

CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XX

SERVING ALL RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

WINTER 2007

Hamilton Methodist Hits Nerve With Needle Exchange Plans

It's hard to express the shock of neighbors when it was announced by the new pastor of Hamilton United Methodist Church had he intended to lease the adjacent building to a drop-in service for indigent youth and, oh, yes, a needle exchange.

After a family shelter vacated two years ago, the large space was ripe for development into some kind of neighborhood service—preschool child care, senior center, after-school program—but no one thought the minister would bring the Haight's indigent youth into that residential corner. Especially when clients of the Haight Ashbury Food Program had long taken control of the sidewalks Tuesdays through Fridays for most of the daylight hours. Now, not only would there be lines of boisterous lunch clients, their dogs, shopping carts, backpacks, garbage cans, stacks of cardboard but also indigent street youth and junkies. The word "clueless" comes to mind, but that might be too harsh a description for the saintly Reverend Gary Barbaree, the half-time pastor who moves gently in this world and seems adverse to leaving even a footprint.

Management Quality Under Question

Even worse was the fact that the Haight Youth Alliance (HYA) would be running the program. Their existing storefront operation, until recently, was infamous for its beat-up doorway, scrawled signs,



Over 100 neighbors filled Hamilton Methodist Church for a meeting called by Reverend Gary Barbaree to discuss the proposed tenancy of the Haight Youth Alliance drop-in center and needle exchange program.

sagging Venetian blinds and six-pack of kids blocking the sidewalk. Anyone passing its unkempt entryway, would have doubts about the program's management. Following the philosophy of "harm reduction," its mission is to support the kids in their lifestyle while steering them away from overdose and disease. Now they wanted to come to the corner of Belvedere and Waller and do the same thing.

Feelings Erupt at Meeting

E-mails bounced around the neighborhood like billiard balls;

Buena Vista Terrace Opens: A Dream Becomes Reality

The rain stopped and the sun came out for the October 17 opening reception of Buena Vista Terrace, the residence for seniors at the site of the former Christian Science Church on Haight Street. After years of abandonment, nonprofit developer Citizens Housing Corporation found a way to retain the exterior of the Romanesque



Matt Franklin, director of the Mayor's Office of Housing, Thomas Brutting, architect, Kaori Tokunaga, project manager for Citizens Housing and Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi pose for photographer on opening day.

brick building and, within it, construct a modern 40-unit residential community.

The building that nobody wanted, the building that needed prohibitive amounts of seismic reinforcement and was thought to be unsalvageable got a second life thanks to the patience and persistence of Citizens Housing, which for three years walked a financial tightrope, leveraging loans and overcoming architectural challenges in order to create the modern facility across from Buena Vista Park.

On opening day there were nonstop tours of the small efficiency units. It was easy to forget the dark, gutted cavern it had



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In this "building within a building," the historic exterior and modern interior meet only in the stairwell where an original window can be seen.

a year before. From the inside of the building, the only clue as to its original interior are the leaded windows visible on the staircase.

Rental applications were made available on the site for four

—Karen Crommie

Hamilton Methodist Church- *continued from page 1.*

meetings were scheduled and then canceled; agendas were announced and then changed. The Department of Public Health, which oversees the needle exchange as part of its HIV risk reduction program, became involved. Finally, on September 26, there was a meeting in the knave of the church. The day before, Pastor Gary had said it wasn't going to be about the controversial new tenants but rather about "a vision for the church's future." But when we arrived, the distributed agenda was clearly focused on HYA's needle exchange program with DPH staff member Tracey Packer leading the meeting.

Conspicuously missing was the church's board of directors, who were apparently cut out of the "vision" thing. Later I was told that there had in fact been two members of the board present, but they had chosen not to be introduced.

After an introduction about the community of Tongan Methodists to which the church was assigned several years ago by the deciders of such things, we were introduced to the board of the HYA, all young public health workers, who spoke favorably about the program. The board was newly formed after HYA's former organization, under a different name, had been cut loose by the Haight Ashbury Free Clinics.

Packer spoke at length about the needle distribution program and the cost-effectiveness of providing clean needles to addicts. Unable to contain himself any longer, Haight writer Arthur Evans, rose to his feet and in full voice, accusing Packer of "putting the audience to sleep with fatuous, numbing platitudes and 'process-speak.'" To her credit, she cut to the chase, and called the first speaker.

Agenda Diverted by Tongan Funeral

But even before the issue of the HYA's tenancy could be discussed, neighbors let out a tirade of pent up frustration over two weeks of 24 hour-a-day partying that had been taking place at the church— part of a traditional Tongan ritual for mourning the death of a member of the congregation, which included family members actually camping in the church.

Nearby resident Marianne Hesse describes it as follows: "The children and young people were in the streets yelling and screaming until twelve or one in the morning; their cars blocked the sidewalks and double parked on the street; there was the slamming of car doors, honking of horns and car alarms going off with regularity as they reshuffled their cars throughout the night. They took over Belvedere Street and some had become comfortable enough to now move across the street to hang out on neighbors' steps as well."

Reverend Gary explained that they should not let their anger over the ongoing Tongan mourning ritual, for which he took no responsibility, influence how they felt about the proposed installation of the HYA drop-in center. But it turned out that they were equally angry about that and lined up to let him know it.

Parents Speak Out Loudly

To be fair, there were those who spoke eloquently in favor of HYA. But most persuasive were the number of young parents, most new homeowners living in close proximity to the church, who described their efforts to create a safe neighborhood for their small children. It was clear that the daily influx of Food Program clients were about all they could cope with. The addition of the indigent youth and needle exchange participants would push them too far.

