

The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Coit Tower Revisited

ISSUE 182
WINTER 2008



THE SEMAPHORE # 182 WINTER 2008

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THE ALFA NOSE

The Fourth Season

Winter kicked off officially at Caesar's December 10th with the THD Holiday Party. Luigi's bar was filled with brightly decorated neighbors who were entertained by B.J. Poppa on the piano, accompanied by the beautiful Emily Palen on violin.

New Years Day, Washington Square Bar & Grill surprised everyone by not opening for business. Regular Gil Jacobs, who has met with fifteen guys for thirty years during football season (they bet football games and the winner buys lunch), said the closure left "lots of people walking the streets of North Beach with dazed looks." According to Gil, Ed Moose helped revert the space back after the Cobalt phase, but the "two Texas investors pulled the plug rather sud-

denly." Bartender Michael McCourt left for Amante, which will open for lunch. Seamus Coyle, who landed at Gino & Carlo, reports former owner Guy Ferri is in New York. Under Guy, the food was excellent, but the Washbag "space" was the thing, the kind of restaurant to which you took your dad for lunch. (I did.) Later, it defined rainy Saturdays... lingering over steak sandwiches and Cabernet, watching a huge raccoon waddle down the redwood in the triangle park. Who will step up to resurrect it?

Wear Black and Jay Walk

Write poetry and paint. Or visa versa—it's symbiotic. Rent Worms (\$150/day weekdays, more week-

continued on p. 4

PRESIDENT'S CORNER WILL
RETURN NEXT ISSUE

THD BOARD MOTIONS FOR THE MONTHS OF SEPT.-DEC. 2007

SEPTEMBER, 2007

None

OCTOBER, 2007

MOTION: That for a period of two years THD will sponsor one flower basket on Jack Kerouac Alley at a cost of \$1236 with funds from San Francisco North East Conservancy established for Parks and Trees. The Motion passed.

NOVEMBER, 2007

MOTION: To approve the THD Internet Privacy Policy, as amended. The Motion passed.

DECEMBER, 2007

No Board Meeting was held.



"Anything can be fixed
except a fallen soufflé."



415-307-1205



THE ALFA NOSE

ends), recite and sell. Artists who must write poetry in and out of Trieste, and poets who must create artwork, are doing just that. The four horsemen showed at the end of November when Worms was the staging area for Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Agnetta Falk, Jack Hirschman and photographer John Perino. THDer Sean O'Donnell filled the gallery walls with three decades of photographs of TH notables (hello, like who isn't?) and Sherry O'Donnell's drawings and paintings in the whimsical style of high end magazine illustrators. In early January, Maestro Mario Passavanti showed not only Telegraph Hill perspectives in oil, but "Scenes of Tuscany," fitting since he teaches fresco painting in Florence. Worms is indeed a moving feast.

Salons vs. Saloons

Five Points Arthouse (located on Bannam Lane off Green Street), another new venue for local artists, caters to the young and edgy. Curators Eric and Jessica Laurent, both artists-- paper, painting, collage -- moved from Wisconsin and put together multi-artist shows. Five Points was the site of the first intellectual forum in the THD Salon Series, where a dozen artists bravely assembled to explain the indefatigable need to create and find space in the neighborhood. The successful event included sculptors, painters, printmakers and poets, such as Thierry Rosset, Martine Jardel, Barbara Szerlip, Candace Loheed, Kevin Brown and

Jack Hirschman. Termeh Yeghiazarian deserves huge kudos for launching this on-going project.

Next was Joe Butler's show at the historically very significant Canessa Gallery (former Barbary Coast site of The Black Cat Cafe). At "A Visual Diary, an Architect's Personal Journey", Joe's reception overflowed with colleagues, politicos and a cross section of personages that make TH a focal point of creativity. Joe's art is an inviting perspective on his need to create, but why notebooks of watercolors and not simply a camera? "It is much more personal and rewarding to draw, paint the scene. I am part of it. Photography involved equipment, messing with f-stops. Once I shot an entire roll only to discover the film had not forwarded." Been there!

Touched by St. Francis

"God said to St Francis," Father Robert explained, "rebuild my church because it is falling into ruin, which St. Francis took literally and built three chapels."

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PLANNING & ZONING COMMITTEE REPORT

by Nancy Shanahan

NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (NBNCD):

Many changes are taking place in our neighborhood commercial district (NCD), with proposals to convert the ever-dwindling number of retail spaces to new eating and drinking establishments. As we reported in the Summer 2007 issue, over the last 20 years the number of restaurants and bars in North Beach has increased by over 35%, as neighborhood-serving businesses become a threatened species. And North Beach is suddenly ground zero for the latest eating fad: the rebirth of frozen yogurt outlets. In addition, there are several new proposals to convert the district's scarce supply of ground floor retail spaces to real estate offices. In the North Beach NCD, a conversion of former retail space to a restaurant, bar or office uses requires a special Conditional Use Approval (CUA) by the Planning Commission, but in the last 20 years, 91% of all CU applications in North Beach have been approved. Don't forget, once a new restaurant, bar or office use is approved by the Planning Commission, the use *stays with the property and the property owner* since it cannot be legally tied to any particular business. So the new use (and higher rents) remains although the business may change.

THD has appointed a sub-committee to examine what can or should be done to protect our remaining retail spaces and find ways to ensure that residents of North Beach and Telegraph Hill have access to neighborhood services. At least 7 other neighborhoods commercial districts in San Francisco, including those in the Castro, Inner Clement, Outer Clement, Upper Fillmore, Haight Street, Union Street and Noe Valley, have limited new conversions from retail to restaurants and bars. Should North Beach follow suit? This new sub-committee will explore this important topic.

RESTAURANTS & BARS:

1400 Grant (Swirl Culture). The Planning Commission approved a CUA to change this former retail

space to "Small Self-Service Restaurant" use in order to accommodate Honeydoo frozen yogurt. Past occupants of this space were clothing stores, including East-West Leather, Babette and Pixi). Following approval by the Commission, "Honeydoo" suddenly became "Swirl Culture."

527 Columbus (Red Mango). With over 14 locations in operation and more pending in the United States (and more than 130 in Korea), the Red Mango frozen yogurt chain is trying to defy North Beach's ordinance to keep out chain stores (called "formula retail" defined as a business with at least 11 locations nation wide). Applying for permits under the name "RNMB LLC" and claiming to be a full service restaurant, Red Mango managed to obtain a building permit before the neighborhood found out and blew the whistle. The Building Department suspended the permit on January 15th, but the fight may not be over.

507 Columbus (Vino Divino Wine Bar). The Planning Commission has been asked to consider CUA for another change from retail to Bar use with the addition of a Type 42 ABC license (which allows for the sale of beer and wine for consumption on or off the premises). Although the project sponsor added a few shelves to his original plans to show "retail" sales of wine and beer, the intent is to open a "wine bar" selling glasses of wine varietals offered in the store.

427 Columbus (Panta Rei). An application has been filed to convert the former Galletti Shoe Repair space from retail to restaurant and bar use to allow for the expansion

continued on next page

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P & Z COMMITTEE

of Panta Rei Restaurant & Bar into this adjacent space. This proposal will require three separate Conditional Use approvals from the Planning Commission: to convert a retail use into restaurant use, to allow bar use, and to exceed the use size permitted in the North Beach NCD.

627 Vallejo (Piazza Market). The former Rossi Market is being transformed into a specialty grocery store that will offer food for take-out, catering and a casual dining area for self-service dining. Diners will choose from hot and cold buffet-like stations, serving pastas and salads, plus dishes like stuffed bell peppers. There will also be specialty foods and a wine shop featuring Italian and Californian wines. The new owner is Sal Chiavino, a partner in Pier 39's Swiss Louis and Wines of California. The Planning Commission approved a CUA to allow "small self-service restaurant" use, with conditions requiring that the restaurant occupy an area under 940 sq. feet and be operated as an integral part of the market under a single operator.

1234-68 Grant (King Chacha Thai Restaurant / Manchester City Bar). Citizen Thai & the Monkey suddenly closed and these buildings sold to King of Thai Noodle, which has several locations in San Francisco. It was quickly repainted and reopened as "King Chacha Thai Restaurant" and "Manchester City Bar." Formerly Basta Pasta & La Pantera, the buildings are subject to a recorded Notice of Special Restrictions limiting the square footage of the dining area and requiring maintenance of the separate identities of the two original buildings, including differentiating them by using different color and tile schemes and physically separating the two interior spaces to the maximum extent feasible. The NSR also requires retention of the historic La Pantera sign.

continued from page 5

1741 Powell (Pagoda Theater). Permits have been filed to modify the building to accommodate a *new 3,875 square foot a Mexican restaurant*, 17 two-bedroom and 2 three-bedroom dwelling units within the existing building envelope, for a total of 400,875 square feet in 5 stories of developed space over basement parking. A total of 27 independently accessible parking spaces are proposed below grade with a garage entrance off Powell. The proposed new restaurant will require three separate CUAs from the Planning Commission: to convert the use to restaurant, to allow bar use, and to exceed the use size permitted in the NBNCD.

PROPOSALS TO CHANGE RETAIL SPACES TO OFFICE USE:

In the North Beach NCD, converting retail space to office use is discouraged through the Conditional Use process, since it further reduces the number of storefronts available for neighborhood serving retail uses. Three proposals are pending at this time:

805 Columbus. Several years ago, the former Do Wash Laundry was demolished to make way for a residential condo project. Located in the North Beach NCD,

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two retail spaces were required on the ground floor of the new building in order to maintain an active streetscape. The real estate company that built the condos is proposing to locate its offices to these storefronts in lieu of retail uses. In addition to a CUA to change the use from retail to office, the proposal will require another CUA for size to combine the two spaces for a total square footage over 2,000 square feet.

1429 Grant. As many of you know, Knitz & Leather, the retail business that occupied this location for over 19 years, was evicted by the owner who is now proposing to convert the space to office use for his real estate office requiring a CUA.

