

NORTH PANHANDLE NEWS



North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

www.nopna.org

March-April 2011

The City, Connected

Bold plan envisions network of bike, pedestrian pathways

by Jarie Bolander

San Francisco is without a doubt one of the most socially integrated cities in the United States, if not the world. A new plan, if implemented, may make it one of the most topographically integrated urban centers as well—with our own neighborhood playing a primary role.

Connecting-the-City (connectingthecity.org) is a bold project, championed by the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, that aims to connect all of San Francisco through a network of more than 100 miles of bikeways so that anyone can use a bike to get around.

The Panhandle is pivotal to the “Bike to the Beach” route. The vision includes a bikeway along the curb, buffered by car parking running along both sides of the panhandle (Oak and Fell). This innovation, according to the plan’s proponents, is not only good for bicyclists but for

pedestrians, too. It would divert much of the bicycle traffic out of the park and onto the road, thus providing greater safety and more space for

pedestrians as they stroll along the Panhandle.

While this green extension of Golden Gate Park is already a great place to walk and bike, the three blocks connecting the Panhandle to the popular bike route of quiet residential streets nicknamed “The Wiggle” (see article on page 7) will also need some work. Located just east of NoPa, this well-traveled bike route, with some added upgrades, could be ideal for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Implementing the Connecting-the-City concept would entail converting one of the four lanes of car traffic into a separate bike lane on both Oak and Fell between Stanyan and Scott. The proposal will help improve safety for bike riders, walkers and drivers while retaining parking along both streets.

For NOPNA, this plan could be an exciting development. Our collective vision of a revitalized Panhandle encompasses needed repairs, including better paths, more seating and improved playgrounds. A separate Oak-Fell bikeway would provide the needed incentives to make those repairs happen.

An investment in improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure also benefits those of us who travel by car or Muni. Cyclists and motorists both need smooth roads, free of nasty potholes, for enhanced safety and ease of transit.

NOPNA MEETING

Thursday, March 17

7 pm: Informal get-together

7:30 pm: General meeting

OASIS CAFE

901 Divisadero St. (@ McAllister)



An artist's rendering of a physically separated bike lane on Fell Street. Image courtesy of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

(Continued on Page 3)

Do Renters Play Second Fiddle? Think Again



by
Jane Zimmerman

While NOPNA has been a part of our neighborhood for more than 20 years, some people persist in seeing it as a group primarily for homeowners. On the

surface, it may seem that homeowners have more at stake when it comes to the many quality-of-life issues NOPNA takes on, but the unique makeup of our city proves otherwise.

According to the National Multi-Housing Council, about 62 percent of San Francisco housing-- nearly twice the national average--is occupied by renters. And thanks to rent control and the high cost of home ownership, many of us stay in our apartments for a long time.

Case in point: Me! I have lived in my flat for going on 13 years, making me one of the many local renters who are not "coming and going," but putting down roots and making the neighborhood our own. We work on our backyards, sweep the front sidewalks, spend money (and pay taxes) at local businesses, take our kids to nearby playgrounds, and benefit from all the work done by our neighborhood volunteers.

NOPNA has become well respected beyond the bounds of our neighborhood for the work it does, not just for those who live here but for the city as a whole. The NOPNA board is routinely asked to weigh in on decisions made by local politicians and advocacy groups, and what we have to say makes a difference.

That's why it's all the more important to have renters engage in the process. Whether you are a renter who has lived here for many years, or you are just settling in to your new apartment, your views are important in the big picture and can help make our community a better place.

If you're looking for ideas, please attend the next NOPNA meeting on March 17. We can use your help with events (our annual block party is coming up!), street safety, and this newsletter, to mention only a few projects.

Got more to say, or to contribute? Join the NOPNA Board! We're always looking for new members. Or, if you just want to start out by exploring the possibilities, just send us your thoughts or questions. And be sure to check out nopna.org for upcoming events and news about local issues affecting our neighborhood.

North Panhandle News is published for the community, businesses, and friends of our neighborhood, bounded by Turk Street, Divisadero Street, Fell Street, and Masonic Avenue.

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NOPNA's mission: The purpose of this association shall be to establish neighborhood unity, maintain multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity, foster a sense of neighborhood pride, promote a safe and clean community, and improve the quality of life for all residents of the neighborhood.

