CASTRO/Eureka Valley

Neighborhood Association Newsletter

Eureka!

The neighborhood association for the Castro, Upper Market and all of Eureka Valley since 1878.

Distributed to over 3,500 residents and businesses in central Castro/Eureka Valley

CASTRO CARES - SOFT LAUNCH IN DECEMBER: A SUCCESS

By Alan R. Beach-Nelson, President

As previously reported in the Eureka! Castro Cares is a coalition of neighborhood groups, businesses, social service and city programs coming together to improve the quality of life for those living on the street and those who live, work, shop & play in the Castro. Castro Cares is concerned about these issues:

• People with serious mental illness/drug addiction on the streets
• Increase in mostly non-violent crime, drug dealing & petty theft
• An increase in bad behavior, public drunkenness, rowdiness and lack of respect for the area from late-night partiers

We, in collaboration with the City of San Francisco and its Police Department, Patrol Special Police and Department of Public Health, are developing locally controlled, long-term, sustainable solutions to these concerns. Castro Cares is a two-year pilot program to fund added compassionate help to those living on the street and additional hours of police patrols, paid for and supervised by Castro Cares.

GREEN THUMBS MAKE GOOD FRIENDS

By Sally Swope, neighborhood resident

Every time I walked through the wrought iron gate and went up the stairs on the left of the courtyard to my flat, I cringed as I passed a huge jade plant with broken limbs. The paper person had broken the limbs when she threw the Chronicle into the courtyard.

“Look where you’re throwing the paper,” I told her in a stern voice at 5:30 am.

Since no public garden had come through for me, I decided to turn the ugly cement courtyard into a green space with a peaceful feeling (see “before” photo page 9).

First I pulled out the jade plant from the three-feet-high cement planter about that looked like a huge Chinese urn with several characters on the side. I threw the jade plant into the recycling container. Even the space where all the trash containers were kept repulsed me with its skuzzy gray retainer wall.

I put a huge green leaf plant in the urn that looked like a fountain and a huge red bougainvillea in the other urn. More colorful flowers came from Hortica. My partner, a docent at the San Francisco Arboretum, gave me a huge fuchsia with red and purple flowers to put next to the flowering yellow and white honeysuckle.
When I became president of EVNA in 2010 we had just 55 members, 60 non-member subscribers and we printed 200 of our one-page newsletters. Our Board of Directors consisted of six members and we had one active committee, the Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC) with six members - all Board Members. Our bi-monthly public meetings had a handful of attendees.

As the new President, I found these data points to be quite troubling. We were THE neighborhood association for Eureka Valley and as such, we often “spoke” for the neighborhood to city agencies, most notably the Planning Commission, and yet we had very little involvement FROM the neighborhood and shared our work with very few of the 5,000 homes in the core Eureka Valley area. In short a few were speaking for the majority without much input from those for whom we were speaking.

Over the past five years, the Board of EVNA has worked hard to grow our organization. The Board now consists of 12 Board Members from diverse backgrounds, with diverse viewpoints, though we could use more women. We now have six active committees: Marketing, Newsletter, Social and Community Engagement, Quality of Life, PLUC and Technology.

We now have a robust and extensive newsletter production that is 16 pages covering a wide range of topics and news relevant to our community. Moreover, the newsletter is now distributed to over 3,500 homes and businesses with plans to expand to the full 5,000 homes and businesses in the core Castro/Eureka Valley. This ensures that the community at-large is aware of topics of importance to the neighborhood, has an opportunity to be part of the decision making process by voicing their opinions to the Board and/or actively participating at our bi-monthly public meetings and is aware of EVNA’s planned positions on topics of importance to us all.

Our membership and subscriber roles have also grown exponentially. We currently have 302 members and 225 non-member subscribers. While I realize this is less than 10% of the population in the core Castro district,
City Hall Update
By Supervisor Scott Wiener

In kicking off 2015, we can look back on an eventful 2014 and get ready to meet the challenges ahead.

Castro Streetscape Project
2014 saw a lot of change in our amazing neighborhood. We started and completed the Castro Streetscape Project, for which I was able to obtain funding from the 2011 streets bond. After an incredible amount of community input and participation in the design process, we were able to move forward with this transformational change to our core commercial corridor. The Castro Street sidewalks are now nearly double what they were before. The street has beautiful new lighting and trees. We also incorporated the neighborhood’s history and culture by installing rainbow crosswalks at 18th and Castro, placing neighborhood history plaques in the sidewalk, and implementing the first phase of the Rainbow Honor Walk, with sidewalk plaques for famous LGBT people in our community’s history.

