THE SEMAPHORE # 184 SUMMER 2008

FEATURES

Macchiarini Show
Celebrates Family Heritage ........................................ 4
The State of Live Music
in North Beach .......................................................... 5
The Rock of North Beach: Sts. Peter and Paul .............. 8
North Beach Literary Noir .............................................. 12
Neighbors Ponder Joe DiMaggio and More ................. 13
THD Spring Salon Mixes Neighborhood

ThD BUSINESS

Artistic Types ............................................................. 15
Broadway Before Busts .................................................. 23
Theatre on the Square: A Blueprint For What Might Have Been .................................................. 24
Meet New ThD Board Members .................................. 25
ADA Lawyers Shake Down North Beach ....................... 28
The Academy of Art University It's Not ....................... 29

COLUMNS

The President’s Corner .................................................. 3
Parking & Traffic Committee Report ......................... 16
The Alfa Nose ............................................................. 18
Restaurant Review: Sodini’s ......................................... 19

ThD BUSINESS

Board Motions .......................................................... 38
Board of Directors ....................................................... 39
THD Committees ......................................................... 39
Membership Info ......................................................... back cover

SEMAPHORE STAFF:

EDITOR: Art Peterson, 101A Telegraph Hill, 956-7817, apeterson@writingproject.org
COPY EDITOR: Tony Long, alittlechinmusic@yahoo.com
AD SALES: Kathleen Cannon, 776-6014, cannonpk@aol.com
BUSINESS MANAGER: Gail Switzer, 341 Fillbert, 788-8667, gail_switzer@yahoo.com
TYPESETTING/DESIGN: Chris Carlsson, Cloverleaf Productions, 608-9035 cc@chriskarlsson.com

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.

Cover: North Beach Alley, photo by Catherine Accardi
I have lived on the Hill for thirty years and have, for most of that time, been a member of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. Last year I was approached by the Nominating Committee to join the Board and take on the responsibility of being the Financial Secretary in charge of Membership. And this year I was asked to assume the office of President. I agreed after much soul searching and, even though overwhelmed, am prepared to work hard during the next year.

I want to devote this year to re-energizing the committees by encouraging members to become involved. When you originally become a member or when you renew your membership, you have the opportunity to select a committee to work on. I hope you will thoughtfully consider joining one if you have not already done so. You can call the THD voice mail (273-1004) or send an e-mail to president@thd.org to express your interest.

The Parking & Traffic Committee meets the first Saturday of the month. There are important issues on their agenda this year.

The Planning & Zoning Committee meets the first Thursday of the month.

The Social Committee is in the throes of setting up a schedule of events for the year which will include dinners, cocktail parties, lectures, tours and family activities. We hope to bring back the September picnic.

The Parks & Trees Committee has submitted requests for tree planting and will solicit volunteers to help when needed.

The Art & Culture Committee had a very successful first year and is planning more events. Watch for details!

You will be hearing about future Waterfront Committee meetings.

Our webmaster is looking for help. If you have experience working with websites, we would like to hear from you.

WE NEED YOUR INVOLVEMENT.

As you read this issue of the Semaphore we will be well into our summer festivities. Be sure to take time to relax with family and friends and take advantage of all the wonderful opportunities that are offered to us in our neighborhood.

Sean O’Donnell
Handyman

“Anything can be fixed except a fallen soufflé.”

307-1205
People sometimes lament the passing of old North Beach. But on Grant Avenue, we still have one of the places that established North Beach as a haven for artists and bohemians.

Macchiarini Creative Design, the nation’s oldest metal arts design, production and display shop, will celebrate its 60th anniversary on Grant this fall.

Dan Macchiarini, who is continuing in the tradition of his parents, the late Peter and Virginia Macchiarini, is planning a show called “Generations” to mark the occasion. It will feature the metal jewelry and sculpture of his parents, who opened their shop on Upper Grant in 1948, as well as his own metalwork and the paintings and jewelry of his daughter, Emma Macchiarini Mankin. The show opens with a reception from 4 to 6 p.m., Sunday, September 21.

Besides being a familiar North Beach figure in his beret and glasses, Peter Macchiarini was an important “Messenger of Modernism” whose metal jewelry and sculpture are held in museums and private collections throughout the country. Macchiarini was part of a vibrant arts community with friends such as the sculptor Beniamino Bufano with whom he often talked about art over drinks at the Tivoli.

Peter and Virginia were ahead of their time. In addition to founding the first artist-run street festival (see Alfa Nose, p 22) they supported various progressive causes. Macchiarini was clubbed by police during the 1934 waterfront strike.

Virginia Macchiarini died in 1999, Peter in 2001. The Kearny Street Steps above Broadway, where he had his first North Beach workshop in the 1930s, were renamed the Peter Macchiarini Steps in 2000.

Now after decades in which the family has rented studio and gallery space, Dan has purchased a production and display space at 1544 Grant.

Dan’s art is very much part of San Francisco.
North Beach has long been one of the most storied and celebrated of neighborhoods. Beneath the scepter of Coit Tower, the hilly streets and back alleys were once alive with the sound of music infusing the fog. The bars and clubs that line Grant Avenue, Columbus and Broadway served as epicenters of the jazz, folk, punk, and metal scenes, both locally and nationally. But what is the state of live music in North Beach today? In a neighborhood so heavily invested in its cultural legacy, the music scene struggles to overcome ambivalence, meddling, and a lack of parking.

Starting this piece, I was tempted to write a journalistic/historical tribute to a neighborhood that, dating back to the days of the Barbary Coast, seemed to embody the questing nature of its inhabitants. Then, I thought about how disappointed I had become over the lack of vitality in the neighborhood music scene. After talking with many of the club owners, bookers, bands, patrons and citizenry, I came to realize what was in order was a little tough love.

The music scene in North Beach is, for all practical purposes and with a few exceptions, dead. A neighborhood that was responsible for embracing and fostering jazz on the West Coast now uses “jazz” as a marketing tool. The mouth that housed the voices of the early sixties folk renaissance produces a din of disposable cover bands. The Broadway corridor essential to the late ’70s-early ’80s hardcore punk and later metal movements, is boarded up and blighted.

I came to know North Beach through the Beats. The passages described by Kerouac, Ferlinghetti, Kaufman and others of nightclubs perspiring with the fevered squall of Charlie Parker-like saxophones, had me resolute in the belief that this is where an
aspiring musician needed to go. This ideal was cemented when my sheltered Peninsula adolescence was infiltrated by the socio-political call-to-arms of the Dead Kennedys.

I was a junior in high school and my weekends were spent inside Ness Aquino’s Mabuhay Gardens on Broadway. If Kerouac could step into a time machine, I reasoned, this is where he would have ended up. It was there, moved by the performances I witnessed, that I suspended any parentally mandated decrees of attending college, in service of lending my voice to punk rock’s discordant choir.

Punk rock was built on community. It provided an environment where freethinking challengers to social conventions and political dissidents could find safe harbor. Upon moving to North Beach shortly after high school, I realized that this was also true of my new neighborhood. I was merely part of a continuum, a direct line that leads to the threshold of one of San Francisco’s oldest bars, The Saloon.

Many often deride The Saloon as “that place with all those scary, drunk, old dudes out front.” But the Saloon is the best example of a self-sustaining musical community left in North Beach. The Saloon does one thing: the blues. Many of the bands that play weekly gigs there have been neighborhood staples for decades. They are woven into the fabric of this community.

The problem with The Saloon is that the music they celebrate and those playing it are chronically out of fashion. There have been no attempts at regeneration. The Saloon is a daily destination for its regulars and an accidental night out for tourists, who are lured in by the charm of the down and out. I have a hard time imagining anything else in its place.

The “accidental tourist” makes up the majority of the clientele in North Beach clubs according to many of the bookers and club owners I spoke with. Live music is basically one part of a business model designed to get people in the door and up to the bar. Walking around North Beach will reveal many signs in restaurant windows boasting “Live Jazz.” These spaces are poorly designed for live music, with acts...
that have little hope of restoring North Beach’s jazz heritage.

