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Cover: 1980s Graffiti in I-Hotel hole by Twist, photo by D.S. Black

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The Semaphore is a publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers for its members. Articles, except for the summary of Board of Directors’ Motions, do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Association or its officers, but are the opinions of the writers of the individual signed articles. The Association can take no responsibility for their content. This membership publication is not to be reprinted or disseminated without permission in writing.
I am following my theme of INVOLVEMENT first mentioned in the last issue. In order for our organization to stay healthy, there must be involvement of many members on a rotating basis. As our lives become more and more busy, I know that extra time is in short supply.

That is why I believe we need more than just a few people on any committee. When you send in your application or renew your membership, there is an opportunity to check an area/committee on which you would be interested to work. When asked to come to a meeting, please do—we need everyone to help!

This time I am focusing on two areas:

First, we need to set up a Website Committee. The focus will be to develop a vision and set some goals as to how we present our website. We are looking for people within THD who have an understanding and deep respect for the organization. ARE YOU THAT PERSON?

Second, we are setting up a Membership Committee. This committee will work on ways we can encourage residents to join. Many of you have expressed an interest in this area and we will be contacting you to come to a meeting.

I am happy to report that the Social/Program, Parking & Traffic, Planning & Zoning, Semaphore, Parks & Trees, Art & Culture and Waterfront are active and involved. Of course, any one of these committees would welcome new members.

Lastly, I would like to report that the THD board met with the members of the boards of Russian Hill

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Planning, Urban Design, Architecture

Rod Freebairn-Smith
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Handyman

“Anything can be fixed except a fallen soufflé.”

307-1205
A couple of Semaphore issues ago, THDer Herb Kosovitz put out an urgent request for a weekend gatekeeper at Jack Early Park at the corner of Grant Ave and Pfeiffer Street. It seems the nearby condo management, as part of its long ago agreement to build next to the park, had agreed to unlock the park’s gate on the weekdays, but the condo was not staffed to perform this task on the weekend, when, presumably, the park might get the heaviest traffic.

Low and behold, a couple of angels in the persons of Michael and Patrice of 148 Pfeiffer stepped forward in response to Herb’s request, and the gate is now open on the weekends.

In volunteering, Michael wrote to Herb: “We live right next to Jack’s old place and we were well acquainted with him. My history with the park goes back to the late 50s when my folks moved back to North Beach. Danny, Billy, Ralphy and I used to go up the ‘mountain’ to build forts, complete with camouflage. It was a great place to hang out, sitting above the old macaroni factory, amidst licorice-scented finnock, looking down at the working waterfront, freighters docked, loading and unloading, the state belt railroad clanging along, the bay in its multifaceted beauty beyond. Those were the days before Jack started his crusade for a park. About the time he began his campaign, we were all old enough to drive and other pursuits beckoned. I’m glad he was successful; I’m sure without his initiative and persistence, and without help from the Hill Dwellers this spark of a park would not exist.”

THE NEW THD T-SHIRT IS HERE

Show off your neighborhood pride with the new Telegraph Hill Dwellers t-shirt. The 100% cotton black t-shirt features NORTH BEACH on the chest, and the THD logo on the right sleeve. Also available as a 100% cotton fleece long-sleeved hooded pullover sweatshirt for those chilly San Francisco summer nights. Quantities are limited, so reserve yours today.

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A lot has happened on the North Beach Branch Library and Joe DiMaggio Playground projects since the Sempahore’s summer edition. A third community meeting was held on August 18 in which the Library and Recreation and Parks Department presented a plan distilling the results of previous community and City staff meetings. That plan was then presented to the Library Commission on September 4. After strong words of support from several commissioners, the group voted unanimously for approval of the plan. The Library Commission then asked the Recreation and Parks Department, as the landowner, to sanction the changes proposed for the library and playground. On September 18 the Recreation and Parks Commission voted, also unanimously, for approval.

The preferred master plan scheme attempts to balance a host of competing needs, challenges, budgets and schedules. It eases the disparity between the library’s ideal construction schedule (“yesterday”) and RecPark’s (“maybe 2014”). It adds significant green space without losing any of the many sports that use the hardscape areas. It accommodates the library’s expansion while minimizing the larger building’s impact on recreation areas. The relative positions of the existing pool and clubhouse and the proposed library give each plenty of room to breathe but improve the connection between the facilities and increases opportunities for staff supervision. In general, the master plans seems to succeed in giving the community what it asked for: a bigger library, more green space and improved safety in a more attractive setting.

What happens next?

The approvals are all for a general master plan — neither the library nor the playground has been designed yet. Each of the departments will hold their own community meetings and manage independent design processes to develop final construction plans. The community will also have lots of opportunity for input regarding the final solution for the short block of Mason Street between Lombard and Columbus as the environmental review process moves forward.

The library would like to see construction begin late next year or early 2010. The park renovation may not be funded until a (I hope successful) 2013 parks bond. The EIR process is expected to take about a year.

Highlights of the preferred master plan include:

- A new, 2-story library to be built on the triangle, extending out eastward to the current Mason Street curb. Books, computers, reading areas, staff desk would all be on the ground floor. Unsupervised areas like offices and storage would

continued on next page
be on the upper floor along with the community room that, by agreement with the unions, has to be independently staffed when in use anyway. Early test-fit plans call for double-height reading areas in the triangle’s 3 corners with books, checkout desk, offices, etc. stacked in 2 stories in a central cube.

Though much effort was made to try to render the current library useful, no workable, cost-effective scheme resulted. There are other, more architecturally valued libraries by the same firm in the City, some of which have been newly and lovingly restored. Ours was always a problem child, forced, as it was, to limit itself to one tennis court adjacent to a high retaining wall and wracked in later years by ADA-mandated alterations. Community meetings held 4 years ago resulted in a clear neighborhood consensus that a new building was preferred.

- The closure of Mason Street and its conversion to green space. Both departments would very much like to see their holdings optimized by the repurposing of Mason Street as open space. But there are at least 2 alternative options regarding Mason (in all schemes a new sidewalk could be poured where the west parking lane is now to accommodate an expanded library): 1. Mason could remain a 2-lane street with parking on only the east side. 2. Mason could become a 1-lane street with parking on both sides. In any of these cases, Mason would remain an unobstructed view corridor. If closure is approved the plan is to also keep Mason open as a pedestrian pathway, though in a more park-like setting. The utilities below the street would remain.

- The conversion of the site of the existing library and, perhaps, all or part of Mason Street, to park use. The bocce court area would probably be more integrated with the rest of the park. In addition to a new library, a long strip of green area would front along Columbus Avenue. The western park area could include places to read, picnic, play chess, do tai chi, etc. It might include a statue of Joe DiMaggio and/or other historical elements. The square footage of the triangle is traded for the library’s current site plus additional land. The newly created open space would be located tangentially to existing open space, making it easier to incorporate into the park.

- The switching of the children’s play area and the tennis courts. This switch would open up a connection between the east and west sides of the park, now blocked completely by the tennis courts. It would place the play area directly adjacent to the clubhouse and pool building, closer to the rec director and farther from the streets. One goal is to add greenery along the border of the play area, extending the “green theme” deeper into the heart of the park. This plan may also allow for patios, planted seating areas, etc. adjacent to the clubhouse creating a nicer place for park patrons of all ages to hang out.

