

GOOD NEWS for...

A CORNER OF THE TL Work starts this month on Mona Caron's mural at the northeast corner of Golden Gate and Jones. Lisa Ruth Elliott, project manager, says she's looking for volunteers from the community. "We'll need help in the next month with basic nondecorative painting, priming areas for detail work, varnishing and creating grids for plotting details," Elliott wrote in an email. Volunteers also need to be expert at cleaning brushes, using a plumb line and "painting cleanly," she added. Funding for the \$63,000 project of the Tenderloin/North of Market Community Benefit District is from a Community Challenge Grant and the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. Info: lisaruth.elliott@gmail.com

THE LOCAL WINNER Angela Au, a 17-year-old who attends Washington High School, was named the Tenderloin Clubhouse 2009 Youth of the Year. The honor — the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco's highest award — entitled Au to compete with youth from the other eight city clubhouses to represent San Francisco in regional and national Boys & Girls Clubs competitions sponsored by Charles Schwab & Co. The citywide winner, announced Jan. 29, was Lowell High School student Diamond Davis, a member of the Excelsior Clubhouse. Local finalists like Au get a plaque, lapel pin and one-time \$500 scholarship; if they advance, they're eligible for \$1,000-a-year scholarships as well as "recognition and leadership opportunities," said TL Clubhouse Executive Director Patricia Zamora. Au, who has been coming to the Clubhouse since she was 7, is a youth leader, athlete and artist, Zamora added. She was feted Feb. 5 at a Youth of the Year celebration at the 201 Turk St. Community Room. For more information: pzamora@kidsclub.org or 351-2582 (Clubhouse office).

BROWN BAGGERS Looking for a new place to sit in the sun to eat your sandwich? This just in from embyrne@attglobal.net: A new plaza, on Ninth Street just off Market, is open to the public from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Park benches, attractive landscaping, even lunchtime concerts when weather permits are some of the amenities. The plaza is just north of the Quaker Meeting Hall, next to the State Compensation Insurance Fund building.

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

Smile, suspect caught on candid cameras

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

POLICE Capt. Gary Jimenez dropped by the January Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting unannounced. It's something he does periodically, not because he's on the agenda but as just another interested community provider.

This time, when two of the three presenters didn't show, Jimenez filled the remaining half-hour answering questions from the dozen people around the table.

"Can you give us an update on Adam's camera?" asked Michael Nulty, Alliance for a Better District 6 president.

(In early December, TL resident Adam Jackson aimed a live-streaming Web cam and microphone out the window of his Ellis and Taylor apartment and captured life six stories below, including some crimes, that then aired on his Website. Within weeks, Jackson pulled the plug on the camera, the result of harassment and death threats, according to the Chronicle and sf.curbed.com, a Website covering the news in San Francisco neighborhoods.)

"I'm not really sure what happened to [Adam Jackson]," Jimenez said, "but I think he's moved out of the neighborhood."

Cameras have become a touchy subject. Just five days before this Collaborative meeting, the UC Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society released a 184-page report on the city's 55 surveillance cameras, installed between 2005 and 2007 at a cost of \$12,500 each. In the central city, they're operating at O'Farrell and Jones, U.N. Plaza and Hallidie Plaza.

Mayor Newsom fought for the cameras, impressed by Chicago's success with 2,300 cameras monitored by police in real time. Supervisor Chris Daly fought against them, calling them a waste of money and an invasion of privacy. Then-TL police Capt. Kathryn Brown called the inclusion of U.N. Plaza "brilliant." She also had wanted a camera at Turk and Taylor.

The report said the cameras may be deterring purse-snatchers and pickpockets citywide but do nothing to

prevent or reduce violent crimes or drug dealing. The reasons are numerous: Cameras operate 24/7, but police aren't allowed to monitor the cameras in real time — too big-brotherish, even Newsom agreed. If police think a specific camera may have captured something useful, they have to request image copies from it within 14 days; after that, images are erased because data storage is limited. Frames per second are so low that images are choppy, hampering identification of perps and license plates. And no one oversees the camera program, the report said.

Jimenez offered mild apologies. "The cameras aren't as good as they could be," he said, but he remains a fan. "Cameras are great — they tell the truth."