Enrico’s still hosts the truly talented Lavay Smith and the Red Hot Skillet Lickers every Monday night, for free. Ms. Smith has been in the neighborhood for years and goes largely unnoticed, while commanding forty dollars a ticket in Manhattan.

Mojito Cafe on Grant Avenue, along with Grant & Green, have the potential to resurrect North Beach’s musical legacy. Mojito will be celebrating its three-year anniversary and is fast becoming a destination for eclectic world music, jazz and reggae. Owned, operated and booked by John Miles and Robert Kowal of Sunset Promotions, Mojito has become the center of the neighborhood music scene.

Sunset Promotions, along with Alistair Monroe, produce the North Beach Jazz Festival. The NBJF, now in its 14th year, is perhaps the best example of how a music community can be built and cross-promoted in North Beach. Once a year, every available venue is transformed into a jazz club, booking some of the top names in jazz. Thousands traffic the neighborhood streets in search of live music and, in the process, discover clubs, restaurants and businesses they might not otherwise. As Miles notes, “… success depends on all the clubs acting together.”

This is a sentiment echoed by Scott Rootenberg, longtime booking agent for both the Grant & Green and the now defunct Cocodrie. He has been an advocate of working with other clubs to collectively advertise their venues as part of an effort to build community. The problem as he sees it is a disjointed scene where clubs work independent of each other and receive little support from the North Beach Chamber of Commerce or any other local organization.

The Grant & Green’s booking philosophy seems to parallel that of legendary New York City club CBGB’s. Rootenberg has always welcomed bands that run the gamut from those just starting out to touring bands. He has consistently, dating back to his days at the Cocodrie, tried to support genres that have fewer avenues open to them. The problem one local musician expressed was that due to noise considerations, lack of parking, no real neighbor-

continued on page 8
hood scene and better-known venues across the city getting the name acts, Grant & Green is not highly regarded locally. Gone are the days of Metallica selling out the Stone. Other local musicians I spoke with would love to play in North Beach but feel that beyond Bimbo’s, there is no real club worth the hassle. The perception is neighborhoods like the Mission, SOMA and Lower Polk Gulch are where the scene has gravitated. This is mostly due, as Rootenberg pointed out, to the fact that the “dot-com bubble” raised rents in North Beach, effectively pricing out many of the local musicians. Many of the moneyed, new arrivals weren’t as interested in supporting local music. This resulted in the explosion of the “lounge” with DJ’s replacing live music.

With the bubble burst we see a neighborhood still in transition some eight years later. There seems to be a competing vision for North Beach between business owners who operate in the daytime hours and those who depend on nighttime traffic. Many club owners I spoke with bristle at neighborhood groups, who wield a disproportionate amount of influence on how business in North Beach gets done and who does it. The perception of the club owners is that unreasonable restrictions and stonewalling prevent them from succeeding.

To that point they say neighborhood groups should be supporting, both in presence and financially, these small businesses. In many ways this debate mirrors the fractured North Beach music scene. If live music is to once again come to prominence in North Beach it will take a concerted effort by residents, club owners, neighborhood groups and some adventurous booking. What made someone like Enrico Banducci, famed tastemaker, so unique was his eye for talent and the support of the local community.

As things stand now I still walk past the clubs in my neighborhood en route to other districts to see music that should be nurtured in North Beach. High rents are finishing off the last of the last of the musicians I played in bands with here. The truth is if you want to play a club with some cache, with the exception of Bimbo’s or Pearl’s, you have to leave the neighborhood. It begs the question; will former glory one day return to the music scene? Not that long ago you wouldn’t have considered going anywhere else.

Robert Celli is a longtime North Beach resident, musician, and freelance writer. Currently he is working on his upcoming blog, “What Duvet Said...”
FERRY BUILDING MARKETPLACE

A HERITAGE OF GOOD TASTES

A VIBRANT GATHERING OF ARTISAN PRODUCERS, LOCAL FARMERS AND SHOPS THAT CELEBRATE THE FOOD TRADITIONS OF THE BAY AREA.

SEASONAL • LOCAL • SUSTAINABLE

WWW.FERRYBUILDINGMARKETPLACE.COM

THE FERRY BUILDING IS DEDICATED TO THE CELEBRATION OF SAN FRANCISCO’S ARTISAN FOOD CULTURE AND CUISINE AND IS SUPPORTED BY EQUITY OFFICE, A COMPANY COMMITTED TO FOSTERING THE VALUES OF THIS COMMUNITY.
Great Shopping, Dining & Services
There is No Other Place Like North Beach!

www.NorthBeachMerchants.com

Preserve the History and Beauty of your home while gaining: Energy efficiency, Sound Reduction & Design Flexibility.

More than a Window, a Work of Art...

415-357-1370
Wooden Window Inc.
Custom fabrication, installation & restoration of wood windows and doors.
WoodenWindow.com • Send us your digital pictures for your project

GSM

Green Street Mortuary

William K. Steiner
General Manager

Lic. #OB28431
FDR 2082
649 Green Street
San Francisco, California
94133-3801
415.433.5692
Fax 415.433.2290
with them Bosco’s view on educating youth through love and attention rather than punishment. This became extremely important to many boys of North Beach who grew up unattended in the streets, with both parents trying to make ends meet by working at the Wharf, in factories, or later at the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge.

It was one accomplishment of the Salesians to get Italian workers accepted into labor unions held under tight control by immigrants from other nations, particularly the Irish. Also, the Salesians’ “Americanization School” provided English language training to help integrate the Italians into the civic community. This proved particularly difficult during the Second World War, when Italians without U.S. citizenship were under suspicion of supporting fascism and, after the fall of Benito Mussolini, of promoting communism.

One very visible display of Salesian-sponsored Italian pride in North Beach is the Columbus Day parade, inaugurated 1919, and the “Blessing of the Fleet” at Fishermen’s Wharf, administered by the Fathers to this day. In 1964, U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson visited to participate in the Columbus Day festivities and delivered a speech in front of the Church.

Not only did the Salesians provide school education for the children of the neighborhood, but their “Salesian Boys’ Club” and “Salesian Girls’ Club” proved a home to many youngsters. (In 1994, the clubs merged to become the “Salesian Boys’ and Girls’ Club.”) Many great national athletes as well as some of San Francisco’s most respected citizens are alumni of these clubs. The list begins with “Ping Bodie” a.k.a. Francisco Pizzola, who emerged from the Boys’ Club as the first Italian-American to play in a major league baseball team on the West Coast. Emerging during the thirties and forties were Dario Lodigiani, baseball star of the Chicago White Sox, Fred Apostoli, boxer and welterweight and middleweight world champion, Angelo “Hank” Luisetti, a great shooter in the history of basketball, and, of course, the legendary Joe DiMaggio of the New York Yankees. Joseph L. Alioto, San Francisco’s second “Italian” Mayor (1968-76), was one of the most active supporters of the Salesian Boy’s Club and a graduate of Saints Peter and Paul Grammar School. Just last month (June), something of an alumni meeting occurred at Sts. Peter & Paul at

continued on page 13
NORTH BEACH LITERARY NOIR

By Catherine Accardi

It’s no wonder San Francisco has been the main character in stories since its early days. The literary city of fog has been the setting for countless mysteries—can we say literary noir? Literary historians site “The Mysteries and Miseries of San Francisco”, by Anonymous in 1853, as the first San Francisco mystery story. The cool gray city has since seduced many a writer. North Beach—and Telegraph Hill—in particular, embody all the seductive qualities any writer would desire to weave into dark tales; the hills, alleys, views, colorful people, and the soft, eerie blanket called fog.

Following is a sampling of mystery stories (listed chronologically) set within our Telegraph Hill Dweller’s boundaries.

**Foghorns**, by Howard Pease (1937), opens with, “San Francisco was smothered in fog...peering down into the gloom, he could barely make out the waterfront street below.” The story is set on the waterfront near the base of Telegraph Hill, where a college student from Sacramento lands a job on a freighter and gets caught up in a murder. **Foghorns** will bring the reader back to their own days of youthful, and sometimes reckless, enthusiasm.

