

By Jim Kelly  
In Cow Hollow, residents would rather not be judged by Sunday night's exposure on TV.

If you saw the evening news, early or late, there was no missing how some people celebrated Sweet Sixteen, the Super Bowl that put San Francisco, and its all-victorious 49ers, atop the football world.

Union Street, arterial heart of the historic Hollow, may never be the same. January 24, 1982 — in the bistros for which the street is famed, stories figure to grow in the telling of The Night a mob of mainly outsiders...

... set Buchanan Street ablaze, where it crosses Union, with a bonfire that got bigger as the night wore on;

... Stopped a trolley dead in its tracks and then smashed it, from front to rear;

... made missiles out of bottles, empty and full, at a cost of more cracked skulls and black eyes than anyone may ever know.

And so it's not easy, the day after, to write a story about another kind of Cow Hollow. The other had its moments and its celebrations, too. And its share of split lips and bloodied noses.

But with a difference. The Hollow — that area where San Francisco takes a little dip between Pacific Heights and the Bay —

kept things on a neighborhood basis. Unlike Sunday last, people who got out of line were by and large its own. And were dealt with accordingly when someone called the police.

Drunks departing Hoin's Saloon, Union near Fillmore, got an escort home more often than not. Roisterers from the roof garden of the Grand View Hotel down the street were told to knock it off. And usually did.

It figures that youthful gang fights were the lustiest of all. Cow Hollow lads against the guys from the Mission and North Beach. Us against them.

At least, that's how Walt De Vecchi remembers it from when he was a kid. He's 83 and a charter member of Cow Hollow Boys, Inc., the kind of organization that makes the City what it is. The Boys, of course, are men, 425 strong, most of them a good deal younger than Walt. They've never lost touch with the neighborhood where they grew up, whether they still live there or not. They keep its history and tradition alive.

And how they do, at the annual Cow Hollow Boys dinner. It happens this Saturday, Jan. 30, at the S.F. Italian Athletic Club on Stockton Street. The fact that the club is in North Beach says chief-

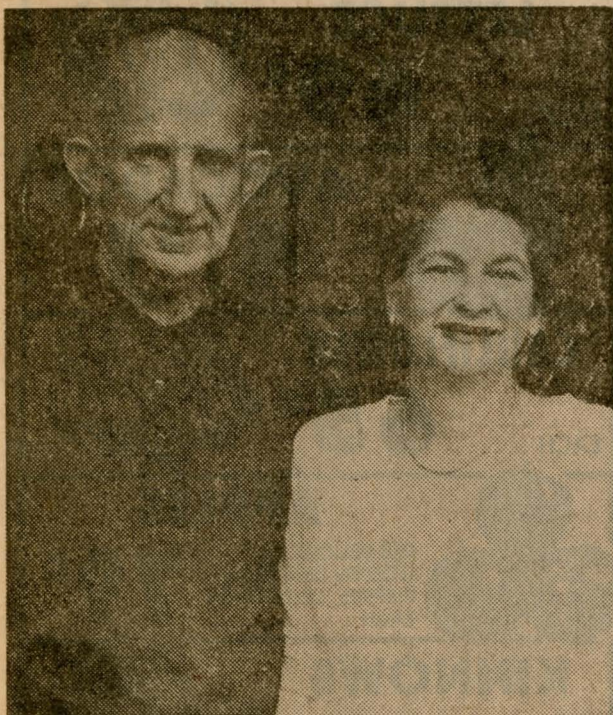
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COW HOLLOW

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**MILES AND CHARLOTTE DROBISCH** — She remembers her father, Theo Fredericksen, as a man who loved to help people.



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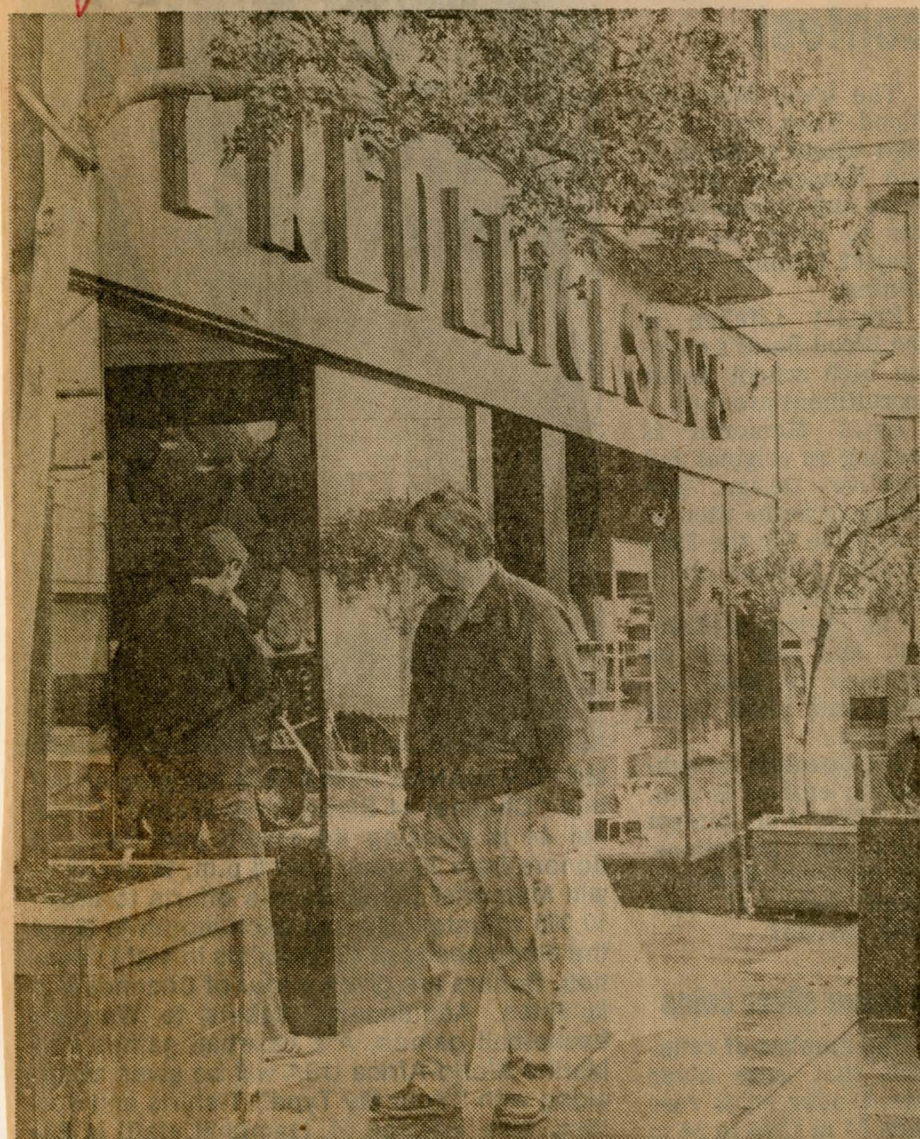
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## Cow Hollow — memories of merchants and police who had a way with people