NEW PLAN PROMISES...

A better North Beach Branch Library

- Decouples the RecPark and Library portions of the project, allowing the library planning and construction to take place sooner. (Long delays could increase construction costs resulting in reduce library size or amenities or, in the extreme, could jeopardize our slot in the branch renovation queue.)

- Provides a new, state-of-the-art library that will include separate areas for kids, teens and adults; more space for books, computers and reading and a new community program room.

- Calls for a seismically safe, ADA-accessible, energy-efficient library.

- Allows the existing library to remain open until the new facility is open and functional.
A better Joe DiMaggio Playground

- Adds significant area (the existing library site and, potentially, the Mason Street right of way) to the western side of the playground allowing the addition of trees, shrubs, flowers, benches, sculptures and other park amenities without the loss of basketball, tennis, softball or other hardscape functions.

- Creates a much better flow pattern through the park allowing for better connection between activities and better pedestrian flow through the park.

- Brings the children’s play area to the center of the playground, making it safer, more convenient and easier for the recreation director to supervise.

Renovates all existing outdoor facilities.

A better neighborhood center

- Creates a civic presence—part park and part “North Beach town hall” (the library)—along Columbus Avenue.

- Creates a buffer between Columbus Avenue and the playground.

- Creates a stronger and safer connection between the library and the playground.

- Distributes staff and park patron “eyes and ears” effectively across the park.
It looks like North Beach will soon be joining 10 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, to protect our remaining small neighborhood serving businesses by limiting their conversion to new restaurants and bars. [See separate article “Myths and Facts” for a summary of the new North Beach controls.]

Here's the latest on what's been happening in the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District (NBNCD) since our last report:

427 Columbus (formerly Galletti Shoe Repair). In July, the Planning Commission approved the conversion of the former Galletti Shoe Repair space to restaurant and bar use to allow Panta Rei Restaurant & Bar to expand into this space. This approval required three separate Conditional Use Authorizations from the Planning Commission: to convert retail use to restaurant use, to approve bar use, and to exceed the use size permitted in the NBNCD. The Planning Commission's approval provided that no modifications would be made to the exterior.

501 Columbus (formerly JB's Hamburgers). Soon there will be a new Italian eatery specializing in “small plates” in the space vacated by J B's Hamburgers at this prominent corner at Union and Green. No Planning Commission approval was necessary for this café since a small self-service restaurant can replace another small self-service restaurant if, as in this case, building permits are issued within 18 months from the time another small self-service restaurant vacated the site.

507 Columbus. Following the Planning Commission's disapproval of a Conditional Use Authorization to change this storefront into a new bar, a small “convenience store” has occupied the space.

527 Columbus (formerly part of the Gold Spike). As we reported in last Winter's Semaphore, the Red Mango frozen yogurt chain tried unsuccessfully to defy North Beach's anti chain store ordinance (Red Mango had over 14 locations in the United States and more than 130 in Korea). The space previously occupied by the Gold has now been converted back into the original 2 storefronts, and the north part of space will be occupied by a new jewelry and watch repair store. No modifications will be made to the exterior. The south half of the former Gold Spike space at 535 Columbus is now for lease.

722 Columbus (formerly Holistic Solutions). After a very lengthy appeal process, the Planning Commission's July 2007 decision to disallow this medical cannabis dispensary (MCD) was upheld by the Board of Appeals and the MCD has finally vacated the site.

805-07 Columbus (formerly Do Wash Laundry). The former building was demolished to make way for a residential condo project. Although the developer agreed to build two retail spaces on the ground floor of the new building specifically to maintain an active retail streetscape, the Planning Commission recently approved a Conditional Use Authorization allowing for the use of the entire ground floor for a real estate office.

542 Green (Golden Boy Pizza). The Planning Commission denied a proposal to extend the hours of operation of this existing restaurant from 2:00 AM to 4:00 AM, but did approve extending their hours to 2:30 AM. Restaurants in the NBNCD are allowed to stay open until 2:00 AM without special Conditional Use approval.

724 Lombard (formerly North Beach Antiques). The owner of the Rex Caffe at Polk & Union proposes to convert the bottom floor and basement of this building into a new full-service restaurant and Italian deli, requiring the elimination of an existing ground floor apartment proposed to be replaced by adding an additional floor to the building. Because the application for a Conditional Use to convert the space into a full service restaurant was filed before the new NBNCD controls became effective, it would be “grandfathered,” meaning that the Planning

continued on page 11
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GREEN STREET MORTUARY

William K. Steiner
General Manager
Commission may consider granting a Conditional Use for a new full service restaurant at this site.

**1741 Powell (formerly Pagoda Palace Theater).** The proposal is to alter the existing building to incorporate 19 residential condominiums and a 4,000 square foot ground floor full-service Mexican restaurant, for a total of 41,000 square feet in 5 stories of developed space over basement parking to include 27 parking spaces be accessed from a garage entrance at Powell and Columbus. Although the height limit in the area is 40 ft, the existing building is 56 ft high, which would allow the new development to take advantage of this additional 16 feet so long as it is within the existing building envelope and maintains most of the existing exterior material. The issue that incited neighborhood controversy relates to the compatibility of the proposed design with Washington Square and the surrounding neighborhood. THD is committed to ending this long-term vacancy with a project that will enhance and benefit our neighborhood and, to this end, supported a provision in the new NBNCD Legislation that would “grandfather” the owner’s pre-existing application for a Conditional Use Authorization for a full service Mexican restaurant at this site.

**627 Vallejo (Piazza Market).** The former Rossi Market building is being transformed by its new owner, a partner in Pier 39’s Swiss Louis and Wines of California, into an Italian specialty food market that will offer food for take-out and catering, and will include a casual dining area for self-service dining. There will also be a wine shop featuring Italian and California wines. The Planning Commission approved a Conditional Use Authorization to allow for “small self-service restaurant” use in conjunction with a grocery store, with conditions requiring that the restaurant occupy an area under 940 sq ft and be operated as an integral part of a grocery store under a single operator. The Planning Commission also included the preservation and revival of the exterior features of this Streamline Moderne building.

Updates on a couple of commercial spaces a little outside of the central core of the NBNCD:

**301 Union (formerly Speedy’s New Union Grocery).** A grocery store or butcher shop occupied this corner of Union and Montgomery almost continuously since 1858. Unfortunately the storefront is now empty and the owner is seeking a new tenant. According to information provided by the owner, the proposed rent for this 2,000 square foot space (including storage and office space in back) is $3,200-3,500, and the off sale liquor license is listed for $100,000. Please share your ideas and thoughts for potential new occupants of this important space. The fascinating history of this corner market is presented on pages 169-173 of San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill by David Myrick.

**302 Greenwich (Julius’ Castle) City Landmark #121.** Re-opened as a restaurant only briefly since the building was sold by its long-time owner and operator, Jeffrey Pollack, this Telegraph Hill Landmark is undergoing a few changes to cure Planning Code violations and reverse alterations made without benefit of permits or Landmark’s Board review. THD looks forward to celebrating the reopening of this historic restaurant and to working with the new owner to make it a success.

