

CVIA NEWS

COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Volume XVI

SERVING RESIDENTS OF THE GREATER HAIGHT ASHBURY

August 2003



CVIA SUMMER SOCIAL FOR MEMBERS ONLY



*Election of officers and silent auction
Time to meet your neighbors at a potluck luncheon*

Saturday, August 16, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

628 Ashbury Street (between Waller and Haight)

Please bring a dish for six, corresponding to the first letter of your last name

A-G hors d'oeuvres H-P salad Q-Z dessert

Sausages, beer, wine and soft drinks will be provided.

If you plan to attend, please leave a message at 864-4139 or CVIASF@aol.com

“Not Progressive Enough,” Says Supervisor Gonzalez

Ed. note: When district elections were reestablished in 2000, the greater Haight Ashbury was put in District 5, along with, most notably, the Western Addition. Former public defender Matt Gonzalez was elected supervisor. Knowing that this area was home to dozens of neighborhood groups, CVIA and others formed an organization that would bring them under one umbrella, hence, “5Together,” a nonpartisan information clearing house was established. According to the secretary’s minutes, Supervisor Gonzalez agreed to make every other monthly meeting a “town hall” in which he would be available to answer questions. The following is a letter written to 5Together members by its current president, Jay Bagi.

A few months ago 5Together made a decision to have a “Meet the Supervisor” meeting on a bimonthly basis where our groups and constituents at large could meet with Matt Gonzalez directly to discuss district concerns as well as actions coming before the board.

Sadly, Matt’s participation has not been what we expected. I called administrative aide Mary Ann Love on Thursday (the day after he failed to show up at the July 9 meeting) to set up a meeting so that we could reconcile what seemed to me to be a lack of coordination both on our part and Matt’s office and perhaps a misunderstanding of what it was we were looking for in terms of participation.



District 5’s Matt Gonzalez is president of the Board of Supervisors.

Instead of hearing back from Mary Ann, I got a call from Matt, who was plainly irritated with us. He asked what the problem was at

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Major Density Changes Proposed for Neighborhoods

The appearance and livability of San Francisco neighborhoods is under attack again. This time, it’s bad. Proposed amendments to the Planning Code and new ordinances would raise height limits from 40 to 80 or more feet along streets that carry major public transportation lines, so-called “Transit Corridors.” The inevitable result of such changes—density, increased traffic, parking problems, shade, and the wind tunneling effect of high buildings is bad enough, but it doesn’t stop there. Second units would be allowed in residences located within 1250 feet of a “corridor” with no additional parking required. In San Francisco where the average lot frontage is 25 feet, 1250 feet translates into 50 house frontages, or two to three blocks on each side of a “corridor.” The “thinking” behind that? People near transit lines will have few or no cars.

The legislation that would make these changes is not in a single document. Already, the proposed amendment to the city’s Housing Element of the General Plan has been heard before the Board of Supervisors. Three ordinances that authorize construction along transit corridors and the addition of second units are now before the Planning Commission and will be heard again this month. The sec-

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the meeting and I expressed to him that the consensus of the group was:

- Disappointment in his absence.
- The feeling that neighborhood groups were being left out of the deliberative process and that he seemed to give more credence to the activist organizations and single issue advocates than to the constituents of District 5.
- The lack of balance in the guest presenters his office brought in.
- The lack of preparation on the part of his staff in considering all sides of the issue, if only to discount alternative viewpoints.
- The futility of bringing to us issues that have already been decided behind closed doors without giving us a chance to participate in the development of policy.

Matt was not happy to hear that. He first took issue with how his staff had been treated at the meeting. I guess we're to blame because they could not anticipate that we might take exception not only to the particulars of the issues at hand but the slanted process in which they were developed. Matt is familiar enough with our meetings to know that when we address a topic, we go to great lengths to bring people from both sides of the issue. It's a pity he doesn't know how to do the same.

Matt also took exception to the notion that he does not listen to the constituency of District 5, letting me know that he was "highly offended" by the charge. He said he takes in 50-plus hours of public testimony a year (at hearings largely dominated by single issue advocates). Furthermore, as far as he was concerned, 5Together did not represent the true composition of the electorate in District 5. He said the district is far more progressive than the conservatives who make up 5Together—so progressive in fact that *he* would be considered a conservative. He cited the voting pattern on progressive ballot initiatives over the last the election cycles to substantiate this. Sadly, I was not quick enough on the pick up to point out that over all, progressive initiatives have lost city wide, and it is only in pockets of District 5 that such measures enjoyed a popular percentage.



Jay Bagi, board member of the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC) is president of 5Together.

He then went into the landlord vs. tenant polemic, about how property owners expect to recoup their mortgage, insurance and tax in addition to providing a return. (On rental housing.)

As for his agreement to a bimonthly district "meet the supervisor," he said that was flat out "nuts," a misunderstanding on our part, and that he would never agree to something like that. He goes to too many meetings already.

Bottom line, 5Together holds no truck with him. It is not representative of the district. It is conservative. He would rather work directly with individual neighborhood groups. He does not have to "check in" with 5Together on how to vote, he does not need our approval and he wasn't elected to vote the way we tell him to.

Now, we can get into a long argument into who more closely represents the "true" concerns of residents in the district, Matt or us. We can get into a philosophical discussion over whether being "progressive" obligates one to blindly adopt any and all "progressive initiatives" our leaders force down our throats, regardless of how ill-considered.

The real issue is whether or not as constituent and residents we will be treated as legitimate stakeholders who have a right to be heard, or disregarded because we fail to meet some ideological litmus test.

Matt chooses to disregard us. That's fine. Our existence as an organization is not dependent on Matt's approval, though his might be dependent on ours. I think it is time to accept the relationship for "what it is," as Matt would say, and move on.

