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As 2008 draws to a close, it is time to look back on our achievements of the past year and our challenges in the year to come. As indicated in my last column, the Board of Directors, working with Jerry Talley of Talley & Associates, has completed its updated Strategic Plan as well as metrics to evaluate Heritage’s success in implementing the Strategic Plan in the coming years. The Board’s main effort continues to focus on strengthening the organization and providing the necessary long-term financial resources so that Heritage can effectively fulfill its mission of historic preservation education and advocacy.

To fulfill that goal, it will be necessary in the coming years to broaden Heritage’s base of financial support. Traditionally, the annual Soirée has been one of the principal fundraising sources for Heritage. That will not change, but in order to continue Heritage’s existing activities and to broaden its outreach and influence, it will be necessary for Heritage to develop additional financial resources to maintain the Haas-Lilienthal House and enhance Heritage’s effectiveness. In short, in order to grow the organization, Heritage will need to focus on additional methods to raise funds. These efforts have already commenced. In September, Executive Director Jack Gold, myself and fellow Board Members Carolyn Kiernat, Kathleen Burgi-Sandell, Frederic Knapp and Nancy Goldenberg attended a Better Boards training in Santa Fe, New Mexico, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This excellent two-day training focused on fundraising strategies for major donors, and the Board has already begun to apply this training experience to Heritage. Our first major fundraising effort will center around Heritage’s anticipated publication of Port City, a book on San Francisco’s historic waterfront, in 2010. Heritage also intends to augment its historic easement program to promote preservation of historic structures in San Francisco and also provide a financial resource for Heritage. All of these efforts will depend upon the resources and skills of Heritage’s staff, Board, membership and friends to achieve success.

As I write this column, we now know that Proposition J, which will establish a Historic Preservation Commission, replacing the current Landmarks Advisory Board, will become law. Heritage worked hard in support of Proposition J to bring San Francisco’s preservation and planning policies into line with most other major cities. One of the lessons that Heritage must take from this political experience is the need to do further outreach to the San Francisco community and better explain how preservation fits hand-in-hand with other primary policy concerns in this City. Much of the anti-Proposition J rhetoric suggested that preservationists are intent only on preserving historic structures without regard to other pressing political and social problems in the City. Our challenge will be to engage the approximately 90,000 San Francisco voters who opposed Proposition J and increase efforts to demonstrate how preservation of historic structures or districts in San Francisco is compatible with a thriving economy, developing affordable housing and promoting mass transit and sustainable building policies, among other laudable planning policies.

During the past year, Heritage successfully managed the transition of several key staff members. Jack Gold replaced Charles Chase as Executive Director, Alex Bevk joined as Preservation Advocate, Dana Talise as new Fiscal Manager, and Cate Conmy replaced Shelley Adams as Volunteer Coordinator. I am also delighted to welcome new board members Zander Sivyer and Christopher VerPlanck.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the Heritage community a Happy Holiday season. I personally look forward to seeing many of you at the Holiday Open House on December 7, 2008, and I am very excited about Heritage’s opportunities in 2009!

Charles Olson
President
Notes from the Editor

You might notice that this issue of Heritage News looks a little bit different. We’re experimenting with some new ideas, and would love your feedback! The newsletter is undergoing a graphic renovation (something that was last done in Vol XXVI - that was in 1998!), but we’re also going to include some new features and recurring sections that you can look for in each future issue.

Notes from the Editor

Volunteer Coordinator
Cate Conmy

Heritage welcomes Cate Conmy as the new Volunteer Coordinator for the organization. A former Heritage volunteer herself, Ms. Conmy brings a volunteer’s viewpoint to her new position, in which she will oversee a corps of more than 60 volunteers who serve as docents for the Haas-Lilienthal House Museum, the historic structure owned and maintained by Heritage. Ms. Conmy will be responsible for recruiting, training and managing the diverse group of architecture and history enthusiasts who lead museum tours, as well as the volunteers who serve as guides for unique, twice-weekly walking tours of Pacific Heights and other San Francisco neighborhoods, and those who volunteer their time to assist with research and administrative tasks.

Ms. Conmy will also supervise Heritage’s education initiatives, including Heritage Hikes, its award-winning education program that will serve more than 40 San Francisco elementary school classes this academic year. Her other duties will include managing the Haas-Lilienthal House bookstore, which offers a collection of books related to San Francisco’s history and architecture, and organizing group tours of the museum.

Some new sections to look forward to include:
- Sustainable Preservation - new ways that preservation practices relate to sustainable building
- From the Bay Window - a section dedicated to and written by Haas-Lilienthal House volunteers
- Cutting Through the Red Tape - a spotlight on various forms of preservation legislation, including tax credits and building codes.

I’m hoping the biggest change will come from your active participation. We are officially soliciting all our readers and members for articles for upcoming issues. Submissions can range in topic from preservation issues to current projects, the Haas-Lilienthal House to activities that affect the membership.

If you would like to write something for the newsletter, or if you have any comments and suggestions regarding the new layout, please email me at abevk@sfheritage.org.

Enjoy the new Heritage News,
Alex Bevk
New “Uptown Tenderloin” National Register Historic District

The State Historical Resources Commission voted unanimously on July 25 to create the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District. The nomination now proceeds to the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C., which could add the 18 whole and 15 partial city blocks in the neighborhood to the National Register of Historic Places within 45 days.

The Commission’s action culminates a process that began in 1983, was halted for over two decades, and then restarted in 2006. The District’s 470 buildings include the world’s largest collection of historic single-room occupancy hotels (SRO’s), such historic structures as the Central YMCA, the Hibernia Bank, the former Empire Hotel (now Hastings Tower), and the astonishing Alcazar Theater.

After decades of being primarily described by the media as “seedy,” the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District finally gives the community defined boundaries and a positive identity. The District’s creation also means that the dream of maintaining the Tenderloin as a rare urban neighborhood combining affordable housing, primarily low-income residents and a high quality of life is a large step closer to reality.

The Uptown Tenderloin Historic District runs from McAllister on the south, to Mason on the East, Geary to the north (but only between Taylor and Polk), and just east of Polk as the western border. No Polk Street properties are included, as this corridor has its own rich, independent history.

- Randy Shaw, via BeyondChron.org

All the photographs accompanying this article are courtesy of Mark Ellinger, and used with permission. Mr. Ellinger has photographed San Francisco’s vast collection of single room occupancy residential hotels (SROs) as a tool to both publicize the plight of SRO residents and promote the architectural preservation of the central city. Hundreds of his stunning photographs can be seen at his website “Up From the Deep”: http://upfromthedeep.wordpress.com. The work will also be published in book form, available for purchase through the website.
55 Laguna Update

“Save The Laguna Street Campus” filed a public interest CEQA lawsuit that will be heard in Superior Court on Tuesday, November 25th. The suit challenges the project approval to demolish two of five buildings listed as an historic district on the National Register, when an economically feasible alternative exists that was deemed environmentally superior in the EIR. Further, the EIR did not adequately analyze the cumulative effects of the project, especially with regard to historical and publicly-zoned properties.

Of particular concern is the potential demolition of Middle Hall Gymnasium - the oldest building on the site - and Richardson Hall annex. Destruction of these buildings could result in the site being taken off the National Historic Register.

On August 26 Allison Vanderslice led the first outing of the HeritageYP Pier 70 Tour Series. This tour focused on the pre-WWII development of the Union Iron Works/Bethlehem Steel shipbuilding and ship repair yard. The yard opened in 1884 and was one of the earliest steel hull shipyards in the country. The tour offered an overview of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture on 20th Street, and explained the movement of materials and the shipbuilding processes used at Union Iron Works during the late nineteenth century.

Since then, HeritageYP also held a Proposition J Informational Happy Hour on October 13, generously hosted by the San Francisco LGBT Community Center at 1800 Market Street. The group also hosted a happy hour at the historic Hotel Utah on October 26. Upcoming events include a tour of the renovations at 75 New Montgomery on December 9, and a tour of the Levi Strauss Building/Friends School conversion some time after the new year.

To learn more about these events and the HeritageYP group, and to sign up for the mailing list, visit www.heritageyp.org or email questions to info@heritageyp.org.

Hibernia Purchased

The Tenderloin’s neglected Hibernia Bank at 1 Jones Street has been purchased by San Francisco’s Dolmen Property Group. After its initial listing price of $9.9 million, it sold for $3.9 in early September of 2008.

The purchasing company plans to complete all necessary construction work to bring the structure back to life. While there are no concrete plans for its use, the Dolmen Group acknowledges the building’s potential, and hopes it can be used for social events or a cultural use.

Designed by Albert Pissis and completed in 1892, the building has a stained-glass domed entrance and a steel frame clad in carved granite, but has been frequented by rats, pigeons and crack dealers since it was abandoned in 2000.
Farnsworth House Flood

This past September, the Farnsworth House, a National Trust Historic Site and icon of modernist architecture, was flooded by tropical storm Lowell and the aftermath of hurricane Ike. Site Director, Whitney French, and a host of volunteers from Landmarks Illinois, worked tirelessly to secure the house, but there was little that can be done beyond lifting all the furniture on plastic milk crates and turning the electricity off. The house was built in a hundred year flood plain, but climate change has significantly impacted the region, and in the 60 years since the house was built, there have been 60 floods and now 7 hundred-year floods.