Alvord Lake Task Force Gets A Tour

The September 26 meeting was followed a week later by a tour of the church's buildings, this time for the Alvord Lake Task Force, the group of service providers and neighbors who meet with Captain John Ehrlich at Park Station every month to discuss strategies for dealing with the neighborhood's street kids. Reverend Gary lead the small group, including Captain Ehrlich, through the Julia Morgan building's many rooms, all of which proved to be poignantly neglected. Overwhelmed with the backlog of maintenance tasks, lack of money, absence of a robust neighborhood congregation, pressure to remove an unsightly temporary trailer lodged in the parking lot, the Reverend chose to emphasize the efforts of volunteers working to replace some clear leaded windows with stained glass.

Second Public Meeting Brings More Balance

A follow-up meeting for the community was held on October 4 at the Boys and Girls Club. To a jam-packed room, it was announced that the lease agreement between Hamilton Church and the Haight Youth Alliance would not go through. A sigh of relief mixed with some skepticism went up from the overflow crowd. Nevertheless, testimony continued as clients of HYA, their board members and Health Department officials tried to mend their battered reputations. This prompted neighbors to again state their complaints, repeatedly expressing support for the needle-exchange program, "...if it were really an exchange and not a give-away." Said one, "It's a no-brainer that the reason so many used needles are found in Golden Gate Park is that junkies don't need to return them in order to get more."

The Hamilton Methodist Church is a major player in the life of the Haight Ashbury. The future of this historic building, the use of its adjacent structure, the gym and parking lot are issues of utmost importance to the daily lives of residents for blocks around. Since they have only seen fit to provide the church with two part-time ministers, neither of whom seems willing to be totally accountable, we strongly encourage the church's board of directors to take direct responsibility for lowering the impact of the Food Program; educating the Tongan congregation about the expectations of the immediate neighbors; building a neighborhood volunteer work committee to repair the church interior; and finding new ways to increase service both to their congregation and the neighborhood.

—Karen Crommie

Ed. Note: For information on attempts to make the Haight Ashbury Food

5th Annual Heart of Cole Fair Draws Ever More Families



Children were fascinated by the collection of reptiles brought by nature educators from "Tree Frog Treks."



Face painter Buki turned little faces into woodland sprites and fairy princesses.



For a second year, the display of classic autos organized by Chuck Canepa drew enthusiastic car lovers to Parnassus Avenue.



No one could pass folk group Pixie Kitchen without picking up the beat of their bluegrass strumming.



Once again, we were reminded how many families with young children call Cole Valley "home."



In addition to CVIA's regular booth at the Cole and Parnassus intersection, members also ran the fair's headquarters, selling T-shirts and posters.



The crowd-pleaser of this year's fair was the pet trick competition organized by Bill Hancock.



Festival organizer Joan Downey was everywhere on fair day dealing effortlessly with vendors, deliveries, security, displays, musicians and lost children.



Everyone stopped when the remarkable SF Women's Taiko Drum Troupe was performing.



A constant stream of fairgoers gravitated to Grattan School's imaginative array of Italian pastries.



District 5 Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi greets Booksmith co-owner Preveen Madan at his booth featuring author book signings throughout the day.



This year's addition to Jessica Justino's annual exhibition of historic Cole Valley photos, was a Rogue's Gallery of neighborhood pets.

Skateboard Park on Waller?

On November 8, the City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee of the Board of Supervisors considered legislation by Supervisor Mirkarimi that authorizes and calls for the construction of a skateboard park in Golden Gate Park. San Francisco has always been world-famous for its skateboarding, and skating is a great activity for kids. Currently, there is no legal place to skate in the Park, and skaters have damaged delicate areas not intended for boarding. The legislation originally envisioned the new park at the Horseshoe Pits, an unused area behind the Conservatory of Flowers.

At the hearing, the Recreation and Parks Department argued that the closed-off portion of Waller Street near Kezar Stadium is a better spot for a skate park; they indicated that it has better visibility, is closer to the currently-skated Music Concourse, and has other benefits. The Waller location would also be substantially larger than the Horseshoe Pits, allowing for more skaters to use the park. The Committee unanimously voted to refer the ordinance back to the Planning Department for preliminary environmental research regarding the two proposed sites. The Operations Committee will then rehear the matter as soon as possible. For more information, see the Examiner article at: www.examiner.com/a-1029316~Golden_Gate_skate_park_could_be_moving.html.

Reprinted from the November issue of Supervisor Mirkarimi's District 5 online newsletter.

Supes Stall Mayor's Measure Against Park Camping

The Board of Supervisors voted on November 20 to send back to committee a short ordinance submitted by Mayor Gavin Newsom to protect the city's parks from damage caused by homeless encampments.

The ordinance followed a series of articles by C.W. Nevius of the *San Francisco Chronicle* documenting camping-caused damage to parks. If passed, it would prohibit cooking in parks without a permit; alter park landscapes to build structures; or sleep in parks from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m.

The measure aroused a storm of opposition from homeless advocates, who took their case to Supervisor Tom Ammiano. Acting on their behalf, Ammiano proposed several amendments to weaken the measure, triggering a counter amendment from Bevan Dufty, an ordinance supporter.

In light of the conflicting amendments, Ammiano moved to send the whole matter back to committee. "There are loose ends," he said, adding that "the issue has been politicized on all sides."