From this point on, we are going to go back to basics which means scrapping the "meet the supervisor" format. It was a good experiment, worth trying, but it didn't work out. Now that it is abundantly clear where we stand with relation to our supervisor, it is incumbent upon us to redouble our efforts and our commitment as an organization to come together to address the concerns that our supervisor will not.

—Jay Bagi, President, 5Together

Note: Any member of CVIA is welcome to attend 5Together meetings on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the community room of Northern Police Station at Turk and Fillmore. Public transit: 22 Fillmore and Geary Lines. Free parking in adjoining lot.

Major Density Changes—Continued from Page 1

ond unit ordinance, introduced by Supervisor Aaron Peskin, is being challenged by the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods (of which CVIA is a member) and others, on the grounds that such vast changes require an Environmental Impact Report under CEQA.

Whether you agree that these changes should be adopted or not, it is important that San Franciscans, especially those in the ar-



Because both Haight and Carl streets are designated as "transit corridors," adjoining neighborhoods would be subject to rezoning.

reas where the housing is to be increased, are made aware of these proposals and given an opportunity to be heard. If this is the first time you have heard of these changes, please write or fax Gloria Young, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. Tell her just that. Ask her to distribute your fax or letter to all the members of the Board. Let her and our supervisors know that these proposals have come as a surprise to you, and that you want them debated and examined after *citywide notification*. Letters to Ms. Young can be sent to City Hall, Room 244, San Francisco, 94102. The fax number is 554-5163. This will give necessary support to community spokespersons who will demand that the Board of Supervisors require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report before they go any further. The impact of these changes must be fairly evaluated and publicly debated before the livability of the city changes forever. Please do it today.

—Beatrice C. Laws

See CVIA's response to the Housing Element document in a letter to the Planning Commission on Page 7.

Vacancies Forecast Change

We all know there's an economic downturn, but, oddly enough, each of these businesses seem to be shutting its door for a different reason. Haight residents have to be a little wary of national chains taking advantage of all this empty retail space in our vibrant neighborhood. (Now, if only we'd attract a bank or a copy shop.)



Rustic: *Gone!*



Manhattan Bagel: *Gone!*



Something Else: *Gone!*



Solo Mia: *Missing!*



Black Flys: *Gone!*



Hoy's Sports: *Going!*



Gary's Cleaners: *Gone!*

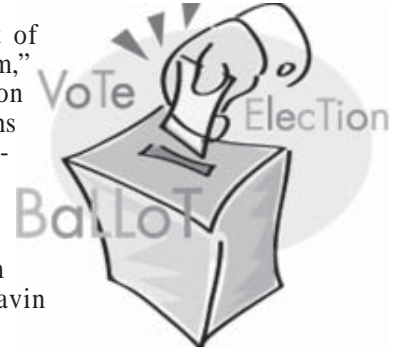


Setana Sport: *Gone!*

Michael Krasny to Moderate Mayoral Debate in District

An important debate between mayoral candidates will take place on September 3. Together, the District 5 coalition of neighborhood and merchant associations, is hosting the event at Cole Hall Auditorium, UCSF Medical Sciences Building, 513 Parnassus Avenue, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Michael Krasny, host of KQED radio's popular "Forum," will keep the candidates on course as they tackle questions regarding the state of city government and what lies ahead. All five major candidates have confirmed that they will be there: Angela Alioto, Tom Ammann, Susan Leal, Gavin Newsom and Tony Ribera.



Muni lines 43 and 6 go to the front door or take the N-Judah to 2nd and Irving and ride the elevator up to level J. Parking is available for \$2.50 per hour at the UCSF garage.

It's very important that CVIA members attend. We must show the candidates that the greater Haight is made up of responsible families, homeowners and politically active citizens. Put September 3 on your calendar now.

*Joan Downey
CVIA President*

Progress Report: Working to Improve the SF Police Web Site

Richard Magary from the Buena Vista Neighborhood Association and I met with Deputy Chief Heather Fong and three of her staff on July 3 to discuss how to improve the SFPD's Web site. We outlined the basic goals and steps in the project and reached agreement on how to begin involving more citizens. We also discussed the site's need to provide more multilingual access.

The next step is defining what the new site should do and how it should look. To do this we need to look at other Web sites and to survey San Franciscans about what they want from a police Web site. We'll be gathering this information in several ways and you can help.

Go to the Web site (www.ci.sf.ca.us/police/) and jot down what does or doesn't work. Send us your comments by fax or e-mail.

If you have ideas for questions for an online/printed survey form about improving the SFPD Web site, send us those too. The police department project staff will then put up a survey form (based on this initial feedback) on the Web site. Community groups can then put a link to the survey on *their* sites, as well as distribute the survey forms to their members.

Once we've gathered a wide range of suggestions, we can begin redesigning the police Web page based on a better knowledge of user needs, both citizen and departmental. So let us hear what you think the new site should do. We'll keep you posted on further meetings. City Hub Neighborhood Alliance: Tel/Fax 255-2157, sfhubneighbors@sbcglobal.net

—Edward B. Goehring

Sweet on Haight

Children played in the street without their parents concern. Two little girls inhaled the scents of fresh bread and famous "wine tarts" wafting from the bakery. They skipped off to the candy store for a homemade coconut-caramel cluster and then skedaddled to the "kiddie matinee" where an opera singer was the opening act.

Though Frances Hagan loves to read, this description is no piece of fiction. This was a slice of reality for the longtime member of the Cole Valley Improvement Association: a snapshot of her neighborhood from many moons ago. Frances has lived on Shrader Street, between Haight and Page, for the past *nine decades*. Never has she



Frances and Raymond Hagan were married on September 13, 1941, shortly before he left to fight in World War II. Frances wore the same hat (as shown above) on their golden wedding anniversary.

desired to leave. "My father thought of selling this house once when I was a child and I'm glad he didn't. I love this place." That's not to say that her peachy neighborhood hasn't endured a few bruises. She says it's definitely improving greatly as owners are restoring property and caring more about their surroundings.