CONTACT NOPNA: PO Box 591208, San Francisco, CA 94118
• 415-267-6113 • email: board@nopna.org • www.nopna.org

GET the NEWS!—PAY your DUES!

Your NOPNA membership gives us a stronger voice at City Hall and supports our efforts to create a clean, safe, and friendly neighborhood.

Please join us! You can sign up online at nopna.org.
For more information, call 415-267-6113.

SF LIVE ARTS at ST. CYPRIAN'S

presents

SATURDAY, MAR. 5, 8 pm:

Gypsy Jazz & the music of Django Reinhart with
The George Cole Quintet

Bobby McFerrin vocalist Dave Worm & exotic
guitarist Mark Vickness are **Glass House**

SATURDAY, MAR. 19, 8 PM:

A (belated) St. Patrick's Day concert/
celebration with **Colm O'Riain**

The fiery violinist and his band explore
connections between Irish music and
jazz, Brazilian, Indian and other genres.



SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 8 pm

Culann's Hounds • Lucia Comnes

All performances at St. Cyprian's Church, 2097 Turk (corner of Lyon)
Performances start at 8 pm—Doors open 25 minutes before the concert.

Information: www.noevalleymusicseries.com,
liveatcyprians.blogspot.com, or 415-454-5238

Tickets available in advance at: www.brownpapertickets.com, by phone
(800-838-3006), Swankety Swank (289 Divisadero), Phoenix Books (3957 24th St.)

Tickets for each performance: \$18 in advance; \$20 at the door
(\$16 for kids, seniors & students with ID —AT THE DOOR ONLY)

City, Connected *(from page 1)*

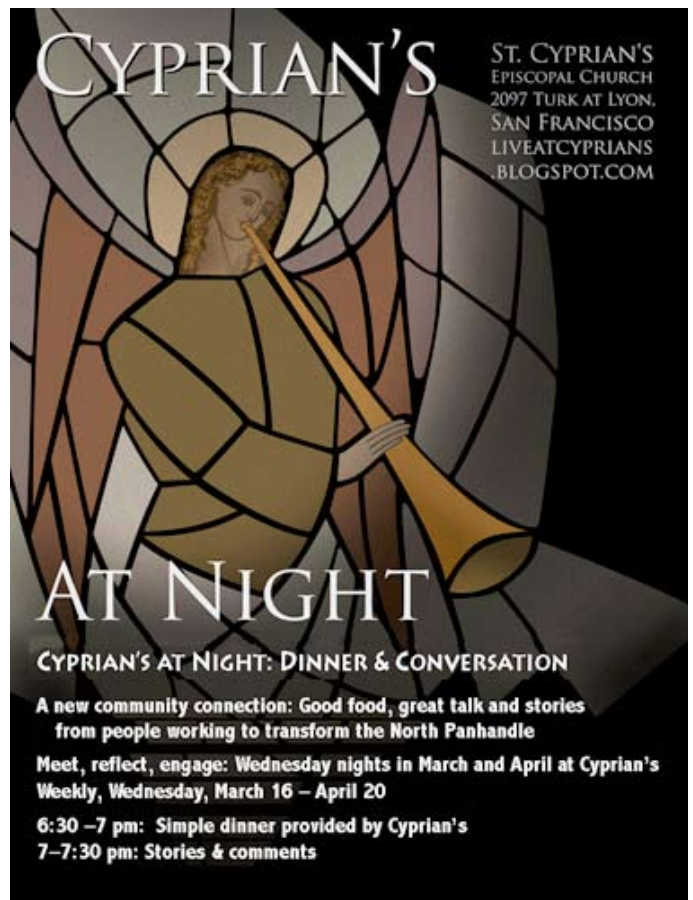
Finally, pedestrians play a vital role in road use planning. They are among the most vulnerable users of our roadway infrastructure. When a car swerves to avoid hitting someone, it frequently jeopardizes the safety of other vehicles that, in turn, swerve to avoid hitting it. This chain reaction can snarl roadways and endanger everyone. Safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure helps reduce this danger.

Looking beyond our own area, the prospect of improving safety on San Francisco's streets and sidewalks and connecting them with bicycle routes coincides with NOPNA's goal of making our own neighborhood more livable and sustainable.

Connecting-the-City is a bold plan that provides San Francisco with an opportunity to meet the transportation demands of the one million people who are expected to be living and/or working here in the coming decade. Introducing an integrated bicycle and pedestrian network will change how we get to work, shop and ultimately live in this great city.