Soon: Food and Entertainment at Lou’s
For the first time in many years, there is no immediate crisis affecting our precious waterfront. However, the THD Waterfront Committee, co-chaired this year by Medical Vedica Puri and Andy Katz, continues to diligently track developments. The following is a report on a few projects we are looking at.

**Piers 27-31**

We were hopeful that Shorenstein Properties LLC, with its local roots and excellent outreach to the neighborhood, would be proposing a plan for piers 27-31 that supported maritime uses and active recreation. However, with the economic downturn and the Port’s plan to make Pier 27 the new cruise ship terminal, it appears Shorenstein will not be proposing anything for the moment. The Port’s Exclusive Right to Negotiate (ERN) agreement with Shorenstein, expired in September. That means that the Port is no longer exclusively negotiating with Shorenstein for development of the site. It also means that Pier 27 will become the new cruise ship terminal—a move that THD’s Waterfront Committee supports. What could be more of a maritime use than a ship terminal? However, the future for Piers 29 and 31 remain uncertain—both piers are in terrible shape and in desperate need of retrofitting that will not happen without millions of dollars of funding.

**Exploratorium**

The Exploratorium move to Piers 15-17, on the Embarcadero at Green Street, is in full swing. THD fully supports the idea of this historic institution moving to the waterfront. Everything from its noble mission, to its wide-reaching audience, to the fact that the entire move is being financed privately is reason to cheer. However, the move is subject to many regulatory hurdles because those parts of the piers built before 1950, have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places as “contributing resources” to the San Francisco Embarcadero National Register Historic District. These contributing resources do not include the paved parking area (the “Valley”), which is in between the Piers and the “connector building” between the two piers. The piers are located within the Northern Waterfront Special Use District and, as such, are subject a 40-foot height limit.

The Exploratorium and the Port have negotiated a term sheet, which provides for the museum to lease Pier 15 and Pier 17 under a long-term lease and build the project in two phases.

The Exploratorium has conducted routine public outreach and most recently presented to the Joint THD’s Waterfront and Planning & Zoning Committees. Some of the key issues that we are focusing on include:

**The New Bridge Building.** The BCDC Special Area Plan requires returning the entire area between Piers 15 and 17 to open water. From what we can tell, as currently proposed, this would not be the case because of the proposed bridge building. The Exploratorium is proposing to demolish the existing shed and build a new “connector building.” Our primary concerns with the proposed bridge building are its height, bulk and the blockage of the view corridor b7 that would result from this bridge building as currently proposed. We also want to be sure that the materials used in the construction of the bridge building blend well with the existing historic pier sheds.

**Two Proposed Cafes.** We understand that the Exploratorium is proposing two cafes—a small take out cafe at the front end Embarcadero side that would be essentially walk through and a larger cafe that would occupy the ground floor of the connector building. We have asked what the seating capacities of the two proposed cafes and whether two cafes are necessary.

**Phase II Planning.** As plans are developed for these piers, we are urging a holistic approach. We cannot properly evaluate the Pier 15 plan without at least some general idea of the Pier 17 plan. We understand that the Pier 17 plan is Phase II and will not be built until requisite funds are raised and by no means are we asking for detailed plans. However, it is simply not possible to properly place what is being proposed for Pier 15 in context unless there

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is some notion of what will eventually happen on Pier 17.

**Transportation Issues.** The following are some key transportation issues we have asked to discuss further:

- **Curb changes.** We would like to understand the impact of extensive cut outs/white zones/drop off zones on pedestrians and bicycles/bicycle lanes along on Herb Caen Way.

- **Bus impact.** Where will the buses park after dropping off p school children?

- **Parking impact.** If Seawall Lot 321 across the street is changed from a long term parking lot to 1 hr parking, where will the longer term parkers relocate?

- **Ferry and water taxi service.** Ferry service should be integral to the project.

**Seawall Lot 351**

This is a small piece of land (27,900 square feet) immediately adjacent to the proposed luxury condominium development site, 8 Washington. Prior to the Port of San Francisco issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop this site the Waterfront Committee wrote an extensive and thoughtful piece urging restraint. Below is a summary of some main points from our letter.

**Update the Waterfront Land Use Plan (WLUP)**

A holistic view of how the waterfront should mature is critical—this can only be achieved by updating the WLUP. Without this vital tool in place, we are doomed to lurch from unviable project to another and conduct lot-by-lot battles without any true twenty-first century cohesive vision.

Proposition H, which was passed by the San Francisco voters in 1990 and mandated the preparation of a WLUP and required maximum feasible public input in the planning process. With regard to SWL 351 in particular, the proposed zoning change, uses and height issues, and the lifting of the public trust, demand a community-based planning process, enabling revisions to applicable plans and codes.

**Apply the Public Trust Doctrine to SWL 351**

The Public Trust doctrine protecting this lot demands that certain resources are preserved for public use. This doctrine prohibits housing from being built on this land. The doctrine has also been used to provide public access across these areas as well as to provide for continued public interest in those areas where land beneath tidally influenced waters has been filled.

We feel that the Port must provide a specific concept and use before undertaking the process of removal from the public trust, and such process should be completed before issuing an RFP.

**The Seawall and Fluid Dynamics**

The Port needs to clarify the status of the historic seawall in regard to any proposal that involves demolition or modification of the seawall. While the role of the seawall has diminished over time, it remains a physical barrier as well as an historical artifact. It is essential to ascertain before issuance of an RFP the legal status of the seawall its significance as an historic resource, and its potential impacts on neighboring properties should it be breached replaced.

**General Height Limit Issues**

While the city professes a “vision” of reuniting the city with its waterfront the proposed mid-rise and high-rise struc-
tures have the effect of replacing the Embarcadero Freeway with a new even greater barrier. We ask that those lots facing the Embarcadero remain zoned at 40 feet.

Uncertainty vs. Predictability

We want to ensure that the Port is not setting itself up for another costly failure. Is this site so encumbered with unresolved issues that only the adjacent landowner can justify taking on the risk? Will its development or use for any purpose be limited to a parking lot for decades while all the legalities and associated issues are sorted out? Would it not be more prudent for the Port to enhance the existing parking with quality landscaping, enjoy the steady income and wait out clarification of some of the stickier legal issues?

An Applicable Cliché: Haste Makes Waste

We are deeply disappointed with the Port’s efforts to ram this development through the procedural process. One reason that has been offered for the fast track is that the Port would lose the chance to ever develop this lot because another project is being proposed for the neighboring lot at Washington/Embarcadero (known as 8 Washington). This logic does not withstand scrutiny; the Port is in essence saying every time a development of one lot is proposed, if there is a neighboring lot, it must also be developed at the same time. Another reason offered for the fast track is that there are higher and better uses for this land than as a surface parking lot. While that may be true, it does not justify slamming this lot through the development process.

