

Volume VI, Number 3

Excelsior News

September 1993

Neighbors of the Excelsior Meets October 16, 10 am-3 pm, in McLaren Park at top of Persia Ave.

Bring your gloves! Wear your work clothes! Drive your pickup! Get down and dirty! Yes, folks, it's time for our Second Annual McLaren Park Cleanup!

Neighbors of the Excelsior (NOTE) will hold its third 1993 General Meeting from 10 am to 3 pm on October 16 in McLaren Park. The headquarters for the cleanup will be the picnic area at the top of Persia Avenue, near the intersection of Mansell and Sunnydale. At noon on that day, we will gather at the picnic area for a business meeting. Even if you cannot help clean up, we urge you to bring something to eat and join us for the meeting at noon.

Last October, about 50 Neighbors of the Excelsior members partici-

pated in a cleanup of McLaren Park. We rented three debris boxes from Sunset Scavenger, filling them all with all kinds of garbage and trash. We found refrigerators, tires, construction debris, used motor oil, and even a couple of dog skulls, along with the usual collection of beer cans and full garbage bags.

Everyone is invited to participate, whether you are a member or not. NOTE is a group of neighbors working to improve the Excelsior District. We started about 6 years ago, and have engaged in a variety of projects and activities during that time. Everyone is welcome to join and help our neighborhood. You will find a membership form on the back page of this newsletter.

Pacific Rim In the Excelsior

by Alan Mills

This is the second in a series of articles on businesses in the Excelsior.

It is well documented that over the past 25 years Asians and Pacific Islanders have had a huge impact on the social, economic and political fabric of San Francisco. The 1990 Census revealed that Asians and Pacific Islanders make up about 38 percent of the population of the Excelsior District, an approximate increase of 25 percent over the previous decade.

The commercial heart of the Excelsior provides visible proof that native and foreign born Asian American professionals and merchants are making their presence felt in the economic life of our neighborhood.

For an authentic and traditional Thai meal at bargain prices, drop in on **Champa's Restaurant at 5429 Mission Street**, corner of Mt. Vernon. (Phone: 584-3629). Mr. and

Continued on p. 2

Calendar and Notices

Sabado, 16 de octubre: a las 10 de la mañana: Reunion general de "NOTE": (Vecinos de la vecindad Excelsior) en el Parque McLaren. Ayuda hacer el Parque mas limpia!

October 2, 9 am-12 pm, 750 Phelps: Citizens Work Group on wastewater treatment. The new plan could have a big effect on the Excelsior. Call 431-9430 for details.

October 9: 10 am - 2 pm. Non-Native Plant Removal in McLaren Park. Meet in the parking lot on the east side of the Crocker Amazon Soccer Fields

October 18, 7 pm, 2 Santa Ysabel: Issues/Candidates Night. Learn about, discuss issues; meet candidates for City Attorney.

Tree Planting: Friends of the Urban Forest has received a grant, which they would like to use to plant trees in the Excelsior. Those interested please call Betty Olafsson at 585-0306.

Anytime: Call Joe Strupp, 826-1100 Ext. 21, or 431-8212, at the San Francisco *Independent*, with any news of our neighborhood.

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**Please Patronize Our
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Pacific Rim, from p. 1

Mrs. Saya Southichack, from Laos and Vietnam, respectively, opened their restaurant four years ago. Their cousin San, a native of Thailand, waits tables. Serving such traditional Thai specialties as Pad Thai (a noodle dish with shrimp, pork, chicken, egg, bean sprouts, ground peanuts and Thai spices), and chicken or pork satay (meat marinated in Thai spices, with peanut sauce), Champa's has received rave reviews from the S.F. Independent, as well as from its loyal patrons. The restaurant sits 30 at tables and semi-private booths, and is open for lunch Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dinner is served daily, including weekends, from 5 to 10 p.m. The owners are committed to serving authentic Thai food at affordable prices. Lunch entrees average \$4, while the average dinner costs about \$6. Deserts, wine, and imported and domestic beers are also available.

If you are a devotee of the spicy cuisine from the Chinese province of Hunan, and you want a reasonably priced meal in pleasant surroundings, the you will relish the daily fare at **Chef Hunan at 4661 Mission Street** (Phone: 668-4568). Donald Fu, his wife Ann and their friend and partner, Rose Lin, opened their restaurant four years ago. Mr. Fu takes pride in the fact that he has not raised his prices since the restaurant opened, and stated that "We try to serve our customers fresh, high-quality food at affordable prices. We do not cut corners by sacrificing quality." The restaurant seats 80 people, and is open from 11:30 a.m. 9:30 p.m. An all-you-can eat buffet lunch (priced under \$5) is served daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Chef Hunan also offers free delivery service and caters banquets and parties. Mr. Fu, a native of Taiwan, also donates food for the homeless to a church in the Tenderloin.

