



**ON TARGET:** A city-sponsored "March Gladness" event will be held in San Francisco's Oceanview, Merced Heights and Ingleside neighborhoods on Saturday. Local neighborhood youths will be teamed up to compete in basketball and soccer matches, and there will also be a free barbecue, activities for children and resource tables with information from city agencies and community organizations. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Minnie & Lovie Ward Recreation Center at 650 Capital Ave.

# Water rationing down the drain

February rain adds to reservoir, but city still asks for conservation

By Will Reisman  
Examiner Staff Writer

The rain during the last few months may have put a damper on outdoor fun, but it did save San Franciscans from being forced to ration water.

After a dry December and January in which less than 3 inches of rain fell, concerns were raised that mandatory water rationing might have to be put into place for The City.

However, February rainfall washed away those fears, according to San Francisco Public Utilities Commission spokesman Tony Winnicker. There were 6.4 inches of precipitation in that month.

"Mandatory rationing has looked unnecessary, unless we see a surge in production," Winnicker said.

San Francisco's position on water rationing is better than other parts of the Bay Area because of the city-owned Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, which is located in Yosemite National Park.

The Hetch Hetchy system provides water to 2.4 million people in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda counties.

The recent rainfall and the runoff from the Sierra Nevada snowmelt, which provide the majority of the water in the reservoir, has the Hetch Hetchy water level at 70 percent of capacity — a level the agency has set for the dam, according to Winnicker.

"We're in a very fortunate position compared to some other Bay Area water agencies," Winnicker said.

For example, Santa Clara County, which receives only part of its water from the Hetch Hetchy system, voted Tuesday to enforce



ALL: EXAMINER FILE PHOTOS

**Weather or not:** A wet February made up for a dry ending to 2008, helping fill San Francisco's main reservoir and averting water rationing this summer.

15 percent reductions on customers' water usage. Cities in the East Bay are also mulling similar options.

San Francisco residents are being asked to cut down on their usage by about 10 percent, although the request is voluntary, Winnicker said.

The last time that The City had to resort to mandatory water cutbacks was in 1992, when a five-year drought left the SFPUC with drastic shortages. The water shortage then forced the department to overhaul much of its operations, Winnicker said.

wreisman@sfxaminer.com



## The liquid lowdown

The Hetch Hetchy system ...

- Delivers about 260 million gallons of water per day
- Provides water to 2.4 million people in San Francisco, Santa Clara, Alameda and San Mateo counties
- Sends water 160 miles via gravity from Yosemite National Park to the Bay Area
- Consists of more than 280 miles of pipelines and more than 60 miles of tunnels
- Includes 11 reservoirs
- Uses five pump stations
- Has two water-treatment plants

Source: Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency

# DEA raids SoMa pot dispensary

Federal agents raided a marijuana dispensary in SoMa on Wednesday afternoon, seizing pot, patient records, scales and other materials.

Armed agents with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency raided Emmalyn's Collective Cooperative at Howard and 12th streets sometime after 2 p.m., according to witnesses.

No arrests were made Wednesday, Special Agent Anthony Williams said in a statement.

"We believe there are not only violations of federal law, but state law," Williams said. "As of now, we are prohibited from releasing further details of the case."

After several hours inside, about 10 agents loaded eight large plastic containers and at least six trash bags filled with marijuana buds and leaves into a black Chevrolet Express van. — John Upton

## THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

### Mark Kingdon

The CEO of San Francisco-based Linden Lab, maker of the virtual Internet world Second Life that's imagined and created by users, explains why his company launched the \$10,000 Linden Prize to honor the site's most innovative user. The winner is slated to be announced by April 30.



**Why give this award?** There's an incredible amount of innovation inside of Second Life. There are many examples ... where resident or community groups created something really wonderful that had a real-world connection and impact.

**What are some examples of the virtual world having a real-world impact?** Some examples of projects, initiatives or experiences residents have created include the Relay for Life in 2008, which raised several hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer research ... and the U.S. Holocaust Museum [virtual exhibit on Second Life] allowed visitors [on the site] to play the role of journalists investigating the events surrounding the Kristallnacht.

**How much time do you spend on the site?** For work, I spend anywhere from one to three or four hours a day in Second Life, because we hold many of our company meetings [on the site].

**What kind of people can you meet on Second Life?** The Second Life community, it is an incredibly creative, passionate, motivated group of residents, and very diverse. Some are entrepreneurs, some are researchers, some are companies, and some of them are philanthropists and artists. — Mike Aldax

# Plaza in the works next to Castro-Market junction

By Michael Aldax  
Examiner Staff Writer

A strip of roadway that connects to Market Street in The City's Castro neighborhood will be transformed into a lively pedestrian plaza where folks can grab a seat, a bite to eat and unwind.

The project — scheduled to be finished in late April or early May — will close to automobiles a portion of 17th street where it runs into Market at Castro Street.

While still open to Muni, the closed roadway will be developed into an open area for pedestrians with seating, tables for dining and added aesthetic touches such as planters, said Ed Reiskin, director of the Department of Public Works.

The new space is being created on a low budget, Reiskin said.

The South of Market-based firm Public Architecture is designing the space pro bono. It plans to use outdoor furniture that is reused, recycled, resalvaged, repurposed or donated, he said.

Much of the material will likely be obtained from the salvage yards of various city departments, including the Port and Recreation and Parks, he said.

The plaza will run alongside the streetcar tracks servicing the F-Market line and will not affect service, he said, adding that there will be "some form of traffic delineation" between the tracks and the plaza to ensure pedestrian safety.

Local restaurants have been invited to "spill out onto the sidewalk" in order to keep the area lively, said David Alumbaugh of The City's Planning Department. Orphan Andy's, a nearby eatery has expressed interest in using the space for its patrons, he said.

Although some have expressed concerns that the new space might be taken over by homeless people, Alumbaugh said community groups have largely supported the idea.

"It's reversible," he said. "If people don't like it, we can take it out and maybe try it somewhere else."

Reiskin said the area is one of several spots around The City planners have been looking to convert into open spaces.

maldax@sfxaminer.com

## One possible proposal



- Design Features
- Small Tree in Planter
  - Tables and Chairs
  - Removable Bollards on Perimeter
  - Planter Box (used to hold trees)
  - Public Art Installations
  - Painted/Treated Asphalt (with special surface for wheelchair access)

COURTESY GRAPHIC

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