

# Holly Park

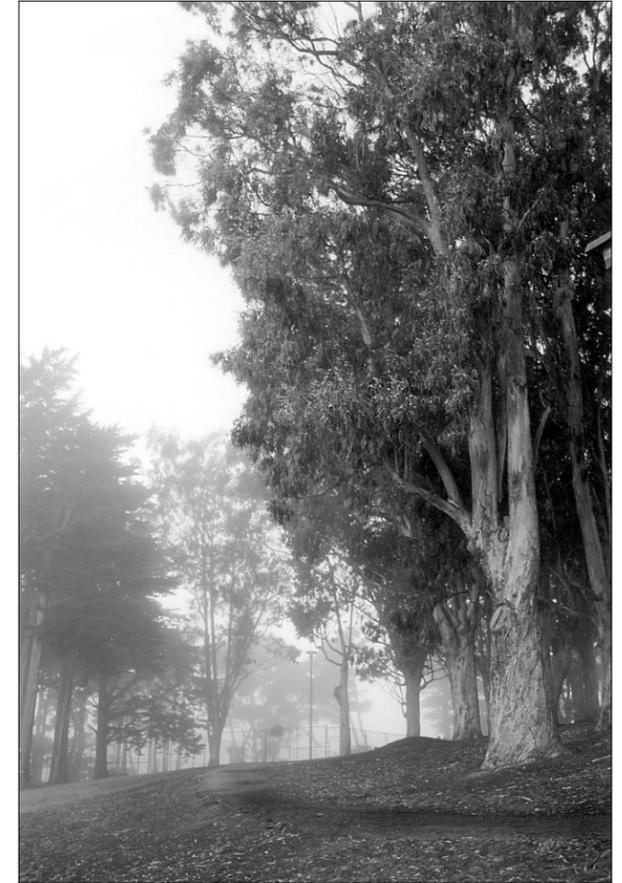
Was a seven-and-a-half-acre parcel on the Bernal Rancho in 1862 when San Francisco's colorful high roller/miner James Fair bought it and deeded it to the city. Its price—\$375,000—scarcely dented the \$45,000,000 fortune Fair had made from his silver mines (and devoted to new real estate holdings and famously high living). The site lay unimproved until 1887 when development began in the Holly Park District. Roadways were graded, streets opened, sidewalks paved; and, by 1889, 200 houses and families had sprung up in the area. But people lacked a way to climb to the hilltop, 274 feet above. Under persistent pressure from the Holly Park Improvement Club, Holly Park Circle (then Holly Park Avenue) was built and opened in 1874. Now families could have an outing in their own neighborhood instead of making the long trek out to Golden Gate Park. Source: San Francisco History Center.

Trees and shrubs held their ground in the park until April of 1929, when the Playground Commission requested a playground and asked the Park Department to clear away shrubbery and put in basketball and tennis courts. In 1954, archives in the Planning Department record the proposal to create a hilltop park in Bernal Heights, and Holly Park joined the roster of neighborhood parks/open spaces.

Maintenance and piecemeal improvements, which began in the '60s, carried on into the late '90s, always leaving more to be done. The '70s saw grading, paving, irrigation repair and rehabilitation of the children's playground.

In 1971, Rec and Park gave it the much-coveted surplus fire engine that was to be converted into a piece of play equipment and donated to a city park. Fast forward to 1989 and a program of repair (irrigation system), removal (cuttings, bushes, glass in the playground), and promises (picnic area cleanup and baseball diamond renovation). In 1991, the South Bernal Neighborhood Association submitted to San Francisco Beautiful and the Neighborhood Graffiti Clean-Up Fund a proposal for a Holly Park Sculpture Playground. They were turned down but encouraged to resubmit the following year. Also in '91, concern about the park's hazardous conditions prompted Rec and Park to fence the children's play area, playing field and BBQ area, and upgrade lights. In April '96, a grant for water conservation funding included replacing the baseball field grass with a cinder/clay mix, installing wood chips on high traffic areas, eliminating landscaping in erosion areas, and replacing irrigation heads.

A year and a half ago in her early morning walks around the hill, Eugenie Marek noted the condition of the picnic tables and benches, barbecue pit, children's play structures, tennis and basketball courts and baseball field. Aware both of the park's deterioration and the 10-year, \$110 million Capital Plan allotted to facility improvement from the passage of Propositions A and C, she



Shadows of the Day at Holly Park

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JAMES SANDERS

resolved to start up Friends of Holly Park. She sought the Neighborhood Park Council's advice and set up a meeting to inform the community and enlist its support. Two activist friends joined her in working with Junipero Serra Elementary School for the children's wish list. A \$2,000 Beginner's Grant from Friends of Rec and Park paid for a booth at the annual Fall Fiesta, flyers for a new summer recreation program and a questionnaire on park priorities and preferences. The 200-plus responses formed the basis of the Holly Park Improvement Proposal submitted to the Recreation and Park Department in October.

