

CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XXII

SERVING ALL RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

WINTER/SPRING 2009

Can the Haight Take Another Shop for Tokers?

Anyone hoping to get a neighborhood-serving retail store or new restaurant on Haight may be disappointed to learn that a new 3,000 square foot “head shop” is said to be opening at the Discount Fabrics location.

The word among other merchants is that relatives of “Daydreams” in the 1500 block of Haight had signed the lease and,



If “GoodFellas” succeeds in occupying the space recently vacated by Discount Fabrics, it will become the 13th shop selling drug paraphernalia in the Haight.

yes, more bong and pipes for the Haight. We currently have 12! Fortunately, Supervisor Mirkarimi has responded by initiating legislation to require Conditional Use Authorization for additional “tobacco paraphernalia establishments” in the Haight for a one year period. It will be heard at the Land Use and Economic Development Committee in Room 263 at City Hall on February 23. It might be of importance for those of you who care about the future of the street to call or write the supervisors on this committee to voice your opinion.

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Backers of the Whole Foods Project Succeed, For Now

After much intrigue and neighborhood acrimony, the project to tear down the old Cala Foods and construct a market to replace it, along with 62 units of residential housing and a 176-space underground garage, has finally scaled its greatest hurdle. The autumn months saw major community organizing, letter-writing and neighborhood turnout at both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to push forward this development.

Some who thought the 34,400 square foot market was too large and that delivery trucks would interfere with flow of traffic on Stanyan had valid arguments and presented them well. In some cases their fight resulted in a better project. But many of us were fearful that, with the economy under pressure, Whole Foods, who was committed to the ground floor lease, would back out, or that John Brennan, the site owner, would become discouraged leave it as a parking lot or sell the land for residential development sans market. But, in a unparalleled effort by the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association, the members of CVIA, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and



Revised design for the 690 Stanyan project will be reviewed February 19.

others, the project has been approved. To be sure, there are many more layers of red tape ahead: the new design is on the Planning Commission’s February 19th agenda as an “informational” item. But the legal groundwork has been laid for the demolition of the existing building. It’s time to congratulate ourselves.

—Karen Crommie

Sadly, Daily Cleaning of Cole Street to End

Due to a lack of participation by a majority of Cole Street merchants, the CVIA board reluctantly decided that it could not continue the CleanScapes daily cleaning service. It was decided at January’s board meeting that, if we did not receive checks from at least a majority of merchants (13), the service would have to end. The cost per individual merchant was less than \$1.00 per day. We agreed to pay CleanScapes for the first 2 months of the year, retaining the checks received by participating merchants, in hopes

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would contribute during the month of January. We sent letters and made personal calls but we have only received 10 checks to date.

We thank and commend the Cole Valley merchants who contributed to the street cleaning for 2009: Alpha Market, Bambino's Ristorante, BurgerMeister, Cole Cleaners, Cole Hardware, Cole Valley Fitness, Crepes on Cole, La Boulange de Cole, Postal Chase and Tully's.



CleanScapes' Carlos Callejas on Cole St.

Although we hoped we could all work together on this for the benefit of the neighborhood, various merchants wanted to handle cleaning their sidewalks in other ways: some services were provided by the building owner, others had prior arrangements with cleaners or staff to monitor their frontage. CVIA's anonymous benefactor, who had been contributing up to \$5,000 a year, intended it to be seed money, until the time the merchants took over the responsibility. We regret that we could not continue this 7-day a week service that

—CVIA Board of Directors

Ed. note: From the DPW website, "By law, the property owner or the ground-floor tenant of the building immediately adjacent to the sidewalk is responsible for keeping it clean and free of litter."

Planning Department To Weaken Design Review

The opportunity for a citizen to ask that the Planning Commission review a decision the Planning Department has made is undergoing a major change. A request for Design Review (DR) typically comes from a neighbor who believes a new construction or remodel is contrary to the Residential Design Guidelines. The Department feels this privilege is utilized too often, resulting in lost staff time. They have suggested that instead of being reviewed by the entire commission, that a DR be handled by a "hearing officer."

"When the Design Review process was last revised four years ago, neighbors were active in the process, working with Planner Jonas Ionin at the planning stage. This time we have been shut out," said Judy Berkowitz, former president of the Coalition for SF Neighborhoods. "This time the only people who were asked to participate early on were SPUR and AIA.

"Our answer four years ago to DR reform was a strong Pre-Application process. Neighborhood representatives agreed and presented a draft for this procedure. The Planning Department accepted it but then watered it down radically. They are now claiming it doesn't work. Well, of course it doesn't work: they weakened it so as to make it completely ineffective, allowing them to now claim 'it doesn't work' and that there is need for yet another DR revision." Berkowitz added, "The Planning Department clearly states that these proposed changes are for the benefit of the Planning staff and the Planning Commission, not for San Francisco residents. Planning is again trying to cut neighbors out of the process."

—Karen Crommie

Continued from page 1, column 1.

For those of you who feel this is self serving of me to try to avoid more competition — as I have run a head shop/clothing store since 1976 on Haight — I'll agree. But, I'll also add that I have lived in the Haight since 1972, started my store when the street was boarded up, and have worked hard with my Victorian restorations to make the neighborhood what it is today. In my heart I love the Haight, its history, its residents, and its potential.

Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley is an example where, 10 years ago, too many head shops opened. Then, suddenly, several closed at once due to too many stores serving too few customers. The result left a glut of vacant stores from which Telegraph has never fully recovered. Another fallout of having 13 head shops on the street could be the reappearance of throngs of teenagers from the suburbs coming to the Haight to find pot. None of us wants the return of the early 90s when you couldn't walk five feet without being approached to buy "buds and doses." As for me, my lease is finally up in two years and I plan on opening a Victorian restoration store. It's too bad that the Haight doesn't offer the climate that would support such a business.

—Jim Siegel, owner, *Distractions*

13th Head Shop? Regulation Can Be a Slippery Slope

I'd be happy to see fewer head shops on Haight, too. However, the larger issue is about the role of city government in regulating commerce by picking winners and losers. It would be a grave mistake to give the city *carte blanche* authority to determine what kinds and numbers of businesses should be permitted (assuming of course they are legal businesses, and not, say, brothels, etc.).

We've already seen supervisors impose unnatural restrictions that punish people for living in San Francisco, such as a complete ban on big box stores, chain stores (where "chain" is poorly defined), dollar stores, etc. Is Bayshore Boulevard better off now that the old Goodman Lumber building is rotting away and no jobs exist on that site?

Take the example of the guy in North Beach who wanted to open a yogurt shop. By the time the city got around to handling his permit, he had 10 other locations in other states already up and running, and this local entrepreneur was classified as a chain, and could not open his home-town store. How many jobs and how much revenue did that cost the city? Are there too many restaurants on Haight St? We already have a grocery on Haight: why do we need Whole Foods? Are two low-income senior residences in the neighborhood one too many? Are existing merchants entitled to a ban from new competitors who might provide better products at lower prices? I believe the city should stay out of the business of artificially regulating competition, and rather create an incentive structure that will help neighborhood serving merchants gain traction to get started and stay viable.

Simply put, every effort put forth by supervisors to pick winners and losers has resulted in disaster for San Franciscans, leaving us subject to paying high prices for commodities. It restricts choice, adds extra costs and provides incentives for going to adjacent cities (or on-line) to acquire what is not available in the city. We must be very careful in considering the consequences of the slippery slope of giving City Hall the ability to restrict commerce based on political whims.