468 Green. A real estate company has occupied this ground floor space for several years without the required CUA. The Planning Department has required the company to apply for a CUA to legalize this conversion to office use.

GOOD MOVES:

1544 Grant (Macchiarini's Creative Design and Metalworks Gallery). In conjunction with Danny Macchiarini's move of his business to this location, he restored the storefront to its historical appearance.

1453 Grant (Knitz & Leather). Evicted from 1429 Grant, Knits and Leather found a new home in Macchiarini's recently vacated storefront.

HOUSING PROJECTS:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

THD has enjoyed working with Chinatown Community Development Center (CCDC) on the following projects and applauds CCDC's efforts to respect the character of historic buildings and districts while providing exceptional affordable housing for its residents.

1160 Grant at Broadway (Wells Fargo Building). In connection with CCDC's renovation of this building for affordable housing, a preservation architect assisted with exterior alterations to retrofit the structure and propose a new color scheme to enhance the exterior appearance of this prominent building on the Broadway corridor.

53 Columbus (Historic Ill's Hotel). Once threatened by demolition for the new City College campus, this

structure is being renovated to preserve affordable housing for its residents and provide a new home for the Asian Law Caucus. A preservation architect helped design an appropriate accessible entrance scheme and window treatment to maintain its historic character.

Broadway Family Housing (Broadway at Battery). Very near completion, this successful project built on an Embarcadero Freeway parcel fits well in the Northeast Waterfront Historic District thanks to a successful collaboration between the architect (Daniel Solomon) and neighborhood on design issues. CCDC is seeking ground floor retail tenants.

Broadway & Sansome Family Housing. CCDC's newest proposal will transform another Embarcadero Freeway parcel into affordable housing. In the early stages of design, the structure will have an interior courtyard visible from Broadway and storefronts to create a vibrant streetscape for the neighborhood. THD looks forward to another successful collaboration to finalize design details for this prominent site, and has recommended that a community committee once again be set-up to work with the project architect.

MARKET-RATE CONDOMINIUMS:

In addition to the condo project proposed for the **Pagoda Theater** (discussed above), several other large-scale market-rate condo projects are in the works:

555 Washington (Transamerica project). This proposed 400 ft high glass and limestone structure would provide 240 condominium units and 230 underground parking spaces on the same block as the Transamerica Pyramid. To build the project, the developer would have to convince the City to double the site's existing 200-foot height limit. An offer to expand the private Redwood Park and offer it to the City is a part of the proposal. An environmental impact report (EIR) will be conducted to assess potential impacts.

Tower Records (Columbus at Bay). A "Planned Unit Development" (PUD) on the Tower Records site proposes 46 condominium units and 82 parking spaces, with a below-street-level retail space. By combining parcels and measuring the site's 40-foot height limit by utilizing

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ADDITIONAL LIGHTING INSTALLED IN WASHINGTON SQUARE

by Herb Kosovitz

The Committee to Illuminate Washington Square, formed in 1991, selected a lighting proposal that was comprised of seven pole lights and approximately thirty ground-mounted uplights. That installation, completed in 1992, was the first contemporary attempt to relight the park. It was a great improvement; the uplights cast a lovely glow, and those surrounding the poplars in the center of the park created light that established a sense of space at the park's heart.

The maintenance and uses of Washington Square elicit numerous and conflicting opinions that are deeply felt; however, a broad consensus—people traversing the park at night, adjacent merchants, and police—agreed that safety issues dictated an increased light-

ing level along the pathways. The original Committee, now called the Friends of Washington Square, has been working since 2002 with the North Beach Merchants' Association to consider additional lighting options. A proposal to add eleven pole lights, refit the existing pole lights to make them brighter on the ground and more efficient, and to refurbish the existing ground uplights was accepted after much effort, which included input from a community meeting.

Finally, the eleven new poles have been installed and the existing poles relamped. Funding for the new poles and for minimal refurbishment of uplights was provided by the Public Utilities Commission. Installation was provided by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The excellent and patient

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P & Z COMMITTEE

ing the topography to its advantage, the structure would appear to exceed the 40 foot height limit on Columbus by 10-20 feet, with 5 stories plus roof top features extending an additional 16 feet above the roofline.

LIMITING ROOFTOP FEATURES/ EXCEPTIONS TO HEIGHT LIMIT

A flurry of new and proposed extensive roof top additions on Telegraph Hill has raised questions and controversies over what roof top elements should and should not be allowed as exemptions to the 40 foot height limit. At what point is a roof top addition essentially an additional floor of living space above the height limit? Should kitchens, dining areas, spas and fireplaces be allowed? Does such additions make sense in light of the 40-foot height limit? What should the exceptions be to the existing height limit? A new sub-committee has been formed to explore these questions and determine whether the neighborhood should suggest changes to the Planning Code concerning roof top additions.

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NORTHEAST WATERFRONT HISTORIC DISTRICT:

915-21 Front (Daniel Gibb Warehouses). In the Fall 2007 Issue of the Semaphore, we reported on the history of the two Daniel Gibb Warehouses in the Northeast Waterfront Historic District. We have learned that the warehouse located at 915-21 Front will soon be renovated. As part of the renovation, non-historic balconies, awnings and affixed lights will be removed, inappropriate window treatment that occurred over time will be reversed, and a partial-footprint 1-story rooftop addition with a mechanical screening parapet will be added. The proposed addition will be set-back so that it will not be visible from the pedestrian perspective from the corner of Front and Vallejo, and because of the height of the adjacent building to the west, formerly known as the Busvan Building, it will not be visible from Telegraph Hill.





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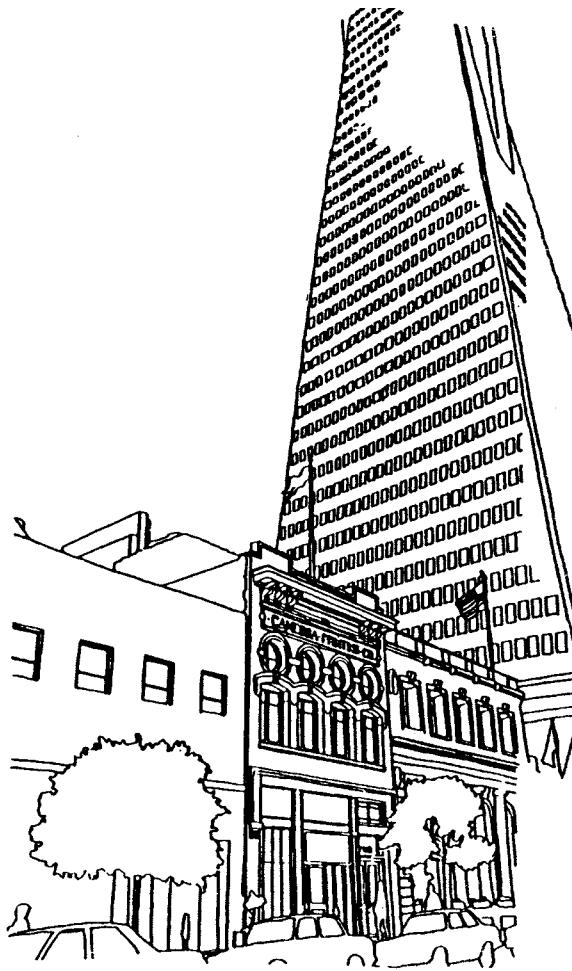
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IN MEMORIAM: THE WASHINGTON SQUARE BAR & GRILL

PLEASE DON'T REST IN PEACE

By Ernest Beyl

Shock waves bounced around San Francisco—and as far east as New York City—this past New Year's Day when word got around that the Washington Square Bar & Grill was locking up, shutting down, going out of business.

Actually the Square—as we regulars called it (never the Washbag; that was taxi driver code) was over and done with back in 1990. That was when founder and ringmaster Ed Moose, its tireless promoter-proprietor, walked away from the business. A couple of years later he opened his eponymous restaurant Moose's—just across the Square—Washington Square, of course.

At that point the legendary Washington Square Bar & Grill—the real one—morphed into the Washington Square Bar & Grill-lite and went on for several years, first under Peter Lomax and later Peter Osborne. But although Lomax was a fine host and provided a good table and Osborne tried for awhile before bailing out and opening Mo Mo's by the ballpark, things were never the same back at 1707 Powell Street in North Beach.

Well, I wish I could report that things returned

to normal—normal being that reporters, columnists, TV types, cops, politicians, tycoons, socialites, sports stars and just plain folks were in residence daily—but that wasn't the case.

Credit to Guy Ferri, when he saw the light and decided to re-create the Square, he put quintessential Irish bartender Michael McCourt behind the plank, and those of us who were still undergoing withdrawal symptoms and trying to suck it up at Capps Corner, Gino and Carlo's, Red's in Chinatown, the House of Shields—and other drinking establishments for the drinking establishment—returned to the Square. We disciples would have followed McCourt to Ponca City, Oklahoma if he had fetched up there, but, as I said—things were never the same. How could they be?

Opened in 1973, the Washington Square Bar & Grill with Moose and his partner Sam Deitsch setting the stage, an in-crowd soon took over. Those who come to mind are Ron Fimrite, Claude Jarman, Vernon Alley, the Eden Brothers (Ted and Tom), Herb Caen, Stan Delaplane, Charles McCabe, Stephanie Salter, Glenn Dorenbusch, Scott Beach, Deanna Mooney,

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Washington Square Lighting continued from page 8

Project Coordinator, Lizzy Hirsch, and Bob Mittelstadt, who has worked tirelessly on park lighting over the years, deserve our heartfelt thanks for their efforts to accomplish this.

The Department of Recreation and Parks has agreed to maintain the ground uplights which have been the responsibility of the Friends of Washington Square since 2000. Some grading, and work required for refurbishment of the uplights is ongoing. This is an integral part of the lighting design, and we will continue working to insure that this is accom-

plished. Meanwhile, the North Beach Merchants' Association intends to pursue a new funding phase for the ultimate replacement of all existing ground-mounted uplights (plus the addition of possibly forty more) with new LED fixtures, when the technology becomes available.

