

Free toilet cost over \$5 a flush

CBD's 3-month pilot program proves 'a little pricey'

BY TOM CARTER

THE free toilet at the Rescue Mission was used 11 times a day on average — costing \$5.36 per visit, results from the three-month pilot program show.

A committee of the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, which funded the toilet as a service to the neighborhood, will recommend to the full board meeting June 20 that the project be funded for another six months. The board will also consider ramping up the CBD's fight against public urination and defecation by renting two porta-potties for the neighborhood at \$5,000 a month with a \$20-an-hour monitor.

At the CBD board's May 16 meeting, the free-toilet experiment was to be explained in light of this proposed expansion that would bring the CBD's financial commitment to normal bath-

room behavior in the neighborhood to about \$6,500 per month. But the matter was put over a month.

The Rescue Mission's toilet data, kept by an on-site monitor paid \$9.79 an hour, showed that during the 66 weekdays the toilet was available from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. 728 people (489 men and 239 women) used the toilet.

The CBD grant to the mission covered \$1,300 a month for the monitor and supplies but budgeted no money for repairs. The omission caused board concern after the toilet opened Feb. 1 because tales of public toilet abuse are legend.

Hospitality House, a block from the mission, has free bathrooms, with daily drop-in traffic of 300 mostly homeless clients, frequent toilet breakdowns and annual plumbing bills in the thousands. But for three months the vigilantly monitored Rescue Mission toilet was little used and had no breakdowns.

Ron Hicks, CBD Public Rights of

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

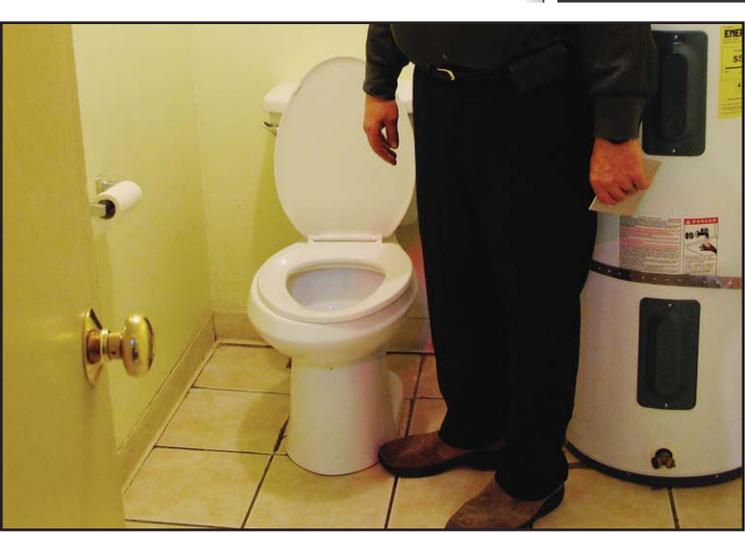


PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

The CBD-subsidized toilet at the Rescue mission averaged 11 users daily.

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THE EXTRA WINS 8 BIG ONES

S.F. Peninsula Press Club awards

PAGE 2



MARKET ST. MERCHANT PUSHED OUT

Bike store replaces 25-year business

PAGE 3

'AS WE LIVE IT'

City Hall show by people in treatment

PAGE 4

CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA

SAN FRANCISCO

TENDERLOIN STARS



PHOTO COURTESY JEFF MARSHALL

Kitemaker Jeff Marshall flew the small version of his gargantuan Harvey Milk kite from windy Corona Heights on Milk's May 22 birthday.

'KITEMAN'

Jeff Marshall's art flies sky-high

BY TOM CARTER

WHEN Jeff Marshall was 12 in Houston, a Hi-Flier kite cost 25 cents, same for the string. Forty years later, Marshall is famous in the Tenderloin for making and flying kites. "I can make one for 10 cents and in 10 minutes — I'll impress you."

He did. With a clock on him one day in May, Marshall sat on the floor of his 10-by-10 SRO room in the Boyd Hotel next to St. Anthony's Dining Room, materials around him, and set his fingers flying. A whirlwind, he grabbed Elmer's Glue, wood sticks and string and made a tight skeleton. With scissors, he snipped pink and green tissue paper to size, gluing the colors to the sticks for a garish two-toner.

Bingo, 10 minutes on the nose, 18-by-26-inches. And it will fly.

But a tail?

Sure, Marshall says. Liberating a 10-foot strand from a pink sheet in a nearby stash, he attaches it, along with guide string he adjusts near the crossbar. The final touch is his signature — a lemon-size circle he cuts from orange tissue paper and pastes on the green background above the crossbar, "the sun over the horizon," he says, smiling.

The kite looks frail, but he tests all his scrap string for strength, and tissue paper is tougher than it looks.

Originally a photographer, Marshall turned to painting and sculpting, then resumed kite-making four years ago, bring-

ing a lifetime of artistic skills to his childhood hobby. He's been impressing people ever since. His specialty is painting portraits of inspirational people on kites and sending them up to soar and bob in the sky.

In 2008, he flew Barack Obama in front of City Hall. An Associated Press photographer shot the airborne kite and the image went 'round the world. "I was in the Korean Times!" Marshall exclaims with glee.

Marshall made 50 candidate Obama kites, hoping others would join him.

"I envisioned the sky filled with those kites," he says, "but it didn't happen." Unfazed, he's fulfilled by the medium and stays high on a stream of new ideas.

"I just want to remind people of this simple — nonelectronic — pleasure."

Marshall got a fine arts degree in pho-

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

TENDERLOIN STARS

THERE are 30,000 of us in the Tenderloin, each unique in special ways. With "Kiteman," Central City Extra introduces a new regular feature, Tenderloin Stars, to capture the personality, humanity and, often, strangeness of our remarkably diverse populace. The people who make our neighborhood great.