The sixties presented challenging times for Haight Ashbury homeowners. Rampant drug use and clamorous music that played into the wee hours affected everyone within hearing distance. Frances couldn't feel safe walking around even though she philosophically agreed with protests denouncing the Vietnam War.

One time a man yelled at Frances when she was routinely sitting by a window in her home. He made threats and accused her of spying. He was paranoid. She was scared. So she called the police. The next day the FBI raided the man's apartment and found all sorts of explosives in his refrigerator. Street dwellers have been the prob-

lem these days. "I hated to put up that gate," she says, referring to the metal caging in front of her house. Ten years ago, though, Frances had to do something to counteract vagrants who were urinating on her porch.

The neighborhood has gone through several transformations in the 92-year-old's lifetime. Her favorite rendering included numerous bakeries, several candy stores and millinerries. In the early '40s when hat and corset shops were in vogue, Frances, like many women of the time, wore white gloves and looked forward to shopping for two hats each year: one for Easter and the other, a winter hat, for Christmas.

These days Frances finds grand pleasures at the Booksmith on Haight Street. She bought six novels there just the other day. She likes all kinds of books—historical, romantic and sleazy, "especially sleazy," she says with a devious smile.

Frances never saw much reason to travel. She has thoroughly enjoyed playing tennis in the park where she met her husband and visiting the library around the corner on Page Street. She never missed a movie as a child and it was always a family affair. "We would take up a whole aisle practically," in what was then called the Haight Theater.

She can hardly believe how people complain about chains moving into the neighborhood. Many chain stores have set up shop on Haight Street throughout its history including banks, pharmacies and others such as Woolworth's. They weren't considered evil empires. In fact she wishes a pharmacy were located closer to her residence, chain or not.

In 1912 Frances' father and close relatives pitched in to buy the family home for around \$7,000. The patriarch, a civil engineer for the City of San Francisco, once earned a gold medal for his work on the Twin Peaks tunnel. With all her roots, Frances wouldn't leave this neighborhood for the world. "I couldn't have better neighbors, either. They are lovely." And while most people her age don't like birthdays, Frances asserts, "I think they're a gift."

—Christopher Read

Upcoming G.G. Park Events

Park District Station's Captain Dan Lawson assures us that he and his staff are working closely with Rec. and Park to monitor the sound and general impact on the community by the summer events in Golden Gate Park listed below. Call or e-mail him if you have any concerns. He can be reached at daniel_lawson@ci.sf.ca.us or 242-3000.

- August 10 - Festival of the Chariots (approx. 3,000 people)
- August 30-31 A la Carte a la Park *unconfirmed* (approx. 35,000)
- September 7 - Opera in the Park (approx. 12,500)
- September 14 - Comedy Day (approx. 5,000)
- September 21- KLIC-FM Alice Radio Station "Now & Zen Music Concert" gated event (approx. 12,500)
- September 27 - Alpha Pregnancy March (approx. 300)
- October 4-5 - Reggae in the Park *unconfirmed* (approx. 20,000)
- October 12 - Self workout in the Park Women's Fitness Fair (approx. 1,000)
- October 26 - Pet Pride Day in G.G.P. (approx. 200)



Would you like a copy of this newsletter sent to a neighbor? Leave the name and address at CVIASF@aol.com or 431-1414 and consider it done.

San Francisco's Natural Areas Program: Two Points of View

Why Have Natural Areas in the City?

First: It's universally recognized in the scientific community that there's a unique ecosystem with unique species and relationships of plants and animals, from San Bruno Mountain to the Marin Headlands.

Second: The California native landscape is fantastically beautiful. Its visually unique, multi-hued, undulating masses shade the ground assisting in water retention during summer. In its fully established state the native landscape is evolutionarily capable of withstanding the long rainless periods of our Mediterranean climate.

There are a few areas of San Bruno Mountain that seem to have been almost untouched and appear as fully intact native landscape.

These give a glimpse of the possibilities of restoration efforts.

What can be achieved and what is already happening in the city's Natural Areas is turning s u m m e r - scorched fields and slopes of



Tank Hill's wide variety of native species is the result of thousands of hours of volunteer labor.

noxious burr and sticker infested weeds, unfit for human, pet or wild animal into fields and slopes of year-round wildflowers, fruits and greenery of diverse, multifaceted plant life. It is invasive weeds that create the at-first golden, then burnt-brown of our hillsides: hillsides stripped bare by past fire and cattle grazing.

Amazingly, in the city there are remnants of our native landscape, some more intact than in many rural areas perhaps because cattle grazing and burning in the city ceased as a practice much earlier. While most of the city's remnants are in areas that were never developed, predominantly hilltops or areas set aside as park land long ago, there are even rare natives such as the Mariposa Lily that have reappeared on abandoned sites giving evidence of the endurance of the seed bank of native plants.

It's regarded that eucalyptus, while providing habitat for some species, is actually detrimental to others, while also being a high fire hazard. There are so many fire resistive trees native to the city or to areas very close, that it's folly to perpetuate our single species eucalyptus groves. Instead, they could gradually be replaced with a diverse array of trees such as oak, fir, laurel, maple, alder, redwood, madrone and others, all native to, or within 20 miles of, the city. These could be planted along with native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers, simulating the mosaic that occurs in nature and providing an environment much more useful and enjoyable by wildlife and humans alike.

Some question the possibility of wildlife habitat in the city: that small areas cannot be viable. But, this isn't yet known. Habitat restoration, especially in the urban context, is quite new. Our small remnants have held on. We shouldn't let them be lost without making an effort to revive their completeness. Their seed banks and associated animal life will endure for only so long. Once they're gone they'll be gone forever. Our scattered areas can grow closer together and start acting in unison if property-owners become active participants in their own yards by planting natives.