People interested in joining our effort to preserve and beautify the park are invited to contact Friends of Washington Square at P.O.Box 330241, S.F.C.A. 94133, or email hkosovitz@sbcglobal.net.





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BROADWAY CORRIDOR REPORT

by Mike Madrid, Chair of the Broadway Corridor Subcommittee

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the Entertainment Commission held its first *Nightlife Safety Summit* on Friday, January 15. The purpose of the summit was to address various safety issues that have come up in bars and nightclubs over the past several months, in particular, concerns about violence and crime. Kevin Ryan from the Criminal Justice Office, Police Chief Heather Fong, and Entertainment Commission President Audrey Joseph all addressed the attendees, which included nightclub owners and promoters, security personnel, police, and concerned neighbors. The overall message was very direct—nightlife is an intrinsic part of San Francisco's appeal and history and is what draws many visitors to our city. However, the city agencies

involved say they will not tolerate any more violence or crime in nightclubs. The bottom line is that nightlife establishments throughout the City must undergo City-mandated changes to make these places safe for patrons and for neighbors who live in the vicinity. The attendees were invited to be part of the process and help develop the solutions, but it was clear that new policies would be instituted whether nightlife owners got involved or not. The good news is that Broadway is considered to be one of the safer nightlife areas of the City, thanks to the efforts of Captain Jim Dudley and the officers of Central Station over the past year. Hopefully, through the continued efforts of our local police and stricter policies instituted by the City, Broadway will become a safer area of North Beach that local residents will not feel they have to avoid.



ROSALIE TURNS 100!

By Patricia Cady

Rosalie Taggi celebrated her 100th birthday in October with a lively party in her Telegraph Hill home hosted by her daughter Beatrice. Rosalie arrived in San Francisco as a young bride in 1930 and built her life around volunteer service to the neighborhood. As a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi Church she sponsored free pasta feeds for hungry locals. In time, she started a popular long-running thrift shop, donating proceeds to the church and helping young families and struggling

neighbors have what they needed, whether or not they could pay.

In 1944 Rosalie put on twenty-pound horsehide coveralls and went to work as a welder in the Richmond Shipyards. Our own "Rosie the Riveter" was honored by Telegraph Hill Dwellers in 2003 when a bronze plaque was laid in her honor at the corner of Vallejo and Kearny Streets. Reading it, a tourist remarked, "She must be an important person." She certainly is.



sem.a.phore

DEFINITION: *To convey information using visual signals, such as flags, lights and mechanical arms.*

In the 19th century, Telegraph Hill was a lookout spot. A man stood at the top and watched for ships arriving through the Golden Gate. He used semaphore signals to spell out ships' names to the people below who were waiting for goods and mail. Neighbors who formed Telegraph Hill Dwellers in 1954 named their newsletter to salute this early use of the Hill.

AN OVERDUE HONOR FOR COIT TOWER

by Art Peterson

On January 29, 2008, Coit Tower was designated a National Historic Site. That means the structure joins the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. While no plans to demolish Coit Tower seem imminent, Stephen Worsely, the mover and shaker behind the application for this historic status, wasn't taking any chances. For 18 years, Worsely and Coit Depression Preservationists, his small but hearty organization, have proselytized against commercialism at Coit Tower. Worsely's love of the site and tower comes through in his writing: "For 75 years Coit Tower has offered us, as Herb Caen once said, 'a bit of breathing room' in an ever crowded environment." Pioneer Park was, Worsely says, "itself a gift from our privileged philanthropists to protect this vantage point from commercialization." The "Coit Experience" Worsely says, "should not be denigrated with another commercialized tourist-oriented concession."

What does Worsely want? "Our tasteful rich"—as Worsely calls them—"should once again unite to save Pioneer Park and convince the mayor and supervisors that the city should designate the rotunda as a Depression-era heritage site with informative docents in costumes teaching a vital lesson, not unlike the wonderful effort we made at the Hyde Street Pier. The tower's greatest historical significance is that it houses a treasured New Deal time capsule of American Scene Art which should always be used to teach generations to come about the trauma of the Great Depression and how those years of confusion coursed through the fabric of our nation."

However, when Worsely presented the nuts and bolts of his proposal to the Recreation and Park Commission, it was rejected as not viable. Instead

the commission is considering the application of Coit Partners LLC. (See story page 15.)

Worsely has a website: SaveCoit.org and can be reached at 916-281 8268.

Here are some facts from Worsely's application for National Historic Site status that may be new to readers.

1. There are at least five "official" names for Coit Tower.

2. The tower is constructed of three concrete cylinders one inside the other.

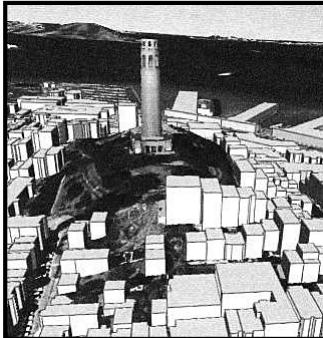
3. The tower was constructed between 1932 and 1933, as a memorial to the volunteer firemen who died in the five major fires in San Francisco history. But, as we locals know, the fluted tower was not constructed to resemble a fire hose.

4. The present gift shop at the tower served for years as a broom closet

5. In planning for the rotunda murals, space was allotted to the 26 participating San Francisco artists on the basis of their reputations. The most well known artists worked on 10' x 36' sections and lesser known artists received 10' x 4' sections.

6. There are murals on the presently inaccessible second floor of the tower. These murals were executed by the so called "Ivory Tower Group" whose work tended toward the sentimental and nationalistic. This work contrasted sharply with the social realism of the rotunda artists whose work called attention to effects of the prolonged Great Depression and offered a radical response.

7. Because the tower's stairwell has been off limits for many years, visitors are not able to enjoy the frescoes of Lucien Labaudt which depict scenes of Powell Street in 1934 using all familiar faces. Labaudt's work



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THD SPONSORS COIT TOWER DIALOGUE

by Art Peterson

On the evening of December 17, 2007, The Telegraph Hill Dwellers sponsored a meeting at the Sts Peter and Paul Cafeteria to allow community members to gain information and voice concerns about the negotiations between San Francisco's Recreation and Park Department and the potential Coit Tower Lessee/Concessionaire, Alexander Leff.

Present at the meeting were Mr. Leff and his architect Mark Cavigenero, Tom Hart and Margot A. Shaub of San Francisco Park and Recreation Department and, in the audience, approximately 45 neighborhood residents.

What follows is a partial summary of the discussion that went on that evening based on the transcript provided by volunteer court reporter Sondra Leque. Many of the statements are paraphrases, not direct quotes.

The Process:

Mr. Hart began by saying that the Request for Proposals (RFP) process had been a lengthy one, lasting two years. He said, "The first process was cancelled because we did not see how we were going to be able to move ahead financially with these proposals ... neither of them really met the criteria of what we had hoped for."

According to Hart, these criteria included upgrading the quality of the merchandise sold in the gift shop "because that was something we had always gotten complaints about from the neighbors." Another criterion concerned improving the quality of the food service as well as upgrading the food vending vehicle.

Hart said that when a second round of proposals was requested, Mr Leff's original proposal "addressed all the concerns in the RFP, and we were prepared to move forward with that, but because of various delays, we are where we are today."

The Finances

Hart said that RecPark receives 90 percent of the tower's elevator revenue, of about \$325,000 a year. On anything over that amount the department would get 75 percent. He said that RecPark is responsible for funding recreational programs throughout the city, and that money collected from the elevator and the food service is distributed to support all these programs. The funds are not specifically designated for maintenance of the Coit Tower site. But, he added, this revenue does help offset the costs of taking care of Pioneer Park.

Hart said the initial term of the lease will be ten years, and there would be a possible option period of five years after that.

Who is Alexander Leff?

Alexander Leff is a lawyer and real estate developer, a native San Franciscan from the Richmond District who attended San Francisco public schools. "I grew into an appreciation of parks," he said, "as my mother, Muriel Leff, built the first mini park in San Francisco, one that is named after her."

Leff claims neighborhood connections, saying he previously had lived on Telegraph Hill for about 15 years. "I see some of my former neighbors here," he said. "I don't want to do something that will be at odds with you," he told the audience.

Mr Leff's Vision

Leff began discussing his plans by commenting on what he characterized as some of the misinformation floating around about his project. "I've heard... we're going to bring Starbucks there.... and we're going to bring a restaurant to Coit Tower." He denied both these assertions.

Moving into the specifics of his proposal, Leff

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PARKS & TREES REPORT

by Robert Mattei

As reported in the fall issue of the *Semaphore*, I have replaced Joe Butler as the Chair of the Parks and Trees Committee for THD. Among our projects are the planting of new trees, replacing dead trees, and filling empty tree basins in the neighborhood.

Here is a brief overview on how to get a tree planted where there is not a tree basin already cut into the sidewalk. An application must be filled out and signed by the owner of the property. Do not let this discourage you if you are a renter and want a tree planted; simply fill out the application and get your building owner to approve it. Once I have collected enough applications I will submit them all to the Friends of the Urban Forrest (FUF) who ultimately

provide the trees once clearance is granted from The Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW comes out to do a site survey to make sure it is possible to plant in your designated spot. Unfortunately, not everyone who wants a tree may get one, but it is definitely worth the effort to try.

When I get between 30 and 40 applications, I will submit them all to the FUF. In the meantime, I am starting to concentrate on planting trees in the existing empty tree basins around the neighborhood.

If you have an empty tree basin, or would like an application to plant a new tree, please contact me. Also, please contact me if you are interested in volunteering to help distribute tree-planting applications around the neighborhood. Let's "green" the Hill and make it an even more beautiful place to live than it already is.

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COLOMBO BUILDING TO RECEIVE HISTORIC STATUS

by Art Peterson

This spring the Colombo Building, the two story Classical Revival structure that dominates the North West corner of the intersection of Columbus and Washington, will be added to the National Register of Historic Places, the country's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The present building, along with the 1909 Old Transamerica Building (also known as the Fugazi Building and currently occupied by the Church of Scientology) across the street, are the pillars that border the Columbus Avenue gateway to North Beach.

