

The Ingleside Light

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March/April 2012

✓ The Birth of Ingleside Racetrack

Bay District Track's End the Start of Ingleside Track



Above: The Bay District Racetrack, which stood between Arguello and 5th Avenue north of Fulton Street in the Richmond District. Left: President of the Pacific Coast Jockey Club, which would build Ingleside



IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD Medical Cannabis Dispensaries Under Scrutiny Neighbors' Concerns Taken to Planning Dept.

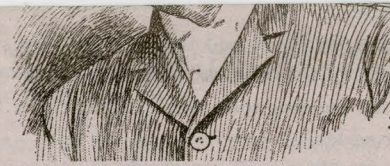
By ALEX EMSLIE
CONTRIBUTOR

The fiery, 2-year debate between Excelsior neighborhood groups and medical cannabis advocates and entrepreneurs is not yet over, despite the San Francisco Planning Commission's Feb. 16 approval of three new marijuana dispensaries for the community's Mission Street border.

The Outer Mission Merchants and Residents Association plans to challenge two of the dispensaries, both proposed for Mission Street's 5200 block, at the city board of appeals as soon building permits are issued. The appeals board halted another dispensary from opening in the Sunset neighborhood in 2010 because of the location's nearness to a daycare center, and OMMRA President Steven Currier said he's identified several childcare facilities around the cannabis clubs' proposed locations.



Racetrack. Right: Adolph Spreckels.
Photos and drawing Courtesy of Woody
LaBounty.



By **WOODY LABOUNTY**
COLUMNIST

In 1893, the United States fell into the worst economic depression in its history. The "Panic of 1893" spawned a credit crisis, bank failures, and unemployment rates that wouldn't be topped until the Great Depression of the 1930s. In San Francisco, however, a horseracing promoter named Thomas H. Williams was riding high.

Williams ran the Bay District Racetrack on rented land in the Richmond District. Men of capital backed the track, and for two decades it had served as the haunt of local "turf men"—gamblers, bookies, and horse owners. Harness racing and endurance races of the 1860s had given way in popularity to thoroughbred racing, and running delicate and powerful horses required careful breeding, maintenance, and fine facilities. Rich men who could afford the hobby were drawn into competition and by the 1890s the "Sport of Kings" had fan from every background and social class. It seemed all of San Francisco followed the race results at Bay District, most with a betting interest.

Much of the sport's success could be credited to Tom Williams. In an era of goatees, Van Dycks, and enormous sideburns, Williams was a clean-shaven, baby-faced man, and as director of the California Jockey Club he had made the Bay District track and horseracing the talk of the town. Tom Williams raced his own horses, arranged for handicapping, kept an eye on operations—including managing the bookies and tipsters in the betting ring—and set the race schedule. For his efforts, he received a cut from everyone, acting both as middleman and czar of the business.

In 1893, Williams moved to expand the reach of his growing business and put Bay District track on the national map for racing. He lured owners of some of the country's finest racehorses to bring their strings west to compete. From October 1893 to May 1894, the Bay District track hosted 150 days of high-quality racing with big crowds and lots of betting. Everyone declared the season a triumph. San Francisco and its mild climate were touted as a burgeoning winter venue in the country's horseracing scene with Tom Williams holding the reins.

Despite the great success of 1893, Williams and his track

suddenly faced numerous problems as the racing season came to a close in 1894. The Bay District track was on leased land, and every year the owners were rumored to have eviction plans. In the twenty years of the track's existence the space between the settled city and the sand dunes of the Richmond District had shrunk. The 1894 Midwinter Fair drew thousands to Golden Gate Park to the south and increased the hopes of west side land owners and real estate salesmen. With improved public transportation options to the area, a neighborhood was growing up around the track, and the subdivision of large parcels into home-building lots seemed more attractive than ever. Bay District track had become prime real estate.