If we don't want another head shop on Haight, then the Conditional Use Permit process is the right way to fight that, on a case by case basis.

—Ted Loewenberg

Library Redo: Blessing or Not?

Once again, our Park Branch Library will be closing for renovation. But, this time, the upgrades will be more visible. At a meeting held in the library's community room on January 27, the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) turned out its top brass to answer questions about the refurbishing plans. Chief Librarian Luis Herrera, Chief of Branches Brian Bannon, architects from Field Paoli and Joseph Chow & Associates, and bureaucrats with titles too lengthy to mention here, filled several rows of chairs. Head architect Mark Schatz, with an engaging New York accent, literally bounced with enthusiasm describing the planned changes.

The main desk will be moved to the center of the room and become a more functional control center in this time of minimal staffing. There will be new restrooms, improved lighting, a self-checkout station, separate study sections for both children and teens, 14 computers — with an additional 10 laptops and a renovation of the lower level community room, complete with a state-of-the-art audio-visual system. Less interesting to the public are the upgrades in the mechanical and electrical systems necessary to comply with city code.

So what's to complain about? Well, it means we will lose our library for at least a year, beginning this summer, to the fall of 2010. Several people asked that an interim library be created at another location. This was met with noticeable coolness by SFPL staff, who were adding up the cost and work involved. Other members of the audience warmed to the idea and began offering locations that might be available for free, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the William R. DeAvila School.

Some were concerned that, in the present economic situation, once closed, the library might not reopen. In fact, there is a cost-cutting measure being circulated around the Board of Supervisors that would remove the special "set aside," which insures the library a fixed percentage of the city's annual budget. Herrera assured us that the funds were in place from the \$106 million bond measure passed by the voters in 2000. (And later, Supervisor Mirkarimi confirmed this.) The possibility is strong enough that Tes Welborn, Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council board member, asked that the project be postponed or put last in line for renovation. Schatz said that Park Branch was already the last branch to be renovated out of the initial bond money. "The time is right," he said. "The contractors are hungry now. Bids on construction projects are going down every day. This is the perfect time to act."

Branch manager Cathy Delano assured the audience that there will be some library services during the closure. Certain children's programs will be offered in neighborhood schools and community centers and there will be bookmobile service for the rest of us. She thought that the library's once-a-month poetry reading might temporarily relocate in a nearby café.

After regaling us with all the high tech improvements, it was revealed that the bond money will not, however, cover any of them. Equipment, furniture and fixtures and will be paid for by the Friends of the SFPL, a member of which, promptly gave us a pitch on donations. The Friends are in the middle of a \$16 million campaign to raise the needed money from private donations. For more information contact Mindy Linetzky, Branch Library Improvement Program at 557-4354.

—Karen Crommie



Users are leery that, once closed for renovation, the city's budget deficit will prevent the reopening of the Page St. library.

Expansion of Care Facility at Page and Masonic

It was hard to look at the array of middle eastern food laid out on a long table and listen to the handsome and worldly Dr. Nader Shabahangi and still manage to keep a critical eye on his presentation. Spurred on by a representative from the Mayor's Office of Housing, Joan McNamara, who had hand-picked Shabahangi as the person to give new life to the now defunct residential care facility on the corner of Page and Masonic, Shabahangi described the vision for his "Awakening Program" at a community meeting on February 5.

The former Page Street Guest house will still house about the same number of indigent mentally ill people, only now it will be funded with public money. It has already cost the taxpayers \$2.8 million for the purchase of the building and it will take an estimated \$8 million of public funding to renovate it. But it will reopen it as a newer, more "humanistic and caring" version of itself with electrical and plumbing upgrades



The wooden interior of the former Page Street Guesthouse will be replaced by concrete and steel.

and the old wood interior replaced by fire retardant concrete and steel.

Apart from my sniveling about the taxpayers burden, which, in light of the tab Washington is running these days, is a pittance, the project has much to commend it. Care for older, mentally ill, indigent people is something few can argue with—any one of us could end up there. Dr. Shabahangi has a fine reputation and I have no doubt that the clients will receive the best of care.

The problem arises from his request to change the Haight's zoning code to establish a Special Use District jurisdiction for that one building. That would allow them to apply for a further amendment of the code to create "special height control" to raise the building from 40 to 55 feet to construct an additional floor: a built-out penthouse containing offices with floor to ceiling glass windows. There is mention of a rooftop garden for clients, which would benefit the neighbors by keeping clients on the premises to smoke and schmooze. But the reality of that coming to pass is somewhat questionable at this point, both because of the square footage available after the construction of offices and a set back of 16 feet on the Page St. side and 12 feet on Masonic. In fact, the artist's rendering, projected in a slide, showed only greenery from window boxes perched on top of a four foot ledge.

When CVIA received the official notice from the Planning Department, the board members were singular in their response: We are opposed to "spot zoning," and, by the way, *who* is this group,



Dr. Nader Shabahangi, executive director of AgeSong presented his plans.



why do they need to violate the neighborhood building heights, and why haven't they contacted us for a presentation? In response, both the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association (HAIA) and CVIA contacted the planner assigned to the project (Sarah Vellve) and she agreed to postpone the hearing before the Planning Commission until the neighborhood had a chance to learn more about the project. In the meantime, CVIA was contacted by Richard Magary, from the Buena Vista Neighborhood Association, who told us that the building was being taken over by a nonprofit called AgeSong (this was the first we had heard of it) and asked that we, please, keep an open mind until we got all the facts.

Then Ted Loewenberg, president of HAIA, met with Dr. Shahangi and persuaded him to conduct a community meeting to lay out his plans. This meeting was held on February 5 at Urban High School.

The main impact on the neighborhood will be increased traffic, but no more than the care facility it is replacing. There will be deliveries on a weekly basis, mainly to stock the on-site kitchen. Yes, there will be more mentally ill people roaming our streets but they will, hopefully, be taking their meds and not sleeping on the street. If there are any difficulties with neighbors, AgeSong will accept responsibility. The staff will be expected to use Muni. No off-street parking will be provided.

The building's entirely new interior will contain 48 units of approximately 400 sq. ft., each with private bath. Counseling, meeting and recreational space will also be available on each floor. A new elevator, for ADA compliance, along with an open, external staircase on the west side of the building, are being added to comply with all current code requirements.

The structure was built in 1903 as the Scobie Hospital, designed by architect T. Paterson Ross and engineer A. W. Burgren. It was also later known as the Trinity hospital. While it has served in several housing and care roles over the years, the structure has been vacant for about a year.

The project is now scheduled to go to the Planning Commission on February 19. Questions can be addressed to Sara Vellve at 558-6263 or sara.vellve@sfgov.org. If you wish to write to the Planning

—Karen Crommie

Happenings at the Booksmith

An update from Christin Evans and Praveen Madan

Wrap-up of 2008

2008 was a busy year for all of us at The Booksmith. We began to re-energize our events program with some notable successes, including sell-out events with Neil Gaiman and Chuck Palahniuk at the Sundance Kabuki Theatre. In the store (1644 Haight St.) we hosted over 100 authors, including novelists Charles Bock and Richard Price, humorists Lynda Barry, Alison Bechdel and Dan Piraro, and local celebrities like Janis Bell. We also participated in a unique author event for Neal Stephenson at a first-class venue, The Grand Ballroom at The Regency Center in partnership with the Long Now Foundation. To top off this successful year, SF Weekly honored us with an award for "Best Author Appearances in San Francisco 2008."



Kim Addonizio, February 24.