Designed in 1913 by master architects James and Merritt Reid, the triangular shaped building replaced an earlier building that until 1906 had housed, among other occupants, A.P. Ginannini's Bank of Italy. In 1906 this structure, like almost all of North Beach, was destroyed in the Earthquake and Fire. The owner of the original building was Elsie Drexler, one of the first female financiers in San Francisco. (In 1914, 63 "capitalists" were listed in San Francisco directories and of these only Elsie Drexler and Emily Hopkins were female.)

As San Francisco was being rebuilt Drexler joined forces with the Reid Bros to erect the Colombo Building in a neighborhood in which, according to a contemporary account, "nearly all the buildings had been old and very shabby. They will be succeeded by

new and ornamental ones, the erection of which will create employment for several hundred workmen. North Beach in every way will be greatly benefited."

The team of Drexler and the Reid Bros. were, in fact, responsible for several notable post earthquake structures still standing in downtown San Francisco. Some of these are the Garfield Building at 938-942 Market Street, the Drexler Estates Building at 111 New Montgomery, and the western portion of the O'Conner-Moffatt Building at 117-129 Post.

But the Colombo building was more neighborhood than downtown, as is evidenced by the names of some of the firms that occupied its retail and office spaces: Zappetini & Perasso, agents for the Pacific Coast branch of Italian Steamship Lines; auto dealer E. Jacopetti; an immigration assistance agency, Gerali-Marchi; attorney E. P Anderlini, and the Cuniberti's cigar store. In those days nothing said North Beach more emphatically than

the Colombo Building.

The current owner of the Colombo Building is City College of San Francisco, which has plans to build a multi-storyed structure nearby. With many changes going on in our neighborhood, the placement of the Colombo Building on the National Register of Historic Places serves as a reminder that there are many pieces of our past that deserve to remain with us.



THE CIVIL GRAND JURY: A NEIGHBORHOOD VEHICLE FOR CHANGE

By Howard Wong, Civil Grand Jury 2005-06

Worldly Hill Dwellers seem to make good Civil Grand Jurors. Interestingly, four Hill Dwellers, out of nineteen jurors, served on the 2005-2006 Civil Grand Jury. From our neighborhood, Beate Boultinghouse, Mike Lusse, Chris Stockton, and Howard Wong accepted the responsibility of jury service. Not surprisingly, citizens of the northeast quadrant have long been entrenched in City issues and good government.

Civil Grand Jury Reports spark scrutiny of the status quo by the Mayor, Board of Supervisors,

department heads, city officials and media.

Our own Grand Jury stirred passionate focus on timely issues that included emergency medical preparedness and technology in government. In the process, we interacted with City leadership, agencies and organizations and received an incomparable education in local government. The legally-mandated inspection of the City's jails was particularly eye-popping.

Grand Jury participation also provided a lesson in human nature. Individual jurors have wide-ranging and valid perspectives on the same evidentiary evidence. Like the 1957 movie classic, "12 Angry Men," where emotions and interpretations rise from diverse life experiences and motivations, a 19-person Grand Jury can have similar strains—although the consensus process seems to work. Today's juries are fairly diverse in gender, race and economic background, but we noted a need for greater representation of youth, minorities and lower income groups.

Armed with the power of subpoena, the Grand Jury's empowerment to procure facts and testimony creates a fertile dynamic for consensus and change. Those jurors appalled at the permit inequities in the neighborhood seized the opportunity to investigate the Department of Building Inspection, learning about challenges and making recommendations to turn things around. Other jurors were surprised by research into emergency medical response, finding a lack of strategic planning. The importance of NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams) and community preparedness seemed paramount. Other reports found noteworthy successes and praised effective agencies and programs.

Not for the faint of heart, the Civil Grand Jury serves a one-year term. Some jurors find great satisfaction and status, volunteering for second terms.

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HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE CIVIL GRAND JURY:

Grand Jury eligibility includes U.S. citizenship, minimum age of 18, one year minimum residency in the City & County of San Francisco, ordinary intelligence, good character, and a working knowledge of English. Jurors take an oath of permanent secrecy to protect those interviewed from possible retribution.

Application deadline is **April 18, 2008** for service from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. For Grand Jury details and application form, go to www.sfgov.org/site/courts_page.asp?id=3680.

(or www.sfgov.org and "Search" for "Superior Court, Civil Grand Jury").

Applications are also available at the Grand Jury office, 400 McAllister Street, Room 008 (lower level) or by phone at (415)-551-3605—weekdays 8 am to 4:30 pm.

On the website, you can read past **Grand Jury Reports**—many featured in newspapers, radio and television news. Take a gander! You may be a perfect candidate for the Civil Grand Jury!

SCOTT HOWARD: WHERE FLAVORS COMBINE



By Carol Peterson

The Semaphore writes about only four neighborhood restaurants each year. Because of this limitation, we focus on those establishments we can review positively.

**Scott Howard, 500 Jackson St., San Francisco
94133 415.956.7040 ★ ★ ★ ★**

Remember the Cypress Club? The feeling of stepping right into Aladdin's tent, swaying to the music of Frank Jackson on the tiny dance floor and enjoying the good-for-the-times food? All of North Beach mourned the closing of this popular neighborhood eatery. What could replace it? Walking by the location one day, I noticed the interior had been changed; a fish place was coming in. But we never tried it. Something about the empty tables and new decor wasn't inviting.

But in 2005, when Scott Howard, whose popular cuisine I knew from his Fork restaurant in San Anselmo, took over the space, it was time to return to this Jackson Street venue. Since then, I've been back several times, always loving the seasonal, fresh and innovative dishes. The food has all the creative preparation of a snobby, prestigious place, but without the pretension.

On a recent visit, our fourth, we decided to try eight dishes. After ordering, we met with the extremely knowledgeable sommelier, Arash Pakzad, who suggested an exquisite bottle of pinot noir to complement our food. The restaurant has an extensive wine list—about 140 varieties. Our experience with the sommelier was typical of the excellent service we received throughout our meal.

Many dishes were still on the menu from our visit the previous winter, when Scott was offering his Dine

About Town menu for \$31.95. As Scott is a celebrant of the seasons, there were wonderful new dishes as well. I was again delighted to see the sweet and rich carrot "broth" on the menu. The bright orange puree was anchored with a dollop of creamy chervil sabayon and drizzled with truffle oil.

If you like raw dishes, Scott's Ahi tuna tartare is the best in town. The fish is finely diced and accompanied by avocado, vanilla bean oil, ponzi for a little spice, chorizo and piperade, providing a wonderful marriage of flavors. Another appetizer, scallop sashimi, was so delicate that there was barely a need to chew. The bright yellow uni on top of the scallops was creamy and intense, like eating egg yolk drenched in butter.

For the main course, the Colorado lamb loin raised the stakes on a great lamb dish. The eggplant caponata, currants, capers and olive jus provided just the right combination for this tender lamb.

For dessert I was a sucker for the butterscotch pudding, but this wasn't the five minute Jell-O pudding my brother I and used to make after school. From the first bite I was transported into pudding heaven. This creamy, rich delicacy was topped with fresh whipped cream. I wanted a foam sponge to finish the dish.

Last year, Scott told me he was extending his Dine About Town for another month because it was such a success. Let's keep our fingers crossed that he considers extending this January event again.

With Scott Howard we have another keeper here in North Beach, one that has the staying power to thrive in a finicky city that doesn't go back if the food isn't good. If you haven't yet visited Scott Howard, you are missing a great meal.

JAMES REDO: BORN TO DO ART



In this ongoing *Semaphore* series, artist Sherry O'Donnell interviews North Beach Artists.

I've always been devoted to the great women in my life, but truly, my art is my mistress.

—James Redo

James Redo was born in San Francisco, but, because of his father's employment, he spent his youth traveling the world with his family. "Going to the great museums was my education in art," he says.

Redo has been making art as long as he can remember. "It was always something I had to do. I had no choice. I've had a steady stream going on like a momentum for all my years."

S: I've noticed that your more recent work has taken on a Mayan or Aztec influence.

R: I've always had a love for primitive art. It strikes a tone in me that's very deep. Wherever I've gone, I've looked for that ancient origin. I've spent time in Mexico, Central America, and South America. I've gone to lots of ruins, drawing and painting.

S: So you feel emotionally comfortable in the tribal and the more primitive aspects of art?

R: It speaks to me. I think that everything that I do carries that primitive aspect. I love seeing all that antiquity around me from places and civilizations that don't even have names anymore because they're so old.

S: What's your latest project?

R: One of my latest projects is a 100 foot long piece —my San Francisco monumental piece. I put all these drawings together to become one. So far,

it's 100 feet long and that's what I'd shown at the Berkeley Museum of Art. I've done 50 feet more since and I'm going to add more this year. At my upcoming show at Worms, I'll be showing a fusion piece that's 25 feet long. That show will be opening on March 15.

S: Is that something that you've shown before?

R: I've shown part of it. It's hard for me to show a lot because I have this epic vision. I see in large depth, breadth and height.

S: Speaking of epic pieces, tell us that story about that epic piece that was stolen.

R: Oh yes, An 18 foot painting of mine, was stolen many years ago by a guy that I'd taught how to paint and draw. He was angry because I wouldn't teach him anymore. I had been living in the Haight in the 60s when I had to get out from everything that I knew, so I went to Hawaii to let it all settle down because I'd been a real space cowboy- lots of mescaline, peyote and acid. And so this character came and found me. So I said, "Look, that part of my life is over. I'm not a teacher anymore." I was kind of a guru to a whole bunch of artists.