Williams's landlords were some of the same wealthy men who raced their horses at Bay District, and to whom he occasionally availed himself of a loan when times were tough, but Williams' power had begun to chafe.

Some desired a facility more luxurious and well provisioned like the Hawthorne track in Chicago—an opulent palace to racing and the rich men who wanted to be a part of it. Operator and turf man Edward Corrigan, "the Master of Hawthorne," had made the place so respectable that even ladies attended the races there. Bay District was twenty years old, and the style and cachet of horse racing had evolved in those two decades. Everyone—the capitalists, the breeders, the sporting men, even Williams—saw the need for a new track. Rumors started running through the newspapers, especially when a visiting Edward Corrigan made a few choice remarks about how things could be better in San Francisco.

On April 19, 1894, Adolph Sutro sold 110 acres of his land east of Lake Merced and south of the old Ocean House Road to Alexander F. Ullman of Chicago for \$165,000. Ullman and his brother Joe were two of the busiest bookmakers in the country, and soon the news escaped that San Francisco would have a new racetrack.

An association to build and operate the track formed with an initial \$100,000 of stock shares. Edward Corrigan and Ullman each invested \$25,000. Thomas Williams promised \$15,000, and the rest was split between Colonel Dan Burns (10 shares),

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I'm not saying MCDs are not legitimate businesses, but people are scared to death," Currier told the Planning Commission. OMMRA's appeal will also challenge "clustering" two dispensaries on the same block and the location's proximity to the Daly City border, Currier said.

MCDs must be at least 1,000 feet from a school or a community facility that primarily serves children, but daycare facilities are covered by a different section of the code and are

Medical cannabis consumers and providers said the right to accessible store-front dispensaries is a civil rights issue.

not allowed consideration when siting potential dispensary locations, according to testimony by city planner Sharon Lai. Members of the appeals board, noting the code's confusing language, believe daycare services are intended to exclude dispensaries, according to their 2010 decision.

Medical cannabis consumers and providers said the right to accessible store-front dispensaries is a civil rights issue.

"While there is an emotional response of people who just don't want it in their neighborhood, there are people who do want it and need it in their neighborhood," Medical cannabis advocate David Abernathy said. "For a lot of people this is a useful and necessary medicine to help treat their illnesses."

In testimony before the Planning Commission that stretched well into the night, 17 people spoke in favor of the dispensaries, but not one of them identified themselves as a resident of the Excelsior. About one dozen Excelsior residents testified against the MCDs.

"I have a bar that's two doors down from where I'm located," said Laurie Heath, who lives next door to The Green Cross's proposed location

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FOLLOWING OLD OCEAN ROAD

Origins of Ingleside Racetrack

Continued from the Front Page

Mose A. Gunst (10), James Rowe (5), Pat Dunn and Barney Schreiber (5), all well-known turf men. The association later purchased an additional twenty-three acres to expand the tract.

The land for the new track was along the south side of the Ocean House Road (today's Ocean Avenue) and adjacent to a roadhouse called Ingleside House (at the southeast corner of today's Ocean Avenue and Junipero Serra Boulevard). The San Francisco Call described it as "not more than four miles from the new City Hall and a rifle shot from the Pacific Ocean [...] snugly laid between high and thickly wooded hills at the beginning of what is often spoken of as the Mission warm belt." (Past and present residents of Ingleside Terraces may differ with this estimation of the local climate.)

Details were vague at first. One newspaper said the track would be called the "Golden Gate Racetrack," while another called it the "Ocean View Racecourse." The track's location ranged in newspaper articles from Sunnyside to Ocean View before all the reporters eventually agreed it was in Ingleside.

The ownership of the new venture became just as muddled. In January 1895, Williams had a very public falling out with Adolph B. Spreckels, sugar magnate and owner of one of the best horses on the west coast. The two argued over the handicapping of Spreckels' horses for races and soon the disagreement turned personal. Spreckels wasn't one to ignore perceived slights. A decade earlier he had shot newspaper publisher Michael deYoung in the San Francisco Chronicle offices in retaliation for numerous printed insults. For this battle, he only pulled his string of horses out of the Bay District track, supposedly to keep them safe from sabotage.