**Dead Center**, by Mary Collins (1942), tells the story of a wealthy young woman who stumbles into a murder she is determined to solve. Quoting from the book: “The disreputable old building at 706 Montgomery turned out to be a perfect hangout not only for artists and writers but also for murder.” Currently, there is no such address. As a North Beach native, I particularly enjoyed Ms. Collins’ intimate descriptions of her colorful characters and their bohemian lifestyle.

David Goodis’ 1946 novel **Dark Passage** is the book on which the classic film, by the same name, was based. The film starred Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Telegraph Hill. The film keeps close to the book with one significant departure. Irene’s apartment in the book is in an unidentified building somewhere on Geary Street while in the film the apartment is 1360 Montgomery Street, near the Filbert steps, across from the former Shadows Restaurant and under the shadow of Coit Tower.

**The Frightened Child**, by Dana Lyon (1948), is an interesting book. It is the prequel, if you will, to the screenplay for the deliciously noir film, **House on Telegraph Hill**. This book was elusive, but I’ve finally found it in a gem of a bookstore in the Polk Gulch district of San Francisco, which has since closed. **The Frightened Child** is a must read if you enjoyed, or plan to enjoy, viewing the film.

**Death-Wish Green**, by Frances Crane (1960), is a San Francisco Beatnik mystery with murder among the North Beach bohemia.

**Mystery on Telegraph Hill**, by Howard Pease (1961), is absolutely delightful and another rare find. It is just as it says, a mystery set on Telegraph
Discussions about the fate of the 701 Lombard triangle and Joe DiMaggio Playground have shifted out of the courtroom and chambers of City government and back into the heart of North Beach.

Two significant developments in 2007 paved the way for a memorial service for local boxer Ruben Manchacca, a North Beach boy who emerged from the Boys’ Club as a promising boxing champion (under his boxing name Ruben Hernandez).

Al Baccari was an altar boy at Joe DiMaggio’s first wedding to movie actress Dorothy Arnold in 1939 at Sts. Peter & Paul and remembers well that after his divorce from Arnold in 1944, DiMaggio couldn’t have a second Catholic marriage. He married Monroe at City Hall and only returned to Sts. Peter & Paul for a photo on the church steps on their way to their new home near the Marina and Fisherman’s Wharf, where DiMaggio had grown up. In 1999, Sts. Peter & Paul became the venue of a private funeral service for DiMaggio, officiated by the Salesian Father Armand Oliveri, a lifelong family confidant. The church proudly holds a picture of DiMaggio at his first wedding—not with Monroe.

Movie makers have been attracted to Sts. Peter & Paul ever since the Salesian Fathers began building today’s church at Washington Square—to replace an original church at the corner of Filbert Street and Grant Ave. destroyed during the 1906 earthquake and fire. (The loan for the constructions was arranged through the “Bank of Italy”—today Bank of America—whose founder, Amadeo P. Giannini, was one of the first donors.) As early as 1923, while the church was still under construction, film maker Cecil B. DeMille shot scenes for his epic “The Ten Commandments” (1926) in the church. Stained-glass windows in the upper walls of the middle nave were dedicated as the “Ten Commandments” windows. While actually only two of these windows depict such a theme (‘Moses Receiving the Tablets of Stone’ and ‘Moses with the Tablets of Stone on the Mountain before the people’) they received that name because they were filmed and featured in DeMille’s movie.

During the 1970s and 80s, legendary film detectives such as Clint Eastwood’s rogue cop Harry Callahan (“Dirty Harry”), as well as Karl Malden’s and Michael Douglas’ hard-boiled detectives Mike Stone and Steve Keller (“Streets of San Francisco”) paid cinematic visits to the church. Eastwood climbed the roofs around Washington Square to chase a serial killer, who had threatened to kill a Catholic priest as his next victim. In a sting, Eastwood lured the killer to a roof over viewing the church, while one of Sts. Peter & Paul’s Fathers volunteered as a target at the church portal. Eastwood returned to Sts. Peter & Paul in 1988 in “Dead Pool”, this time dealing with a suicidal character setting himself on fire with the church’s portal in the background. In a more romantic film genre, many a wedding scene has been shot at Sts. Peter and Paul, for example there’s the scene in Hugh Grant’s “Nine Months” (1995) and the one in Julia Roberts’ film “Runaway Bride” (1999).

But while these celluloid images are even now being projected throughout the world, those who live here know that Sts. Peter & Paul is not much about glamorous weddings, and not at all about shootouts, but rather and especially about sanctity, charity, and community.
way for the new phase: the official acquisition of the 701 Lombard triangle property by the City last summer and the voter approval in November of a library bond, a portion of which has been set aside to fund a new North Beach branch library. Now the library and the Recreation and Parks Department have begun a joint master planning process to investigate possible locations and configurations for the expanded library and to consider options for assimilating the triangle property as part of the Joe DiMaggio open space.

Two community meetings designed to solicit neighborhood opinions and provide more in-depth explanations of the project’s opportunities and challenges were held on April 30 and May 28. A third community meeting, originally scheduled for June 25, has been postponed to August 5 in order to present a more comprehensive analysis of the short-listed options. The August 5th meeting is to be held at Sts. Peter & Paul gymnasium at 7:00 PM.

The first two community meetings on these topics have been a cause for pride in our neighborhood, in my opinion. The meetings have been well-attended and people have been thoughtful and articulate – and remarkably civil, even in cases where opinions were strong and divergent. So where are we so far?

Planning has to work around a few key, fixed elements. The new pool and clubhouse certainly aren’t going anywhere. And the large expanse of blacktop used for softball, roller hockey and the like will only fit in the Powell/Greenwich corner (though new, permeable and more attractive surfacing would be nice). There are very limited alternative options for locating the tennis courts.

But some pretty major shifts for other amenities have been discussed. Placing the children’s play area in the center of the park has been a very popular notion. This would make the play area easier to monitor, place kids farther away from the street and perhaps open up circulation through the center of the park now blocked by tennis. In this plan, the current children’s play would be partially or totally excavated and the tennis courts moved south towards Greenwich.

Working around the givens, the library’s studies of alternative locations, coalesced to 3 sites: the Greenwich/Mason corner; an expanded triangle site (which includes a portion of Mason Street); and the Powell/Lombard corner.

By the second community meeting, attendees seemed to overwhelmingly favor the triangle as a potential library location. “Test fit” studies are being done prior to the next community meeting to see if that’s feasible, even with an encroachment onto Mason. The library believes the triangle’s limited size and configuration makes that solution unlikely, though, and the department favors the Greenwich/Mason site.

The other interesting outcome of the community meetings is what appears to be broad support for the Mason Street closure. Though some people do have strong concerns, in general attendees seemed ready to exchange the asphalt for more parkland. Recent traffic studies seem to support earlier assessments that closure would have no impact on emergency services and little impact on localized traffic. A full report on the methods and results of the traffic counts will be presented on August 5. But a lot more study, planning and legal steps remain before any decisions are made regarding closure.

And the rest of it? The studies are taking a hard look at how to make the park look welcoming and attractive from Columbus while still shielding the park from the traffic, soot and noise on its busy side. Alternative uses and arrangements are being considered for the triangle if it doesn’t house the library. And efforts are being made to accommodate all current uses and still find extra room for tai chi, shade and wind blocks, picnic tables, chess and lots of trees and greenery.
He thought he had just lost his new job. Mike Greensill had only recently started playing the piano at the Washington Square Bar and Grill when a patron asked for “New York, New York.” Greensill, as he now says was still in his “artistic phase,” pretended he didn’t know that song. The angry customer complained to the proprietor, Sam Dietsch, and Mike prepared himself to be fired right on the spot. “But Sam kicked the customer out and told me, ’Next time someone bothers you, let me know.’”