We invite NoPa residents, merchants, and visitors to get involved in the discussion. Please email board@nopna.org and share your ideas about road use, urban sustainability, and plans for connecting the city. Also, look for a followup discussion and links on our blog, nopna.org.

There are several reports about the proposed study to establish bike lanes along Oak and Fell streets. The links are too long to type, so just Google "SFMTA Newsom protected Oak and Fell bike lanes," and you'll get there.



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AT NIGHT
CYPRIAN'S AT NIGHT: DINNER & CONVERSATION

A new community connection: Good food, great talk and stories from people working to transform the North Panhandle

Meet, reflect, engage: Wednesday nights in March and April at Cyprian's Weekly, Wednesday, March 16 – April 20

6:30 – 7 pm: Simple dinner provided by Cyprian's
7–7:30 pm: Stories & comments

Jarie Bolander has served on the NOPNA Board for four years, and is in his second year as president of the organization. A technical manager, he has lived in the neighborhood since 2004 with his wife, Margaret, and dog Harold.

Masonic Avenue: Change is on the Way



The San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA) recently released its report on the proposed redesign of Masonic Avenue. Resulting from three community meetings that took place last year, the report (to read it, Google "Masonic Avenue Street Redesign Study") describes the two options suggested for the renovation project and subsequently voted upon by neighbors.

After NOPNA's Board met to discuss the proposal and consider the various issues that arose in the community meetings, they sent a letter to the SFMTA asking them to seek the maximum funding available to improve safety and traffic flow on Masonic. NOPNA has already circulated a petition among local residents in efforts to assess their views. Check out our blog for the results.

However Masonic may be eventually transformed as a result of the project, major changes are in store for the western border of our area. Through respectful discussion, feedback from all concerned parties and a spirit of compromise, we hope to find a solution that can unify our neighborhood behind a common vision.

Please let us know what you think by emailing board@nopna.org or commenting on our blog post.

Bay to Breakers Update



ISCOTT, the City's Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation, has approved the permit for this year's Bay to Breakers footrace, scheduled for May 15, 2011. It will be the 100th anniversary of the event,

and a record turnout is expected.

City agencies, including the Police Department, have assured neighborhood representatives that their communities will be protected from damage and disruption during and after the event. That commitment is a direct result of constructive input from the nine neighborhood groups directly affected by the race.

NOPNA will support volunteer efforts coordinated by AEG, the entertainment promoter serving as the official Bay to Breakers 12k host.

NoPa residents are urged to volunteer during the race. It is vitally important that we, as neighbors, play a proactive role in monitoring our streets and ensuring that both the B2B organizers and the City be held accountable. Make sure to check the next issue of this newsletter, as well as NOPNA's website (nopna.org) for volunteer assignments and news.

YogaGardenSF.com

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Some Facts about the Recycling Center

by Michelle Welch

Editor's note: The last issue of NOPNA News (January-February 2011) carried an article reporting on the decision by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission to create a community garden on the site of the Frederick Street recycling center operated by the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC). While the Commission's decision was unanimous, it has been strongly opposed by neighborhood residents who claim that the center provides an important service to San Francisco's recycling efforts.

At a February 14 City Hall hearing, both supporters and opponents of the proposed community garden showed up in force to speak their minds. District 5 Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi has introduced a nonbinding resolution before the Supervisors calling on the Parks Department to reverse its decision, at least until an alternative location can be found for the recycling center. HANC has received an eviction notice to vacate the area by March 2, but advocates for the center say the battle is far from over.

In response to the article that appeared in our last issue, a local resident sent the following opinion piece outlining her position in support of the recycling facility. It is reprinted below, edited slightly for length.



The Golden Gate Park Master Plan, under "Objectives and Policies," calls upon the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC) Recycling Center "to increase its benefits to the Park" by focusing on "the recycling needs of Golden Gate Park and the immediate neighborhoods." Nowhere does the document advocate or mention removing the Recycling Center.

Nevertheless, The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department has issued an eviction notice to the Recycling Center and approved the creation of a gated and limited public access garden at the Center's current Frederick Street site.

