

CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XXI

SERVING ALL RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

SPRING 2008

Hamilton Methodist Church Closes its Doors. Well, Almost

On a Saturday morning, January 19, with the temperature in the high forties, a clutch of neighbors stood in front of Hamilton Methodist Church and listened to Reverend Gary Barbaree say: "Last Sunday night the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church declared the church at 1525 Waller Street 'abandoned,' and closed it down. It exists no longer. There will be no worship: the doors are locked."

Only three months ago, we were concerned with the church's attempt to lease space to the Haight Youth Alliance who were going



Church elders found that Hamilton had lost authority over its occupants.

to move their drop-in program, including needle distribution, into the ground floor space vacated by the Hamilton Family shelter almost two years ago. There were neighbor complaints about the carpet-bagging congregation of Tongan Methodists whose board members had slowly but surely attained near absolute authority over what went on in the church and its ancillary buildings. There were fiduciary irregularities, a noisy three-week (24 hour-a-day) mourning ritual, neglect of the building, little organization to increase neighborhood church membership and overnight sleeping. In short, things had gotten out of hand. But they were not the only problem. There were continued neighborhood demands for changes in the takeover of the sidewalk

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Proposed Skateboard Park Stirs Up Controversy

There's a high octane debate over the recent approval of a feasibility study to build a skateboard park on the end of Waller Street between Stanyan and Kezar Drive (now closed to traffic). In the last version of the Golden Gate Park Master Plan, that area of Waller St. was specifically designated for "hard-surface sports." Most of us thought in terms of basketball or in-line skating, but Rec and Park in its wisdom decided that skateboarding is what was needed.



Cole Valley neighbors say it came from out of the blue: no notification, no public hearings and no environmental impact report and have been shooting pro and con volleys across the internet, mostly on HAI A's Yahoo forum. Here are a few:

From Marianne Hesse, Waller Street Resident:

"I was astounded to learn that there is a concrete skateboard park planned for Waller Street between Stanyan and Kezar Drive. To my knowledge, Supervisor Mirkarimi did absolutely no outreach to the people who live in his district and who would be affected by whatever is permanently built at this location—lasting for generations to come. Since there was no Environmental Impact Report, we have no idea of how much noise would be generated or how would it affect the nearby homes or businesses.

"Many people living in the neighborhood have recently expressed an interest in having that section of Waller Street opened up again to traffic—both in order to reduce congestion on Frederick and to insure that the police can continue to have immediate access from the station house to the neighborhood in case of emergency. If this section of the street were permanently blocked by skateboarders and their paraphernalia, how many lives would be put at risk while the police have to find a slower, less direct route to where the problems lie?

"I think it is important that those of us who live in his neighborhood be instrumental in deciding what should be done with that



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tion of land at Waller and Stanyan. With the creation of a permanent skateboard park going into that location, all hope of some alternative use, determined by the neighborhood, will be lost forever.”

From Joe Goldmark, Managing Partner Amoeba Music and Escape from New York Pizza:

“My feeling is that kids have to be kids somewhere, and that this is not a battle that should take up a lot of our energy. This isn’t a needle exchange program, it’s just young people getting exercise and having fun in the park.”

From Jan Chernoff:

“As a city, we provide so few opportunities for young people that it amounts to chasing them out of town. There are very well utilized skateboard parks in other cities that actually reduce the damage caused by using buildings for the same application. Frankly, I think it is an ideal use for that area.”

From Ted Loewenberg, former Skateboarding Task Force Chair:

“Noise from skateboarding is a function of the smoothness of the pavement. The proposed park will be professionally paved to provide such an optimum surface...much smoother and more quiet than your sidewalk. I live within a short distance of the proposed site, and skateboarders travel by my home on Waller every day. Yet I see that these young people are under-served and lack the facilities they need to practice their sport. That’s why I advocate for them. It is not about me, but rather what is the right thing for a new generation.”

This decision to build a skateboarding park in the Haight is the climax of several years of work by the Skateboarding Task Force, formed by the Commission on Youth. It’s mission was to accomplish three things: review the city’s laws pertaining to skateboarding—suggesting revisions if necessary; advocate for more skateboarding facilities based upon identified demand; and define a planned approach to improving San Francisco’s skateboarding. A “master plan” draft was vetted in a series of meetings around the city, which drew very little interest. Although the Task Force was dissolved in 2006, its recommendations for more skateboarding parks remains on Rec and Park’s “to do” list.

—Karen Crommie

The Panhandle Needs You

Two neighborhood organizations have joined together in sponsoring a once-a-month clean-up in the Panhandle.

Since October 2006, members of PROSF (Panhandle



Residents Organization Stanyan Fulton) and NO-PNA (North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association) have shoveled compost, weeded flower beds, picked up trash and raked leaves and branches from storms. It’s been fun doing it with others in beautiful surroundings and even sometimes with children and dogs. Our Rec and Park gardener, Guillermo Vasquez, has a big job and not much help so he’s very appreciative.

Everyone is welcome to join us on the second Saturday of the month from 9:00 a.m. to noon—or for whatever time you have. We meet at the bulletin board at Fell and Ashbury.

For more information call Mary Helen Briscoe, Volunteer Coordinator for the Panhandle, at 346-1448.

Hamilton Church Closes, continued from page 1, column 1.

church by the Haight Ashbury Food Program (HAFP) and the behavior of its clients. The HAFP, lessees of the now nonexistent church, are presently in the process of renegotiating their contract. They, too, have suffered recent problems due to a cut in their funding from the city. Two of their formerly four-day-a-week hot lunch programs have been changed to bag lunches.