Since 1989, the **PK Market at 4515-A Mission Street** (corner of Excelsior St.) has been selling fresh produce and Chinese, Mexican and Filipino specialty items. The proprietors, Vietnamese natives Ken and Anna

To, say they are open to suggestions from the public and try to stock items requested by their customers. The store is opened daily from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. (except Sunday, when they close at 7 p.m.). Mr. and Mrs. To state that they enjoy working with the ethnically diverse clientele and hope to become a permanent fixture in the Excelsior. When possible they will make deliveries in the neighborhood to those customers who are unable to get to the store.

For the past six years, Excelsior residents have been able to obtain a wide variety of fresh fish and meats at the **Yangtze Market, located at 4599 Mission Street** (corner of Brazil Street). Raymond Lim, a native San Franciscan, is an Excelsior resident. His partners, Steven Lee, Kim Au-Yeung and Pak Shi Fan, were born in Mainland China. Mr. Lim reports that most of his patrons live in the Excelsior and they reflect the cultural mosaic of the neighborhood. He and his partners intend to remain at their present location.

Optometrist June Chun has spent her entire 19-year career in the Excelsior. Dr. Chun, a native San Franciscan of Chinese ancestry, has bachelors and

professional degrees from U.C. Berkeley. She has developed a loyal clientele in the Excelsior and expects to spend the rest of her professional here. Over the years Dr. Chun has established cooperative working relationships with other neighborhood merchants. She has a general practice but specializes in contact lenses. Although the majority of her patients live in the Excelsior, Dr. Chun has a city-wide following because of inventory includes frames designed by Giorgio Armani, Christian Dior and Gucci. Dr. Chun says that she provides the full range of diagnostic services, and a bill now pending in the state legislature would allow optometrists to prescribe medication for eye ailments. The three office assistants, Martina Columbo, Trish Hue, and Jasmine Sanchez, all reside in the Excelsior. Dr. Chun relaxes by taking art classes at U.C. Extension. Four of her acrylic paintings adorn the walls of her office, located at 4390 Mission Street, between Cotter and Theresa Streets (Phone: 585-4966). Office hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (The office is closed from 12-1 p.m.), and on Saturdays by appointment only.

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The Excelsior News is published by Neighbors of the Excelsior (NOTE), a neighborhood group dedicated to improving the quality of life for all residents of the Excelsior District. Annual dues are \$10 per person, which includes a subscription to *The Excelsior News*. Please send your check to NOTE, P. O. Box 12236, San Francisco, CA 94112.

The Neighbors of the Excelsior Board of Directors:

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Michael Sleczkowski

Special thanks for Pagemaker assistance go to Trudi Richards, Jorge Espinet, and Fernando and Michelle Aranguiz.

Letters to the Editor:

The Excelsior News welcomes Letters to the Editor on any and all topics. Please send your typed letters to the Post Office Box listed above. To be published, letters must include your name, address, and telephone number. *The Excelsior News* reserves the right to edit letters for publishing purposes.

Editorials

Merry-go-round!

Many of the members of our organization have noticed a lack of recreational facilities in this area for young people. The Department of City Planning tells us that almost 19,000 persons under the age of 18 now live in the "South Central" district surrounding McLaren Park, an almost 6% increase since 1980. Census data also shows a 14% decrease in the same age bracket in three of the districts immediately adjacent to Golden Gate Park in the past 10 years. While we appreciate the "Super Playground", Carousel and other fine facilities in Golden Gate Park, why don't we have these facilities in McLaren Park where the need is greater?

Do we really need another one?

Recently, Neighbors of the Excelsior protested the issuing of an off-sale alcoholic beverage license on Mission Street. We are very happy that the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control upheld our protest and denied the application. However, the decision was not based upon the number of licenses currently in use in our neighborhood. We are working with Supervisor Kevin Shelley, who has drafted a proposal to place a moratorium on new licenses in the Inner Mission, to see if we can include the Outer Mission in his proposal. We would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone who has an interest in this matter.

Farewell, Janice and Roy!