(Continued on next page)

Recycling Center *(from page 4)*

The Center has paid \$200,000, at no expense to the City & County of San Francisco, to develop a Native Plant Nursery, which supplies plants to various parks and open space programs in the City. We operate a buyback center that pays \$600,000 a year to San Francisco residents. Our payroll, totaling \$200,000 a year, includes health benefits. Each year we pay Rec & Park \$5,000 and provide \$10,000 for in-kind services, mainly recycling for major events in Golden Gate Park. Finally, while diverting 1,800 tons a year from our landfill, we save San Franciscans over \$270,000 in landfill fees that would otherwise be incurred. These are only a few of the cash value benefits the Recycling Center offers our city's residents.

Additionally, the Center serves thousands of recyclers of every possible San Francisco demographic. People with too much trash to fit into their blue bins often bring their overflow to HANC.

The decisions taken by the Recreation and Park Department and Commission to replace the recycling center with a public garden were carried out without regard to these agencies' own written policies. Moreover, they were taken without consulting or informing the Kezar Citizens Advisory Committee or the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee.

HANC is calling for a planning process to design a comprehensive Golden Gate Park recycling program, native plant nursery, and garden resource center at 780 Frederick Street. This process must include representatives of the Recycling Center, Native Plant Nursery and

neighbors of the Park.

More than 1,000 regular users of the Recycling Center, as well as Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, Senator Mark Leno, San Francisco Tomorrow and the Sierra Club, are on record as supporting our initiative. To learn more or join our efforts, please visit HANC's website (hanc-sf.org) and click on "Contact Us."

A long-time Haight Ashbury resident, Michelle Welch has served on the board of the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council and contributes to various community projects, including the regular beautification and cleanup efforts of the Panhandle Park Stewards.

Around & About

Church music: NoPa's St. Cyprian's Church, at Turk & Lyon, is the venue for the terrific new music series coordinated by SF Live Arts. The program, part of the San Francisco Bluegrass & Old-Time Festival, kicked off on February 11 with three rompin', stompin' bluegrass groups. The house was packed, and it was a ball. More events are scheduled in the series; visit liveatcyprians.blogspot.com to find out about them.

In stitches: Are you dreaming about the perfect outfit and know you could have it if only you could sew? Check out The Workshop at 1798 McAllister (at Baker). They are offering a series of sewing classes, including Rock-and-Roll sewing, alterations for beginners sewing basics. Check them out at workshopsf.org.

(Continued on page 9)



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A Special Skill for Special Ed

By Caitlin Storhaug



Andrea and Micah find lots of places to explore and activities to enjoy in NoPa.

Andrea Montes is a San Francisco native, an 11-year NoPa resident and a whiz with kids. As Head of The Laurel School, located in the Richmond District, she oversees educational programs for K-8 students who need small classes and instructional

specialists in order to overcome learning challenges like dyslexia and language impairments.

Montes received her Master's degree in Special Education and began tutoring children with learning disabilities while still in college. She has been Head of School since 2003, and her commitment and enthusiasm are just as strong as the day she began. "Watching students' eyes and faces light up when they discover information or experience success in school for the first time makes my day. It is highly rewarding and motivating," she states.

Although it is still early in the school year, Montes is already looking ahead to summer and happily anticipating the second annual Laurel School Summer Day Camp, held in June and July. The camp is especially designed for students entering first through seventh grades who have learning differences. It maintains a ratio of one staff member to every five children and offers a wide range of activities that develop social competence and confidence while giving the kids a great time.

"For children with learning differences like dyslexia, ADHD, language impairments or Asperger's," observes Montes, "the typical summer camp is very overwhelming—too many kids and too much action happening at once." By contrast, as she describes it, The Laurel School Day Camp offers a joyful, enriching experience for just thirty campers. Besides a full program of drama, art, music and occupational therapy, the camp offers some enjoyable academic preparation. This year, based on feedback from

parents, students and the teachers, Montes has decided to expand the camp from a two-week to four-week session.

Outside of work, Montes spends quality time with her husband, Sam, also a special education professional, and their baby, Micah. Favorite activities include walking, visiting Crissy Field, and discovering San Francisco's playgrounds. She also loves to cook, stocking up on pantry essentials and specialty food items at local gourmet groceries. For Montes, one of the joys of San Francisco is easy access to Farmers' Markets. "I can find one almost every day of the week. We are very lucky to have fresh, local food always at our fingertips," she declares.

Given her enjoyment of visiting parks and high-quality food outlets, Montes finds NoPa an ideal location for her family. Another advantage of the neighborhood is its easy access to all other parts of the City.