By his own admission, Reverend Barbaree had been uprooted from a beloved congregation in Hawaii, and Rev. Douglas Firth had been called out of retirement (from the city’s Glide Methodist Church) to take the joint responsibility for evaluating Hamilton’s ongoing problems. So long as the present congregation and its board of directors was empowered, nothing would improve. In fact, according to protocol, until the church was closed down, it could not take the numerous necessary steps to reopen with a more conventional management structure.

During the interim, Reverend Barbaree has asked the superintendent of the United Methodist Church (Golden Gate District), Reverend Jane Schlager, for four concessions: 1) that they continue to rent out parking spaces to City CarShare (plus five slots to neighbors) 2) continue the stain glass window project 3) continue plans to repair the furnace and 4) that a video would be made about the building’s closing, transition (cleaning, inventory, discarding, security), and ultimate reopening. “I don’t want it to look like an abandoned building,” said Rev. Barbaree, who hopes to be reassigned to the church when it reopens.

In the last nine months, Reverend Barbaree has become very attached to the church. He has researched its early architectural drawings and is now an expert on the Julia Morgan design. In fact, recent research has indicated that it might have actually been designed by Bernard Maybeck, who gave his sketches to Julia Morgan to complete. For this reason he was relieved when the Conference decided not only to keep the building, but to reconsecrate it as a church.

When that happens, the ten or so church members living in the neighborhood will need to help the Reverend build his congregation and reconstitute a new board of directors. For Hamilton to once again be thought of as a place for weekly worship, Sunday school, baptisms, weddings and funerals, it will have to increase the size of its congregation dramatically. This will be made easier if the church decides to use its space for programs that draw nearby residents. Reverend Barbaree has already spoken of his desire to use the gym for regularly scheduled recreational activities such as exercise classes, and utilize the ground floor building for senior workshops, afterschool programs, enrichment classes and meetings.

United Methodist Church’s California-Nevada Conference is comprised of 80,000 members with 400 churches. This includes San Francisco’s Golden Gate District. Superintendent Schlager has asked Reverend Barbaree to be her special assistant and has formally named him project manager to close down the church. But this is easier said than done: An email from Reverend Barbaree this week indicates that three former church members are refusing to leave the premises in spite of warnings from the Bishop that they will be arrested for trespassing.

—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.

New Owners of The Booksmith Raise the Bar on Service

When we were entrusted the keys to the bookstore last June, we set an ambitious goal: Let's create an independent bookstore for the 21st century. Most of our focus so far has been to ensure a smooth transition, improved service and establish a relationship with the community.

We continue to have a great line-up of author events. Recently we hosted Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Ann Packer, Frank Warren, and Poet Laureate Robert Hass. And, in December, we hosted a special holiday event with local Cole Valley authors Daniel Handler and Lisa Brown—latkes in hand.

We are strengthening our community presence. Recent ventures took us to the Heart of Cole Festival with a line-up of nine local women authors, and a successful literary fair with Grattan Elementary School. We are also sponsoring WritersCorps Open Mic series for teens at the Park Branch Public Library (1833 Page Street) on March 19 and April 16 at 4 p.m. Free admission.

We are keeping the quality and depth of titles you've come to expect from The Booksmith. But since we know we can't fit every title within our four walls, we have increased our ordering frequency and now we can get most titles for you within one or two days.

Since we know many of you are night owls, we have expanded our store hours to Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Booksmith Event Calendar

We have another great line-up of author events scheduled for the Spring. Coming to the Booksmith are Ethel Merman biographer **Caryl Flinn** (March 6), popular Parisian police procedural pen-woman **Cara Black** (March 12), the one and only **Anne Lamott** (March 21), Booker Prize nominee **Edward Docx** (March 28), much admired local author **Lewis Buzbee** (April 7), bestselling writer **Mary Roach** (April 8), famous eco-feminist author **Susan Griffin** (April 16), acclaimed novelist **Patrick McGrath** (April 21), Vikram Chandra's wife and first time novelist **Melanie Abrams** (April 22), n+1's editor-in-chief **Keith Gessen** (April 29), Booksmith's own writer-in-residence **Kiara Brinkman** (June 25) and many others. All events start at 7 p.m. For up-to-date listings, please our website at www.booksmith.com or call (415) 863-8688.

Additional Events

We are partnering with San Francisco's Jewish Community Center to host additional author events. Please join us to see National Book Award winner **Richard Powers** (March 4), famous screenwriter and producer **Gary Goldberg** (March 5), Pulitzer Prize winner **Jhumpa Lahiri** (April 15), cultural force **Mary Pipher** (May 5), and psychologist and neuroscientist **Drew Westen** (June 18). These events are held at JCC's facilities at 3200 California Street.

—Christin Evans and Praveen Madan



Booksmith owners Christin Evans and Praveen Madan.

Major Staff Changes at Park District Police Station

Just when we thought Captain John Ehrlich had been assigned a second stint at Park Station, it was announced that he had been reassigned to the Tactical Division, which includes: the Swat Team, K-9 Division, Honda Patrol, Police Horses, etc. He assesses the reassignment as a "lateral move."



Capt. Ehrlich's new job will include "horses, hounds and Hondas."

In parting, Ehrlich was gracious enough to say that, "The four years as Captain of the Park Police District were the best of my 27 years in the police department. I would like to thank all those of you who are involved in making the city a better place. I truly appreciated your commitment, even when you criticized me. Even more thanks to those who became community leaders which takes even more time and effort. Community policing is impossible without you. My wish for the District is that we try to concentrate on the 95 percent where we agree and not on the 5 percent of disagreement."