We have recently learned that two of our founding members, Janice Parakilas and Roy Baker, have sold their house and are moving to Humboldt County. Everyone in the Excelsior owes these two hard-working, committed neighbors a big THANK YOU for their contributions to improving our neighborhood. Janice, our Vice President for several years, coordinated our tree-planting committee and had a hand in planting over 200 trees. Roy handled many of our computer chores in our early years, designing a building survey which we have used to argue before various city commissions, as well as the group of houses which graces the front page of this newsletter. We wish them the best of luck. Humboldt County's gain is our loss.

FAX: (415) 469-0201



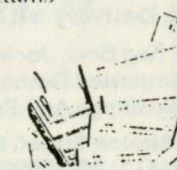
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Building Blocks!

by Marion Aird

Had enough of the ugly, overscaled buildings that have been popping up all over the Excelsior and the rest of the neighborhoods during the past decade? Tired of new buildings and additions that are like sore thumbs on the block? Do you like living in the shadows when your sunlight is eliminated by new construction or an addition next door?

N.O.T.E. is a member of San Francisco League of Neighborhoods, a

city-wide umbrella organization. We have joined in an alliance of fifty neighborhood associations representing thousands of residents, owners and tenants, across the city. We are presenting the following amendments to the existing Planning Code:

- Rear yards should encompass 45% of the total lot square footage
- 35 foot height limit in RH1 and RH2 zoning areas
- Design Review to preserve neighborhood character
- Improved notification and appeal process

• Guaranteed street trees on new construction and additions exceeding 200 sq. ft.

• Encourage restoration of historical homes

If you are interested in the adoption of this amendment and want more details please call Marion Aird at 333-6624.

Please call Mayor Frank Jordan's office to express your support for these improvements to the existing San Francisco Planning Code. Ask for Erica Henri at 554-6120.

done by others. Any and all help from the neighborhood is welcome and needed. Typically, all the preparation is done before the planting day, then on the big day, the group of volunteers gather to plant up their street — instant greenery! Friends of the Urban Forest likes to plant in batches — either whole streets or blocks — to minimize the cost of concrete cutting and tree deliveries. Also, a tree planting party can be a fun way to beautify your neighborhood and get to know your neighbors.

Recently, the Friends of the Urban Forest received a grant which they would like to use for tree planting in the Excelsior. Those interested should call Betty Olafsson at 585-0306 for more information, and start talking to your neighbors about greening up your street!

Greening the Concrete Jungle

by Michael Sleczkowski

You stroll along Mission Street, shopping, running errands, caught in the grind of a busy neighborhood. Then you turn up Persia Avenue and you're suddenly in a whole new world. Beautiful green trees line the street all the way to McLaren Park. Birds chirp. Leaves rustle in the wind. The harshness of the pavement is softened by the green leaves overhanging the street.

Street trees offer great dividends for city neighborhoods. A single tree provides a touch of nature and greenery to a street. It can provide a habitat for birds and other wildlife. A tree can contrast with the harshness of pavement and stucco, the green of the leaves pleasing to the eye. A street tree can soften noise and fumes from traffic, as well as block an unwanted view of the street. It can provide shade on those rare hot days in The City and block wind on those typical cold days. In addition, the green of the leaves is a relaxing color to the eye — a welcome sight in the concrete jungle.

So why are there so few trees in the Excelsior? As I drive through our neighborhood, I see few trees of any shape or size except for the tree-lined thoroughfare of Persia Avenue. There are blocks of wide sidewalks with an occasional tree and a cut-out in

the sidewalk with a healthy crop of weeds. Imagine how a typical street can become transformed overnight with a few trees. It can change the look of a whole neighborhood! Fortunately, Friends of the Urban Forest is available to help.

San Francisco Friends of the Urban Forest is an organization that solicits grants to help neighborhoods plant street trees. They will help organize a street or entire block, suggest choices for trees, arrange for cutting concrete, and even help plant the trees on planting day (usually weekends). The cost is a fraction of what a homeowner would pay to have the work

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McLaren Park News

by Jo Coffey

Native Plant Restoration

June 26th was glorious - sunny, warm, a light wind - all the more appreciated since it followed two enervatingly hot days. A perfect day for working outdoors, and a group of McLaren neighbors joined with Jake Sigg, president of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society, to cut back fennel. Fennel, relative of the vegetable you buy in markets, and sometimes itself used in cooking, was brought here from Europe. But it is not a good neighbor here. The organisms that keep it in balance in its native places don't exist here, and it just runs rampant, driving everything else out. To see this, walk along the path on the south side of the park that leads from the SLUG garden to Sunnydale. You will pass through a veritable forest of fennel, where only litter breaks the monotony of the single plant landscape.