He turned out to be prescient.

Seven hours after the Collaborative meeting, 31-year-old Darnell Curry was stabbed to death on the sidewalk in front of 201 Turk St., and two cameras caught at least part of the crime. But they weren't the much-maligned city cameras. One was at the City Radio/MetroPCS store at 401B Turk, the other at Salvation Army's Kroc Center across the street, at 240 Turk.

Jimenez told The Extra by email, "The quality of the video was not all that great but was very instrumental in the arrest of the murderer. Metro PCS ... captured the stabbing in front of their store, and the Kroc Center ... caught the suspect in flight from the area."

Peter Azar, a City Radio employee, says the police couldn't have seen the act.

High on the back wall of the store, which is jammed with myriad electronic and digital gizmos, a monitor displays the angles picked up by the store's two cameras, both inside. One is aimed out the door toward the sidewalk, the other trained on the middle counter where a customer might be standing.

The police came to see what City Radio's cameras caught, Azar said, but it wasn't much. "Through the open front door they could see an argument outside, people moving, the victim hitting someone with the outdoor plastic ad sign, but they didn't capture the stabbing."

Curry, in a wheelchair, managed

to get to an ambulance that happened to be parked nearby on Jones Street, but died before he reached S.F. General.

Over at the Kroc Center, two outside cameras caught the stabbing suspect fleeing.

"The police came after the stabbing to see if they could identify the man, and they downloaded the images from our DVR," said Shelton Yee, the center's director of operations. He doubts that police could have seen the man's face, but they saw enough to place him at the scene.

The night of the crime, Capt. Jimenez clarified what happened in a special police crime bulletin sent by email to community groups: "Initially, the police could not find a witness nor the crime scene, but through viewing the video cameras ... were able to locate where the incident occurred and images of the stabbing and escaping suspect."

"Plainclothes officers located a man matching the description of the suspect who was found to be in possession of a bloody knife."

The Kroc Center camera — a ProVideo CVC-7MWTDV — is one of four near the front door, two inside and two outside, and are part of an arsenal of 59 security cameras throughout the building. Yee said center staff monitor the images in real time "casually, as part of their work during the day," but no one was watching when the stabbing suspect fled.

Like the new center, its cameras are state of the art and produce smooth, seamless 29.97 frames-per-second images. The Chronicle reported that city cameras can go up to only 12 frames per second and, worse, often are set to a quarter of that or less to save storage space.

Jimenez said the assailant was arrested within 45 minutes and that the Kroc Center video may become important to the case.

"We've gathered enough evidence to have the district attorney accept the case and prosecute it," the captain said. "The video was booked into evidence — it'll be discovered to the defendant's attorney and possibly used against him." ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CENTRAL City Extra has a responsibility to reflect the community it serves. Within that parameter are decisions based on fact. Information is given placement based on priority. In many ways, those decisions are determined by the pulse, the climate and the daily struggles of your readers. Central City Extra also chooses how it will acknowledge individuals, some while they live, others when they die.

To devote over two pages to the life of Hank Wilson was more than just a tribute to him. Readers discovered how he encouraged others to understand their own role in raising the quality of life for themselves, their neighbors and their friends.

Many lives were transformed by Hank Wilson. In turn, many whose life he changed responded by reach-

ing out to help others. This was the world of Hank Wilson and this clearly defines what we call community.

Hank Wilson was a person who understood education. He knew how to teach and he set an example for many. Central City Extra captured the layer upon layer of lives he changed. When you honored Hank Wilson, you also honored many who make San Francisco a better city, the Tenderloin a more vibrant community and you let us all know that, like Hank Wilson, we have the opportunity to make our world a better place.

Now the time has come to say thanks for the important and responsible coverage you, Tom Carter, and other Central City Extra staff have given to the life of Hank Wilson.

Allen White
San Francisco

ERRATA In Issue 85, the Futures Collaborative story contained errors: The TL police captain was holding meetings seven years ago, and the Safety Network has never held regular public meetings. Also, the 220 Golden Gate efficiency kitchenettes will have two built-in electric burners. Our report on Proposition L said the Community Justice Center will address quality-of-life violations; it will prosecute nonviolent felonies and misdemeanors.



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