

CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XXII

SERVING ALL RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

SUMMER 2009

Blight on Cole Finds Savior

After a fire some years ago, the building at 625-628 Cole Street (near corner of Haight) has become a derelict eyesore and target for graffiti. Acknowledged as a blemish on the face of Cole Valley, it is the focal point for unfortunate patrons sitting outside of Café Cole. Former owner Anton Gerich, convinced that rebuilding costs would not pencil out unless he added a fourth unit, was in protracted battle with the Planning Department for a required variance to permit the first floor bay windows to extend over the sidewalk creating a potential danger to passing pedestrians.

Years passed and the building continued to disintegrate. More warning signs and graffiti accumulated. Finally in the first week of



626-628 Cole Street has been derelict since a fire made it uninhabitable several years ago.

April, the Planning Department sent out a notice that an application for a new building permit had been filed. It seems Gerich had sold the building to the Brown family of Novato, who happen to own a development company, Brown & Co. The new plans call for three units with a build-out of the attic, raising the height of the building two feet for a total of 40 feet.

They plan to demolish and reconstruct the rear egress staircase, which requires a variance, already granted.

Shawn Brown, the general contractor, said they hope to begin within 60 days and complete the project by the end of the year, no doubt causing a huge sigh of relief on the part of residents living on the first block of Cole.

—Karen Crommie

District 5 Grows by One

Congratulations to Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and Venezuelan actress Eliana Lopez, on the birth of their first child, a healthy, 8



Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi



Eliana Lopez

pound, 14 ounce boy. The couple have chosen the name Theo Aureliano. Lopez delivered the child without anesthesia at home, which is only fitting for a couple who met at a Green Party conference.

Arson Alert

Park Police Station has confirmed that the recent series of small fires in our area are continuing to occur and are probably connected. Most have caused only minor property damage. Officials tell us that SFPD, Fire Department investigators and Park Station officers are actively and intensively working on the issue, but could not comment further at this time.

Residents can help. If you see anyone or anything suspicious or have other information that may help with this investigation, please call the Police at 911 immediately to report it.

Because some of these fires have started in refuse containers, and as a personal safety practice, everyone is reminded not to leave trash containers out too early, and when trash is left for pickup, it should be placed in a visible and accessible area that does not have a combustible fuel source near it.

Cole St. Cleaning Resumes

The Clean Cole Street project will continue for another year thanks to 10 participating merchants, CleanScapes, CVIA, and our anonymous donor. With so few merchants contributing to this year's program, the CVIA board had first voted to cancel the program. Then an anonymous donor, a Cole Valley resident, increased his contribution. This still left us with a \$3,750 gap – and again the board voted to cancel the program. Then, CleanScapes, in an effort to avoid cutbacks to their workers in hard economic times, generously offered to reduce their monthly fee for 2009. The CVIA Board voted to increase its contribution and continue the project when learning that the workers' jobs were threatened.

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Neighbors Ask Police for Solution to Muni Park Problem

A group of Cole Valley neighbors, fed up with the boisterous activities becoming a permanent feature of the small park at the entrance to the Muni tunnel on Carl Street met on March 11 with members of the Park Police Station. James Judge, Carole Glosenger, Ruth Wheeler and Joan Downey discussed the situation with Sgt. Nilan and Officers Recton and Diskin.

Judge, who has lived across from the park for over ten years, said, "Although the problems are cyclical, there is a considerable downturn right now with camping and alcohol consumption becoming regular events. I've contacted SFPD many times. Just



Night time disturbances at the small park tend to run in cycles.

yesterday a transient person was nearly hit by an N-Judah car as he was stashing his gear under the westbound handicap platform. The Muni gardeners are doing their best. I can't begin to imagine what they have to deal with."

Petra Trimmel, whose comments were read at the meeting, put it this way: "The folks regularly hanging out in the park and spending the night at the tree surrounded by the round concrete structure, are very loud (cussing, screaming, sometimes hitting each other) almost every evening and many nights.

"The guy who keeps stashing his bedding underneath the outbound handicapped platform, is there almost every night. If he doesn't sleep under the tree, then across the tracks on the concrete and lawn area, next to 52 Carl, or in any of the shop entrances on Cole. He has taught his younger disciples to collect cans, so, regularly on recycle days, they are in the park at night, or very early in the morning, crushing the cans. You can imagine how that impacts the neighbors' sleep."

The Park Station police told us that many problems they have in dealing with the neighborhood's homeless people is made more difficult by the Coalition on Homelessness who coach them on how to evade arrest and process their citations so that there is no consequence for their behavior. The officers told us that the Recycling Center is a draw for the indigent people who are hanging out in Cole Valley: They redeem their stolen recyclables for money to buy alcohol and drugs.

Sgt. Nilan said that he would file a "509" which lets the police know that there have been numerous complaints and that offenders should be issued a citation instead of just a warning. After repeated citations, they can take further action. He said that neighbors should call Park Station (242-3000) with complaints about the Muni park and tell the dispatcher that a 509 is on file.

The meeting resulted in several ideas and suggestions to help alleviate the problem:

- Have the Police bike patrol that now cruises the Haight ride through the Muni park regularly.
- Communicate to Rec and Park that the Recycling Center is causing a problem in our neighborhood and we want it moved to another site.
- Find out from the Park Station officers when the citations will be heard and have neighborhood representatives show up in court to let the judge know that these quality of life citations affect us.
- Encourage Cole Valley merchants to post No Trespassing signs, issued by SFPD in their windows. If a store does not post a sign and someone is sleeping in their recessed space, the police can do nothing since it is private property. For example, people access the mail boxes at Postal Chase 24/7. If someone is sleeping in the doorway, they can call the police because the owner has posted a No Trespassing sign.