I want to thank the Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District, Castro Merchants, the Castro/Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association, the Rainbow Honor Walk, and our city departments (DPW, MTA, Planning) for making this project a reality. I also want to thank Andres Power in my office for playing a huge role in ensuring the project moved forward as smoothly as possible.

I also want to acknowledge our neighborhood merchants and residents for persevering through the construction. It wasn’t easy on anyone -- particularly our merchants -- and I thank folks for hanging in there. We now have a permanent neighborhood upgrade that we can enjoy for generations.

Castro/Upper Market Retail Strategy
Our neighborhood has a large, diverse, and thriving retail sector. We also have challenges. A few positive things are happening. First, we are gradually filling vacant storefronts, both existing and in the new construction going up along Market Street. From long-term vacancies such as the old Diesel store (soon to be SoulCycle) and the Patio (soon to be Hamburger Mary’s) to more recent vacancies such as Escape from New York Pizza (now a new pizza place) and the old sunglass shop (now a hotdog shop), dozens of new stores, service providers, restaurants, and bars have come into the neighborhood. Of course, we want to make sure we are being proactive in attracting businesses that will add to the neighborhood and meet the needs of both residents and visitors. A coalition of neighborhood groups, including EVNA, has come

Supervisor Wiener continues page 8
The Café is committed to ensuring that the Castro has a vibrant and active nightlife and a peaceful neighborhood.

All who live, work and play in our neighborhood deserve a positive and healthy community.

We are proud to help set the tone for working in partnership with fellow businesses, neighborhood leaders and residents.

It’s about respect. It’s about partnership. It’s about fun.

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LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE
By Mark McHale, EVNA Board Member

I See Heroes

One small act, one gift, one word sets a world of experience into motion around us. In any given moment, what we choose to do, how we respond and what we say to one another contributes to or detracts from the essence of who we are and what kind of community we want to create together.

Our newly revamped commercial area along Castro Street and the redeveloping landscape along the entire Market Street corridor and bringing lots of new residents and new storefronts, some very interesting architecture, and a revitalized interest and engagement in our public spaces. We are a vital neighborhood in a city determined to renew its identity on the world stage, a city committed to progressive values and a sense of responsibility, fairness and caring.

At the same time, our community is facing a host of challenges both unique and common to urban areas, most notably the growing number of unconnected people who are obviously suffering with severe forms of addiction and mental illness, and the (related) abuse of our public spaces like Jane Warner Plaza. While these pressing and disturbing issues are not unique to the Castro, nor to the city, the manner in which we as a community choose to engage with them is square upon our shoulders. After the frustration and disgust wanes, when we can look beyond our own disappointments and fears, when we can stop desperately trying to blame others, only then can we stop ignoring this reality and with compassion actually see ‘the least among us’ right in front of our eyes. It is then, when we identify our commonality as human beings, can we ask ourselves, “What am I willing to do about it?”

There are many heroes among us as we walk through our daily lives, heroes from many different facets contributing to our experience. Here, we need to call out and commend the handful of residents, non-profit and city professionals who have found the strength to consider the question, have refused to ignore the problem any longer, and have decided to take action. Those involved in the Castro Cares program have asked themselves “What am I willing to do about those unfortunates living on our streets and the effects on everyone from the decreasing quality of life in our neighborhood?” Here are heroes who are willing to give this sensitive issue their best ideas, they are willing to take risks without the guarantee of an outcome, and they are willing to take action in the hopes of making a positive change. Bravo!

For more than a year, this group has given of their time to address the very real fact that we have a problem in the area. Together, with input sought from every person and stakeholder willing to contribute their insight, this group has attempted to find a solution that will address the concerns of residents tired from the unchecked assault on property and public spaces and from those who have no voice or option for improving their living conditions on their own. While these are not the only problems we face, Castro Cares will address the majority of issues we face in this arena. Granted, the program is a long-term effort, expensive, difficult to measure, and has no guarantee of success…but it’s something. The chance to make a difference is real.

Whether we agree or not, whether we think we’ve already paid enough in tax dollars, or that changes need be made or things don’t go far enough, the fact is that it’s the best solution on the table to improve our shared public experience and to help those who need it. We cannot go on turning a blind eye and enduring the outcome. The other fact is that it will take many heroes to make it work, and giving as you are able and to the measure of your ability is required from those who want to make a difference. I ask you to be an every-day hero: subscribe to Castro Cares program, volunteer your skills and time, engage however you can - make a difference - we all have something to give.

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A key component of Castro Cares that we believe will lead to success is a dual approach outreach to those in need, and increased police presence with a foot patrol like those in days gone-by.

**WINTER HOLIDAY SOFT LAUNCH:**
Through an $8,875 contribution from the Castro Community Benefit District the program had a soft-launch in December. It was an amazing success.

