



# EDIA

## EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

### Focus on Community

by Robert Katz

On Sept. 20, 2008, at Monroe School, residents of the Excelsior and a number of community based organizations and non-profits, met and heard presentations by a variety of law enforcement officials from the city. Residents were given an opportunity to speak and many exercised that opportunity. The primary focus of the meeting was the increase in violence we have experienced in the Excelsior and the authorities response to it. Presentations were made by Chief Fong, Captain O’Leary of Ingleside Station, members of the police gang task force and representatives from the District Attorney’s and the City Attorney’s office. The meeting was well attended, filling the auditorium/lunchroom at Monroe. A follow-up meeting was held at Balboa H.S. on Oct. 16. The focus of the follow-up meeting was non-law enforcement approaches to violence prevention, particularly violence connected to young people, both as perpetrators and victims. This meeting was also well attended, and included representatives from city agencies and youth serving non-profits. Numerous candidates for elective offices, Supervisor Sandoval, and Sen. Leland Yee attended one or both meetings.

The meetings were the result of discussions initiated by neighborhood residents stemming from the homicides

THE VOICE OF THE RESIDENTS  
A PUBLICATION OF THE  
EXCELSIOR DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
FOUNDED IN 1942 – INCORPORATED IN 1962

we experienced in 2008. The community meeting concept had its inception at a meeting of EDIA and members of EDIA were involved in both meetings as were a number of Excelsior residents who had not previously heard of EDIA. Captain O’Leary and Chief Fong were early supporters of the community meeting concept and without that support it is unlikely that the Monroe location could have been utilized. Large public spaces are not commonly available on a Saturday morning in the Excelsior and if they are, they are not generally available without payment of substantial fees. As a “community-driven” event, needless to say, the organizers of the Monroe police community meeting had no public funds. Due to the assistance of the S.F.P.D., the space at Monroe was made available at no cost to the organizers. Most attendees seemed to recognize a special poignancy in locating the event at Monroe, a public grade school centrally located in the Excelsior, with most attendees walking to the meeting, many taking the opportunity to speak and the whole morning representing something of the “community” that we perhaps aspire to but which mostly seems to elude us. The event was hosted by Angie Minkin, a local resident who by all accounts helped create a wonderfully relaxed, open atmosphere but nevertheless moved the meeting along seemingly effortlessly when required. Many spoke, many of us learned something, we showed up in sufficient numbers to impress city hall and many candidates in the recent supervisorial race seemed to re-prioritize their campaign issues as a result of this meeting. Perhaps partly as a result the meeting and the wide public concern it demonstrated, police and other law enforcement activity in the neighborhood has increased dramatically. Photos of the meeting by Excelsior photographer Charlie Wambeke and an article about it by Ron Baird are located on or linked

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# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

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February 2009

## HELLO MEMBERS and FRIENDS OF THE EXCELSIOR BOOK CLUB

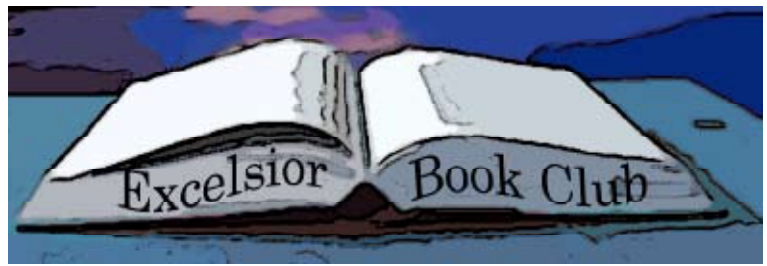
We welcomed the new year in at the home of Jillian and Greg Cripps, with *Under The Tuscan Sun* by Frances Mayes. Greg cheerfully survived being the only male in the estrogen zone. Special thanks to Jillian, who set the mood by making several of the recipes from the book. I heartily recommend the yummy Lemon Cake (pg 238), which will never be found in a *Weight Watchers* cookbook. We all enjoyed the book, some more than we expected, and disliked the movie. We ended up fantasizing about what far-away place we might choose to escape to.