In other areas of the park, native plants still grow, but they are threatened by the encroaching non-natives. To give these natives breathing room, we're getting together regu-

larly to cut back fennel and other invasive non-natives. We meet the second Saturday of the month, from 10:00 until 2:00. Until further notice, we're working on the slopes on Geneva, just east of the last Crocker Amazon soccer field. Join us anytime between 10 am and 2 pm. It's fun. You meet your neighbors, get a good, healthy workout, and help the native plant communities. Bring gloves and tools, or use our tools. We have one tool, nicknamed "Mary Queen of Scots" and "Conan the Barbarian," that's deadly efficient and great for working out aggressions.

The manager of the Excelsior Branch of Bank of America, Kent Dymak, read the story on native plant restoration in June's *Excelsior News*, and called to tell us of a B of A Environmental Grants Program that he thought we might qualify for. We could use money for tools (right now, we're borrowing Jake Sigg's), seeds, and out-

reach, so we're applying for a grant.

Native Plant Restoration

The best time to see native plants is in the spring, when they are flowering. Jake led a native plant walk in McLaren last March. Despite the pouring rain, we had a great time (see *Excelsior News*, June, 1993), and Jake plans to do it again next year, on Saturday, April 9th. Mark your calendar!

McLaren Park Cleanup

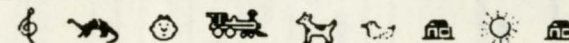
After the cleanups last September and May, there is much less trash in McLaren, but we still have a long way to go, and we're planning a massive cleanup on Saturday, October 16th at 10:00. We'll have dumpsters, tools and gloves, and refreshments. We're so fortunate to have this expansive, beautiful open space in our neighborhood. A little effort will make it a place we'll feel comfortable being in. So join the party on October 16th.

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Please check those interests or concerns you have below:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime/Police Liaison | <input type="checkbox"/> Children, families, schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter/Graffiti | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach to Other Neighborhoods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> McLaren Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Writing and Distribution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission/Merchant Outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic & Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Public Service Numbers

Abandoned Cars	781-5865
Building Inspection	558-6088
Condominium Conversion	554-5826
Curb Painting	554-2300
DPW 24-hr. Emergency	695-2020
Electrical Inspection	558-6030
Energy Conservation	558-6220
Garbage Complaints	255-3620
Illegal Parking (Police)	553-0123
Muni Information	673-6864
Noise Complaints:	
Construction	558-6096
Industrial/Health	255-3616
Street Work	554-5815
Nuisance (Police)	553-1012
Parking Meters (out of order)	550-2739
Parking Permits (residential)	554-5000
Parking Lots/Garages (city owned)	554-9805
Plumbing Inspection	558-6054

Public Library:

Excelsior Branch	337-4735
Information Services	557-4400
Recycling	554-6193
Vacant Lots & Rodent Control	255-3610
Spills (street area)	861-8020
Sewer Repair	695-2096
Sewer Service Charge	695-7300
Street & Sidewalk Inspection	554-5837
Street Cleaning	695-2017
Street Lighting (out of order)	554-0730
Street Repair	695-2100
Signs (missing/damaged)	554-9780
Traffic Signal (out of order)	
Weekdays to 4 pm:	550-2736
After 4pm & weekends:	861-8000 Ext. 309
Tree Planting	695-2162
Tow Away (retrieving cars)	553-1235
Three R (Residential Records Report)	558-6081
Water Department:	
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Neighbors of the Excelsior

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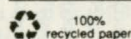
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Kent S. Dymak
Assistant Vice President
Branch Manager



Bank of America

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San Francisco, CA 94112
415/622-3240
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NOTE Membership Form

Annual Membership of
\$10 per person. Mail this
form along with your
check to NOTE, P. O.
Box 12236, San
Francisco, CA 94112.

Join! Renew! Participate!

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone: day _____ evening _____

Please check those interests or concerns you have below:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime/Police Liaison | <input type="checkbox"/> Children, families, schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Litter/Graffiti | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach to Other Neighborhoods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> McLaren Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Writing and Distribution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Mission/Merchant Outreach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic & Parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |