



# EDIA

## EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

THE VOICE OF THE RESIDENTS

A PUBLICATION OF THE

EXCELSIOR DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1942 – Incorporated in 1962



### Planned Development of 4441 Mission St.

At the EDIA meeting on Feb. 27, Sia Tahbazos, the developer of 4441 Mission St., site of the former B&B Sheet metal, and an adjoining lot, submitted several alternate designs for the facade of a proposed mixed use building to be erected on the property. The EDIA membership and representatives of several other community organizations attended the session and voted in favor of one of the three designs submitted for community approval.

The design chosen has a more traditional facade of bay windows with a flat roof line as opposed to the more angular, larger bays submitted earlier by Mr. Tahbazos; along with another version he submitted as an alternative design with a staggered, and taller roof profile. The facade approval removes the final local impediment to development of the long vacant and neglected site.

Christy Johnston director of Encore/EAG (Excelsior Action Group), and several board members of EAG attended the EDIA meeting. Prior to the meeting, a request for a discretionary review of the project by the Planning Commission that had been submitted by EAG and supported and partly paid for by EDIA was withdrawn as part of a proposed settlement with the developer. As part of the settlement, fees paid by EDIA to support the Planning Commission Discretionary Review were reimbursed and the developer agreed to contribute \$ 30,000. to the Excelsior Festival and toward preliminary studies concerning creation of a "Community Benefit District" on parts of Mission Street in the Excelsior. The contribution and its disposition raised numerous issues for residents of the Excelsior and particularly for the EDIA.

As of the date of the writing of this article, further discussions are underway as to control over and payment of these funds. All local non-profits are aware of their own narrow constituency in the Excelsior and so the answer to the question of who should speak for the neighborhood in these matters must remain open. Some form of collaboration has been mentioned as an approach to explore.

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# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

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March 2007

## Locals are protecting parks through the internet

"In the past, city residents relied on phoning or writing letters to the City about problems, and often these did not reach the right person to address the problem" says Alfredo Pedroza, ParkScan's Technical Outreach Coordinator. "Now, the City has a paper trail via the Internet, and the correct staff person can be reached within minutes" he added. He was referring to the growing use of [www.ParkScan.org](http://www.ParkScan.org), which is a website monitored by Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC).

ParkScan.org empowers residents to connect with the Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) and other city departments and provide their information about issues needing attention in San Francisco parks, athletic fields, recreation centers and playgrounds.

Although there are other factors that improve the city's response time, it is clear that ParkScan is working. In 2005, 44% of the issues reported with parks, etc, received responses from city agencies and 8% of those issues were resolved. Since 2006 there has been a more than 90% response rate from city agencies and over 60% were resolved!

"Our small park was a hot spot of abuse and neglect until a group of us started using ParkScan.org in 2004" says Eric Arguello of "Friends of The 4th St. Mini Park" in the Mission. "With our recent renovation and our continued vigilance through ParkScan, our park is once again a center for our community."

According to NPC, the main complaint of park users was playground maintenance. Vandalism is #1 cause of poor conditions in 2006, and 63% of all those problems are probably related to vandalism. Graffiti is the most common form of vandalism, followed by theft, destruction and "toilet trashing".

The park conditions most reported were Playgrounds (23%), Turf/Lawns (21%), Graffiti (20%), Trash/Litter/Dumping (12%), Athletic Fields & Courts (10%), Restrooms (8%), and Urban Forestry (6%).



illustration by and copyright Jackie Jack Wipf

RPD has assembled a Toilet Task Force to draft new restroom design and maintenance standards, and survey park users about restroom conditions and public expectations. They also plan to refurbish 30 playgrounds that were given a low score on NPC's Playground Report Card in March 2006. The goal is to bring all playgrounds to at least a "C" standard through on-going maintenance and volunteer work days in 2007.

The Neighborhood Parks Council would like to triple the number of people using ParkScan in 2007, so check out [www.ParkScan.org](http://www.ParkScan.org) or call NPC at 621-3260.