**ON THE OUTREACH FRONT:**
One hundred care packages consisting of two pairs of socks and toiletries, and a $6 Subway card were distributed to those in need by our dedicated outreach worker. The Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District funded the packages, and local volunteer Bob Burnside assembled them for us. Going forward, The Apothecarium is planning on funding this key component to our compassionate outreach.

Further, Castro Cares brought the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) into the coalition early. Due to this collaboration, DPH has funded 4 hours a week of HOT workers dedicated to the Castro/Upper Market beginning in September. Over the past four months these HOT workers have engaged with 74 individuals, 4 people were referred to shelter, 1 person was placed in a room, and 9 were referred to other services and 4 were referred to the LGBTQ Project Homeless Connect. This population typically has a resistance to authority so these numbers are quite impressive, in fact of the 74 people engaged, only 33 resisted assistance.

**ON THE ENFORCEMENT FRONT:**
You may have noticed an added police presence in the neighborhood through the month of December. The Castro CBD funded 64 hours of overtime police (known as 10B) on foot patrol throughout the district. Sixteen four hour shifts were staffed in the early evening, 5 to 9 PM or late at night, 11 PM to 3 AM random dates and times from December 8 to December 27. Patrols are divided evenly between Market Street east of Sanchez to Octavia, and West of Sanchez to Diamond and the Castro District - see map.

The holiday program started on Monday December 8th for a 5 – 9 PM shift. According to Andrea Aiello, executive director, Castro/Upper Market CBD, “The officer’s first order of business was to call the EMT for an injured homeless man. This is exactly what we are looking for with Castro Cares, to improve the quality of life for all residents (housed, not/marginally housed) and for those who work and play here.”

*Castro Cares continues next page*
The soft launch of the added enforcement resulted in over 41 citations and warnings on just 9 of the shifts ranging from infractions for verbal assault, trespassing, shoplifting among others. As this was a soft launch we did have some data collection issues that are being worked on.

**As the Program Unfolds:**
The Castro Cares beat officers will be conducting community outreach and will focus particularly on these types of issues that affect us all:

- Public drunkenness
- Aggressive panhandling
- Late-night rowdy or violent behavior
- Bike riding and skateboarding on the sidewalk
- Public urination
- Public open-container and substance use/abuse
- Trespassing
- People going through city and personal/merchant trash cans creating a mess.

To ensure that the 10B officers know the neighborhood and are sensitive to the diverse community in the Castro/Upper Market, Castro Cares requested that the officers all be drawn from Mission Station.

**Key Component for Success:**
The fully implemented Castro Cares program will provide 95 hours a week of added enforcement and outreach work. The full cost of the Program is over $360,000 per year.

Supervisor Wiener has championed Castro Cares and was able to allocate $100,000 a year for two years in the city budget. The Castro/Upper Market Community Benefit District is also contributing $15,000 and has secured an additional $15,000 in grants. That leaves $220,000 left to be raised in the community for OUR community.

To succeed, Castro Cares is dependent on YOUR participation AND contributions. Fundraising for Castro Cares began in December and we are pleased that we have already raised $150,000 from grants, business and resident contributions. However, $200,000 is still needed to fully implement the program.

**WE NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION: To donate and to learn more go to: www.castrocares.org**

With everyone’s involvement, Castro Cares will be a success and it will improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, shops and plays in the Castro.

*Castro/Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association is a charter member of Castro Cares and has played a leadership role in its development.*
together, working with my office and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to formulate a neighborhood retail strategy. Data collection is now underway, and many of us eagerly anticipate the results of this important work.

**CASTRO CARES**

Homelessness and street behavior continue to be challenges for our neighborhood. I work closely every day with our police department, our Community Benefit District, and homeless outreach workers to try to address the problem. In the last budget, I obtained funding for a pilot program, called Castro Cares. Castro Cares is a coalition of neighborhood organizations dedicated to a targeted approach to homelessness and street behavior in the Castro. The project will fund homeless outreach workers dedicated to the Castro as well as off-duty police officers who will patrol the neighborhood. Both our police department and our homeless outreach team are under-staffed. We don’t currently have enough officers, and outreach workers tend to focus on the Tenderloin, Mission, and other neighborhoods with the most intense needs. Castro Cares will supplement existing services and ensure focused attention on the Castro. It’s not a silver bullet, given how deep these problems are, but it will help.

Here’s to a great and productive 2015.

Scott Wiener represents the Castro/Upper Market, among other neighborhoods, on the Board of Supervisors. More information at www.scottwiener.com.

