

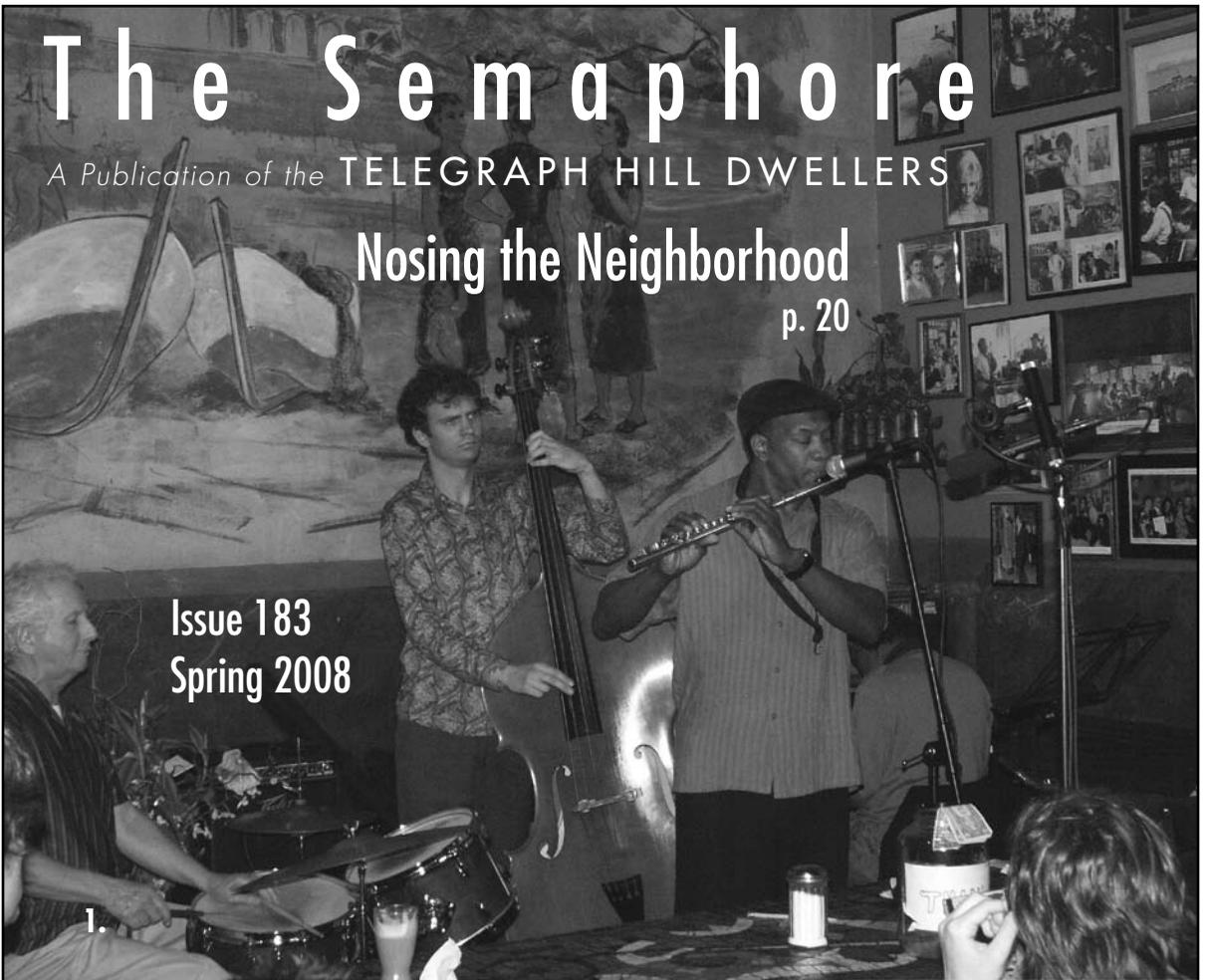
The Semaphore

A Publication of the TELEGRAPH HILL DWELLERS

Nosing the Neighborhood

p. 20

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Spring 2008





THE SEMAPHORE # 183 SPRING 2008

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Vedica Puri

It began when we heard a developer was building a 60+ unit luxury condo building across the way from our home. We started by knocking on our new neighbor's door to talk about the proposed development. I remember sitting at their compact dining room table thinking how darling the furnishings were. They listened carefully to why we thought the development wasn't a good one and at the end of our talk told us they agreed with us and would do what they could to support us.

So next up, we contacted THD. We were told we had to be members to attend or present at a Planning & Zoning Committee meeting. We had been members for a while, just not active ones. I appeared before the Committee with poster boards, a detailed presentation, ready to answer tough questions. Our neighbors came to the meeting as well. They made clear they were in this just as much as we were. As a lawyer I may be used to presenting things, but not on topics I know nothing about. The first question from the committee was tough – “do you mean you never want to see anything developed there ever?” (Courtesy of the ever-gracious Jeanne Milligan). The answer was “of course not, but if something is going to go there, it had better fit with the neighborhood and the developer needs to listen to us.”

And so it began. The Committee invited us to stay for the rest of the presentations and listen to the discussion. We heard a group of intelligent and dedicated volunteers offering free architectural and planning advice. We heard spirited discussions about fenestration (windows), tree cutting, the planning code and paint color. It sounded boring until we understood that each and every one of those things comes together to make a neighborhood what it is. It's the reason North Beach is the prize and the Northern Waterfront is where I want to live. Who knew there were all these creative and intelligent

people even existed—let alone spent their precious energy preserving our area?

Next thing I knew I was recruited to serve on the Board and did so happily. We took up issue and after issue. Easy issues, political hot potato issues and hard painful issues. There's yelling and laughing and sometimes hard feelings. Mostly, there is a lot of hard work, time and energy spent thinking of ways to make where we are better. We have 17 board members, more so than many non-profits, all with different backgrounds and attitudes. When we harness our synergy, there's nothing like it.

My neighbors and us—we were sold. We

continued on p. 4



Sean O'Donnell
“Anything can be fixed
except a fallen soufflé.”
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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

became dear friends. With them, we attended Port Commission meetings, Planning Commission hearings, Board of Supervisor meetings, the Dept. of Park & Rec. meetings. Together we made daily trips up the Coit Tower stairs and into North Beach. They only live here part of the year. But when they come here, our frenetic downtown life is happily interrupted. They have a reverence for this place that can only come from not being here all the time. Their very presence reminds us and reminds us again that not everyone is so lucky to live here day in and day out. They single-handedly taught us not to take this place for granted. They point out the house on Union that they must see every time they visit or the gold mansion on top of Chestnut. They visit the same place on the waterfront where they buy fish each time they visit. They do great impressions of the barking sea lions.

They have spent countless hours testifying for the THD at hearings and attending meetings. When I became President—they cheered me on, helped me write speeches, prepared special invitations for social events and truly upgraded the quality of our life. They listened to all the tales I had to tell and gave me wizened advice; always cautioning to take reasoned, well grounded stands. They told me not to flip out when angry members would send poison emails. They were right. They said everything would be ok if the Board was unified and not disgruntled. They were right.

And so, as my second term comes to a close, my only wish is that the story of THD and meeting our neighbors had started much earlier.

Thanks to all of you who support THD. It has been a privilege.



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Opinion

PUBLIC TRANSIT IN THE NORTHEAST QUADRANT: ROBUST CIRCULATION WORTH PRESERVING

by Gerald Cauthen (*Transportation Engineer and Consultant; Past President, Telegraph Hill Dwellers*)
& Howard Wong, AIA (*Past Chair, Parking and Transportation Committee, Telegraph Hill Dwellers*)

NORTH BEACH TRANSIT MEMORIES

For decades, public transportation has coursed through North Beach, Chinatown and Russian Hill. Those of us who grew up in these neighborhoods remember quick and easy rides to seemingly exotic places. For a nominal few coins or a Muni token, new worlds traversed the bus windows of the ever-present 15-Kearny, 30-Stockton, 39-Coit, 41-Union. And the faces framed by those bus windows reflected the cultural dynamics of the moment. At a time when car ownership was rare, the robust public transportation network was an integral and defining part of neighborhood life.

SUSTAINED NEIGHBORHOOD VIBRANCY

When the American Planning Association named North Beach one of the “Top 10 Great Neighborhoods in America, 2007”, they noted: “*North Beach is, in many ways, a traditional neighborhood. It’s rarely more than a few blocks walk to find a grocer, bakery, barber shop, hardware store, church, school or park.*” They might have added that another dimension to North Beach’s intricate tapestry is its access to public transit. It’s

rarely more than a few blocks walk to busses and cable cars with direct links to urban nodes and transportation corridors. North Beach has successfully evolved towards an urban prototype—including a transportation system—which planners and architects are attempting to recreate in other venues.