## EDIA Regular Meeting Guests

At our March 27th meeting the SFPUC discussed the Mission St./Mt. Vernon Sewer Improvement Project. This will improve wastewater flow especially around Mt. Vernon Ave (between Alemany and Mission) and Mission Street (from Mt. Vernon Ave to Sickles St). The idea is to reduce flood risk in low lying areas. They'll be ripping up the center of Mission St, doing it in 3-block segments. Each segment will take a few weeks. Two way traffic will still be possible, but for the love of us all do not double park during this time.

On April 24th we've invited Judy Berkowitz to talk about the Coalition of San Francisco Neighborhoods. EDIA is a member of CSFN, so it's good if we understand what that is for, what they do, and why we joined.

## From the Office of Leland Yee



As your State Senator, I am very proud to continue serving the Excelsior District of San Francisco. We strive to help constituents who come to us to address problems or concerns with state government agencies, or to request information and support. My staff and I are committed to continuing to provide the highest quality of public service possible. The following

are examples of services that our offices can provide for you:

### Community Services

- Speaking to community groups, schools, & organizations
- Assisting with community grant applications
- Presenting commendatory and memorial resolutions

### Public Services

- Reports issued by the Legislature and state agencies
- Consumer protection information
- “Where to find it” – state agency information

### Constituent Services

- Department of Motor Vehicles
- Veterans’ affairs
- Assistance with other local state and federal agencies

### Legislative Services

- Copies of legislation or information on the status of legislation
- Summaries and analyses of specific bills
- Legislative committee rosters

Please feel free to contact my staff if there is anything our office can do for you. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

LELAND Y. YEE, PH.D. California Senate

Contact information:

San Francisco County Office - 455 Golden Gate Ave,  
Suite 14200, San Francisco, CA 94102

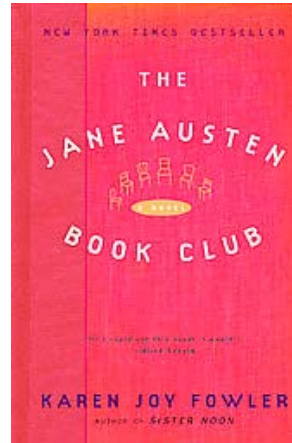
(415) 557-7857

San Mateo County Office - 400 South El Camino  
Real, Suite 630, San Mateo, CA 94402

(650) 340-8840

<http://www.sen.ca.gov/yee>

# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS



The Excelsior Book Club's April Reading will be “The Jane Austen Book Club”

2004, 304 pages, by Karen Joy Fowler

The Excelsior Book Club will next meet  
TUESDAY, April 17, 7:00 PM  
at the home of Candi Strecker,  
650 Le Grande Street,

(at the top of the Excelsior, right turn off  
Russia, next to McLaren Park).

In California's central valley, five women and one man join to discuss Jane Austen's novels. Over six months they get together, marriages are tested, affairs begin, unsuitable arrangements become suitable, and love happens. This is Fowler's 5th novel (after PEN/Faulkner award finalist *Sister Noon*) and it features her trademark sly wit, quirky characters and digressive storytelling, but with a difference: this one is book-club ready, complete with mock-serious “questions for discussion” posed by the characters themselves. This is more a character study than an action or plot driven work. With her eye for the frailties of human behavior and her ear for the absurdities of social intercourse, Karen Joy Fowler has never been wittier nor her characters more appealing.

*Don't be shy, come by!*

The Excelsior Book Club is a project of the Excelsior District Improvement Association sponsored by Patty Devlieg



# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

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## Gardening with an Excelsior Accent

As gardeners in much of the rest of the country contemplate the pending arrival of spring and the upcoming planting season, we in the Bay Area have the possibility of harvesting the many winter grown vegetables that thrive in our moderate winter climate especially if we have a corner of the garden that enjoys good winter sun. Many of us are familiar with the varied "cole" crops, e.g. collard, kale, mustard, that thrive in cooler weather. A slightly more unusual winter vegetable that grows well in our district is the fava bean, (called faba in Latin America).

You may have noticed the large acreage of fava now growing inter-cropped with grape vines in Napa, Sonoma and other northern California grape growing districts. In this context, favas are frequently grown to protect bare soil from erosion, fix nitrogen for later plant growth and for incorporation into the top soil to improve soil structure. Favas are thus primarily used as a "green manure" in northern California at this time. However, in earlier times favas were extensively grown in our area for human consumption. The San Francisco peninsular had extensive fava acreage.

Fava is an unusual crop in that virtually all of its above ground parts are edible at one stage or another. Foliage and stem may be steamed, sauteed, or boiled. The bean may be eaten in the green stage or allowed to ripen to become a dried bean for longer term storage. Dried favas may now be found extensively in middle eastern and other specialty green grocers. Fresh green fava beans have a special place in Mediterranean cuisine.

The green stage of the bean readily oxidizes so home grown beans usually are uniquely attractive and tasty, although they too may appear nowadays in local markets, including our own fruit and vegetable stores on Mission Street.

Fava beans for planting may be obtained from better stocked local nurseries in our area and from selective seed catalogues. In a pinch I've planted beans sold as food at a more modest price and had reasonable success at having them germinate although this presumably is



Excelsior Favas in Mid-March (foreground)

not a recommended practice. In your Excelsior garden recommended planting time for favas is November-December, after the ground is wet and fall temperatures have fallen. Favas do not like heat. They may be harvested at any time after sprouting. In our area, fall planted beans will generally die off in late spring to early summer.

People, particularly those of Mediterranean descent have reportedly experienced allergic reactions to favas. Use discretion if you are new to favas.

### **San Francisco Fire Department Neighborhood Emergency Response Training (NERT)**

The goal of the program is to help the citizens of San Francisco to be self sufficient in a major disaster situation by developing multi-functional teams cross trained in basic emergency skills. Through this program, individuals learn hands-on disaster skills that will help them as members of an emergency response team and/or as leaders directing untrained volunteers during an emergency, allowing them to act independently or as an adjunct to City emergency services. The 20 hour training consists of six class sessions that are approximately 3 hours each. NERT is free to the public. The San Francisco Fire Department has ongoing NERT scheduled. If you would like to attend call 970-2022. Web-site is: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/sfnert\\_index.asp](http://www.sfgov.org/site/sfnert_index.asp)

# What and Where is the EDIA?

We are a non-profit organization working to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood.

EDIA's mission is to build community relationships which advance the quality of life and commercial opportunities in the Excelsior. You can join us by filling out and sending the handy form on the right.

Our goals are:

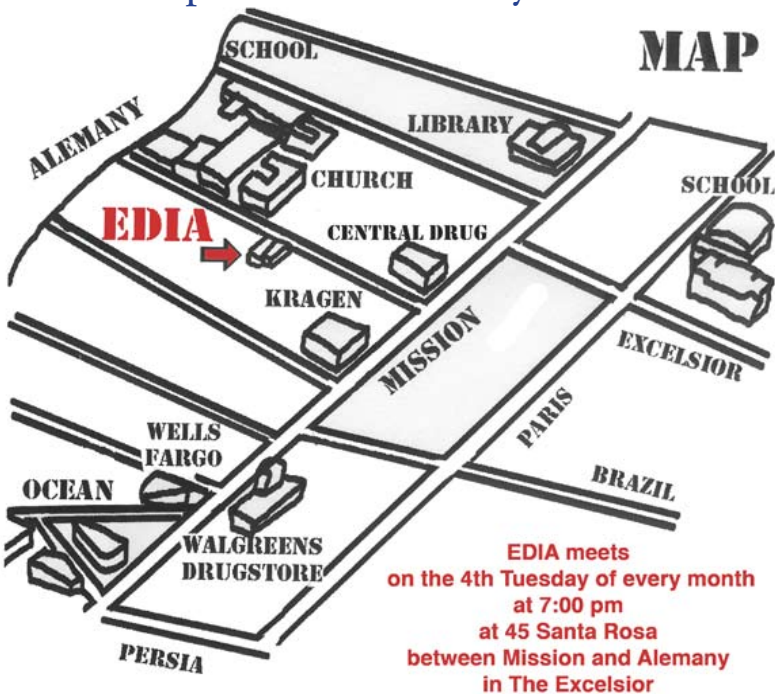
1. Preserving the Quality of Life for our Residents
2. Keeping Our Neighborhood Safe and our Streets Clean and Beautiful
3. Representing Excelsior and it's Issues at City Hall
4. Revitalizing Our Shopping District