March 20: Ingleside Police Station community meeting will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Ingleside Police Station's Community Room. Call (415) 206-2140 for more information.

March 20: Taraval Police Station community meeting will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Taraval Station.

March 21: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Parent Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

March 21: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Anger and Relationship Support Group for Women 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

March 21: The Crocker Community Club meets from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Recreation Center located at Moscow and Italy streets.

March 24: Join Friends of the Urban Forest from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to help plant over 50 trees throughout the Excelsior. Meet at Cleveland Elementary, Moscow at Persia. For more information, call (415) 561-6890.

March 24: Free pet vaccinations will be available to District 11 residents from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church, 5655 Mission St. No appointment needed. Dogs must be 6 weeks or older. Arrive with dog on a leash or in a carrier. Se habla espanol. For more information, please call (415) 554-3030.

March 26: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Grandparents Support Group meets from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

March 26: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Men's Support Group meets from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

March 27: The Excelsior District Improvement Association meets from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at 45 Santa Rosa Ave. between Mission and Alemany.

March 28: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Parent Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

March 28: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-

Amazon parking lot at Moscow and France streets.

April 9: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Grandparents Support Group meets from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 9: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Men's Support Group meets from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 11: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Parent Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 11: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Anger and Relationship Support Group for Women 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 11: The Crocker Community Club meets from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Recreation Center located at Moscow and Italy streets.

April 14: The District 11 Council meets at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in Ingleside Station's Community Room, 1 John V. Young Lane.

April 14: James Denman Middle School and OMI/Excelsior Beacon Center 2nd Annual Community & Family Resource Fair will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at 241 Oneida St. For more information, call (415) 406-1290 or e-mail info@omiebeacon.org.

April 16: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Grandparents Support Group meets from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 16: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Men's Support Group meets from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 16: The New Mission Terrace Improvement Association will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Ingleside Police Station Community Room, 1 John V. Young Lane.

April 17: Ingleside Police Station community meeting will be held from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Ingleside Police Station's Community Room.

als include the 8X Bayshore Express, J Church, and 14 Mission (Outer Mission). For more information, visit www.sfmta.com/cms/mtep/tepovert.htm or e-mail tep@sfmta.com.

April 19: The Ocean Avenue Association meets from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. For more information, e-mail info.oacbd@gmail.com.

April 19: District 11 Supervisor Avalos and his family host Family Night Out from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. For more information, contact frances.hsieh@sfgov.org.

April 21: District 11 Supervisor John Avalos will hold office hours from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at Mama Art Cafe, 4754 Mission St. To schedule a 15-minute appointment time, call (415) 554-6975.

April 21: Naples Green Work Day begins at 10:00 a.m. For more information, contact steven.currier@sfdistricts.org.

April 23: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Grandparents Support Group meets from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 23: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Men's Support Group meets from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 24: The Excelsior District Improvement Association meets from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. at 45 Santa Rosa Ave. between Mission and Alemany.

April 25: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Parent Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 25: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Anger and Relationship Support Group for Women 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 25: Taraval Police Station will host the Police Commission Meeting from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at A.P. Giannini Middle School at 3151 Ortega St. Captain Curtis Lum will present a State of the District and request community support.

April 26: Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Neighbors In Action meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Temple United Methodist Church at 65 Beverly St.

April 28: Free pet vaccinations will be available to

Suddenly, Williams' East Coast rival Edward Corrigan became more than just a large shareholder in the new track; to Spreckels and other rich men tired of Williams he was a viable replacement as race promoter.

Williams quickly tried to shore up his position. Two weeks after his argument with Spreckels he demanded to be majority stockholder and president of the new track's racing association, or he would back out. The rest of the ownership declined to accept the terms. Williams made good on his threat and signed over his unpaid-for shares. Suddenly the man who had been king of local racing for two decades was cut out of the new track.