Finally, she is delighted that so many young families with children reside here. NoPa is often referred to as the most family-friendly neighborhood of San Francisco, and Montes has certainly experienced that first-hand. "Everyone is so friendly and welcoming! We plan to be here for many years to come," she tells us with a smile.

To learn more about The Laurel School Summer Day Camp or to request an application for next summer, go to thelaurelschool.com or contact 415-752-3567.

Caitlin Storhaug, a regular contributor to NOPNA News, has lived in the neighborhood with her family since 2003.

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The Wiggle and the Wigg

by Morgan Fitzgibbons

We who live in the North of Panhandle neighborhood can all agree that our community is a gem. One of the main reasons for this is our neighborhood's namesake, the iconic Panhandle Park.

A stroll through the Panhandle on a beautiful weekend afternoon reveals the best that our community has to offer: friends and family lounging in the sun, children and elderly strolling along taking in the beauty of this splendid urban oasis, and many, many cyclists.

The reason the Panhandle mixed-use northside path has such a high concentration of bicyclists is that it is the westernmost leg of a bicycle route known as the Wiggle, a zig-zagging path beginning near Duboce Park, winding through the Lower Haight and ending in Golden Gate Park. This route is revered in the cycling community for its defining feature as the flattest route from the east side of town to the west. If you have not done so already, please add "easy access to the most popular bicycle route in San Francisco" to your list of reasons to love your neighborhood.

Here's another for your list. In these turbulent times, with the enormous challenges we face as a society and planet mounting day by day, our neighborhood is positioning itself as one of the few American urban communities that is taking a proactive approach to meeting these challenges head on. For over a year, neighbors and friends have been systematically engaged in programs aimed at making our community more sustainable and resilient. Our efforts have created the Wiggle Party (named after the Wiggle, not the 19th century Whig political party that elected Millard Fillmore).

The Wiggle party engages with local businesses to help make their practices more sustainable and then rally support around them. We work with friends at Hayes Valley Farm to help people grow their own produce, encourage fellow community members to buy locally produced food, and eliminate food waste where we can.

We also work to "re-skill" our community by teaching each other to sew, pickle food, make cheese, and fix our bikes—all skills that were once commonplace and will once again be needed if we hope to thrive in the face of looming dangers like peak-oil.

Finally, we advocate for more sensible transit policies centered on our beloved route, the Wiggle. We believe that one safe bicycle route from the east to the west

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side of town is essential if more people are to temper their unsustainable reliance on the personal automobile. The current "bicycle path" sections along Fell and Oak streets fall far short of this goal.

In the end, our group is about building community. We revel in events like Sunday Streets and neighborhood block parties. We love to meet our fellow neighbors, and we've taken to wearing wigs because they make it easier to strike up conversations with strangers.

If we can come together to make our little pocket of San Francisco a better place, then we have a chance to inspire others to do the same.

Morgan Fitzgibbons has lived in the North of the Panhandle for over a year. He has a Masters degree from the California Institute of Integral Studies through the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness program, and spends the majority of his time as a sustainable community organizer.

Animation by NoPa Youngster Featured at Macworld Expo



Trevor Higgins and a friend from Camp Edmo stand in front of the video screen where their animated film ran continuously during the Macworld expo.

Macworld, the major international tradeshow for Macintosh-related product developers, selected an animation film created by nine-year old NoPa resident Trevor Higgins and fellow fourth grader Candise Massa as a feature presentation in its welcoming video. The film was shown continuously on more than 10 LCD screens during the conference, held from January 26th to 29th at Moscone Center.

Conference attendees, numbering nearly 25,000 people, watched Trevor's funny, colorful stop-action animation film, "Planet Disco Dance Off," as they entered the show area.

"The video is about aliens that land on a strange planet (Earth) and find interesting sea creatures called mermaids.

The aliens and mermaids have a friendly dance-off to see who is better," says Higgins. "We decided a dance-off was better than a fight," he further clarified.

Trevor, a fourth grader at Claire Lilienthal Alternative School in San Francisco, learned to create, edit and produce animation films at Camp Edmo, a summer camp coordinated by Zeum, the Exploratorium and the San Francisco Academy of Sciences. Trevor honed his technical and artistic skills while attending the camp in 2009 and 2010.

Camp Edmo Program Director Eva Vander Giessen stated, "We love Trevor's enthusiasm and sense of humor, and we are so proud that Macworld chose to feature his film. What a great accomplishment!"