Responded Dufty: "We can't have the parks provide housing." Only three supervisors voted against the motion: Michela-Alioto Pier, Carmen Chu, and Sean Elsbernd.

Ammiano, who orchestrated the stalling tactic, was a pivotal figure earlier in the decade in slowing the board's response to the city's burgeoning homeless crisis. The board's sluggishness triggered Newsom's Care Not Cash initiative, opposed by Ammiano, and led to Newsom's successful bid for the mayor's office.

—Arthur Evans

Together We Can Clean Cole For a Second Year-Let's Do it

For over a year CleanScapes has been sweeping the commercial area of Cole Valley every day. The results have been noticeable and CVIA continues to receive positive responses about the sidewalk



cleaning program. Not only is the sidewalk clean right after the sweep, but it remains that way throughout the day. It appears that people have greater respect for our sidewalks when they see they've been swept.

We're hoping to continue the project in 2008. CleanScapes co-owner and Cole Valley resident Chris Husband will continue offering his service for the upcoming year at a reduced rate. The merchants have been asked to chip in \$350 for the year—that's less than \$1 per day. Other funding will come from a grant from an anonymous Cole Valley resident and a grant from CVIA from the Heart of Cole Festival profits.

The project will not continue unless we have enough merchant and other sponsors. The merchants who have signed on to date are: **Alpha Market, Bambino's, Boulange de Cole, BurgerMeister, Cole Cleaners, Cole Hardware, Cole Valley Fitness, Crepes on Cole and Zazie's.** They are joined by residents **Ellena Ochoa** and **Ted Ridgeway.** Please thank these supporters and encourage others to join them.

—Joan Downey

If you wish to make an individual contribution to the daily cleaning of Cole St., please send your check to: CVIA —A Clean Cole Street, P.O. Box 170611, San Francisco, CA 94117.

Cars Still Using Concourse Dr.

During the Mayor's July 28 Town Hall meeting in the Sunset District, the Department of Recreation and Parks General Manager Yomi Agunbiade said that, in October, RPD would start enforcing the law that prohibits cars from using Golden Gate Park's Concourse Drive for anything other than dropping off passengers at the DeYoung Museum. But October came and went and there was no enforcement. Park users, who enthusiastically supported Prop J in 1998, were promised a "Pedestrian Oasis." Instead, cars regularly use Concourse Drive (the road immediately in front of the DeYoung) to get from one side of the park to the other. A follow-up letter from



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

Two Recent Forums Take On Carl & Cole Transit Problems

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) is studying ways to improve the safety, comfort, operation and efficiency of transit and pedestrian activity at Carl and Cole streets on the N-Judah Muni Metro Line. The study will look at the possibility of:

- Creating expanded N-Judah boarding areas by widening the sidewalks
- Adding transit amenities such as ticket vending machines, shelters and NextMuni displays
- Relocating wheelchair ramps so Muni streetcars don't have to stop twice when serving wheelchair users
- Maintaining or increasing the total number of parking spaces in the area
- Enhancing the pedestrian experience on Carl between the Muni park and the Cole Valley merchant corridor, including reduction of sidewalk obstructions, upgraded newspaper racks and other amenities

Problems Revealed in PowerPoint Presentation

At the first community meeting on September 27, existing problems and some potential solutions were discussed. Should the inbound N-Judah stop on the east side of Cole Street so that passengers don't have to squeeze between cars to board? Should we extend the sidewalk for N-Judah passengers to make boarding faster and safer? Should we make the passenger loading areas more integral to the Muni park? And how about making a pedestrian plaza on Carl between Cole and Belvedere? Should the stops for the 37-Corbett and 43-Masonic be



Cole Valley resident David Morgenstein said, "Having a stop on the east side of Carl would be dangerous unless the street was closed off."

relocated so that the buses don't have to stop at a stop sign and again for the bus stop? Should we add bus bulbs (extend the sidewalk out to the lane of traffic) to make boarding faster and safer?

The fifty neighbors that came out for the meeting voiced a variety of concerns. Some thought an extended Muni park would attract more vagrants to the area; others felt that the project wouldn't make sense unless Carl St. was made a cul-de-sac east of the tunnel and the park area extended. Others raised concerns about the traffic and parking impacts.

Many felt that Muni should be putting all their resources into making the service more reliable. Julie Kirschbaum, SFMTA Transit Effectiveness Project manager, explained that redesigning stops could shave a few seconds from the dwell time of a transit vehicle. Add up 30 seconds saved from nine stops on a line that takes about 45 minutes (like the N-Judah) —that's a 10% increase in service. Likewise,

adding bus bulbs and changing bus stop locations to coincide with the location of the stop signs, could save valuable time for the 37 and 43 bus lines.

Muni Staff Takes Grilling at Second Meeting

A follow-up workshop took place on November 15 during



Ruth Wheeler emphasized the importance of using data from traffic counts to anticipate the consequences from the changes in bus and N-Judah stops.

which the project was discussed in more detail. As transit planner Javad Mirabal took questions, Cole Valley transit riders proved themselves extremely savvy about Muni's routes, schedules and driver problems and were forthcoming with ideas for improvement. A number of people expressed the fear of "more concrete" in an intersection that is the hub of neighborhood life. So astute were the members of the audience that deputy director of planning Peter Albert admitted that Muni needed to provide neighbors with much more information, including maps of different scenarios, traffic studies, truck delivery schedules, etc.