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**Handy Resources for Home**

**CALL 311 FOR:**
- Report Litter and Graffiti, St. Cleaning, Abandoned Vehicles, St. Signs Missing/Damaged, Pot Hole Repair

**POLICE:**
- Non-Emergency: 553-0123
- Report nuisance and non-urgent issues. Always ask for a CAD #.
- Mission Station: 558-5400
- Captain Dan Perea’s email: daniel.perea@sfgov.org

**HOMELESS issues:**
- Community Awareness & Treatment Service (CATS) non-emergency: 734-4233

**PARKING AND TRAFFIC issues:**
- SFMTA Parking Enforcement: 553-1200
- SFMTA Parking Tickets: 701-3000

**DISTRICT. 8 SUPERVISOR SCOTT WIENER:** 554-6968, Scott.Wiener@sfgov.org

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**Neighbors’ Faves!**

Neighbors share their favorite places in the ‘hood!

**This issue’s Faves come from EVNA Board Member, Alan Beach-Nelson**

**Dapper Dog - 417 Castro Street**

I love a good hot dog. I love a gourmet one even better! I’ve been anxiously awaiting the opening of Dapper Dog. It was worth the wait and it has already become one of my Castro favorites. The Banh Mi is a different twist on a hot dog and very good. The Chicago Dog is heaven. I have 8 more dogs to go on the menu. They’re very new so the have kinks to work out, but it is definitely worth a visit.

**Castro Nails - 431 Castro Street**

Love to pop into Castro Nails for a mani & pedi. Mid-day special is $32. But if you really want to pamper yourself go for the Castro Mani & Pedi which comes with massage. The staff is always friendly and welcoming. It’s one of my indulgence treats.

**Mudpuppy’s Tub and Scrub - 536 Castro Street**

My husband and I just adopted two rescue dogs, a 9 year old and a 1 year old Chihuahua. Mudpuppy’s has been amazing! The staff is so attentive, caring and thorough. From a full wash and blow to trimming nails, they do it all - with a smile. Not only do they make you feel appreciated, more importantly they make your puppy feel special and loved. Their online appointment system and post-visit are really a nice touch.

**Best In Show - 545 Castro Street**

Whatever you need for your little cat or dog best friend, Best in Show has it all: dog apparel, quality food, toys, carriers, etc. The staff is very knowledgeable and helpful. They also offer a discount if you have rescued a puppy.

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**I’m QUEER but I’ll get your deal STRAIGHT!**

Katharine Holland

[www.KatharineHolland.com DRE#01336487 415-378-2697]
“Ah! Honeysuckle, it gives me a nostalgic memory-- it covered a fence near the sandbox of my favorite house growing up.” I said to Mark, my neighbor on the other side of the courtyard. He agreed to help me.

I knew nothing about him, and discovered we both lived there more than twenty years! We were transplants from the Midwest.

First he put up a white fence over the gray retaining wall in back and added small plants on the ledge above the trash containers (see after photo).

“My bamboo seems to grow an inch a day!” he said.

He added an Australian willow tree in the cement front yard that he bought from Friends of the Urban Forest and he screwed in ten pots with robust plants on a stand he built.

The two friends in high tech from Vancouver who shared the other flat in Mark’s building added succulents. The owner of Mark’s building, Jim Wong, took me to a plant warehouse where we bought large celadon-colored pots to put on each side of the gate. To enhance the entrance, I added huge fire-engine red geraniums in them.

“That red’s a show-stopper for cars” I said, and Jim agreed. Other residents had bought my building for a song in the 1960’s before the land rush in the Castro.

All nine of us no longer pass each other mute with a blank stare—we’d broken the sound barrier. It feels good to walk through our enchanted garden and relax in the sunlight and catch up with neighbors. We’re part a neighborhood that has more than 20 gardens on the block of Hancock Street, one block from Dolores Park.
CASTRO HOODIES - STORIES FROM HOODLINE

As you may have heard, the Castro Biscuit has moved over to Hoodline - San Francisco Neighborhood news. Biscuit founder Roy McKenzie is still on the beat for Castro news, but now you’ll find him at http://hoodline.com.

ICONIC CASTRO TRAVEL AGENCY

“Now, Voyager” back in business

By Sari Staver

Thanks to a generous landlord, the 31-year-old Castro travel agency Now, Voyager has a new lease on life.

This week, Now, Voyager owner Peter Greene hung the shingle of the iconic LGBT travel agency at 4115 19th St., in the small Victorian storefront next door to Spike’s Coffee.

Greene found the “greatly discounted” commercial space through landlord Joe Chavez, a longtime client of Now, Voyager. When Now, Voyager was evicted from its former location on 18th Street near Douglass several years ago, and former owner Jonathan Klein died suddenly, Chavez knew he wanted to help his longtime friends and business associates to keep the business intact.

