

# Safety in the Tenderloin

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encourages further contact. Don't appear to be lost or distracted, they say. But when you look a person in the eye, that flicker of recognition could suggest something you don't mean: disgust, defiance, an invitation, and more.

It can also, as Chatsova said, let them know you're not afraid. The tricky part is that the guy on the street makes the interpretation.

"I think people [here] don't realize that they have the Code Enforcement Task Force," said Adopt-A-Block's Nicholas Rosenberg, who organized the workshop. "They (Code Enforcement) can deal with all the feces, urine and the needles around here [besides other things]."

A DPT workshop addressed citizen safety in terms of traffic laws. In a city where already this year 18 pedestrians have been killed compared to 26 in all of 1999, Frank Markowitz of DPT said the department is working to improve pedestrian safety through public education about traffic laws, new traffic signals and heightened enforcement.

Markowitz said DPT is testing different traffic devices such as the countdown signals currently used in Walnut Creek, Concord and San Ramon, and flashing crosswalk lights that illuminate all the way across the sidewalk and flash toward drivers as they approach intersections.

The causes of pedestrian deaths are split between the failure of drivers to yield the right of way to pedestrians, and jaywalking or pedestrians crossing the street against a red light.

Pedestrians were advised to wear reflective clothing at night or in bad weather and, most importantly, don't jaywalk. Drivers were advised to observe pedestrians' right of way and not speed.

The agenda at a sparsely attended Muni workshop was to find ways to make the public transit service "more pleasant."

"Muni rides must be pleasant enough," said Muni accessibility advisory committee member Edward Evans, considering the paucity of people at the workshop. "Safety is the main priority, whether it's a pedestrian waiting [for the bus], or a person on Muni itself."

Advisory committee member Bob Planthold said that crime, a big problem on Muni in recent years, is on the decline, based on police and incident reports. To encourage this trend, accessibility coordinator Paul Fichera said, 350 new trolleys equipped with surveillance cameras will be added to the fleet by the end of this year. In case of emergencies, he said, each vehicle will have access to "central control."

A Tenderloin community safety forum addressed issues of self-sufficiency, as opposed to reliance on assistance from nonprofit service organizations and public agencies.

"Because there are so many

agencies in this neighborhood, people depend on these agencies and expect them to do most of the work," said workshop moderator Kali Grosberg, the North of Market Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) co-coordinator. "That's the biggest problem."

But, Grosberg said, citizen participation is very important to maintaining safety in the neighborhood, and that will never happen without communication among the residents.

Kathleen Gray from the Coalition on Homelessness suggested there are too many meetings and theories on how to make the neighborhood better.

All of the panel members, which also included representatives of such groups as the Tenderloin Task Force and the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp., agreed that some people aren't going to go to meetings on their own, so the solution is to get the leaders of certain organizations together to reach the others with the information they need.

"We need to take the vital information and make sure the people who we're representing are informed," Tenderloin Task Force Capt. Stephen Tacchini said.

Taking an alternative view of the neighborhood's approach to safety concerns was U.C.-Berkeley urban studies major Ilaria Salvadori, whose master's thesis analyzes the layout of Boeddeker Park. Some safety measures inherently cause disconnection between elements of the community, she said.

The park, she pointed out, is fenced off from the rest of the neighborhood. And within the park, the basketball court has a wire fence around it, and so does the children's playground.

"It is not positive because people are segregated," Salvadori said, comparing the park to a chessboard, with everything divided into individual squares, making it harder for the diverse activities and park users – the sunbathers, picnickers, hoops players and playground users – to mix.

"Just like in chess, people should cross over the edge and go in someone else's territory," Salvadori said.

But with safety concerns coming first, Salvadori said, community takes a back seat. Barred windows and doors, fenced-in public facilities and a general atmosphere that expresses a general feeling of anxiety all show the disconnectedness of the community.

"Public safety affects design," Salvadori said, "but it makes people very defensive and more fearful."