A suggestion to urge Muni to replace the benches with the type that has dividers—so that they can't be used for sleeping—got a positive response from members of CVIA's board, some of whom wanted CVIA to contribute funding for this. Said one, "That's a smart neighborhood improvement."

A suggestion to convert the park into a children's playground met objections from dog owners who use the park for their exercise and to meet with other neighbors.

The main imperative was for neighbors to call 311 whenever a disturbance occurs and for merchants to post the No Trespassing sign. The more police officers are drawn to this trouble spot the less desirable it will be for the offenders.

—Joan Downey

Farmers Market at Waller and Stanyan Near Approval

I have been in contact with the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association (PCFMA) about initiating a market at the 1800 block of Waller St. (closed area west of Stanyan) and have sent their proposal to Rec and Park, to work through the details of use of the site. You may recall that a couple of years ago, Cheryl Brodie led the Haight Ashbury Improvement's (HAIA) support of legislation from the Board of Supervisors to authorize use of park land for a local farmers' market. Now, with a proposal in hand, we are hopefully closer to seeing this come together as a real, live market, on Sunday mornings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

PCFMA provides all of the management and administration of the market, its setup and cleanup. Importantly, they also provide insurance for the weekly event. The content of the market, as proposed, is at least 60% fresh, locally grown produce, and as much as 40% artisanal local products, such as breads, cheese, fish, flowers and such. In this arrangement, HAIA will be the local sponsoring organization.

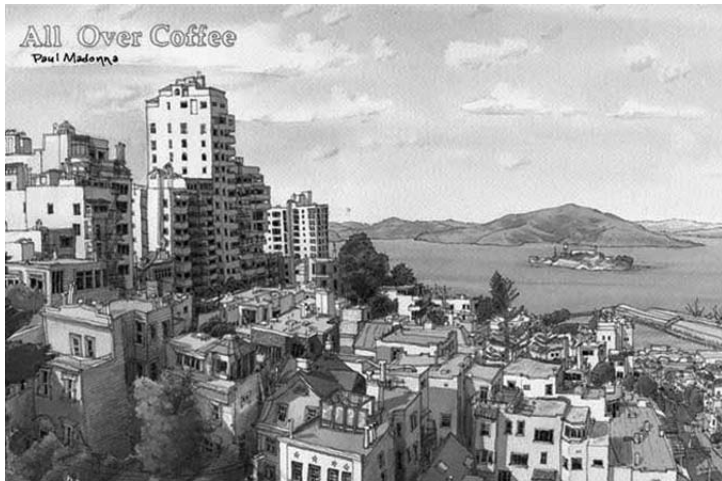
To comment on this topic, please go to the HAIA blog site <http://haia-sf.blogspot.com/> and post your entries, your questions, your suggestions.

—Ted Loewenberg, President
Haight Ashbury Improvement Association

Paul Madonna Has Solo Show: Five years of All Over Coffee

You might recall that the extraordinary San Francisco artist-writer Paul Madonna made an appearance at last year's Cole Valley Fair (The Booksmith booth) signing copies of his new book, "Five Years of All Over Coffee." Fair organizer Joan Downey took the opportunity to ask him if he would consider taking the commission for the fair's poster in 2009. Maybe it was the warm fuzzy haze that the fair produces but, incredibly, he accepted.

That's just one reason we were so delighted to see that the San Francisco Main Library has mounted an exhibition of his work celebrating half a decade of "All Over Coffee" in the San Francisco Chronicle.



Artist/writer Paul Madonna, who will design a poster for the 2009 Cole Valley Fair (September 20), is exhibiting five year's of his Chronicle work.

It will feature his original pen and ink drawings as well as displays of how the artistic process evolves from sketches and first drafts of written copy to finished drawings and final verse. A special video of Paul Madonna at work in his studio courtesy of KQED will be on view in the exhibition. For information about the video please visit: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=5800>

The exhibition will run through August 23, 2009 in the Jewett Gallery on the Main Library's lower level (100 Larkin Street).

Fire Plan for Mt. Sutro

A public meeting has been scheduled for May 18 to inform those interested in Mt. Sutro issues about two proposed fire mitigation projects which would take place in the Mt. Sutro Open Space Reserve.

I have been kept informed of the progress and scope of the joint UCSF/FEMA projects and find that they conform to the Open Space Management Plan developed with community input and finalized in 2001.