Greene and Klein launched Now, Voyager in 1983 with a focus on providing exceptional attention to their clientele.

“We worked very hard to bring our customers personal, high-quality service,” said Greene. “Our motto always was, ‘We want to get you the most for your hard-earned dollars.’”

Although Now, Voyager had a loyal following, the travel business has faced enormous challenges in recent years, said Greene, who has worked in the industry for five decades. In addition to airlines cutting agency fees and customers turning to online travel sites, the proprietors of Now, Voyager faced additional difficulties. In the 1980s, just as their business was gaining steam, the AIDS epidemic struck. Both Greene and Klein soon learned they too were HIV-positive and were dealing with their own health issues.

Their troubles intensified several years ago when Klein and Greene were forced out of their home of 27 years through an Ellis Act eviction and, soon after, the same landlord refused to renew their commercial lease.

Klein, who suffered from depression for many years, took his own life in April of 2013 by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. In a note left to friends, he apologized and said that he couldn’t face all of the losses.

At Klein’s memorial service, Joe Chavez told Greene that he would do “anything possible” to help save the business. Greene had retired from Now, Voyager at that point, but when Klein’s will named him the owner of the business, “I couldn’t just walk away,” said Greene.

Greene added that when Chavez gave him a discounted rate on the 19th Street space, he couldn’t say ‘no’ to reopening the business.

Right now, Greene identifies his top challenge as finding additional travel professionals who want to work at Now, Voyager. He has already hired one employee with over 30 years of corporate experience who will start work on Monday, but needs someone with web experience to help him update the website.

Although Greene’s home is now in Palm Springs, he plans to travel back and forth to get the business off its feet. He hopes to have it fully staffed at least five days a week.

Greene began his career in travel when he was a 19-year-old college student in Colorado and had a jack-of-all trades job with a regional airline. He then formed a company to organize gay bike trips to China, “before either China or gay was on anyone’s radar.” Klein

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EVNA Membership Drive:
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Please join or renew your membership today.
http://evna.org/join.

WE'RE BACK THE EDGE
COME PLAY WITH US

4145 18th St.
was the first person to sign up for the China trip and the two became fast friends, and soon, business partners.

“Jonathan was an absolutely amazing and wonderful person,” said Greene tearfully. “I miss him every day.”

If you’re looking for a travel agent, a travel career, or can help Greene update his website, he can be reached at Now, Voyager’s longtime phone number (415) 626-1169 or by email at pg@nowvoyager.com.

**Barracuda Sushi Shutters, Will Reopen as “Mandu”**

*By Ray McKenzie*

After eight years in the Castro, Barracuda Sushi at 2251 Market St. closed its doors this week, sharing on Facebook that it will remain closed for the rest of January and will reopen with “a new concept and menu in February.”

We reached out to Barracuda Sushi’s owners to find out more details about the new concept. Manager Nam Kim told Hoodline that closing the restaurant was a difficult decision, but that he has big plans for its new incarnation.

The new restaurant, opening in February, will be called “Mandu” and will offer pan-Asian street food. “‘Man-

Du’ means pot stickers in Korean,” Kim said. “Since many Asian countries have their own versions (gyoza, jiaozi, etc.) I thought it would be a good name to represent what we are about.”

Kim wants to bring the sidewalk and alleyway food stall vibe from countries like Japan, Korea, and Thailand to San Francisco.

The kitchen will be helmed by Slurp Noodle Bar chef Daniel Sudar.

“Dishes will be quick, casual, fast, fresh and easily approachable as well as reasonably priced,” said Kim. A drink menu will include Asian-inspired cocktails, wine, sake, and an Asian-style agua fresca.

The sushi restaurant was a regular stop for Sunday brunch-goers, offering bottomless mimosas and breakfast plates. Kim plans to open the restaurant for dinner only to start, saying that he wants to make sure to get it right. Soon after that, he plans to open for brunch again, and then to expand with lunch offerings as well.

If you’re missing Barracuda Sushi, it still operates two other locations in Burlingame and Daly City. Otherwise, stay tuned for Mandu, coming soon to the Castro.

**Manos Nouveau Opens In The Castro**

*By Ray McKenzie*

Manos Nouveau, the Castro’s newest Latin-fusion dining restaurant, has opened at 3970 17th St. It replaces Pica Pica, which shuttered in early 2014.

Owner Manuel Montalban told Hoodline he was excited to make a Castro home for his restaurant after closing the restaurant’s previous incarnation on 22nd Street in the Mission. The new space is bigger than the Mission Street location, seating up to 49 diners on two levels.