: Well, he came back to San Francisco and stole some of my paintings that I had in storage, and he took them to East LA, cut some of them up and gave them to people (or so he told me). The rest I figured were gone. I don't like to harbor grudges so I just let it go. So, one day, a couple of years ago, I get a phone call and it's this character. He said, "Hey, Redo, remember all those paintings that I took from you?" And I said, "Yeah". He said "You





remember that Kundolini painting? I still have it." I said, "Oh, you do?" And he said, "Yeah, I've been carrying it around with me for 30 years, and would you like it back?" I said, "sure!"

S: I guess he found carrying around an 18 ft. painting with him a little difficult after awhile.

R: Well, he was carrying it around in his van and he'd taken very good care of it. It was really remarkable. The way he explained it, he was on his way north to Arcata, to see his son and so, he would stop by and give me the painting. Then a week later, I get a call and he says, "Redo, I'm here. Why don't you meet me at the garage?" So I walked over to the garage, and he pulls out the painting and there it is!

S: So, now you're showing it.

R: Yeah, now I'm showing it for the first time. Nobody had ever seen it—I had never seen it unrolled since I did it.

S: The long lost child.

S: Well, I'm curious about those places that you'd mentioned where many artists and musicians had studios in the neighborhood. What was the Chicken Factory?

R: The Chicken Factory was the old San Francisco Poultry Co. at Sansome and Filbert, and it was filled with artists. It was one of those warehouses that was built in the old days, and it was virtually abandoned. Most of these factories down there had a caretaker at best. But they were just owned by the real estate companies and they were infested with artists. It turns out that it's a good thing that those artists stayed there because they kept

the buildings from being burnt down. Everybody was really good people. And nobody knew about it except the artists and the musicians. And so it was all that culture, that sub-culture of artists and creative types.

S: So, do you know anybody that's still around?

R: Well, Carlos Santana had the studio above mine for awhile. There were a lot of famous and infamous people around. A lot of people that quit art and went into practical things, you know, and got jobs. Course, none of those people are close to me now.

S: How long have you been in North Beach?

R: I've been living here off and on since the 60s. When the Haight collapsed, I pretty much came over here. It's just naturally a social place because of all of the restaurants here. Café Malvina was one of the great cafes. Caffe Trieste was always happening; they were artist friendly. This was an artists-friendly neighborhood.

S: Yes. I hope it always will be.

R: Yes. As long as the sleaze factor on Broadway is there, this will be an artist friendly community.

S: Very interesting, and why do you say that?

R: Well, it'll never go upscale, as long as Broadway has all those strip clubs out there; It gives that spice to the neighborhood and tolerates people on the fringe....

S: Where do you work?

R: I work at home and I share a studio with an associate of mine. But I haven't done any sculpture for awhile because I haven't had a yard to work in. Lately, I've been concentrating on prints of my work. They'll be available through my website: jamesredo.com. Then there's my show at Worms. I'll be showing a little of the old and a little of the new.

S: James Redo, thank you.



COIT Tower Dialogue

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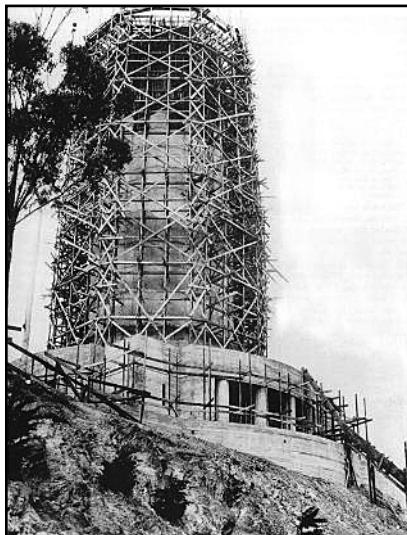
said the overall experience of visiting the tower can be enriched with more information. "I think that visitors should get excited even before they enter the building about what they're going to see." He said there needs to be graphics and educational interpretive signage that are tasteful, thoughtful, and "maybe multi-lingual." According to Leff's plan, before visitors enter the tower there would be signage—and perhaps an information booth with brochures—that will help them understand what the city was like at the time of the Depression, "so when they enter the tower they will be engaged by what they see."

Leff also wants to allow access to areas of the tower currently off limits, to the interior staircases with its murals, as well the murals on the second floor balustrade level. "These are the hidden treasures of Coit Tower"

Leff also believes food service can be improved. "When people get to the top of the hill they want to enjoy themselves a bit. I think it's appropriate to offer a cup of coffee and a snack." To facilitate these services, Leff is considering bringing in James Freeman of Blue Bottle Coffee who provides the coffee carts at the Ferry Plaza Market. He also wants to make available the organic hotdogs purveyed by Larry Bain of Let's Be Frank.

"My idea would to set out a few tables and a few umbrellas so people could sit down rather than sit on the cold concrete facing bumpers of parked cars"

On the subject of merchandise in the gift shop, Leff had little to say beyond, "I would hope the retail inventory could better match what I see is a higher demographic visitor at Coit Tower...people that are coming for a cultural experience." Leff said he has no



SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

plans to enlarge the footprint of the store, and Hart said that would not be allowed.

Questions and Concerns

The meeting opened up to questions and comments from the floor. Here are some of them and Leff's responses:

Is there a plan to have special events?

"I don't think it's possible to have large scale events. You can't—there's no traffic access, [but] is there a type of event [say] 25 people with acoustic music and cocktails? I'm open to thinking about it.

But I don't think that anybody wants to have a wedding up there with "We are Family" playing every night for the next ten years."

Would he be willing to have a provision in the lease that specifies that, not only would special events be limited, but that there would be a neighborhood group that would know about and review events ahead of time?

"My hope would be that there would be a group, sort of our liaison with the neighborhood."

Is he planning on asking for a liquor license to sell beer and wine?

"One of the things we need to talk about...is the security problem. Kids driving up with cases of beer in their cars. That's not necessarily a glass of Prosecco to a visitor. I think I have to go up there and prove myself, that we're not bringing people up from North Beach to get drunk. And then I'm going to come back to you in a year and say: What do you think? Can James sell a glass of Prosecco?"

There were concerns about Leff's hope that visits to the tower would increase significantly as a

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COIT Tower Dialogue

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result of his work to improve the facility. What effect would this have on the congestion?

Though Leff's application does seem to indicate an interest in promoting more visits to the hill, he answered that he was not necessarily interested in increasing the number of visitors who come at peak hours, but rather in increasing the number of paid visitors. "They're already there to pay us some money and go up the elevator without bringing up new bodies from the flat lands."

In terms of alleviating the automobile queues that have plagued the neighborhood each weekend for decades, Leff had some suggestions, some new, some recycled. 1. Even out the demand by encouraging people to come at off peak hours. 2. Make the 39 bus more viable, promoting it and routing the bus so it leaves from Pier 39. 3. Employ a web site and brochures to show visitors where they can find off-site parking and how to get on the 39 Coit Tower.

Here are some other some other questions and concerns raised by those present:

We have terrific coffee in North Beach. Why don't we have a North Beach coffee person selling coffee?

If you open up the stairway and balustrade level how are you going to prevent damage to the murals?

I don't want to see another Disneyland on the Hill... There's no need for kitschy fire trucks.

Is there a way to bring all the City Departments that have a responsibility for Coit Tower together to work together on this?

In general, while the residents were wary of Mr. Leff's plan and wanted more specifics, they were more displeased with the failure to communicate on the part of the RecPark. "Why didn't we have meetings a year ago about all these issues? Why are we here now?" one speaker asked.

As the meeting adjourned Mr. Leff said he

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WHAT'S THE WHOLE STORY ON COIT TOWER?

The discussion that took place at the THD forum held in December around the proposal by Alexander Leff to take over the Coit Tower concession did not probe many of aspects of Leff's written proposal which Rec and Park seemed poised to approve. The proposal—too long to adequately summarize here—did not—to say the least—lack for imagination. By dipping into some of its specifics, readers may gain insight into the document's tone:

Presently there are 125,00 paid visitors to Coit Tower each year. The concession's goal in the first year would be to boost this number to 200,000, in the second year to 350,000 and by the fifth year to 2.8 time current visitors. "[Part of] our financial success will depend on our ability to attract more visitors to Coit Tower."

Under Leff's proposal there would be:

- souvenir elevator tickets with advertising on them.
- a themed "steam pumper" fire truck coffee cart at the rear (south) of the tower.
- a photographic station at the south lawn where kids could have pictures snapped "in front of reproductions of cowboys, firemen or policemen."
- tower staff dressed in period firefighters uniforms.
- "theme related music" in the elevator.
- direct sales to tour and motor coach operators. (note: Tour buses are not currently allowed on Telegraph Hill Blvd.).
- an increase in the price of an elevator ticket to \$4.50.
- attendants on Lombard & Kearney handing out flyers with directions or discount coupons for off-site lots.

—AP

THE MARITIME MUSEUM GETS A REDO

by Sally Towsé

The next to last time I visited the San Francisco Maritime Museum in the Aquatic Park Bathhouse building at 900 Beach Street it was stuffed with exhibits: Beniamino Bufano sculptures, the "Communications At Sea" exhibit, ships' figureheads, ship models, scrimshaw, mast sections, spars, a re-creation of a 1943 Victory ship radio room and more.

On my most recent visit, accompanied by my guide Lynn Cullivan of the National Park Service (NPS), it was a much different scene. All these artifacts have been temporarily removed while the museum's interior and exterior undergo substantial renovation. Still present are the exterior green-slate reliefs created by Sargent Johnson, a well-regarded San Francisco African American artist, that flank the Beach Street doors to the building. Hilaire Hiler's wild, colorful murals of the two lost continents of Mu and Atlantis pop out from the walls of the now-empty lobby. More Hiler and Johnson work decorate the second floor. Outside on the veranda, colorful Johnson-designed tile mosaics cover the walls. Inside the bathrooms, more murals.

Where did this gem of a building come from?

The \$1.5 million WPA-San Francisco Aquatic Park project was dedicated in 1939 after years of work. WPA and the Federal Arts Project (FAP) stepped in after San Francisco ran short of funding to transform Black Point Cove into Aquatic Park.