Like the other participants in the Spring Salon sponsored by THD’s Arts & Culture Committee, North Beach is where Greensill has felt understood and at home as an artist. Today an acclaimed musician on the West Coast Live Radio show and at other venues, he was one of the five artists at the April event who had gathered to discuss how the North Beach neighborhood supports and influences local creative types. The other panelists were film maker Judy Irving, photographer Edward M. Brooks, Jazz musician Mal Sharpe and designer Arthur Hanna. The salon was moderated by singer, artist and food critic Carol Peterson. The organizer of the event, committee chair Termeh Yeghiazarian, convened an audience of about forty at Fivepoints Arthouse gallery for this lively discussion.

The musicians remembered how since the fifties and sixties local characters like Ed Moose and the aforementioned Sam Dietsch, found-

Continued on page 17

But all these hopes and visions depend on funding. And, while the library bond should cover reasonable costs for a new North Beach branch, RecPark has been frank from the beginning that, with another year of deep City budget cuts and with current parks bonds funds already committed, they can’t help with funding. The community has raised millions in private donations and governmental grants for neighborhood parks. Can we do it again—in this economy?

Neighbors interested in getting more involved with the Joe DiMaggio project are invited to join the volunteers of Friends of Joe DiMaggio Playground. Over the past 10 years the group has raised money, provided design services, organized community meetings and acquired grant funding for the pool and clubhouse renovation, the new bocce courts and for improvements to the children’s play area. This new phase is the biggest challenge yet and we’d love your help. E-mail me at julie@surfwork.com or respond to the link on our website at DiMaggioPlayground.org.
The fate of the 39-Coit bus topped a busy agenda for the THD Parking and Transportation Committee, which met twice in June.

Task forces were formed to review other issues – traffic congestion at Coit Tower, the proliferation of colored parking zones in North Beach, pedestrian safety issues, local construction zones and signage, and the proposed Stockton Street central subway. But the committee agreed that the fate of the 39-Coit is our groups most pressing issue.

The Muni is currently formulating its Transit Effectiveness Project, or TEP, which it plans to implement by July 2009. As part of that system-wide route overhaul, Muni is proposing to shorten the 39’s current route by eliminating the Union Street leg and reducing the number of buses in service from two to one.

Muni says the line is underutilized and requires heavier subsidies than other routes, making the cutback necessary. But the line is important for hill residents either too old or too laden with groceries to make the steep climb, and the THD committee believes that expanding, not contracting, the 39-Coit’s route would bring more riders and create better overall service.

The committee has submitted a proposed expanded route plan to TEP that envisions a 39 loop serving most of the popular tourist sites in the neighborhood while still retaining full service on Telegraph Hill.

The plan, worked up by architect Howard Wong, would place the 39-Coit Terminus at Pier 39. From there the 39-Coit could travel to Coit Tower by way of Fisherman’s Wharf/Jefferson Street, Aquatic Park, the Cannery and Ghirardelli Square, the Crooked Street, central North Beach and the two public parking garages on Vallejo.

A 39 loop, the committee believes, would attract a much greater ridership while triggering a vigorous sales of Muni Day Passes.

Parking Committee co-chairs Paul and Gail Switzer invite your feedback and/or participation. They can be reached at (415) 788-8667.
ers of the “Washbag” and other venues, were great supporters. “They provided the gigs and audiences for us,” remembers Mike. “Ed Moose loved jazz and supported us beyond what a proprietor does.”

Mal Sharpe thinks of the neighborhood as not only artistic, but romantic. It was in North Beach where Mal fell in love with a girl—and they have been together ever since. “It is amazing that the charm is still in the neighborhood today,” he observed.

“A neighborhood is like a circle,” explained photographer Edward M. Brooks who looked back to over 30 years of working in North Beach. “The artists need their surrounding and in return give their surrounding their art.” In the 1950s, these surroundings were dominated by the rather conservative Italian community who observed the beatniks settling in the neighborhood with tolerance. “The Italians didn’t care,” remembered Edward Brooks. “But there was little interaction between the Italians and the beatniks,” noted Sharpe. “They tolerated us artists—although they certainly didn’t want their daughters to date a beatnik!” he added.

Designer Arthur Hanna, who came from Detroit in 1957 and first worked as a private detective before discovering his design talent, was drawn into his profession during the 1960s when churches in the city like Grace Cathedral offered work to artisans. On a smaller scale, the artist also developed projects for the local hardware stores and workshops in North Beach. “These shops were important for me to sell things,” he remembered.

But times have changed. The hardware stores and workshops are mostly gone, and the cafes and bars offer fewer gigs for musicians. Suddenly one day, the piano was carried out through the door at Joe DiMaggio’s restaurant. “Things aren’t the same,” said Greensill. Low rents, once a magnet for artists, are now a thing of the past. Landmarks like the Washbag and Moose’s are gone. New generations turn to other neighborhoods for affordable living. “Today’s 30-35-year olds probably have their own North Beach elsewhere in the City,” Greensill said.

Even with the inevitable changes, artists still find great sources of inspiration here. The “Swimmers’ and Rowers’ Club”—arguably the real North “Beach”—inspired film maker Judy Irving to her latest film “19 Arrests, No Convictions,” a documentary portrait of an Italian-American bar owner and San Francisco Bay open-water swimmer. Also, she is working on an update to her widely-acclaimed documentary “The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill” featurnig the parrots’ idealistic patron, Mark Bittner, who has since become her husband. The two are living with the parrots on the Hill, and the update shows how the parrots have influenced the lives of the people in the neighborhood; for example there’s a sequence with two local children who painted their room’s wall with colorful parrots, and another with a dentist who shows “The Parrots” as he performs root canals.

As the evening opened up to questions, it became clear that this is a community that loves its artists and a group of artists who love their community.

Look for details coming your way through THD’s announce list about THD’s Art & Culture Committee’s upcoming events:
—North Beach Open Studios in October
—THD Salon in November

The Art & Culture Committee is looking for volunteers who can help at these events and, if you are interested in getting more involved, please attend our monthly meetings. The committee meets every second Wednesday of the month, 6-8 pm. For location please contact: historian@thd.org.
Life is a Beach

Ahhh, the sweet sights and smells of summer: sidewalk tables overflowing with pasta, streets sticky from the NB Festival, animals freshly blessed at St. Francis (holy cats?), and a visceral burst of creativity in the air.

Why do waves of tourists annually wash up at Club Fugazi for Beach Blanket Babylon? Having not landed there for over a decade, I drifted in on an “off” night for a late show. The place was jammed, awash in pop music and wildly costumed characters, airing the latest in political satire (from Dreamgirls Pelosi, Boxer and Feinstein to former Gov. Spitzer to the evolving plate of presidential candidates). Beach Blanket, created in 1974 by Steve Silver, played before Queen Elizabeth in 1998, is now produced by Jo Schuman Silver. It remains a uniquely 100 percent North Beach cabaret. And Snow White still finds her prince…. Brava!

A Day in The Life Of ... News Hounds

Caffe Trieste is ground zero for writers, artists and poets. Tony Long—Semaphore copy editor, author, former publisher of the North Beach Beat, editor by profession, and working man’s advocate—navigates that special world with insight and sensitivity. Tony’s resume now includes “online columnist.” Visit www.examiner.com/san francisco to read his North Beach-focused “Examiner” (they don’t call them blogs). Note his column that handicaps the District 3 supervisors’ race. Other TH/THD writers going journalistic also include Dick Boyd, whose columns you can enjoy in The City Star. (There’s a particularly good one on David Wright of Cafe Divine.)

Can of Worms

While Kevin Brown is basking in the south of France, his Live Worms gallery has been wriggling with art events. At Fanny Renoir’s birthday party recently, Fanny found Elvis (a hot impersonator), Presidio, hosted William (aka Bill) Stout, owner of Wm. Stout Architectural Books speaking on Frank Lloyd Wright’s early publications. A fascinating subject, by an excellent speaker at an historic location (housing, as it does, a press that functioned for over 100 years). The Stouts are long-time Telegraph Hill residents and THDers. Stout’s bookstore on Montgomery, too small for to-dos of this type, is one of the most unique, hard-to-leave places in San Francisco. The lower level overflows with design and art books. Bill Stout is also launching a warehouse site for architectural writers to use for works in progress.