Good News! They received \$1.5 million for facility and short-term projects which translates into reforestation and ADA compliance in the Capital Plan's Year Two. Their landscape architect, Susan Lucchi, is on the case and, after surveying the site and the Improvement Proposal, held her first community meeting in mid-November.

"We're off and running," says Eugenie. "Short-term projects can develop into long-term plans when the park is looked at as a whole. And we're very hopeful."

—Jeanne Alexander, Neighborhood Parks Council

Friends in the park movement in New York City have shared a wonderful perspective about the tragedy at the World Trade Center—specifically what it has done to the sense of community in the Big Apple. Clearly, one goal of this deplorable terrorist act was to frighten and isolate us. However, New Yorkers report that the opposite is happening. The disaster has led people to affirm public life more than ever.

Since September 11th, people all over New York City have gravitated to public spaces. Along the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, with its view of the now-incomplete Manhattan skyline, a quiet, continuous vigil is taking place. In Union Square and Washington Square, people are finding comfort in sharing each other's stories. And throughout the city people are gathering – as people in times of upheaval always have—in their public parks. How appropriate then that the Parks Council of New York City has encouraged New Yorkers to come to neighborhood parks to plant a million yellow tulips and daffodils in memory of those lost at the World Trade Center.

As the Neighborhood Parks Council has said many times, parks are the heart and soul of our city. It seems now more than ever we can use parks to come together to affirm our shared reality, but we must love them as we learn to love each other. In a war-time economy and a possible recession, adequate funding to maintain our wonderful neighborhood parks may not make the top cut of City priorities. Given the economic climate, what ideas can we implement that would help San Francisco capture and retain resources for services such as parks?

Parks and open space benefit every San Franciscan, tourist and neighborhood, yet we have only one mechanism for requiring investment in this vital service—and it



benefits downtown only. Today, developers of new downtown office space put \$2.00 per square foot of new space into a fund to acquire and develop downtown parks. But downtown is now mostly complete, and most new office space will be developed in SOMA. This requirement needs to

be expanded citywide to other developments such as hotels, entertainment and retail facilities, and increased to

*continued inside*

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK REPORT #24

- FRIENDS IN PARK MOVEMENT
- HOLLY PARK
- IN MEMORIAM

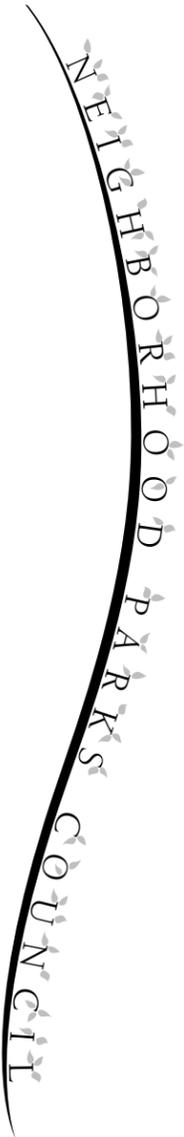
# NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS COUNCIL #24

A PROJECT OF  
URBAN RESOURCE SYSTEMS  
783 BUENA VISTA WEST  
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94117

Revitalizing Communities,  
Park by Park

NOTE: TO MAKE BETTER USE  
OF SPACE OUR CALENDAR  
IS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
www.sfnighborhoodparks.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED.



NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
SAN FRANCISCO CA  
PERMIT No. 789

# UPDATES

**Lake Merced on the Mend?** A lake that has dropped 50% of its volume in 60 years is obviously in serious trouble. That's why **Supervisor Tony Hall's** announcement of a first step toward reaching an agreement between San Francisco and Daly City to split the cost of routing storm water into the lake and to reduce the amount of water being pumped easy from the West Side Aquifer (which feeds the lake) came as such good news. Yet to be determined, however, is how much water D.C. will be allowed to pump from wells on its golf courses, so don't pop the cork on the bubbly just yet.

**Also Around City Hall.** Nothing short of cloning could make it easy to be both chair of the Rules committee and a member of the Finance committee. After giving it a go, district 5 **Supervisor Matt Gonzalez** is now moving over to the Neighborhood Services and Parks Committee from Finance, switching seats with district 11 **Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval**. Welcome aboard, Matt!