REVERSALS IN PUBLIC TRANSIT

So for years, San Francisco’s northeast quadrant has had a healthy transit system amalgamated into the North Beach landscape where thriving bus stops have been neighborhood-energizers and social nodes. But recently this system has begun to lose its vigor.

Historically, North Beach riders have had multiple transit options to reach BART/Metro at the Powell, Montgomery and Embarcadero Stations, as well as the Powell St. Cable Car turn-around and the Van Ness Corridor. This flexibility benefited travel time, linked major transit nodes and short-circuited jams in the street system. However, these transportation options and levels of service have been curtailed. The once reliable and fastest service to Market St./Montgomery Station, the 15-Kearny bus, has been discontinued. Its replacement, the 9X/9AX/9BX bus, goes through busy Stockton St. to the Powell St. Station, eliminating the Montgomery Station option.

continued on next page

**THE PLANNING AND
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After a public outcry, the 20 bus was added, linking Columbus Ave. to the Embarcadero Station—but with limited hours of weekday service. Previously, the 41-Union bus to the Embarcadero Station had been curbed to weekday commuter hours. And there are more service cuts looming in the future.

PRESSURES ON SAN FRANCISCO'S MUNICIPAL RAILWAY

These changes must be viewed in the context of Muni's general health. The system now faces a two-year budget deficit of \$82 million. Proposition A, passed by voters in November 2007, helped slightly with a \$26 million addition. But these amounts don't address the \$150 million annual structural deficit necessary to modernize the Muni system. Transit advocates and Muni's Board of Directors rejected a raise in Muni Fast Pass fares—when on-time performance hovered at 69 percent, far below the 85 percent benchmark mandated by voters in 1999. Furthermore, for the third consecutive year, Muni ridership decreased, down 5.16% in 2007. One way Muni leaders have chosen to address this depressing situation is by reconfirming plans to streamline service by shifting resources to the busiest lines while reducing or eliminating underperforming routes. Unfortunately, recent Muni "streamlining" in the northeast quadrant has reduced, not enhanced, the levels of transit service. And worse may be on the horizon

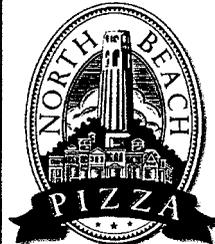
One proposed change is a service reduction for

the 39-Coit bus which unfortunately has only about 390 daily riders. The reduction would truncate the route, eliminating the leg up Union St. to Montgomery St.—thus reducing rolling stock and operating costs. Union St., between Kearny and Montgomery Sts., is one of the longest/ steepest inclines on the Hill. In 1954, attempts to drastically cut 39-Coit service led to the creation of Telegraph Hill Dwellers (THD). So, as in past battles, the THD Parking/ Transportation Committee, transit experts and residents have begun to brainstorm route enhancements and funding strategies that would fortify a regional 39-Coit loop. (See page 13)



THE CENTRAL SUBWAY AND MUNI OPERATING BUDGETS

Other Muni ideas will better serve the neighborhood. The agency proposes increased service on the Stockton corridor, with the 9/9X and 30-buses running every 5-10 minutes during the day. This is a smart reallocation of existing Muni budgets, maximizing transportation benefits for the entire northeast quadrant. This insightful approach needs



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to be applied to the future **Central Subway**, with its \$1.2 billion budget. The money to improve public transit systems doesn't come easy. It is critical that the limited amounts of transit improvement dollars are spent wisely, because they are investments for many centuries and future generations.

As final design plans are generated between now and 2011, this is the time to maximize \$1.2 billion of transportation benefits for the entire north-east quadrant. Currently, the Subway travels only 1.7 miles from Fourth/ King Sts. to its final stop at Stockton/ Washington Sts.—arguably the most expensive transit project per mile in history. The new system provides few benefits for riders north of Washington St.

Observed travel patterns over decades show that the densest passenger volumes occur between the northeastern neighborhoods and Market St. The distance between the Central Subway's Chinatown Station (Washington St.) and Market St. is about ½ mile. And the Chinatown Station is five stories below grade. Moreover, the Central Subway doesn't connect to Market St—but rather to a new Union Square Station, seven stories below grade and 300 yards from the existing Powell St. BART/Metro Station. To save money, SFMTA reduced station lengths to two-cars long, thereby curtailing the ability to carry more passengers in case the line is ever extended northward.

We believe that vast majority of residents in the northeast quadrant, including Chinatown, will continue to rely on the current bus, cable car and F-Lines. The Central Subway won't even begin to ease traffic congestion on Stockton and Fourth Streets. Muni would be saddled with costs of both heavy surface transportation and the very expensive underground subway. Quietly, within the Central Subway's Draft SEIS/SEIR Report, there are forebodings of service cuts to offset new operating/maintenance costs. In

the Executive Summary's Table S-2, page S-12, the following is a synopsis:

Alternative	Total Annual Diesel/ trolley Bus Hours (Systemwide)
No Project/TSM (2030)	2,622,030
Fourth/Stockton Alignment Option B (2030)	2,545,630

The Central Subway would lead to a reduction of bus/ trolley service, 76,400 hours a year (2,622,030 minus 2,545,630 hours). Since the Central Subway serves the Stockton corridor, likely service cuts would affect the northeast quadrant—just as the T-Line eliminated the 15-Kearny bus.

EFFECTIVE USE OF LIMITED MUNI RESOURCES

The costs of the Deep Subway scheme may escalate, with increasing unknowns about deep boring under BART and underground streams. Necessity may dictate the evaluation of options:

- **DEEP SUBWAY:** The current scheme has few benefits to northeastern neighborhoods.
- **SHALLOW SUBWAY:** Closer to grade, the Central Subway ties directly with the Powell St. Station—eliminating the Union Square Station.
- **SHALLOW SUBWAY, EXTENDED FOR BUSES:** Tunnels are shared with buses/trolleys, bypassing congested streets—such as in Seattle.
- **SURFACE FOURTH STREET TRANSIT MEDIAN:** Subway cars stay on Fourth St./ surface, crossing Market St. before entering a tunnel—eliminating the Union Square Station.
- **NORTH BEACH STATION:** Cost savings extend the Subway northward.

continued on page 8

MUNI RESPONDS

In an April 7, 2008, *San Francisco Chronicle* op-ed, Gerald Cauthen criticized the proposed design of the Central Subway project and suggested a number of alternative approaches.

On its website the Municipal Transportation Agency advanced a rebuttal. Some points in this response are relevant to the arguments that Wong and Cauthen present here.

The Central Subway project will be of little use to anyone living north of the Chinatown Station.

RESPONSE: The project will in fact help relieve the serious passenger crowding and surface congestion of the bus lines passing through Chinatown, which will be of great benefit to those customers coming from points further north. In addition, it must be recognized that this is the second phase of the overall T-Third project, which may include a future northerly extension to North Beach and Fisherman's Wharf.

Existing bus operations will likely be reduced to help pay for subway operations.

RESPONSE: While there will be minor reductions in the frequency of buses serving the corridor, the subway is really meant to enhance, not replace, the existing bus service. It will be especially beneficial to longer-distance customers. Surface buses with more frequent stops will continue to serve customers travelling shorter distances.

The location and depth of the Central Subway station located at Market Street is problematic, subway should be shallow not deep.

RESPONSE: After considerable planning, design and community input, it was decided to provide a combined Union Square/Market Street Station within the two blocks between Market and Geary Streets. Customers boarding from the Union Square area will be able to access the station from an entrance in Union Square and descend to the platform located between Geary and Ellis Streets. Those accessing the station from the Market Street area can use the existing five access locations at the east end of the BART/Muni Powell Street Station on the Market Street Subway.

The depth of the Union Square/Market Street Station was the result of trying to minimize the disruption to the City during the construction phase. A shallow alignment would require opening up Fourth and Stockton Streets all the way from Harrison to Geary Streets. In addition, there is not sufficient vertical clearance between the existing Powell Street Station and the surface of Market Street at Fourth and Stockton Streets to accommodate a shallow crossing. Even of greater concern, a shallow crossing of Market Street would disrupt all traffic and transit surface operations on Market Street for an extended period of time. Again, based on extensive planning and community input, it was decided to

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Public Transit *continued from page 7*

Even in the short term, as seen in many countries, modern transportation techniques can vastly enrich surface transportation: Well-designed bus stops, prepaid/speedy entry, efficient management of bus intervals, low-floor vehicles, larger/ 3-door articulated buses, peak hour/ bus reallocations, exclusive bus lanes, fuller passenger capacity, restrictions of

trucks/delivery times, bus/traffic signal synchronization, double-parking enforcement, planning of green/white/yellow/metered parking, traffic congestion pricing.