Montalban said he thinks the new 17th Street location will be a natural fit for Manos Nouveau. When the restaurant was located in the Mission, he estimated that 20 percent of his diners came in from the Castro.

Chef Gualberto Nic Camara and sous chef-partner Francisco Morales are behind the menu, which is broken down into small plates (ahi tuna ceviche, day boat scallops, latin chicken meatballs) and large plates (Latin-style chicken cordon bleu, duck breast with mayan kun sauce, salmon over chimole rice). The new spot also boasts a wine list sourced from small biodynamic and sustainably farmed wineries from South America and the Iberian Peninsula, with glass running $9-$15 and bottles starting at $32.

“We’re reinventing the wheel,” said Montalban about what sets Manos Nouveau apart. Montalban said that the restaurant’s dishes borrow from many different cultures, including Mayan and French influences.

The space has an artsy feel, with painter, sculptor and creative director-partner Caitlin James contributing her own textiles and pottery and managing the restaurant’s rotating selection of original artwork, all in addition to running the restaurant’s front-of-house operations.

Manos Nouveau will be open 5 pm-10 pm Tuesday through Sunday. Stop on by and check it out, or call (415) 872-5507 for reservations.
WHEN IT RAINS IN SAN FRANCISCO, IT POURS
by Crispin Hollings, Board Member

It pours into our combined sewer system, to be precise. San Francisco is unique among California cities in that we have a combined sewer system. A combined sewer system collects and treats both sewage from homes and businesses and rainwater (“street runoff”) before it is released to the bay or ocean. In a separate sewer system, the sewage is treated, but the rainwater flows in separate pipes, with minimal or no treatment before being discharged. In San Francisco, whatever is on the streets, such as motor oil and trash, enters our sewer system and can be removed before it reaches a waterway. The ability to treat stormwater is a clear benefit of a combined sewer system over a separate system.

The unique nature of San Francisco’s sewer system brings a number of challenges during large storm events. When heavy rains hit San Francisco, the combined sewer system can reach capacity. During rain events, we activate a third treatment plant, the North Point Facility, to increase our ability to treat stormwater. Though we have storage boxes - surrounding the City like a moat - to store the excess flow, Mother Nature brings so much rain that sometimes we cannot fully treat all of the combined flow before it goes out to the ocean or bay.

Additionally, when heavy rains wash over San Francisco, localized flooding can occur, especially in low-lying areas. Stormwater rushes to the lowest point in the landscape, often neighborhoods or streets that used to be creeks, streams, or even bays. Depending on the area’s ability to drain water either via gravity or through the soil, flooding can occur.

The SFPUC is working to address these and other issues through our Sewer System Improvement Program (SSIP). Using innovative techniques such as green infrastructure, we can mitigate the severity of flooding and combined sewer discharges. Green infrastructure, which includes storm water management techniques such as rain gardens and permeable pavement, takes advantage of the natural processes of soils and plants. By swapping out asphalt for soil and plants or permeable pavement, we can slow down and clean storm water and keep it from overwhelming the City’s sewer system. Green infrastructure can be made to look very aesthetically pleasing as well, and can be integrated into city beautification projects such as parks and plazas.

The SFPUC is committed to protecting our environment and working to minimize storm water-related problems across San Francisco. Learn how you can get involved by visiting: www.sfwater.org/getinvolved.
**PROJECT UPDATE: SOULCYCLE, PHILZ COFFEE AND HAMBURGER MARY’S**

By Alan R. Beach-Nelson, President

The last half of 2014 was active with proposed major or formula retail projects coming before EVNA. All planning related projects first go before our Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC), chaired by Jack Keating. The committee consists of about 10 members of the community knowledgeable on planning and land use issues and planning codes. This dedicated committee spends hours learning about proposed projects, reviewing plans, attending Project Sponsor outreach meetings and having formal presentations at our monthly PLUC meetings (the first Wednesday of the Month).

After reviewing and understanding the details of the projects, the PLUC takes a position on the project. For large projects greater than 4,500 square feet, and formula retail projects the PLUC takes a formal position as a recommendation to the Board of EVNA to take. The Board of Directors then either adopts a formal position that is then presented to the San Francisco Planning Commission or it decides to put the project up to a vote of the membership as we did with Hamburger Mary’s.

The three most recent significant projects EVNA took a position on, Hamburger Mary’s, SoulCycle and Philz Coffee, were all heard before the Planning Commission on Thursday, December 4. As President, I represented EVNA and spoke before the commission on our formal position and the reasoning for each project. I am happy to report that the Planning Commission approved all three projects as EVNA had requested.