The Bathhouse building, designed for 5,000 people, was the centerpiece of the project. Intended to serve hardy Bay bathers, the building is a Streamline Moderne design in a nautical motif by father/son architects, William Mooser II and III.

A 1939 Time Magazine article details some Bathhouse features: "Curious modern improvements



await swimmers when they come in from the Park's 1,000-foot strand: automatic showers set off by photoelectric eyes; towel-less drying in warm air currents."

The building with its murals and tile mosaics was an instant success. With San Francisco's blessing, a pair of brothers opened the Casino restaurant in the building, before the building was finished. The FAP artists and the brothers did not get on. As witness, on the veranda, is a partially-finished mosaic. Upset at the brothers, artists walked off the job, never to return.

The restaurant failed. Philanthropist Alma Spreckels moved ship models displayed at the 1939 Treasure Island World's Fair into the building, intend-

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COIT Tower Dialogue

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would take under advisement all that he had heard, and Mr. Hart promised there would be another meeting as new plans materialized. That meeting was scheduled for 6PM. , February 21, at the Sts. Peter & Paul Cafeteria.



ANOTHER YEAR OF THD HOLIDAY CHEER

by Gerry Hurtado

THD's holiday dinner party, held Dec. 10 at Caesar's restaurant, drew its usual big crowd. This year, they convened in the lounge and warmed quickly to the holiday spirit, helped along by jazz and a few holiday favorites supplied by B.J. Papa on piano and Emily Palen on violin.

Among the notables present was Supervisor Aaron Peskin. Peskin, who served as a past president of the Dwellers, moved through the crowd greeting everyone by first name. It's hard to believe that seven years have gone by since the Dwellers helped elect Peskin supervisor for District 3. And, even though he still has almost a year to go in office, candidates Tony Gantner and Joe Alioto Jr. were on hand to meet and greet the membership.

After the diners were seated, Nancy Shanahan, THD's Vice-President introduced the guest speaker, Central Police Station Capt. James Dudley, who gave a very interesting talk on the state of policing in our area.

Over the past several months, Dudley has been meeting with neighborhood groups and businesses along the Broadway strip, searching for ways to ameliorate the rowdiness. At Dudley's suggestion, the Department of Parking and Traffic has limited parking on Broadway after 8 p.m., and this has helped. That move opened up the street to greater scrutiny by both the citizenry and the police. And he's beefed up the police foot patrols along Broadway, particularly at closing time.

In addition, Dudley said that he is pushing a plan that would have the clubs stagger their closing hours. He feels that this would make crowd control along the strip more manageable. Not surprisingly, businesses are resistant. The city, meanwhile, will convene an Entertainment Venue Violence Conference at the Entertainment Commission to seek answers to violence.

Dudley ended his talk thanking THD for our involvement and support toward finding solutions to longstanding problems in North Beach. He emphasized his determination to continue to work with the Dwellers and other groups to improve safety in our neighborhood.

Julie Christensen took a moment to announce that there were

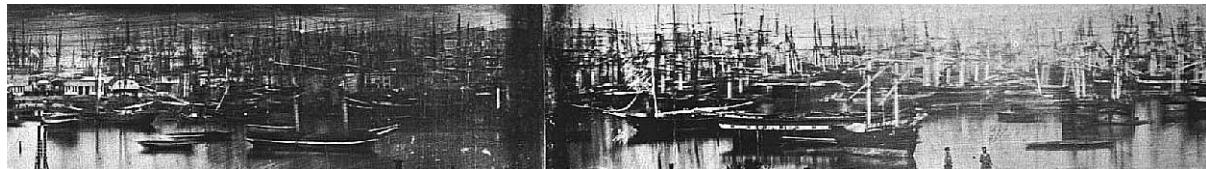
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DAGUERREOTYPE COURTESY OF THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

by Catherine Accardi

The 1848–1849 rush for gold in the California foothills, drew more ships around Cape Horn and through the Golden Gate into San Francisco Bay, than all previous years combined. The daguerreotype above is of our Gold Rush city shoreline, taken in 1851. By the summer of that year, over 500 vessels were recorded as being in, and about, Yerba Buena Cove. Crews and passengers abandoned many of their ships in their frenzy to reach the gold fields. Some vessels were left to rot; some were used for storeships, saloons, hotels, and jails.

Yerba Buena cove looked like a forest of slowly decomposing trees. Carl Nolte wrote, in the March 14, 1999 *San Francisco Chronicle*: "Beached or scuttled in the shallow waters of the cove, the hull would then be turned into a warehouse, hotel, restaurant, tavern or store. Such a conversion was quicker and less costly than buying a lot in the Gold Rush city, purchasing lumber imported around Cape Horn, and hiring carpenters at premium pay to put up a building."

Reports of the day, in 1857, stated the ships were "now fast disappearing" due to nature's call of the sea,

and man's need of wood. Hubert Howe Bancroft is quoted as saying: "As late as January 1857, old hulks still obstructed the harbor while others had been overtaken by the bayward march of the city. Even now (1888) remains of the vessels are found under the filled foundations of houses".

At that time, the northeast shoreline meandered along what are now Front, Battery and Sansome Streets. Ships clung to the shore, and to each other. Five wharfs jutted out into this jumble at the following streets: Broadway (Broadway Wharf), Vallejo (Vallejo Wharf), Green (Cunningham's Wharf), Battery (Griffing's Wharf, also spelled "Griffins") and Lombard (North Point Dock).

According to historians, no less than seven ships are buried along the original waterfront, within our Telegraph Hill Dwellers boundaries, between Broadway and Lombard Streets. On the map at the on page 27, the dashed line designates the original shoreline.

The names and locations of the seven ships are:

- **Envoy** at Battery and Union: Used for support of the planking that was Battery Street.
- **Fortuna** at Front and Vallejo: Used as a hotel on the block now bounded by Battery, Front, Vallejo,

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Buried Ships *continued from page 26*

and Green Streets.

- **Phillip Hone** at Battery and Union: Used as a storeship, or warehouse.
- **Japan** at Union and Front: Used as a storeship.
- **Le Baron** at Sansome and Lombard: Information not available
- **Name unknown** at Battery near Filbert: Used as support under Griffings/Griffin's Wharf at Battery Street.
- **Palmyra** at Battery near Filbert: Used as a store ship and currently under Levi Plaza.

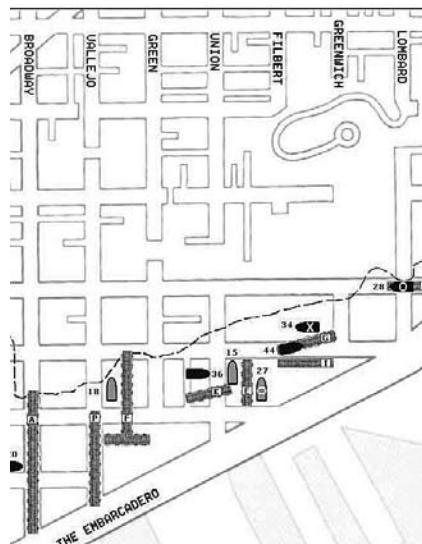
Although additional ships have been unearthed at other shoreline locations, they are outside our Telegraph Hill Dwellers boundaries. According to Marine historian James Delgado, there may be as many as seventy ships, most of them as yet undiscovered, under the streets of San Francisco. Over the years, several buried ships were discovered during excavations and construction of modern buildings and other projects.

A noteworthy discovery was made in April 1978, when the remains of a ship's hull were discovered during excavation for Levi Plaza, at Battery Street. The vessel was estimated to be about 100 feet in length and 30 feet wide. Historians believe the ship was the *Palmyra*. Archaeological excavations were conducted in late 1979 and early 1980. The *Palmyra* still lies beneath the plaza.

The ship *Arkansas*, was uncovered on the north side of Pacific between Battery and Front Streets, one block outside our boundaries, but too delicious not to report.



The Old Ship Saloon sitting atop the ruins of the *Arkansas*.



MAP PREPARED BY, AND COURTESY OF, RON FILION

The *Arkansas* had arrived to our hamlet in December 1849. She was a three-masted whaling ship. By 1851, a door was cut into the ship's hull, which was converted into the old Ship Ale House. The ship remains to this day under the newer establishment, the Old Ship Saloon. The three story red brick building looks nothing like a ship. At some point, the top of the *Arkansas* was dismantled to make a hotel over the saloon. All that is left of the *Arkansas* is an original black sign, shaped like a ship, hanging from a mast extending over the sidewalk. It is reported that one can still hear the ebb and flow of bay waters when standing in the lowest level.

Whether we can see them or not, buried ships are beneath us, along the old shoreline, at the waterfront.

Sources:

- Courland, Robert - *The Old North Waterfront*
- Richards, Rand - *Historic Walks in San Francisco*
- Ron Filion, *San Francisco History*
- *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 14, 1999
- San Francisco Maritime Museum National Historic Park

THE ALFA NOSE

On January 18, at St. Francis of Assisi in North Beach, cement was poured and walls rose in the replica of the 13th Century chapel (original in the Basilica in Assisi). The event was attended by Mayor Newsom and counsel generals from several nations. En route: The Rock, supposedly touched by St. Francis, The Rock will temporarily reside at the DeYoung (dedication, April 24) and then will move into the Porziuncola.

A Politico ...

Who will step up to fill the shoes of Supervisor Aaron Peskin? Is there a "shoe-in" for District 3? Currently City Star columnist Tony Gantner has officially declared, and his mission statement promises pro-neighborhood. Nine other 'possibles' are listed on www.sfusualsuspects.com, but Rose Chung (currently aide to Aaron) said to take her name off the list. The deadline to declare isn't until August, but TH/NB has been exceptionally well taken care of, and in this time of uncertainty, we could get our ducks in order before they float away.