The house was closed to the public in the immediate aftermath, but is now opening on a limited schedule to help raise funds to repair the damage from the floods. These tours provide a rare chance to experience the restoration first-hand.

Detailed information on the tours — as well as an opportunity to contribute — are available at www.farnsworthhouse.org. And, in the event that you can’t make it to Illinois for a tour, the staff of the Farnsworth House have started a blog to share the progress of the restoration.

Issues of “Arts & Architecture” Available Online

Selected issues from John Entenza’s Arts & Architecture Magazine (1945-1967), including the historic Case Study House Projects, are now available on the internet. The A&A website is made possible by Benedikt Taschen and his eponymous publishing house, which is re-issuing the magazine in book form in the Fall of 2008. http://www.artsandarchitecture.com/index.html

San Francisco Architectural Heritage is happy to announce a new exhibit at the Haas-Lilienthal House opening October 25, 2008

Take an intimate look at celebrations of love and commitment with:

Weddings of the Haas-Lilienthal Family
Understanding the Green Building Ordinance

In August of 2008, Mayor Gavin Newsom signed into law stringent green building codes for new construction and renovations of existing structures in the city. The new legislation helps bring San Francisco into the forefront of environmentally sensitive building practices and sustainable policies. The ordinance will work by imposing Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or Build it Green’s GreenPoint (GPR) construction standards on a broad array of commercial and residential projects.

The ordinance adopts the LEED construction standards developed by the nonprofit US Green Building Council (USGBC), which acts as a certifying body. USGBC assures that projects meet specified prerequisites and awards points for adherence to certain requirements in the areas of site selection, water efficiency, energy efficiency and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor air quality and innovative design. Certification is broken down into four levels based on number of points earned: LEED (26-32 points), Silver (33-38 points), Gold (39-51 points) and Platinum (52-69 points). In San Francisco, various levels of LEED and GPR will be required as building standards for projects designated as New Large Commercial, Mid-size Commercial, Large Commercial Interiors and Major Alterations, High-rise Residential, Mid-size Residential and Small Residential.

The CAPSS Program

A new city initiative, entitled the Community Action Plan for Seismic Safety (CAPSS) has been formed to provide the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection with a plan of action to reduce earthquake risks. This action plan will propose ways to minimize damage in existing buildings regulated by the DBI and to improve post-earthquake repair guidelines to expedite recovery.

CAPSS will focus first on ways to reduce risk in wood frame buildings with “soft” or weak first stories. This building type experienced dramatic collapses in the Marina neighborhood during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Thousands of similar buildings throughout the city could be damaged by a larger or closer earthquake. By the end of January 2009, the project will recommend policies to make these buildings safer. Next, CAPSS will focus on analyzing other building types and policies to reduce their risks and develop improved guidelines for repair and rebuilding after earthquakes. These activities are slated for completion by June 2010.

Currently the CAPSS project team is working to:

- Identify the number of soft story buildings that exist, the neighborhoods in which they exist, and how they are used;
- Design prototype retrofits;
- Calculate the costs of retrofits;
- Study social, economic and cultural implications of retrofitting;
- Identify various policy approaches to make these buildings safer in a major quake.

Visit www.sfcapss.org for more.

Often historic properties are at risk for demolition in favor of more energy efficient contemporary systems and green building practices. The new San Francisco Green Building Ordinance seeks to avoid exactly this by including strict policy regarding building demolition.

Encouraging renovation over demolition, the ordinance includes significantly heightened permit approval requirements for projects involving a building demolition. When a project is required to be LEED certified, such as commercial or high-rise towers, applicants must score an additional 10% of otherwise required LEED points, regardless of whether the demolished building was of historical significance. If the building is historic, the applicant must obtain an additional 10% of total points possible for the project (meaning if they were only aiming for silver at 33-38 points, they must obtain 10% of all possible points, even if that exceeds 38). The goal is to encourage alteration over demolition of all resources.

The technicalities of the ordinance are complicated, and the Department of Building Inspection will be issuing a bulletin. Until then, additional information is available at the Planning Information Counter, at the Planning Department, 1650 Mission Street.
Spotlight on a Docent: John Gaul

On the night of Saturday, August 9, 2008, Heritage’s own John Gaul, longtime docent, Volunteer Steering Committee representative, and Lilienthal Society member, was awarded the Walter G. Jebe, Sr., Neighborhood History Award at the eleventh annual awards dinner of the San Francisco History Association. As has often been the case, the festivities were hosted at the historic Double Play Restaurant in San Francisco. Following a glowing introduction by Lorri Ungaretti, the first recipient of the Walter Jebe Award, John was presented with his award by Association President Ron Ross.