A brief summary of the reasoning EVNA used to determine our position are as follows:

**SOULCYCLE:**
A fixed cycle fitness studio to be located within the old historic Bank of America building at 400 Castro at Market Street. The 3,700 square feet area will serve up to 55 participants during one-hour sessions, generally operating from 6AM to 10PM, weekdays and 7AM to 7PM weekends.

The EVNA PLUC voted to support SoulCycle as an appropriate use for this unique and historic building and a good fit and addition to the retail, service, dining and entertainment mix of commercial uses in the Castro District.

As this is a large and significant project, the EVNA Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC) made a recommendation to the EVNA Board of Directors to support this project based on the following criteria:

- Exterior historical features of the building will be preserved
- SoulCycle has committed to mitigating noise via intricate soundproofing on the interior
- The personal services/gym use would provide daytime and evening activity for this prominent building
- This is a use not currently represented in the neighborhood
- They will preserve the mural of the house on 17th

SoulCycle has agreed to keep the existing window mural on the northwest side of the building, has assured that the exterior of the building will be well maintained, including lighting and window graphics, and that any mechanical equipment will be quiet and not disturb neighbors. Further, SoulCycle has given every indication that they will be active and supportive participants within the greater Eureka Valley, Castro and Upper Market community.

**PHILZ COFFEE:**
Proposal to move from their 4023 18th Street location to one at 549 Castro Street. The EVNA PLUC voted to support Philz move based on the following criteria:

- While a Formula Retail use, Philz is a locally owned business, based in San Francisco and their location in the Castro was their second shop
- Philz has a commitment to provide charitable donations in the local community and to hire locally
- The proposed plan for the location seems scaled appropriately for the block

For these reasons, we feel that Philz Coffee’s desire to move to a Castro Street location is an appropriate use and the EVNA Board of Directors voted 10 to 1 to support the approval of this project with concurrence of a quorum of our membership on November 13, 2014.

**HAMBURGER MARY’S:**
Please see the May 2014 edition of the Eureka! for pro and con positions on this project. Because this project was so controversial the Board decided to put the project to a full membership vote. The summary for which follows:

In a groundbreaking outreach for member participation, EVNA conducted an online referendum asking the full membership to cast their votes on whether or not to allow Hamburger Mary’s, a formula retail restaurant, to occupy the space of the former Patio Café at 531 Castro Street.

Membership voted almost 3-1 in support of the move, 110 in favor – 42 opposed. There were 17 votes determined to be invalid, 12 in support and 5 opposed, for reasons such as double votes or non-member votes. There are 252 paying members of EVNA. The member participation rate was a remarkable 60%!

EVNA is thrilled that the Planning Commission followed EVNA’s recommendations for these three projects. We feel that they all will add to the vibrancy and diversity of the neighborhood - ensuring it continues to thrive.

If you would like to learn more about EVNA’s decision making process or about serving on a committee, contact me at Alan.Beach@EVNA.org.
it is a substantial improvement. The Board, through our Social and Marketing committees are developing strategies to increase our membership roles to better reflect the neighborhood we represent.

Finally, our bi-monthly public meetings now have over 60 members and non-members in attendance. In fact, lately the meetings have been standing room only. This, I think is a key measure of our success as a neighborhood association - active participation and involvement. This growth in attendees has helped the Board and our committees be more informed about the interests, concerns and views of our community. This in turn helps the Board form its positions on various topics in a way that is more reflective of our communities wishes.

Of course all of this growth comes with challenges. Most notably, with greater membership and greater participation comes more viewpoints and opinions. This means our Board needs to not only vote with our own views and opinions in mind, but also in a way that is reflective of our memberships’ wishes. To ensure that we do in fact act in a way that is reflective of our member’s wishes we conducted our first survey on Neighborhood Priorities and Concerns last January and will conduct the survey annually. We also conducted our first full-membership vote on a topic: Hamburger Mary’s. The participation was amazing with over 60% of our membership voting and the results were decidedly different than the position we likely would have taken.

Another challenge is ensuring that our meetings are accessible to all in a comfortable setting. As such, it is clear that we have outgrown the Castro Community Meeting Room. Beginning with our meeting on January 28, 2015 our meetings will be held in the auditorium at Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy at 19th and Collingwood.

The Board of EVNA, and I personally am proud of how EVNA has grown over the past five years. Much has been accomplished, and there is much more to be done. I hope that if you are not already, that you will become a member of EVNA and let your voice be heard. Joining is easy, visit: http://evna.org/join. Additionally, we are always looking for committee members and board members. To learn more, email me at: Alan.Beach@EVNA.org.