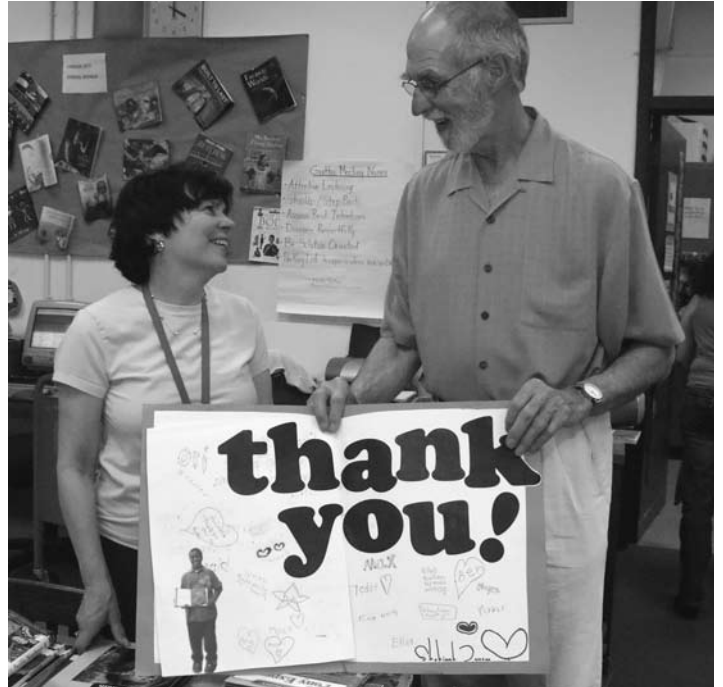
Please plan to attend the public meeting at **7 p.m. on May 18 at St. John Armenian Apostolic Church, 275 Olympia Way** (between Clarendon and Dellbrook) and become informed on this upcoming Mt. Sutro project and about our continuing efforts to preserve, restore and improve the viability of this significant Open Space area.

The invitation from UCSF's Orlando Elizondo appears on the CVIA website at <http://cviasf.org/news>.

—Craig Dawson, Mt. Sutro Stewards

CVIA's Gift Books Arrive at Grattan Library

In response to CVIA's gift of \$1,500 to the Grattan Elementary School Library for new books, the students constructed an impressive 6-page "thank-you card" which was presented to CVIA president David Crommie on April 21 by librarian Lynne Burwell. The money came from the profits of last year's Cole Valley Fair, which, in turn, came from the generosity of its neighborhood supporters, Cole Valley



Grattan Librarian Lynne Burwell presented a handcrafted book of appreciation to CVIA president David Crommie

merchants, and the Fair's vendors. This was in addition to a \$2,000 grant for two cafeteria tables and \$200 for a garden planning day presented earlier from the same funding source.

Burwell said, "Some of the children had never before held a brand new book in their hands. There's something about the feel of it you never forget."

Get Involved in Sunday Streets

What is Sunday Streets? Simply put, Sunday Streets brings streets to life. Sunday Streets are safe, fun, car-free places for people to get out and get active in San Francisco neighborhoods on Sunday mornings.

Last year's two Sunday Streets events engaged over 15,000 people each weekend creating huge demand for more. This year, on six Sundays, the car-free streets will beckon San Franciscans and beyond to the streets for dancing, yoga, skating, biking, walking, hula hooping (and more!) and plain ole' people watching.

Sunday Streets connects residents to San Francisco's neighborhoods and support local businesses along and even off the routes. Sunday Streets brings open space to communities, filling local corridors with healthy free activities, and demonstrates the benefits of increasing open space and recreational opportunities within our City.

For more information about dates, routes and volunteering, go to: sundaystreetsf.com. Come out and play!

Groundbreaking Marks New Life for Buena Vista Park

Neighbors and city dignitaries gathered early on the morning of March 16 to celebrate the beginning of widespread infrastructure repair at our most beautiful neighborhood park. The ground-breaking ceremony for the \$2.6 million Buena Vista Park Southeast Slope Improvement 2009. The project comes after ten years of planning by the



Photo: Elton Pon, S.F. Recreation & Park Dept.

Pictured (L to R): Jared Blumenfeld (Acting General Manager DRP), Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi (D-5), Richard Magary (Chair BVNA Steering Committee and Friends of BV Park Coordinator), Supervisor Bevan Dufty (D-8), Capt. Teresa Barrett (Park Police Station), Alex Randolph (D-8 Representative from Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services), Isabel Wade (Executive Director Neighborhood Parks Council).

Buena Vista Park community with the Departments of Public Works and Recreation and Parks and is funded by park bonds approved a few years ago.

It will include a new ADA-compliant trail connecting the Duboce steps to the Buena Vista East/West Terrace, a new stairway running from the Buena Vista East sidewalk to the service road, a resin- and wood-based boardwalk trail, re-grading of the hillside, renovation and expansion of the irrigation system, tree trimming, and new retaining walls and barriers for erosion control for the sandy hillside. Work should be completed by fall.



Photo: Elton Pon, S.F. Recreation & Park Dept.

Pictured (L to R): Bob Incerti (BVNA Treasurer), Richard Magary and Alex Randolph presenting a Certificate of Honor from the Mayor to BVNA.

Joining the park neighbors were Supervisor Bevan Dufty (D-8), Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi (D-5), Capt. Teresa Barrett (Park Station), representatives from the Rec and Park, DPW and the project contractors.

“The Buena Vista Neighborhood Association believes this project is a huge ‘win’ for the neighborhood and is working to raise supplemental funds for a community bulletin board and new benches in the area,” said Richard Magary. For more information on the project, contact Meghan.Tiernan@sfgov.org or 581-2557.

Bay to Breakers Reforming?

Although the race will probably have occurred when you read this, we thought you should know what AEG, race organizer for the ING Bay to Breakers promised by way of improvement.

- New corral system at the start line. The start line will be organized using corrals that are designated starting areas for participants with similar estimated finishing times.
- Shared enforcement of city ordinances regarding alcohol. Anyone publicly drinking alcohol or displaying public drunkenness on or along the racecourse will be subject to fines and prosecution. Race organizers say they will coordinate with the San Francisco Police Department to proactively remove kegs and glass bottles of alcohol from the racecourse.
- Wheeled objects and floats will be permitted on the course, with new provisions for safety. Participants with wheeled objects and floats must



Panhandle neighbors played an active part in restricting alcohol use during the event. “No more kegs in carts,” say race organizers.

be registered to participate. Wheeled objects and floats must enter the race at the starting line in designated corrals. Wheeled objects and floats cannot be motorized or taller than 9 feet; and may not be used to transport or store alcohol. Float owners are directed to act responsibly toward the environment and other participants, and to dispose of their floats in dumpsters provided along the course and at the Finish Line.

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.

June 9, July 14, August 11
Mark Your Calendars

Skateboard Park Gets Go Ahead From Supervisors

It was small, as groups go, but noticeably high-powered. One supervisor, one department head, one police captain, four commissioners, two heads of neighborhood organizations and a sprinkling of skateboard boosters. The reason for the gathering on April 29 was to announce an \$80,000 grant from the city to design a long-awaited skateboard park at the end of Waller Street, between Stanyan and Kezar Drive.

Acting General Manager of Rec and Park Jared Blumenfeld (on loan from the Department of the Environment) welcomed the small band of officials, who stood in a clump at skateboard park site. He



Because of late notice, those present were mostly city officials.

expressed the longtime need for a skateboard park in the center of the city. Next to speak was Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, in shirtsleeves, having just ducked out of a budget meeting. His well-known efforts have spurred the plans into action.



Skateboarders put on a demonstration before the speeches began.

In spite of the spirit of bonhomie, many Haight neighbors are opposed to the park. Letters to CVIA and to Supervisor Mirkarimi have stated objections to noise and attracting additional kids to the Alford Lake Area, notorious for drug sales. But, mainly, complaints focused on the lack of opportunity for neighbors to weigh-in before its announcement as a “done deal.”

Said CVIA member Carole Glosenger, “It is my understanding that the design for the Waller Street skate park will simulate the effect of jumping stairs and benches rather than rolling hills. This will be much noisier than the normal skate park. We will surely hear the ‘clack, smash, clack, smash’ all day long.”

The ubiquitous Jim Lazarus, now head of the Rec and Park Commission, said a few well-chosen words, as did Captain Teresa Barrett of Park Station and Ted Loewenberg, chair of the Skateboard Commission and president of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association.

It was all over in 20 minutes with Blumenfeld getting the last laugh by joking that, unknown to most, Supervisor Mirkarimi had been on the cover of Thrasher magazine last year displaying a daredevil jump.

—Karen Crommie

Attention Artists, Vendors, Musicians, Owners of Unique Cars, and Volunteers:

CVIA is pleased to announce that the Cole Valley Fair will be back again for its seventh year on Sunday, September 20, 2009.

The Cole Valley Fair continues to be a charming and well-attended event sponsored by local merchants and organizations with outstanding records of community support. The fair features local art and fine crafts, food from neighborhood restaurants, live music, a display of historical Cole Valley photographs, a full block of vintage automobiles owned by neighborhood residents, events for children, and more!

If you’re an artist with unique handcrafted work or a food vendor with tasty morsels, we hope you’ll apply for a booth space. The deadline is July 1. Priority will be given to Cole Valley residents, returning vendors, and to promising new applicants. (Imported merchandise will not be considered). We will be accepting some applicants before the deadline date.

We’re also seeking musicians from all genres and styles for one-hour performance slots. Please note that limited amplification will be allowed – see the application form for details. The Cole Valley Fair is a small and intimate street fair where the right sound will attract a lot of attention.

And, yes, Cars on Cole will be back again this year. Never been to the event? We look for interesting neighborhood vehicles-- whatever that may mean. It need not be a “show queen”, or vintage, or rare. The range of vehicles in past years has been from a gaggle of Citroen 2CV’s, British, German, French, Japanese and Italian sports and touring cars, heavy 30-60s American Iron, Model A to modern Hot Rod.

Application forms for vendors, musicians, and cars are available online at www.cviasf.org and on paper at Postal Chase, 912 Cole Street.

Volunteers Needed!

We need lots of volunteers to make this event work smoothly. Interested in being a part of this wonderful neighborhood event? Send an email with the times you’re available to colevalleyfair@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at this year’s Fair.

—Joan Downey

Save the Date:

The date for the seventh Cole Valley Fair has been set for September 20, 2009, the third Sunday of September. Any comments, suggestions, or to volunteer, contact colevalleyfestival@gmail.com.



Cviasf@aol.com

Please contact us by e-mail if you have an issue to raise, 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.

Cole Valley Merchants Get Serious Green Challenge

Cole Valley merchants gathered at Bambino's on the morning of March 26 to hear an interesting proposition by Jared Blumenfeld, director of the SF Department of the Environment. Why not make Cole Valley the first Green Shopping Zone in the nation?

"Think of it," he said, with his characteristic exuberance barely under control, "Cole Valley would be the first in the Nation. This is a big national deal, friends." A silence descended on the room as business owners weighed the cost and inconvenience against the honor of being America's First. And what if he was pitching this same idea to other neighborhoods? And, worse, what if one of these other San Francisco neighborhoods beat us to the punch?

This was no fly-by-night idea on Blumenfeld's part. With a law degree from UC Boalt, another from the University of London in international environmental law and a resume that includes Cambridge University, the National Resource Defense Council and the Fund for Animal Welfare, he looks at our own Cole Valley as a microcosm that has the potential to be a model for the nation's



With Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi looking on, Department of the Environment Director Jared Blumenfeld announced a plan for making Cole Valley the nation's first Green Shopping Zone.

small business communities. "The city already has a tremendous head start," he said. "Norcal and PG&E are among the greenest utilities in the nation."

Led by the pioneering efforts of Cole Hardware, he knows that Cole Valley merchants have already become more conscious of the importance of reducing toxins, recycling and conserving energy. Blumenfeld had made an inventory of Cole Valley businesses before the meeting and concluded that every business had the potential of becoming officially "green" excepting the dry cleaners and the nail salon. Not bad odds.

And what a challenge. Although he assured everyone that the ultimate goal was to save, not only resources, but money, merchants understood it would involve extra employee time and training as well as an initial investment of capital, particularly scarce at this time.

Blumenfeld assured the business owners that they would not

be left on their own to implement their green program. "Members of our department (Environment) will come out to your stores and 'walk you through' the steps you need to take," he said. "They, in turn, will be backed up by other city departments that have their own commercial green education programs."

Although Spiro Makras, owner of Bambino's hosted the event, which included coffee and pastries, Cole Hardware's marketing and



Shel Silverstein related Cole Hardware's long struggle to attain green certification. Julia Strzesieskia (left), Cole Hardware marketing and advertising manager, organized the meeting.

advertising manager, Julia Strzesieskia led the meeting. After giving an overview of their ecological goals, she introduced manager Shel Silverstein who described the steps begun by Cole Hardware in 2006 to achieve their goal of getting officially certified Green. They included things like limiting water use, reducing use of toxins, replacing overhead lighting with T-8 LED tubes, installing low-flow toilets, accepting an array of recyclables from customers including paint, batteries and soft plastics, exchanging their large dumpster for a system of separating trash into three, segregated cans as the residential customers do but, when dealing with a huge volume of packing materials, plants and corrosives, not nearly as easy.

Members of the Department of the Environment's team of specialists each spoke about the wide range of services offered to businesses and communities. This is an exciting idea. Let's encourage the businesses we frequent to be part of this effort. For more information go to sfenvironment.org.

—Karen Crommie

Golden Gate Traffic Calming Solutions Elusive

Since the Academy of Sciences opened in September, 2008, traffic and parking in and around Golden Gate Park has been a problem. The 800-car garage underneath the Concourse, between the two institutions, is often full by 11 a.m. leaving many frustrated visitors circling the surrounding neighborhoods looking for parking.

The Academy and DeYoung partnered with Muni to run the 74x Culture Bus which transported tourists with a day pass between SF MOMA, Union Square, the Asian Art Museum, and the Golden Gate Park Concourse. It was a dismal failure — probably for many reasons: it was not aggressively marketed (the DeYoung and Academy's responsibility); it was priced too high (\$7 per day); and it was limited in the tourist attractions on its route — missing the Golden Gate Bridge was a big mistake. Since the average ridership per trip was six passengers, it will be eliminated as part of Muni's service

reduction plan to cope with their operating deficit.

In the past couple of months, both Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and the Concourse Authority have addressed this issue. No one questions that there is a problem – but the solution remains hard to pin down.

The March 24 meeting hosted by Mirkarimi, was attended by representatives from the DeYoung, Academy, Municipal Transit Agency, Rec and Park, the Park Rangers and many park neighbors. Some of the suggestions that came out of that meeting were to re-institute the park shuttle, operated for a few years by the Concourse Authority but stopped when funding ran out (the institutions may agree to fund this); early warning electronic signage on Fell and Divisadero and 19th Avenue and Lincoln indicates when the Concourse garage is full; improved signage for alternative parking — especially the UCSF garage (where parking costs \$3 per hour on weekends).

—Joan Downey

CVIA Board Actions

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.

March

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee, the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, and the Municipal Transit Agency's Citizens Advisory Council. Welcomed Annie Armstrong.
- Reviewed questions from CleanScapes regarding treatment of personal (non commercial) fliers posted on utility polls. After discussion, decided that, since they are, in fact, illegal, all fliers (even lost dogs) should be removed from the blocks of Cole Street in CleanScapes' jurisdiction..
- Discussed table and chair arrangements for this year's Cole Valley Fair and decided to pay to have them set up as part of the rental fee.
- Reviewed wording of Fair booth application form.
- Discussed Supervisor Mirkarimi's work to contain behavior of participants in the Bay to Breakers Race.
- Discussed opening of the Haight's 13th head shop, GoodFellas (which we had opposed).

April

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee, the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, the Municipal Transit Agency's Citizens Advisory Council. Welcomed Annie Armstrong, Orlando Elizando (UCSF) and Craig Dawson (Mt. Sutro Stewards)
- Treasurer Joan Downey reported \$2,930.48 in CVIA bank account.
- Heard a report from Craig Dawson on the Mr. Sutro trail restoration project and the FEMA grant to clear some of the most fire-prone areas, later elaborated on by Orlando Elizando (see below).
- David reported on a meeting held at Joey Cain's (HANC) house at which locations for a temporary library were discussed to serve users during the one-year renovation period of the Park Branch (1833 Page St.). The Hamilton Methodist Church is out of consideration because of ongoing litigation by the prior congregation. St. Mary's Hospital and DeAvila School will be approached.
- Joan reported on the effort to persuade Cole merchants to post

No Trespassing signs in their window enabling the police to move campers from the premises. She met with three officers from Park Station and residents of buildings in close proximity to the Muni park. (See full report on page 2.) Joan agreed to contact officer Diskin to facilitate distribution of No Trespassing signs to merchants.