Class Act

Wm. Stout’s Architectural Book Scene: On June 25, Arion Press/Grabhorn Institute, located in the Presidio, hosted William (aka Bill) Stout, owner of Wm. Stout Architectural Books speaking on Frank Lloyd Wright’s early publications. A fascinating subject, by an excellent speaker at an historic location (housing, as it does, a press that functioned for over 100 years). The Stouts are long-time Telegraph Hill residents and THDers. Stout’s bookstore on Montgomery, too small for to-dos of this type, is one of the most unique, hard-to-leave places in San Francisco. The lower level overflows with design and art books. Bill Stout is also launching a warehouse site for architectural writers to use for works in progress.

The photo shows Elvis at Fanny Renoir’s party at Live Worms.
RESTAURANT REVIEW

TRIED AND TRUE

SODINI’S WINS AWARD

by Carol Peterson

SODINI’S
510 Green St., (415) 291-0499 ★★★½

It is told that, in San Francisco, a restaurant closes every day and every day a new one opens. Why is it then that we have a trattoria in North Beach that has survived and flourished year in and year out, maintaining a reputation reinforced by the Bay Guardian’s Best of the Bay Awards? According to the Guardian Sodini’s is the “Best Old Style Italian Restaurant” in San Francisco.

I asked Mark Sodini about this one night at his packed restaurant, with people waiting in line out of the door. “It’s the employees,” he answered, “Most have been with us for over a decade. We have one girl who is new. She has only been here six years. Our chef, Rufigio, has been cooking here for 12 years.” Those of us who have enjoyed going to the restaurant for years know beautiful Ana. She runs the full bar and welcomes everyone who steps in the door as if the place were hers. Our server, Rachelle, started working at Sodini’s nine years ago as a single woman. Now she is married with three babies. This is a family restaurant in more ways than one. Mark told me that his brother bought the place 16 years ago, and Mark joined him one year later. Not long after, Mark took the establishment over and has run it day in and day out, 360 days a year.

In addition to his staff, Mark attributes his success (he has never advertised) to Old World Italian food, with many of the recipes being his grandmother’s. He supplements the neighborhood feel of his place with products from North Beach: pasta strips for lasagna from Molinari’s and crusty bread from the Italian French Bakery. The restaurant draws eighty percent of its customers from the neighborhood.

The walls are covered in memorabilia and art. There’s a painting of the old Green Valley Restaurant that Sodini’s replaced, a mural that positions the viewer to look from the restaurant down Green Street, and another one, executed by a former waitress, that shows Mark’s brother kissing his wife, amid grape vines.

As for the food, if there was a prize in North Beach for the best house salad, Sodini’s would win hands down. The fresh romaine lettuce is supported by, black olives, onion, tomato, cucumber, garbanzo beans, croutons and mushrooms. However, it is the house made dressing, made of blue cheese, olive oil, garlic and lemon that makes the salad. The fried calamari appetizer is not your generic North Beach fried calamari. Sodini’s only serves the rings, which are lightly battered and lightly fried, leaving the calamari extremely tender. This delicacy is accompanied by spicy aioli sauce. The restaurant’s signature pasta dish is Tortellini Carbonara. This beef filled tortellini ring has a light cream Alfredo Sauce with mushrooms and pancetta. The tortellinis melt in your mouth and the sauce is light. Biting into a piece of pancetta brings this otherwise mild dish to life. Lamb lovers will enjoy the rack of lamb, infused with butter, grilled to perfection and served with a generous portion of linguine pesto. My favorite vegetable at Sodini’s is the sautéed spinach, with mushrooms. It is fresh, tender and not greasy or overcooked. Try it with a little hand-grated parmesan cheese sprinkled on top.

So one night when you are wondering where to eat, saunter over to Sodini’s. You will be treated wonderfully, leave with a belly full of good food and feel like you have just been to an Italian family’s home for dinner. Just remember their motto: No decaf. No reservations. No dessert. No exceptions.
Five shipwrecked men, visible only because of a single bobbing flashlight, were plucked from the darkened ocean off the Golden Gate early today in a one-in-a-million rescue.

That's how Examiner reporter Baron Muller began his story about five San Francisco bartenders who were rescued by the Coast Guard after their 32-foot sloop took on water and sank three miles west of the Golden Gate Bridge back in Sept. 1969. One of those seafaring publicans was bespectacled, 41-year-old Richard Simmons, aka Specs, who had just opened his North Beach bar a year earlier.

Just think how many livers might have been saved had Specs gone down with the ship.

He didn't, though, and his watering hole in Adler Place has not only survived, but thrived. Specs is one of North Beach's storied bars, but it's also one of San Francisco's oddest little museums, housing a collection of ephemera ranging from maritime artifacts to Wobbly memorabilia to a petrified walrus penis guaranteed to make the manliest of men shrivel by comparison.

Muller's Examiner account, along with the Chronicle's version of the rescue and a copy of the Coast Guard report, is part of the collection, preserved under sticky plastic and displayed just past the bar and above the trash can.

More about the museum in a minute, but first the walrus penis. You don't find one of these in just any bar, at least any bar south of Alaska where, apparently, they're plentiful. According to one Specs barfly, who was sober enough to sound like a reliable authority, petrified walrus penises wash up regularly on Alaskan beaches. Which makes you wonder what the hell is going on out there in the chilly North Pacific.

Whether our trusty barfly has his story straight or not, that object above the bar --the thing that looks kind of like a child's femur next to the sign that says “All dogs found on the premises will be turned over to Chef Matsumoto for the Sunday luau”—is...
Indeed a walrus penis.

To know that is to understand that you’ve entered a very special place.

The donor of said artifact, incidentally, is apparently the same guy who sent Specs the Alaskan king crab that is mounted on the wall just past the end of the bar. The story I heard, possibly apocryphal, is that the legs had to be removed in order to fit the crab into the shipping box. One leg was said to have been reattached backwards, although I couldn’t see any evidence of that.

There is no official curator at this museum, so cataloging the inventory is left to the visitor, a tricky proposition when you consider why most people are there in the first place. I’ve been going to Specs for years now and I always seem to find something, somewhere I’ve never seen before. Maybe it’s me; maybe it’s the Scotch.

Anyway, all drinking aside, Specs is an absolute feast for the eyes. The walls are drunk with pictures, posters, notices (“How to Get a Drink” greets the patron to his immediate left upon entering the bar), shipping company pennants and drawings (pencil sketches of neighborhood notables by artist Kristen Wetterhahn, done on cocktail napkins and framed, are particularly good).

Inside glass display cases you’ll find scrimshaw, American Indian artifacts, lapel pins (“Boycott the Examiner” is a personal favorite), political pamphlets, a stuffed mongoose locked in mortal combat with a stuffed cobra, and, across the bar in another case, a stuffed armadillo.

One of the more unusual pieces can be found way in the back, near the piano. That would be a full-sized mummy case, whose face, on closer inspection, is a pretty good likeness of Specs himself. This was not unearthed during some early 20th century Egyptian dig, but rather a gift from Dancer, a former Specs bartender who obviously has some talent as a mummy artisan.

Notice the coin slot in the mummy’s head, and contribute.
so it was art with Jail House Rock. Nancy Calef, a Telegraph Hill artist for 25 years and musician, had a show up in mid-June. Twelve artists displayed for “One Night Only” on June 26; among those featured were locals Rebecca Peters, Tina Tarnoff and Carrington. Like all the shows that drift regularly into Worms, it offered a great chance to mingle. Grant Avenue feels like the old Fillmore West — you keep passing the same smiling people going around in circles.

**Faire or Not Fair?**

What is the beginning of summer without the North Beach Fair? Well, maybe we could do without today’s corporate-sponsored Team Pro event that gobbles up Washington Square and serves as a kitsch soiree and drinking fest. But jeweler Daniel Macchiarini remembers an earlier fair, the one founded in 1954 by his father, Peter Macchiarini, that was 100 percent North Beach/Telegraph Hill artists, and staffed completely by volunteers. The art colony of North Beach, which then included the likes of Benny Bufano, Emmy Lou Packard, Gretchen McAllister and P.M. Skinner, got a permit from Mayor George Christopher, closed off the 1400 block of Grant Avenue — the very first place in the United States where a street was closed to display art. They put out chairs and coffee and sold art from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. A 6-by-6 foot space cost $15 in 1954, compared to $550 for a 12-by-12 foot booth in 2008. Serious buyers came from around the world to buy North Beach art in those days.