The Excelsior Book Club will meet next on WEDNESDAY, February 25, 2009, 7:00 PM, at the home of

Candi Strecker, 650 Le Grande Street , (at the top of the Excelsior, right turn off Russia , next to McLaren Park )

We now turn back to historical fiction, this time to pioneer life in the Pacific Northwest : *The Living* by Annie Dillard: (1992, 397 pages, widely available in paperback). Unfortunately, there are only a few copies at the SF Library. It can also be purchased at any major bookstore, or from Amazon for \$10.92.

Pulitzer Prize-winner Dillard (for *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, HarperCollins, 1988) is best known for her non-fiction. *The Living* was her first fiction effort, a historical novel of the American Northwest in the late 19th century. On the first page we step onto the beach at the settlement of Whatcom on Bellingham Bay (near Puget Sound) in 1855, and into the world of the white pioneers and their native-American Lummi neighbors, as they eke out an existence at the edge of the world in the damp and rain, the relentless press of life all around, some benign and some hostile, and always and everywhere the giant Douglas Firs. As Dillard's novel gradually unfolds, her characters endure the hardships of living and dying as they struggle out their interrelated lives in the unsettled Pacific Northwest . Death comes suddenly and unexpectedly: "Death mowed the generations raggedly and out of order". "Accidents happened," Dillard observes, "and human bodies were thin-skinned parcels out of which the force of life leaked at a prick...all deaths were accidental, or none was, for disease was just as random an accident as



injury, and all die. None died prematurely, for death battered on only the living, and all of those, at any age". Incidents such as the clearing of the logjam, are breathtaking in their sweep, natural detail, and emotional punch. This novel is about settling the Pacific Northwest in the same way that *Moby Dick* is about whaling. The richly drawn narrative provides a framework for Dillard's exploration of the mysteries of life, suffering and death. Dillard's characteristic attention to detail is evident on every page, and her prose is a pleasure to read, and then reread. If you have not read this novel already, you are in for a treat.

Relevant Internet links are:

### Some reviews:

[spoiler alert!] [http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/03/28/specials/dillard-theliving.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/03/28/specials/dillard-theliving.html?_r=1)

<http://littlebirdreview.wordpress.com/2007/11/21/book-review-the-living-by-annie-dillard/>

### Interviews with Annie Dillard:

<http://www.bookpage.com/BPinterviews/dillard492.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/99/03/28/specials/dillard-pilgrim.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/21/AR2007062101900.html>

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6431505.html>

EXCELLENT NPR interview with Dillard on her newest novel, *The Maytrees* (2008):

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12241185>

Relevant (more or less) YouTube video clips:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fy9XCmhqYbw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8qzxb6e-wY&feature=related>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\\_zDWwB5COo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_zDWwB5COo)

### Annie Dillard's website:

<http://www.anniedillard.com/>

Dillard's Wikipedia entry:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie\\_Dillard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Dillard)

### COMING ATTRACTIONS:

We are open to any book you might want to consider. Currently on our “Hmmm, Maybe...” list:

**Two Years Before The Mast**, by Richard Henry Dana (1840 memoir, 400 pages): A common sailor’s first-hand account of visiting the California Coast , among other places; a classic.

**Run** by Ann Patchett (2007 Novel, 320 pages): The novel’s plot centers around the story of a woman’s identity, and takes on interracial adoption, familial allegiances and rivalries, Boston ’s notoriously complex political and racial history; by the best-selling author of *Bel Canto*

**The Testament of Gideon Mack**, by James Robertson (2006, 400 pages, competed for the 2006 Booker Prize): a fictional autobiography of a Scottish minister who confronts the devil. A brief foreword claims the book is an autobiography penned by Gideon Mack, a Church of Scotland minister who, after allegedly encountering the devil, becomes a pariah and madman before disappearing.

**The Egg and I** by Betty MacDonald (1945 non-fiction, 288 pages): When Betty MacDonald married and moved to a small farm on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington , she was largely unprepared for the rigors of life in the wild. No running water, no electricity, a house in need of constant repair, and days that ran from four in the morning to nine at night, with barely a moment to spare. And this was before the children arrived. But the MacDonalds managed to keep their sense of humor, and this account of their adventures with the house and with neighbors is an endearing frontier classic.