Rail Replacement Schedule Disappointing

Immediately prior to the workshop, there was an update on the N-Judah rail replacement project. Neighbors living on Carl Street have been waiting for Muni to replace the tracks and track bed to compensate for the heavy Breda streetcars which cause noise and vibration in their homes. Ha Nguyen, the project manager, said that the Request for Proposal (RFP) would be issued soon and that she expected that the rail work to begin in about 30 months. A disappointing report that prompted Carl Street resident Howard Case to rightly ask, "Are you putting this on a back burner?" Nguyen apologized for the delay, citing lack of funds and personnel and promised a temporary fix of "rail grinding" sometime next year.

Time to Add Your Two Cents

Over and over again, Albert stressed that the Cole/Carl Street project was in its very early planning stage and that input from Cole Valley Muni riders, residents and merchants was essential. Joern Kroll, a MTA engineer on this project, was taking careful notes of suggestions made over the course of the meeting. As soon this information is compiled, it will be e-mailed to all CVIA members (be sure we have your e-mail address). To properly evaluate proposed changes, we need to be clear on the objectives of the project and concerns of the neighborhood: Pedestrian safety? Faster Muni Boarding? A better looking intersection? Let us know your objectives in order of importance. Even if you have not attended the meetings and want to share your ideas, send your them to cviasf@aol.com or by letter to CVIA, PO Box 170611, SF CA 94117. We will make sure that they get to the project manager.

—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

Forum Features Key Players in Sheltering Homeless

At his November community forum, Capt. John Ehrlich gathered a rare group of insiders dealing with one of the neighborhood's greatest problems: indigent people living on the street and sleeping in the park. Two speakers dealt solely with youth, followed by a presentation offering a broader look at city shelters in general.

Do you know the difference between Huckleberry House and Larkin Youth Services? Both have venues in the Haight but each deals with a very different situation. Huckleberry Youth Programs director Franklin Shearer describes their priority as family unification. "We deal with kids who are at risk for running away." They offer counseling and a time-out from crisis situations. The great majority



Briana Moore, Manager of the Single Adult Shelter Programs in the city's nine homeless shelters, said that the nightly vacancy rate averages 20 percent. On the right are Heather Petrie of Community Convenes and Mary Howe of the Haight Youth Alliance.

of clients are San Francisco-born kids who, for one of a myriad of reasons, can no longer communicate with their parents. He reports a good success rate primarily with 12 to 14-year-olds, mainly African American. Even though they have only six beds, because of the short-term model, Huckleberry House (Page and Lyon) manages to serve as many as 240 young people a year.

The programs of Larkin Street Youth Services are more varied and less structured. Drop-In Center manager Perry Vermilyea admits their facilities are not licensed and that most of their kids (18 to 24 years old) are "street smart" and not much interested in going back to Mom and Dad. Nevertheless, Larkin will not keep them over a few days without demonstration of a clear desire to get into the social service system, keep appointments, complete their education and prepare to support themselves. They offer case management but no therapy. Larkin operates a "referral center" on the 1300 block of Haight Street that mainly serves kid living in the park. They also run the Diamond Youth Shelter north of the Panhandle, open to anyone under 18, and a larger drop-in center on Sutter Street with beds. Vermilyea says many of their kids are drug-users and sex-workers.

The third speaker, Briana Moore, offered an overview of the city's shelter system. As program manager of homeless, single-adult programs, she articulately described the new coordinated intake system for reserving beds (and mats) in the nine shelters. In addition, there are special Interfaith Winter Shelters located in four Episcopal churches, which have just opened and are utilized predominately by Hispanic men. She emphasized the different services provided by each shelter—their hours, storage policies; meals served; availability of case management and options for long-term care. Shelters average 20 percent vacancy with special beds always on reserve for people

against camping.

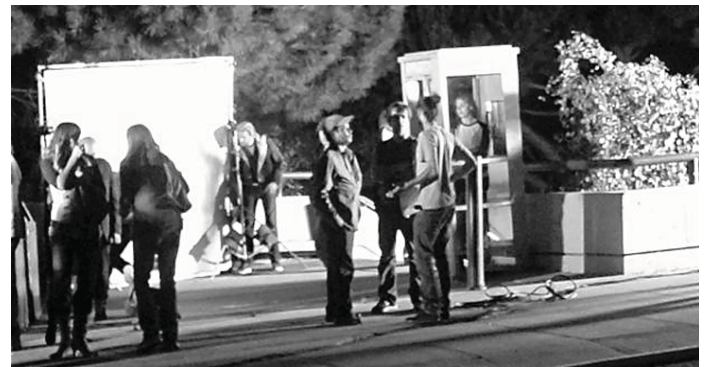
There was a brief talk by Heather Pitre about a new program sponsored by TALK Line Family Support Center, part of the SF Child Abuse Prevention Center (located in the old Fire House on the 1700 block of Waller). Called Community Convenes it aims to bring all the Haight's social services together in dialogue for the benefit of the neighborhood's needy. (Kind of like the present Haight Ashbury Service Providers, only without a political agenda.)

The only downside of the meeting was its meager attendance. Hoping for a larger turnout, Captain Ehrlich had recently changed the meetings to the second Tuesday of the month, but with seemingly little effect. Because there will be no meeting in December, the next will take place on January 8. Please make a note of it. These monthly forums continue to be the best possible way to stay apprised of neighborhood issues and CVIA members are strongly encouraged to attend.

—Karen Crommie

MTV on Clayton Street

On Clayton Street at the top of the N-Judah tunnel park, a music video scene was filmed in the third week of October. The preparations started in the morning, with a dressing room trailer parked at the bottom of the park. By evening, plumbers had connected large pipes from a fire hydrant to a high sprinkler, klieg lights were in



Artificial rain was pumped over a temporary phone booth on Clayton St. as singer Colbie Caillet lip-synced a song for a music video.

position, and a glass-walled phone booth had appeared at the top of the stairs. A policeman wrote the singer's name out for me: Colbie Caillet. There she stood in the crowd of technicians and onlookers, tall, slim, modest, approachable. "Oh, my daughter is a big fan of hers," said a woman. "Go over and say hello, honey." But the little girl burrowed behind her mother in an agony of shyness.

According to the internet, Colbie Caillet is a 22 year old Los Angeles based R & B singer and songwriter. She grew up in Malibu where her father was a producer and engineer for Fleetwood Mac. She began posting songs on her myspace.com site last year, and one called "Bubbly" was such a hit that she now has over 100,000 myspace friends and almost 14 million people have looked at her online profile. Her schedule posted there says she is now touring Europe, but will sing in San Francisco December 16 at a "KLLC Christmas show."

The director called "action." The rain started, a recording of a song boomed out, and extras as passersby hurried along, hunched against the storm. Inside the rain-lashed phone booth Caillet mouthed the words; her boyfriend seemed to be on the line and she was telling him the romance was going badly. The verse ended, and to underscore the romantic tragedy unfolding, she stepped right out into the rain and was drenched.

—Douglas Hall

Haight Ashbury Food Program: Problems with Solutions

A long awaited meeting between neighbors of the venerable soup kitchen (Haight Ashbury Food Program) on the ground floor of Hamilton United Methodist Church on Waller, revealed a manager with willingness to work with neighbors on their long list of grievances about the program's impact on their daily lives but fuzzy on city ordinances requiring neighbor notifications, blocking public right-of-way and traditional lease restrictions.

Michael Scribner, a former manager of two Starbucks stores, would seem to possess the qualifications lacking in former directors and indeed is respectful and intelligent. It is his naivete that was a disappointment.

No Notification of Increased Services

An example of this was the news that the Food Program, which provides free hot lunches Tuesday through Friday, had added a "food pantry" on Mondays without any notice to the immediate neighbors. This is a program of the San Francisco Food Bank, affiliated with the national nonprofit Second Harvest, which makes food free to anyone in a "farmers market" setting. While there are as many as 178 different pantries in the city, and so is meant to be a neighborhood service, demographics show the immediate neighborhood does not have many low-income families. For that reason it draws people from farther



Neighbors were not notified when the Haight Ashbury Food Program added a Monday "food pantry" to its present lunch services.

away. However, from the attitude of the very compassionate neighbors who were at the meeting, it is highly unlikely that they would have opposed the inauguration of the Monday food giveaway— a 20 percent escalation of activity at that site—but it was clear that they would have appreciated being asked.

Request: Minimum Civility

While these long-suffering and very tolerant neighbors were asking for things like more control over the behavior of clients waiting to enter the dining room, cigarette butt pickup, quieting dogs, removing shopping carts after lunch, taking in garbage cans, etc., the elephant in the room was the sense of entitlement the whole operation has long had over the use of Waller Street: the spilling out of the program on to the sidewalk and, as a result, determining and defining the character of the whole block.

A Simple Solution

When it was pointed out that waiting clients could be seated on benches within the confines of the large fenced parking lot immediately adjacent to the dining room thereby eliminating the major impact to the block, there was silence, followed by a request to put this "idea" in writing.

Negotiation Required

At this point the church's pastor, Rev. Gary Barbaree, entered the conversation. He explained that the Food Program's lease does not include the parking lot and so it belongs to the church. In fact, the church is already renting out five parking spaces for extra revenue (three to neighbors and two to SF CarShare). He told the three members of the Food Program's board of directors, who were present, that this could only happen if they worked out an agreement with the church's board. One assumes he was referring to either an offer by the Food Program to increase their rent or convincing the church elders, a majority of whom are Tongans living outside the neighborhood, that it was of humanitarian benefit to get the clients both off the street (eliminating public humiliation) and off their feet since, by their own figures, 28 percent of them are disabled.

Waller/Belvedere Neighbors Will Help

Neighbor Dan Loos immediately offered to help build benches and anything else the Food Program needed to reduce the impact on the street. When it was suggested that the ubiquitous garbage cans could be permanently kept in the parking lot and arrangements made to have them serviced from that location rather than the sidewalk, neighbors again indicated their willingness to pony up for the "additional steps" surcharge required by Norcal.

A Laudable Program Can Become a Good Neighbor

The neighbors came to the meeting merely asking for better control over the behavior of the clients, which director Scribner readily promised. But it does not change the fact of the garbage cans, empty boxes, shopping carts, dogs, huge hand-painted signs, etc., which overpower the whole block on a daily basis. This is a wonderful program that can be continued and enriched by keeping its function within the confines of its building. It has been given too much freedom over the years to spill over onto a public street.

—Karen Crommie

POLICE COMMUNITY FORUM

Captain John Ehrlich holds community forums every second Tuesday of the month except December. In addition to interesting guest speakers, he and his 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. CVIA members are strongly encouraged to attend each month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Park Police Station, 1899 Waller at Stanyan.

**January 8, February 12, March 11
Mark Your Calendars!**

CVIA Board Actions

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

Note: Because of the Summer Social (annual general meeting) on September 8, a board meeting was not held in the month of September.

October

- 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. Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi and CVIA member Ted Ridgeway were welcomed.

