

# Rescue Mission tries to save face

*Pastor doesn't speak for Tenderloin, activists tell Huang's aides*

BY TOM CARTER

THE San Francisco Rescue Mission got its knuckles rapped and the crusading, media-attracting antics of its Pastor Roger Huang got panned when the May meeting of the Alliance for a Better District Six erupted into charges that the minister had misrepresented the Tenderloin and run slipshod over sensitive neighborhood politics.

The second agenda item of the evening was an innocent enough update of Huang's 32-day hunger strike outside City Hall over what ails the Tenderloin. The sharp moral thorn in the mission's side is next door, the Chez Paree strip club at 220 Jones, a night spot that originated 50 years ago as an adult theater. Huang, whose mission dates to the mid-1990s, had vowed to stay on a liquid diet until the Chez Paree either closed or moved. Neither happened, and he bailed early, his antipathy to the Chez Paree unresolved.

"I invited these two parties here tonight to help clear the air," said moderator J.R. Manuel, Alliance co-president, as the meeting began.

Terrance Alan, the strip club's owner, was sitting in the front row. But the Rev. Huang, five days after his hunger strike, was nowhere to be seen. The mission was represented by its chaplain, Earl Rogers, seated near the back row.

## READY FOR ROUND 1

The tenor of the room soon made Alan out to be the good guy wearing white trunks; that's Rogers in the black ones. Thin, white, sporting frosted hair and earrings, Alan is about a half-foot shorter than the bearded, 6-foot-4 black

minister with a deep voice. But, as the round began, Rogers' size and reach were neutralized as Alan sat passively and let others handle his offense.

Rogers was Huang's second surrogate in recent weeks to reach out to the neighborhood. Huang lieutenant Clint Ladine took the assault from the Tenderloin Future Collaborative just weeks earlier. Rogers, as scheduled, was at the front of the Community Room at 301 Turk to recapitulate his pastor's litany of neighborhood issues and the hunger strike that he had undertaken "in behalf of the Tenderloin."

The audience of 31 represented many independent TL voices, interests and organizations, not a group to endorse a spokesman without prior examination and analysis. Yet Huang had been billed in the dailies as the voice of the Tenderloin, moral or otherwise. The papers covered the mission's tactics, from marching its schoolchildren in protest in front of the strip joint chanting "shame!" to Huang's hunger strike. Clearly, the pastor had brought increased official attention to the neighborhood, but some wondered at what price.

Manuel asked Rogers if the club was a public nuisance.

"Having the club next to the school is a major problem," Rogers replied.

"But the city can't shut down a lawful business," Manuel said. "And you're saying you're doing this on behalf of the Tenderloin? What group or groups?"

"The Christian Academy was one."

"That's not the Tenderloin."

"No, it's on behalf of the Tenderloin. And the Tenderloin is changing - more children, more



PHOTO BY MARJORIE BEGGS

families."

"It'll take a referendum (to determine representation)," Manuel declared.

At this point, others in the audience, their voices buzzing, tried to enter the exchange.

## "IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, MOVE OUT"

"I don't have to put up with this Christian dogma!" TL resident Ed Evans said above the others. "Terrance's business has been here 50 years. You shouldn't have moved in next to him. If you don't like it, move out!"

Some, not wanting to be painted religious, objected to Huang's use of the "God trump card" to gain political advantage for the Tenderloin. Huang wanted to get rid of the public toilet at Turk and Jones, saying it was dirty and hid illicit activities. On the contrary,

**Pastor Roger Huang**, shown here in the last day of his headline-grabbing hunger strike that failed to get rid of the strip club next door, but did get neighborhood activists on his case.

► CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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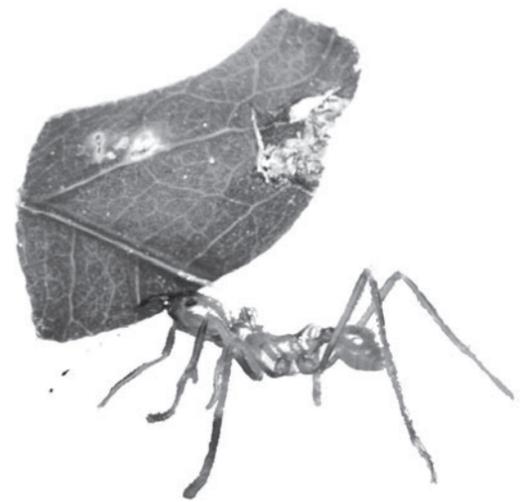
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