—Jim Houillion, volunteer
Natural Areas Program

A Realistic Natural Areas Program?

Most San Franciscans want a successful Natural Areas Program. To be successful the NAP must be realistic and must be supported by the public. A fantasy vision of a nature that never existed does not further that goal.

Natural San Francisco was primarily sand dunes, dune scrub, and annual grasslands. It was never characterized by, "year-round wildflowers, fruits and greenery." Early explorers described San Francisco. George Vancouver in 1792 reported, "The sides of hills seemed barren or nearly so; and their summits were composed of naked uneven rocks." Otto von Kotzebue in 1815 said, "The country in autumn exhibits only the prospect of bare scorched tracts, alternating with poor stunted bushes, and in places with dazzling wastes of drift sand." Nineteenth century photographs confirm these descriptions.

San Francisco was naturally brown in summer. Annual grasses, whether native or non-native, sprout in the spring, flower, go to seed, and die. San Francisco's ecosystem is greener now than 300 years ago, with more species, including new birds, trees, and year-round butterflies. Wildlife has adapted; natives and non-natives coexist.

"Trees were not a conspicuous component of the (natural San Francisco) landscape," says the Natural Areas Management Plan. "Scrubby coast live oak and dwarf California buckeye," were very localized. Now San Franciscans enjoy many fine Monterey cypress and Monterey pines in their parks, but they are "non-native" and the plan proposes to remove them from many Natural Areas. Firs and redwoods are also not native to San Francisco, and will not be planted by the Natural Areas Program. Oaks, maples, alders, and laurels grew in sheltered areas and will not thrive on our rocky, windblown hills. San Franciscans can have stately trees or they can have natives-it's a stark choice.

If the Natural Areas Program were preserving remnants of native vegetation, there would be little controversy. In fact NAP claims many parks where there is virtually no native vegetation. It is the "restorations" that are controversial.

Readers can visit a restoration at Parcel 4 on Ocean Beach at Balboa Street. Here \$48,000 of sand was trucked in to "restore" a highly altered



lot that had previously been built on. It is now a totally artificial, constructed site. There are no trees. Readers can also visit Pine Lake in the Sunset District, where there is little native vegetation. Non-native plants ("invasive weeds") thrive in a lovely, diverse, luxuriant display of vegetation. The tall trees have not yet been removed. It looks very natural. After three consecutive years of planting, fencing, and weeding the same area, few planted "native plants" survive.

The Natural Areas Program should clearly tell the neighbors of each San Francisco park just what changes they intend to make. The public should be allowed to decide what kind of parks they use and pay for. If the public prefers to keep green grass and tall trees, so be it.

—Keith McAllister

KENNETH E. WHELAN
1932 - 2003

Kenneth E. Whelan passed away after a long and spirited battle with pancreatic cancer at his home in Cole Valley on June 9. He was 71 years old.

Whelan was a self-taught man of letters who lived a unique and inspiring life that began in Philadelphia in a Salvation Army founding hospital and ended in his Belvedere Street flat which had become a magnet for neighborhood intellectuals. He is survived by a large community of artists and scholars around the country, and in some cases, the world, who considered him both a father and a brother.

Whelan was one of the founding members of the legendary San Quentin Drama Workshop, an inmate-run theatre company formed in the late '50s in California's oldest and best known prison.

The company, which was greatly influenced by the work of Samuel Beckett, performed over 35 plays during a ten-year period. It was the subject of the 1987 film "Weeds," starring Nick Nolte and William Forsythe. The film was loosely based on the experiences of the inmate director and his actors.

While in San Quentin, Whelan directed "Waiting For Godot," "Krapp's Last Tape" and "Out To Sea." He also acted in Beckett's "End Game," O'Neill's "The Ice Man Cometh" and Harold Pinter's "The Caretaker."

Once out of prison, Whelan and other SQDW "graduates" went on to start the Barbed Wire Theatre, a drama group which traveled around the world performing, among other plays, the world-famous prison drama "The Cage" written by another former inmate and theatre founder Rick Cluchey.

In addition to acting and directing, Whelan wrote several plays including "The Ballad of Dangerous George," performed at San Francisco's Artists Enterprise Theatre and "Men and Birds with Words—Requiem In Three Parts," performed by the Corner Space in New York.

After spending fifteen of his adult years in prison for armed robbery offenses, Whelan went on to master the works of ancient and contemporary philosophers and to pursue a life of scholarly study. In the mid '70s, he cultivated a loyal following in lower Manhattan underground intellectual circles and most recently in Cole Valley, where he lived since the early '90s.

Whelan had been working on a memoir entitled: "Go Figure: The Memoirs of A Liar and a Thief," which recounted his youth and his later "struggle to discover something of the truth of things."

His transformation from prison inmate to self-taught man-of-letters made him both admired and adored by the dozens of artists and intellectuals he influenced.

His oldest friend, San Francisco resident Clayton C. Barbeau, recalls Whelan's frequent mention of the years in which this transformation took form: "He knew there was more to life than this. And he started to realize that if you really wanted to live the optimal life, it didn't have a lot to do with external stuff. It really had to do with what went on inside of you."

Whelan told many that during his stint in prison, he pursued a job in the chaplain's office because that was where the books were.

In the early '90s, Whelan began studying classic Greek and became a fan of philosopher Eric Voegelin. In 1996, he helped Stan-

ford University's Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, organize the Eric Voegelin papers, acquired after the death of Voegelin's widow.

From the '90s on he held salon-like gatherings at Cole Valley's Reverie Café. He formed his own discussion group playfully referred to as The Peripatetic Porch and encouraged several young intellectuals to form a group that gathered weekly to study the works of Plato and Aristotle and, eventually, classic Greek.

Those of us who knew him well frequently referred to him as the best-read person we knew, a critical thinker and deep intellectual whose *cri de coeur* was "substance over style." He wrote and spoke frequently about the crises in American education and the importance of returning to the classics.

Marianne Hesse, a member of the CVIA board, shared her Cole Valley home with Whelan for over a dozen years. "I feel as though nobody ever plumbed the depths of his knowledge. He gave me a headache, has was so smart," said Hesse.

He was also the possessor of a wry spirit and a quick wit. He found humor in the darkest of places, making fun, for example, of the way his cancer operations had robbed him of his sizable girth.

Whelan spent his last days at home where dozens of friends and colleagues gathered to say goodbye.

Shortly after his death, during the filling out of a form from the mortuary, silence filled the room when the question of Ken's occupation came up.

One friend suggested "intellectual gadfly." Another offered up "urban shaman."

Another suggested "man of letters." But the suggestion that got the most chuckles was "nag," a reference to the extraordinary influence Ken had on us, the scholars, artists and writers—young and old—who sought him out.

"He had a wonderful talent for helping people see what they had to offer and encouraging them to pursue their goals," says Barbeau.

Shortly before his death, when one of Ken's friends, an American painter living in France, called to ask how he was doing, a bed-ridden and rapidly weakening Whelan replied, "Soon, I will be speaking to you from a better place."

The words were indicative of a quiet optimism that marked his life. Ken was an independent thinker who accepted little at face value, yet he had great faith in the transforming power of the examined life. For those of us who loved him, he was often a much needed reminder that what mattered most was not the job, the money or the fame, but the dogged pursuit of one's true passion and, of course, the willingness to grow.

We will all miss his unique and extraordinary presence, but there is no question that in our daily work, his rich soul will live on.

A memorial mass for Whelan was held on July 26 at St. Agnes Church followed by receptions at the homes of Marianne Hesse and Leah and Ted Loewenberg.

—Kyle Spencer



An unpretentious intellectual, Whelan was always among friends at the Reverie Cafe.

CVIA Board Reacts to City's Plan to Solve "Housing Crisis" by Increasing Neighborhood Density

The following letter criticizing the Housing Element was sent by the CVIA Board to the president of the San Francisco Planning Commission on June 5.

Dear Commissioner Bradford-Bell:

You and your colleagues have an opportunity to do something now to prevent the devastation of our city's oldest, most vulnerable neighborhoods.

The Residential Housing Element is an honest and forward-looking attempt to lay the groundwork for San Francisco in the 21st century. Much of what it suggests is sound. But there are, unfortunately, several aspects that are not. If followed, they will have long ranging deleterious consequences.

Based on statistics that are no longer valid for needs already met, the plan proposes to radically change the very same neighborhoods that give San Francisco its unique character. Are we really due for a population increase? That's what they thought in 1950 when the population was more than it is today.

Increasing density within 1250 foot wide "transit corridors" may be a good idea in areas being developed but, alas, not on streets where lifestyle and transportation needs have long ago achieved an equilibrium. We refer particularly to Haight Street in the Haight Ashbury where the sidewalks are already hard to navigate through crowds of tourists on weekends and where parking is nonexistent.

There are a string of different small neighborhoods further east along Haight Street (most notably the Fillmore and Hayes Valley) in which increased density will also translate into a denigration of community life. More people, more traffic, fewer parking spaces, more demand on transit, police and DPW services, not to mention unsightly building additions will change both the visual character and the "feeling" of the neighborhood.

There are other flaws in the plan. We site particularly Section 1.2 which refers to removing "impediments" to the production of housing in neighborhood commercial districts. What are these impediments that you will be removing? And later in the same section, just what is meant by revising height, bulk and density standards? How can you do this while also respecting Prop M?

Section 1.8 and 4.4 advocate relaxation of parking requirements for units built under the new higher density standards, be they secondary units, affordable units or transit corridor bonus units. Although we are supporters of the city's "transit first" policy, we do not believe that simply living along transit routes will result in the voluntary forfeiture of car ownership. There must be strong car ownership controls in place before higher density allowances are established. We suggest a stipulation that those transit corridor neighborhoods must already have residential parking designations in place and that occupants of those new units be prohibited from obtaining a permit.

Section 2.6 recommends legalization of existing secondary units. This is simply authorizing "spot zoning" for no reason. Why should those who have violated the city's zoning laws be rewarded? And why cause people now enjoying the lower rents

these illegal units provide to suddenly be displaced or inconvenienced during the process of bringing the units up to code?

In Section 5.1 the plan describes "streamline approval" for so-called affordable housing. What consists of "streamline approval?" What current obligations would be waived?

Then there are the host of measures that have somehow found their way into the document that perpetuate failed policies of the past and force private property owners to bear the burden of providing for low income residents when this is clearly the responsibility of all San Franciscans through taxation.

We refer particularly to Section 2.5 which preserves residential hotels; Section 2.2 which controls the merger of residential units; Section 2.3 which "restricts the conversion of rental housing to other forms of tenure or occupancy"; Section 6.1 which constructs impediments to owners who have fulfilled their obligation of supplying subsidized housing for 20 years to terminate that service.

Many of the incentives for the building of affordable housing are sound. But affordable housing without guarantees as to the benefits to the city are simply wishful thinking. There needs to be a priority established for occupancy. First choice should go to city employees whose income falls within the eligibility range, followed by people who hold jobs within the city limits. No preference should go to nonprofit developers, but rather whoever can produce the highest quality housing at the lowest cost. As stated above, no buildings without parking should be approved until the car-ownership controls are firmly in place.

Many of us have lived through the implementation of well-meant housing reforms that had unintended consequences. We ask you to concentrate on the development of transit-friendly high density housing along the Third Street corridor, the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and Mission Bay and to leave be the neighborhoods already suffering from excess density.

With respect and appreciation for your commitment to this city,

Board of Directors
Cole Valley Improvement Association

Cole Street Fair

On October 19 the Cole Valley merchants will be hosting a street fair on Cole Street from Parnassus to Frederick. There will be local artists, food, and musicians. If you would like to volunteer for a safety committee or express any concerns about the fair, contact Lori Elder at The Shop, 113 Carl St. (at Cole). Telephone 661-7467, or e-mail art@theshopsf.com or colevalfestival@yahoo.com.



CVIA Board Actions

The following is a summary of what took place at CVIA board meetings the last two months.

Those wishing to bring a neighborhood issue before the board are welcome to do so. Meetings occur the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the home of a member. Call 362-0870 for location.

June

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to 5Together and the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods.
- Approved welcome packets created by Nancy Corsaut and designated her to head the new "Community Relations" committee.
- Discussed SPUR's protracted article on the future of Golden Gate Park.
- Agreed to pay one-third of the cost of the Buena Vista Park jazz event (\$179.37).

July

- Reviewed last meeting's resolutions, discussed current Haight issues, heard reports from committee heads and from delegates to 5Together and the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods.
- Motion passed to nominate long time board member Douglas Hall for president to succeed Joan Downey and be voted on by the membership at the annual meeting, August 16.
- Discussed topics of questions for candidates appearing at 5Together's forum on September 3 at Cole Hall (UCSF - 513 Parnassus).
- Agreed on points to be contested in the Planning Department's second draft Housing Element and passed motion to send letter to Planning Commission.
- Discussed further plans for the Cole Street Fair on October 19.

CVIA Executive Board Members: Chuck Canepa, Nancy Corsaut, David Crommie, Karen Crommie, Joan Downey, Lena Emery, Carole Glosenger, Douglas Hall, Marianne Hesse, Richard Shadoian.

CVIA Elections Coming Up

At our annual Summer Social on August 16, we'll be asking for a vote of approval for the following slate of candidates for the CVIA Board:

Douglas Hall – President
Richard Shadoian – Vice president
Marianne Hesse – Treasurer

Anyone with a desire to actively participate in improving the neighborhood who has been a member for a year, is eligible to join the CVIA board of directors. You can find out more by attending the board meetings held on the first Monday of every month (excepting September and December) at the home of a member. Call 362-0870 to learn the location for the October meeting.

Captain Dan Lawson Says:

"Everyday I speak to people in the district who don't want to bother us when they see something suspicious. Please call 553-0123 with a non-emergency message or 911 in an emergency. Then call or e-mail me (daniel_lawson@ci.sf.ca.us) the next day if you have any questions or concerns. This helps us stay on top of all issues within the district." (Park Police Station's telephone number is 242-3000.)

Bravery Lauded at Haight's Police Commission Meeting

The police commission's annual meeting in the Haight was the occasion of a moving tribute to a young couple who intercepted the



The SFPD command staff and commissioners rise to honor the Haight's Good Samaritans at the Police Commission's annual meeting at the Park Branch library in May.

mugging of a neighbor on Baker St. last year. A dignified middle aged man was returning home from work and had just parked his car when he was assaulted by a youth in a hooded sweat shirt. The resident was brutally beaten.

Nathaniel Wood heard the struggle and immediately ran out of his house barefoot and tackled the mugger, pulling him off the victim. While they were struggling, Wood's girlfriend entered into the fray, jumping on the assailant's back. It was a selfless act on both their parts. The victim, a shy man who did not give his name, recounted his ordeal to the crowd with some difficulty and beamed when Wood was presented a commendation by the Police Department. By the way, the mugger, who had a long list of prior arrests was convicted and jailed.

—Karen Crommie

Save Those Last Thursday Nights

Captain Dan Lawson holds community meetings on the last Thursday of every month. He and his staff review criminal activity, park events and the general safety concerns of residents. Plan to attend each month from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Park Police Station, 1899 Waller St. at Stanyan.

August 28, September 25, October 30

Call Sgt. Mark Porto for details: 242-3032



Fitness Hike

Join noted fitness expert E.A. Morgan for a 90-minute "West End Fitness Hike," on Saturday, August 23, beginning at 8:30 a.m. What an opportunity to combine a true workout with the beauty of the west end of Golden Gate Park. For more information on the free event, call 750-5105 or the Friends of Rec and Park's 24-hour hotline at 263-0991.

100-Year-Old Trees in Music Concourse Threatened

The Golden Gate Park Concourse Authority is considering a proposal to cut down many of the historic trees in the Music Concourse Bowl. The plans show rows of trees removed from the Band Shell back to the first fountain. Most of these trees were planted for the opening of the Band Shell. These trees are over 100 years old.

The Concourse Authority has stated at various times that “only” three to seven trees would be cut; however, the design drawing indicates that many more will be removed. In addition, instead of re-planting as is planned in the rest of the Concourse, this area will remain bare – no trees, no shade, no shelter.

The Music Concourse and its trees are part of every San Franciscan’s heritage. They provide shade needed by elderly people



Landscape architects ask that the plane trees of the Concourse be considered part of a legacy worth preserving.

and children during the summer and fall. They also help to control the wind in the bowl. Most of us have listened to a band concert, practiced Tai Chi or just enjoyed a quiet moment under their magnificent canopy.

The formal tree grid and the pruning, or pollarding, of the trees are an integral part of the overall historic Concourse design. The removal of any of these trees undermines the design concept by altering the formal grid. It also introduces the idea that tree removal is acceptable for convenience and clears the way for removal of more trees in the future. What will be the future response when a performance group asks to remove “just a few more trees” for the benefit of their sightlines?