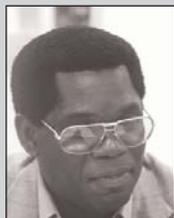
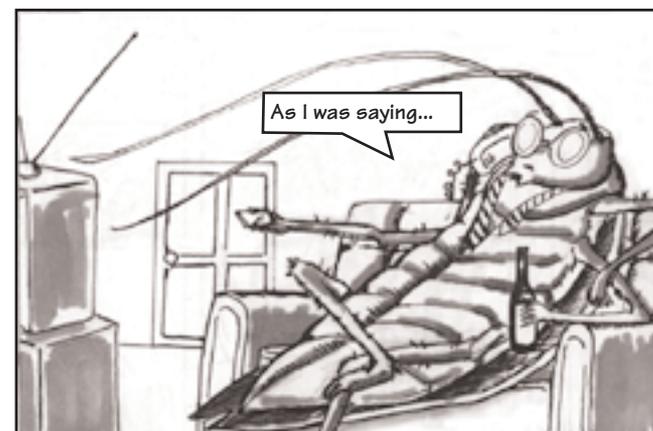
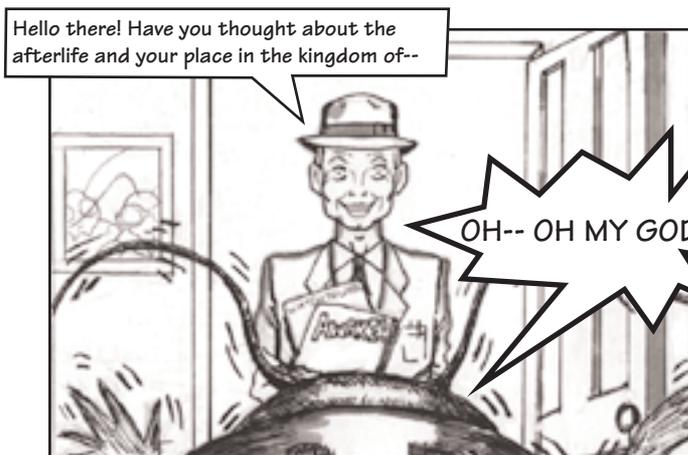
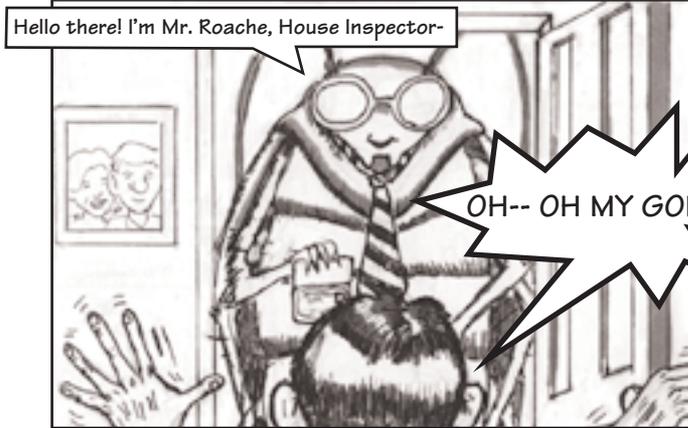
Kathleen Kearney, development director of North of Market Senior Services, thought the fair was a good opportunity to receive all types of information concerning safety.

"This year is terrific," she said. "People are getting the message about safety."

## "Harry"



written and illustrated by Carl Angel



Johnson Ojo



Neli Palma

Not much you can do about trouble in an elevator, but SAFE's Chatsova recommended standing close to the control panel. She also told workshop participants that SAFE offers free security surveys of residences. Inspectors will visit, even on weekends or evenings, and point out changes that would help make rooms and apartments burglary-proof. Advice on better window and door safety are usually suggested, along with purchasing timers that will turn lights on and off as if a resident were present, even when no one is home.

A Code Enforcement workshop led by Deputy City Attorney Neli Palma and Principal Environmental Health Inspector Dr. Johnson A. Ojo of the Public Health Department detailed the various functions provided by the five organizations that comprise the city's Code Enforcement Task Force.

The city attorney's office, Palma said, primarily defends the city from lawsuits, or files them as needed. A team at the office



A bandstand was set up along the park walkway where various groups entertained the crowd.

files litigation on behalf of the city against "property owner or lessors, for a variety of things excluding nuisance." The maximum penalty in such civil cases, she said, is closure of the business and/or payment of \$25,000 plus legal costs.

Ojo said that his assignment is to maintain a healthy environment in restaurants, SRO hotels and in the streets. He promised that the Health Department would investigate every call that comes in, even anonymous ones.

"If you see anything that doesn't fit, give us a call," he said.