

GOOD NEWS for...

TENDERLOIN KIDS Once again they can test their courage in the haunted house at 118 Jones St. on Halloween, from dusk until 9 p.m. This year, Elaine Zamora will wait outside as the Queen of Hearts, perhaps cradling an ax primed to lop off heads. She will direct kids through the gruesome doorway into her former law office waiting room that will be transformed into a cemetery, down a cobwebby hallway laden with icky things hanging from the ceiling, and into the witch's lair. There, a larger than life-size witch will be stirring a bubbling cauldron. If kids make the roundtrip back to the door, the traditional Halloween payoff awaits them: candy. This is Zamora's fourth haunted house. Last year the spooky event drew 40 kids, several in strollers. She has seven costumes looking for volunteers and 15 masks that will fit even more. This year the NOM/TL Community Benefit District, which she manages, is the sponsor. "I just enjoy Halloween and getting dressed up," she says. "It brings something positive to the kids and the neighborhood. And it's part of taking back the streets." To volunteer, call 440-7570.



TENDERLOIN Community School kids are "overjoyed" these days with the largess that rode into their school at 627 Turk St. on the shoulders of 49er football players last month, according to Principal Herb Packer. That would include a set of four basketball hoops for kindergartners, 4-square games (with 30 balls), art supplies, 20 classroom globes and three classroom rugs — \$10,000 worth of stuff, free through Donors Choice, which connects teachers' wish lists with philanthropy. "They just love the globes and, of course, rugs are a classroom luxury," Packer said. Some teachers had made requests a year ago to Donors Choice. But a few weeks ago, he said, the organization's Becky Johnson called to ask if the school wanted to be part of a media event with the Niners and a 49ers Foundation gift. If so, Johnson said, submit a list. "Our teachers had less than 48 hours to get it together," Packer said. "They (Donors Choice) wanted large things to show the players carrying them." The rugs worked great but the art supplies didn't come in big boxes. On Sept. 27, the Examiner ran a setup picture of offensive lineman Eric Heitmann carrying a rug at one end while two smiling first-graders held up the other end.

If you have some good news, send it to marjorie@studycenter.org or tom@studycenter.org.

Cops can't solve sidewalk camps

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top issue of District 6 candidates for supervisor.

Spurred by murders in the Western Addition in his District 5, Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi introduced legislation in May that would increase police foot patrols in a part of his district. It fit in with the growing popularity of community policing, where police and concerned citizens stay in close contact, and many of Mirkarimi's board colleagues jumped to be included.

"The idea caught on like wildfire," District 6 Supervisor Chris Daly said Oct. 2 at the board's Select Committee on Ending Gun and Gang Violence to which the ordinance had been re-referred for changes. Daly amended the Tenderloin and Southern police districts into the one-year pilot program as did Supervisors Sophie Maxwell and Tom Ammiano for their districts. The measure calls for "at least" one beat officer to walk two of three daily police shifts.

PROBLEM IS GROWING

For months, Tenderloin residents have been telling Capt. Brown in public meetings and in private that they want more old-fashioned foot patrols. Calls from the public continue to rise, reflecting what some say are growing, rowdy street populations.

"There's always been a homeless problem in the Tenderloin, people sleeping in doorways and urination and defecation on the sidewalks," said Sister Karen Kielb, resident services coordinator at Presentation Senior Community, Mercy Housing's apartments at Taylor and Ellis. "But in the last two-three weeks there's been an influx of encampments (on Ellis Street). It's shopping carts and cardboard houses. I haven't seen it this bad in the six years I've been here.

"We had our vice presidents come here a week ago and they couldn't walk down that side of the street. It was so ugly and unsightly. We were embarrassed, though we had no fault in it. I e-mailed Capt. Brown. Sometimes I am calling Capt. Brown twice a day."

Kielb thinks the ranks will multiply with Glide's free Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and holiday food giveaways.

70% OF DRUG CRIME IN TL

Seventy percent of the city's drug-related crime occurs in the Tenderloin, according to Police Department figures. Presentation is in the hottest spot in town — police plot 176. Bound by Turk, Leavenworth, Ellis and Mason, it's the heart of the TL where a concentration of nonprofits serve the poor and homeless. It was responsible for 30% of the service calls in 2005, about twice as many as any of the six other TL plots. Moreover, calls from plot 176 have jumped 12% in each of the last two years.

The bottom line for 2005 was crime was up, arrests were down, according to the Tenderloin Station report to the Police Commission in March. Calls for overall service in the Tenderloin showed a 6.1% rise over the previous year and are continuing.

Brown called the "summit" meeting because of crime and nuisance offenses on Golden Gate Avenue. "Putting people in jail is

not the only solution," Brown said, "and we need long-term solutions and your suggestions."

Lt. Larry Minasian, day watch commander, said, "It's not a homeless problem." Often cops are called to handle situations that are basically medical, such as substance abuse, defecation and urination. The problem is dealers supplying addicts. TL police are called several times a day to Tenderloin Health, he said. People served there hang around and cause problems.

NO ANSWERS

"It would be great to come up with one or two ideas we can follow up," he said.

But there was none. The first hour was spent grilling the police about what happens to people who are arrested, because they are right back on the street.

"We've been trying to protect DeMarillac school for years," Minasian said. "We get calls in the morning and when the kids are out in the afternoon. There's a 1,000-foot rule. But there's a minimal number of cases going to court. So it doesn't serve us."

Drug peddling arrests within 1,000 feet of a school carry greater penalties. DeMarillac Middle School is located at 175 Golden Gate, in the same block with Tenderloin Health.

The police get calls from the YMCA on the northwest corner of Leavenworth and Golden Gate about blocked sidewalks, Minasian said, but seldom calls about St. Anthony's long meal lines along Golden Gate. They are well-policed by St. Anthony's, he said, even though drug dealers will "swoop down on long lines."

Another problem area is in the first block of Jones Street when people attend the Islamic Society mosque on Friday afternoons. They are inconvenienced by crowds blocking the sidewalk, he said.

"People are getting everything they need to subsist in the neighborhood and there's no need for them to go elsewhere. But you are impacted," Minasian said. "We've got to come up with something. And we're counting on you to come up with something."

Brown's operations are undermanned. The department has 14 fewer officers than in 2005. She

has four officers on bicycles and four that work on homeless outreach. But it is "rare that we can staff a foot beat" during the day, she said. Taking cops out of cars "jeopardizes safety" because it lengthens response time to emergency calls. She said her ideal is "a foot beat on every block." But the funding isn't there.

The litany was a repeat of exchanges during the Sept. 12 Alliance for a Better District 6 meeting at the TL police station. The featured speakers were Lt. Charlie Orkes of SFPD Field Operations, Supervisor Mirkarimi and a representative from Daly's office.

"We need more foot beats," said Elaine Zamora, manager of the North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District. "Can't we take them from car patrols?"

"No," Orkes said. "Car patrols are for pursuit and quick reaction. You can't expect an officer to run and cover six to eight blocks."

So much narcotics-related crime creates a catch-22, Brown said. It takes cops off the street.

"We send a patrol to Ellis and Jones and 10 minutes later they're right back in the station doing paperwork," Brown said.

'IT'S ALL ABOUT MONEY'

"What can the Board of Supervisors do?" asked George Dias, a candidate for District 6.

"It's all about money," Brown said. "Money for more officers."

"What about policy changes?" he asked.

"No."

"Why don't police make arrests on quality-of-life issues?" he asked.

"Because of the city's hands-off, compassionate approach to the homeless problem," she said.

What can drive drug dealers away is an obsessive question that crops up at every community meeting involving the police. At the Sept. 21 summit meeting, Sharon Woo of the DA's office was the only one to offer some small encouragement.

She said last November bail was raised to \$25,000 for dealing to make it tougher for the mostly BART-commuting drug dealers to get out of jail "in three or four hours." She said the DA's office

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