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**Apothecarium Owner’s Commitment to Community Becomes a Passion for Philanthropy**

By Alan R. Beach-Nelson, President

When the owners of the proposed Apothecarium, Ryan and Michael, presented to EVNA’s Planning and Land Use Committee (PLUC) they mentioned that they would be giving back to the community. This is a common statement that most project sponsors make. As a non-profit executive and professional fundraiser, I always jump on this statement and ask for detailed information - what % of profits, priorities, where - local or national, etc. Usually a lot of platitudes are given with very little details. Ryan and Michael, plainly stated that they didn’t know exactly how to do it, but were willing and ready to learn and would think about the details.

The next day I received a call from Ryan asking me if I would help them figure out their philanthropy program. They were serious about giving back to the community but just did not know how to do it. Since the PLUC had already voted to support the project, I agreed to help them figure out their program. I advised them to develop priorities of the types of charities they’d like to support, develop internal guidelines for doing so, such as determining what % of gross revenue they were going to give - between 1% to 3% is the norm and how frequently they would be giving. I also suggested that they create a committee of community members to advise them on giving amounts and priorities as this would ensure that their giving was reflective of the community.

Ryan and Michael took these suggestions to heart, immediately creating a committee of community members including me, developing an initial list of priorities (to be added to by the committee) and set a minimum that they would like to give each quarter - $25,000, which they have far exceeded.

It took about a year for the Apothecarium to get the philanthropy committee up and running, after construction costs were covered. Once the committee met the funding priorities were reviewed and revised, and a list of 15 charities was created for initial funding. Over the past two and half years, the priorities have been refined based on experience and the list of supported charities has grown to 42.

The numbers are very impressive, showing that their initial commitment to giving back to the community was not just platitudes to garner EVNA’s support, but a real commitment. Over the past two and half years the Apothecarium has given $234,000 in direct contributions as well as funding $190,000 in support group donations for a grand total of $424,000 or about $170,000 per year.
Our goal is to help you pursue yours. It’s that simple.

At Merrill Lynch, you’re at the center of every conversation. Your Merrill Lynch financial advisor will take the time to understand what’s most important to you: your family, your work, your hopes and dreams. Together, we’ll create an investment strategy that’s uniquely yours.

Richard Velez
Financial Advisor
415.274.6061

Merrill Lynch
101 California Street
Suite 2575
San Francisco, CA 94111

Apothecarium from previous page

The list of charities is diverse, reflective of the diversity of our community. Charities include:

- AIDS Emergency Fund
- Americans for Safe Access
- Brighter Beginnings
- Canine Companions for Independence
- Castro CBD - Retail Strategy and Castro Cares
- Castro Lions Club
- Cooper Education Foundation
- Dolores Shelter Program
- Equality California
- First Saturdays Homeless Care Packages
- Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy
- Intersection for the Arts
- Larkin St. Youth Center
- Lyon-Martin
- LYRIC
- Maitri
- Muttville
- PAWS
- P-FLAG
- Rocket Dog Rescue
- Rooms That Rock
- Roseland University Prep
- SF CODA
- SF Pride Pink Triangle
- Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Inc.

Apothecarium continues next page
Join us at Castro/EVNA’s Bimonthly Public Meeting, Wednesday, January 28, featuring: Local Take shop on 17th, a presentation on Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) program, San Francisco SAFE, and a discussion of the soft-launch of Castro Cares in December.

HOT TOPICS

• ARSONIST SETS FIRES ON HARTFORD STREET: Between 3am and 5am on January 19 a person lit four trashcans on fire on Hartford and 18th Streets and also set fire to the back of a pick up truck parked on 19th and Castro Streets. According to Captain Perea of Mission Station Mission Station Officers working with our special Investigations Division, concluded a lengthy investigation and arrested a suspect in the Castro arsons. We will discuss this issue at the upcoming meeting on January 28.

• EVNA PUBLIC MEETING VENUE CHANGED: HARVEY MILK CIVIL RIGHTS ACADEMY, 19th & Collingwood. Due to the growth in attendance at these meetings we have moved to a more comfortable and spacious venue.

Getting Involved

President’s Column, Alan Beach-Nelson

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When asked how has the philanthropy program changed their lives Ryan stated, “It has changed us both a lot. While personally philanthropic, we never really thought much about giving or its impact. That has changed. We now know the power of philanthropy, and we have discovered the power and value of giving. It is quite rewarding and personally meaningful.”

About 85% of donations are decided by the Philanthropy Committee, the employee of the month also gets to decide on a charity to give a set amount to the remainder are on a case by case basis. Our priorities currently are HIV/AIDS, youth, animals, education and the homeless. The Committee does not accept unsolicited proposals, however the list of charities is fluid, so if you have a worthy cause that you would like the committee to know about, please email Ryan at: ryan@apothecariumsf.com.