*Patty*



Love the pictures? Wish they were in color? Unfortunately, the cost of printing this newsletter in color is prohibitive. However, if you go to our website, <http://excelsiorsf.org>, through the miracle of technology, the newsletter will indeed be in color.

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## A big thank you to “ P.O.” Pete’s and proprietor Pete Whitcomb

(Sorry Pete - we are a family publication!)

The Excelsior social event of the season was held this last December at the historic saloon “Pete’s” located at 4528 Mission St. We’d like to thank proprietor Pete Whitcomb for graciously opening his establishment to EDIA for its annual holiday pot luck. This was a new venue for the event and the consensus seems to be that it was welcoming, intimate and all around good fun! Pete has made a number of improvements to his saloon since he acquired it a number of years back, adding live music, a comedy night and other features. We encourage you to give it a try.!



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## Looking For District 11 Green Space

San Francisco Recreation and Open Space Element  
(ROSE)

by Linda J. D'Avirro

What is your idea of open space and greenways?

Do you think District 11 needs more green spaces?

Do you want your voice heard before the City finalizes its 25-year General Plan for open space and greenways?

Want to get more involved in city-wide open space planning?

The window of time is short for District 11 residents to have one of the few chances to voice our vision of open space and greenway that will benefit our community

for the next twenty-five years.

One year ago the Mayor's Office launched The Mayor's Open Space Task Force, to begin updating the Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE), one part of the overall update of the General Plan. San Francisco last updated the Recreation and Open Space Element (ROSE) in 1986. To "update" the ROSE by early 2009 has up to now involved several hundred city officials, landscape architects, park advocates, planners and community leaders.

District 11 residents need to have a voice and this is where your ideas come in.

What constitutes open space and green space?

The Open Space Task Force has adopted the international standard that all residents should be within a 10-minute walk of a green space. However, for some people even a 10-minute walk is too much and they may need public space on the block where they live.

But what shape should this open space take?

Is open space creating sidewalk or roof gardens, outdoor classrooms, skate parks, temporary street closures, multi-mile city greenways and planted alley ways? Should we build bike paths, widen sidewalks, hang flower baskets, plant more trees? Is green space a fabulous trail, a system of cycling trails, or a swath of green medians and mini-parks?

Open space enhances our access to nature, reduces the cost of storm water runoff and offers linkages that promote neigh-

borhood connections and opportunities for healthy exercise. A greener San Francisco will help to make San Francisco a showcase of sustainable city living and will help revitalize and beautify our long undeserved neighborhood.

Having a cohesive plan of new open spaces in our District could transform the look of our neighborhood, the same way the City transformed Crissy Field, plans to transform the southeast waterfront into the Blue Greenway, and the Geneva 280 corridor with the Balboa Better Neighborhoods Plan.

Lend Your Voice – Public Meetings to Plan for future District 11 Green Space

Neighborhood Parks Council kicked off the first of the Community Workshop Series hosting "The Future of Open Space in San Francisco" an overview of the Mayor's Open Space Task Force at the NPC's October Coalition Meeting. Astrid Haryati of the Mayor's Office and Sarah Dennis of the Planning Department were introduced as the core team charged with creating a Vision and Action Plan for San Francisco's open spaces in the 21st century.

Rather than let this be a one-way, top-down process, NPC's Isabel Wade identified the need for there to be a conversation with residents and neighborhood groups, and grassroots support for the plan. The ROSE Community Workshops are the outreach efforts to create a two-way dialogue, not just a new plan prepared by the mayor's staff and a team of outside consultants.

NPC has put together a meeting kit to encourage neighbors to become informed, "dream big dreams" and for communities to create a district-wide plan by soliciting participation and opinions about the future of Open Space in San Francisco. There are many ways to get involved, including attending a hearing, filling out an individual online survey, contacting an Open Space team member, or attending an Open Space Community Workshop in your neighborhood.

Linda D'Avirro is NPC's community contact and wants to encourage as many District 11 residents as possible to host their own Open Space Community Workshop with your park group, neighbors, or even friends and family. It's simple –Just print out a copy of the Open Space Community Workshop packet, host the workshop, and then send your results back to Linda for the Open Space team!