**From the Guest Editor:** The newsletter has a revised look in this issue. We welcome your comments and submissions. If you have an article or photo you would like to submit, or a comment please call R. Katz at (415) 586-6014 or e-mail: [attykatz@pacbell.net](mailto:attykatz@pacbell.net).

## EDIA Meeting & Location Information

We meet on the 4th Tuesday of every month  
7:00 p.m. at 45 Santa Rosa Street - see map below

Meetings are scheduled now for:  
April 24th and May 22nd



# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

**It is easy to join or renew your EDIA membership. Just fill out and clip this coupon; then enclose it with a check or money order for \$15.00 made out to EDIA**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

San Francisco, CA 94112 or if different fill in changes below

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Send it to

Excelsior District Improvement Association

P.O. Box 12005

San Francisco CA 94112-0005



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## The Jewish Home of San Francisco

For more years than almost any living resident of the Excelsior can recall, that big red brick building at Mission and Silver has been the gateway for people coming to our district from that metropolis to the north and the sign that we've made it home. But except for those of us who have loved ones residing there, or are employed there, few of us know much about the institution or what goes on there.

You may be aware that the Jewish Home of San Francisco is generally considered one of the finest facilities of its kind in the nation. You may not be aware that its services are provided on a non-denominational basis. If you are interested in the types of service it provides, there's an excellent website: [www.jhsf.org](http://www.jhsf.org).

The following description and historic photos were kindly provided to us by Ilana Glaun, Communications Coordinator.

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The history of the Jewish Home of San Francisco can be traced back to 1871 when the Pacific Hebrew Orphan Asylum and Home Society were incorporated "to found and maintain an asylum for orphan children" and "to establish and support a Home for aged and infirm Israelites."

In 1872, the Society purchased the site at Silver and Mission, constructing a rambling two-story wooden Victorian building. In 1891, the Home first opened its doors to twelve residents. In 1923, the old wooden structure was replaced with the red brick Roman pillared building, which today remains the Home's main entry.

Over the years, with generous support from the community, the Home has enlarged and expanded its original facilities and services in response to the changing needs of elders and their families.

A new wing was added in 1945; further expansion was completed in 1959.

A comprehensive day services center opened in the mid-1960s. In 1969, construction of the "A" (Annex) building provided 176 beds for

skilled nursing care and rehabilitative services.

The 82-bed Koret Center was opened in 1984 to provide maximum medical and nursing care and rehabilitation. The Howard A. Friedman Pavilion, a 120-bed state-of-the-art skilled medical and nursing care facility, opened in 1995, providing specialized rehabilitative services, short-term and long-term care in a space defined by its soaring atriums and skylights.

The Home's newest addition, the Barbara and Richard Rosenberg Family Center, opened in October 2006. It houses many of the main services of the Jewish Home, including a new modern kitchen, state-of-the-art medical clinics, and geriatric research center. This outstanding addition provides facilities that continue to support the Jewish Home's high standards for quality care and services.

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The Jewish Home of San Francisco is a non-profit, licensed skilled nursing facility and residential community specializing in programs, services, and care for older adults. For over 135 years, the Jewish Home has ensured that Bay Area elderly have always had a place to call home. The Jewish Home has grown from modest beginnings to a nine-acre complex with five distinct buildings, serving different populations with diverse care needs. Today, 430 residents call the Jewish Home their home. With a trained staff of more than 650 skilled and compassionate workers, the Home provides a full range of personal and comprehensive geriatric care, services and programs. To learn more about the Jewish Home or to inquire about joining its volunteer corps, please contact community liaison, Carole Burns at (415) 469-2229.