A Decisive & Clear RFP is Necessary

The THD does not want such unnecessary battles. A well-coordinated, connected waterfront is in everyone’s best interest—we can only recognize this potential if we plan it now. We need to know how this piece of land fits into the rest of the waterfront. When the WLUP was drafted, the seawall lots were not even considered a focus point. In fact, to deem SWL 351 part of a Ferry Building sub area does not make sense any more given the context in which it now exists. The Ferry Building has long been revitalized and the area surrounding SWL 351 is now one of a fast-emerging, low-lying residential neighborhood. This is the context in which SWL 351 must be viewed and it is only fair that potential developers be told this.

The Waterfront Committee plans to hold a meeting in January 2009 and is looking for dedicated volunteers to help track Waterfront development. Please contact Vedica Puri or Andy Katz if you are interested—their contact information can be found at www.thd.org.

continued from page 13

CANDIDATES AIR DIFFERENCES AT NEIGHBORHOOD EVENT

by June Fraps

By the time you read this, you’ll know who will be representing District 3 in the coming years. But at Francisco Middle School on a balmy night September both the potential winner and the also-rans were getting earful of neighborhood concerns.

Eight of the candidates for District 3 Supervisor, plus a potential write-in candidate, showed up at a forum sponsored by THD, along with Russian Hill Neighbors and North Beach Neighbors, to persuade us to vote for them, and left with a clearer idea of what the neighborhood wants from them.

Each group submitted a question to the candidates to start the discussion, followed by questions submitted by the audience. Questions that went unanswered were sent to the candidates after the event. Topics of interest ranged from rent control to recycling, raccoons to restaurants. Many questions focused on the homeless and affordable housing in the neighborhood, and on empty storefronts in North Beach.
WHERE HAVE YOU GONE, MANILATOWN?

by Art Peterson

The International Hotel at Kearney and Jackson, the “I Hotel” to the natives, lives, but in a very different envelope than it did in the 1970s when the site became ground zero in the development wars. Now 14 stories of senior housing—104 units that possess some of the city’s best views—rise above a ground floor that houses a gallery and Filipino-American history center.

But between 1979 and 2005, after the demolition of the hotel, the site was no more than a gaping hole reminder of earlier battles. Up until the 1950s, the I Hotel had been one of many hotels along Kearney between Columbus and Bush Street that housed almost exclusively Filipino males. Because of exclusionary immigration practices that were anything but family friendly, these men led bachelor lives. Some were migrant farm workers who came to the city during the off season, but others worked in the city as cooks, waiters, bell-hops, house servants, chauffeurs and “elevator boys.”

A vibrant cultural ghetto known as Manilatown evolved in the neighborhood. Locals could patronize the New Luneta Café, the Bataan Lunch, Mango’s Smoke Shop, Blanco’s Bar and Teno’s Barber Shop. The pool halls and lunch counters provided mailing addresses and “help wanted” employment boards for the locals. Gambling was a fixture of the back rooms of these establishments where illegal and non-stop games continued on page 16
of poker and rummy raged pretty much ignored by the cops at the Hall of Justice a block away.

But by the mid-1950s the expanding financial district was encroaching on Manilatown, and the hotels and community services began to disappear. The I Hotel was about the last vestige left of this vanishing community. Then in 1968, the owners of the hotel, a consortium of interests headed by San Francisco real estate mogul Walter Shorenstein, served eviction notices on the residents who were, for the most part, manoings, male elders in the Filipino community. The developers wanted the property to build a parking garage.

Any San Franciscan with a passing understanding of issues like this will have a pretty good idea of what came next. Picket lines went up; legal battle ensued. To activist students from the University of California and San Francisco State stopping the eviction of the manoings became a cause celebre. The residents also had friends in the establishment. Diane Feinstein, then president of the Board of Supervisors, Mayor George Moscone, and Sheriff Richard Hongisto supported the residents’ cause. Shorenstein bailed out, selling the property to the Four Seas Corporation. Like many who had signed on to attack the problem of urban “blight” during these years, he was a bit mystified by developments. “I thought I was getting rid of a slum,” he said.

Finally, in summer of 1977, Four Seas got the court order to proceed with the eviction. At first, Hongisto, who as sheriff was supposed to act as major domo for the removal, refused to do it. He was sent to jail for five days. But by August 4, he accepted the inevitable.

The episode of the International Hotel had cost San Francisco 3 million dollars and a lot of bad national publicity. Frank Church of the Senate’s Committee on Aging sent a delegation to investigate the eviction. But there was also an upside to the shameful removal of these old men. A movement had coalesced. The city enacted an ordinance forbidding demolition of residential hotels, voters passed limits on downtown construction, and nutrition, housing and safety programs for the elderly moved closer to the front burner.
San Francisco Chronicle, May 18, 1958:

UPPER GRANT AVE. FIGHTS “BEAT” LABEL

The Upper Grant Ave regulars launched an all-out campaign yesterday to demonstrate that they are not members of the “Beat Generation.”

A booth, bearing the legend “We are not Beat,” was set up in front of 1422 Grant Ave where supporters of the fifth annual Grant Ave Street Fair signed petitions stressing the good influence the fair has on the community.

The misconception that these working artists, who for four years have displayed their skills at the open air event, are “beat” caused the Supervisors’ Police Committee to refuse permission to block off Grant Ave between Union and Green Streets on June 15.

“They are destroying the Street Fair to get rid of the bad elements on Grant Ave,” said Peter Macchiarini, jewelry designer and fair director.

“It’s like pulling up all the vegetables in the garden to get rid of the weeds, but you still have the weeds left.”

“It is ridiculous to confuse the hardworking craftsmen with the drifter,” said Mary Erckenbrack, the sculptress who designed the fountain in front of the the Shriners’ Children’s Hospital. “The Beat Generation is not interested in crafts or street fairs. They haven’t anything to contribute. Artists are business people.”

Said Macchiarini, “In the past we have had the support of the police department and the Board of Supervisors. How can they now imply that we are beat?”

San Francisco Chronicle, July 18, 1958

A PLEA FOR GARAGE ON TELEGRAPH HILL

The Telegraph Hill Dwellers, a neighborhood improvement organization, set out yesterday to find a solution to a problem that vexes nearly every mobile visitor to the San Francisco prominence: Inadequate parking.

The Dwellers asked the Parking Authority to initiate an engineering study and traffic check to determine the feasibility of a public garage at the top of the hill on Montgomery street.

The Authority said it cannot finance such a study now, but might be able to if parking meter fares here are raised to a dime.

Dr. Stanley Burton of the Dwellers said parking on Telegraph Hill now is an “intolerable situation.” He suggested excavating into the hill at the dead-ends of Greenwich or Montgomery streets to make a cave like garage.

Albert E Schlesinger, chairman of the Authority, said a mechanical push-button vertical garage that didn’t require much ground area might work out better.

Authority member Harold Berfliner said a mechanical garage would be a “wonderful idea.”

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The THD Archives, presided over by Rozell Overmire, provide a treasure trove of surprises from the past. Here are a couple.