Staff training and development has been a major area of focus for us since we bought the store, and this past year we sent several team members to training programs and trade conferences, including the annual Book Expo America in Los Angeles. Through continued participation in workshops and conferences such as these, we hope to continue to bring you excellent customer service and in-depth knowledge of books. You might also have noticed that the store redesign we have been talking about is finally underway. Look for more upgrades in 2009 that will improve your in-store experiences.

In order to increase our contribution to the community, we are starting to focus our development efforts on two local issues:



Veronica Chater, February 27.

literacy and homelessness. We are working actively with local neighborhood schools like Grattan Elementary and New Traditions to help raise money for their underfunded programs, while also fostering a love of books in future generations. Our aim with the homelessness issue is to help create a constructive community dialogue that will lead to positive action. The October event with Dr. Karen Staller from University of Michigan was a productive starting point for these efforts. We also worked on events and fund-raisers with WritersCorp, an organization that promotes writing and literature among the underserved youth population, Saint Ignatius Prep School, the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, Breast Cancer Action Network, and Haight Ashbury Psychological Services. We look forward to forming new community partnerships in 2009.

January was Local Authors Month

Locally-run independent bookstores are an important avenue for writers — especially new and emerging writers looking to find an audience for their work. The Booksmith takes this responsibility seriously, and to demonstrate our commitment to local writers, we declared January 2009 "Local Authors Month." We were joined by Writers' Grotto member Rodes Fishburne, Cole Valley's Katherine Powell Cohen, Stanford's Lawrence Lessig, and many others. If you missed any of these great events, visit our website to watch short videos featuring these local authors and another one featuring us interviewing Prof. Lawrence Lessig. And check back for future online videos that will address other aspects of literary life in the SF Bay Area.

Events Calendar

Highlights of upcoming events include comedian Eugene Mirman, February 20; local writer Kim Addonizio, February 24; memoirist Veronica Chater, Feb. 27; mystery writer Cara Black, March 5; and local debut author Minal Hajratwala, March 26. All events start at 7:30 p.m. Please visit www.booksmith.com for a complete listing.

On a personal note

After nearly a year of looking, Christin and I found a great house on Ashbury Street and we moved into our new place just before Thanksgiving. With the residential move you might say we are now 167 percent committed to the Haight/Cole Valley neighborhood. It's a joy to be able to walk to work every day and see familiar faces all around us. We look forward to working with

—Praveen Madan

Boulange de Cole Open Daily

It's only 10 a.m. at the Boulange de Cole and general manager Justin Ledbetter is pretty sure he has enough vanilla and chocolate chip madeleines for the mothers and pre-schoolers that stop by. But you never know. He says he sells more madeleines than any other "boulange" in the Bay Bread group of stores. But madeleines are just one of the more than 80 pastries and breads baked fresh every day.

Although the corner of Cole and Parnassus has housed bakeries for half a century, nothing is baked at the Cole Street location anymore. Ledbetter says the last operator to use the ovens at the Cole and Parnassus location was Tassajara Bread Company. Remember them? After Tassajara, there was Just Desserts and then the space was vacant for more than a year until Paul, the landlord, who is a



Regular customer Joan Crotty shares a joke with longtime employee Tim Wegman at Boulange de Cole.

baker himself, called Bay Bread founder Pascal Rigo and told him he had to give it a try. Rigo says, "Since the first minute we opened the door, the neighborhood has embraced us. I like to call it a little trip to France in the middle of Cole Valley." Arthur Combs, a regular at Boulange de Cole, would agree. He comes there every morning to do two hours of work and get up to date news from the other regulars. "We do everything but get our mail here," Combs says.



Artisan breads, from baguettes and boules to ficelles, fill the baskets.

But back to Ledbetter who is from a family of bakers in Maine. "I was eighteen when my grandfather sold our bakery. My great-great grandfather was the first baker and we were famous for our English muffins." After the closure, Ledbetter went into the army and was a cannon crew member with the 13 Bravo Field Artillery in Kuwait. "In August it was 150° at 10 in the morning. We were confined to our tents between 10 and 2." After he came home he partnered with a friend in a landscaping business that lasted about six months until, "We started butting heads." He then he took a rigorous 900 hour course in massage therapy and was licensed, but then, his uncle, Jamison Ledbetter, who was then the general manager of the Cole Street operation called him. Jamison was going to take a 2 year leave to raise his new born daughter. So, in October of 2007, Justin took over the day-to-day operation of Boulange de Cole. Gregarious and respectful, Justin is a bit camera shy and you will have to visit Boulange de Cole to see him in person.

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In addition to their remarkable assortment of pastries and breads, Boulange de Cole does quite a business in food preparation. Justin says tuna is a big thing here. "Both our Salade Niçoise and our Tuna Melt are very popular." My suggestion: Don't overlook the open



Just some of the more than 80 products baked fresh each day and sold at Boulange de Cole.

faced Smoked Salmon with cucumbers, shallots, crème fraiche and capers. I've a soft spot in my heart for that one.

Boulange de Cole has been a very good friend of CVIA both as a sponsor of the street cleaning program and the annual Cole Valley Street Fair. Although the Cole Street location was one of the first retail outlets, there are now eight others. The newest is in Novato with another opening soon at 685 Market Street.

—David Crommie

HAIA Honors Four Members of the Community

The Haight Ashbury Improvement Association (HAIA) awarded proclamations of service, signed by Mayor Gavin Newsom and the Board of Supervisors, to four individuals at their annual holiday party at the Waller Street home of Ginny and Dave Keller. Sami Sunchild, Christin Evans, Praveen Madan and Karen Crommie were all designated "Neighborhood Treasures."

HAIA president Ted Loewenberg read nomination testimonials written by Joan Boyd (Evans and Madan), Susan Strolis (Sunchild) and Ted, himself (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.

March 10 , April 14, May 12
Mark Your Calendars

Martin Snipper

1914 - 2008

Martin Snipper, a longtime champion of public art who brought a populist philosophy to the San Francisco Arts Commission as its top administrator for 13 years, died December 30 of congestive heart failure at his Haight-Ashbury home. He was 94 years old (and a distinguished member of CVIA).

Mr. Snipper was born Martin Cohen in New York City in 1914 and grew up in Los Angeles. During the Great Depression, he rode the rails back to New York with just \$5 in his pocket to attend the National Academy of Art. Mr. Snipper applied to the academy twice to ensure he would be accepted: once under his given name and once under his mother's maiden name. When he was accepted as Martin Snipper, he adopted the name permanently.

Mr. Snipper is best known in San Francisco for expanding the Arts Commission during his tenure as executive director from 1967 to 1980, and for helping shepherd the Neighborhood Arts Program into existence 40 years ago. Now known as the Community Arts and Education Program, it takes a grassroots approach to art — funding artists and organizations to work in community settings — and has inspired similar programs in cities across the country. He also ran the now-defunct Summer Pops concerts for 13 years, and the city's annual Arts Festival for 12 years before that. He secured federal money that allowed the Art Commission to embark on a number of projects that still exist today, such as neighborhood art festivals; community gardens, the program that licenses street artists; and the Arts Commission Gallery.

Excerpted from an obituary by Marisa Lagos (SF Chronicle 1-03-09)

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 cviast@aol.com.



Cole Values

We all appreciate the services and products provided by our Cole Valley merchants, who are such an important part of our neighborhood. And now, we like them even more because they are offering discounts. Here are a few special offerings that you might find interesting:

BAMBINO'S: Special dinners on Tuesdays \$13.50. Add wine at \$13.50 per bottle.

BURGERMEISTER: Daily specials at reduced prices.