The San Francisco History Association is an organization dedicated to remembering San Francisco’s colorful past, and to celebrating its rich culture today. A highlight of its many annual activities is the awards dinner. John Gaul was singled out for distinction based on his many years of service to all number of organizations. At the root of all his involvement, the sponsors of the award maintained, is John’s knack for “focusing on the people of the place” in everything he does. John’s community involvement has included the Maybeck Foundation and the Palace of Fine Arts in particular, the Swedenborgian Church, St. John’s Presbyterian Church, and the San Francisco History Association, in addition to Heritage and the Haas-Lilienthal House.

It is difficult to imagine the Haas-Lilienthal House at all without thinking of John. Whether you know him from a gracious welcome and polite bow at the front door, from his insightful tours for countless House visitors and special tour groups, or from his educational and inspiring training of new docents in the volunteer program, John is someone you never forget.

As Shelley Adams, former Volunteer Coordinator for Heritage so eloquently put it, “John is a vital element to the success at Heritage not only for the many tours that he leads through the House, but also because of his dedication to nurturing partnerships between Heritage and other non-profits in our community. John teaches all of us about the importance of getting to know the people and places around you and finding ways to make a contribution small and large, public and behind-the-scenes. His dapper dress and ready smile are always a welcome presence and, in my short tenure, have become for me a symbol of community activism.”

Jack Gold, Heritage Executive Director, was on hand on August 9 and observed, “I cannot think of the Haas-Lilienthal House without thinking of John. I see him with his timepiece, welcoming visitors to the House and leading them on a voyage of discovery. His gravitas really impresses all with whom he interacts and makes people really enjoy their experience. As a newcomer to Heritage, so many people have been welcoming and kind to me. John, however, has really made a special effort to get to know me, check in on me, introduce me to his wonderful contacts throughout the city, and to make certain I am doing well. It has meant so much to me to have him as a friend and we are all so grateful to benefit from his tireless efforts on behalf of Heritage and organizations like it throughout San Francisco.”

- Albert Moore

Tour Translations

Thanks to an exciting initiative spearheaded by the Volunteer Steering Committee, the Haas-Lilienthal House will soon be providing an enhanced tour experience for our non-English speaking visitors to carry with them and read on their docent-led tours. Volunteer translator Guenter Baum has already completed the German translation, and it has been used by several grateful German visitors.

Other targeted languages include: French, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian. If you are interested in helping translate the tour script into one of these languages or have suggestions about another languages to target, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Cate Conmy at cconmy@sfheritage.org or 415 441 3000 x24.

Albert Moore
Did you know that the “ballroom” was part of the original design of the house? According to an article published in the San Francisco News Letter on November 19, 1887, about one year after the house was completed, a finished ballroom existed. In this article, written for a series called “Artistic Homes of California,” a detailed description of the basement is given. It states “the rear of the basement is devoted to the laundry, furnace-room, store-room and wine-cellar, while the front part is finished off for a supper-room for balls and receptions.”

Many of us have heard told and have told ourselves that the unfinished front portion of the basement was later converted into a “ballroom” when the family grew too large to gather in the dining room for holiday occasions. This misconception may have come from the book “The Haas Sisters of Franklin Street,” that volunteers read as part of docent training. On page 8 Frances Rothmann writes “When our Christmas gatherings grew to include between fifty and sixty cousins, sisters, uncles and aunts, the party was transferred from the warmth of the upstairs parlors and dining room to the bare and colder regions of the basement ballroom,” which over the years and changes in docents gets turned around to “the family outgrew the upstairs dining room for family gatherings so the basement was turned into a ballroom.”

The use of the word “ballroom,” also may have contributed to the story. When we hear the word “ballroom” many of us envision walking into a grand room like Julie Andrews in the Sound of Music. We don’t get that feeling in this ballroom and neither do our guests. The later conversion story helps to explain away the lack of grandness.

The staircase could have also had a part in the development of the ballroom story. We know for a fact this staircase was added later. Since we are told of the strict separation of the classes during the Victorian era, many believe that the family never used the back stair. So when, as the story goes, the basement was converted to a ballroom, naturally a separate set of stairs had to be added. But I don’t believe the back stairs were strictly the domain of the servants only. If they were they would not have opened onto the second floor family quarters as they do and the walls wouldn’t have needed to be finely finished.