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PROHIBITION
NORTH BEACH AND THE MOB

by Dick Boyd

It’s hard to pick up a paper these days without reading about a murder. North Beach thankfully seems to be a little behind that curve. However, the recent barrage of homicides in the Bay Area got me to thinking about another era. What was North Beach like during Prohibition? That’s when organized crime got its foothold in the neighborhood. I had always heard that the SFPD had kept the Mafia out of San Francisco. Well, that’s true—sort of.

But during prohibition East Coast mafia “soldiers” were in San Francisco’s North Beach in sufficient numbers to control the illegal booze coming into the city. Keep in mind that city voters had overwhelmingly rejected Prohibition. San Franciscans were drinkers legal or otherwise. Figures are not easy to come by for the Prohibition Era, but at the close of WWII our residents consumed not only more booze per capita than any other city in the U.S., but the city was also first in gin mills per capita.

During Prohibition speakeasies flourished in North Beach There was Portuguese immigrant Izzy Gomez’s place at 848 Pacific The joint became writer William Saroyan’s watering hole of choice. The Hotel D’Oloron on Columbus between Pacific and Jackson was opened by Basque immigrants. What later became Mooney’s Irish Pub at 1525 Grant had a 600 sq/ft speakeasy in its basement next to a Bocce Ball Court.

Contrary to the Hollywood depiction of the era, most speakeasies were just rectangular rooms with curtains from ceiling to floor. A waiter took the order, disappeared through an opening in the curtain, and returned with the booze. If there was an unexpected raid the owners simply changed a couple digits in the street address, the color of the curtains and reopened the next day. Of course, there were hundreds of these speakeasys throughout the city. Well, residents had to get their booze somewhere. This is where the mafia and some of their front men came in.

In 1928 Gerri Ferri, the “Don Juan of North Beach,” was the man in charge. He was later found filled with bullets in his bathroom at 490 Lombard. Ferri’s murder set off a four-year power struggle. He was soon followed in power and death by “Genaro the Magnificent” Broccolo, Mario Filippi, Alfred Scariso and Frank Bosch, “the strong man of the Sicilians,” all of whom had brief reigns. The bloodbath ended with the murder of the self proclaimed “King of North Beach Crook’s” Luigi Malvese of 1495 Grant Ave. At one time or another Malvese, had been charged for bootlegging, hijacking, extortion and gunrunning (including a plot to smuggle guns into Folsom Prison).

He met his demise just before 6pm on May 19, 1932 in Al Capone style while double-parked in front of the Del Monte Barber Shop at 720 Columbus...
Ave, now the North Beach Citizens headquarters, but then. a gangster hangout. In a scene reminiscent of The Godfather, Mavlese's passenger, Ralph Ravelli entered the barbershop, leaving “The King” alone. Three men emerged from the shop and one ran to the rear of the auto and began firing. Malvese tried to escape but crumpled to the ground where the killer applied the coup de grace behind his ear.

The killer then ran back into the barbershop and disappeared through the back door, into what is now known as “Via Bufano” (or Grover Street for USPS delivery purposes). The barbers and patrons in the Del Monte Barber Shop suffered a bout of “amnesia,” as did most passersby. Ravelli, denied any implication in the crime in spite of the fact it appeared he had set Malvese up. He claimed when he heard the shots he came out of the barber shop, found Malvese dead in the street, dragged him to the gutter and walked away. He was never prosecuted.

One of the barbers was Rafaelle Esposito who had shot and killed Broccoli (see above) in October of 1930. He was acquitted on the story that Broccoli had threatened to bomb his home and steal his wife because he wouldn't pay tribute.

By 8pm of the 19th, Captain Arthur Layne of Central Police rolled out a “task force” of a dozen patty wagons and headed to the Tenderloin. In those days the Tenderloin was in part an upscale district. There were numerous fashionable theaters along Market from 10th St. to 4th St. including the Fox, Orpheum, Paramount, Warfield, United Artist, Golden Gate and State. But there were also “men’s only” card clubs at 136 Taylor and 105 Turk Street where a number of suspects were known to hang out. Seventy men were booked at the Hall of Justice, most on $1000 dollar vagrancy charges so they could be legally fingerprinted and held on high bail.

The next day, May 20th, the Chronicle headline read, “S.F. Gangster Executed in Busy Street”. The sub headline read, “Columbus and Filbert Throng in Panic as Bullets Fly.” Police Chief William Quinn declared war on the gangsters. (He didn’t like it a year later when Alcatraz was about to open. He told the press, “We don’t need a Devil’s Island here. We have so far in San Francisco kept the gangster within bounds. Incarceration of the likes of Al Capone and Machine Gun Kelly would draw their henchman...
CELEBRATES AT 75
I
n recent issues of The Semaphore I’ve reviewed three excellent restaurants in the 500 block of Green Street. In the last issue I wrote about Sodini’s, at 510 Green, the best purveyor of traditional Italian food in North Beach. In an earlier issue I spotlighted Sotto Mare, Gigi’s hole-in-the-wall celebration to wonderful seafood, at 552 Green. Housed between these two delights was the excellent but short-lived Nua. A new restaurant, Vicoletto, has now moved into the Nua space, providing the missing link in the Green Street chain of superior cuisine.

Vicoletto’s owner Francesco Covucci, had, between frequent visits to his home in Calabria, been looking for the perfect location to offer San Franciscans the delicacies of Southern Italy. “When I found this spot, I knew instantly this is where I belonged. I felt the strong Italian culture, loved the neighborhood, my neighbors and the little alley, which reminds me of Southern Italy where I grew up. That is the reason for the name of the restaurant. Vicoletto in Italian means little alley.”

Upon opening, Francesco brought his mother over from Italy for the first two months as head chef. She and his grandmother were the great influences on his understanding of how good food should be made and eaten, and on his menu today family recipes abound. He now has another chef, Antonio Tovana, from Venice who specializes in delicate pastas. To prove this point, Francisco brought to our table a tray of newly formed tortellini that Antonio had just made. Indeed, they were slender and perfectly shaped little hats. Because the pasta is fresh, it is cooked as each dish is ordered, unlike many Italian restaurants that cook their pasta in the morning and then dip it in hot water to refresh it at dinner time.

There is an unusual antipasti on the menu that I have never seen nor heard of: Burrata. It is a special mozzarella cheese from Puglia, recognized as the best Burrata in Italy. Francesco imports it fresh. I was rather taken back by the price ($18), but the Burrata, served on a large plate with arugola and organic sweet tomatoes, was the size of a baseball and could be shared by two or even three people, making the price of the dish reasonable. As I put my fork into the cheese, an exquisite creamy soft liquid oozed from the center of this rich and delicious delicacy. If you are a lover of mozzarella, you must experience this heavenly dish.

The chef also makes a wonderful Caprini con vegetali, which translates to velvety layers of goat cheese seasoned with thyme and drizzled with basil Collis and served with freshly grilled local, organic vegetables brought in fresh every morning.

Then we have the pasta! The handmade tortellini is stuffed with imported prosciutto, mortadella and ricotta cheese. It is served with a delicate light cream sauce with peas and ham. My favorite pasta dish at Vicoletto is the cappellacci, hand made as well. I have never seen this pasta before, but it is a favorite in Southern Italy and festivals are fashioned around it. This pasta is stuffed with goat cheese, leeks, potatoes and served in a buttery artichoke sauce.