COLE HARDWARE: Frequent shoppers 5% rebate; discount on your birthday equal to half your age. They also provide recycling of paint, batteries and fluorescent bulbs, check on limits.

COLE VALLEY PETS: Free treats for dogs.

EOS: Happy Hour Sun.-Thurs. from 5:30-7 p.m., \$5 wine, cocktails and finger foods at \$5-\$9.

LA BOULANGE DE COLE: With a card, buy 9 hot beverages and the 10th is free.

MAD KAT: Frequent shoppers discount card.

OCCASIONS: Frequent shoppers discount card.

PHARMACA: Seniors get a 10% discount on Sundays.

REAL FOODS: Seniors, over 65, get a 10% discount.

TULLY'S: Buy a \$30 card and they add 10% to the value. Buy a pound of coffee, get a free cup of coffee.



VIDEO NOOK: Monday and Thursday rentals 2 for 1.

ZAZIE: On Mondays, dogs are welcome in the patio. Tuesdays there is free corkage, bring your own wine.

If we missed any specials let us know, we will do an update as needed.

—Lena Emmerly

Most Unreported Local News in 2008: Embezzlement

Gregory H. Colley, age 48, was arraigned in San Francisco Superior Court on August 7, 2008. Colley, a financial consultant for the non-profit corporation, Music Concourse Community Partnership (MCCP), pled not guilty to charges he embezzled \$3.9 million from MCCP and committed money laundering and identity theft of two officers of the corporation. According to court documents, Colley transferred money from the corporation's bank account into his personal account. He was arrested in Salem, Oregon on August 1, 2008 and was held by Oregon police until his extradition to San Francisco. The defendant is currently in San Francisco County Jail awaiting trial. Judge Dekreon denied the defendant's request for a bail reduction at the time of arraignment so bail remains set at \$1.5 million dollars.

Plants Vandalized at Alvord Lake During Winter Months

The Alvord Lake Gardening Work Party gathered on the fourth Saturday of 2009. It was a drizzly morning but it wasn't the weather that dampened our spirits. A considerable amount of the vegetation had been vandalized. The flax that surrounds the pond has been considerably thinned. In some spots, bare patches give testimony to where plants had been literally ripped from their roots. "That's three years of growth right there," said Rec and Park gardener Joe Chmielewski, as he held out an uprooted flax plant. Other plants that had been lovingly installed a few months before were missing. The Birds of Paradise were gone.



Flax surrounding lake.



Caught red-handed.

Chmielewski explained, "Some of the plants ripped out from around Alvord Lake were the *cineraria*, which is a bright blooming plant you can see at the corner of JFK and Stanyan. All of that disappeared, pulled out by the roots. The poor violas were torn out of the ground, but some remain. The ferns were ripped out by the roots, or the fronds were cut at the base. Some of the Douglas iris was affected. The sedges were also ripped out by the roots. The *Berginia*



Vandal art?

and *Liriope* were torn out of the ground. Besides the damage done by plant removal, trampling around the rim of the lake causes soil compaction and beats down artificial trails, which just encourages more intrusion by visitors. We'll have to restore a buffer around the edge of the lake again and redefine small paths that people can use to get to the lake edge, otherwise it's going to be hard to get anything to grow again."



Felled tree in background that was a venue for mischief making was removed last week after complaints to Rec and Parks' new manager Jared Blumenfeld.

The word around the pond is that it only took two individuals to do this damage. One fellow is said to periodically rampage through the area possibly uprooting things because of some drug induced rationale. Another person cuts the flax to weave into floral shapes. On my way to the park that morning, I had spotted a fellow walking

down Haight Street with cut flax and woven work in his hand. When I quizzed him about where he got his materials, he simply stated "the pond right inside Golden Gate Park." As talented as this fellow may be, it is a shame that he is not enterprising enough to

find a legitimate source for his craft. Little by little, he is removing what should remain for all to enjoy.

Another area that we had lovingly created and tended disappeared almost completely one night when a couple and their dogs decided to turn it into a campsite.

It is heartbreaking that it takes only a few individuals and a small amount of time to completely undo months of labor and years of growth. Yet the spirit of the volunteers has remained unbroken as we fell to our knees in order to weed around the surviving growth looking forward to next month when hopefully we will try again and plant some more.

—Susan Strolis, Alvord Lake Volunteer

Ed. Note: After reading this article, Chmielewski wrote to Strolis saying, "Putting plants at the Stanyan/Haight entrance is a lot like building castles in the sand, so try not to be too attached to the results. Having said that, I have plans for next month's gardening work party that include planting a variety of drought-tolerant and tough plants that put up with a lot of abuse and still look good. We'll be looking at adding more lavender, rosemary and sages. I want to try lobelias again, and lets try more native plants and bunch grasses for ground covers and buffer zones. We'll try a new plant from Texas, and keep the theme tough, durable plants that are drought tolerant but induce biodiversity. Lofty goals, simple applications."

A Rare Glimpse of Reality From Someone Who Knows

Longtime Golden Gate Park volunteer Rob Bakewell has given CVIA permission to reprint a letter he wrote to Sue Vaughan of the Eric Mar for Supervisor Campaign.

Dear Sue:

Yes, Eric (Mar) has shown willingness to listen and gain fresh perspective. I am cautious, however, when I hear statements about "willing to listen to both sides" in regards to the runaway and vagrant youth issue.

A 17 year old meth-addicted runaway and a 25 year old alcoholic, street beggar and petty thief can tell you what they think they need, however, I will tell you that beyond requesting a safe place to sleep, free food, and free drugs, they really depend on society setting firm limits and providing a coherent social service intervention.

We have suffered from the recent history of "advocates" for these people standing for naive and wrongheaded notions in regard to this public health problem. I know well, having attended many meetings with these advocates, many of whom seem to know little about the day to day situation on the ground in Golden Gate Park (a demeaning and dangerous feral existence) and have the "victim" philosophy so ingrained that they are unable to discuss this issue on a realistic basis. The refusal to look at the need for non-violent coercion and tough love measures does not serve their constituency.

I have no professional interest or ideology in dealing with this issue, only many hours of on the ground interactions and many hours spent in community discussion meetings with all parties present.

It seems to me that a cohesive and civil society can get off the ideological soapbox and come up with practical and proven practices to deal with this issue.

One of the elements needed is political leadership that listens and then acts to move and implement effective policy.

Robert Bakewell
Steward for Oak Woodlands
Golden Gate Park

CVIA Board Actions

The following is a summary of what took place at the CVIA board meetings over the last five 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.

October

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from board representatives to the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, Kezar Stadium Advisory, MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee, Mt. Sutro Stewards and the Alvord Lake gardening work party.

- Treasurer Joan Downey reported a balance in CVIA's account of \$1,306.61.

- Reviewed Cole Valley Fair: lessons learned, vendor feedback, community comments, accounting. Particularly annoying were those who did not buy booths who proceeded to sell goods or services within the fair boundaries. Fair organizer Joan Downey reported that fair profits were \$9,000, all of which will remain in the Fair's bank account for distribution of grants to neighborhood charities; to CleanScapes to make up the difference between annual cost and that money contributed by Cole Valley Merchants; and seed money for the 2009 fair. Downey also said that she had gotten a commitment from artist Paul Madonna to design next year's fair poster (and, possibly, t-shirt); that 19 people signed up as new members; and recommended we stick with the same (third) weekend for the 2009 fair, which will be September 20. Some suggestions for improvement were 1) having signs identifying the names of the performers or groups; 2) eliminating food vendors who would not fully comply with police or health department rules 3) repositioning crowd-drawing groups like Pixie Kitchen at the intersection to avoid blocking access to nearby vendors, at least during the last hour of the fair, when many sales are made.