It's time to look more carefully at these options. **Note: The Telegraph Hill Dwellers has not taken a stand on issues related to the Central Subway.** ✕



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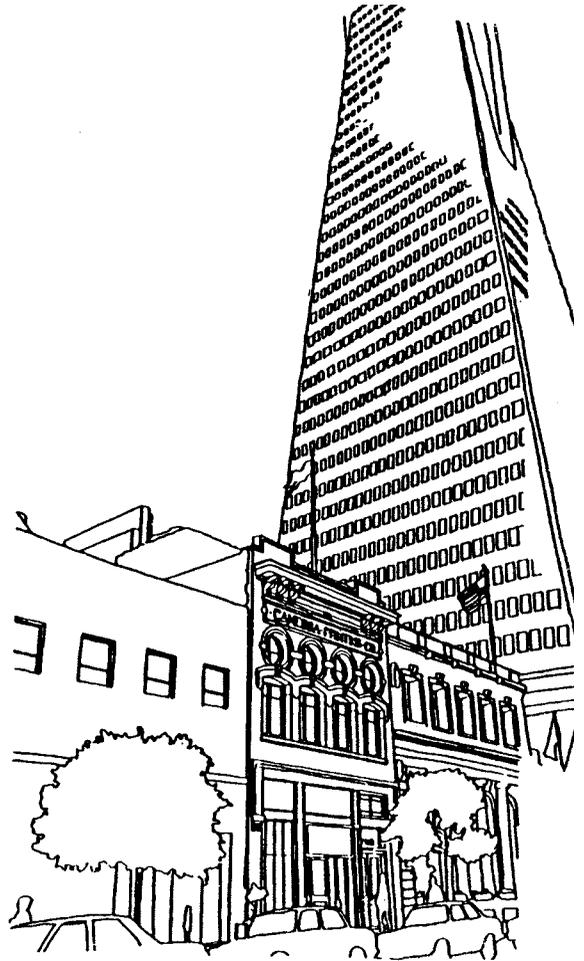
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McCABE ON THE 39

From a 1979 Column by San Francisco Chronicle columnist Charles McCabe.

The 39 Bus, which now runs between Telegraph Hill and Fisherman's Wharf, is more than a bus line. It is an institution itself, and a curious one. Until recently it only circled Telegraph Hill from Coit Tower to Speedy's grocery on Union and Montgomery.

There was only one bus. Now that the run has been extended to Fisherman's Wharf there are two. There is a schedule that says you can pick up one every 12 minutes. That schedule is honored more in the breach than in the observance. The Hill service is worse with two busses than in was with one.

On its Union Street run you will seldom see more than three or four people in the bus. More often, there are none at all. The buses themselves are moribund. They can barely chug up to the top of the hill. The machines are called a "bucket of bolts" by some officials and it is not a bad description.

It is clearly an uneconomic run, yet the Muni and the supervisors keep it on. If they should ever take it off the resultant commotion would be mighty loud. In fact, it was a recent rumor I heard that the service is to be discontinued that urges this column.

For the 39 is loved, and a powerful force for law and order in an almost wholly residential community. Its clientele are mostly older people without auto-

mobiles. To these folk it is necessary and sometimes indispensable.

Nearly all the regular riders of the line, and I am one, know each other. Much chaffing and trading of gossip goes on among us, and with the driver, who knows his customers well. It is rather like the town pump. The more infirm are left off as close to their homes as possible.

The 39 is perhaps more important for the other reason, law and order. Telegraph Hill is an almost totally residential community. It is almost as closed off from the world as Pebble Beach or Montecito in Santa Barbara. There is only one place of business on the Union Street side, the aforementioned Speedy's grocery, and it closes around 8 p.m.

There are two restaurants—the Shadow and Julius' Castle—which largely cater to the tourists trade, and provide their own private bus.

Thus the Hill's only real connection with the outside world is those two noisy rattling buses. They run until shortly past midnight. Their value as a cautionary reminder to would-be malefactors is incalculable. Mischief might not abound if they were taken off; it would certainly increase.

So it is not a surprise that I got into a tiny dudgeon when a friend, a fireman, implied to me that the old bucket of bolts was on the way out. I got in touch with Curtis Green, director of the Muni and

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MUNI RESPONSE *continued from page 8*

pass under the Market Street Subway using tunnel boring machines, which will greatly reduce surface construction impacts along the alignment and avoid a shutdown of Market Street. The trade-off for this decision was a deeper Union Square/Market Street

Station. However, it should be pointed out that many systems around the world, including Atlanta, Washington D.C., London, Paris and Moscow, operate very successfully with deep stations.





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A WIN/WIN FOR THE 39 COIT

By Bill Seellinger

We told Bill Seellinger, long-time (if not long-suffering) ex-chair of the THD Parking and Traffic Committee about Muni's announced plans to reduce service on "under utilized" lines so the city can add service on the heavier traveled routes. At the moment the plan seems to be to reduce service on the 39 bus from two busses to one and to eliminate the part of the route that goes up Union Street. Bill now lives in Palm Springs and has been out of the Telegraph Hill action for about a year, but his views on this subject are as feisty as ever. THDers interested in taking on this issue should attend meetings of the re-constituted Parking and Traffic Committee (See page 23)

Low ridership on the 39 Coit is a long-standing, ridiculous problem that has an easy, productive, win-win fix.

However, cutting back on buses and headway, and eliminating service on Union Street up the hill—as the City is apparently considering -- is not the fix.

The facts are:

- many elderly and disabled people use the bus to get up the hill, including Union Street;

- the bus has low ridership because, at its peak potential times for many riders—every weekend day and holiday from late morning to early evening—the bus is blocked for long periods by visitors' stalled car traffic;
- the above also causes the 39 Coit to slip way behind schedule; this unreliability discourages riders at all stops from waiting;
- there is a dense population up the west hillside above Washington Square—plus the curvy street—which needs bus service and would significantly enhance ridership.

Key to the win-win solution is to restrict parking at Coit Tower, during peak periods, to neighborhood red sticker holders, and encourage visitors to take the bus, walk, or be dropped off, clearing out the choking queues on Telegraph Hill Boulevard.

Why hasn't this simple, win-win solution been implemented in the past?

MTA management, in a reflexive attempt to be "fair"—that is, let visitors park equally with residents at the Tower lot—has so far refused to support

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The 39 Bus *continued from page 11*

his transit planner, Luther Freeman Their answers came to this:

"The future of the 39 for now is secure. As for expanding service that depends on traffic checks and just how many people are using it. The 39 line is a vital part of our five year plan and it is a vital service to the neighborhood." The five year plan is something that is effective through 1984.

This is comforting. As I say there is no way of expressing the affection felt by those who ride the bus any more than the appeal of the Toonerville

Trolley, which it closely resembles, can be put in words. It would not be loved nearly so much were it not rickety, like many of the passengers.

And the conductors are something. The best-remembered was a chap called Geography John, on account of he had a PhD in geography. He had a big beard, refreshed himself at the Powell Street Bar and Grill, kept something that looked like a German Shepherd at his side, and listened to Mozart on KIBE. In moments of exuberance he would do double back somersaults down the aisle of the 39. He is missed.



JACK EARLY NEEDS A GATE KEEPER

By Herb Kosovitz

In 1962 Jack Early obtained a permit from DPW to landscape and maintain a portion of the stub end of Pfeiffer Street, East of Grant Ave. Early had lived on the north slope of Telegraph Hill—a location he referred to as “Alcatraz Heights”—since the 1950s. He had had an interest in trees and plants dating back to his Sacramento childhood when his father had built him a greenhouse. Over the years he planted and maintained some 20 trees on Pfeiffer Street, but he always had an eye on beautifying the strip of city owned hillside at the top of his block. The Department of Public Works wasn’t much interested. Too steep and rocky for beautification, the department said. So Early signed a waiver absolving the city of financial responsibility and undertook the project on his own. He planted shrubs and trees, including a eucalyptus and a Monterey pine. For years, he hauled buckets of water up the hill to feed the trees.

In the 1980s, Cal Rossi obtained a Conditional Use Permit to build the condominium project at the Northeast and Southeast corners of Grant and Francisco, which abuts that Pfeiffer stub. Due to the efforts of THD, led by Early, a condition of that permit was that the Condominium Association develop and maintain that uphill slope as a public park. Rossi provided old railroad ties for steps and the residential development, now known as the Telegraph Terrace Condominium Owners’ Association (TTCOA) was

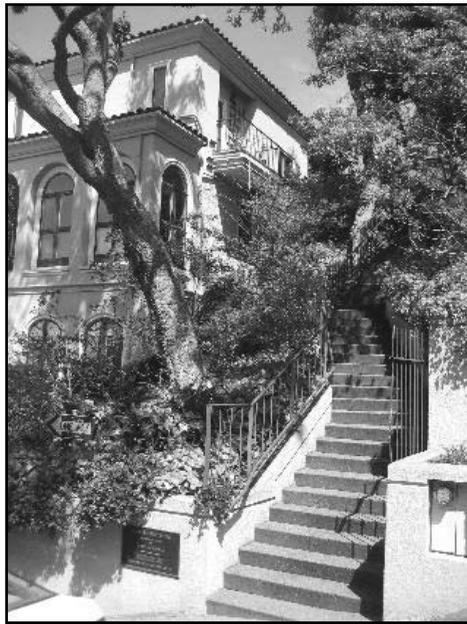
completed. The landscaped stairway leading to a viewing platform at the top, was named for Jack Early, and opened in June, 1987.