- Treasurer Joan Downey submitted full accounting records from August 1 through Oct. 1.

- Lena Emmerly reported that the commercial fitness firm called Boot Camp, which regularly uses the Kezar track for its participants, needs to share responsibility for its wear and tear and contribute money for its eventual replacement. At the next Kezar Advisory Committee meeting, Lena will suggest that Rec and Park be contacted regarding some kind of reimbursement for this use.

- Karen Crommie reported on the September CSFN meeting: Voting: Prop H lacked the ¾ of those present necessary to support it. Group voted to support the “Lights Out SF” on Oct. 20.

- Joan reported on UCSF’s reconsideration of demolishing certain buildings in the Aldea student housing complex—unoccupied for 5 years. These were the old buildings that they had received permission to replace. Now, instead of demolishing them, they want to refurbish them, expanding the university’s footprint for 15 years.

- Joan also reported that UCSF is seeking community input regarding the extra space resulting from the replacement of the old hospital building. The university suggested that one possibility was using it for residential units.

- Board members agreed to attend the grand opening of the senior housing project situated at the site of the former Christian Science Church at 1250 Haight St., now called Buena Vista Terrace.

- Lena agreed to ask the Park Station Police to reduce the \$2,000 fee they charged for barriers, signs and two officers during the Heart of Cole Festival.

- Karen reported on two neighborhood meetings with the pastor of Hamilton Methodist Church Gary Barbaree and Tracey Packard of the Department of Public Health on their recent plans to relocate the Haight Youth Alliance, including its needle exchange program, to the former site of the Family Shelter. Neighborhood objection thwarted the plan for the present time.

- Board members reviewed Joan’s list of “lessons learned” regarding the production of the Heart of Cole Fair. Along with them, Joan had assembled a list of suggestions from fair vendors. We postponed any decision of what to do with the profits. Not all of the Fair’s bills have been received.

November

- 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, MTA/CAC, and the Coalition for S.F. Neighborhoods.

- Treasurer Joan Downey reported an estimated net profit from the

Heart of Cole Festival at \$9,000. Members agreed that \$4,000 would go to CleanScapes to make up the difference between the \$12,000 annual cost and the \$5,250 contributed by the merchants for next year’s the daily cleaning of Cole Street; (note: It is hoped that the remaining \$3,750 can be made up by member donations.) \$2,000 would be made available to Grattan Elementary School on a specific grant basis; and \$3,000 would be left in the bank as “seed money” for next year’s Festival.

- Lena's request to the Park Station Police to lower their \$2000 fee for services during the Heart of Cole Festival was turned down.

- Discussed relations between the neighborhood and Hamilton Methodist Church, which recently tried (unsuccessfully) to lease the ground floor of its ancillary building (formerly Hamilton Family Shelter) to a tenant markedly unsuitable for a residential neighborhood. Pastor does not seem to be in control of what goes on in and outside the building. This is cause for some concern for those living in close proximity. Marianne Hesse is following this. In the meantime the H.A. Food Program, on the ground floor of the Church, has extended its program to include a Monday food pantry. There will be a meeting with the director of the Food Program (Michael Scribner) on Nov. 9 at 3:00 p.m.

- Discussed the controversy over the proposed Whole Foods market at the former Cala Foods site. HANC is opposing it because of expected traffic increase. Board members expressed concern over the perception of the Vardakastanis family (Haight Ashbury Produce) that their business will be negatively impacted. Son Dimitri was quoted as saying, “We don’t mind going out of business but we want something good for the neighborhood to replace us.” Most feel this will not be the case.

- Lena reported that there was little interest at the Kezar Advisory Board for pushing Rec and Park to charge a fee to the commercial fitness group that daily uses the Kezar track for group workouts.

- Joan reported that Healthy Saturdays has been approved. The measure permanently closes off JFK Drive from Concourse Drive to 19th Ave. on Saturdays. DeYoung Museum now contends that their Saturday visitor count has decreased.

- Discussed a possible “Welcome to Cole Valley” mural on the side of the laundromat on Cole and Carl, visible to those disembarking the N-Judah. Owner needs to be located to determine if he/she would be receptive to the idea.

- Karen reported on CVIA’s hosting of the Coalition for San Francisco on October 16, which was shared this year with the Barbary Coast Neighborhood Assn. Per tradition, CVIA’s president David Crommie gave a brief history of CVIA; its activities and issues. Chuck Canepa and Lena Emmerly were present representing the Board. CVIA provided a wide array of desserts, cold drinks, hot coffee and herb tea for the fifty some representatives in attendance.

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

CVIA Officers

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

SF Chronicle Asks: Is This a Cash Machine for Homeless?

In a front page Chronicle article (Bay Area section), reporter C.W. Nevius looked at the connection between the number of indigent people living in Golden Gate Park and the proximity of HANC's recycling center next to Kezar Stadium. Is there a cause and effect relationship? Even the center's employees admitted that many of those redeeming cash-for-recyclables are probably homeless and get their bottles and cans from residents' blue bins (provided at taxpayer expense indirectly from the high cost of the city's contract with Norcal).

For many years CVIA has asked the recycling center to relocate to an industrial area with good truck access to implement its transfer station operation. Not only is it a non-conforming use of the park (which is dedicated to recreation), it is noisy, brings the aforementioned large trucks into the neighborhood, provides an incentive for vandalizing the residential blue recycling bins in order to redeem their contents for cash, which, in turn enables living on the streets



The recycling center's relocation to an industrial area is long overdue.

and sleeping in the park. Nevius reports that the recyclers have a sweetheart deal with the city, paying the city only \$5,000 a year for a prime slice of our largest public park bounded by a residential neighborhood. Nevius quoted the mayor's spokesman Nathan Ballard as saying, "It may be that these recycling centers are an "attractive nuisance" (a term meaning something basically good with an unintended downside). He added that the mayor was, "looking into whether it is a good idea to modify state law."