- Discussed plans for volunteering time and resources to the upcoming District 5 candidate forum (Oct. 16) being organized by Richard Magary of BVNA. Board members David and Karen Crommie volunteered to make table signs and work that night.

- Discussed setting up a CVIA message board at the Facebook website, as some members have suggested. After weighing pros and cons decided against it at this time.

- Agreed to allocate money from the Cole Valley Fair account to cover the 200 extra issues of the CVIA News containing fair programs distributed free at the fair.

- Agreed to give an honorarium of \$100 to Tree Frog Treks, the environmental education program, who gave neighborhood children the opportunity to handle and learn about a variety of snakes and small amphibians at the fair.

- Board congratulated Karen Crommie on the award conferred by San Francisco Beautiful to the Alvord Lake Gardening Work Party. Award will be given on Oct. 24 at a dinner at the Hotel Mark Hopkins.

- Agreed to renew CVIA's membership to Walk SF.

- Discussed possible conflict between owners of homes flanking the proposed entrance to Mt. Sutro's Woodland Canyon footpath before formally signing on to support the clearing. CVIA board are unanimous in their support but feel the homeowners should be met with first.

- Downey asked members to bring ideas for neighborhood grants to November meeting.

November

- Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. because of the impending national election results. Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from board representatives to the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, Kezar Stadium Advisory, MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee, Mt. Sutro Stewards and the Alvord Lake gardening work party. Welcomed Craig Dawson of Mount Sutro Stewards.

- Treasurer Joan Downey reported a balance of \$1,258 in CVIA's account and \$9,000 in the account of the Cole Valley Fair.

- Lena Emmery reported that at the last meeting of the Kezar Stadium advisory committee, members discussed the lack of attendance at this summer's children's event. Additionally the track replacement has been put on hold; Larry Burgheimer has been voted the new secretary; chair is still to be determined.

- Joan Downey confirmed that surplus Cole Valley Fair t-shirts will be donated to a charity in Peru to which she has access.

- It came to our attention that the yellow signs that businesses place in their windows permitting police to roust sleepers must be renewed every six months. At the next meeting (January) we will discuss what we can do to lengthen the legal duration of the posting so that merchants do not have to take a time off to renew the permit at either Park Police Station or 850 Bryant.

- Discussed design of Alpha Market remodel. Although some felt it was contrary to neighborhood character, most felt it was a big improvement, especially since it incorporated the clearstory windows of the prior store.

- Joan Downey discussed the funding of street cleaning for 2009, especially the problem of non-participating Cole Valley merchants. CVIA's benefactor, who has been making up the difference between the cost of service (\$1,000 per month) and the amount of merchant contributions (\$1.00 per day per business), is cooling to the idea of continuing his support which was only supposed to be "seed money" to get the project off the ground until the merchants picked up the cost.

- Joan suggested a meeting with new Rec Park General Manager Jared Blumenfeld on the following topics: Skateboard park, recycling center, condition of track in Kezar Stadium, noise of Sharon Meadow events, park camping, lane widening over Alvord Lake bridge (could go back to four?)

- Craig Dawson (Mt. Sutro Stewards) gave an update on the restoration of the Stanyan segment of the Historic Trail that runs up through Woodland Canyon into the UCSF Mt. Sutro Open Space. He recently met with Rec and Park's Natural Areas Program Director Lisa Wayne, Meredith Thomas from the Neighborhood Parks Council, Peter Brastow from Nature in the City, Jake Sigg, and other advocates working to expand the network of trails from Sutro Forest through the Interior Greenbelt. Immediate neighbors, who would see a new trailhead opening up on their street are in the process of being contacted and invited to attend a presentation detailing the project. Wayne told him that the preliminary work from the Rec Park side will need to include a survey of hazardous trees, which is necessary before the trail clearing/restoration process can become an official "project." In the meantime, the Neighborhood Park Council offered their considerable clout to this process, which included a number of suggestions on implementation of the plan. Feedback from the previous public meeting with Stanyan Street residents and considerable comments shared at the Cole Valley Fair,

revealed the main concern to be security: whom to call when there are safety issues (overnight sleeping, campfires, peeping toms). At a subsequent meeting with Park Patrol Supervisor Marcus Santiago and the UCSF Police, the latter assured Dawson that they would respond to calls for assistance within Suro Forest including the Rec Park Interior Greenbelt. Dawson also said he has continued to advocate for the building of a community center at Aldea Student Family Housing, primarily for its residents, but also for a classroom/meeting location for the Mt. Suro Stewards enabling them to offer lessons on the preservation of natural areas, native plants, and environmental sustainability. A meeting will take place at UCSF on Wednesday, November 19 to discuss the Community Center and Aldea Housing plans with the neighborhood.

- Discussed the possible impact of an appeal by HANC's to Planning Commission approval of the 690 Stanyan St. project.

- Discussed the possibility of a Farmers market in section near HANC recycling center.

- Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 to watch the election results.

January

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from board representatives to the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, Kezar Stadium Advisory, MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee, Mt. Suro Stewards and the Alvord Lake gardening work party.

- Treasurer Joan Downey reported \$1,231 in CVIA's account, while the Cole Valley Fair has a balance of \$15,513. She reviewed the profit and loss statements both from the last quarter and the entire year of 2008. Downey announced with sadness the death of Steve Desdier, CVIA's accountant. Bookkeeping will return to "Quicken" Software. CVIA donated \$3,700 to Grattan elementary school.

- Douglas Hall reported on the fire potential in Suro Forest. It has been designated one of 11 open space areas in SF with "moderate fire hazard severity zones." He also described plans for a community center in a building part of Aldea Student Housing.

- In Joan's absence (1/14-2/7). Karen Crommie will collect CVIA mail and Amy Blakeley will maintain website.

- Downey reported that, to this date (1/5/09), only 7 Cole Valley merchants have contributed to the 2009 cleaning of the Cole Street corridor. A minimum of 13 (a majority of merchants) is needed to participate. The options were as follows: 1) Allocate all of Fair proceeds to street cleaning 2) eliminate the program completely because of lack of merchant interest 3) continue one more year and asking CVIA's anonymous benefactor to increase his contribution. Board voted to continue to hold back the checks of the contributing merchants and pay for January and February out of the CVIA treasury (\$2,000). If the required number of merchants do not contribute by Feb. 5, the checks will be returned and the contract with CleanScapes will be discontinued. A letter will be sent to all merchants expressing this.

- Chuck Canepa reported on his conversation with the Planning Department's quadrant supervisor for the Haight Ashbury, asking why the community was not notified about the structural changes in the Alpha Market building at Cole and Parnassus. The planner admitted that it had been mistakenly approved "over the counter." Community notices were not sent out and the project should have been subject to review for neighborhood character, etc. Although the CVIA board was generally pleased with the improvements made by the owner, it felt that a dubious precedent had been set which was incongruous with the restrictions placed on others in the neighborhood whose plans for renovation have been held to ridged standards.

- Downey reported on a visit to Judge Alpert's Drug Court. She was impressed and urged others to attend (Mon.-Thurs., 2:00 p.m.)

- David Crommie agreed to interview managers of Boulange de Cole for the next newsletter.

February

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from board representatives to the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods, Kezar Stadium Advisory, MTA citizens advisory committee, UCSF citizens advisory committee, Mt. Suro Stewards and the Alvord Lake gardening work party. Board welcomed member Cole Roberts and Coco-luxe owners Stephanie Marcon and Stan Bradbury.

