

Hope agreed: "She'd come into the chaplaincy at the Ambassador talking in a stream, and I'd just shudder. Once she looked at me and said, 'You don't like me.' It gave me the chance to tell her the truth. I said, 'We just don't know what to expect from you.'"

Ms. Ridolfi was quite disabled toward the end of her life. Her former visiting nurse, Sunny Lovel, noted that going from being active to being in a wheelchair can shut a person in and create anger that's directed at everyone. "Still," Lovel said, "a couple of days with her was all I could take."

Mary Ann Finch recalled how Ms. Ridolfi wanted to go visit her daughter, but delayed because she felt she looked so bad. Finch, who operates the Care Through Touch Institute, which give fully-clothed and seated massages to the homeless and others living on the margins, was approached to give Ms. Ridolfi an "extreme makeover," with shower, manicure, haircut.

"I kept putting it off," Finch said ruefully.

Ms. Ridolfi's age was unknown. She is survived by a daughter and grandchildren who live near Sacramento and two sisters in Southern California.

— MARJORIE BEGGS

PRESTON HOROWITZ
Popular cook at Iroquois

"We have a saying in Hebrew, 'May his memory be a blessing,'" said Rabbi Natan Fenner, who conducted a memorial for Preston Horowitz, a retired cook who made life a little brighter for his friends in the Iroquois hotel.

The cheerful Mr. Horowitz insisted on sharing the fruits of his talents, an offering that one social worker said made him a community builder.

"He'd maybe have to scrounge around for change to buy a pepper but then he'd invite everyone to enjoy what he made," said Bruce Kucejko, an Iroquois resident who knew him 2 1/2 years. "And he had a humorous way of looking at things. We'll all miss him."



PHOTO COURTESY OF IROQUOIS HOTEL

"Yes, I know some people gained weight because of him," said another man among the dozen friends who attended the memorial. "For a while he was charging \$5, but he had to stop that."

Mr. Horowitz died of a heart attack in his sleep March 18. He was 63. His companion of 12 years, Beverly Galaz, said he had worked as a chef in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. They lived at the Iroquois on O'Farrell nearly eight years.

Rabbi Fenner, from the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center, read the charming poem, "The Summer Day" by Mary Oliver, and sang two prayers in Hebrew.

— TOM CARTER

LUIS M. URENA
'A remarkable guy'

The table at the front of the Alexander Residence's community room held three huge bunches of spring flowers, two candles and four cards filled with prayers and remembrances for Luis Urena, who died April 10.

"By this turnout, Luis must have been much loved," said the Rev. Glenda Hope, surveying the 30-plus people of all ages and ethnicities assembled for the April 19 memorial.

Mr. Urena moved to San Francisco from Juarez, Mexico, in 1978. He was 48 years old when he died at UCSF after a long battle with AIDS, according to a long-time friend.

"Luis was a hard worker who wanted to make things better for everyone," said Chris Lapoure, Mr. Urena's friend of 26 years. "He bought a house for his mother in Juarez, he was on the TNDC board [as a tenant rep], he had a job at Beronio Lumber until he got ill 12 years ago, and he loved to build things."

Mr. Urena's friends and neighbors at the Alexander, where he had lived for six years, remembered him as kind and friendly with a great sense of humor.

"He had the purest Spanish heart," said one of the mourners.

"We were all such good friends," added Donna Lisa Stewart, who brought her tiny dog, Spike, to the memorial.

Several recalled Mr. Urena's love for his dog, Blanco, that died last year.

"I remember him walking around the neighborhood with Blanco," said Kelly Cullen, TNDC executive director, "and I have memories of him on the board. He touched everyone with his concern. The rehab at the Alexander was hard, but he dealt with it, even though he was ill — he kept serving, despite the fact that he was dying. It's hard to let go of someone like Luis. He was a remarkable guy — very self-effacing."

Alexander Tenants Association board member Michael Nulty said he became friends with Mr. Urena when he asked to get involved with the tenants' group.

"Luis was very generous with his time," Nulty said. "He became an officer of the tenants' association. Later, he asked me if I thought he should join the TNDC board. I told him to do it and see if he could help improve things for tenants."

Nulty announced that that afternoon, the Board of Supervisors was closing its meeting in memory of Mr. Urena.

He is survived by his sister and a sister and brother in New Mexico.

At the memorial's end, the tables of the community room were piled high with bags of food, mostly frozen entrees and side dishes, a donation from S.F. Rescue Mission. The food, a precious commodity, was gone in just a few minutes.

— MARJORIE BEGGS



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL NULTY

Paint it almost black

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they wanted to change it if it was black and silver, or gold and red like the 49ers."

The spiffy Boeddeker job made up for something of a bummer a year ago. The Friends of Boeddeker Park then were looking for cute ways to make the park more attractive to the young and old alike. Rainbow colors for its big fence came up in a well-attended meeting and got heartily endorsed. Wang, who gardens there, too, agreed it was a swell idea and took the message back to Padilla.

But unknown to everyone, black paint had been ordered months before for the job at the same time a lot of painting was being done in the city's 200 parks. Boeddeker's fence was painted black. The surprised and disappointed Friends said it made the enclosure look like a prison. They also felt snubbed. Some suspected that DPW under orders from the mayor had swept in and done the dark deed.

"We did it," said Padilla. "It was a capital improvement and we already had bought the materials. But last July we went in and painted the playground different colors."

Wang mentioned the directive from the mayor's office in an e-mail to the Friends at their April 14 meeting. Wang asked if letters could be written to the mayor pointing out the waste of taxpayer money (around \$6,000) and touting the uplifting colors.

Former Friends chair, Betty Traynor, read Wang's message to the group. A week later, she sent an e-mail to the mayor and met with his District 6 liaison, Jason Chan, who she said would bring it up in a meeting.

Padilla, who has been caught by surprise by the order, said the deadline for transforming the whole plaza opera blue is June 1. He said he would start with ventilation boxes and light poles and leave the playgrounds for last in hopes an 11th-hour reprieve would save the rainbow scheme.

Meanwhile, Wang continues to get unsolicited favorable comments about the colors from people he sees on his rounds.

"Maybe five or six I've gotten," he says. "What's not to like?" ■

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