In May 1999, a revocable Agreement was signed between THD and TTCOA, whereby THD assumed the responsibility of locking the gate at the Park entrance between sunset and sunrise, which brings us to our present dilemma. The saga of the locking and opening of the gate, between 1987 and recent times is not entirely understood, at least not by me. TTCOA seems to have assumed that respon-

sibility at one time; however, in recent times they have not had personnel available to do that on weekends. A member of THD who lived nearby kept it open Saturdays and Sundays for awhile, but for some time now it has been locked on weekends.

Obviously, it’s important to have this little gem of a park open to the public on weekends, but who’s to do it? All efforts so far to find a willing gatekeeper are to no avail. It was suggested at a recent meeting of the THD Board that the general membership should be advised of this situation; that perhaps some good ideas would

surface. Finding a willing THD member would be desirable, however, that arrangement would always be temporary—people travel, move on, etc. Perhaps a person, or a security organization, could be paid to perform the service. Please email any helpful ideas to Herb Kosovitz at hkosovitz@sbcglobal.net.



NORTH BEACH CITIZENS PROFILE: COLLEEN AND MICHAEL

By Brady McCartney

It all started two and a half years ago. North Beach resident Colleen Yerge was walking from her apartment on Water Street to the Trader Joe's at Mason and Bay. On her way she passed a gentleman camped in front of San Jose Taqueria at Francisco and Mason. Not wanting to simply walk past him, Colleen asked the gentleman if he was ever hungry. He said yes, of course.

Michael Richardson, known to some in the community as Raven, had been homeless off and on for 17 years when Colleen introduced herself to him. Enamored by San Francisco and its music scene, Michael had moved to the city as a young man to pursue his dream of becoming a professional guitar player. He had worked as a landscaper and later on as a public school janitor until he was let go for drinking a beer on school grounds at the end of his work day.

After his dismissal, Michael had trouble finding work and ended up applying for General Assistance (GA) as a stopgap. With a diminished income, Michael was forced to move to the Rose Hotel on 6th Street, one of the few hotels he could afford on GA alone. He lived there until the management decided to buy out its tenants, remodel the hotel, and raise the rent. With no option to stay at the Rose, Michael accepted the buyout and moved to another hotel where he lived until his GA benefits were discontinued after missing one meeting with his GA worker. With no income, no support network, and, consequently, no housing, he became homeless. Michael had been homeless in San Francisco for approximately 14 years when Colleen introduced herself.

After their introduction, Colleen began visiting Michael every time she shopped at Trader Joe's. The two would generally only talk for 5 or 10 minutes,

but she made a point of seeking him out and Michael quickly recognized this. Recalling one of her first visits with Michael, Colleen said, "The first time I called him by his name he couldn't believe someone remembered his name." The more and more the two talked the more Colleen wanted to do whatever she could to help Michael get off the streets, "It was something about his eyes...I couldn't just keep passing him by."

December 25th, 2007, Colleen was on her way to volunteer at Marc Bruno's Christmas Dinner at Saints Peter & Paul Church. On her way Colleen invited Michael to the event. Unfortunately, Michael said that he couldn't attend, though he would like to, because he couldn't leave his belongings unattended.

Soon after, Colleen offered to store some of Michael's belongings and, before she knew it, she was in a little bit over her head and wasn't quite sure what to do next. Fortunately, Colleen had been donating clothing to North Beach Citizens (NBC) for the past couple of years and in her time of need contacted NBC.

Within a matter of days, Colleen introduced Kristie Fairchild and Brady McCartney of NBC to Michael and the four of them discussed the options available to a chronically homeless man and devised an action plan for Michael. Two weeks after being contacted by Colleen, NBC had advocated for Michael with its various community partners and executed every part of Michael's action plan. February 5th, 2008, Michael moved into temporary housing and is currently taking the requisite steps to move into permanent supportive housing.

North Beach Citizens.

www.northbeachcitizens.org 415.772.0918

720 Columbus Avenue,

San Francisco, California 94133



PARKS & TREES REPORT



by Robert Mattei

THD has partnered with Friends of the Forest (FUF) to make it possible for landlords, renters and homeowners in North Beach and Telegraph Hill to plant trees outside of their buildings and homes. To begin the process of planting a tree, a property owner must sign the FUF Letter of Agreement and the Department of Public Works (DPW) Tree Planting Application Form and submit both forms to Robert Mattei, the Chair of the Parks and Trees Committee for the Telegraph Hill Dwellers and neighborhood represen-

tative for FUF.

The FUF Letter of Agreement and DPW Tree Planting Application Form can be found at www.fuf.net/tree_plantings. The web site also contains information on the benefits and requirements for planting trees and the many different species to choose from. For those who apply for a tree, FUF will incur the expenses and costs of permit processing, administrative expenses, underground utility identification, concrete cutting and removal, ordering of the trees and supplies and coordination of volunteers and planting logistics. FUF will also recommend the species of trees that will do well in the North Beach area. The only cost a landlord or owner will pay is \$165 per tree during the mass planting, or if it is a replacement tree (one where there is already a sidewalk cut). This fee covers \$45 for an 18 month arborist visit to check on the health of the tree and \$120 in expenses not currently covered by government funding.

We need to gather 30 applications in order to schedule a neighborhood tree planting, however I am only halfway there. Janis Kaempfe a long time neighborhood resident who has assisted me in composing this article has also been working with me to facilitate this process. We really need to gather more tree applications to make this happen. Please feel free to contact Janis at kjanis@mail.com she is helping me distribute and collect tree applications so we can make this planting a reality. ♦♦

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THE LATEST FROM THD'S ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

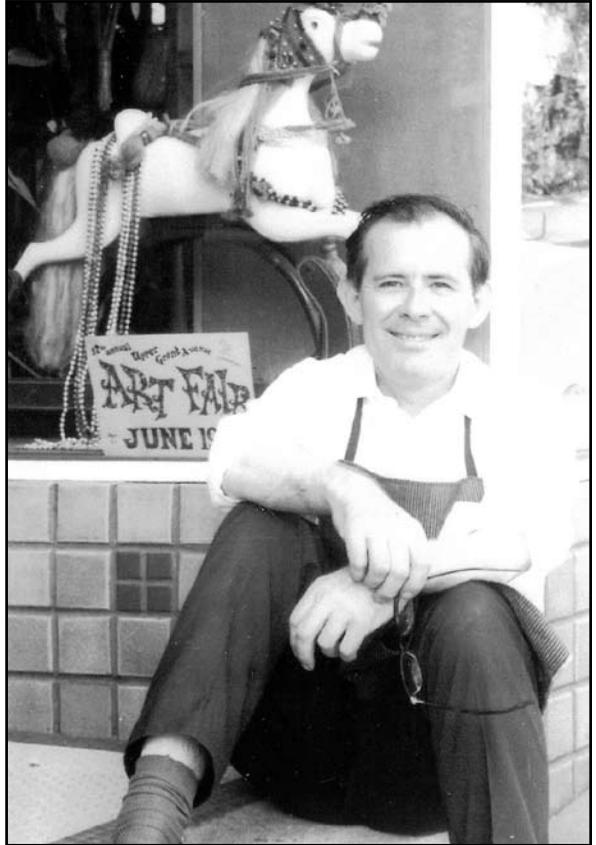
By Rozell Overmire, Oral History Chair

Have you ever entered a store and been dazzled by its merchandise? Yone bead store has been dazzling its customers for nearly fifty years.

On Union Street just above Grant Avenue, Yonemitsu Arashiro (Yone to us) and Hermon Baker opened a bead store in the 1960's. Yone collected beads for the designer dresses he was producing. He had started the store, Sueko, at the present Yone location, with his sister Sue who modeled his fashion creations.

Beads fascinated Yone. He discovered Peking Glass beads in Chinatown, and soon more and more beads poured in as Yone searched for them in Los Angeles and New York. People were bringing their beads to the store, and the Beats and then the Hippies were buying them. To this day creative souls interested in jewelry making and fashion, choose special treasures from Yone and Hermon's collections to spark their imaginations.

Today, at 85, Hermon has outlived Yone, but he is still dispensing beads to avid customers and has



Yone, 1963.

PHOTO BY IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM, IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM FOUNDATION.

a new website, yonebee.com, where customers can browse online.