The Jewish Home c. 1920

# EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWS

The EDIA has a new website:

<http://excelsiorsf.org>

The site is up and running but in its early development stage. Stay tuned. Many thanks to Julian Cash and Sonja Norwood for the design, administration and hosting of our new web home.

**Crossing  
our streets  
should not  
be as risky  
as patrolling  
Falluja.....**



## Our Neighborhood

While stopping in the northern California coastal town of Fort Bragg last week, I heard of a local police practice that may have some efficacy in our neighborhood.

Police officers in plain clothes would walk across intersections. Vehicles that did not yield the right of way to them would then be ticketed by a waiting patrol car.

We all know that walking is a healthy and often pleasant activity. You can meet your neighbors and patronize local establishments conveniently. We also know that only the demented, wildly optimistic and naive nowadays rely on motor vehicles to yield to pedestrians at uncontrolled intersections despite California law giving pedestrians the right of way.

A patrol officer working out of Mission Station told me that officers there have been following this procedure at a number of intersections in the Mission. A call to the desk officer at Ingleside Station indicated that to his knowledge officers were not using this practice in the Excelsior.

We've heard much talk from the authorities regarding a commitment to pedestrian friendly streets. We wonder how often they or people they care about, have walked across Mission, Silver, Alemany or Geneva at an intersection without lights or stop signs. Have they observed the elderly, infirm or children stranded on narrow medians while vehicles pass them without even slowing? So beyond the rhetoric, where is the material commitment? Allocating some police resources to pedestrian safety would send a clear message: that we care - not just that we talk about caring.

## Senior Home Safety

### Fall and Fire Prevention Program



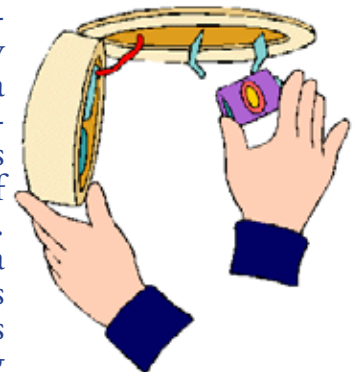
The San Francisco Fire Department in collaboration with the Department of Public Health and the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation are offering to all Seniors living in San Francisco free smoke alarms with free installation and free home safety surveys. These alarms have 10 year batteries. Trained volunteers will install new smoke alarms or replace old ones where needed.

For more information or to schedule a free smoke alarm installation, call the

**Senior Home Safety Program at**

**415-734-2101.**

Even if you aren't a senior, the battery is usually easy to replace. When a detector is working, it doubles your chances of surviving a fire. You should buy a new detector if it is more than 10 years old. Try installing the newer longer life lithium batteries.



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Several development projects are in the pipeline for Mission St. and under the San Francisco Planning Code developers are encouraged to consult district residents as part of the planning process. These pending projects will help shape the physical, esthetic and social aspects of the neighborhood for many years into the future.

If the EDIA is to participate in a meaningful way in this process, we likely will require the involvement of additional residents who are willing to commit some time and energy.

## EXCELSIOR DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Guest Editor Robert Katz

Guest Layout Sonja Norwood

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San Francisco, CA 94112-0005



## Contest! Name this Man and Win!

So did T.E. Lawrence ever reside in the Excelsior? Perhaps not, but we do have this local resident who spent the war years in the Middle East. We speak here of that other war, the one we used to call "the war" and needed no qualifier.

If you are not currently a member of the EDIA, and reside in the Excelsior, then come to our meeting on April 24th, be the first to guess the name of the person pictured above and win a full one year membership in the EDIA (a \$15 value!).

Clues may be given. One entry per contestant. Contest devised by Shameless Enterprises, Inc.



**EDIA**

P.O. Box 12005  
San Francisco, CA 94112-0005

PLACE STAMP  
HERE