**Laissez les bon temps rouler!** That was the crowd's mandate when New Orleans funkster **Zigaboo Modeliste** took the stage at the **McLaren Park Funk Project**. At 90-plus degrees, October 14th was made to order for a funk festival, and 600 party people shook their groove thangs accordingly at the NPC benefit for the Red Cross.

**Cleaning Up Franklin Square.** It should be an urban oasis in district 6. Instead it is a "needle park," littered with discarded hypodermic needles, human waste, and beer cans. The thirty **Americorps** volunteers who took action in the neglected park on **Make a Difference Day**, picking up trash and pulling weeds, provided a glimpse of the clean, welcoming space Franklin Square could be. Special thanks to NPC's own **Liz Donnelly** for coordinating the event and **Miriam Moss** and **Eugenie Marek** for pitching in.

**Voted Down.** It must have seemed like a good idea at one time. But the proposed legislation requiring 24-hours notification before removing personal property from public spaces, including city parks, would've resulted in trash-strewn open space, additional work for already overextended RPD staff, and little real help for homeless persons. The supes wisely nixed the measure.

**Park Event of the Year?** The STRICTLY BLUEGRASS festival bankrolled by financier, banjo picker, and park pal Warren Hellman will be hard to beat for this honor. **Emmylou Harris** and **Alison Krauss** headlined the star-studded free music festival October 27 at Speedway Meadows in GGP. Brand new **House Majority Whip Nancy Pelosi**, **Mayor Jerry Brown**, **Supervisors Aaron Peskin** and **Tony Hall**, and **City Treasurer Susan Leal** turned out for the post-park soiree at Slim's.

**A Talk on a Thorny Issue.** San Francisco has long been a city of transplants – its flora included. How do native plants compare with, say, Mediterranean species, especially when it comes to the resources needed to maintain our lovely landscape? The NPC panel discussion "**Native Plants and Habitat Restoration: A Broad Perspective**" will examine both sides of the native-versus-non-native-species issue. **Ruth Gravanis**, **Lisa Hokholt**, **Art Shapiro**, and **Mike**

**Vasey** are scheduled to speak. They will also field audience questions. The discussion will take place at **7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 12**, in the State Building Basement, 455 Golden Gate Avenue. A wine and cheese reception begins at 6:00 p.m.

**A Living Memorial.** The NPC/RPD initiative to plant thousands of bulbs in remembrance of those who died in September's terrorist attacks got underway on October 27th at Park Presidio Boulevard's annual daffodil planting. The effort in San Francisco supports the memorial planting of one million yellow tulips and daffodils in NYC. Special thanks to Park Presidio stalwarts **Patty Phleger** and **Carol Brost**, **RPD General Manager Elizabeth Goldstein** and **Supervisor Jake McGoldrick** for helping with the kick-off.

**New Staff at NPC.** **Tracy Baxter**, Information and Outreach Program Manager; **Amber Rosenberg**, Communications Director; **Vidya Tikku**, District Park Planning Program Manager at your service!

**Looking for a great holiday gift idea?** Give a subscription to **Bay Nature Magazine!** For only \$16 (\$3 off the regular price), you can give your friends and family members a treat full of gorgeous images, insightful articles and valuable information about the Bay Area's legendary natural world. For more information, go to: [www.baynature.com/gifts.html](http://www.baynature.com/gifts.html) or call (925) 372-6002.

—Tracy Baxter

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**THE NPC HOLIDAY PARTY**  
**WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY,**  
**DECEMBER 6 AT 5 BUENA VISTA TERRACE**  
**AT DUBOCE FROM 5:30 P.M. TO 8:30 P.M.**  
**SEE YOU THERE!**

## THANK YOU

Americorp Volunteers	The Honorable Susan Leal
Carol Brost	Judith Anne Lockhart
Alexander Clemmons	Mary McAllister
Cole Hardware	Nurserymen's Exchange
Grace D'Anca	Nancy Dobbs Owens
Angela Patricia Duque	Patti Phleger
Floor Craft Garden Center	Ariana Sexton
Barry J. Frankel	Shindig Productions
Walter & Elise Haas Fund	Sloat Garden Center
Supervisor Tony Hall	Maurico Vela
Mary and Al Harris	Christopher Woods
Kelly Properties	Margaret Woods
Daniele Kent	Togo's Eatery

The **Neighborhood Parks Council** is a non-profit project of Urban Resource Systems. It is funded by grants and private donations. Your contribution would be deeply appreciated and is fully tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

The NPC is a non-profit coalition of community-based park groups that are actively involved in improving and restoring neighborhood parks in San Francisco. Our mission is to launch a renaissance in the parks and recreation system that will be sustainable for future generations.