Our Oral History Committee has interviewed Hermon, and the transcript of this interview is available at the North Beach Library and the San Francisco Main Library History Room. Take the time to read Hermon's story and then visit his store. As well as beads, he has more stories to tell you than you will have time to listen to. Ask the librarians for the THD oral history transcript of Hermon Baker (or any of the other 16 oral histories we have produced), and you will see the neighborhood through new eyes. ✦



TEL-HI: STAYING MODERN FOR 118 YEARS

By Art Peterson

Three years ago, Telegraph Neighborhood Center (Tel-Hi) stepped away from the medical component that had been part of its full service community effort for 115 years. There were some practical reasons for this move—the doctor who had been providing these services was leaving, and, of course, medical costs had gone out of control. But according to Tim Daniels, Executive Director of Tel-Hi, there were other reasons. “We wanted to move from the medical model which has been part of our focus from the beginning to preventative programs.”

So Tel-Hi has been developing ways to help its clients, who range in age from 2 ½ to 98, to stay well. Says Daniels, “We’ve redone our snacks and our lunch menus with nutrition in mind. We have a blood pressure screening program for our seniors. Two instructors from the San Francisco Bay Club come two days a week to offer classes on healthy aging, balance and cognition. All this is free.”

And in further recognition of clients needs in a 21 century environment, Tel Hi has converted what was a medical examination room into a computer center hosting 18 state-of-the-art computers. The computers are put to good use in the center’s after school program, but are also used by seniors who are introduced to computer basics such as setting up email accounts, communicating with loved ones far

away, and researching topics that interest them.

The center is renovating its garden space into an “environmental garden” that will grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers and will be designed so that the youngest clients and the oldest—who don’t have as much flexibility as they used to— help with both the planting and the harvesting..

Keeping abreast of the times is nothing new to Tel- Hi. Since its inception in 1890 the center has made a priority of providing what members of the community most need. Founded in that year by two Grace Cathedral Sunday School teachers, Elizabeth Ashe, 21, and Alice Griffith, 24, one a nurse the other a social worker, the center was committed from the beginning to serving the needs of the neighborhood poor. 118 years ago this “settlement house”— as this kind of facility was called at the time--



was a new idea. Modeled on Jane Addams Hull House in Chicago, the center, at its home on Vallejo Street, aimed to provide what Daniels today would call “a one stop shop,” serving the physical, social and economic needs of low income families.

And in 1890 most Telegraph Hill residents were indeed low income. Large families on the western slope of the hill were jammed into tiny flats without plumbing or heat. Children were pulled out of school to sell flowers or otherwise support their families.

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GERALD HIRIGOYEN: FOUR STARS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE



By Carol Peterson

After attending the North Beach Citizens annual fund raiser at Sts. Peter and Paul Church in North Beach, I decided to change the focus of this quarter's review because of the impression our neighborhood chef and restaurateur, Gerald Hirigoyen, made on me. Gerald's establishments, Piperade, at 1015 Battery and Bocadillos at 710 Montgomery consistently appear on the *Chronicle's* Top 100 Bay Area Restaurants list.

Because Francis Ford Coppola, the founder of North Beach Citizens who normally takes on kitchen duty for this event, was out of the country filming, Gerald was invited to cook the entire dinner for 450 guests, a challenge he accepted with relish. When I interviewed Gerald he was also getting ready to prepare the main course for 300 guests at the Taste of Tel-Hi fund raising event held May 10.

For our interview we sat at a little corner table at Piperade. Gerald positioned me where he could watch the dining room as I asked him a few questions about his charitable contributions to our neighborhood.

Carol: How did you decide to become so involved in the community and the charitable events you do?

Gerald: (chuckle) I've been around San Francisco for 28 years and know so many people. When North Beach Citizens asked me to do the dinner I was very pleased because it was a challenge for me to prepare that much food. I love to break my own records. Also, the events that I do in North Beach are special to me because they are low key, unlike other charitable events in the City, where everyone is trying to outshine each other. I love that I can

contribute to North Beach Citizens and Tel-Hi and know that most of the money is going right to the cause. It is important to me. I try to do these events using the freshest ingredients, with great texture and taste. If you go in with that attitude, the meal will always be good.

Carol: How would you compare preparing for both of these events? They take place in a relatively short time span.

Gerald: The difference in the two events is huge. For the Citizens event we went in to start the cooking and preparation work four days in advance. A caterer friend of mine helped with storage and ovens. Many of my staff and I worked overtime. We prepared the meal the day before to test how everything tasted. On the day of the event, we had four staff people in the kitchen that morning and then that evening, we had five staff people. We had five or six very helpful volunteers in the kitchen, as well. Because we were serving family style, it was important that the kitchen was very organized. The food had to come out hot, on time and flow. We thought it went very well. The Tel-Hi event is different because we are only preparing the main dish, so there is much less preparation, even though we are serving 300 people. The individual plates will be taken to the tables by a stream of volunteer servers. The important part of the individual serving is that the food gets out on time and hot. I haven't figured out what I am serving that night, but I think it will be some kind of braised meat. We'll see.

Carol: What do you do about the vegetarians?

Gerald: (smile). They will just have to raise their hands! I have been living in California so long that

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THE ALFA NOSE, SPRING 2008 SP

Artist Agneta Falk at her opening at Worms



Alfa Romeo Spiders are very social. Drop the top and they effortlessly find their way to the nearest location of fun. They are cute, even stylish (Italian designer), go with anything-- from the bricks of the Barbary Coast to Coit Tower -- and adventurous. Driving over Green Street becomes an "E Ticket" ride! Cruising Grant Avenue is 'cool', and pulling up to the fire plug in front of Gino & Carlo draws a welcoming committee.

The '77 Spider Veloce "Alfa Nose" has been sniffing out news for the past two years. It

Julia of Knitz and Leathers modeling one of her hand tooled leather jackets a la Marlena Dietrich



THDers Sean and Sherry O'Donnell at their Opening at Worms



The Spider



BJ Poppa at Holiday Pa

SPIDER'S SPECIAL PHOTO COLUMN



Survives; The Castle Doesn't

has poked its Pininfarina Nose into the galaxy of North Beach art galleries and (figuratively) crashed the field of Ferraris on Washington Square, Columbus Day, all to report on Telegraph Hill news. We, Spider and myself, are continually in awe of the jewel box that comprises "The Neighborhood," places, people, events. Something is *always* happening. Since Spider is an avid photographer, below is a 'column' of photos. (Actually I more often than not walk, but don't tell Spider that. He would be crushed (figuratively!).

—Kathleen Cannon

Enrico and Christine Deeb at Enrico's last interview



Franco of Porziuncola before the replica of St. Francis of Assisi Shrine



and Emily Palen entertain at THD party at Caesar's

Caffe Greco—Auction of Ferlinghetti artwork—Joe Butler, Ferlinghetti, owner Hanna Suleiman and Officer Fred Firth

Gerald Hirigoyen

continued from page 15

I understand all about Californians and their varied diets. I always cook enough of everything that I can put together a vegetarian meal very easily.

Carol: How do you figure out how much to spend for these dinners?

Gerald: Because we are a small business, we like to work with people who have a budget. If we have the budget, we can plan the meal where they get good food, with fresh and high ingredients. Not that the budget always covers the cost of the event, as there are staff people, etc. but that is fine. Staying within the exact budget is not what this is about. I love to be a part of the community.

At this moment, we are interrupted by Gerald motioning to the waiter to see the three dishes he is bringing to customers he was talking with when I came in. He approved the dishes and we resumed.

Carol: So, are you besieged by people all the time to do these types of events?

Gerald: Yes, (shrug and smile) you pick and choose the ones you want to do. I love the small charities where it all goes back.

Carol: And may I ask where you went to school to

learn to become such a wonderful chef?

Gerald: I didn't. go to chef school. I grew up in the French Basque area, Biarritz. My parents were not professional cooks but very good ones and I cooked all my life. When I was 13, I told my parents that I wanted to be a chef and off I went. They were very worried about me because the life of a chef is a difficult one. There are long days. You give up all your free time. Holidays are spent with customers and not your family, etc. But, I love what I do and am very glad I did it. I like to think of myself as not only a chef but as a restaurateur, who can handle the front and the back of the restaurant. As you know, there are many things that go wrong between the front and back. My goal has always been to be a good chef and a good business owner. Every Wednesday the Food Runner comes by for left over food to deliver to charity. We rarely have anything left, so then we will make a little something.

And with that after the traditional French kiss on both cheeks from Gerald, I said goodbye to this charming, friendly chef and owner of Piperade Restaurant. ❖

FRONT COVER PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Cafe Trieste—N. Beach Jazz Festival kicks off the SF International Poetry Festival; 2. Artist Tina Tarnoff at her opening at Vesuvio's; 3. THD Social Director Sarah Kilban recites at THD Beat Omage; 4. Dick Boyd and Chi Chi Banducci (Enrico's niece) at Enrico's Memorial; 5. Three Cool Cats (Tony Long, Aaron Peskin, Jerry Cimino) and a Hip Chick; 6. Spec's daughter, Elly Simmons, displaying her artwork at Worms; 7. Greg Chiampou, Art Peterson and Nancy Shanahan at THD Caesar's Dinner

“discriminatory” parking, although there are examples of selective discriminatory parking all over the San Francisco metro area. This “politically correct” approach harms everyone affected:

It harms visitors, because they are relegated—de facto, because of the “car habit” mentality—into an “interminable” queue of cars during popular times, sometimes stretching to 30-or-so all the way to Lombard Street, causing many hopeful visitors to turn around and leave. The irony is that visitors don’t need their car close at hand to enjoy their Coit Tower visit. An unfettered bus would take them up the hill in seconds and bring them back down.