Open space will not survive in our community unless we do our part to protect and maintain it.

Open Space San Francisco: 2100 - To view the latest plans and opportunities for you to share your ideas for enhancing the city's green spaces visit <http://openspacesf.org/> If you are interested in getting involved you can e-mail:

[ediasf-info@yahoo.com](mailto:ediasf-info@yahoo.com) or call L. D'Avirro at 584-6229.

If you haven't yet attended a meeting to discuss the Mayor's Recreation and Open Space Plan to revise the 25-year General Plan, please consider attending the upcoming meeting coming February 11th from 7-9PM at the Crocker Amazon Park Clubhouse, Moscow at France (just off Geneva by the Purple Playground). There's plenty of parking and it is

very close to many of you. The planned format of the February 11th meeting includes representatives from NPC, the Mayor's Open Space Task Force and guest speakers from local greening projects. There will be a lot of opportunity to ask questions and give opinions.



## Changes at Sorrento's

by Catherine Consiglieri

The new owners, Jung and Monica Cho and Gi Kang, will be slicing our cold cuts, as the new proprietors of Sorrento's Delicatessen. Sergio and Troy Schimenetti turned over the reigns to the new owners in October of 2008 and spent several months working beside them.

The Cho's and her brother Gi Kang came to us from Marin County and have since moved to Daly City, becoming our neighbors.

Jung has worked in the food service industry in Sacramento with Kaiser Permanente and the Capitol Building Cafeterias and Restaurants.

They desire to continue the good relations with the community that the previous owners offered. While they encourage all new comers to their Deli, they extend a welcome with friendly open arms to all of the old timers. They hope that all continue to feel welcome and encourage good communication and suggestions. They plan to continue stocking all the goodies we have come to love.

The store hours will continue to be from 8AM to 5PM and they plan to be open on Mondays once again, providing us with the opportunity to shop 6 days a week.

Monica was a Television Reporter in South Korea and has promised to contribute to the EDIA Newsletter in the future. Jung was a professional glass blower and may stock some of his hand blown glass art.

The Cho's have 2 grown sons, one is a student at San Jose State University and the other is employed as a Graphic Artist in Los Angeles.

The new owners look forward to joining us for an EDIA meeting. EDIA welcomes them to the Neighborhood.

# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

## Looking Forward into 2009

On Jan. 27, EDIA held its first general meeting of the 2009. One portion of the meeting, involved a discussion about the neighborhood issues the membership would like to see our new Supervisor, John Avalos, focus on in 2009, a year of budgetary crisis. Among the items mentioned by members during the discussion were the importance of: continuation of the cleaning and graffiti removal program along the Mission St. corridor, protection of the Rec and Park budget as relates to District 11, going forward with implementation of the transit effectiveness improvement program proposals for the Excelsior, maintenance of the increased staffing that has been provided recently to Ingleside Police Station, defeat of any proposal to establish a "trash collection/recycling center" in McLaren Park, support of greening efforts and an expansion of community gardening opportunities in the Excelsior, facilitation of block parties and other community building events, and providing opportunities for civic education to our residents. One member mentioned the ongoing issue of parking, particularly the difficulty in finding street parking on residential streets in the evening and night hours. There was discussion about having some form of neighborhood "summit" to address the issue and the need to approach the problem in a creative way. Attending our meeting and actively participating in the discussions concerning these matters was Frances Hsieh, representative from Supervisor Avalos's office. She mentioned that it was the intention of the Supervisor to regularly meet with residents in the neighborhood, perhaps at public facility, such as the library, or a cafe or other commercial establishment. This news was well received and prompted further discussion about the possibility of on occasion inviting other elected officials to meet with residents during non-work hours, in the neighborhood. The willingness of our new supervisor to reach out and engage us, and of his aide to freely express her opinions, was refreshing and appreciated. Most attendees at this meeting expect tough financial and budgetary times ahead. However, it seems not unreasonable for us to expect that cutbacks not be inequitably allocated and that the modest improvements that have been achieved in the Excelsior at great effort in recent years not be sacrificed.