When Proposition J (Concourse garage) was voted on, proponents told the public that no trees would be cut down. Now we are being told that the trees must go in order to “renovate” this area.

These trees must be preserved now and protected from the coming construction. They are part of the heritage of all San Franciscans. Without your support, they *will* be cut down. Once they are gone, there is nothing that can replace them for another 100 years.

Help us save the trees. Call or e-mail us, and we will let you know about upcoming public meetings where you can express your opposition to this plan. Call one of the numbers below or e-mail us at musicconcourse@earthlink.net

Margaret Mori, Landscape Architect, ASLA (American Society of Landscape Architects), Historic Preservation Group, National Chair (665-6197).

Katherine Howard, Landscape Architect, ASLA Historic Preservation Group member (668-8854).

Priority: Clean Streets

Most of the city’s streets get cleaned every week but many of the streets in the greater Haight Ashbury are only cleaned once a month— some are never cleaned. The people who store their cars on the street object to moving them every week to make way for the cleaners, which leaves the rest of us with dirty streets and grit that coats our window sills. To change monthly street cleaning to weekly service, each block needs a majority of the residents and/or owners to petition the Department of Public Works to make the change. DPW also needs contiguous blocks to be on the same schedule. If you’re interested in collecting signatures for your block, contact CVIA at cviasf@aol.com and we’ll provide you with a petition for your block and coordinate the effort.

—Joan Downey

Conservatory to Reopen

The long wait is almost over. The San Francisco Conservatory of Flowers will throw its doors open to the public on September 20 for what it calls its Historic Grand Reopening Ceremony. There



will be music, performances and family activities. General admission will be \$5.00 for adults.

On Thursday, September 18, Friends of Recreation and Park (FRP) will hold a Black Tie Dinner open to anyone willing to contribute \$500 to the cause. On Saturday, September 19 there will be free preview tours of the Conservatory for members of FRP.

For more information visit www.conservatoryofflowers.org or call 750-5443.

Save the Date!

Saturday and Sunday, September 6 and 7
California Academy of Sciences
150th Anniversary Outdoor Festival

How does the oldest scientific institution in the West celebrate its 150th Anniversary? With an outdoor street festival in historic Golden Gate Park. On the same site as the 1894 Midwinter Exposition, the 150-year-old Academy will roll in a 75' Ferris wheel to offer bird’s eye views of Golden Gate Park. Throughout the weekend, the Academy will celebrate with scientific demonstrations, musical and children’s entertainment, live animals, street festival foods and free cake. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned for more information.

Ed. note: Due, in large part, to the efforts of the Alliance for Golden Gate Park, the San Francisco Planning Commission recently decided not to certify the EIR for the concourse garage.

Postscripts

The May jazz event in **Buena Vista Park** attracted over 200 people in spite of a heavy fog that descended early that afternoon. With participants bundled up like Eskimos and zero visibility, singer **Edna Love** kept belting out songs as she and members of the **Motown**



Review got wetter and wetter. A half hour into the concert, the guitar player was forced to stand on a piece of plywood to prevent electrical shocks from his amplifier. So good was the music that everyone stayed until the end. If the definition of class is “grace under pressure,” both **Richard Magary**, organizer for the Buena Vista Neighborhood Association and **David Hatfield**, of the sponsoring **Friends of Rec. and Park**, qualify big time. Thanks to them and all the volunteers who had to work much harder than last year because of nature’s onslaught.

Carl Olsen, owner of the fanciful corner of Haight and Masonic (**Positively Haight Street**) has appealed the decision to place a **De-**



caux toilet in front of the Masonic Ave. side of this building. The hearing is scheduled for August 17 at City Hall in Room 416 at 5:00 p.m. The current musical “Urinetown” gives this never-ending issue a whole new meaning.

CVIA president **Joan Downey** tells us there’s a sad rumor that the **Golden Gate Park Shuttle**, funded by the Clean Air Initiative, is in jeopardy because the ridership is too low. The Park Shuttle operates on weekends and holidays from mid-May to October from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., making its rounds every 15 minutes. It travels throughout the Park from the Beach Chalet to east end stops at McLaren Lodge, Kezar Stadium, UCSF parking garage at 2nd and Irving. Downey suggests taking the three mile walk to the ocean,

having lunch at the Beach Chalet, perusing the murals at the Visitors Center, and then taking the shuttle back. Let’s preserve this wonderful resource by using it. For more information and a map, go to www.parks.sfgov.org and click on “Golden Gate Park – Free Shuttle.”

Since **Fajitagate** made **New Yorker** magazine this month, I guess it isn’t too late to quote a story that appeared in the Chronicle about **Virginia Staab**, the foreman of the Grand Jury that indicted the SFPD command staff. “Her highest praise was for **Capt. Dan Lawson**, Fagan Jr.’s supervisor at Park Station. Lawson testified he had made sure that SFPD’s Management Control Unit was called in to investigate the three officers’ conduct. He also testified that he had believed Fagan Jr., Tonsing and Lee were all intoxicated when he saw them at Northern Station after the brawl. Of Lawson Staab said, ‘He was such an upstanding, bright, great police officer.’”

You’ve probably noticed that **All Saints Episcopal Church** is shrouded and fenced these days. To celebrate their centennial, the



building is undergoing major renovation. The work will make it more accessible to disabled parishioners and restore the brown shingle facade that it originally sported at its first site, around the corner on Masonic Ave.

The Urban High School on Page Street (between Masonic and Ashbury) has gained permission to demolish two adjoining, 3-unit build-



ings for school expansion. The present enrollment of approximately 250 students would swell to 380 exacerbating the double parking problem, the curse of every school in this city. There was a great hue and cry from Haight activists who deplored the necessary eviction

of tenants but very little was heard from the preservationists, perhaps because the upscale private school, heavy on humanities and public service, is considered a plus in the neighborhood.