I am always a sucker for a wonderfully prepared rack of lamb and Vicoletto does this dish beautifully. It is served over horse radish mashed potatoes.

continued on page 26
Dennis Hinze has been on his own since he left his foster home as a 19 year old in 1963. Since that day, he has not had a plan of action, but instead a feeling that, after the premature deaths of his father and mother, things couldn't get worse.

While interviewing Dennis, 64, American Indian, orphaned since the age of 11 (1955), he told me the story of his first road-trip from his home in Northern California to New York City.

As a 19 year old, Dennis was not well versed in the ways of the world and thus experienced many firsts on his trip. For instance, when confronted with Jim Crow laws for the first time at a hot dog stand in Mobile, Alabama, he stood in front of the white and colored signs for a few minutes confused by which line to enter since to his mind he was neither white nor colored. After a few minutes of confusion, he made his decision and without further speculation bought a hot dog from the white line and a bun from the colored line.

It’s surprising how quickly Dennis developed a tolerance for homelessness, but, by his own account, he is and was, above all, adaptive. In his mind, he hadn’t had a home since the final years of childhood, so why would he have one now? That’s not to say that he didn’t at points live in single room occupancies (SROs) in between his stays on the streets and in church missions—Dennis worked his entire adult life as a piano player and hotel kitchen hand, but none of the SROs he lived in were permanent housing options.

Thankfully, since encountering North Beach Citizens (NBC) and the staff’s commitment to him, Dennis’s tolerance for the streets has diminished and his desire for a home has increased. As a homeless, senior encountering frequent health issues and cold nights of broken sleep, the process of obtaining benefits and housing has been difficult. But Dennis has persisted thanks to his strong will and ownership of the action plan developed and executed by both Dennis and North Beach Citizens.

At the end of September, Dennis Hinze signed his first housing lease and moved into Civic Center Senior Housing Residence. “I look back at my life and wonder how I lived without North Beach Citizens.”

North Beach Citizens

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Broadway North Beach
The Golden Years

A Saloon Keeper’s Tales
by Dick Boyd
Foreword by Margo St. James
How to End a Saturday Afternoon

by June Fraps

After you’ve done the Saturday chores, drift down to Grant Avenue to the Savoy-Tivoli. Kick back and relax to traditional jazz, supplied every Saturday from 3 to 6 pm by Mal Sharpe’s Big Money in Jazz Band. It’s a great way to unwind, and one of the reasons this is such a great neighborhood. And you’ll probably find some familiar faces if you show up at 4 or 4:30.
Many of you have heard about the changes to the NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (NBNCD) ordinance recently approved by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. The purpose of the legislation is to provide a tool to help rebalance our North Beach business district between the ever-growing ranks of bars and restaurants and the businesses that serve the every-day needs of our residential community. Although we all greatly value our tradition as a dining destination, the fact that restaurants and bars currently occupy 45% of all North Beach storefronts seems sufficient enough to provide a large selection of choices to diners. This number is already almost double the amount recommended by the SF General Plan for a healthy mix of businesses in the City’s neighborhood commercial districts.

We have all watched the number of neighborhood serving businesses dwindle away in recent years to be replaced by new drinking/dining establishments – “daytime” businesses being replaced by “nighttime” businesses. With the number of “daytime” businesses at its all time low, North Beach has become known primarily as a “nighttime” drinking/dining destination, a scene which suffers, especially on weekends, from a growing crime rate caused by the huge influx of rowdy drinking crowds both on Broadway and in North Beach proper, impacting the numerous residents who live above these bars and restaurants, and spilling onto our residential streets.

Because of this reputation as a nighttime destination, it has become more and more difficult to recruit new businesses, other than more bars and restaurants, to our neighborhood. Further, longtime shops are being driven out by high rents demanded by landlords who now prefer to rent to bars and restaurants, which can afford to pay much higher rents than retail establishments.

While we all know that no one piece of legislation can completely address the complexities of North Beach’s economic situation, the recent changes to our ordinance represent a good first step towards making the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District more neighborhood-friendly again. That is why the THD Board of Directors voted unanimously to support the legislation. But our work is not done.

The North Beach Merchants Association (NBMA), which represents many of the remaining small businesses in our neighborhood, also sup-

The Missing Link restaurant continued from page 22

and accompanied by tender French beans. Lovely. Francesco’s friend, Rocco, who came from the same village to help out, brought us this dish and many others. He lends a unique authenticity and friendliness to the restaurant.

Francesco was referred to wonderful pastry chef, Ming Alder, who specializes in the authentic regional desserts she found while studying in Italy. Enjoy her panna cotta, almond cake or chocolate cake with nuts. Or try these or other delicacies as an assortment. This is a wonderful plate to share for a party of two or four.

So, now our row of fabulous Green Street restaurants is again complete. Drop into Vicoletto and meet this young man who is in love with our neighborhood. You will, in turn, fall in love with his food.
ported this legislation and is now actively looking for incentives to reward landlords who are willing to rent to neighborhood serving businesses. On the flip side, the NBMA is also looking for tools to discourage landlords from leaving their properties empty and derelict, sometimes for many years, as they try to find takers for unrealistically high rents, while claiming as a “write off” on their taxes the “lost income” from these vacancies.

The search is on for a new hardware store and an independent grocer for North Beach. What THD members can do to help keep our remaining daytime businesses is to “go that extra mile” and make the effort to support these North Beach businesses. We must send a message to would-be new shopkeepers that the residents are willing to support these businesses with their pocketbooks. It’s really up to all of us to shape our business district into a place where we can not only have a great meal and a glass of wine, but can also pick up household essentials without having to drive to another neighborhood.

With increasing emphasis on a “green” SF economy, it makes sense to have a local business district that allows residents to “shop local” for everyday needs without having to get in their cars and leave North Beach. But “shop local” is not just a slogan, it’s a commitment to our community as well as to the environment. We must decide whether to allow North Beach to continue to devolve into a drinking/dining Disneyland that no longer serves its residents.

THD believes that our North Beach commercial district deserves better than that.

Everyone has heard and read about the changes to the ordinance that governs our Neighborhood Commercial District – including many things that are simply not factual or correct. Let’s try and set the record straight on a few of these:

**LIMITING NEW BARS AND RESTAURANTS:**

**Myth:** It bans all new restaurants and bars in North Beach.

**Facts:** It only prevents new bars/restaurants from occupying commercial spaces that were last occupied by a neighborhood serving retail/service business. It does not prevent them from occupying ground floor spaces occupied by non-neighborhood serving businesses, such as offices or banks.

All current restaurant and bar spaces are automatically allowed to be replaced by new restaurants and bars. In addition, the new legislation adds a new benefit to landlords of bars and restaurants – they will now have three years (as opposed to the prior 18 months) to find a new restaurant or bar to reoccupy a vacated space (total time allowed is now 3 years instead of 18 months).

