

## *North Beach Community Business District*

*By Lynn Jefferson*

What is it and what does it mean for the North Beach community? A CBD or Community Business District is a special assessment on property values which is imposed on all property owners in a given district to accomplish an agreed upon goal. The goal might include services, such as clean-up or security and can also include improvements to the neighborhood in the form of tree planting or sidewalk improvement and the goal can change from year to year.

What defines the boundaries in a CBD? There is a process involved of listening to all property owners to determine if they would like to belong to the CBD. Based on this process, the boundaries of the CBD are determined by the majority of the property owners. If a majority of the other property owners adjacent to a property owner within the same square block choose to vote in favor of the CBD, that property owner is “in” the District.

Not every owner pays the same assessment as the value of each property owner is different. The vote for or against a CBD is determined by the majority of “weighted votes”. In other words, the majority of the votes of the total CBD assessment.

Everyone on the proposed CBD is subject to the same assessment formula, determined by frontage on a public street or sidewalk, the square footage of the lot and the square footage of the usable space of the building (assuming there is a building). This formula will be decided by the input received from the community of property owners.

Should the North Beach CBD successfully win 50% plus one of the weighted votes among North Beach property owners, the San Francisco Assessor’s Office will automatically add the assessment twice yearly to the property tax bill as a separate item.

Since many commercial leases are set up to pass the costs of the assessment to their renters, the local ordinance dictates that at least 20 % of the oversight body, or the CBD Boards must be commercial renters, who do not own property in the CBD District.

## *Neighborhood Resources*

*By Rhoda Feldman*

Sometimes one doesn’t know that what’s good is just around the corner.

Did you know that within blocks of where you live there is a great source for upgrading your health, your intellect, and your social life? None of which will break your bank, numb your brain, or make you stay out late.

Not far from your home is a huge block-square area from the corners of Columbus Avenue, Lombard, Mason and Greenwich Streets devoted entirely to a City playground with outdoor and indoor basketball and tennis courts, a toddlers’ play yard with swings and a sand box. Adjacent to the playground and accessible to the public, is an equally dramatic, heated, year-round indoor swimming pool with an overhead sliding roof which brings in the sun on warm days, and moonlight on pleasant nights. The pool is open six days a week, with different hours and various activities designed for children and adults, ranging from lap swimming, lessons for all levels, aerobics, swim teams, senior classes, and access to a Sauna and more. The pool and playground are operated and manned by the SF Recreation and Park Department.

Just next door at Columbus Avenue is the North Beach Public Library plus an under-construction updated outdoor bocce court. The Library has books for all ages, and in several languages. A schedule of many programs is designed for various age levels and intellectual interests.

And then... believe it or not, across the street on Lombard Street, and familiar to many locals, is the two-level Telegraph Hill

Community Center with its large meeting hall, an available kitchen, amply-supplied computer room for learners, an indoor basketball court and outdoor playground for little children. Classes and guidance is available for most activities. And a savvy friendly staff is accessible to help visitors who have questions and need assistance. Some lucky residents also have access to garden plots on the property where they grow vegetables and flowers year round. It may be hard to believe but it's all a part of your neighborhood, run by The City, and all for free or accessible for modest fees. Meantime, you can contact these three outstanding sources of pleasure and knowledge for immediate information:

Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center  
660 Lombard St                      421-6443

North Beach Branch Library  
200 Mason St                        355-5626

North Beach Pool  
Lombard and Mason St      391-0407

If you would like to meet with the new Executive Director of Tel-Hi Neighborhood Center, Tim Daniels, you're invited to attend the next meeting of North Beach Neighbors at Tel Hi Center. Please check with the NBN Program Director first at 396-2770.

### *Jack Early Park* *By Jim Nelson*

When I first went looking for a place to live in San Francisco, I quickly learned that a good view can lift the price of a mediocre apartment into the stratosphere. Only when I moved into a flat just west of Telegraph Hill did I discover that the district's most panoramic view is available for free at Jack E. Early Park. This great neighborhood park is the result of one man's hard work. No public money was put into its construction. The story begins in 1962 when Jack Early noticed a segment of undeveloped city-owned land at the end of Pfeiffer Street, the alleyway he lived on. He obtained permission from the city to begin work transforming the lot into a park. He

funded this large-scale hobby project entirely out of his own pocket, as well as with materials donated from local developers. He planted a eucalyptus and a Monterey pine on the steep and narrow ground, as well as a blanket of groundcover, shrubs, and flowers. He hauled dirt and water up the hill in buckets and installed a staircase made of railroad ties lit by electric lamps. He finished the park in 1987, at which time the city dedicated it to him.

With no intention of disparaging Early's hard work, "park" is a slight misnomer for his achievement. Due to Telegraph Hill's incline, it's more like a terraced garden. The trees and groundcover keep you in the shade during the climb up, and it's so green, dense and lush you momentarily forget you're in San Francisco. With the last few steps you emerge from the cover onto the top landing, a railed platform offering two benches and a bit of standing room. It can't be more than six feet by six feet, unable to hold more than half a dozen people at one time, but this is part of the park's charm. Only part of it, though. Jack Early calls this area of Telegraph Hill "Alcatraz Heights," and from his park's apogee, his reasons are apparent. The storied penitentiary crouches directly across the bay from the landing. It's the centerpiece on the panorama being offered, with the Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate flanking either side. Fisherman's Wharf sprawls out just beneath you; to your left, Fort Mason and the Aquatic Park are easily seen, and to your right, the northernmost docks of the Embarcadero. The first day I visited, the bay was speckled with sailboats. I witnessed a seaplane taxi out from Pier 35 and take off into the Marin Highlands.

A writer for one tour guide Web site reported running into Jack Early napping on a bench at the top of his park. It's that kind of place, not a people-magnet like Dolores Park on the weekends, not as fabled as Washington Square, not as famous or majestic as Golden Gate Park. It's a welcome slice of green space for a congested section of town, a good place to take in some fresh air, enjoy a lunch, and admire the bay. Jack E. Early Park is a great neighborhood spot.

*Jack E. Early Park is located on Grant Avenue between Chestnut Street and Francisco Street.*