It harms all riders at all stops on the route, because of the unreliable arrival times.

It harms the nearby neighbors on Telegraph Hill Boulevard by spewing idling car and bus fumes under their windows (to say nothing of global warming; how “green” is it to have 10-30 cars idling constantly on the boulevard all afternoon, for 115 or so days per year?).

It harms the nearby neighbors whose only parking alternative is the Coit Tower lot, because they have to wait in the “endless” queue just to drive home.

MTA management must recognize that the Coit

Tower parking lot has a different value to visitors, as opposed to nearby householders. To the visitors, it has no value because of no need for their cars at the Tower. The nearby residents, however, have a legitimate need to park their cars there, because it is the only “street” parking they have.

In addition to all of the above, MTA management should expand the route marginally and capture many more riders. Members of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers have spent countless hours trying to help solve this problem. It has worked out a proposed route modification, which is:

- + starting at Safeway, the bus would travel to pier 39, which is often swarming with potential riders;
- + then through Fisherman’s Wharf to the lower end of the Lombard crooked street;
- + then south, passing many people-filled apartment buildings and on down east to the twin garages on Vallejo, where visitors can park their cars and pick up the bus for a great ride to Coit Tower;
- + then to Washington Square Park, to Montgomery & Union, and on to Coit Tower;
- + then back again to Safeway to begin another run for waiting visitors.

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PARKING AND TRAFFIC BACK IN BUSINESS

Gail and Paul Switzer have agreed to act as co-chairs of THD’s reconstituted Parking and Traffic Committee. Meetings of the committee will be on the first Saturday of each month at 11:00-12:30 pm at North Beach Citizens, 720 Columbus. THD members interested in becoming involved on a regular basis and willing to take on assignments should contact the co-chairs at switzer.gail@gmail.com

Issues that the committee will be discussing during the next few meetings include

Coit Tower—traffic, parking
Bus service modifications for the #39 bus
Valet parking for North Beach
Light Rail extension to North Beach and Fisherman’s Wharf,
Pedestrian Safety issues at Coumbus/Stockton/Green

THE PAGODA, A PALACE NO MORE

By Art Peterson

No building in our neighborhood embodies more glorious cultural history and depressing false starts than the boarded up structure at 1741 Powell Street, still referred to—with fleeting hope—as the Pagoda Theatre. No theatre—or any other activity—has taken place on this site since 1994.

That's not to say there haven't been lots of tries. Presently, restaurateur Joe Campos who has owned the property since 2004, is making a second attempt to open a Mexican Restaurant at the site. His plans also include plans for 19 market unit condos and 27 parking spaces.

The Semaphore will have more to say about this plan in our next issue. For now we want to present an overview of the celebrated past of this bedraggled structure.

Beginnings

Up until the 1906 Earthquake and Fire a Russian Cathedral stood on this site. But that catastrophic event that wiped out most of North Beach demolished the Cathedral as well. In the years following 1906 a neighborhood that had been multi-ethnic became increasingly Italian as Southern Italians poured into town to join the rebuilding of the neighborhood. Antonietta Pisanelli, a singer turned impresario enlisted the help of the notorious political boss Abe Ruef to push through a plan for The Washington Square Theater which specialized in all

things Italian from variety theatre to drama to opera. The renowned Italian tenor Tito Schipi played this location in the 1920s.

The Milano, then The Palace

But by 1930s, America had gone movie crazy and live theater was on the back burner. The Washington Square Theater was reborn as the Milano. Still under the stewardship of Pisanelli, the Milano showed American films during the day, but featured Italian language films, and sometimes drama in the evening. In the late thirties the theatre had been extensively remodeled in the Art Moderne style and reopened as the Palace in 1937.

But in 1941, the U.S. government began confiscating Italian films, as well as German and Japanese movies, and the theatre switched to all-American fare. June Osterberg, writing in the *North Beach Beat* remembers this period. "In those days a matinee ticket costing 5 or 10 cents would include a newsreel, a cartoon, a serial episode—like Buck Rogers—and both an "A" picture and a "B" picture. There was a malt shop in the building called Bozo's that had great milk shakes and hot dogs for a nickel."

The Golden Age of the Cockettes

In 1967, The Palace, under new owners, started to show exclusively Chinese movies. Two years later, in 1969 the theater entered its most notorious period as home to San Francisco's Cockettes, a performance

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Win/Win 39 Coit *continued from page 13*

It's time for MTA management to take this quite feasible action to make 39 Coit richly useful to the residents. Isn't that the point of a municipal transportation line?

It's time for the MTA to tell us how it can make

the 39 Coit serve us better—rather than telling us why it can't.



Tel-Hi 118 years old *continued from page 18*

Whooping cough, typhoid fever and diphtheria were rampant, more so on the Hill than anywhere else in the city.

To this depressing environment Ashe and Griffith brought some relief. They offered a club for boys and classes in sewing and “domestic science” for girls and later a kitchen, garden, gymnasium and library. Drawing, dancing and singing classes were also offered. The center provided a day nursery, a health clinic and even an operating room. Tel-Hi launched the first school nurse program on the west coast.

Some years later, when North Beach was destroyed by fire following the 1906 earthquake, it was Tel- Hi that ministered to the needy in the tent city the organization helped set up in Washington Square.

A year later Tel-Hi purchased a site at 1736 Stockton St. and commissioned renowned architect Bernard Maybeck to build the center a new home, a building that still stands. Then, in 1954 Tel-Hi moved to the seemingly quiet location of 660 Lombard St. where the center remains today. Any quiet at Tel-Hi, however, ends at the sidewalk. Inside a staff of 42 (20 full- time and 22 part-time) plus 37 volunteers serve 600 community members each day. Those 600 people represent a more diverse group than the largely Italian immigrant community the center served in 1890. Today the center reaches beyond Telegraph Hill and out to polyglot areas of North Beach and Chinatown. So the center must draw regularly on the many languages its staff speaks. “We currently do not have a staff member who is fluent in Russian,” says Daniels. “So we have become dependent upon a volunteer to provide a translation to Russian immigrants we serve in the senior program.”

A bit of logistic magic makes it possible for Tel-Hi to serve all these people in a relatively small space. It turns out that when one group of clients leaves, another group is entering. Each morning 140 local seniors arrive for the health and fitness activities described above as well as English as a Second Language Classes, Tai Chi, a nutritious hot lunch, and social activities such as games, mask making and line dancing. Daniels says that these activities give these seniors the community they need to stay mentally healthy. “Isolation is the biggest disease,” he says.

At 2:30, after the seniors leave, the 105 K- 5th grade students arrive for the After School Academy (that also operates full-day

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At a party on Green Street last December honoring the late restaurateur and baseball coach Dante Benedetti, Soto Mare owner GiGi Fiorucci unveiled this Jasper Alley Mural depicting those who had played under Dante's tutelage.

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programming in the summer). At the academy, in addition to receiving tutoring in school subjects, these students enjoy a range of other activities from creative writing to sports to organic gardening and community service learning projects.

Tel-Hi also offers an Expanded Learning Program at nearby Francisco Middle School where 150 youth in grade 6 through 8 experience after school activities such as cooking, biking/bike repair, comedy, and film making, all aimed at fostering enthusiasm for learning.

Back at the Lombard Street site Te-Hi provides a quality State-licensed and accredited year-round pre school program for 42 children between the ages of 2 1/2 and 5. Tuition for this much in-demand program is on a sliding scale based on income, with 1/3 of the students on state subsidies. Because of

the pre-school's reputation, it has a rather daunting waiting list for admission.

Tel Hi has never limited its activities to its four walls. Griffith and Ashe lobbied against a proposed plan to make passage across the city easier by flattening Telegraph Hill. They opposed smoking on street cars, fought successfully the quarry owners who were destroying the Hill's eastern slope, and tried to get the city to reduce density in neighborhood housing.

Fast forward and you'll find Tel-Hi still taking up neighborhood causes. Consider the case of the demolished North Beach Place, the subsidized and low income housing development at Bay and

Powell. It was Tel-Hi, along with the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, that faced down development interests to champion what is now a new facility of 342 modern units dedicated to low and moderate income housing. Many of the former residents of the complex have had a chance to return. Tel-Hi has set aside places in all its programs for residents of North Beach Place. For example 60 percent of the slots in the center's Youth Leadership Development Program are filled by young people from the complex. Tel-Hi also runs

a teen center on-site at North Beach Place. The program offers 50 teens access to homework support, tutoring, computers, and enrichment activities after school and during the summer.

