The Castro/EVNA general meeting on May 19 will focus on the three residential and commercial developments proposed for the last block of Upper Market Street between 16th/Noe and Castro Streets: the “church pit” site, Gold’s Gym, and the RC gas station site. Come and find out how these projects may affect you and how you can be involved in guiding the changes that are coming to Market Street. Attend, listen, learn, and express your views.

Three years ago the Upper Market community came together to craft a vision to guide pending and future projects on Market Street between Castro and Octavia Streets. There was a huge turn-out at the community meetings beginning in Fall 2007, resulting in the Upper Market Community Plan, approved in October 2008, which incorporates the community’s vision and goals for the Upper Market corridor as well as design guidelines for developers and property owners. The Plan expressly states that it “relies on the zoning and land use designations of the Market and Octavia Plan and supports the community benefits created through the Market and Octavia process.”

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The Market and Octavia Area Plan, developed over a period of six years, was adopted by the Board of Supervisors and incorporated into the General Plan and the Planning Code of San Francisco in May 2008. Among its many elements, it assesses a community impact fee on new development to subsidize parks, streetscape improvements and affordable housing. It has an inclusionary housing policy requiring that 15% of new units be affordable housing. It sets building heights and parking standards for most of the area. It stipulates building design standards and requires 15-foot ceilings on new retail space on Market Street.

The Market and Octavia Plan includes the Upper Market Street corridor from Octavia to 16th/Noe Streets. But it does not include the last block from 16th/Noe to Castro Street, leaving it “an orphan” block in terms of zoning and illogically splitting the intersection. And yet the Upper Market Community Plan is clear about expectations of uniform development controls for the entire Upper Market corridor.

Consistency of expectations is crucial for constructive engagement with developers through the permitting process. How can our community make sure that the new proposed developments are consistent with the rest of Upper Market zoning and land use requirements and that they reflect the vision and goals of the two Plans?

What is important to us and how do we want the Planning Department to apply the development standards, community benefits policies and design guidelines to these three large projects?

Be sure to attend the Castro/EVNA general meeting on May 19 and be involved! You may also communicate your views on these projects at any time by e-mail to Judy.Hoyem@evna.org or by letter to EVNA, PO Box 14137, SF. CA 94114.

How to deal with a noisy neighbor

By Alan Beach-Nelson, EVNA President

Note: This is a reprint from the March 2008 issue. EVNA was asked to re-run an updated version as part of our work with Castro After Dark (CAD) [see March 2010 Eureka!]. EVNA has formed the Community Awareness Committee (CAC) to serve as the neighborhood counterpart to CAD. If you’re having issues with disturbance in the neighborhood, please email Rob Cox, CAC Chair, rob.cox@evna.org.

I highly doubt anyone moves to Eureka Valley to enjoy the absolute quietude one normally associates with suburbia. And, I certainly don’t think for a moment anyone would live in the Castro central business districts without expecting a certain level of what we call “city noises.” In fact, I would bet that most move to these central areas precisely for the vibrancy. I know that my husband Daren and I did. But what does one do when the “city noises” we expect become consistent and persistent nuisances? First and foremost, it is important to know that almost every establishment has what are called Conditions of Use. Uniformly, one of them is that the establishment shall not negatively impact the neighborhood; for example, a condition imposed on a local bar clearly states: The bar owner shall implement other conditions and/or management practices . . . to insure that management and/or patrons of the establishments maintain quiet, safety, and cleanliness of the premises and the vicinity of the use.

Based on experience, I provide you with steps to deal with a noisy neighbor—specifically, an entertainment venue. At every step, copy CAC Chair, Rob Cox, robcox@evna.org.

1. Unless completely obvious, it is a good idea to investigate the source. You don’t want to falsely accuse someone. If you’re awakened every Monday night at 1:30 a.m., go out and see if you can ascertain the source. It is an inconvenience, but you want to be sure before you move on to step 2.

2. Contact the bar or restaurant. Nicely. They may not know that their patrons are disturbing the neighborhood. Talk to both the manager and the owner.

3. Advise your supervisor, currently Bevan Duffy, bevan.duffy@sfgov.org; also copy his staff, which you can find at www.ci.sf.ca.us.

4. Contact Robert Davis, Executive Director of the Entertainment Commission, (415) 554-7793; bob.davis@sfgov.org. Advise of the issue and the steps taken. Bob is very responsive. He will be in touch with the business owner, as well as investigate the nuisance.

5. Contact Planning Enforcement which ensures businesses adhere to the Planning Code. We are in the Southwest Quadrant, staffed by Kate M. Conner, (415)575-6914, kate.conner@sfgov.org. She is terrific and very responsive. She will open an investigation and notify the establishment of the complaint. The owner can ask to see the complaint so always be sure to be factual, and try not to let “emotion” get into it.

This process takes time, results are not immediate. I know personally how frustrating it can get, but try to give each person along the way a chance to rectify the situation before moving to the next step.

While no plan is perfect, taking these steps should ameliorate the nuisance. In fact, you may find that a situation that had been causing you aggravation has turned into a close partnership with an area business. After all, that’s what a neighborhood represents—people living together, at the very least in peaceful co-existence and ideally in peaceful harmony, respect and partnership.
Celebrate the first Harvey Milk Day in the Castro Saturday, May 22, 2010. There are over 20 separate events, each celebrating Harvey in some way. Visit www.milkday.org for a complete list of activities—it promises to be a fun filled day!

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Friends of Saint Francis Childcare Center invites you to its Spring Fling fundraiser Cultivation, a fun-filled, appetizing evening at The Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture.

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Wednesday, June 9 from 6:30 to 10 pm.
Visit www.fosfchildcare.org

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2010 Membership Meetings
7:30-9PM, Chase Meeting Room
15th & Sanchez at Market St.
January 20, March 17, May 19, July 21, September 15, and November 17

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