- Motion approved to send message to merchants encouraging the use of above signs.
- Discussed asking MTA to replace the existing benches in the Carl Street Muni park with ones with arm rests to discourage overnight sleeping. The current benches are being used for that purpose and are scene of loud, late-night parties by indigent campers. David Crommie will contact Muni to see what the procedure is for such a request.
- Orlando Elizando (UCSF) reported on a community meeting scheduled for May 18 to discuss the FEMA fire prevention program which would involve removing 90 percent of vegetation in a south east section of Sutro forest. It is a long term plan to reduce the danger of fire and to restore native habitat. This scale of forest management was last done in 1933 as part of a WPA project.

■ Passed a motion to write a letter in support of this effort. Agreed to send out a notice of this meeting to CVIA members.

■ Joan Downey reported on the reorganization of the Inner Sunset Park Neighbors who have been active in efforts to prevent AT&T getting carte blanche to erect 800 refrigerator-size communication boxes on sidewalks all over the city. Another of their projects is a Farmers Market in the 8th Avenue parking lot between Irving and Judah on Sunday mornings.

■ Local photographer Loic Nicolas asked for the board's partnership in a "Photograph with Santa" booth for Cole Valley children for a nominal fee on a Sunday three weeks before Christmas. Any profit will go to CVIA for community grants. Location must found with enough room for Santa's chair, background draping, lights, cordoned area for waiting line. Promotion: "You Don't have to go to a Mall to get your Christmas card picture."

■ Passed a motion to vote for the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods' support of the plans by California Pacific Medical Center's to build a hospital at the Cathedral Hill (Jack Tar) Hotel.

■ Carole Glosenger reported on a visit she and Marianne Hesse had made to several skateboard parks (Balboa Park, Potrero and Cesar Chavez) in the city. Their appraisal was that it was noisy and required much more space than is available in the Waller Street location where it is proposed. In both existing parks there was much more separation from surrounding residences than there would be on Stanyan and Waller, the proposed location.

■ Motion passed to oppose charging admission to the Strybing Arboretum (Y-4, N-2, Ab-1)

May

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee, the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods and the Municipal Transit Agency's Citizens Advisory Council. Welcomed members Andrea Amaraggi, Cole Roberts, and Neighborhood Parks Council founder Isabel Wade.
- Treasurer Joan Downey reported a balance of \$3,010.48.
- Isabel Wade presented a persuasive case for supporting a Park Investment District, patterned after the Community Investment Districts that have been adapted by eight different San Francisco neighborhoods. There was a vigorous discussion but no decision was made.
- David Crommie reported that the committee to find a location for a temporary library during the closure of the Park Branch was now

investigating the feasibility of a temporary building (trailer) to house basic library services.

■ Motion approved to set August 29 for the summer social. Joan to speak to Spiro Makras, owner of Bambinos.

■ Joan Downey (Fair Organizer) reported on plans for the Cole Valley Fair (Sept. 20). It was agreed that the second "stage" will be located on Parnassus (between Alpha Market and Boulange de Cole).

■ Lena Emmery reminded members of the May 18 hearing on the clearing of a portion of Mt. Sutro for fire prevention.

■ Agreed that the jury process for artists applying for a booth at the Cole Valley Fair will be held on July 1 beginning at 5 p.m. at the Emmery-Canepa home. A light dinner will be brought in.

■ Joan Downey reported that Mario Mogannam has offered Postal Chase as the site of the "Photo with Santa" event scheduled for Sunday, December 6.

■ Andrea Amaraggi reported on the impact of the of the Saturday Food Pantry located at Hamilton Methodist Church (Waller and Belvedere streets). Clients gather before the 9 a.m. opening, sitting on stairs of resident homes, talking loudly and smoking. After getting their food, some dispose of bags and wrappers in the street, etc. In coordination with Marianne Hesse, Andrea will draft a letter of complaint specifying changes that need to be made. President David Crommie will approve and send the letter to the program's director.

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

Grattan Students Get Down and Dirty to Go Green

Grattan Eco-sphere, an after school project, featuring an environmental newsletter, evolved into a hands-on project demonstrating the power of the sun — smack dab in the middle of the Grattan Element-



tary School courtyard. Tech instructor "Mr. Phillip" works alongside Sean Kealy (center) and Renzi Tamayo (far left) in constructing a small pool that will be filled with living plants and water circulated by solar energy.

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.

DeAvila School to Reopen

Beginning this fall, the now empty William R. De Avila Elementary School at 1451 Haight St., will be the site of a Cantonese magnet school for children who want to learn the language or study what they already speak at home.

San Francisco school district officials made the decision after receiving 500 more kindergarten applications for next fall than they



had this school year, said Deputy Superintendent Myong Leigh.

About 4,455 kindergartners are currently enrolled in the district. The new popularity of the San Francisco public schools is a turnaround after years of shrinking enrollment and school closures.

About 55,000 pupils are enrolled in city schools, down from nearly 62,000 in 1995. The decline has forced the district to close 10 of its 111 schools since 2003. De Avila was one of them.

Overall enrollment rose slightly last year, by 154 students. District officials attributed the new interest in their elementary schools to energetic recruitment — and to the poor economy that has made it harder to afford private tuition or a move to the suburbs.