* * *

A Buddhist group—**Tzu Chi Foundation**—is planning to “feed the hungry” at Stanyan and Haight streets on a regular basis on Sunday mornings. At a recent community meeting, volunteer coordinator **Linda Hsu** said, “Based on our research, there is a high number of homeless youth in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood so the Tzu Chi Foundation has selected the Stanyan/Haight corner as a site for free breakfast distribution.” For more information contact Rec. and Park or Linda Hsu at 994-5683.

* * *

Afterthoughts: Last week I counted over twenty “**For Rent**” signs in Cole Valley windows. And still, they say we have a housing crisis . . . The enormous tree on the corner of **Shrader and Alma** is gone. It was inevitable: too old, too tall, too dangerous. That doesn’t stop us from grieving. . . There are stylish new street lights on the Panhandle paths. . . **Grattan School** has some impressive new landscaping: impressive if you remember how it looked last year. . . **Jim Rhoads**, who’s been overseeing the **Haight Street Cleaners** for many years, is discouraged that so many Haight merchants won’t chip in. The 1600 block has so few contributors that they’re cut off sweeping it temporarily. . . The **Department of Rec. and Park** approved former CVIA president **Chuck Canepa** as a member of the **Kezar Advisory Board**. Congratulations, Chuck. . . Who’s going to be the one to tell the owner of **Crepes on Cole** that his awning needs cleaning. Badly. . . The board and care establishment on Fell near Ashbury has applied for conversion to five condos. . . **Christian Science Church** redevelopers are still waiting for funding and permits but it looks like it the senior housing project will get underway before the year is out.

—Karen Crommie

Letters

Dear CVIA:

I would like to bring up the safety of the intersection of Stanyan and Parnassus. There have been three accidents in the past week, one involving a fire truck. It seems the closure of the Central Freeway has increasing numbers of cars exiting at Duboce and taking 17th and Stanyan. I worry about the safety of pedestrians especially. It is also becoming increasingly tricky for us to exit our driveway.

Maybe we need a left turn signal for those on northbound Stanyan turning west on Parnassus and a “no right on red” for those coming east on Parnassus making a right on Stanyan. The hill makes it tough to see oncoming traffic so many act quickly, only checking for pedestrians as an afterthought. I’ve witnessed and been the almost-victim of many near misses. I can only imagine the future Walgreens’s exacerbating the situation.

Ellen Curry

CVIA Officers

President Joan Downey
 Vice President Richard Shadoian
 Treasurer Marianne Hesse
 Membership Lena Emmerly
 Community Relations Nancy Corsaut

Cviasf@aol.com

Please contact us by e-mail if you have an issue to bring up, a newsletter article, address change, or an update to your membership information. Send us *your* e-mail address if you want to be notified of upcoming meetings and events of importance to our neighborhood.

HELP

Emergency 911
Disturbance 553-0123
Blocked Driveways & Parking on Sidewalks 553-1200
Abandoned Vehicles 781-5865
Health Department 255-3610
Litter Patrol (sofas, mattresses, etc.) 695-2017
Graffiti and Illegal Sign Removal 28-CLEAN
 282-5326

Street Lighting 554-0730

Mayor Willie Brown 554-6141
 City Hall - Room 200
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
 S.F., CA 94102

Acting Chief of Police Alex Fagan 553-1551
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
 S.F. CA 94103

District Attorney Terence Hallinan 553-1741
 Hall of Justice - 850 Bryant St.
 S.F. CA 94103

Captain Dan Lawson 242-3000
 Park District Police Station
 1899 Waller St.
 S.F., CA 94117

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

City Hall - Room 244
 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
 San Francisco, CA 94102

Telephone: 554-5184 FAX: 554-5163

District		Telephone	Fax
1.	Jake McGoldrick Jake.McGoldrick@sfgov.org	554-7410	554-7415
2.	Gavin Newsom Gavin.Newsom@sfgov.org	554-5942	554-5946
3.	Aaron Peskin Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org	554-7450	554-7454
4.	Fiona Ma Fiona.Ma@sfgov.org	554-7460	554-7432
5.	Matt Gonzalez Matt.Gonzalez@sfgov.org	554-7630	554-7634
6.	Chris Daly Chris.Daly@sfgov.org	554-7970	554-7974
7.	Tony Hall Tony.Hall@sfgov.org	554-6516	554-6546
8.	Bevan Dufty Bevan.Dufty@sfgov.org	554-6968	554-6909
9.	Tom Ammiano Tom.Ammiano@sfgov.org	554-5144	554-6255
10.	Sophie Maxwell Sophie.Maxwell@sfgov.org	554-7670	554-7674
11.	Gerardo Sandoval Gerardo.Sandoval@sfgov.org	554-6975	554-6979

BECOME A CVIA MEMBER

Membership in the Cole Valley Improvement Association is open to anyone interested in the greater Haight Ashbury. CVIA's mission is to promote a sense of responsibility and mutual respect; preserve the character of its architecture; support the police department in law enforcement efforts; encourage neighborhood serving business; and be constructively involved in San

Francisco's governmental process.

Annual dues are \$20.00. Membership provides contact with other responsible neighbors, a quarterly newsletter and participation in an active forum for effecting change. If you would like to become a member, please send in your dues with the form provided.

Please clip and mail the coupon below to CVIA, P.O. Box 170611, San Francisco, CA 94117



Yes! I'd like to become a CVIA member!

Here's my check for \$20.00 made payable to: COLE VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION Renewal

NAME _____ E-MAIL _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____ FAX _____

What I like about the Neighborhood: _____

What I dislike about the neighborhood: _____

I would like to help and this is what I can do: _____



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

CVIASF@aol.com