- Treasurer's report was postponed because of the absence of Joan Downey

- Karen Crommie reported on Planning Director John Rahaim's appearance at the Coalition for SF Neighborhoods. Issues discussed: Higher density and reduced parking requirements going forward; changes in Design Review procedure, eliminating commission review; 2009 Housing Element time table; inclusion of a preponderance of nonprofits and developers in the department's "neighborhood notification list."

- Crommie reported on a community presentation by the SF Public Library on the upgrades planned for the Park Branch and its closure from Summer '09 to Fall '10. She suggested a contribution to the Friends of the SFPL earmarked for Park Branch computers, etc., which was tabled until next meeting.

- Cole Roberts reported on the possible one-time-only moratorium on the condo lottery, permitting all those currently holding lottery tickets to begin conversion. This would provide extra money to offset the city's coming fiscal year's deficit. Roberts said that the extra fee must be high enough to be meaningful, but low enough to be widely accessible. He suggested a factor of 1.5 to 2 times the current fee or alternatively an additional \$2,500 per unit. He urged attendance at a City Hall rally on February 4.

- Coco-luxe owners Stephanie Marcon and Stan Bradbury described their attempt to attain a Type 02 liquor license that would enable them to stage wine and chocolate pairings in their Haight St. store. No free wine would be dispensed and only glasses of wine from their own winery (122° West) could be sold on the premises. The board voted to support them at the Board of Appeals on February 11.

- David Crommie reported on the rezoning request of AgeSong for their property at 1500 Page St. which includes the construction of an additional floor, raising the building height from 40 ft. to 55 ft. Board members were generally against it, but will wait until the project sponsor's community presentation on February 5.

- Discussed a new task force dealing with the future of Stanyan Street being organized by HANC. Cole Roberts (environmental engineer) volunteered to attend the meetings when he was in town.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

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

Thoughts on Last Election

Cole Valley resident Michael Sullivan is founder of Plan C, a city-wide organization of moderates that has gained prominence over the last five years. CVIA has supported it since its founding. Below are excerpts from his end-of-the year letter to Plan C members.

Of the ballot propositions, there were two that we thought were key. These were Prop. B, Chris Daly’s \$2.7 billion “set-aside” for low income housing, and Prop. H, the public power initiative. Prop. H went down by a whopping 60-40 vote. Voters apparently agreed, yet again, that spending billions on public power isn’t a priority. Plan C did a ballot argument against Prop. H, and helped develop and distribute other messaging against the measure. Public power seems to go on the ballot every two or three years. We hope that the huge margin of victory for the No on H campaign will discourage public power efforts for the foreseeable future so that the city can try to address real problems.

Prop. B’s failure was one of the big surprises of the local election, and one of the most welcome. Almost every political expert in the city expected Prop. B to pass, and despite the fact that we wrote a ballot argument against Prop. B, we also expected it to pass. The San Francisco Association of Realtors put out some effective mail pieces late in the election cycle that highlighted the danger of Prop. B’s set-aside in this time of fiscal crisis, and we have to thank them, in particular, for their leadership in defeating Prop. B.

The news was also good in the Board of Education race, where Rachel Norton, a fantastic first-time candidate, and Jill Wynns, a veteran of the Board of Education, came from behind to win, as a result of absentee ballots counted in the two weeks after election day. On the Board of Supervisors races, the news wasn’t good. Moderate candidates lost in each of the three key districts that we focused on — Districts 1, 3 and 11.

In District 3, Joe Alioto came in second by a surprisingly wide margin to David Chiu, and in District 11, Ahsha Safai came close, but ran second to John Avalos. In District 1, the loss was particularly disappointing, as Sue Lee lost to Eric Mar by just 350 votes — 50.5 percent to 49.5 percent.

What happened? A few key things stand out. First, San Francisco’s far left “hijacked” the Democratic party’s County Central Committee in the June election. At the last minute for candidates to apply, the left got several sitting Supervisors and Board of Education members with high name-recognition to run for the obscure “DCCC” — usually a stepping stone to high office, not the other way around.

Jake McGoldrick, Aaron Peskin, Chris Daly and Eric Mar all ran (unexpectedly) and won, throwing control of the DCCC to the progressive machine. Moderates were caught off guard. Following this “coup,” not surprisingly the DCCC endorsed down the line for “progressive” candidates for supervisor — Mar in District 1, Chiu in District 3, and Avalos in District 11.

Control of the Democratic party “slate card” endorsements was especially important this year, with the huge turnout for Obama and Democrats in general. In the weekend before the election, thousands of Democratic Party door hangers flooded San Francisco, featuring

images of Barack Obama juxtaposed with those of Chiu, Avalos and Mar. This “perfect storm” swamped the moderate campaigns, although in the weeks leading up to election day polls showed centrist District 1, 3, and 11 candidates either leading or in a dead heat.

Moderates also were outgunned in so-called “field” operations. There were many more volunteers on election day for the Mar, Chiu and Avalos campaigns than for their centrist opponents. This is a chronic problem for centrist candidates in San Francisco. If we want different results in the future, we are going to have to address this imbalance. Although there were disappointments, there is plenty of evidence — underscored by the initiative and school board votes — that San Francisco voters are a pragmatic lot. Most of us just want city leaders to focus on clean streets and parks, better schools, an efficient Muni and other quality of life improvements, rather than utopian ideologies.



Eric Mar, D-1

—Michael Sullivan

Mt. Sutro Volunteers Push On

What a fantastic way to kick off the year on Mt. Sutro. The Stewards and over 40 volunteers from One Brick, SF Urban Riders and the neighboring communities expended much energy and contributed another 150-plus hours of labor to the Open Space habitat restoration and trail programs. The habitat crew under the supervision of Jake



Peterandrakristin photo

Sigg and Rob Bakewell worked at numerous sites along the Historic Trail and continued to push back the invasive weeds, ivy and black-berry. My Sunday tour of the sites where the work took place left me amazed at how much was accomplished in a few short hours.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the hill, the trail crew under the supervision of Dan Schneider and Dwayne McDaniel took charge of a work in progress that was started last October. The technical and challenging section of trail just below the Fairy Gates Trail near Medical Center Way is being realigned for safety and to meet the standards established for the Mt. Sutro trail network. A huge amount of excavation was required for the full bench construction on the steep hillside. Not to make things any easier the volunteers struck rock in the one remaining switchback corner needed for completion. The work was a huge success and the new alignment is now open. Some finishing work and replanting will take place next month before the Stewards move on to their next site. A huge thank you to all the One Brick, SF Urban Riders and community volunteers who participated on Saturday.

—Craig Dawson
Mt. Sutro Stewards

Ed. Note: UCSF, Mt. Sutro Volunteers, Nature in the City and the California Native Plant Society are collaborating to restore and rejuvenate the trails of Mt. Sutro. They hope to build support to



John Avalos, D-11



David Chiu, D-3



David Campos, D-9

connect the University's land and the adjacent Interior Greenbelt, managed by SF Rec and Park's Natural Areas Program, into one contiguous parkland to serve the community as an oasis of serenity and biodiversity, welcoming anyone in need of peace, fresh air and a little exercise. For the volunteer calendar, go to www.natureinthecity.org/mtsutro.php.

First Bike Signal in Haight

Have you been stymied by a strange little bicycle symbol mounted on the signal light at the Fell and Masonic intersection? Well, get used to it. In late September, the Haight received San Francisco's first bicycle traffic signal. The new signal was installed at this particular intersection to give bicyclists a dedicated signal phase to cross Masonic Avenue on the heavily used Panhandle bike path.