The new immersion program, headed by principal Rosina Tong, will admit only kindergartners and first-graders the first year, adding a new grade annually until fifth.

But the new school may already be full. District officials have already sent out enough invitations to fill the 106 available spots to families that have expressed interest in a Cantonese immersion program. Two others at Alice Fong Yu and West Portal elementary schools - are very popular.

The above article by Nanette Asimov is reprinted (and edited) from the San Francisco Chronicle, March 13, 2009

[HTTP://CVIASF.ORG](http://cviasf.org)

Check out our nifty website created by CVIA member Mark Ballew and maintained by Amy Blakeley and Joan Downey. It has everything: history of the organization, breaking neighborhood news and upcoming events.

News from The Booksmith

The Booksmith hosted its first event in 1977 with Paul Williams, author of “Das Energi.” Apparently nobody showed up. Last year we hosted over one hundred author events ranging from small intimate events to large off-site productions. In the old days we used to host plain old book readings and promoted them by issuing author trading cards. Now we are also doing interactive panel discussions, multimedia presentations, and musical performances, and promoting our events with YouTube videos, facebook invitations, and twitter updates. Over the years we have hosted speakers ranging from leading thinkers, cultural icons, social critics, photographers, artists, graphic novelists, poets, politicians, historians, musicians, and of course literary fiction writers.

When Christin Evans [co-owner] and I got serious about assuming stewardship of an independent bookstore (against all advice), one of the ideas that intrigued and motivated us was building community. For us this means creating an environment in which people can learn about new ideas, discuss issues, experience art and culture, and, most importantly, interact with each other. So having a great events program is central to our goal of building community.

As we continue to evolve our events program, we invite you share your thoughts and ideas with us. Our general direction is to produce more interactive and engaging events, and be more tuned



Janis Bell

in with the headlines and locally significant issues. Another important goal is to enable our customers to participate by deciding what kind of events we do. Last fall local CVIA board member Joan Downey chided us for not carrying her favorite new book by local writing instructor Janis Bell. We ordered Janis' books and invited her to speak at the Booksmith and it turned out to be a really good experience. Another long time Booksmith

customer, illustrator Julie Downing, helped us organize a fun and interactive event for kids during the holidays last year, which also doubled as a fundraiser for Grattan Elementary and New Traditions schools. We would love to hear from you about your ideas.

Here are the highlights of some upcoming events. On May 21st cultural critic Mary Beth Williams will speak on affordable housing. On May 26th David Henry Sterry, Beth Lisick, and Alan Black will engage us in an interactive discussion on the art of writing memoirs. On June 1st debut novelist Joshua Mohr will speak about his novel set in the Haight Ashbury. On June 4th you can meet the creator of counter-culture icon Emily the Strange. On June 8th social critic Hal Niedzviecki will share his insights on technology's role in turning us into exhibitionists and voyeurs. On June 15th you will have an opportunity to meet Novella Carpenter who studied under Michael Pollan and is now on the cutting edge of the urban farming movement. On June 18th, we host Booksmith favorite and critically acclaimed cartoonist Adrian Tomine.

We also have two new event formats. On popular demand, we started a reading group, Found in Translation, where the participants are reading contemporary works of translated fiction. The group meets the fourth Thursday of every month and is hosted by our

customer services supervisor Julie Boyer. Julie has been cooking up delicious treats for the participants and offering them 15% discounts on the group's selections. The next two books will be “The Post-Office Girl,” by Stefan Zweig (May 28th), and “The Naked Eye,” by Yoko Tawada (June 25th). On June 19th we are hosting a Singles Book Swap designed to address the complaint that San Francisco is a hard place to meet people.

—Praveen Madan

Botanical Garden Will Remain Free for SF Residents

San Francisco has the last remaining botanical garden in the country with free admission. But because of the city's budget crisis, Rec and Park had proposed a \$5.00 admission fee, \$3.00 for seniors. In comparison to fees at similar botanical gardens, which range from \$20.00 (Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami) to \$8.00 (Brooklyn Botanical Garden) the charge is small. However, there is no denying that an entrance fee will limit access to the most frequent visitors: people who live near the park, like us.

After public meetings full of the usual partisan sound and fury, the Department relented and will maintain free entrance to those with



In addition to being a lovely spot for a stroll or picnic, the SF Botanical Garden is an important resource for Bay Area horticulturists and backyard gardeners.

identification proving they are SF residents. Out-of-towners are not so lucky and will pay the \$5 tab. This is a compromise that some believe will result in a net loss of funds—that is, after Rec and Park sets up its fare-collecting protocol—heavily wrapped in the city's notorious red tape.

Once known as Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park's Botanical Garden is still a major attraction. Plans for the gardens were drawn up in 1893, but construction did not begin until 1926 when Helene Strybing died and left money for the project. The gardens are run by the San Francisco Botanical Garden Society, which operates a bookstore, monthly plant sales, and community educational programs within the park. For more information go to www.sfbotanicalgarden.org



The Booksmith book club meets every fourth Thursday. May's selection is “The Post Office Girl” by Stefan Zweig.



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.

Muni Service Reductions That Affect Haight & Cole Valley

The San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA) Board of Directors adopted proposals to close the projected unprecedented \$128.9 million operating deficit. These include service reductions, expenditure reductions, as well as increases to fares, fees, fines, rates and charges.

The extensive technical data and analysis done as part of the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) along with the extensive public input received helped the SFMTA make informed decisions about these service changes which represented an annual operating savings of \$13.4 million.