The North Beach approach is much more lenient than the existing ordinances in other Neighborhood Commercial Districts in the City, which prohibit all new bars and restaurants (including those in the Castro, Inner Clement, Outer Clement, Upper Fillmore, Haight Street, Union Street and Noe Valley); and an additional 3 prohibit all new bars (including Pacific Avenue, the Mission and Sacramento Street).

All pending applications to convert a space into a new restaurant are “grandfathered” and are not subject to the new restrictions. For example, the proposed Mexican restaurant proposed for the ground floor of the Pagoda Theater project will not be affected.
ADDING EXISTING ABC REQUIREMENTS TO SF PLANNING CODE:

Myth: It adds unreasonable new operating requirements for restaurants to obtain and maintain State ABC liquor licenses. Others have said that: “Government has no business defining a bona fide meal” or “The definition of bona fide eating place is presumptuous and totalitarian.”

Facts: It adds no new operating requirements for restaurants.

Existing State Alcoholic Beverage Commission (ABC) laws and regulations define bona fide eating place and specifically require that in order for any restaurant in California to obtain and maintain an “on sale” beer and wine or general liquor license to serve alcohol (license Type 41, 47 or 49), the restaurant must “operate and maintain the premises as a bona fide eating place.” The ABC defines a bona fide eating place, requiring specifically that it must “make actual and substantial sales of meals during meal hours that they are open, at least five days a week. Normal meal hours are 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.” Also according to the ABC, the gross sales of meals prepared and sold to guests in a bona fide eating place must exceed the gross sales of alcoholic beverages. If a restaurant cannot meet these State law requirements, they must be characterized as a “bar” which does not allow minors (and has separate licensing requirements).

The new legislation adds the existing terminology to the City Planning Code for consistency, clarification and information as to the liquor licensing requirements in relation to restaurants.

EXPANDING THE EXISTING NORTH BEACH FINANCIAL SUBDISTRICT:

Myth: It bans all new financial services or offices in the entire commercial district.

Facts: A North Beach Financial Subdistrict prohibiting all new banks and financial services has been in effect since 1987, and has been successful in preventing ground floor retail spaces in the core area of the NBNCD from being converted into banks or financial institutions.

The amendments expand the existing boundaries of this Subdistrict (adding approximately 2 blocks to the north of Union Street) to include the properties surrounding Washington Square. It also adds ground floor office to these controls. This was added to ensure that the storefronts immediately surrounding Washington Square remain filled with vibrant businesses such as the existing restaurants and unique shops.

PROHIBITING NEW ATM MACHINES NOT ASSOCIATED WITH A BANK.

Myth: It bans all automated teller machines (ATM's) in North Beach.

Facts: It does not affect any existing ATM’s attached to North Beach’s many legitimate banking establishments.

It does prohibit freestanding walk-up ATM’s, such as Swipe machines, and ATM’s on the exterior walls of storefronts, attached to such places as liquor stores and convenience stores.

Will stop the proliferation of ATM’s on our sidewalks, which have increased clutter and litter on our streets.

LENGTH OF ORDINANCE CHANGING NORTH BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT CODE:

Myth: The North Beach legislation is 318 pages long!

Facts: While the entire proposed ordinance was approximately 318 pages in length, the pages involving North Beach changes were only 16-20 pages of this—the other pages reflected changes requested by the Planning Department as “clean up” amendments that are not specific to North Beach.
Today, Lena Massucco at 90 is the only surviving child of the Achille Spediacci family of Speedy’s Market (the New Union Grocery on the southwest corner of Union and Montgomery Streets) on Telegraph Hill. It is fitting that we finished her oral history this summer, since Speedy’s Market closed this year. For over 130 years this spot has served the neighborhood and it is sorely missed by the thousand or so households that depended on it. Lena was one of many that helped Speedy’s feed the residents of the hill. Her parents and siblings kept the store going for over 30 years.

Way back in 1860 Martin Lammers operated a grocery at the same corner. In 1880 Henry Eggert ran a butcher shop there and added groceries later in 1903. The earthquake and fire in 1906 devastated most of the block and it wasn’t until 1915 that the Spediacci family bought the present building while it was under construction. Achille and Emma Spediacci both came from Italy and had settled on Alta Street nearby with their family of five children. They moved into the new building and had other tenants who ran the grocery on the first floor. When those tenants left, in 1923, they took over the grocery. There are wonderful photographs of the market with Emma and Mary, Lena’s sister, in David Myrick’s, “San Francisco’s Telegraph Hill” book which we sell on at our online site thd.org and at several bookstores in the neighborhood.

Lena makes the market and her life on the hill come alive in her oral history. Here is just a bit of it to wet your appetite. Interviewer Lori Viti asks Lena what life was like on the hill:

“LORI: I guess women did shopping every day?
LENA: Yes. They shopped every day. They’d buy a chicken and my mother would give them all the vegetables to make soup - free. [chuckle]
LORI: Really?
LENA: Yes.
LORI: Did she give them the recipe too?
LENA: Yes, probably. [laughter] She was so good-hearted. If they were going to have a baby … she’s a midwife and she’d wash their clothes because she was the only one that had a washing machine on the hill and she was one of the first ones to have electric lights.”

Lena’s mother, Emma Frediani, made sausage, homemade ravioli and “gravy”, kept live chickens and rabbits on the roof and made wine in the basement. Lori asks about her mother’s cooking:

“LENA: Oh, we all cooked in our family.
LORI: Did you learn from your mother or learn
continued on page 30
on your own? She was in business, right?

LENA: Yes, my mother cooked, she was a great cook but she always did it so early that none of us got to do anything and then we were working in the store while she was cooking for all of us. But later on in life we all got to learn a lot from her when she wasn’t working. She cooked. We always had soup. We always had spaghetti and chicken or pork or tripe. It was always big dinners and I don’t know how she fed all the salesmen in between who would come. I don’t know how she stretched it all [chuckle] but she always had polenta. One time she said she was through cooking for us and my father said, “She can’t cook no more for nobody.” Well, my father was outside trying to get people to come up and eat with him [chuckle] and she was bringing the food down to the store so that didn’t last very long, she was back cooking for everybody. She just had to cook.”

As you know, dear readers, these oral histories are available at our local North Beach Library and copies are also in the Main S.F. Library’s History Room and at the Bancroft Library at U.C. in Berkeley. Lena’s family will be reading this oral history in their homes. They ordered 25 copies for relatives. Join the family and read of Lena’s adventures!

—Rozell Overmire, THD Archivist, October 5, 2008
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32 Issue #185 • Autumn 2008
POETRY ON PUBLIC DISPLAY

by Susan Weinberg

Northeast poets will have their place in the sun (and under the stars) thanks to THD Art & Culture Committee’s Poetry in Public Display project.

Poets living in North Beach were invited to enter a competition organized by the Committee. But rather than being printed in a poetry journal, the winning poems will be prominently displayed in the large illuminated spaces on the sides of JC DeCaux’s public lavatories. The poems will appear in nine locations around the city, including Washington Square Park and Coit Tower.

Each poet could enter up to three poems, with the final number chosen for display—up to nine—determined by the judges’ ratings. As of press time, the winners hadn’t yet been chosen.