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to the EDIA website: *excelsiorsf.org*, go to the “About the Excelsior” section.

A follow-up meeting was held at Balboa H.S. There was no attempt to leaflet the neighborhood for the Balboa meeting, as had been done for the Monroe meeting, and no attempt at multilingual outreach which had also been attempted for the first meeting. No public resources were used in the follow-up meeting, except for the space freely made available by Balboa. Still the turnout was substantial and discussions animated. The administration of Balboa was supportive of both meetings and for many of the attendees, this event was their introduction to the wonderful space that is Balboa H.S. For many of us, there has been something of a sense of a disconnect between our local schools and residents of the Excelsior without school age children, to the detriment of both. Locating this meeting at Balboa, seemed to suggest the many interesting possibilities that a closer connection between residents and schools might open up. The meeting itself resulted in the expression of many ideas about how the Excelsior, in a non-law enforcement way, might attempt to respond to the recent increase in violence. Partly as a result of the Monroe and Balboa meeting, a “Google group” was created that contains in much greater detail the suggestions made by participants in the Balboa meeting. (see <http://groups.google.com/group/edia-pilot>)

As a result of these meetings, many residents were introduced to a number of programs and non-profit groups that serve young people and others in the Excelsior. One idea that resulted from the Balboa meeting, was a need to identify what resources are currently available and attempt to determine how those resources align with the needs of the neighborhood(which also need to be better defined). One of the resources that was introduced to the neighborhood partly as a result of these meetings was Megan Fleming, who occupies the position of “community convener” for the Excelsior, a position funded by the city and operating out of the Mission YMCA. Megan has volunteered to organize a meeting of neighborhood non-profits serving young people in the Excelsior, to explain to residents what they do, who they serve, who they are, etc. (Megan is currently on leave

from the “Y” due to the recent birth of her child- her role is currently being filled by Jimmy Ozaeta also from the “Y” )Residents and other interested persons are welcome, indeed encouraged to attend. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 7 and will likely be held at the Mission YMCA, or possibly a more central locale. When a final date, time and location is determined, it will be posted on the EDIA website and announced via various e-mail lists available in the neighborhood. One aspect of this next meeting is the active support and encouragement that has been provided by our new supervisor, John Avalos and his office. This represents something of a welcome departure for Excelsior public events and greatly facilitates what most of us believe is a crucial requirement for the Excelsior to effectively respond to the many issues that confront us: active community involvement.

## In Memorium

By Catherine Consiglieri

Rose Marosi Toboni a charter member of EDIA died November 2, 2008.

Rose’s parents, Giuditta and Giuseppie Morosi, immigrated to San Francisco from Turate, Italy in 1914 when Rose was one year old. Rose attended St Vincent High School and thereafter worked as a stenographer for Bank of America, often taking dictation for AP Giannini, the founder.

Rose married Louie Toboni and moved to Theresa Street to raise their family. In the mid 50’s the family received word that the State planned to construct Highway 280 which would eliminate their home. Santa Rosa Avenue was the site selected for their new residence, where Rose resided for 50 years.

Rose was a faith driven woman, who dedicated her time and service to many aspects of life surrounding her neighborhood. She was an active member of Corpus Christi Church for almost 70 years. As a Girl Scout leader in the 50’s, Rose taught leadership and independence to many Excelsior District girls.

Rose Toboni was not only a charter member of EDIA and active for 40 years. She held the office of Treasurer and Secretary in the 60’s and 70’s and as a wonderful cook and baker, EDIA meetings culminated by sharing her cookies and cakes.

Rose contributed much to the Excelsior District in her day and will be remembered and appreciated.

## What and Where is EDIA?

We are a non-profit neighborhood organization working for civic improvement and the general welfare of our district and the city of San Francisco, since 1942.

