Pink Triangle Park Opens.
The most recent moves came from someone not even scheduled to speak.
Gloria Lyon, a Holocaust camp survivor, sat in the audience at the June 23rd dedication of Pink Triangle Park, her own memories of the experience weighing on her mind as various dignitaries spoke of the importance of human rights. As the crowd waited for the Mayor to arrive, she rose and approached the podium asking to share her memories.

“I remember the pink triangle but I didn’t know at the time what it stood for because there was never any time to socialize,” recalled Lyon who still bears the tattooed identification of A6374 on her arm. “I saw them work hard, being abused and deprived of their human rights. I saw them being beaten.”

She recalled her own experience in the notorious Auschwitz camp as a Jewish teenager witnessing the lines of people entering the crematoriums, with nothing but smoke coming out. Her own death came inescapably near when she and others more were forced onto a truck en route to execution fields. She jumped, rolling down an embankment and hiding until she could melt back into a crowd.

The audience of about 150 people was quiet as Lyon finished her remarks and Mayor Brown approached. Veterans of World War II, some of whom fought in the European theater, snapped at attention and saluted. Though she and the Mayor stood together, there was no question for whom the salute was intended.

An emotional wave rolled the audience forward.

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Gloria Lyon shows her concentration camp ID tattoo and spoke of seeing prisoners with pink triangles.
The dedication ceremony of Pink Triangle Park was made possible, in part, through the support of these generous businesses. Eureka Valley Promotion Association expresses its thanks to:

- MARK LENO, SAN FRANCISCO SUPERVISOR DISTRICT EIGHT
- CAROLE MIGDEN, MEMBER OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY

Pink Triangle Park and Memorial is open and ready for visitors. It is the nation’s first permanent memorial that focuses exclusively on the experiences of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders during the Nazi regime. It joins other significant Castro landmarks such as the giant Rainbow Flag, the mural of Harvey Milk above his former camera shop, the site of the nation’s first AIDS Quilt Office and, of course, the Castro Theater itself. Though the park is open, the work continues on developing educational outreach materials and fundraising to ensure the park’s proper maintenance of landscaping and sculptural art.

EVPRA is proud of its principal sponsorship role in transforming a oddly shaped, weedy eyesore into something of national significance. The three-year-long effort that began with a national art competition and continues embodied in the new park could not have occurred without the support of hundreds of hardworking volunteers from the residential and business communities. A few, although no where near all, are recognized in the next column.

This month also marks the 30th anniversary of another significant chapter in our organization’s history: the creation of the Seward Street mini park. Please join us to celebrate the dedication of that Park on July 19th. Congratulations to all who helped create this unique Park for the enjoyment of all.

I encourage residents, business, workers, nonprofits and faith communities to join EVPRA as in investment in keeping the Castro and upper Market area a vibrant neighborhood in which to live and work. As our June and July activities demonstrate, EVPRA is where you belong.

Castro Street Fair Approaching.

The annual Castro Street Fair is approaching and volunteers are needed for the October event. Each year EVPRA receives a portion of its funding from donation collection efforts near the 17th Street entrance to the Fair. Please contact the new project leader for this, Adam Hagen, at 415-296-2190 or ahagen@mciwire.com.

Human Rights Campaign Dinner

Saturday July 26, 2003

Kathleen Connell and her partner Jaye Whitaker are putting together a table for this year’s Human Rights Campaign dinner on Saturday, July 26. Special guests will be John Kerry and Margaret Cho. The cost is $175 per person to support one of the country’s top Gay and Lesbian rights organizations. Anyone interested should contact Kathleen directly. At 650/604-4837

Castro Photos Needed!

Local writer Strange de Jim has signed with Arcadia Publishing to show the history of “San Francisco’s Castro” in 200 photos and captions. He is seeking photos from EVPRA members and others of the Castro/Eureka Valley area and lifestyle taken anytime between 1848 and 2003. If you have an image you’d like to send him for inclusion, please send to Strange de Jim, P.O. Box 14547, San Francisco, CA 94114. He will scan your photos and return them. If you have questions, call Strange at 415-621-4517.