Spreckels, meanwhile, was installed as president of the Pacific Coast Jockey Club, Ingleside Racetrack's ownership association. Wealthy men of high social standing now came out of the shadows of the sporting men and bookmakers. Henry J. Crocker, noted organizer of a swanky horse breeding show, served as vice-president. State Postmaster W.S. Leake acted as secretary and would do a lot of the detail work necessary to make Ingleside a success. Along with Edward Corrigan, these three men formed the board of directors. Many others, including prominent bankers and investors encouraged by Spreckels and Crocker, bought stock in the club.

With money being raised through stock purchases, the Pacific Coast Jockey Club planned an October 1895 opening for Ingleside Racetrack. A.M. Allen of Chicago, an experienced designer of eastern venues including Garfield Park, Harlem, Roby, and Hawthorne tracks, was lured out to act as superintendent of construction.

The Pacific Coast Jockey Club gave Allen one clear directive: create one of the finest racetracks in the country.

Adapted from Ingleside Terraces: San Francisco's Racetrack to Residence Park, to be published June 2012. The Ingleside Racetrack stood on the present site of the Ingleside Terraces neighborhood. Part two next month. Woody LaBounty is a historian and author. Visit www.outsidelands.org to learn about his Western Neighborhoods Project.

Ingleside Anger and Relationship Support Group for Women 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

March 29: Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Neighbors In Action meets at 7:00 p.m. in the Temple United Methodist Church at 65 Beverly St.

March 31: Crocker Amazon Playground Spring Fling will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Crocker Amazon Club House (Moscow & Italy) for children of all ages. For more information, e-mail info@facesf.com.

April 1: Athens Avalon Greenspace Workday will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the greenspace at the intersection of Athens and Avalon. For more information, e-mail pamelaaxelson@gmail.com.

April 2: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Grandparents Support Group meets from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 2: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Men's Support Group meets from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 3: The Outer Mission Merchants and Residents Association meets from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Recreation Center located at Moscow and Italy streets.

April 4: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Parent Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 4: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Anger and Relationship Support Group for Women 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 4: The Crocker Community Club meets from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Recreation Center located at Moscow and Italy streets.

April 6: District 11 Supervisor John Avalos will hold office hours from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at Java on Ocean located at 1700 Ocean Ave. To schedule a 15-minute appointment time, call (415) 554-6975.

April 6: Mission YMCA Senior Council meets from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. at 4080 Mission St.

April 7: Crocker Amazon Park Workday will be from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Meet in the Crocker

April 17: Taraval Police Station community meeting will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Taraval Station.

April 17: Excelsior Film Festival Monthly Movie Night will be held from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at Excelsior Branch Library, 4400 Mission St. Free. Children 13 and under must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

April 18: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Parent Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 18: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Anger and Relationship Support Group for Women 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 18: The Crocker Community Club meets from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at the Crocker Amazon Recreation Center located at Moscow and Italy streets.

April 19: The Municipal Transportation Agency will hold a discussion about its Transit Effectiveness Project from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. in City College of San Francisco's Multi-Use Building in room 140 located at Phelan and Ocean. Propos-

District 11 residents from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church, 5655 Mission St. No appointment needed. Dogs must be 6 weeks or older. Arrive with dog on a leash or in a carrier. Se habla espanol. For more information, please call (415) 554-3030.

April 28: The Best Buddies Friendship Walk - Bay Area will be held on Crissy Field. For more information, visit www.bestbuddiescalifornia.org/faf/home/default.asp?event=1006346.

April 30: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Grandparents Support Group meets from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center, located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

April 30: The Ocean View-Merced Heights-Ingleside Men's Support Group meets from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in the OMI Family Resource Center located at 156 Broad St. For more information, call (415) 406-1367.

INCLUDE YOUR EVENT

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