Both the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Examiner* conducted interviews with Trevor and three other Camp Edmo filmmakers. To read the SFGate story, Google "Trevor Higgins Macworld."



Camp Edmo teachers and kids (with Trevor clowning in the middle) are recognized for their technical and creative achievement.

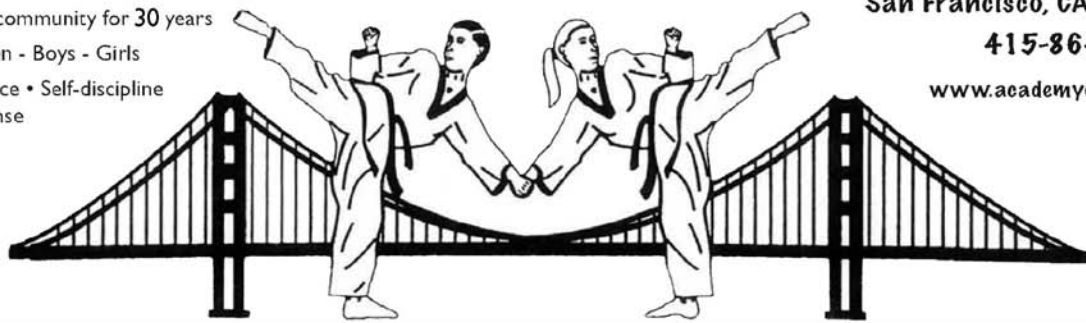
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Around & About *(from page 5)*

Fine needles: Yerba Buena Acupuncture Collective, at 1810 McAllister (at Baker), provides professional treatment at affordable prices. Neighbors had an opportunity to try out their services on February 15, when the clinic offered free acupuncture treatments. Their website, yerbabuenaacupuncture.com, lists rates and upcoming events.

More great food in the 'hood: The long awaited NoPa Bi-Rite location has changed! The popular market, whose Castro/Mission outlet is usually mobbed with happy shoppers, is constructing another store at 550 Divisadero — a location almost twice the size of the one at 736 Divisadero, where they originally planned to set up. When completed, Bi-Rite will be yet another purveyor of outstanding edibles in what is rapidly becoming our very own Gourmet Gulch.

Cafe by day, vinyl by night: Cafe Divis (formerly On the Corner, at 359 Divisadero), is now a wine bar as well as a coffee house and comfort food destination. During the day you can still get a fine panini and blue bottle coffee fix, but every evening, starting around 5 pm, it's all about wine, music and dinner. They're offering a special promotion: 50 percent discount off your total bill, with a maximum discount of \$10.

Literary connections: The NoPa Networking group is planning a Book Swap Social on Tuesday, April 5. The event will offer an opportunity to meet your neighbors, trade in a couple of those great books you finished reading and can no longer remember, and learn how to get a book club started. Email kandace@nopanetworking.com for details.

Work out on Divis: Last year a San Francisco entrepreneur leased the storefront space at 350 Divisadero, proposing to establish a cannabis dispensary there. Neighbor protests nixed that idea, so instead he installed something better: a training center for boxing and oriental martial arts. The new gym, Hybrid Training, opened on February 1. It offers Jiu Jitsu, boxing, mixed martial arts, and kids' classes 7 days a week. Check it out and get fit!

Like a little corner of Paris: Bistro Central Parc (bistrocentralparc.com), at Grove and Central, has added outdoor seating. Weather permitting, you can watch the passing scene while sampling the restaurant's gastronomical marvels. Beer and wine are served until 10 pm nightly, and brunch drinks now include mimosas. To make dinner reservations (strongly advised!), call 931-7272 or email bistrocentralparc@gmail.com.



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Golden Gate/USF Fence: Encroachment or Not?

by Richard Rabbitt

The San Francisco Board of Appeals, a quasi-judicial body that reviews permits, is considering whether to allow the University of San Francisco (USF) to continue maintaining a 389-foot fence that encroaches onto approximately 2,335 square feet of the public right of way along Golden Gate Avenue between Masonic Avenue and Tamalpais Terrace. A hearing on this issue is scheduled for March 23.

Golden Gate Avenue has a public right of way that extends 12 feet from the curb. The sidewalks, however, are often less than 12 feet wide. Private property owners sometimes encroach into that 12-foot strip with landscaping, stairs, or other minor building features.