**From the Newsletter Editor:** We welcome your comments and submissions. If you have articles, photos or other art work you would like to submit, or comments or suggestions you can send a FAX to 415-295-3034 or e-mail us:

ediasf-info@yahoo.com

### EDIA Meeting & Location Information

We meet on the 4th Tuesday of every month

7:00 p.m. at 45 Santa Rosa Street in the basement - see map below

Meetings are scheduled now for:

February 24th and March 24th

### EDIA Officers, Board Members and Trustees

President Jackie Cash

email: prezjack@jackiejack.com

Vice President Patty DeVlieg

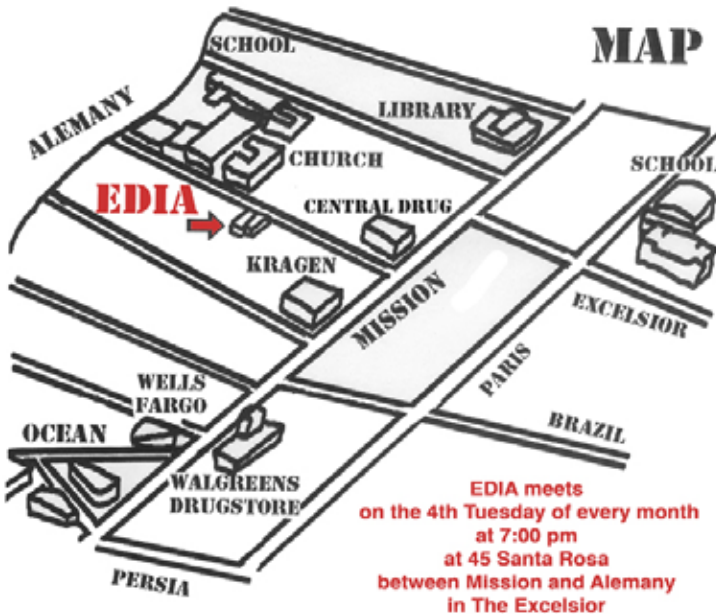
Sergeant at Arms John Consiglieri

#### Board of Directors

Robert Katz Leo Martinez Paige Nittler

#### Trustees

Catherine Consiglieri Linda Harwood Fini



# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

**It is easy to join or renew your EDIA membership. Just fill out and clip this coupon; then enclose it with a check or money order for \$15.00 made out to EDIA**

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Excelsior District Improvement Association

P.O. Box 12005

San Francisco CA 94112-0005



# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

## EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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Layout

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Printing by

Copy World

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San Francisco, CA 94107  
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Community News & Information  
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## Interested in the current foreclosure situation in the Excelsior?

The speaker at the regular Feb. 24 meeting of EDIA will be Phil Ting, San Francisco Assessor-Recorder. The Excelsior has experienced a disproportionately high rate of foreclosures compared with other San Francisco neighborhoods during the current housing crisis. Foreclosures impact everyone in a neighborhood including other property owners and tenants. This will be an opportunity to learn more about what is happening here.



**EDIA**

P.O. Box 12005  
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## Letter to the Editor:

The Council of Neighborhood Libraries is alarmed at proposed June charter amendment

A rarely discussed safety provision in SF budget-making keeps the risk to library services to a minimum, compared to other cities and counties in California. So-called “set-asides” work to prevent drastic cuts in services in lean years for the branch and main libraries, but this safety net could all but disappear by a possible charter change being considered for the pending June 2 special election.

According to a Supervisors memo, the voters will be asked to “...cap all set-asides at their Fiscal Year 2008-2009 levels, allow the City to reduce its contributions during budget shortfalls, and provide that year-end surpluses be returned to the General Fund.” The amendment must be readied for the June ballot by the first week of March, meaning that hearings will be held in a rush starting the first week of February. A second proposed amendment would allow Supervisors to raid up to 100% of the city’s Rainy Day Reserve in years of grave deficits such as is currently projected.

The Friends of the Library issued an ACTION ALERT reminding City residents of the huge increase in recent library use, especially by children, teens, elderly, and other vulnerable persons (library lending, employment info and other services have risen sharply, including a 32% increase in library card requests since June). The Friends and the volunteer advisory body Council of Neighborhood Libraries ask urgently that residents call or otherwise contact their City Supervisor immediately.

District 11 (Excelsior and adjacent) Supervisor John Avalos can be phoned at (415) 554-6975 or e-mailed at John.Avalos@sfgov.org .

Richard Reineccius

(Excelsior Branch representative to Council of Neighborhood Libraries)

PLACE STAMP  
HERE