He will be greatly missed as someone who doggedly tried to understand the day to day problems of each of the communities he served by attending hundreds of mind-numbing meetings. He was known to give a straight answer to any question asked and had an encyclopedic



At the Park District Community Forum, held in January at The Independent on Divisadero St., Captain Teresa Barrett introduced herself.

knowledge of SFPD history and politics. He fearlessly took on the power structure of the Haight Street Fair by effectively prohibiting open containers of alcoholic beverages at that event and, in his own low-key way, brought into daylight the immense power of the social service community in the greater Haight Ashbury.

At the January 8 Community Forum, Captain Ehrlich introduced his replacement. Teresa Barrett is a fifth generation San Franciscan who began her career at Park Station in 1986 and was most recently the nightwatch supervisor at Northern Station. As a newly-minted captain, she is eager to take on the challenge of this diverse and often fractious district.



In the meantime, popular Lt. Anne Mannix (who was in the same Police Academy class as Captain Barrett and her first patrol partner) has been transferred to Southern Station. Lt. Tim Foley has gone to the Training Division. They will be replaced by Lieutenants Dan O'Leary (day shift) and Curtis Lum (night shift).

—Karen Crommie

Plan to Fix Masonic Takes Off

Right now, Masonic Avenue doesn't serve anyone well. Be you a pedestrian, bicyclist, motorist, or resident—you've encountered perilous intersections, treacherous lane layouts, road rage, red light infractions, speeding, noise, and stress. How did this happen to a



Bicyclists on Masonic must compete with high speed traffic on their way to the Richmond District. The "Fix Masonic" project offers solutions.

tree lined avenue at the center of a highly livable city? How could this street serve its various purposes better?

If there were easy answers, the "Fix Masonic" project would have no reason to exist. Instead, we're hoping that if you've found yourself being honked at as you try to turn left, grazed as you attempt to bicycle north at rush hour, or having to run across the crosswalk to avoid a speeding motorist, that you can envision something better—and that you'll be part of making it happen.

Among the potential changes now slated for Masonic Avenue over the next few years:

- Lane restriping (proposed by San Francisco MTA)
- Timing signals for faster bus passage (proposed by SFGO)
- Reworking the Panhandle intersection for pedestrian/bicycle safety (proposed by DPT in conjunction with SF Bicycle Coalition)
- Restoring the Geary/Masonic intersection to full street-level, either through eliminating the Geary tunnel or restricting it to use only by Geary BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)
- Establishing bike lanes or a dedicated bike path through the Turk/Geary corridor

All of these ideas are in progress, but none of them represents the solution to the outdated design of Masonic Avenue. Bicyclists need safe passage in designated bicycle space so they don't have to ride on the sidewalk. Pedestrians need sidewalks that are safe, a street that is pleasant to be on, and intersections that can be comfortably navigated. Motorists need safety and diminished potential for conflicts on the road. The street requires an interlocking set of solutions whose sum is greater than its parts. And the answer has to come from the people who live here and know this street.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, March 19, 6:30 p.m. at the San Francisco Day School, 350 Masonic Ave. If you have specific questions or ideas about the campaign to fix Masonic, email Mark Christiansen (Masonic Avenue resident) at info@fixmasonic.org

Mayor's New Neighborhood Guy

Michael Farrah has recently replaced Daniel Homsey as Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services (MONS). The popular Homsey has moved over to the office of City Administrator Ed Lee. The MONS position may not be a step up for Farrah, who has been a longtime advisor to Mayor Newsom, but it's got to be good news for the neighborhoods. His reputation is solid, his clout is real.



Mike Farrah is the new MONS chief.

San Francisco Magazine recently wrote that "He reputedly knows 93,000 city voters by name. With 27 cousins in city politics, Farrah is connected by blood to the Aliotos, Driscolls, and Callans. Farrah knows where the political bodies are buried and who helped, hurt, and stayed neutral in each battle."

Cole Shop Changes Hands

Four Corners Antiques, the charming little shop around the corner from Alpha Market, has new owners, a new look and a new name, Cole Valley Antiques. Jerry Emerson comes to Cole Valley



Co-owner Jerry Emerson retired from IBM after 30 years and is now doing what he loves at Cole Valley Antiques.

with a special interest in furniture, crystal and silver, while his partner Angie Pettitt-Taylor specializes in jewelry and hats. She is originally from San Diego and has an 18-month old son, Orion. Jerry came to the city in 1961 from New Mexico and lives near Buena Vista Park. They both previously sold their merchandise in an antique collective.

The former owners have happily moved on: Robin Alpert to trade at flea markets and Phil Johnson to retirement and travel.

Jerry and Angie are both very customer oriented. They keep a "wish list" on hand: tell them what you want and they'll keep an eye out for you. For that reason they are always interested in considering unique items for the shop. They both want to become an integral part of the neighborhood so help them do that by stopping by and welcoming them. They will be open from noon to 6 p.m.

—Joan Downey

690 Stanyan Design Changed: Owner Responds to Neighbors

When the Planning Department issued the 127 page draft environmental impact report (DEIR) on the structure proposed for the



Photosimulated rendering of the originally proposed mixed-use building at Haight and Stanyan that appeared in the DEIR before the architect's redesign.

north east corner of Stanyan and Haight, the photosimulated elevations of the design triggered an immediate reaction on the internet message board of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association (HAIA). Loud complaints were posted from the very people who were the strongest supporters of the project. Why?

Said Michael Sullivan, "Those kitschy triangular "party hats" at the top of each unit, and the George Jetson space-age thing at the corner of the building—they really have to go. Can't we have something a little more subdued for this important corner?"

Wrote Stephen Tabor, "We need better, more contextual, design. The problem here is not the developer or their architect, but the city. Our planning department rejects traditional or contextual design and insists on buildings that follow a cliché *modernism*. That is why building after building comes out looking like a stereotype (or caricature) of a *modern* building. This attitude originated with the now-gone planning director, Dean Macris, but its spirit apparently lives on."

At this point the project's Mike Gerrity called a halt to the criticism. "It is important that we tell friends and neighbors that **the images shown in the DEIR are already completely off the table**. Limited renderings of the new design, which were developed with considerable input from HAIA and were well received by the Planning Department, can be seen at the project website: <http://www.690stanyan.com/index.html>. There will be some improvements to this website in the near future and hopefully we can add some further photorealistic renderings, which will help everyone to visualize the project.

"I ask that everyone refrain from commenting on the design of the 690 Stanyan facade for a while. Instead, we need to focus on the EIR draft that is open for public comment until early March. The facade is **not part of the environmental** consideration. The draft EIR states that there is less than significant impact on the environment by the project in a comprehensive 127 page study of all the factors."

Gerrity's comments above were confirmed by HAIA treasurer Ted Loewenberg, who is also that organization's liaison to the project. He said, "An evolved building design is now agreed upon between the project sponsors and the Planning Department. It is based upon Planning's directives, the Brennans' (site owner John

Brennan and his sons) preferences, along with Whole Foods and HAIA. Details such as materials, textures and the like are still being worked on.

"I would also remind everyone that the Planning Department and the Planning Commission have the stewardship of public taste and sensibilities as their charter. They take public comment into



Architect Stephen Antonaros' sketch of the revised design in which the irregular roof line and jutting corner angles have been removed.

account, and strike a workable balance. As esthetics are a matter of personal preference, Planning will never satisfy everyone with their directions. Resolving that gap of taste should not stand in the way of getting the Haight back to having a quality, full-service grocery store, 67 units of housing—with adequate parking for both, and a mezzanine cafe that promises to become a new hub of community activity. Leave the battle to alter Planning's charter to another time so as not to hold this vital project hostage to a long struggle."

Loewenberg ended by saying, "As head of the HAIA Whole Foods Committee, I am happy to receive comments and thoughts on the project at any time." He can be contacted at tedlsf@sbc-global.net.

—Karen Crommie

Cole Valley's Own Wilderness

The Mt. Sutro Stewards began their grassroots volunteer group in 2005 after several of them discovered a hidden pre-existing trail during survey work on Mt. Sutro. The realization that this trail offered accessibility to one of the more remote sections of the 61-acre open space as well as a beautiful route to the summit became reason enough to organize and lobby UCSF for permission to restore the trail. During the process of gaining permission, the California Native Plant Society, the Trail Center, and Nature In The City have pledged support and provided expert assistance during the initial volunteer days. In the Fall of 2007 the Stewards and the One Brick volunteers efforts were recognized by San Francisco Beautiful, and the Stewards received a Beautification Award for their contributions to the Mt. Sutro Reserve.

Upcoming work parties are scheduled for the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. (March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7). The group meets at Woods Lot located at 100 Medical Center Way. It is halfway between Clarendon and Parnassus. Parking is available here *only* during our scheduled activities.

Hand tools, equipment, work gloves and refreshments after the event will be provided. Be sure to bring water, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, and the normal precautions against poison oak exposure (i.e., long-sleeved shirts and long pants). This event is rain or shine. Bring rain gear if needed, it can be wet even on a foggy day.

—Craig Dawson, Mt. Sutro Stewards

Cole St. Residents Speak Out

By now you may have seen the very prominent "Stop Work" signs that are posted on the garage at 1130 Cole Street – the home our friend and neighbor Anna Corderos had owned and lived in since 1948, and which was sold last summer upon her death. I want to update you on what has been happening and ask for your support.

The property was purchased by Mr. Maher Muhawieh around July of 2007. He received a permit from the city to do \$5,000 of work described in the permit as "Tenant move out, remove all shelves broken, sheet rock and carpet, will submit plan for whole house remodeling." The work so far has been to completely gut the house (including walls, trim, electrical, and plumbing), thereby remov-



Only the facade remains at 1130 Cole St.

ing all of the home's early 1900 character. In December, the roof over the rear half of the house was completely removed. The work done is well past the scope of the permit. Removing the roof has allowed the rain to flood all rooms and all levels of the house. There have been days where there is an inch or so of standing water on the wood floors. We are concerned that with all the water in the house, that the termites will find their way up into higher levels and from there into our house, and that all the floors will start to rot.

Once the roof was removed, the contractor (Tony Palacios) started to build a new roof with a higher roof line—that is when we filed a complaint with the Building Inspection Department, and how building inspector Dennis Carlin came to be involved. Coincidentally, Mr. Muhawieh also did the work on the property at 1233 Shrader Street and Mr. Carlin has had to deal with non-compliance issues on that property.

Beyond all these concerns, the property now looks like a crack house. The windows that are not broken are left open, newspapers and trash are everywhere, and pedestrians can easily look up through the windows and see the sky and know that the property is abandoned. In addition to the appearance, the building is not secure and can easily be entered (resulting in access to our backyards and homes).

Mr. Carlin has been very helpful and is monitoring this situation. He tells me that we can make our case more compelling if more neighbors contact him with their observations and concerns. He can be reached at 558-6115 or dennis.carlin@sfgov.org.

—Geoff and Nancy Noakes

Coming soon: Cviasf.org

Mark Ballew, a new CVIA member, has kindly offered his services to bring CVIA into the 21st century and set up a web site. Let us know if there are any ideas you have that for information you'd like to see on this site.



Bouquets to those who fund the daily cleaning of Cole St.

We hope you've noticed how clean the sidewalks look in the Cole Street commercial corridor. Darian, the CleanScapes worker, is doing a great job.

Alpha Market
Bambino's Ristorante
Boulange de Cole
Brittney Bottorff & Asim Bhansali
BurgerMeister
CleanScapes
Cole Cleaners
Cole Hardware
Cole Valley Fitness
Crepes on Cole
GrandeHo's Kamekyo
Kezar Bar & Restaurant
MadKat
Pharmaca
Tully's
Zazie

This project is also made possible by a grant from an anonymous donor and profits from the 2007 Heart of Cole Festival.

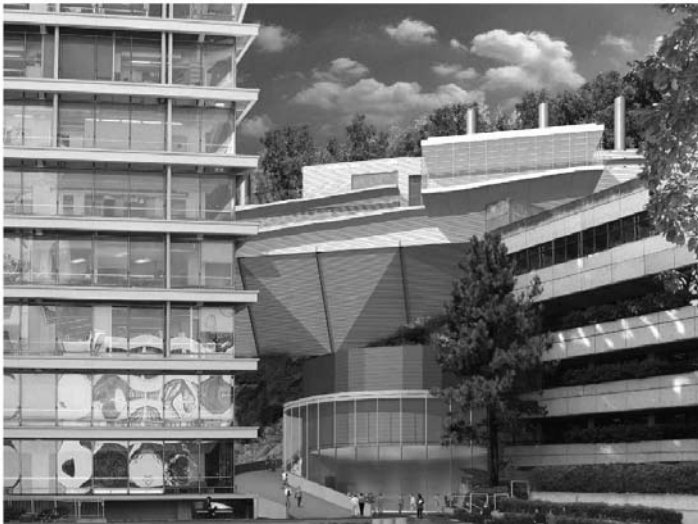
Gift To Grattan Library

CVIA president David Crommie recently presented a check to Jean Robinson, principal of Grattan Elementary School, for \$2,000 for the Grattan School Library Project. These funds are made possible from the profits of the 2007 Heart of Cole Festival. Our thanks to all the community members, both residents and business owners, who made this possible.

UCSF Reveals New Plans for Stem Cell Research Center

UCSF is preparing to construct a 71,000 square foot Institute for Regeneration Medicine on the Parnassus Campus. The revised preliminary building design and site configuration plans were revealed at a public meeting on February 5.

UCSF has had three meetings on this project, including a focus group with key stakeholders and two public meetings. Over 2,000 residents received notices about these meetings.



UCSF plans to build its new research center behind the Health Science buildings (structure shown in photosimulation on right).

Although the building plans have changed since the preliminary design was unveiled last year, the new plan does appear more functional, though longer, and one which will potentially create less impact and disturbance to the site. The positive tone of the responses so far indicate that many have reviewed the full environmental impact report (EIR) and have found little to criticize.

I encourage the public to view the EIR document and submit concerns, if any, directly to UCSF Campus Planning. The "Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration" can be downloaded from the UCSF website. It contains all the details and specifics on the project. Go to http://campusplanning.ucsf.edu/pdf/IRM_InitialStudyMitNegDec.pdf.

Please send your comments directly to Michelle Schaefer, Environmental Coordinator, UCSF Campus Planning, 3333 California Street, Suite 11, San Francisco, CA 94143-0286, (415) 476-2911 or email: EIR@planning.ucsf.edu.

—Craig Dawson, President
Inner Sunset Merchants

Save the Date:

The date for the next Heart of Cole Festival has been set for September 21, 2008. Note that this is the **third** Sunday of September, not the fourth, as in past years. Please send any comments or suggestions to colevalleyfestival@gmail.com.



Neighborhood Schools: An Impossible Dream?

One of the joys of last September's Heart of Cole Fair was the sight of the children having such fun. Our neighborhood has happily seen an increase in families, especially those with small children. The upcoming challenge will be to keep them here.

The major concerns remain the cost of housing and the quality, and uncertainty, of public education. Not much we can do on the local level about the cost of housing, although the recent raising of the loan levels on government-guaranteed loans will make a small difference. On the schooling issue, perhaps, as a neighborhood, we can express a voice for the right to attend neighborhood schools. Most families prefer to have a school within walking distance. This goes along with the need to reduce dependence on automobiles and the fossil fuels that drive them. The city's Byzantine system of school assignments is more of a lottery than anything else. The district claims that 87 percent of parents get one of their choices, but did you know that seven schools need to be requested? What it really means is that 87 percent get one of the seven schools they listed. You can check this out with the San Francisco Unified School District at 241-6565. The website is www.sfusd.edu.

It would be nice if all the children who live in the neighborhood could be guaranteed a place at Grattan Elementary School. While the district claims to have some preference for local students, the diversity index makes the reality quite different. Here's a quote from the Assignment Process section of the website: "When students from the attendance area no longer contribute to the diversity base profile, all students who requested the grade/program are considered for assignment."

The School District is concerned about the dwindling number of students, presently 55,497 down from 90,000 in the 1960's. The last five years saw a loss of 4,000 students. Maybe they need a more user-friendly system.

—Lena Emmerly

Our Walkers Need a Break

CVIA recently wrote to Bond Yee, executive director of the Department of Parking and Traffic, requesting the installation of a stop sign on Carl Street (south side) at Clayton. This need arose during a community meeting on January 24 headed by Javad Mirabal of the SF Municipal Transit Agency. The stop sign would make it safer for pedestrians to cross Carl Street.



CVIA also asked the DPT to consider installing a stop sign on Beulah (south side) at Cole and for a review of pedestrian safety at the intersection of Clayton and Ashbury. It has been reported that cars coming from the south (17th Street and Clayton) are traveling onto Parnassus or Ashbury at a fast pace with little regard for anyone trying to cross the street. Cars and buses traveling from the north (Ashbury St.) onto Clayton are so busy watching the traffic and trying to merge onto Clayton that drivers pay little attention to those in the crosswalk. If you have any comments, please contact CVIASF@aol.com.

—Joan Downey

Those who wish to protest the war in Iraq can join a group of neighbors who meet every third Friday in the Panhandle to take part in a peace vigil at 6 p.m. Meet on Masonic between Oak and Fell. Electric candles are provided.

CVIA Board Actions

The following is a summary of what took place at the CVIA board meetings over the last two 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 p.m. in the home of a member. Call 431-1414 to learn the location.

January

■ Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee, UCSF Advisory Group, HAIA, HANC and the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods. Welcomed guests Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, Jane Hart, Ted Loewenberg and Ted Ridgeway.

■ David Crommie reported on the December 11 meeting of the Park District Police Station's community forum held for the first time at The Independent. Some 20 Divisadero Street business owners spoke in favor of lifting the existing cap on liquor licences. Captain John Ehrlich introduced his replacement, Captain Teresa Barrett.

■ Joan Downey reported on her efforts to engage the Cole Street businesses to chip in for daily street cleaning. Tully's was a recent addition to that surprisingly small group of community-minded merchants. She also reported on a \$300 contribution made by CVIA to Operation Dream, a project by the Park Station Police staff to give wholesome experiences to neighborhood youth who are presently underserved.

■ Motion passed to make a donation of \$2,000 to Grattan Elementary School toward the improvement of their library.

■ Inner Sunset Park Neighbors member Jane Hart spoke briefly about the theft of recycling materials from containers awaiting curbside pick-up.

■ Heard presentation by Ted Loewenberg, former chair of the city's Skateboarding Task Force and longtime Haight activist, on the proposed skateboard park on Waller between Stanyan and Kezar Drive (now closed to traffic). Members expressed concerns about added noise to that area; the feasibility of portable units v. concrete structures; police access to Stanyan from the station house; type of fencing; age limits for users; after-hours security, "street plaza" model v. pipe structure, etc. Members regretted the lack of flexibility for alternative uses, viz., farmers' market, bike training, native plant garden, community events. Loewenberg admitted that this was not his first location choice (he preferred a conversion of the horseshoe pits) but that Rec and Park overruled him. He will coordinate a visit by the CVIA board to a plaza model skateboard park in the near future.

■ Supervisor Mirkarimi listened to the comments of members and stated that he believed that skateboard parks lessen the misuse of other public sites such as the stairs to the museums, band shell and entrance to Kezar Stadium. He said that the legislation, recently approved by the Board of Supervisors, is for a "feasibility study" only and that there will be ample time for neighborhood comment.

■ Joan Downey announced the upcoming (third) meeting with MTA staff on possible improvements in the Cole/Carl intersection scheduled for January 24 at Grattan School at which time they will decide on possible changes in: boarding locations of both light rail (N-Judah) and busses (43 Masonic, 37 Corbett, 6 Parnassus, N-Owl); improvement of ability to comply with published time schedules; possible closure of Carl between Cole and Clayton; improvement in pedestrian safety; etc. She will flier immediate neighbors for a pre-meeting at Crepes on Carl on Jan. 17 to attempt to unify a neighborhood position. Joan said that one item has already been

decided upon by Muni: There *will* be an installation of boarding "bulbs" at stops in proximity to that intersection, enabling passengers to board without stepping into the street and, at the same time, relieving transit vehicles from having to pull in and out of curbside stops.

February

■ Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to the Kezar Stadium Advisory Committee, UCSF Advisory Group, HAIA, HANC and the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods. Welcomed guests Mark Ballew, Virginia Joosen, Jane Hart, Serena Unger and Cole Roberts.

■ Discussed C.W. Nevius' recent Chronicle article (1-31-08) about lack of political will to relocate the Recycling Center to an more appropriate industrial site for the sorting and transfer (by trucks) of recyclables—thereby eliminating the cash-redemption operation which serves as an incentive to pilfer from curbside recycling boxes. Markets would have to take over that state-mandated function. Andrew Pugno is the new head of the Recycling Center.

■ Discussed design of a CVIA website with member Mark Ballew, who has generously volunteered to set it up using open source "word press" software (minus the blogging feature). Joan Downey has agreed to manage and update the content.

■ In a discussion introduced by members Serena Unger and Cole Roberts, Cole Valley was evaluated as a place to raise a family: the accessibility and quality of a neighborhood elementary school; the perceived value of "community" among its residents (shared feeling of responsibility); and the safety of its streets.

■ Karen Crommie reported on citywide issues now before the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, including the profits from sale of Hetch Hetchy water (to suburbs) going to implement the city's solar power program; the impact of the Market Octavia Plan on existing height/density zoning in those neighborhoods with transit corridors all over the city; the replacement of grass with artificial turf on the city's playing fields (implicit in the recently passed Prop A).

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

Thank You

CVIA Members Brittny Bottorff and Asim Bhan-sali recently contributed \$500 to CVIA. They've asked to "designate at least \$300 (or all) toward the Clean Cole St. project". CVIA's board voted to put it all toward the clean up. We thank Brittny and Asim for their extreme generosity.

Spring Comes to Edgewood

The fruit trees are blooming on Edgewood Avenue. It's a pleasure that doesn't last long so be sure to make the climb from Parnassus up Willard St. turning up the Farnsworth Steps to Edgewood. If you're driving, go up Willard and make a hard right at Belmont which leads into Edgewood. There you will find the famous brick street spectacularly lined with ornamental plum and cherry trees in full flower.

No Big Changes at Carl & Cole

About 30 Cole Valley residents attended the third and final meeting with staff from the San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency on January 24 to discuss what should be done to improve transit at the Carl and Cole intersection. The reasons to make changes were: to reduce the boarding period (dwell time) and delays; increase pedestrian safety; and enhance Muni riders' experience—and do this without decreasing the number of parking spaces. It was a typical San Francisco meeting where 30 people had 30 different ideas.

But SFMTA staff merged their expertise with the comments presented in the previous two meetings to come up with recom-



Javad Mirabal listened patiently as transit users rejected most of the MTA's suggested changes for the Carl and Cole Muni stops.

mendations which they estimated would cost about \$550,000 (excluding design):

For N-Judah stops—Keep them at the same location with widened sidewalks and install a ticket vending machine, NextBus information, shelters, consolidated news racks, improved trash cans, and, hopefully, trees.

For the bus stops on Cole Street—Build bus “bulbs” at existing bus stops, creating six parking spaces and allowing more space on the sidewalk for pedestrians.

To the disappointment of many, and relief of many more, the cul-de-sac option on Carl Street was tabled. This option would have closed Carl Street to through traffic from Clayton to Cole. Proponents called the idea brilliant while the opponents raised objections that it was too suburban and that double-parked delivery trucks would not be able to use the space and clog traffic on Cole even more than it is.

Seven potential parking spaces next to the Muni park may be converted to angled parking. SFMTA will investigate if this is possible depending on the width of the street.

Since the community reached agreement on preferred options, SFMTA will hold no further workshops on this Carl and Cole Feasibility Study. However, a public hearing will take place on the recommended sidewalk widening at the N-Judah stops, bus bulbs at the existing bus stops, and on the associated relocation of parking spaces. SFMTA staff will inform workshop participants about this public hearing in advance.

—Joan Downey

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 cocktail napkins. We want to hear from you! CVIA News: 624 Ashbury St. or cviasf@aol.com.

Recycling Center Lambasted Again in Chronicle

After a front page story describing the HANC Recycling Center as a “cash machine for the homeless” (*SF Chronicle* 8-26-07), C.W. Nevius again reveals the political machinations that have kept the recycling center in a corner of Golden Gate Park for some 30 years in spite of the establishment of citywide curbside recycling (*SF Chronicle* 1-31-08). For years neighbors have complained about the noise, truck fumes, non-conforming use of park land, the incentive to



Nevius finds no political will to relocate the Recycling Center.

steal from recycling bins, casual receipt of stolen good and failure to fulfill stipulations of its contract. Says Nevius, “. . . If you're looking for someone to step up and take charge of this, don't hold your breath. [Supervisor Ross] Mirkarimi said it is the Rec and Park Department's area and Rec and Park spokeswoman Rose Marie Dennis said her organization 'is not going to turn around and vilify HANC [Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council].'"

Nevius then went to the Mayor and was told by spokesperson Nathan Ballard, “We're watching this with interest, and we're sympathetic to the concerns of the neighbors.’ In other words, best of luck and keep us posted. Frankly, I can't quote them, but there are plenty of people in all of those offices who think the HANC center has passed its useful sell date. But they aren't going to say so unless someone leads the way.”

At a recent HANC meeting, Recycling Center director Andrew Pugnig criticized the Inner Sunset Neighbors who had complained to Nevius saying, “They don't like to see poor people on their streets... there's a mean, nasty feeling about it...it's like class warfare.”

In a spectacular conflict of interest, even for San Francisco, former Recycling Center manager Kevin Drew, now works in the city's Department of the Environment as the (sigh) *Residential Recycling Coordinator*. “We're very supportive of the HANC Recycling Center,” said Drew, to no one's surprise. “Norcal complains about the stealing of recyclables but doesn't provide us (SFDE) with any figures.”

In spite of being a supporter of the Recycling Center remaining in Golden Gate Park, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who was attending the meeting, said, “Nevius didn't come up with this out of the blue. This issue has been building for many years. HANC can't just dismiss these concerns out of hand [viz., like calling it class warfare, for example, Ed.] but must explain to neighbors exactly where the benefit is. They fill their blue bins, they pay their Norcal bill and don't understand why the stealing is tolerated.” He added that, “Right now the neighbors do not feel they will be listened to, that they will be dissed if they confront you directly.” He later mentioned HANC's lease agreement and again stressed the need for transparency on HANC's part.

—Karen Crommie

Grattan Library Update

CVIA's Board of Directors voted to donate \$2,000 of the profits from the 2007 Heart of Cole Festival to the Grattan Elementary School library improvement project. Below is the project description submitted by Grattan principal Jean Robertson:

Grattan School is happy to report that, as a result of the citizens of San Francisco's overwhelming support in the 2004 election for funding public schools (Proposition H), we have a certificated librarian on staff two days a week—more than most elementary school libraries. We would love to have a full-time librarian. Fortunately, even in the “lean” years Grattan has been able to scrape up enough money to order books each year. Last year our PTA purchased a new set of library chairs.

With our new certificated librarian, Lynne Burwell, I am proud to announce that our library is functioning very well. We have worked together on the following summary of information for you to consider toward funding a portion of our projected library budget for this current year. Our overall projected budget for the 07-08 School Year is \$4,800. We have already covered \$3,000 of the budget and are seeking \$2,000 support from the Cole Valley Improvement Association.

General Information: We have approximately 5,800 books in the Grattan Library, and last year the circulation was just over 5,000 books. While our books per student ratio appears to be adequate, there are some problems.