The University of San Francisco's fence encloses approximately half of the 12-foot right of way, allowing

(Continued on next page)



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Golden Gate/USF Fence *(from page 9)*

only about six feet of available space to the public for a sidewalk. The remaining portion lies on the other side of the fence, making it inaccessible to the public.

USF has asserted that the fence is necessary for the safety of the public. The Board of Appeals has requested more information about the fence in order to make a decision about what to do. In considering the information before it, the Board wishes to consider the views of people living near the fence and whether the public desires to have a wider sidewalk.

Since this area is near NoPa, local residents may wish to comment and also to consider the recently adopted Better Streets Plan, which incorporates a number of proposals designed to enhance the pedestrian environment through wider sidewalks and more landscaping. Information about the Plan is available at sf-planning.org/ftp/BetterStreets/index.htm.

If you would like to register an opinion on the USF fence encroachment issue, you can submit written comments to the Board of Appeals or attend the March 23 hearing. For further information, contact richard.rabbitt@stanfordalumni.org.

Richard J. Rabbitt is an attorney specializing in real estate and tenant issues. His practice focuses on complex commercial real estate transactions, and he also has extensive experience in negotiating agreements with distressed tenants, landlords, and developers, with the goal of benefiting all parties through avoidance of bankruptcy and costly litigation.



CALENDAR of EVENTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 7 - 9 pm:
NOPNA General Meeting
 Oasis Café, McAllister at Divisadero

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 10 am - 12 pm:
Easter Egg Hunt
 Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center, 401 Baker (at Hayes)
 A fun-filled Easter egg hunt along with games, entertainment and refreshments

SFLIVE ARTS AT ST. CYPRIAN'S

St. Cyprian's Church, 2097 Turk (at Lyon)

Saturday, March 5, 8 pm

George Cole Quintet, vocalist Dave Worm and guitarist Mark Vickness

Saturday March 19, 8 pm

Colm O'Riain and his band

Saturday April 16, 8 pm

Culann's Hounds and Lucia Comnes

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FRIDAY MARCH 25, 6:30 pm

SFDS Concert for Community
 San Francisco Day School, Golden Gate at Masonic
 Student bands will perform to raise money for charities. Donations go to local nonprofit organizations.

SATURDAY MARCH 26, Morning

Pasta Cookout hosted by SFDS
 San Francisco Day School, Golden Gate at Masonic
 Help SFDS students and parents prepare meals and deliver them to local shelters. To volunteer, or for more info, email fif@sbcglobal.net.

NERT Provides Crucial Disaster Support for the Community

By Jim Cowan

What happens when a major disaster strikes and the usual emergency services become too overloaded to respond to every need? As individuals, we are extremely vulnerable, but luckily, in San Francisco we have an answer: NERT.

Following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) created its Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) program to train citizens in disaster and emergency response. Since 1990 over 21,000 volunteers have learned how to assist the Fire Department after a



NoPa NERT Coordinator Fiona Raymond-Cox, with help from Maya Imperial, signs up NERT volunteers in front of Lucky's on January 30.

major disaster by taking care of themselves, their families, and their neighbors.

The NERT program offers free basic and advanced preparedness training to those who live and work in San Francisco, and provides an organizing framework for neighborhood teams in the City. Teams gather after a catastrophic incident to survey

their neighborhoods, provide information to the SFFD, conduct light search-and-rescue operations and medical triage, help transport victims to medical treatment facilities and direct untrained volunteers.

Our local NoPa NERT team has been active for five years and now has 97 volunteers on its mailing list. Everyone living or working in the neighborhood is encouraged to join the team by signing up for a six-week training session.

Trainings include Earthquake Awareness, Preparedness, and Hazard Mitigation; Basic Disaster Skills; Disaster Medicine, including Triage; Light Search and Rescue; Team Organization and Management; and Skills Development and Application. The sessions conclude with a hands-on final exam.

On a personal level, NERT trainings develop self-confidence and peace of mind along with practical information and hands-on lifesaving skills. They also offer an opportunity to build community while increasing the safety and well being of your family and neighborhood.

To find out more about NERT, including dates of upcoming meetings, visit the website (Google SFFD NERT) or contact local NoPa-NERT coordinators Fiona Raymond-Cox and Bel Sales at nopa.nert@gmail.com.

Longtime NoPa resident Jim Cowan is a writer and community activist. Among his volunteer activities, he handles mailings to dues-paying NOPNA members.



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