CONTINUED

IN MEMORIAM

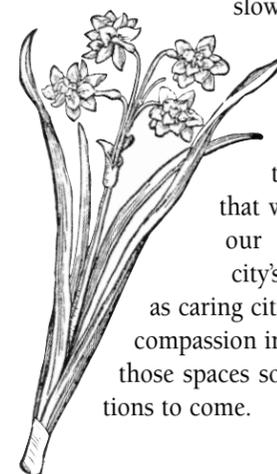
## Friends in Park Movement...continued

keep pace with inflation.

Existing parks need continued investment. Until the passage of Proposition A last year, San Francisco had not had a citywide bond for parks in over 50 years! Parks and recreation centers are capital assets as well as environmental ones. We need to protect our original investment as well as ensure improvements that can meet public expectations. Since everyone not only benefits from parks but also needs them, no development should be exempt from the open space requirement. A second revenue-generating idea, therefore, is to impose a small but graduated fee for parks on every residential development permit. In this way, we could ensure that every neighborhood—not just new ones such as Mission Bay—has appropriately developed play spaces and green respites for children, adults and even dogs.

A third idea is to modify the existing mechanism of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to create PIDs (Park Improvement Districts). One quasi example already exists at Union Square where surrounding businesses have created a "clean and safe" assessment based on linear square footage on the street front to pay for increased security and garbage removal. An actual PID could also help pay for park maintenance, as is the case at Bryant Park in New York City. In fact, many cities place their entire area within a landscape assessment district to raise funds specifically for maintenance. Oakland raises up to \$11 million a year with this method.

What many of us love most about San Francisco is the sense of community that we feel in our neighborhood spaces—especially in times of dire need. One need only think of how the city pulled together after Jonestown or the assassination of Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Milk to realize the strength of our collective compassion. We can take advantage of the



slower development pace precipitated by the economic downturn, and the uncertainty of international events, to plan and test cost-saving and revenue-generating ideas, and to be creative in a thoughtful way that will contribute to our quality of life, our community foundations, and our city's environment. Let's come together as caring citizens to share our strengths and our compassion in our public spaces; and let's cherish those spaces so that we have them for the generations to come.

—Isabel Wade,  
Executive Director

## IN MEMORIAM

### *Bicoastal Initiative to Plant Flowers in City Parks in Remembrance of September 11th Victims*

**T**he **Neighborhood Parks Council** and the **Recreation and Park Department** are planning a citywide initiative to plant thousands of bulbs in San Francisco's neighborhood parks in remembrance of those who died in September's terrorist attacks. This memorial planting is in support of the effort by the Parks Council, our counterpart in New York City, inviting thousands of New Yorkers to come together to plant one million yellow tulips and daffodils in NY parks as a living memorial to the World Trade Center victims.

The first site of this budding effort was Park Presidio Boulevard. On October 27th, volunteers led by the Park Presidio Neighbors—the folks who have been gardening along the boulevard for the last four years—planted bulbs as part of what is now a "sea to shining sea" memorial.

Additionally, the following park groups have scheduled upcoming plantings:

**Who: Friends of Dolores Park**  
**When: December 1st, 2001**  
**Contact: Donald Bird**  
**Phone: 415-864-4614**

**Who: Friends of Buena Vista Park**  
**When: December 1st, 2001**  
**Contact: Isabel Wade**  
**Phone: 415-621-3260**

**Who: Friends of Holly Park**  
**When: December 1st and 8th, 2001**  
**Contact: Eugenie Marek**  
**Phone: 415-826-0236**

**Who: Friends of Crocker Amazon**  
**When: December 1st, 2001**  
**Contact: Steve Currier**  
**Phone: 415-587-9156**

We would like to invite your group to create flower memorials in your park during November and December. If you're interested and would like more information, please contact **Amber Rosenberg**, **Neighborhood Parks Council**, 415-621-3260.

San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Report, Volume 4, Number 24, is published bi-monthly by the Neighborhood Parks Council, 783 Buena Vista West, San Francisco CA 94117. Telephone: 415-621-3260; Facsimile: 415-431-9030. E-mail: [council@sfneighborhoodparks.org](mailto:council@sfneighborhoodparks.org). Web: [www.sfneighborhoodparks.org](http://www.sfneighborhoodparks.org). Editor: Isabel Wade; Contributors: Jeanne Alexander, Amber Rosenberg, Tracy Baxter. Production: Giraffe-X.