**Eating Up the Ferry Building**

The Farmers Market at the Ferry Building is the most succulent, colorful, healthy buffet in town. Peaches debuted June 28, and there are plenty of cherries — did you know there are over 50 varieties? — and also tomatoes in myriad colors and shapes. The farm-fresh food is served at various Ferry Plaza restaurants. During Saturday market, the patio restaurants — Mijita, Mistral, Ferry Plaza Seafood, Hog Island Oyster Co. — are jammed. But there are summer days and nights, and you live here. Delicia, rf-1 and others offer great take out. Marketbar stays open until 9 p.m. Also, remember that there’s a Tuesday Farmers Market as well (www.cuesa.com).

**XXercise and Bocce**

Summer fun fests also mean fitting into that (gulp) swimsuit. Not difficult for Dolphin Clubbers and South Enders like Aaron Peskin and Joe Butler who keep their figures by freezing off 15 pounds swimming in events like the 16th annual Sharkfest, which was held on June 28. The new craze in Bay swimming for boomer children and their parents, however, is The Escape from the Rock Triathlon, scheduled this year for Aug. 25. It’s a grueling 1.5-mile swim from Alcatraz, followed by a three-mile bike ride through the Presidio and a final 7.5-mile run.

Those looking for something warmer and a little less demanding might want to feel the Zen resurgence of yoga and the pull of pilates at Blue Sparrow on Grant Avenue. Or, if you’re strictly the sedentary type,
Long Broadway in the 1950s, the juke box was king. No topless, no bottomless, no DJs. Along the street from Montgomery to Stockton at every bar, the bartender/owner plus the music on the jukebox was the draw.

There were, of course, notable exceptions. Along the north side of Broadway from Stockton were the Red Garter, Bocce Ball, Enrico’s, Finocchio’s, and El Matador. Further up the street were Ann’s 440, the Moulin Rouge, the Casa Madrid and Sugar Hill, where Redd Foxx played. These places had their own specialty live entertainment. Across Broadway below Montgomery, at 346, was the Gay Nineties. A block up towards Columbus were the Club Gala, Jazz Workshop, Burp Hollow and Dixie Land Jazz, which morphed one into the other over the years.

But in that same three-block area there were, at different times, at least forty different stand-alone bars, all of which depended upon jukebox music as their “entertainment.” The jukebox was also a source of money for owners who split the money with the vending company that also supplied the cigarette machines. Because there were competing vending companies, new owners in need of money could get start-up financial help. Later the owners could also get “loans” which were repaid from the jukebox money. Bartenders from that era will remember the quarters for customers’ use dabbed with red nail polish that were returned to the house when the money was split up.

It’s important to keep in mind here that all the bars along Broadway were usually hurting. The street was not friendly to standalone bars. Many owners had card games going; some operated as small-time bookies laying off bets to full-time bookies. They bought hot booze, or messed with their own booze by refilling empty expensive bottles of “call” liquor with cheap stuff of the same proof. If they didn’t do that, they often watered it down a tad to pour late on busy nights.

Then in the early ’60s, the Condor put in the windows facing Columbus and began to feature live music on Sunday afternoons, then on Friday and Saturday nights. That began the migration from jukeboxes to live music. Soon, the bars in the key corridor of Broadway and Columbus to Romolo Alley—the Condor, the El Cid, Tipsy’s, Gigi’s Port Said and Pierre’s—all gave live music a try. All were along the footpath to the two most popular restaurants on Broadway, New Joes and Vanessa’s. Foot traffic was important and the hope was that the music would draw customers on their way to or from dinner.

Live music began to work its magic almost immediately, especially on weekends. Like they said in the movie Field of Dreams, “build it and they will come.”

Inevitably, the bars began to compete for the group that would draw the most customers. The owners tried just about every kind of music: rock ‘n’ roll, rock-a-billy, jazz and salsa. Some began to bring in lounge groups from Lake Tahoe, Reno, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Lounge groups, like popcorn or salty...
pennuts, got people drinking. With the demand for entertainment, prices went up as well. The 75-cent hi-ball worked its way up to $3.50 and blended drinks were even higher. Later came door charges on weekends. Still some places not in the crosshairs of Broadway and Columbus, were hurting.

But along Broadway, restaurants like New Joes, Vanessi’s and Swiss Louie’s were humming along. The bars—or “clubs” as they would now be classified—in the short block from the hub of Columbus and Broadway to Romolo Alley were in the black.

But that all changed that fateful month of June 1964: the month that topless came to Broadway, altering not only the street but, in some ways, also our national mores. But that’s another story unto itself.

Dick Boyd is the author of Broadway North Beach: The Golden Years, available at local book stores.
MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Katie Hopkins, Corresponding Secretary

An advertising job brought me to San Francisco in 1998 from the Midwest and I knew right away this was home. Living here, I’ve continued to work in advertising, and as an artist I’ve brought a humanizing influence to my work with such companies such as Northwest Airlines, Radisson Hotels and Visa. I’ve always lived on the Hill and over the years I’ve taken advantage of it’s gardens, coffee shops, great food, and fabulous people. This year I thought I’d give something back… I joined the board of THD to make a difference in our paradise. To protect what we have, and to aspire to what we can be. I will also provide a voice for us long time renters. When not hard at work I’m often seen on the beaches around San Francisco, being walked by a large black dog.

Jean Forsman, Director 2008-2010

A proud cracker from south Georgia, I have lived in North Beach for 15 years and have been a member of THD since landing here. I am excited to be addressing issues concerning and participating in events that celebrate our amazing neighborhood. My husband Catz (also a THDer) and I are also active

continued from page 18

there’s the opportunity to watch some serious bocce on Sunday afternoons at the North Beach/DiMaggio Playground. Local watering hole Gino & Carlo alone fields 12 bocce teams.

Or, if you’re a walker, go climb a hill—Telegraph Hill in this case—for the THD Picnic on Sept. 28. Whatever you do, though, be sure to move that mojo before the pumpkins surface this fall.

THE ALFA NOSE

continued from page 18
side to make it an architectural gem on Washington Square."

He said he would also install a full bar and a restaurant that would serve light meals that patrons could enjoy before and after the show.

In July 2000, following the groundbreaking for the project, Ahlers thanked THD and other organizations for their support. “It was important to have people remember that the reason the groundbreaking was possible was because the neighborhood stood up and fought for what was right.”

A year later, in June 2001, Ahlers wrote THD reporting that his group had raised 85 percent of the budget needed to open the theater. He expressed pride in the fact that he and his investors were developing the “first new major live theater to be built in San Francisco in 25 years.”

And then came September 11, 2001, a watershed date that, as we are incessantly reminded, “changed everything,” including Ahlers plans. In October 2001, he wrote Peskin, now a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, that, “I am sorry to report that we have had to abandon our effort to open the theater… Several of our investors were negatively impacted by the downturn in the markets and by the adverse impact on the hospitality and entertainment industries.” Ahlers himself, he said, would be out over $8 million that he had put into the project.

He thanked Peskin for his support and encouragement. And that was the end of that chapter.

The Pagoda continued from page 24

Artist Mel Clay(pictured), disturbed as are many North Beach residents by the long-boarded up Pagoda Palace, decided to turn the plywood into art. After getting permission from the building’s owner and the proprietor of Piazza Pellegrini next door, he raised donations from North Beach merchants in one day, and executed this mural in one night.
in local theatre productions. You can catch us next in Subterranean Shakespeare’s production of “Merry Wives of Windsor” in Berkeley from July 10 through August 9. You can also usually find us in Caffe Trieste each and every morning. Drop by, say hi and ask about Dooley, our tabby king.