Lastly, one more fact that points to the “ballroom” as being part of the original house design is the lighting. The lights are both gas and electric, as was the rest of the house when first built. If this space was converted years later, there probably wouldn’t have been a need for gas outlets. The first commercial electric company in San Francisco opened in 1879. By the time the Haas children were getting married in the early 1900’s and having children of their own, an electric company in business for over 30 years was surely providing reliable service so that gas fixtures weren’t needed.

The “ballroom” story is a good example of how, over a long period of time, facts can be altered. Many factors can be the cause, as I tried to show. But the fact is that the ballroom is original to the house and we need to present it that way.

- George Casler
Heritage ED Jack Gold co-chaired this year’s Victorian Alliance Presidio Heights House Tour. Jack assisted with house procurement, including both the Koshland House and the Roos House.

With over 1,200 attendees, this year’s tour netted over $40,000, earmarked by the Victorian Alliance for the restoration of the Palace of Fine Arts under the direction of the Maybeck Foundation.

New board members Zander Sivyer and Christopher VerPlanck were voted in at the November Heritage board meeting.

Zander Sivyer, Principal and CEO of Holmes Culley structural engineers, has acted as Project Principal on San Francisco Piers 1 ½, 3 & 5, as well as the seismic retrofit and renovation of the Clock Tower at Ghirardelli Square. A New Zealand native, Sivyer has practiced in the Bay Area for eight years and is a LEED Accredited Professional with the US Green Building Council. Mr. Sivyer states, “I believe that all existing structures have inherent structural value and one of the most sustainable practices in the construction industry is the reuse of an existing building.” Mr. Sivyer and his wife Antonia reside in San Francisco.

Christopher VerPlanck, a Bay Area native and Principal and co-founder of Kelley & VerPlanck Historical Resources Consulting, holds a BA in history from Bates College and a Masters Degree in Architectural History from the University of Virginia.

He worked as staff historian at Heritage from 1997-99, and from 1999 to 2007 as the senior architectural historian at Page & Turnbull. Mr. VerPlanck is looking forward to taking an active role in Heritage’s Easements Program. He and his wife Abby reside in San Francisco.
Heritage News

Calendar

December

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Starting December 1
Exhibition: “The Art and History of Early California”
Oakland Museum of California
510.238.3514
http://www.museumca.org

December 11, 7:30PM
Lecture: “It Came from Berkeley: How Berkeley Changed the World,” Book Talk & Presentation with Journalist and Author Dave Weinstein
Oakland Heritage Alliance
510.763.9218
http://www.oaklandheritage.org

December 14, 1:00PM
Tour: Architecture Tour of the Building and Gardens, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Kevin Roche and renowned landscape architect Dan Kiley
Oakland Museum of California
510.238.3514
http://www.museumca.org

January

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January 13, 12:30PM
Lecture: “One-year update from Planning Director, John Rahaim”
SPUR
415.781.8726
http://www.spur.org

January 15, 12:30PM
Lecture: “How America Got a Great National Park - the GGNRA,” Amy Meyers talks about her involvement with other neighborhood leaders in the fight to create the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA) in 1972.
Oakland Museum of California
510.238.3514
http://www.museumca.org

January 27, 7:00PM
Lecture: “Art Deco San Francisco,” with Michael Crowe
San Francisco History Association
415.750.9986
http://www.sanfranciscohistory.org/

February

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Through February 8, 2009
Exhibition: “Our Rights as Human Beings: The 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”
San Francisco Main Library
Third Floor, International Center
415.557.4400
http://sfpl4.sfpl.org

Through February 8, 2009
Exhibition: “The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now”
SFMOMA
415. 357.4000
http://www.sfmoma.org

Through April 5, 2009
Exhibition: “Yves Saint Laurent”
De Young
415.750.3600
http://www.famsf.org/deyoung/index.asp

Heritage Tours

Haas-Lilienthal House Tours
Wednesdays 12 noon to 3:00 pm
Saturdays 12 noon to 3:00 pm
Sundays 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Walking Tours
• Pacific Heights Sundays, 12:30pm
• A Walk Along Broadway Second Saturday monthly, 1:30pm
• Beyond Union Street: A Walk Through Cow Hollow
  Third Saturday monthly, 1:30pm
• Walk the Fire Line: Van Ness Avenue
  Fourth Saturday monthly, 1:30pm

Heritage tours are free to members and their guests, $8 for the general public/$5 for seniors and children 12 and under.

To arrange Group Tours call 415-441-3000 x24

Tour/Event Information
Call 415-441-3004 or go to:
www.sfheritage.org/events+tours.html

Heritage programs supported in part by City of San Francisco Grants for the Arts.
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