The poems will be on display from November 19 to December 3. An “unveiling” will take place at Washington Square Park (Union Street), at 6:00 pm on November 21, and all are invited to help celebrate this exciting addition of our poets to public life. In addition to the Park and Coit Tower, the poems will be displayed at Jefferson and Powell Streets, Clay and Drumm Streets, Grove Street at Larkin, the Embarcadero at Harrison Street, Larkin Street at Myrtle, Market Street near Spear, and Market Street at Church.

Nancy Peters of City Lights books and well-known San Francisco poets Neeli Cherkovski and Stephen Vincent generously donated their time to judge the poems. The Beat Museum served as the drop-off location for submissions, and its director, Jerry Cimino, offered invaluable advice to the Committee for managing the competition. Sponsors of the event are The Beat Museum, City Lights Foundation, Focus Gallery, and Philip Hackett Poet’s Gallery.

BOOKS ON THE HILL

Carol Peterson invites lovers of the written word to join our once a month book club. We read all genres and have lively and interesting discussions. 956-7817.

Correction:

The spray art mural in front of Pagoda Palace was painted by Cuba, a famous New York spray artist from the subway mural era, over a period of seven days and nights. It was commissioned, but not painted by Mal Clay, a North Beach playwright, and paid for by local merchants.

Carol Peterson, aka Madame Zelda the face painter, shows off Suzanne Nelson’s grand daughter, Ellie Nelson, and her freshly painted purple butterfly. Telegraph Hill Dwellers end of the season picnic at Coit Tower, which drew around 100.

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.
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During August and September our committee worked on alternatives to MTA’s Transit Effectiveness Program (TEP) proposed cuts to the #39 bus route. Citing low utilization, their proposal would eliminate all stops on Union Street, leaving residents on this steep hill with no alternate public transportation. The proposal would also reduce frequency of service to Coit Tower. THD and other community groups are proposing instead a trial period of three years, during which service on this route would remain in place. The purpose of the trial period is to develop and test plans for route modifications at Fisherman's Wharf and enhanced marketing activities that would increase utilization of the #39 bus. Wharf merchants have already indicated strong support for our trial period proposal. We had a good showing of hill dwellers at the September 23 MTA Board hearing that considered all proposals for MUNI route modifications. The MTA board will be making a decision on the TEP proposals October 21 so we'll know whether we were successful by the time this publication comes out.

Committee member Jonathan Weiner is working with RenewSF and city staff on improvement projects for the Columbus Avenue corridor. Currently, our committee is focusing on pedestrian safety and vehicle circulation improvements for the Columbus/Green/Stockton intersection. Our committee will be considering proposals at its meetings this fall.

Committee members expressed serious concerns about the planned deep Central Subway from South of Market to Chinatown and the tunnel exit at Washington Square. Howard Wong presented study data showing that a trip from Pacific/Stockton to Market Street would take substantially longer by deep subway than by surface bus. An appeal of the Environmental Impact Report was unsuccessful.

Nate Baca is leading our committee to again look at the issue of colored parking zones in North Beach, in particular the many fragmented white zones for passenger loading in front of restaurants. These loading zones are typically not used as intended for pulling in to drop off passengers, often because they are too small or are used for longer term parking by valet services. The committee will be working with the Department of Parking and Traffic to obtain an updated inventory of white zones and to document how they are being used and misused. Our goal is to develop a proposal for consolidating white zones into larger and fewer “community” white zones not tied to specific businesses.

The committee meets on the first Saturday of each month, 10:30 am to noon, at North Beach Citizens, 720 Columbus. Everyone is welcome to attend.

The 39 will continue to chug up Union.
here as honey draws flies.”)

On May 21st, Daniel Piccerelli, “Danny the Hook” AKA James Rizzo of 1304 Stockton St. was arrested as a suspect but was turned over as a fugitive when it was discovered he was wanted for a murder in Philadelphia. No one was ever convicted of Malvese's murder.

Malvese's girlfriend, Ramona Crawford, a dancer, was left heart broken, penniless and unable to pay her rent at their Grant Street apartment. However she seemed to have no regrets. “There is no love as loyal or true as a gangster’s,” and “I’m glad I was a gangster’s girl,” she said.

In 1933 the Volstead Act was repealed and booze flowed again legally. The bootlegging business dried up, and most of the mafia boys left town encouraged by the SFPD. Many years later, in 1958, Gangster Mickey Cohen got rousted big time by the cities finest when he came to San Francisco to see his biographer, Dean Jennings. Chief Thomas Cahill simply said, “I have a sworn obligation to the people of San Francisco to protect them.” The word was out that the mafia thugs were not welcome in the city—even on a literary sojourn.
THD BOARD MOTIONS
for the Months of April-June 2008

JUNE, 2008
MOTION: To buy the 32 tickets the San Francisco Symphony allotted to THD at a price of $10.00 per ticket.
The Motion passed.

MOTION: To approve the 2008-2009 budget.
The Motion passed.

MOTION: To approve the following Special Committees and Chairs: Art and Culture Committee—Termeh Yeghiazarian, Chair; Oral History Committee—Rozell Overmire, Chair; Website Committee—Al Fontes, Chair
The Motion passed.

JULY, 2008
(No Board Meeting was held in July, so there were no Motions this month).

AUGUST, 2008
MOTION: THD endorses the Charter Amendment to Establish an Independent Historic Preservation Commission and authorizes its President to sign a ballot argument in favor of the Charter Amendment.
The Motion passed.

MOTION: THD supports the proposed amendments to the North Beach Neighborhood Commercial District ordinance.
The Motion passed.

SEPTEMBER, 2008
MOTION: To approve David Smolen to serve as a THD Director, completing the remainder of Jean Forsman’s term.
The Motion passed.

MOTION: The Board approves adding the Waterfront Committee to the Membership Brochure.
The Motion passed.
**STANDING COMMITTEES**

**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; artpeterson@writingproject.org. The editor and staff produce a quarterly magazine for THD members.

**Program.** Sarah Kliban. Arranges social events, including quarterly membership meetings and get-acquainted social functions.

**Budget.** Gail Switzer. gail_switzer@yahoo.com. As prescribed in bylaws for Treasurer.

**Membership.** Al Fontes, membership@thd.org. As prescribed in Bylaws for Financial Secretary.

**Archivist:** Rozell Overmire, rozell@ureach.com

**SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS**

**Parks and Trees.** Robert Mattei, chair. 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 Website.** Webmaster, Al Fontes; webmaster@thd.org. Shared information about meetings, local concerns and events.

**Art and Culture.** Termeh Yeeghiazarian. Organizes events and projects that celebrate the history and humanities of our neighborhood.

**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.
NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

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

NAME: ____________________________________
ADDRESS: _________________________________
CITY: ___________________________ STATE: ______ ZIP: ______

CHECK ENCLOSED FOR 1-YEAR MEMBERSHIP
Individual $25 ____ Household $40 ____ Senior (age 65 and over) $15 ____

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

THD W elcomes New Members Autumn 2008:

THD CALENDAR

Schedules of Committee Meetings & Zone: First
Planning & Zoning: First

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

Look to the THD Website for information on THD events.
Log on to http://www.thd.org