Progress photos by Jim Kelly

**FREDERICKSEN'S HARDWARE** — Eighty-four years a place for people to meet.

ly that it serves up "a good meal to a group like ours, the kind our guys like, from pasta to dessert."

That's from Ed Del Bonta, CHB secretary — George Imperiale is the current president. Ed estimates Saturday's crowd at 250 but says he can squeeze in a few latecomers who call him at 751-6611. The tab is \$15.

As the Cow Hollow Boys are a link with history, so are some of the stores in the Hollow that make it a special place. Like Fredericksen's Hardware at 3029 Fillmore, just off Union, where it's been since Theo Fredericksen opened up in 1896. He was then 20 years old. At 14 he'd come to the City from his native Denmark, the town of Tolumme in Jutland.

"Dad loved Cow Hollow. He was so much a part of the community. A lot of the hardware that holds its buildings together came out of our store. He didn't

just sell things. Until he died in 1940, he went out of his way to help people."

Charlotte Drobisch talked of earlier years with feeling and affection. She's still close to the store — she owns the building with two apartments over, originally the family home. Brother Elmer took over the hardware business through World War II. It's had several owners since: Jack Gorton and Dick Van Borstal, Charles Pynchon, and currently James Hill and John Hall.

Though modernized, the store now is all you expect a hardware to be — community meeting place inside and out front, aisles full of tools, garbage cans, hoses, electrical supplies, paints, and plumbing. With an American flag halfway down the left side.

Manager Dick Norwood, there 20 years, ruefully admitted there wasn't much of the old store left to show, "not even an old

photo." Then he remembered the sidewalk elevator and agreed San Francisco "doesn't have too many of those any more."

"In fact," he added, leading the way to the basement to demonstrate the old hand crank, "when the inspector comes out, he just says, 'Oh, my God.'"

Charlotte and Miles Drobisch, wed after her father died, live in the Marina a few blocks away. A casualty actuary, he's recently retired from work in workmen's compensation. "Grew up West of Twin Peaks, but I'm Cow Hollow now, including the dinner. I used to walk here from Parkside by way of the beach and Land's End," he said. A pretty fair hike. Miles says he did it "to get out of the fog and into the sun."

Mrs. Drobisch remembers the store basement two ways: "My girlfriends and I would play hide'n'seek, but never down there

— too scary. And Dad kept things stored there for years and years, stuff he'd buy from other stores selling out. A customer would come in, ask to replace an item 20 years old. Dad would have it."

She recalls the store's "trademark" — a solid wall, floor to ceiling, of little drawers, unlabeled ("Dad knew what each one held"). And the ladder on rollers that ran in front ("our game was to jump on and see how far it would roll").

Theo Fredericksen, says his daughter, knew some customers were all thumbs. "He'd say, 'I'll send a man over to hang those hinges, no charge.' Our employees were all handy at something. But it backfired once. Father (Martin) Ryan at St. Vincent de Paul's asked for a man to fix a window. It turned out to be the largest stained glass window in the church. Dad laughed when the priest said,

"Well, it was worth a try."

Up on posh Pacific Heights, customers were something else. "They'd call down for a screwdriver. He'd ask what size. They'd say to send up all the sizes he had."

But a customer could be wrong and made to know it. Mrs. Drobisch said her father allowed no profanity in the store.

How was it in the Cow Hollow of the '20s and '30s? "Peaceful," she said, "and so neighborly. We all knew and respected each other. Valente & Sons bought plumbing supplies from us. I remember Dad saying Adrian could pinpoint a leak just by putting his ear to the floor."

Miles Drobisch has his own memory of the Hollow that was: "One Christmas before the war, we were visiting friends here. It was so still that night. After dinner, we took a walk along the quiet streets. I remember well the peace I felt."