Recently, a neighbor asked (on the HAIA e-mail message board) exactly what law required the Haight to have a recycling center. Below was the response of Mark Westlund of the San Francisco Department of the Environment.

The law in question is the state's bottle bill, section 12.1 of the Public Resources Code. It's not a particularly user-friendly bit of legislation, but in essence the presence of a supermarket that generates more than \$2 million annual sales institutes a "convenience zone," and there must be a recycling center within 1/2 mile of the store that will refund the redemption value of beverage containers.*

Andronico's is a bit over half a mile away from HANC (recycling center), but since HANC is situated between the Andronico's and the old Cala Foods, the state gave both stores an exemption. Without HANC, it's a near certainty that Andronico's would lose its exemption, and that a new Whole Foods would be required to offer recycling, too. Many [markets] operate recycling/redemption centers.

During discussions in past years with CVIA, HANC has admit-

and has reported searching for an alternative site with no success. To its credit, the Rec and Park Commission in its various reconstitutions has given them eviction warnings with vague time lines. For this reason the recycling center is currently on a month to month lease. In the end, however, they just wait out the term of whatever commissioner is after them and remain — valiantly trying to build goodwill through their native plant garden and school tours.

—Karen Crommie

*www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/calawquery?codesection=prc&codebody=&hits=20

Danger at Oak and Masonic

Letter to Jack Fleck, City's Asst. Traffic Engineer

We are longtime Cole Valley homeowners who commute daily to the Financial District. We are writing to urge you to do something about the left turn from Oak Street onto Masonic Avenue, which has become extremely congested (and a safety hazard) ever since the left turn lane on the last block of Oak prior to Masonic was eliminated earlier this year (parking is now allowed in that lane). We have been informed by Supervisor Mirkarimi that this Oak/Masonic change was adopted by the Department of Parking and Traffic (Municipal Transit Agency) at the instigation of the Pedestrian Advisory Task Force Plan.

Prior to the change described above, there were two lanes that were striped and marked for left-hand turns from Oak onto Masonic. Traffic moved smoothly.

Now, with parked cars blocking the former left turn lane, traffic backs up for hundreds of yards on Oak, routinely extending two or three blocks back to Clayton and Cole streets, causing a ripple effect of congested traffic. Drivers frequently try to avoid the long line of cars in the left-hand lane by advancing in a middle lane and then trying to sneak into the left-hand lane—which often causes congestion even in the middle and right hand lanes—backing up the entire street

Worst of all, many drivers (frustrated at the long wait in the left-hand lane) drive in the middle lanes all the way to Masonic and then make an illegal left-hand turn from a middle lane. This is a routine thing, and it is not just a commute irritant—it is a serious safety problem, which will someday lead to a pedestrian or vehicular accident.

We understand why the changes at Oak and Masonic were made earlier this year. We are not averse to experimenting with traffic patterns to try to achieve pedestrian safety. However, this experiment has manifestly failed. It has caused unacceptable congestion at this busy commute corner, and it is leading to routine illegal left-hand turns by drivers who are exasperated at the several block lines that form from drivers attempting to turn on Masonic Avenue.

We urge you to take a look at the problem at Oak/Masonic, and work to restore the left turn lane that was eliminated. That will not only restore the smooth flow of traffic, it will make everyone, including pedestrians, safer. (By the way, the left hand lane on Oak is free of cars on Monday as a result of street cleaning, so that is the one day that this problem often fails to materialize.)

We look forward to your response.

Michael J. Sullivan
Paul J. Loeffler
Stuart Gasner

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Summer Social: Things Look Better With Food and Wine

CVIA's Summer Social brought together forty or so neighbors from Cole Valley and the Haight for an afternoon of good food and conversation under an overcast sky relieved by occasional bursts of sunshine. The annual event was held on September 8 at the Ashbury Street home of a member.

CVIA president David Crommie lead a brief business meeting which included the election of new officers. Crommie was elected



Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi gave members an overview of current legislation; answered questions; and listened to advice (freely given).

to a second term as was vice president Lena Emmery; treasurer Joan Downey; community relations contact Amy Blakeley.

Members contributed a delicious array of hors d'oeuvres and salads. David was behind the barbecue as usual, this year grilling Bavarian weisswurst sausages. Carl Street connoisseur Ilie Gaceu selected wines from all over the world providing a rare tasting opportunity. Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi dropped by to give an update on activities in District 5, issues currently being handled by his office, and new citywide legislation of particular interest to the greater Haight Ashbury. It was an enjoyable afternoon to which many contributed. We thank them all.

Plea for Neighborhood Schools

While I have been aware for years that the demographics of the Haight Ashbury and Cole Valley districts have changed radically, that fact was not sufficiently brought home to me until the day the Cole Valley Street Fair took place this past September. Seeing the multitude of young families with either babies or toddlers in tow made me realize viscerally that young families did, in fact, make up a large portion of the neighborhood. Unfortunately, my next thought was to wonder how many of those families would actually still be in our neighborhood once those children were ready to enter kindergarten.

