

Laughs & lit, NO lingerie

Now 50 Mason lessee wants to do a comedy club

by Marjorie Beggs

Walk into 50 Mason sometime this winter and you'll hear 40 people laughing their heads off (hopefully) or see them gazing raptly (hopefully) at whoever's at the mike that night — maybe the next Margaret Cho or Robin Williams, Lawrence Ferlinghetti or devorah major.

The storefront will become an as yet unnamed comedy club and poetry lounge, announced attorney Joe Wood at the Aug. 14 Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting. Pretty funny, huh?

by a Planning employee. Neighbors hollered again.

Many of the site "improvements" already were complete when the Department of Building Inspection revoked Hunt's permit because King's Court would have violated the zoning moratorium on adult entertainment businesses closer than 1,000 feet.

Hunt appealed, but in February 2002 the Board of Permit Appeals voted unanimously to uphold the revocation. In March, Wood told The Extra that Hunt might argue against the decision in Superior Court. He didn't.

lots of clubs in the city with a political bent, and we'd like to see that again," Wood added. "Also, Mr. Hunt is being realistic — he wants to defray the cost of build-out." In March, Wood estimated that Hunt had spent \$50,000 before his permit was axed.

"You might be better off diversifying," Conley said. "Have you considered other kinds of entertainment, like music?"

Wood said they weren't averse to the idea, but that they'd start with comedy. "There's the problem of noise with music," he said. "Even the tamest bands can make a lot of noise."

"I have one reservation," said Michael Nulty, Tenant Associations Coalition program director. "If you get your beer and wine license, will the club be for adults only?"

Wood said that because the club will serve food, under-21s can come in, though a bouncer will check IDs at the door.

TNDC board member John Burkitt said that as a resident [of the nearby Dalt], he was glad to hear about the "doorman" and hoped he would help keep the area from being "an open toilet."

Burkitt also threw Wood some support for the liquor license — "it may be essential to this kind of venture" — and wished him luck. "I know you were ganged up on at City Hall," he added, referring to the permit revocation.

Wood looked grateful: "That's wonderful to hear. . ."

Conley wasn't so generous about the liquor license. "I strongly think that businesses are missing the point — there are other ways to have fun without beer and wine."

The mood lifted when one Collaborative member asked the obvious question: "I hope you have no plans for beautiful

young women to remove their clothes while reading poetry?"

"Certainly not," Wood responded, seriously.

He said he'd send all Collaborative members a letter asking for their support.

U.N. Plaza plan: \$1 million at stake

Besides yuks and verse, the Collaborative heard an update on the U.N. Plaza renovation project from Richard Allman, member of the Plaza Working Group.

The biggest concern, Allman said, is "how to make it more useable as a neighborhood resource, as well as a citywide resource." There's \$1 million for the initial upgrade plan, he said, but "so far, our plan looks like a \$10 million plan." The \$1 million, a grant from the federal Department of Transportation, must be spent by next year, and other funds haven't been identified yet.

Allman emphasized, as he has at previous meetings, that there's "100% support for keeping the Farmers Markets — it's the plaza's largest asset."

The plaza is for the people, he added, and the plans will reflect that. "We're not trying to drive off anyone who's using it now, but to open it up to more people."

Solutions has no answers

Also on the agenda, Marissa PioRoda from Urban Solutions, which provides services to small businesses, asked Collaborative members to help her organization launch a new project. It will collect previously published studies of the Tenderloin and identify what still needs to be researched. Interns from Hastings College of the Law's Civil Justice Clinic will help in the

effort, she said.

"This isn't meant to be a new plan," PioRoda said, "but would be used to update and supplement earlier plans, such as Tenderloin 2000. It would be another resource for the community."

Nulty asked about project funding. A proposal is in the works, PioRoda said.

"I have reservations about this," Nulty said. "It seems politically motivated, perhaps connected with Gordon's campaign. [District 6 candidate Roger Gordon is the former director of Urban Solutions.] You should have gone to the authors of Tenderloin 2000 first [NOMPC], instead of coming to the Collaborative."

PioRoda didn't respond, and no other Collaborative members picked up Nulty's gauntlet.

But St. Anthony's Foundation board member Robin Polastri noted that everyone could help Urban Solutions better if PioRoda could be more specific about what she wanted from them.

She said she'd be in touch.

Show of support for Stephanie Salter

With seconds remaining in the meeting, Collaborative Chair Glenda Hope asked members to blitz Chronicle poobahs with e-mails, protesting the cancellation of writer Stephanie Salter's column. Salter has written several editorials shaming Hastings for its plan to erect a parking garage over the objections of the community, and has a large following among caring liberals throughout the city.

"She's been our friend," Hope said. "Now it's time for us to be hers." ■



PHOTO: CARL ANGEL

Is there new life for the old barber college at 50 Mason St.?

Then why weren't Collaborative members all smiles — especially after Wood told them that he and lessee Joel Hunt "tried to find a use that will allow us to use the [already completed] improvements without offending neighborhood sensibilities"?

Back in May 2001, Hunt began remodeling the old Moler Barber College site for its planned reincarnation as King's Court, a retail lingerie shop with live models.

The community reared up in protest and filed a complaint with the Planning Department, which issued a stop-work order in June. But in December, Hunt began work again, this time with a permit erroneously issued

Wood said the comedy club would be open 4 p.m. to midnight, six days a week. Five booths, 40 bar stools and a \$7 cover charge. They'll serve fingerfood and drinks — beer and wine, Hunt said, if he can get a Type 42 liquor license.

Comedy notwithstanding, Collaborative members grilled Wood with serious questions.

"Why do you think a comedy club will work here?" asked Steve Conley, media rep for Alliance for a Better District Six.

Wood cited nearby public transportation and a successful comedy club at Mason and Geary that pulled 'em in for years.

"In the '60s there used to be

NAME THAT 'TOON



Da Mayor auctioning his suit and hat to the homeless

We have a winner



Denise D'Anne, a neighborhood activist well known for her droll wit, wins *The Extra's* Name That Toon Contest with the caption that accompanies the cartoon.

What could be funnier than Da Mayor offering up his sartorial splendor for the benefit of the homeless hoi polloi?

D'Anne, active in the Senior Action Network, PRIDE at Work and Alliance for a Better District 6, among many others, retired in 1999 after 25 years at the Department of Human Services. She also ran for supervisor in 1998 and 2000.

D'Anne will receive a framed copy of Carl Angel's cartoon and a complimentary dinner for two at Café do Brasil.



Michael Wise's submission deserves honorable mention: "My fellow San Franciscans: 'Ask not ... (what?) ... (ahem) ... want not!' Thank you very much." Wise is editor and publisher of the respected mental health consumer quarterly, *Voices at Bay*. He is on the board of Spiritmenders and puts out a monthly calendar of consumer activities for S.F. Mental Health.

Wise will receive a framed copy of the cartoon with his caption.

Thanks to all who entered the contest. And stay tooned. ■