Here are some of the changes that will effect our neighborhood:

The N-Judah which currently operates daily between Ocean Beach and the Caltrain terminal at Fourth and King Streets would end at the Embarcadero Station on weekends. Passengers would transfer to the T-Third line to continue on.

The 7-Haight bus would be discontinued and replaced by the 6-Parnassus and the 71L-Haight/Noriega whose frequencies would increase from 10 to 9 minutes during peak times.

The late night non-Owl routes for the 6-Parnassus, 33-Stanyan, 43-Masonic and 71-Haight/Noriega would end at midnight rather than 1 a.m. while normal Owl service would not change.

The 37-Corbett would end service at 11 p.m. instead of the current 12:55 a.m.

For the complete list of service reductions, expenditure reductions, increases to fares, fees, fines, rates and charges: see <http://www.sfmta.com/cms/rbudget2010/budgindx2010.htm>

—Joan Downey

Haight Street Cleanup

Over fifty people gathered at Haight and Cole on the morning of May 9 to form an army of red-vested volunteers determined to clean up Haight Street from Central to Stanyan. Armed with brooms, scrapers and buckets of paint, they swept the sidewalks and cleaned fliers off the utility polls, repainting them afterward. DPW supplied all the materials and collected the bags bursting with debris.



Susan Strolis scrapes posters while other volunteers check out tools from DPW.

There was wide participation from non-profit agencies, such as the Homeless Youth Alliance, Huckleberry House and Larkin Street Youth Services, that sent out staff members and clients. There were the usual neighborhood stalwarts representing HAIA, HANC, CVIA and The Booksmith, all sponsors of the project. Karen Growney organized the whole event with perseverance and skill while Joe Goldmark (Escape from New York Pizza) generously brought hot pizzas to the Panhandle where volunteers gathered after the work was completed. Thanks to all who participated, including Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, an early advocate of the cleanup. One small, but significant, step for neighborhood unity was taken that day.

Postscripts

Normally the opening of a new clothing store on Haight street would not be news, but Goorin Brothers Hats is a little different. Since its “soft” opening on May 1st, there’s been a steady stream of clients eager to see how they look in one of their distinctive styles. Established in Pittsburgh, PA in 1895, the firm moved to San Francisco just after the World War II to continue the wholesale fabrication



The Goorin Brothers circa 1905

of hats. For the first time in their long history, they have opened two retail shops in the city. If you want to see what a \$75 designer baseball cap looks like, or maybe a coffee color straw porkpie, drop by 1446 Haight. Their official opening party is Saturday, May 30.

* * *

The latest news on the renovation of Park Branch Library is that the project will be delayed until November — after the venerable building’s 100th birthday on October 29. This raised the spirits of those looking forward to celebrating the centenary. The library commission voted to accept the recommendation of the Branch Library Improvement Program which cited a delay in completion of work at another branch.

* * *

The murals on the Shrader Street side of Grattan Elementary School are hard to see past the childrens vegetable garden and screen of small trees, but the angling is well worth the effort. Designed by



Josef Norris (Kid Serve Youth Murals) and executed by the students, the wall sports giant glittering insects in high grass. Here student Zada Clark puts the finishing touches on the head of a grasshopper.

—Karen Crommie

Haight Street Art Walk



Over twenty stores and restaurants on Haight Street, from Central to Stanyan, participated in the April 24 Art Walk to showcase neighborhood businesses. Organized by Kate Morrow, manager of Buffalo Exchange, there were works by local art, live music, book signings, discounts, free appetizers, drink specials, trunk shows and even live burlesque. This event, which will take place on the last Friday night of every month from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.,

is free of charge and open to all ages.

In spite of its newness, HAIA board member and long time Haight resident Susan Strolis observed a nice flow of enthusiastic people venturing into shops they had never entered before. This is part of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association's greater efforts to bring neighborhood residents back to Haight Street. For more information call 431-7733 or go to www.BX.Haight.Artwalk@gmail.com



Photos courtesy of Susan Strolis

Help

- Emergency 911
- Disturbance553-0123
- Blocked Driveways & Parking on Sidewalks553-1200
- Abandoned Vehicles781-5865
- Health Department255-3610
- Litter Patrol (sofas, mattresses, etc.)..... 311
- Graffiti and Illegal Sign Removal 311
- NextBus 311
- Street Lighting 554-0730

Mayor Gavin Newsom554-6141
 City Hall - Room 200
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
 S.F., CA 94102

Chief of Police Heather Fong553-1551
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
 S.F., CA 94103

District Attorney Kamala Harris.....553-1741
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
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Captain Teresa Barrett242-3000
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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 Fall edition should be sent before August 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.

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CVIA Officers

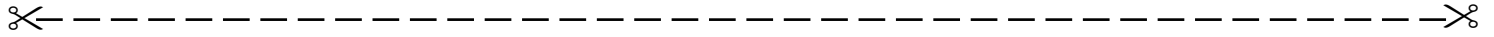
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 Special ProjectsJoan Downey

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 _____

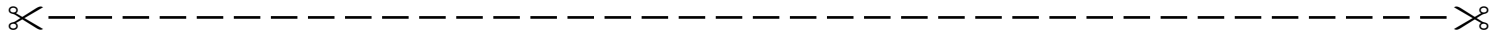
ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____ FAX _____

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**

**Get more neighborhood news
at <http://cviasf.org>**