Short Shorts

Play Ball—Saturday December 8th, Gigi Fiorucci of Sotto Mare on Green Street, "out of the kindness of my heart" held a party and fed 300 sports fans who assembled to commemorate Dante Benedetti who died at the age of 86 in November 2005. On the Jasper Alley side of the building, the Pieretti Group is depicted on a mural (a work in progress), all ball

players, all Italian, who grew up in N. Beach. Dante "took good care of them, bought them bats, gloves, uniforms." Contemporary and friend Joe DiMaggio is in the group. Rumor is the alley may be renamed after Dante.

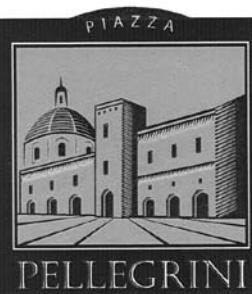
Knitz & Leather artist/craftsperson Julia Relinghaus, is relocating after 20 years, next door to Kabul Rugs at 1453 Grant Ave. Same exquisite hand tooled leather coats and purses, and gossamer sweaters, scarves and gloves. Julia is planning an open house "around the end of February". Drop by for more details. Her craftsmanship is the kind that personifies N. Beach.

For upcoming celebration gifts, Audrey Tomaselli points to Pelote (across from Mama's), especially for haute couture for new arrivals. Fitting since owners April and E.J. are celebrating their own new arrival, Iona (brother to 2 year old Enzo). April and E.J. carry St. James, a French line, up to size 40, and T-shirts that can be custom embroidered on site.

Homage: Hot chicks and cool cats commingled upstairs at The Beat Museum January 28th, where THDers indulged in homemade spaghetti and recited beat poetry to bongos. Original works by Jack Hirschman and Dave Hato were followed by recitals of Ferlinghetti and hard core Beats. Spiced with Beat Trivia questions that awarded gift certificates from Café Trieste and black hipster THD T-Shirts, the homage was suitably respectful, enlightening and apropos. The Beat Museum is celebrating its new non-profit status as a Foundation for Creative Expression, which translates into more poetry readings. Sarah Klibin, new Social Committee head, promises yet more and different THD events for 2008. Cool!

Valentine Days and Noir Nights

On The Hill art is experiencing a renaissance, and 'never too late' is the message. Blame Valentine's Day and the sweet promise of spring—the message in the fortune cookie is "it will be too late," so seize the moment. ☺



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Washbag: Don't Rest in Peace *continued from page 11*

Blanche Streeter, Chris Sullivan, Herbert Gold, Jerry Gibbons, Frank Martell, Pat Lyons, Frank Carrillo, Lynn Kennedy, Lona Jupiter, Suzy Strauss, Patsy Glynn, Willie Brown, Dianne Feinstein. People like that were on the Square's honor role.

But it was the Democratic National Convention held here in 1974 that made the Square instant-legend. Walter Cronkite, Tom Brokaw, Ben Bradlee, Peter Jennings and other big media types, showed up, held court and kept coming back whenever they were in town.

I recall one day in the late 70s at lunch with Stan Delaplane—who edited his *Chronicle* column at the Square on most days—when John F. Kennedy Jr. showed up. Moose was beside himself with pleasure and took the young man by the arm, led him around the tables and introduced him to the regulars.

The Square was our private club, much like the Pacific Union Club. Only the Square was a lot more alive and kicking. There were no officers, no house rules, no dress code. What there was at the Square was friendship, camaraderie—great conversation, decent drinks and decent—not great—food. We knew who our fellow club members were. We didn't need a secret handshake or special greeting. We didn't necessarily snub non-members; we just hung

out at the bar and exchanged philosophical banter with Michael McCourt.

A few days ago some of us old timers were looking around for a new private club. The Square was dark. And so was our mood. Word was out that some of us were going over to Capp's Corner to kick the tires, so to speak. When we got to Capp's a sign on the front door read "Closed for Private Party." We huddled miserably in the cold before wandering off aimlessly. To date, we have found no replacement.

What killed off the Square? Booze and the economy. Seems that we are just not drinking as much as we used to. Some of us can nurse a glass of house red for the entire afternoon. That's not good for the house.

McCourt, who will resurrect at Amante on Green, put it succinctly—he puts everything succinctly—when he said "Saloons are us. Those of us left are the keepers of a dying flame."

Will there ever be another Square? Let's hope it doesn't rest in peace but rises once more.

Ernest Beyl, a Washington Square Bar & Grill old-timer, is in mourning over the demise of his club. "What we need now is a good wake," he says.



Coit Tower Historic Designation *continued from page 14*

may be enjoyed today at The Beach Chalet on the Great Highway.

8. The road, esplanade, terrace balustrade and parking lot at the top of Telegraph Hill were improvements constructed in 1923, a decade before the conception of Coit Tower.

9. Many visitors to the tower are under the impression that the murals are executed by one person. One reason for this perception may be that the pigments for all the frescoes were ground by one person, artist-assistant, Farwell Taylor.

10. The tower was closed for a while in 1934, when the San Francisco Art Commission objected to what were described as Communist symbols in Clifford Wight's *Surveyor* and *Steelworker*. The Artists' and Writers' Union picketed to protect the murals from being destroyed, but during the time the local newspaper headlines were devoted to the settlement of the longshoremen's strike of 1934, the symbols were quietly removed and the tower reopened on October 20, 1934.



F. JOSEPH BUTLER AT CANESSA GALLERY, JAN. 2008

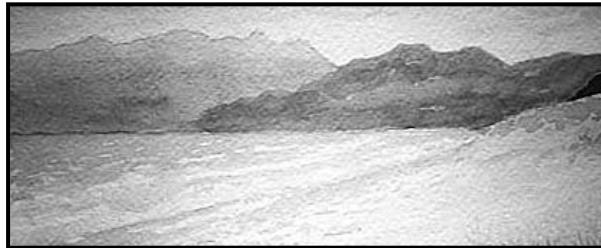
by Termeh Yegnazarian

From the artist's statement:

"Learning to draw in school emphasized it as a way of thinking, visually. First for a grade, then for pay, drawing has become also a pleasurable way to spend time. Restful, contemplative, intuitive, the work reflects a mind at ease.

These delineations over time have developed into a record of place and/or event. Seen together they chronicle the ideas, travels, experiences; the narrative of a life."

Joseph Butler, known to most of his friends and acquaintances as an accomplished architect, has kept sketchbooks since he began drawing as a student of architecture about thirty years ago. This exercise Point Bonita, Joe Butler began mainly as a study of form, space, depth, contrast, texture and color, often in combination with detailed text, describing the subject, which often focused on architecture. However, included in between pages of detailed drawings and



study notes, were recordings of significant moments in life. Sometimes, simply describing a visual experience, other times, recording a feeling, an idea, or a personal milestone, the collection has over the years become as significant as those of any artist's in its visual as well as contextual richness.

The show at Canessa Gallery, organized by THD's Art & History Committee, offered a mere glimpse at a rather impressive volume which includes sketchbooks, drawings and watercolors. The gallery

space, generously donated for the duration of January to THD, provided the perfect setting for a show featuring a local architect's artistic work. Canessa building, built in the late 1800s is a San Francisco landmark that has operated as a gallery since 1925

and is home to several creative small businesses. To find out more about Canessa Gallery, please visit: www.canessa.org



THD Holiday Party *continued from page 25*

new funds available for DiMaggio Park as a result of bond measures passed on last November's ballot. She asked for suggestions on playground programming and library progress to be funded by the bonds.

As the dessert was served, Sarah Kliban, who organized the evening, officiated over a raffle in which almost everybody won a prize. Many copies of "San Francisco's Telegraph Hill" by David Myrick were distributed to the winners. And at least a handful of our handsome black T-shirts boldly emblazoned with "North Beach" on the front, while subtly displaying the THD logo on one of the sleeves, were handed out to the happy winners.



Gerry Crowley, Al Fontes, and Sarah Kliban prepare for a nitecap.

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Civil Grand Jury continued from page 18

However, there has been a significant drop-out rate, due to intense periods of preparation and interviews. The Superior Court estimates that a minimum of approximately 500 hours is required for grand jury service. There's flexibility, but substantive work requires

concentrated moments. Ultimately, Grand Jurors find the camaraderie, status and access to high officials challenging and rewarding. Jurors carry a prestigious business card too, adorned with the State Seal.



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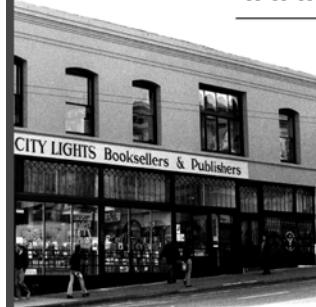
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Maritime Museum *continued from page 24*

ing to create a Museum of Science and Industry. But World War II got in the way. From 1941-1948 the Army occupied the building and Spreckels stored the models.

The Maritime Museum was the brainchild of Karl Kortum, who squabbled with Spreckels over the focus of her museum. Kortum triumphed after enlisting prominent citizens and Chronicle editor Scott Newhall.

The nonprofit Maritime Museum Association, created in 1950, opened the Maritime Museum in 1951. The Museum flourished and evolved into the Maritime Park, adding the Balclutha, the schooner C.A. Thayer and more to its collection at the Hyde Street Pier. Eventually, the Park became the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park under the supervision of the NPS. The (now) San

Francisco Maritime National Park Association provides funding and volunteers for the Park.

But over time, the roof began to leak, windows leaked, skylights leaked, concrete was crumbling. Even the glass bricks had water inside. So in July 2006, the museum was closed for major restoration.

The first phase addresses the upper three floors and the roof. The NPS is adding an ADA-compliant elevator for access to upper floors plus a new waterproof roof membrane and roof tile. The NPS will replace leaky windows and make other repairs and restorations.

The second phase, beginning early August, restores the concrete bleachers and the lowest level, the former changing rooms and bathing services. The lowest level today houses the San Francisco Senior Center—the first senior center in the United States. This phase completely rebuilds one set of bleachers and renews and reinforces the other bleachers and the lower level, including skylights that shed light on the subterranean rooms.

Restoration and replacement work will match the historic originals, in some cases removing interim work that changed the original look. Total cost, funded by the National Park Service, is over \$10 million dollars.

