

Just by Chance

Diamond Dave Whitaker

Just by chance— not too likely.
 Just because the reason is
 Now unclear; doesn't mean
 We won't know, one day
 If we hang on and in
 And follow the stream down to the sea.
 Look up to the stars and really see the sky
 Undeterred— that means not stopped—
 By conventional thinking, short-sighters
 Deaf and blind to the spirit
 I'm talking about naysayers
 Killjoys
 Wall builders
 Door slammers
 Vision slayers
 Doomsayers
 Scribes and Pharisees of science
 Theological engineers
 Lords of this system of things
 But...new morning
 Spring sap flows
 As fingertips touch
 And eyes glow.
 In the night of the living dead
 The poets remain alive
 Walking down that shining path
 That good, red road
 Dream weavers
 Spirit menders
 Healing the pain
 Soothing the silent screams
 Warriors of the rainbow
 Just singing a freedom song
 It's about it being darkest
 Just before the dawn
 But when and where you least expect it
 Help will come along
 Like green shoots thrusting through
 the damp, dark, earth
 Love will spring anew: Life will spring anew
 Just breaking through the ice.



Falling crime stats

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More good news for the neighborhood: The downward slide of burglary and larceny, which dropped double digits during 1999, is falling faster this year with a 14% decline.

The bad news is that although aggravated assaults slid almost 2% last year, in 2000 assaults have increased by 12.5%.

The only major crime that increased in the Tenderloin during 1999 was auto boosting. It jumped from 252 to 310, a 23% leap. However, in 2000, auto boosting in the neighborhood has joined the crowd: This year it's down by more than 50%.

Capt. Tacchini chalks up the Tenderloin's bad rep in part to an image problem. With so many homeless in the neighborhood, the streets don't look safe to tourists and others, he said, but they are.

The Task Force "is addressing street crime," Tacchini said. "We have a higher number of officers on the street, focusing on the areas of known drug activity and prostitution, enabling people to pass freely in the street."

Carl Angel

ILLUSTRATION



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Em's : 26 years & still strong

If you want a quick meal that's tasty and inexpensive, the Tenderloin has several restaurants that fill the bill. One of my favorites is Em's located on Golden Gate Avenue, just down the street from Hastings Law School.

I've been eating lunch at Em's for five or six years, usually once or twice a week. I've never gotten a bad meal. Eric, who has served as Em's owner and chef for the last 10 years, serves a limited menu of Chinese plates, plus an American lunch menu of burger and sandwiches and all day breakfast items.

The Chinese menu is northern Szechuan, which is mostly mild.

The spiciest thing on the menu is Mongolian beef at \$4.25. On a scale of one to four, I would rate it a two-glass-of-water dish. The items on the Chinese menu include king pao chicken \$4.25, Sweet and Sour Pork (\$4.50) and shrimp in lobster sauce at the same price. In addition to the meat or fish, these dishes have pepper, onion, carrots and water chestnuts and are served with steamed rice or fried rice. Meatless meals include Szechuan eggplant at \$3.25 and MoPo tofu at \$3.50. Eric also serves six fried rice dishes and

seven chow-mien dishes (\$3.70 to \$4.50) and eight kinds of won tong soup from \$2.95 to \$4.60.

The American menu reads like the offerings found on an old fashion soda fountain,

8oz. ribeye steak at \$5.95.

The all day breakfast menu, which I see a lot of people ordering lunch from, includes 2eggs, ham or bacon, hash browns and toast at \$3.25. Without a breakfast meat, it costs \$2.25.

Eric also has omelets, corned beef hash and a steak and eggs special for \$4.95.

Eric Man came to San Francisco from Hong Kong in 1980. He attended community college, studying at American Cooking School there. He worked in other restaurants for ten years, including a couple of Tenderloin hotels before buying Em's about 10 years ago. The man he bought it from

had converted it to a Chinese restaurant a couple of years before the sale. Prior to that, the original Em's Place served strictly American food. There's been a restaurant at the location for 26 years.

The atmosphere in Em's is decidedly low key. While many of the tables are filled at lunch, the restaurant never gets too noisy and the people who patronize are quiet and polite. Eric always has a big hello for regular customers and Helen, who takes your order and brings out the food if it's not too busy.

DINING IN THE TL

by Phil Tracy



Em's chef de cuisine, Eric Man

although the only sodas Eric sells are in cans and bottles and usually cost \$1. He has a full line of burgers from 1/3 lb. Plain at \$3.50 to a double cheeseburger for \$4.50. The burgers come with french fries, lettuce and tomato and best of all grilled onion, something not available in the franchise burger joints. His sandwich selection includes egg salad, tuna salad, turkey, tuna and BLT. The cheapest entree on Eric's menu is the jumbo beef hot dog with french fries at \$2.75. The most expensive is an