While automobiles intending to turn left onto Masonic from Fell are stopped at the traffic signal, a bicycle symbol in the familiar green, yellow and red phases indicates when a bicyclist can cross Masonic. The pedestrian signal continues to use the white walking figure and the orange hand to direct pedestrian traffic.

Automobiles turning left from westbound Fell onto southbound Masonic may now do so only with a green arrow. The arrow will be red when bicyclists and pedestrians are crossing Masonic. Before the installation of the new signal, automobiles made left turns from westbound Fell to southbound Masonic as gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle traffic allowed.

"The bicycle community is pleased to see the first bicycle signal in San Francisco, but it should not be the last one," said Andy Thornley, program manager for the San Francisco Bike Coalition, which advocated for the improvement, along with the Fix Masonic Coalition, Walk San Francisco and other community groups. "We



The white car (above) caught in the intersection, underscores the steep learning curve for those making left turns onto Masonic from Fell Street after installation of the city's first bicycle right-of-way signal.

must do everything we can to ensure the safety of bicyclists on our busy streets," he added.

During the five-year period from March 2003 through February 2008 there were 15 reported collisions involving a vehicle making a left turn from westbound Fell Street to southbound Masonic Avenue and a bicycle crossing Masonic Avenue. There were three reported collisions involving a vehicle turning left from westbound Fell Street and a pedestrian crossing Masonic Avenue.

The SF Municipal Transit Agency (SFMTA) and the City Attorney went to court in April 2008 to seek an exception to the injunction that has prohibited all physical changes to the public

space involving bicycles since June 2006 (pending completion of an Environmental Impact Report, now expected in 2009). The court granted the request in May 2008 and the SFMTA Board of Directors approved the design of the new signal phasing and related lane changes in August 2008.

Established by voter proposition in 1999, the SFMTA, a department of the City and County of San Francisco, oversees both the Municipal Railway (Muni) and the Department of Parking and Traffic (DPT). With five modes of transit, Muni has approximately 700,000 passenger boardings each day. Over 35,000 extra vehicles enter San Francisco on any given business day, and rely on DPT to keep the flow of cars, transit vehicles, delivery trucks, pedestrians, and bicycles moving smoothly through the streets.

"This new bicycle signal on the much-loved Panhandle path demonstrates San Francisco's commitment to providing safe, attractive transportation alternatives to the private automobile," said Mayor Gavin Newsom.

—Karen Crommie

Frances Hagen

May 19, 1911 - October 15, 2008

Over the years, CVIA News has run several interviews with one of its founding members, Frances Hagen. She was a special person, not only because of her intelligence and charm but for the fact that she had spent all 97 years in the same house on Shrader Street, between Haight and Page. Her father, a civil engineer for the city, who received an award for his work on the Twin Peaks Tunnel, bought the house for \$7,000 in 1912. "My father thought of selling this house once when I was a child," she said, "but I'm glad he didn't, I love this place."

In 2003, she told CVIA's Christopher Read that she could remember a Haight Street with bakeries, candy stores, meat markets, several millineries, a Woolworths, a Rexall drug store and even a corset shop. She never missed a movie at the old Haight Theatre where the kiddie matinee often began with a live stage act, sometimes an opera singer. In later years, Frances met her husband, Raymond Hagen, on the tennis courts in Golden Gate Park.

In her final years her greatest pleasure was reading. She was a faithful customer of the Booksmith and owned a rare collection of its proprietary bookmarks issued over the years. Toward the end, when she couldn't get out easily, Booksmith co-owner Praveen Madan would hand deliver the books she requested. "She was fond of books by Mary Higgins Clark," said Madan. Frances was a lovely lady who was an irreplaceable part of our neighborhood's history and will be missed greatly.

Tour Busses Frequenting Buena Vista East Intersection

Tour busses have been making their way to a "view stop" at the top of the Duboce Avenue hill. Says resident John Hooper, "They park at the intersection of Duboce and Buena Vista East, disgorging tourists who fan out to take pictures, effectively blocking the intersection in all directions. It creates a potentially dangerous situation for obvious reasons. Personally, as a resident of Buena Vista Ave East,



Neighbors report that tour busses are disgorging passengers to take photos at the intersection of Duboce and Buena Vista East.

I don't think tour busses on this winding and steep street are a good fit. Moreover, we are intent on making this a more pedestrian friendly neighborhood and these tour busses are antithetical to an atmosphere we cherish."

Longtime Buena Vista activist Richard Magary said, "How they get up here is a mystery to me given the tight S-crook on Buena Vista West at Waller, and the narrow, very steep approaches from Central, Frederick and other local streets,-but they do.

"The Municipal Transit Agency's map of the city's prohibited tour bus routes does not show the streets around Buena Vista Park, so tour operators may not be violating any regulations by driving through the neighborhood. However, SFPD and the Parking and Traffic Department confirm that illegal stopping, parking and blocking the intersection are violations, and can be cited. Neighbors who see any violations are urged to call SFPD's non-emergency dispatch line at 553-0123.

Magary added, "Fortunately, there is a related opportunity to organize Buena Vista neighbors on this issue. The Department of Parking and Traffic has begun a Traffic Calming study of the area around Roosevelt Way and Buena Vista East/West. Following a community meeting attended by more than 50 neighbors in December, several are participating in a series of workshops in the weeks ahead to identify specific issues and potential solutions. SFMTA Traffic Engineer Antonio Piccagli is coordinating the effort." Contact him with specific suggestions at Antonio.Piccagli@SFMTA.com or 701-4481. For more information contact Richard Magary of the Buena Vista Neighborhood Association (BVNA) at Info@BVNASF.com or call 431-2359.

No, You Did Not Miss Your Winter Issue

Because the editor and production staff of CVIA News were completely exhausted after publishing the special Cole Valley Fair issue with its special pull out Fair Program, they did not publish a separate Winter edition. Hence this is a double sized, combined Winter/Spring issue. We apologize for our frailties.

Muni Changes Get Final OK. Say Goodbye to the 7 Haight

After months of meetings and analyses, the first comprehensive review of Muni service in a generation has been approved by the SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA). The bad news is that the 7-Haight is going to be replaced by the 6 Parnassus, effectively eliminating service to Ashbury Heights. The good news is that this change, along with dozens of others affecting neighborhoods throughout the city will provide better general overall Muni service.

SFMTA director Nathaniel Ford says, "The package of recommendations could result in changing nearly half of Muni service as we know it today to more effectively meet customer needs and market demand. The recommendations made by the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) are projected to increase the number of daily



Muni's #6 Parnassus will switch its route from Frederick Street to Haight Street replacing the #7 line.

boardings on Muni by 70,000, or 10 percent, by 2015, in large part by adding capacity and frequency to the busiest rail lines and bus routes. Most notably, the TEP changes should result in a shorter wait for at least 75 percent of peak period customers and 50 percent of midday customers. It also will make San Francisco greener by eliminating 60,000 miles of auto trips each day.

"You can expect service changes as early as July 2009. In the meantime, pilot projects could be launched before that. Moreover, during the transition from planning to implementation, we will continue to improve Muni service through reliability initiatives and travel time improvements."

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 Summer edition should be sent before May 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.