Cullinan showed me where murals, hidden for decades, were discovered when workers removed a false wall on the second floor. The Park Service will restore a terrazzo floor design covered with old gunk where a carpet was glued down decades ago.

The interim Museum, in the Argonaut Hotel building on at Jefferson and Hyde, holds a subset of the exhibits. When can we see the Museum, restored to its former glory? Some time in 2009, Cullinan says.

I'll be there.

[for some photographs of the Bathhouse building and Aquatic Park see <<http://snipurl.com/1y9mq>>]



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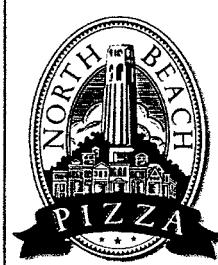


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FROM THE DESK OF SUPERVISOR PESKIN

SAVING THE FLOWER MART

It is no secret that I am a proud to be accused of being an "historic preservationist". Indeed, one of the reasons I ran for office was to help protect edifices and institutions large and small from the economic pressures that bring the wrecking ball and evictions. Over my seven years in office my work has ranged from stopping the City from it's wrong headed and financially devastating proposal to fill in two square miles of the bay to achieving landmark status for historic structures like the Colombo Building as well as passing legislation to help protect and nurture small neighborhood businesses by fighting the influx of chain stores.

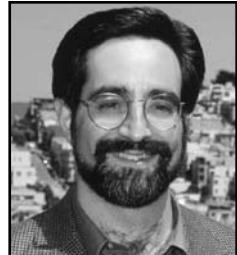
Today the City is facing the loss of one of its most treasured, unique cultural institutions: the San Francisco Flower Mart. For over half a century the San Francisco Flower Mart has operated at the corner of 6th and Brannan streets, selling at whole-

sale to neighborhood florists, or directly to San Franciscans who make the pilgrimage from our neighborhood to the South of Market.

Now the Flower Mart is on the chopping block and the prospective purchaser is requiring that the 30 thriving businesses be evicted as a condition of sale. The name of the buyer shouldn't be a surprise to anyone who lives in District 3 or anywhere in the City: the Academy of Art University. The Academy owns more than 30 properties in San Francisco and has earned the dubious distinction of being the single most prolific violator of the City Planning code with over 40 violations that have been pressed by the City. I've said that it should really be called the Academy of Real Estate as they gobble up property after property displacing hundreds of people from Single Room Occupancy hotels, apartments and dozens of businesses from their places of business.

This isn't the first time the Academy has moved to evict a cultural institution. Six months ago the Academy entered into a purchase agreement for a Sutter Street building that resulted in the eviction of the city's oldest African-American theater venue, the Lorraine Hansberry Theater. After intervention by the city's arts community, the Academy was convinced to allow the Lorraine Hansberry to finish it's current season—for which tickets had already been sold—before having to leave the property.

So here we are again, six months later, with another San Francisco cultural and economic mainstay staring down the barrels of the Academy's purchasing power. I have been working with the City Attorney, the Planning Department and the Planning Commission to find a way to preserve the



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continued on p. 37

From the Desk of Supervisor PESKIN

historic use of the Flower Mart area of the South of Market, passing two pieces of legislation to help preserve the Mart. I am grateful to all of you that have contacted my office offering your help. In the seven years I have been on this Board, I have never received more emails, phone calls, and drop-in visitors on any subject than I have on saving the Flower Mart. I am hopeful that with the public outcry we will be able to overcome their lawyers, lobbyists and consultants. Stay tuned.

JUDY IRVING

As part of this year's Women's History Month celebration, the Board of Supervisors will be honoring

Judy Irving at our March 4th meeting, at 3:30pm. This year's theme is "Women's Art: Women's History".

Judy has been a great friend of the neighborhood, is a free spirit, lovely human being, legendary bay swimmer and an inspirational film maker whose credits include the Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill. Please come down and celebrate with us on March 4. We'll have a reception in my office right after the Board meeting.

As always, don't hesitate to call, email or drop by. As I conclude my final year as your Supervisor, I want you to know that I have truly been honored to serve.

See you around the 'hood.



ART AND COMMERCE INTERSECT AT THD WINTER SALON

by Termeh Yeghiazarian

Offering another opportunity to engage in a dialogue with our community's artists and art organizers, THD's Art, Culture & History Committee's Winter Salon was held at Canessa Gallery on January 23rd to a full house.

Featured speakers were:

Daniel Macchiarini—metal sculptor and proprietor of Macchiarini Design (www.maccreativedesign.com) • **Shinmin Li**—painter/graphic artist and proprietor of I Dream of Cake (www.idreamofcake.com) • **Johnathan Van Coops**—organizer and proprietor of Salon La Bicicletta (641 Green St.) • **James Hakshin Cha**—collaborator and producer (www.meljenarts.com) • **Aggie Falk**—painter/poet • **Dominic Angerame**—filmmaker (www.cinemod.net) • Guest moderator: **Aaron Peskin**—District 3 Supervisor and art enthusiast

Canessa Gallery provided a warm atmosphere and historic context to this event, during which an age-old question was posed to the participants: "What is your creative process?" Followed by: "How do you remain true to your process while meeting the demands of a commercial world?". The evening's guest moderator, Aaron Peskin, skillfully navigated the discussion through highs and lows as featured speakers offered their thoughts and insight about the topic. The conversation, at times emotional and intense, at other times poetic and humorous, shed some light into the soul of these creative minds who on a daily basis deal with challenges, as well as successes of creativity and commercial presence in North Beach. The evening ended with a Q&A session leading to an opportunity for the participants to mingle and join the conversation.

The Art, Culture and History Committee wishes to thank Canessa Gallery (www.canessa.org) for donating their venue for the evening, I Dream of Cake (www.idreamofcake.com) for donation of wine, and our volunteers for their invaluable help.

The Salon Series hopes to encourage an ongoing conversation about art, artists, our community, its culture and history. We hope to inspire an exchange of thoughts, reflections and ideas that can potentially lead to a richer cultural experience in North Beach. The THD Salon is a modern approach to an old tradition, creating a nurturing environment for dialogue among friends. We aim to hold four salons per year, one for each season. With each salon we either pick

ONE LESS TREE FOR WASHINGTON SQUARE

By Gerry Hurtato

Friday December 25th was a particularly dark and gloomy day. There was a constant downpour of rain. Bay Area flood warnings for the evening were broadcast on TV and radio.

Sometime during the night one of the majestic pine trees in Washington Square Park broke apart. A big section of the tree, burdened by the added weight of rainwater came crashing down next to the Briones bench blocking the walkway. Saturday morning Rec and Park dispatched an emergency work crew to clean up the mess. Using heavy equipment they had the area mostly cleared of debris by four o'clock.

Tree maintenance specialist Richard Enger said that much of his time is spent responding to emergencies such as this rather than planning ahead. He said the department is short handed and has a big backlog of work to do. He said there used to be 15 people doing this work and now they are down to eight. He pointed out that he would soon retire and that he wasn't sure the City would replace him.



Washington Sq. majestic pine tree falls to the weather.
PHOTO BY JULIE CHRISTENSEN

up the conversation where we left off in the previous one or, move on to the most pressing topic of the season, all revolving around the arts, culture and history of North Beach.

We are currently recruiting for new members for the Art & History Committee. Also, we are always interested in your ideas for future events. To become a member of this committee or, to share your thoughts on Salon Series, please email historian@thd.org.





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PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION. Promotes efforts to ease congestion, optimize white zones, upgrade public transportation. Works with Department of Parking and Traffic.

PLANNING AND ZONING. Nancy Shanahan, 986-7094, Mary Lipian, 391-5652. Monitors and reviews proposed development projects for consistency with applicable City ordinances. Works with Planning Department staff and represents THD before the Landmarks Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator and other regulating bodies to protect historic resources and maintain neighborhood character. Assists members to learn more about and participate in planning and zoning issues.

SEMAPHORE. Editor, Art Peterson 956-7817; apeterson@writingproject.org. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

PROGRAM. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-acquainted social functions.

BUDGET. Greg Chiampou, gchiampou@sbcglobal.net. As prescribed in bylaws for Treasurer.

MEMBERSHIP. Pat Lusse, membership@thd.org. As prescribed in Bylaws for Financial Secretary.

ARCHIVIST: Rozell Overmire, rozell@ureach.com

SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

PARKS AND TREES. Information and projects concerning local parks, green spaces and street trees.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. Rozell Overmire, 989-3945, rozell@ureach.com. Transcriptions of taped interviews provide historical documentation of living and working in the neighborhood. Available at North Beach Public Library.

THD WEB SITE. Webmaster, Al Fontes, 433-6515; webmaster@thd.org. Shared information about meetings, local concerns and events.

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

COALITION FOR SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOODS. Representative, Gerry Crowley, 781-4201; gerrycrowley@aol.com. City-wide organization interacts with other neighborhoods to discuss common problems.

NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION. Representative, Gerry Crowley, 781-4201; gerrycrowley@aol.com. Tel-Hi-sponsored group of residents, merchants and government agencies working together to address neighborhood issues.

N.E.R.T. Jack Oswald, jack@oswald.com. Energizes members to take emergency disaster response training program sponsored by the City.

WEB SITE = www.thd.org

Whether you want to catch up on THD's Oral Histories, see what the THD is up to, or submit old photos of the Hill, www.thd.org is the place to go. Use the Web site to discover or email information about upcoming meetings in the neighborhood and at City agencies, and ideas and concerns you want the rest of us to know about between Semaphores.

THD CALENDAR

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

SCHEDULES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PLANNING & ZONING: First Thursdays. Call for time and location. 986-7070, 563-3494, 391-5652.

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

Sign Up or Sign a Friend Up as a member of Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Complete and mail to THD, P.O. Box 330159, SF, CA 94133

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$25 Household \$40 Senior (age 65 and over) \$15

Log on to
<http://www.thd.org>

TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS
P.O. BOX 330159
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94133