Mirroring the settlement house tradition of its roots, Tel-Hi both depends on and serves the local Community. The generosity of

neighbors, as illustrated, for instance, by the financial support locals provided at the center's May 10 fundraiser, "A Taste of Tel-Hi," helps keep the center's doors open and the impressive programs alive and growing. But Tel-Hi looks for more than donors; it encourages donor/participants. Community members volunteer in the various programs, teach classes, organize fundraising events, help in the garden and more.

In turn, the community at large makes use of the Tel-Hi facility. THD's own Planning and Zoning Committee uses the center's utility room to meet, as



Tel-Hi's Well Baby Clinic.

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The Pagoda *continued from page 24*

group that Douglas Cruickshank described “an outrageous theatrical troupe comprising gay men, women and babies who use their LSD-infused exuberance, imaginations and a gift for dressing to the nines in thrift store drag and glitter to illuminate a series of funny, flamboyant and utterly unprecedented midnight musicals.”

One attendee remembers, “As the Chinese movie goers were leaving at midnight throngs of people would gather waiting for the box office “lady” to finish decorating the box office window usually with feather boas so they could buy \$2.00 tickets to see the Cockettes.”

The Cockettes performance of a piece like “Tinsel Tarts in a Hot Coma” would be followed by campy movies. Busby Berkeley and Betty Boop cartoons were favorites.

The loose scene continued for some years. Remembers one attendee: “At a midnight movie in 1971 Bette Midler and Barry Manilow, then performing at Bimbo’s 365 Club, came in. He went to the piano on the main floor and started playing a tune, and she went on stage and yelled ‘anyone have



The Pagoda Palace Theater

COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ROOM, SF PUBLIC LIBRARY

a joint? From the balcony a shower of joints rained down, and Bette picked most all of them up.”

The Palace, then the Pagoda, then the Pagoda Palace

In 1974, in keeping with the Chinese fare featured, the theatre was renamed the Pagoda. Its wild days were somewhat behind it though one attendee remembers that “the management was pretty permissive as long as you were a paying customer. Outside food was perfectly acceptable, as was chugging 40 ounces of beer and smoking in the theater.” During these years the theater showcased Hong Kong’s new wave cinema, featuring the work of John Woo and Jackie Chan before they became international stars.

Briefly in 1986 the Renaissance Rialto theater chain took over the theater, rechristened it the Palace, refurbished the old building and opened it as a repertory house. According to Osterberg, “The first movies featured were two filmed in San Francisco: ‘The Maltese Falcon’ and ‘Dark Passage.’ They were shown at a \$10.00-a-person fundraiser to save the Grace Marchant Garden.” But soon the repertory effort failed and the theater returned to showing Chinese films. Now it was the Pagoda Palace.



The Pagoda Palace Theater

COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY ROOM, SF PUBLIC LIBRARY

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A PORT PRIMER: 2008 EDITION

By David A. Smolen

My suspicion is that if you're like me you have only a tenuous grasp of the pier numbering system in San Francisco, and even less sense of what is happening in the efforts to develop/preserve those piers. You know that Pier 39 is in the middle of the tee shirt shops of Fisherman's Wharf, visited by hordes of tourists and noisy seals. Likewise, you might be able to identify Pier 23 because you vaguely remember stopping in for a drink after a date with someone whose name you no longer remember. And if your knowledge of the San Francisco pier numbering system is on par with mine, you regularly see cruise ships berth near our fair hill, but you can't really say where, other than you're fairly certain they don't berth at the beer garden on Pier 23 or next to the seals on Pier 39.

On a quest for knowledge and to satisfy the Semaphore editor's request for a story updating the dwellers of Telegraph Hill on the negotiations surrounding Piers 27-31, I set out for answers.

First, a little background for the uninitiated. Apologies in advance to the cognoscenti among the membership of THD who are experts in waterfront issues and know the home phone number of the Executive Director of the Port Commission.

The piers of San Francisco, along with 7.5 miles of City waterfront, are overseen by the San Francisco Port Commission, which describes itself as "a public enterprise committed to promoting a balance of maritime, recreational, industrial, transportation, public access and commercial activities on a self-supporting basis through appropriate management and development of the waterfront for the benefit of the public." A five member Board of Commissioners governs the Port of San Francisco, and each Commissioner is appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the City's Board of Supervisors to serve a four-year term.

The pier numbering system resembles the seating chart of the War Memorial Opera House, where Market Street plays the dividing role of the central aisle. All piers to the left (or north) of Market Street as you approach the waterfront are odd-numbered, and all piers to the right (or south) of Market Street are even numbered.

At some point between 1849 and 1970 (roughly the time it took for leather chaps to take on a significantly different cultural meaning), the amount of shipping activity in San Francisco drastically declined. Transportation experts calculate that somewhere around April 28th, 1974, the number of cargo containers entering the Port of San Francisco was surpassed for the first time by the number of Midwestern families in shorts taking afternoon cruises to the Golden Gate Bridge. The trend has continued unabated since then, and upkeep of the piers has suffered a corresponding decline as much of the region's shipping activity moved across the bay to the Port of Oakland. At the same time, tourism replaced manufacturing and fern bars as the largest industry in San Francisco, and cruise ships took on an increasingly important role within the City's largest industry.

Today it is widely acknowledged that the current berth for cruise ships in San Francisco – Pier 35 – is crumbling and will not accommodate the cruise business entering San Francisco for much longer. A new cruise ship terminal has to be built soon, or San Francisco risks losing a significant source of tourism revenue. Complicating matters is the pesky problem that someone needs to pay for the new terminal.

Enter the developers. The general formula for financing such projects is that the Port Commission grants development rights to a property developer to build on Port of San Francisco land. The developer makes a return through the receipt of lease payments from its tenants. The development project, in turn,

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pays a lease fee to the Port Commission, and the new development generates tax revenue. The Port Commission uses the lease payments and the estimated tax receipt increment to issue a bond, which in turn pays for the development of projects such as the new cruise ship terminal.

And that's where the fun begins. If only finding a reasonable compromise between the scope of waterfront development projects and sufficient revenue generation for the Port Commission were as easy as finding a fleece for under \$10.00 on Fisherman's Wharf.

The development of Piers 27-31 has a long and controversial history dating back to the turn of the century (not the one with the Gold Rush; the one

with Starbucks and Apple Computers). This history has been covered through the years by the Semaphore, so I won't bore you with the details, other than to say that the previous developer, the Mills Corporation, crashed and burned after strong opposition to its plans and manners, and it sold its development rights to the hometown duo of Shorenstein Properties and Farallon Capital Management.

The Shorenstein group took over the remainder of Mills's exclusive right to negotiate (ERN) for Piers 27-31 in early 2006. Sixty plans, 100 pro formas, and several extensions of the ERN later, and the Shorenstein group is on the verge of presenting its latest plans for the piers before the current ERN expires on May 31, 2008.

continued on page 38

The Pagoda *continued from page 28*

In 1994, facing competition from video and because of decreased attendance following a gang shooting in the theater, the Pagoda Palace closed for good.

The End of the End

Later that year, Lam Kin Ming a Hong Kong real estate developer and garment manufacturer bought the building for a purported two million dollars. In preparation for building a shopping center, the new owner gutted the building of its art deco accoutrements, including its ticket booth and the curving staircase. A number of design plans were submitted in the following years—at least one of which was approved by the neighbors—but no development materialized.

Then in 1997 the infamous Rite-Aid controversy erupted. This was a time that drug stores and banks were looking for a home on every corner. The drug store corporation Rite-Aid was particularly interested in San Francisco. By 1997, they have established 7

SF locations and had plans for twenty more. One of these was to be a twenty four hour pharmacy on the site of the Pagoda. The neighborhood erupted in displeasure. At a community meeting—with the exception of neighborhood gadfly Richard Hanlin—there was universal opposition. The community rented a bill board to publicize its message “Rite/Aid/Wrong Place” and Rite Aid gave up its quest for the Pagoda. Although even in the end the company didn't seem to get it. A Rite Aid spokesperson commented on the company's automated prescription dispensing machines; “Our new state of the art system makes the pharmacy almost like a factory. It's almost like a conveyer belt.” Conveyer belts in North Beach? What's wrong with that picture?

So Rite Aid went away, but the saga of the Pagoda continues. More in our next issue.

June Osterberg's *North Beach Beat* stories “Theater on the Square” and “When the Cockettes Played the Palace,” provided valuable information for this piece. ❖



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Tel-Hi 118 years old *continued from page 27*

does the District 3 Democratic Club, and many other neighborhood groups. Daniels notes that the neighborhood is going to be the center of a lively supervisory election this fall. Tel-Hi, he points out would be a great place to hold a debate among the candidates—

and plans are already in the works for the Center to host a “Meet the Candidates” evening in June.