Andy Katz, Director 2008-2009

My parents, Robert and Nancy Katz, were founding members of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. They moved to Telegraph Hill in the early 1950s, and I have grown up and lived in the same house here on the Hill most of my life. My son, Robert, is growing up in the same room in our house that I grew up in.

I work in financial and property management. My wife, Judi, and I are “mom and pop” landlords, with 2 one bedroom units in our home that we rent out.

I am a photographer who specializes in landscapes and travel photography. It is in my blood. My mother was a photographer for the Department of the Interior and my father was a filmmaker who made documentary films for National Educational Television on notable photographers.

I want to help to keep the character of North Beach, the waterfront, and Telegraph Hill unique, historic and small in scale. My parents moved away from Manhattan and, as much as they loved it, they did not want it to follow them here! I agree.

Kimberly Gooshert, Director 2008-2010

My husband and I have lived in North Beach for almost 12 years. I own my own Events and Marketing Business specializing in Corporate Events, Blue Goose Events. My office is on Columbus Street (strategically placed near my favorite cafes!). I just spent the last three months traveling and am now in LOVE with Namibia (If you haven’t been...go there now!) My main reason for joining the board is to be more involved with the North Beach neighborhood and get to know my community better. North Beach is such a special place and I want to do what I can to give back.

June Fraps, Vice-President

I’ve lived on the hill for years, in four apartments on Stockton St. until, facing my third eviction, I moved around the corner and bought a condo on Chestnut.

My first Telegraph Hill Dwellers event was a costume party at the Old Spaghetti Factory to celebrate the completion of the rebuilt local firehouse; I went as Carrie Nation, complete with a hatchet to break down saloons.

I was an editor for a farm magazine when I first come to SF (fitting occupation for a city girl!), then became a copywriter on agricultural accounts for several ad agencies. Now I’m a freelance editor.

My goal in being on the board this year is to encourage people to get involved and to provide more opportunities for neighbors to get to know each other. Bumping into people you know when you’re running errands on Saturday morning is one of the great benefits THD has to offer.

New Board Members continued from page 25

Breakfast & Lunch 7 days a week 7:30-3:30

PAT’S CAFE

Home Style Cookin'

2330 Taylor Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
415-776-8735

Dinner Fri & Sat
By Kathy Dooley, president, North Beach Merchants Association

North Beach is the latest target in a city-wide assault on small business owners. Most of the 700 block of Columbus Avenue, including XOXO Truffles, Petite Deli and DaFlora, have been sued for non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This federal act requires all businesses to provide access to wheelchair-bound customers and is generally acknowledged to be an important tool to assure this accessibility is provided.

The problem our North Beach shops and restaurants have is that although the City and state view them as having made every reasonable effort to provide this access, the federal requirements are stricter. Few, if any, businesses were informed of this discrepancy when the local building department signed off and allowed them to open. Using this loophole, several lawyers have made it their specialty to actively recruit wheelchair bound clients to sue small, often immigrant-owned, mostly mom-and-pop businesses for damages averaging $20,000.

California’s Unruh Act allows a litigant to sue for financial compensation for each time they attempt to access a storefront and find it federally non-compliant. Owners are allowed no lead time to fix any infractions—the financial clock begins ticking from the moment they are served legal papers.

Even when owners immediately make changes to improve accessibility, the litigants still pursue them for large financial damages. Because of the extremely high costs involved to take a case to trial, many owners feel compelled to pay up in what amounts to a legalized shakedown to these lawyers and their clients. In some cases, businesses have actually been forced to close down entirely because they could not afford to pay either the legal fees to fight their cases in court nor the financial damages demanded by the clients in these cases.

While few will disagree that the ADA is necessary, there is the ethical question of a small group of lawyers abusing the law merely for personal financial gain. In a typical case, the damages awarded are split, with the litigant receiving 20 percent to the litigant and the attorney taking 80 percent as his fee. This is an extremely lucrative arrangement for the lawyer, especially for those who arrange for their clients to file multiple cases at a time as was the case in North Beach.

---

ADA LAWYERS SHAKE DOWN NORTH BEACH
Beach. At last report, Thomas Frankovich, who is the most prominent lawyer involved in filing these multiple cases up and down California, will be censured by the State Bar and prevented from practicing law for several years for unethical practices in filing these cases.

Adding to the woes of the North Beach businesses being sued is the fact that many of them are located in tiny, historic storefronts which simply cannot comply to the full letter of the law to be 100 percent compliant. Most of these owners have tried to accommodate the needs of the disabled as best they can. Surely the spirit of the ADA was not to permanently shutter any storefront that cannot structurally comply with some aspects of the act.

Currently, a support group brought together by Supervisor Aaron Peskin and the North Beach Merchants Association provides pertinent new information regarding these lawsuits and allows businesses and their lawyers to brainstorm with each other on possible ways to help to stem the tide of these mean-spirited lawsuits. This is helpful as many individual owners feel isolated and frightened when they are served by these suits—it is important for them to understand they are not alone.

It is a sad situation that pits a small group within the disabled community against the hard-working small owners who form the backbone of our neighborhoods. In the short term, the North Beach Merchants Association is planning to provide better information to new businesses regarding this situation before they open their doors. We are also looking to long-term solutions on the federal and state level that will be fair to both the shop owners and the disabled.

The Academy of Art University It's Not

By Sally Towse

Mount Rushmore, Coit Tower, the Maritime Museum, Yosemite, Tattoo City in North Beach, the Grateful Dead, Rolling Stone Magazine. What's the connection?

Unless you are steeped in local lore, your answer would not be, the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), that massive Italian/Spanish Colonial style building at 800 Chestnut Street, between Jones and Leavenworth on the eastern flank of Russian Hill. But more about the links between these references and the Art Institute later.

Built in 1926 with a 1969 addition that added an additional 22,500 sq ft, the SFAI building seems large from Chestnut Street, but inside its truly massive, a rabbit warren of classrooms, photography studios, galleries and artists' spaces.

The Art Institute though, long predates this building. Under various names and in various locations, the SFAI has been in San Francisco since 1871.

These days SFAI has a student body of 650 students (undergraduate and graduate) and maintains a faculty-student ratio of 1:5. Unlike Academy of Art University with which it should not be confused, SFAI's focus is on fine arts rather than applied arts. Academy of Art University has nearly 12,000 students and occupies somewhere around thirty buildings (who's counting?) in San Francisco. SFAI accepts 30%+ of its applicants. AAU accepts 100%.

If you've never walked up the hill from North Beach to see the Art Institute, here are some reasons you should make the trek:

SFAI is home to The Making of a Fresco Showing the Building of a City (1931), one of only three Diego...
Rivera murals in San Francisco. The mural is in the Diego Rivera Gallery to your left as you step through the arched entry into the peaceful central courtyard where a fountain anchors the original building.

The people pictured in the mural include Rivera himself (centered with his large bottom facing the observer). The three men standing below Rivera in the mural are William Gerstle, president of the San Francisco Art Association and board member of the California School of Fine Art (as SFAI was then called), who commissioned the mural, Arthur Brown, Jr., who designed not only the SFAI building but also Coit Tower, and Timothy Pfleuger, who designed the San Francisco Stock Exchange, site of another Rivera mural. Open daily 8am-7pm, the gallery hosts a rotating show of student work.

Other SFAI art galleries open to the public include the Walter and McBean Galleries, also at 800 Chestnut, which host exhibitions by international contemporary artists. We Remember the Sun, a group show, opened June 19th and will run through September 13th. Gallery hours are Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00am–6:00pm.

Student photographic work is displayed at the Prentice and Paul Sack Still Lights Gallery at the Chestnut Street campus. Paul Sack, a well-known San Francisco photography collector, took art classes

continued on page 33
If you're looking for something unique, you’re sure to find it at THE CANNERY at Del Monte Square! Once the world's largest fruit & vegetable cannery as Del Monte's Plant #1, THE CANNERY is a dramatic urban space modeled after old European piazzas showcasing unique shops, galleries, restaurants, bars and live entertainment. Today it is home to unique shops and restaurants. Every day and night, THE CANNERY is alive with festivities and activities for all ages. 2801 Leavenworth Street at the foot of Columbus Avenue.
Fog Hill Market
Hanna Chedyak
415-781-8817
1300 Kearny
San Francisco, CA 94133

GINO & CARLO
Since 1942

548 Green Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
(415) 421-0896
at SFAI in the early sixties and is an emeritus Board member.