The average copyright age is still quite old. Last year, through careful weeding and accession, we were able to improve the average copyright age seven years, a significant gain, but even so, the average copyright age of all our books combined is 1984, way old. We don't need to give the heave-ho to every book with an old copyright date, but we do need to infuse the collection with attractive new titles. One area of particular concern is the beginning chapter books.* We weeded them heavily last year, but the section still looks old and worn and, not surprisingly, gets little use. It is our belief that beginning chapter books would circulate more heavily if the selection was better and included more current titles.

About 33 percent of our 5,800 books are easy (picture) books, which is almost 15 percent higher than it should be. While it seems like we have plenty of books, the distribution is skewed and we need a better spread.

Volunteers: We have 15 active volunteers for weekly classes and many others help with special projects, such as the annual Book Fair event that is coordinated in partnership with The Booksmith.

Classes: Every class comes to the library once a week and either has a story read to them or engages in a facilitated library activity. Library activities include learning how to use an index, creating bibliographies, and doing research. Our students start oral note-taking in second grade and begin taking written notes in third grade.

Curriculum: A school library is different from a public library because a school library supports the curriculum. A school librarian is a certificated teacher and works with faculty and staff to plan



lessons cooperatively. For example, at Grattan we are working on a collaborative lesson on life during the American colonies. The teachers know their students and what kind of activities will appeal to them, and the librarian has the flexible scheduling to accommodate the project.

Recreational Reading: We are fortunate to have children who love books and value reading. They regularly suggest new books and await them eagerly. The school library is their closest resource so it makes sense to have it well stocked for all the students' curriculum and recreational needs.

—Jean Robertson, Principal

*A chapter book is a story book intended for intermediate readers, generally age 7-10. Unlike picture books for younger readers, a chapter book tells the story primarily through prose, rather than pictures. Unlike books for older readers, a chapter book contains plentiful illustrations. The name refers to the fact that the stories are usually divided into short chapters, which provide children with opportunities to stop and resume reading if their attention span is not long enough to finish the book in one sitting. (Reprinted from Wikipedia.)

Cheryl Brodie Steps Down

The president of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association (HAIA) has resigned a few months before her term was to expire because of “pressing personal circumstances.” Cheryl Brodie has done an outstanding job in reviving the once defunct organization;



recertifying its nonprofit status; fighting to give merchants and residents more control over the Haight Street Fair and bringing together a merchant population largely detached from community interests. Her former positions as president of SF5Together, president of the Stanyan-Fulton Neighborhood Association and aide to Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi provided her with valuable district contacts and the real world experience to be more effective than any president in recent memory. The absence of her focus and leadership will be an immense loss to the Haight.

The Executive Committee of HAIA will run the organization, per the bylaws, until the April election is held.

—Karen Crommie

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 Spring edition should be sent before May 1, 2008 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
Production.....David Crommie
Editorial AssistanceJoan Downey

CVIA Needs a Tax Advisor

Our records are very organized in Quicken and we're willing to fill out forms, but we need someone to help with the tax returns that need to be filed as a requirement of our 501 (c) (3) status. Please contact us at CVIASF@aol.com if you can help.

Inner Sunset Responds to Poll on Recycling Practices

Ed. note: Concerned by the epidemic of pilfering from Norcal's curbside recycling bins, longtime Inner Sunset resident Jane Hart recently circulated a poll among neighbors on the subject of the HANC Recycling Center and its redemption of looted recyclables both from blue bins and from Golden Gate Park's waste receptacles. With a 52 percent response rate, these are the recommendations based on her findings:

First, we need a professional management plan for recycling and trash pick up in Golden Gate Park. Locked or contained recycling bins are needed throughout the park. Having indigent people perform our recycling operation in the park is not a responsible program. They are exposed to the canine excrement and needles mixed in the trash and recyclables of the park's garbage cans. This is a program the HANC Recycling Center supports, and their presence on city land, with a city lease and a city grant, makes the city complicit in this cycle of disadvantage for all of us.

Second, Norcal (Sunset Scavenger) should be brought into this discussion, not just to solve truck-level pilferage of recyclables (which hurts them most), but to face the neighborhood-level impact when a proliferation of scavengers comes into a neighborhood and hurts not only our pocketbook but our quality of life. Norcal's unlocked blue bins all around the city sidewalks, simultaneous with the presence of buy-back community recycling centers, have combined to create both an epidemic of curbside pilfering, both on foot and in trucks, and a spillover disturbance and invasion of the people's commons—our shared civic space.

—Jane Turner Hart

Alvord Lake Work Continues

The small group of stalwarts who meet every fourth Saturday morning to do weeding, planting and pruning at the park surrounding Alvord Lake (Stanyan and Haight) are continuing to see the fruits of their labor. Carolyn McKenna, Susan Stolis, Brendan McKenna, Rob Bakewell and Ruth Wheeler are there working alongside Rec and Park gardener Joe Chmielewski. Everyone is welcome to pick up a trowel. For more information contact Karen Crommie 431-1414 or kcrommie@aol.com.



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

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.

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**
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 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
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- Chief of Police Heather Fong553-1551**
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
 S.F., CA 94103
- District Attorney Kamala Harris.....553-1741**
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 S.F., CA 94103
- Captain Teresa Barrett242-3000**
 Park District Police Station
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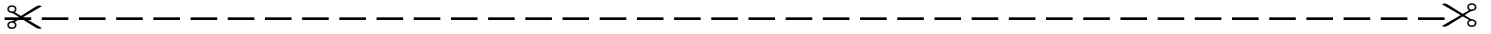
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BECOME A CVIA MEMBER

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: _____



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