EditorKaren Crommie
ProductionDavid Crommie
Editorial AssistanceJoan Downey

Volunteer Gardeners Honored by San Francisco Beautiful

Members of the Alvard Lake Gardening Work Party were honored at a gala dinner at the Mark Hopkins Hotel on October 24. San Francisco Beautiful executive director Leigh Baughman read the following tribute:

“Created in 1801, the lake was named Stanyan Meadows Lakelet and was supposed to serve as a tranquil invitation to park visitors. In recent years, however, the lake had become desolate, dangerous and unapproachable. In 2005, Park Station Police Captain John Ehrlich formed the Alvard Lake Task Force bringing together police, social service providers and neighbors to address drug use and overnight



Alvard Lake Gardening Work Party volunteers with the SF Beautiful Award. L-R: Carolyn McKenna, Karen Crommie, Brendan McKenna, Golden Gate Park Manager Gloria Koch-Gonzalez, and Susan Strolis.

camping in this critical entrance to the park and establish a community presence there.”

The Gardening Party is a spin-off from this group. Karen Crommie, a neighborhood resident and board member of the Cole Valley Improvement Association, organized the group and has kept it going even though the Alvard Lake Task Force has been dissolved.

Karen Crommie was born and raised in the neighborhood and has fond memories of strolling past the lake and under the Alvard Bridge with its curious stalactites, into the park as a child. She moved back to the area 22 years ago and was dismayed to see what had happened to this once idyllic entrance. Karen started the Gardening Work Party with a core group of volunteers consisting of Susan Strolis, Brendan and Carolyn McKenna, Ruth Wheeler, Joan Boyd and Rob Bakewell. Working with city gardener Joe Chmielewski, Golden Gate Park Manager Gloria Koch-Gonzalez and an ever-changing cast of community volunteers, the Gardening Party has led the charge to revitalize the lake and nearby entrance.

When the group started, there was no water in the lake because of a broken pump. There was a resident group of overnight campers and foliage was sparse. Now the water has been restored and new plantings have begun to take hold. As they stroll by Alvard Lake with its profuse foliage, greeted by recently-returned mallard ducks and the smell of lavender, sage and rosemary, it is clear to both neighbors and tourists that Golden Gate Park’s eastern entrance has once again become the welcoming gateway of its design.

—Naomi Lempert Lopez
SF Beautiful Board of Directors

What to Do About Graffiti

You can stop graffiti from spreading by removing it immediately. Experience shows that if you do this repeatedly, taggers eventually go away. Keep a can of matching paint and graffiti remover on hand.

If it persists photograph the graffiti before you remove it and file a police report by going to www.sfgov.org/site/police_index.asp. Click on “online report”, then on the blue “vandalism/graffiti”



SF Police keep photographic records of “tags” which help them identify vandals. If caught, they are subject to 96 hours of community service.

text link at the bottom of the web page. Provide all the information requested. Your case will be reviewed and a SFPD case number will be e-mailed to you.

After you receive the case number, email the photos along with the case number to, sfpd_graffiti_unit@pacbell.net. If you wish to file a police report but do not have a computer, go to your local police station to file a report.

Make sure you take along the photos so the officer can book them as evidence. Report graffiti anywhere in the city by calling 311 or going to 28clean@sfdpw.org.

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.

CVIA Officers

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

Post scripts

Cole Valley Fair organizer Joan Downey reports that San Francisco artist Paul Madonna (All Over Coffee) has agreed to design a poster



for the 2009 Cole Valley Fair, which is scheduled for September 20. She met Madonna through The Booksmith owners Praveen Madan and Christin Evans, who had invited him to their booth at last year's Fair. His drawings and enigmatic fragments of dialogue are uniquely San Francisco. (Let's hope it will also work on a t-shirt.)

Petra Trimmel wrote: "The young guys who camped out at the Muni park on Carl throughout the summer were gone for about 6 weeks in September and October, but are now back. Actually, they have camped out regularly again for the last two weeks. There tends to be the usual three that we saw throughout the summer, and once in a while they are joined by a middle-aged guy, a regular who usually sleeps in the entrances to the shops on Cole Street. Tonight, again, they are very loud, screaming, singing, drinking beer, smoking. An hour ago I asked them to move their conversations to somewhere else, as I can hear every single word they say, they mocked me and continued on just as noisy. The older guy is actually coaching the



young guys on what to say if the police comes . . . but by now they are discussing whether Bin Laden is still alive. . . could be interesting, if I didn't have to get up at 5 a.m. to go to work."

It appears that the Planning Department might have put a hold on the sign Cole Valley's Abe Saba planned to install above the newly remodeled Alpha Market. It may be because of an inquiry made by a neighbor who was surprised that there was no neighborhood notification of such a major change of building design. Looking for a procedural way to make sure that this would not happen again, he asked the planning coordinator for this quadrant of the city to look into it. She came back with an admission that the department had dropped the ball and that the renovation plans had been "approved over the counter." Now there's a suspicion that the Department is taking a VERY close look at the sign.



Lucien Sonder, publications coordinator for the Neighborhood Parks Council wants us to pass the word that the District 5 Community Open Space Workshop that will be hosted by Community Partners

United, on February 18th from 6:30-8:30 PM at the Ella Hill Hutch Community Center (1050 McAllister Street.)

Dave McLean, owner of our neighborhood brew pub Magnolia said a sad farewell to Chef Brandon Jew. But his departure allowed sous chef Ronnie New to move up a notch. Ronnie is originally from New Orleans and came to San Francisco about four years ago to attend the California Culinary Academy. He has cooked at Le Petite



Robert, Bar Crudo, and Range before joining Magnolia earlier this year. He's a firm believer in farm-to-table cooking and local sourcing but, says McLean, don't be surprised to see some of his hometown roots appear now and again.

If you know someone who would like a summer job at Rec and Park's Camp Mather (near Yosemite), let them know they are looking for a variety of positions from life guard and cabin cleaners to assistant cooks. Jobs pay from \$10.50 to \$17.81 per hour with free room and board. Forty-hour weeks. Applications are due March 6. For more information go to www.campmather.com or e-mail the camp manager at claudiareinhart@sfgov.org.

The New York Times did a long article in its January 9 issue on the Haight Ashbury. Written by someone with the unfortunate name of Dan White, it is the most complete and intelligent travel piece I've seen on the neighborhood. Even the down side was accurately described. "Vagrants and panhandlers sat on the sidewalks, using their dogs as pillows or making peace signs on the sidewalk out of pennies. The bongos and beggars remain, but Haight-Ashbury, also known as the Upper Haight, is stepping out of its own shadow." This is followed by 1750 words of positive and practical information. Before your next out-of-town visitors arrive, google NYT Haight Ashbury and the article will come right up.

—Karen Crommie



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.

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 Newsom...** **554-6141**
 City Hall - Room 200
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
 S.F., CA 94102
- Chief of Police Heather Fong****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

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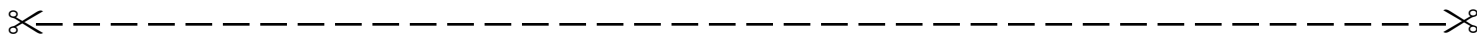
<i>District</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Fax</i>
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2. Michela Alioto-Pier Michela.Alioto@sfgov.org	554-7752	554-7483
3. David Chiu, Board President David.Chiu@sfgov.org	554-7450	554-7454
4. Carmen Chu Carmen.Chu@sfgov.org	554-7460	554-7432
5. Ross Mirkarimi Ross.Mirkarimi@sfgov.org	554-7630	554-7634
6. Chris Daly Chris.Daly@sfgov.org	554-7970	554-7974
7. Sean Elsbernd Sean.Elsbernd@sfgov.org	554-6516	554-6546
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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 the applicable tax law.