Inform, the SFAI newsletter, on the SFAI Web site provides up-to-date information of upcoming alumni/student/faculty events.

The café at the Art Institute is another reason to visit. The café, in the 1969 addition, was designed by architect Paffard Keatinge Clay. With indoor and outdoor seating, the café offers amazing views -- north to the Bay and Alcatraz and east to Coit Tower. Café hours are normally 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. but, because the vendor contract is in transition, the café will be closed this summer.

SFAI offers educational outreach. These programs include the Adult Continuing Education Program, the Pre-College Program (“a five-week, five-college-credit program especially designed for those artists who have completed the 10th grade but who haven’t yet started college”) and the Young Artist Program (“a three-week intensive summer program for artists ages 13–15”). Twenty former at-risk students who have taken part in SFAI’s City Studio (“a two-year arts education program created ... in partnership with a network of local youth organizations”) have matriculated into college art programs, including those at SFAI.

The SFAI lecture series is free to the public. Calendar and details at the school’s Web site.

Still wondering what the SFAI connection is to that mixed bag of specifics that began this article. Here we go:

Gutzon Borglum, creator of Mount Rushmore, is an alum.

A few years after Rivera finished his SFAI mural, Ralph Stackpole, who was on the school faculty and who had worked with Rivera, convinced the WPA to fund murals for the interior of the newly-finished Coit Tower. Most of the mural artists who worked on the Coit Tower project were faculty or students at CSFA.

Sargent Johnson, mentioned in the Semaphore article on the Maritime Museum earlier this year, was a CSFA student. Beniamino Bufano was one of his teachers.

In the forties, Ansel Adams founded the first fine arts photography department in the US at what was then the CSFA. Minor White, Imogen Cunningham, Dorothea Lange and Edward Weston were on the faculty.

World-renown tattoo artist Don Ed Hardy of Tattoo City (700 Lombard @ Columbus) is an SFAI alum, as was Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead.

Internationally acclaimed photographer Annie Leibovitz was an art student at SFAI, taking photography classes at night, when she started photographing for Rolling Stone Magazine. Leibovitz periodically comes back to visit the school and lecture.

With SFAI in our own backyard, we can attend lectures, visit galleries, take classes, and do lunch. Lucky us, it’s just a walk up the hill!

SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE: (http://www.sfai.edu)
Conveniently located in the heart of North Beach, Financial District & Jackson Square.

**Sync Salon** has been designed with an ergonomic and sustainable concept in order to provide its customers with a stress-free and tranquil experience.

Our licensed professionals offer state of the art services and products for hair, skin, and body.

The **Sync Salon** Team invites you to our sanctuary. As a Grand Opening Promotion, bring in this ad for a 30% discount on Therapeutic, Swedish Massage, Facials, Microdermabrasion and waxing, and Hair Services. Offer expires July 31, 2008.

Call 415-397-1078 for your appointment.
He’s contributed a metal heart for San Francisco’s Heart of the City program, and has been a sponsored artist for several years at Burning Man.

“Generations” will run from September 21 through December 31 at 1544 Grant. For more information, visit www.maccreativdesign.com or call (415) 982-2229.

Issue #184 • Summer 2008
The first chapter begins with: “You want to know how the whole thing began? Very well. Blame it on the fog.” That is just yummy stuff! Although Mr. Pease is known for young adult fiction, both *Foghorns* and *Mystery on Telegraph Hill* read quite nicely for adults as well. His vocabulary and writing style is not juvenile.

*North Beach Girl*, by John Trinian (1960), is considered a long-forgotten novel set in San Francisco’s beat world of the Fifties.

*Shake Him Till He Rattles/It’s Cold Out There*, by Malcolm Braley (1963), is described as a post-Beat tale set in San Francisco’s North Beach. It is the story of an ex-con trying to make it on the outside. Braley himself was a convict housed at San Quentin Prison for many years.

Nick Polo is a San Francisco detective in North Beach in Jerry Kennealy’s detective series which begins with *Polo Solo* (1987).

Stephen Greenleaf says of his main character Marshall Tanner in *Grave Error* (1991) “[he]...lives on the south side of Telegraph Hill, eats breakfast at Zorba’s and drinks whiskey at Guido’s, both in North Beach and both fictitious establishments”

James Dalessandro’s *Bohemian Heart* (1993) is a political-historical mystery and is considered a classic in mystery circles. The late Herb Caen called it one of the best San Francisco mysteries and a signed first edition is now a collectable. Mr. Dalessandro has also written the acclaimed novel *1906*, set during the San Francisco earthquake and fire.

North Beach is known for its fabulous restaurants, so for something tasty, try the Angie Amalfi series by Joanne Pence. This is a series of culinary mysteries, beginning with *Something’s Cooking* (1993).

Bill Pronzini’s noir series features San Francisco’s Nameless Detective. In *Epitaphs* (1993), Nameless is watching a game of North Beach bocce when one of the older fellows asks him to take on an investigation. A review of the book reads: “Author Bill Pronzini has always made it clear that Nameless is Italian. From detailed descriptions of the changing character of North Beach and bocce games, to exploring notions of family honor from the old country, *Epitaphs* is rich in cultural heritage.”


*The Fallen*, by Celia Thomson (2004), presents one Chloe King, “considered a normal teenager, up until the day she fell off San Francisco’s Coit Tower and survived without so much as a scratch. Ever since then, Chloe has been doing things she never would have done before...”

continued on p. 37

Next time you find yourself tucked in for the night by that soft blanket of fog over Telegraph Hill, pick up one of these books and enjoy the mysteries of North Beach.

For a comprehensive bibliography of over 1,500 mystery novels written in and about San Francisco (and the Bay Area) go online to http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/sfmystery. Some of the works listed above are out of print. I have found Bibliofind (www.bibliofind.com) helpful in searching for rare and out-of-print editions, including first editions rated as “very fine” condition.

THD BOARD MOTIONS
FOR THE MONTHS OF APRIL-JUNE 2008

April, 2008
MOTION: To donate $1,500.00 to Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center.
   The Motion passed.

May, 2008
MOTION: To elect Nancy Shanahan and Vedica Puri to the Executive Committee.
   The Motion passed.
MOTION: THD strongly opposes the Transit Effectiveness Project’s proposal to eliminate #39 bus service to the Union Street/Montgomery Street hilltop location. There is a significant population of elderly and infirm residents who depend upon this public transportation for essential services such as grocery shopping and medical appointments.
   The Motion passed.
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008-2009

President: Pat Lusse
Vice President: June Fraps
Recording Secretary: Mary Lipian
Corresponding Secretary: Katie Hopkins
Treasurer: Gail Switzer
Financial Secretary: Al Fontes
Historian: Termeh Yeghiazarian
Immediate Past President: Vedica Puri
Semaphore: Art Peterson

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2009

Sarah Kliban
Robert Mattei
Bernie Meyerson

DIRECTORS 2008-2009

Andy Katz

DIRECTORS 2008-2010

Greg Chiampou
Jean Forsman
Kimberly Goosherst
Nancy Shanahan

THD COMMITTEES NEED YOU

You can make a difference! Join one of THD’s committees, meet and work with your fellow Hill Dwellers to improve life on the Hill.

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 WEB SITE. 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 ______

PHONE: ____________________________ EMAIL: ____________________________

THD WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS Summer 2008: Jon Colhoun, Lor Gouldey, Sandy Harris, Spencer Flowers,

For a Voice in Your Neighborhood Join Telegraph Hill Dwellers.

STCN: 18-2005, CA 94133
P.O. Box 330159

Telegraph Hill Dwellers

THD CALENDAR
Schedule of Committee Meetings & Zones: First Thursday, 986-7070, 563-3494.