Want to know more about Tel-Hi? Contact Donna Faure, Director of Development, 415-421-6443 x 34 or donna@tel-hi.org

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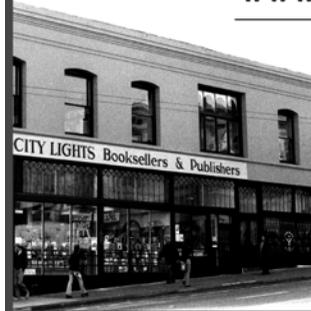
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Please join in welcoming the Tall Ships® by participating in this exciting week. We welcome you to help in:

1. Volunteer Recruitment – the Festival of Sail is looking for over 1,500 volunteers and we need assistance to spread the word.
2. Captain's Manual – we need volunteers to assist in developing the official manual sent to each visiting ship's captain explaining the logistics for the Festival of Sail on San Francisco.
3. Ship Liaisons – we need volunteers to act as ship liaisons for each of the Tall Ships who will participate in the Festival.
4. Crew Activities – we need volunteers to create fun and interesting events and activities for the visiting crews to participate in during their stay such as securing complimentary tickets to interesting places or organizing trips and events that would be interesting to the crews.
5. International Village Outreach – we need volunteers to work with local non-profits, international organizations, and community groups to increase and diversify participation in the International Village.
6. Volunteers during the Festival – we need volunteers to sell beverages to the public, to distribute timed-tickets to the public allowing access to the ships, to manage the volunteers, and to manage the areas where the ships and the villages will be located.
7. Boarding Pass Program – we need volunteers to help contact non-profit groups and get them involved with our ticket give-away program. Additionally we need volunteers to help find corporations to donate to the program. For more information on the Boarding Pass Program please visit <http://www.festivalofsail.org/boarding-pass.asp>.

Please email info@festivalofsail.org if you are able to assist with any of the above areas immediately, otherwise complete the online Volunteer Signup form by going to www.festivalofsail.org, click on EVENT INFO and then VOLUNTEER. We will contact you closer to the event.

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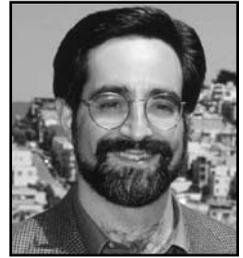
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FROM THE DESK OF SUPERVISOR PESKIN

LIGHTS OUT



floors of office buildings, hundreds of thousands of square feet brightly lit as if fully occupied.

It occurred to me then that downtown office buildings should be asked to do just what my mother always reminded me to do as a kid—turn off the light when you leave the room. When no one is working in large office buildings, the lights should not be on. In a single family home, conserving energy by turning off the lights makes fiscal sense – fewer lights means a lower energy bill. In large rented office suites in downtown buildings, it's a little more complicated. Few suites have individual electricity meters, so the cost of lighting is included in a lease and distributed across all tenants in a building on a per-square foot basis. Since commercial tenants don't see savings if they reduce their energy usage, there's less incentive for them to turn off their lights.

I have introduced legislation requiring office space downtown to turn off their lights after business hours when office space is not being used. The goal of my legislation is to raise awareness about the problem and to bring tenants and owners together to find solutions. Stakeholders have suggested that the city work to publicize incentives already available from the state to install individual meters for office suites. And others have offered that working with representatives of the cleaning industry to establish a standard practice of turning lights off after nightly cleanings could go a long way to reducing consumption.

There is no single answer to the challenge of reducing energy consumption, but I am heartened at the interest in solutions that has developed following the announcement of my legislative introduction. As always, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions on this issue.

Sometimes the most obvious things are right under your nose. I don't know about you but seeing entire floors of office space with their lights on all night has always struck me as wasteful. Some nights I find myself giving the businesses that occupy those suites the benefit of the doubt – they're probably just working late. But night after night, weekdays, weekends and holidays? Not likely.

While the hours and hours of wasted energy have always been troubling, I never thought to address the issue from a policy perspective until a constituent and fellow Hill Dweller, Peter Overmire, came to me with a series of photographs he had taken from Telegraph Hill of downtown. Shooting from the same place and looking at the same buildings, Peter took pictures of the skyline at different times of night, on different days of the week, with each picture showing dozens of



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From the Desk of Supervisor PESKIN

PUC Reform

If you live on the west side of the city, you'll have the chance to vote in four elections this year. The rest of us will have to settle for just three. Next up is the June 3rd ballot, and on it, the city will have the opportunity to bring our Public Utilities Commission (PUC) out of the dark ages with some important good government reforms. As many of you know, the PUC operates our city's unique water, power, and wastewater infrastructure. From Hetch Hetchy reservoir, to the 167 mile aqueduct that transports fresh drinking water to our city from Yosemite National Park, to our storm drain and sewer infrastructure, the PUC is arguably the single city agency that has the greatest impact on our local environment.

Despite its significance, the PUC commissioners are not required to have any expertise in the fields they are charged with overseeing. Currently, the Mayor is entitled to select commissioners with no relevant experience. Similar commissions at the regional and state level require board members to have specific qualifications at each seat. With those

bodies as models, I worked with Supervisors Sophie Maxwell, Bevan Dufty, and Sean Elsbernd to put Proposition E on the June Ballot. Proposition E would set basic experience requirements for each seat on the PUC: one seat would be reserved for each of the following: a member with experience in environmental policy, a member with experience in water systems or public utilities management, a member with experience in project finance, a ratepayer advocate, and, finally an at-large member of the public.

Consistent with efforts I have supported to reform the Board of Appeals, Planning Commission, and the Municipal Transportation Agency, Proposition E would require Board of Supervisors confirmation of nominees for the PUC to certify their qualification for their seat.

The challenges facing the PUC are too great for anything less than professional and experienced commission. The practice of requiring minimum qualifications for appointments is a reform measure proven to professionalize agencies and increase efficiency.

I hope you will join me in supporting Proposition E on the June 3rd ballot.



SF Skyline after midnight

POINT & SHOOT PHOTO BY PETER OVERMIRE

For details on the proposal, I met with Tom Hart, Executive Vice President of Shorenstein, at his 555 California Street office overlooking the proposed development site. According to Hart, the plan has not been finalized, but in concept it calls for locating the cruise ship terminal on Pier 27 and moving the office and retail development to Piers 30-32, which are located on the Embarcadero approximately a quarter mile south of the Bay Bridge.

Pier 27 remains the strongest option for the location of the cruise ship terminal, according to Hart, because it is the longest pier and would require the least amount of capital to refurbish. Although not finalized, the Shorenstein group's proposal tentatively includes plans to remove the portion of Pier 27 closest to the Embarcadero and replace it with a waterfront plaza. According to Hart, the scale of the development of the cruise ship terminal and plaza on Pier 27 would depend on the size of the tax increment the office and retail project would generate. The financial plan has not been completed, but Hart intimated that it could be in excess of \$50 million.

On Piers 30-32, meanwhile, the Shorenstein group would scale down the development plans that have already been approved by the Port Commission for the Lend Lease Corporation, the previous development group to submit a proposal for the piers. The Lend Lease plans have been approved for 450,000 square feet of non-trust use and include a cruise ship terminal. The Shorenstein plan would bring the

amount of development to closer to 300,000 square feet and would include a terminal that Hart characterized as a "tertiary berth". The office space would be located at the far end of the piers, with the length of the pier turned into what Hart described as a "big open park".

Hart emphasized that the plan has not been completed, and that when it is, the Shorenstein group will vet it publicly. And no one will be more interested than the Telegraph Hill Dwellers to see the specifics.

A rendering of the Shorenstein plan can be found on the THD website.

THD BOARD MOTIONS

FOR THE MONTHS OF JAN.-MARCH. 2008

JANUARY, 2008

MOTION: To approve Greg Chiampou, Vedica Puri and Termeh Yeghiazarian to serve on the 2008-2009 Nominating Committee. **The Motion passed.**

FEBRUARY, 2008

MOTION: To approve Gerry Crowley in the open position on the Nominating Committee. **The Motion passed.**

MOTION: Approve a \$2800 order of THD t-shirts, new zipper-hooded sweatshirts, and enough non-zipper-hooded sweat to cover existing requests. **The Motion passed.**

MARCH, 2008

MOTION: THD will support legislation as described by Supervisor Sandoval to impose monetary penalties for violations of the San Francisco Planning code by writing a letter to the Land Use Committee of the Board of Supervisors. **The Motion passed.**



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

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

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

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

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

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

ARCHIVIST: Rozell Overmire, rozell@ureach.com

SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

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

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

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

LIAISONS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

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

WEB SITE = www.thd.org

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

THD CALENDAR

SCHEDULES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

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