While the city gives lip service to both the concept of wanting to keep families from fleeing the city and cutting down on the number of times people utilize their cars while traveling in the city, the continued practice of not allowing families to place their children into schools that are in their immediate neighborhood creates a situation where parents either leave the city once children are of school age or places a burden on many families throughout the city to drive to and pick up their children from schools outside their immediate district at least twice a day, five days a week.

As someone who grew up in an era where it was assumed that all children would go to school in their own neighborhoods, I had the luxury of both making friends in my neighborhood school and then furthering my relationships with these friends by playing

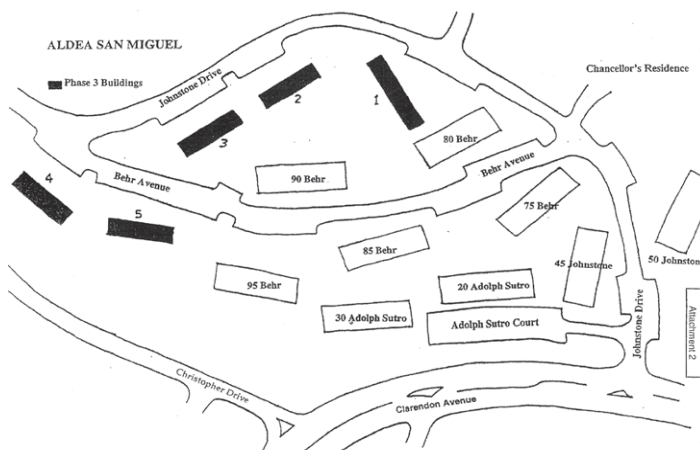
did not exist back then and neither of my parents would have ever entertained the idea of getting into their car and driving me or my siblings somewhere else in order to play with our friends. In a city that speaks ad infinitum about "root causes," and in a culture where we no longer have extended families living nearby to help pick up the slack, I hear little of the positive outcomes for children and families by building community in one's own neighborhood. Those friendships that I forged many years ago both in elementary school and after school in play are still alive and well and a foundation that my old friends and I continue to build upon today.

If the city is truly sincere in both wanting to keep families from fleeing the city and in keeping San Franciscans from frivolously using their vehicles, they need to seriously reexamine the concept of making it almost impossible for the children of this city to attend their own neighborhood schools.

—Marianne Hesse

UCSF Backpedals Demolition

When UCSF built the student housing units on Johnston just off Clarendon five years ago, they said these units were being built to replace old buildings marked for demolition. Five years later they are returning to the community asking about the possibility of retaining some of the old buildings. This housing has not been used since the new units were built. While UCSF staff members assured neighbors



that they "do not take lightly that a standing commitment exists from the Chancellor to demolish this housing in an agreement made during the 1990s," UCSF is in desperate need of additional student housing and retaining some of these buildings would help alleviate an untenable situation. For the first time in several decades the entire student housing is fully occupied and there is a long waiting list.

Some community members suggested that the University look at what benefits the campus could offer the community in return for retaining some of the old Aldea housing. The compromise currently being analyzed is for two buildings to be demolished (#1 and #5 on the map with the remaining three buildings remodeled and retained for student housing for 15 years. This would provide 42 one-bedroom units for single students. The area currently occupied by Building 1 is slated to be used for open space and will have a small campus community center (which would include a small meeting room and bathroom facilities—no larger than 2500 square feet). The pad for Building 5 could serve as a native plant nursery.

More details about the financial feasibility of the project will be available in the spring after the scope of the project is finalized, construction drawings completed, and bids collected.

—Joan Downey

Letters

Dear CVIA:

While having lunch recently at BurgerMeister, sitting outside, we envisioned what this would look like and how it would enhance the now crowded and somewhat ugly intersection.

We think that Carl Street should be configured from the east as a dead-end street, terminating at the plaza. I think anyone who has a home on this single block will be thrilled with the idea! It would not remove parking on the street and might actually increase it if perpendicular spots can be inserted against the plaza.

The idea we have is something akin to the Embarcadero Plaza, but on a much smaller scale – a raised street all the way across to the building edges. This would provide easy boarding of the trains in both directions and wonderful opportunity for café tables and improved street furniture. It will become a true heart for the neighborhood.

This would be safer than having the boarding in the street (Carl) and would not disrupt traffic flow – maybe even improve it as we would like to see measures to discourage using Carl St. as a through street. It carries too much traffic now for its narrow width and the frequent trains. Go for it!

Howard and Kris Case

Dear CVIA:

I have been a Haight resident and property owner since 1979. During this time, I have many times seen opposition grow irrationally to projects which would clearly have benefited a very large majority of Haight residents.

The foo-fa about Whole Foods is another case in point. The old-time more or less radical left leftovers (mercifully few by this time) oppose once again a project which will benefit us all in at least two important ways: a convenient, large market with a complete array of products which we can walk to replacing our lost Cala Foods and more housing which the professional tenants' lobby is always crying about.

Concerns about traffic are clearly just a smokescreen for the John Brennan haters who don't have anything real to talk about. A two-level garage is surely enough. I have not noticed any clogging of the streets around the Whole Foods at the foot of Potrero Hill. And we who live here won't have to drive elsewhere to get to a complete market.

John Manning

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 February 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.

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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

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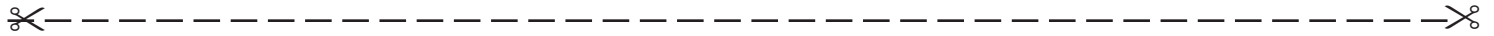
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BECOME A CVIA MEMBER

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: _____



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

CVIASF@aol.com

Happy Holidays