



OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE JANUARY 13, 2020

THE POTRERO VIEW

Application No.: LBR-2019-20-007
Business Name: The Potrero View
Business Address: 1459 18th St., #214

District: District 10

Applicant: Bettina Cohen, Marketing Manager

Nomination Date: July 15, 2019

Nominated By: Supervisor Shamann Walton

Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo

legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Potrero View (the "View") is San Francisco's oldest continuously published community newspaper, beginning in 1970. Dubbing themselves the "Potrero Hill Mob," Bill and Jodie Dawson, Lenny Anderson, Micky Ostler and Rose Marie Sicoli launched The Potrero View out of the Dawson's 284 Connecticut Street home. Aspiring to emerge into a newspaper that could influence municipal policy decisions, they received guidance from Eileen Maloney, their first editor who had journalism experience at Long Island's Newsday and San Francisco's Progress. Potrero Hill resident Ruth Passen started contributing to the View in January 1971. That spring, Passen assumed editorial duties from Maloney, and in 1972, Passen succeeded the Dawsons as publisher of The Potrero View. She retired and turned the newspaper over to Steven Moss in 2006.

The Potrero View began publishing its issues from offices in the basement of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House in June 1972, not long after community advocate Enola Maxwell was elected director of the nonprofit. "The Nabe," as 953 De Haro is affectionately called by locals, is a Potrero Hill landmark, dating back to 1922, and has continuously housed churches or nonprofits that have a mission to serve community members in need, with an emphasis on youth and education. The business relocated once more to 1459 18th Street in January 2017. Steven Moss has improved the quality of the View's articles, maintaining a strong commitment to civic journalism.

The business is located on the southwest corner of 18th Street and Connecticut Street in the Potrero Hill neighborhood.

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Yes, The Potrero View has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:





CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

284 Connecticut Street from 1970 to 1972 (2 years) 953 De Haro Street from 1972 to 2006 (34 years) 2325 Third Street, Suite 344 from 2007 to 2016 (9 years) 1459 18th Street #214 from 2017 to Present (2 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, The Potrero View has contributed to the history and identity of the Potrero Hill neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- The business is associated with the tradition of community newspapers.
- The property has property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status code of "B" (Further Research Required).
- The Potrero View is a member of the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association, is listed on SFNNA's website and is identified under community resources in the Potrero Dogpatch Merchants' Association's and Potrero Boosters annual business directories and monthly newsletters. View coverage has been picked up by the New York Times and San Francisco Chronicle.

The book Images of America, San Francisco's Potrero Hill, by Peter Linenthal, Abigail Johnston and the Potrero Hill Archives Project, refers to The Potrero View on page 127. Below a picture of View staff is a paragraph of text that begins: "The first issue of The Potrero View appeared on August 1, 1970..." The last sentence of text states: "The award-winning, all-volunteer View is a true community newspaper, drawing its inspiration from the diverse talents, interests, and concerns of the neighborhood it serves."

Elsewhere in this book, on page 119, there is a picture of a block party with several members of the community and the text identities Ruth Passen as editor of The Potrero View, alongside Art Agnos, who would be elected mayor of San Francisco later in the year.

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, The Potrero View is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that The Potrero View qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

Monthly free community newspaper publication.





CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

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CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

Publication covering the Potrero Hill area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include The Potrero View currently located at 1459 18th St., #214 in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager Legacy Business Program







OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE JANUARY 13, 2020

THE POTRERO VIEW

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2019-20-007
Business Name: The Potrero View
Business Address: 1459 18th St., #214

District: District 10

Applicant: Bettina Cohen, Marketing Manager

Nomination Date: July 15, 2019

Nominated By: Supervisor Shamann Walton

Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo

legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR THE POTRERO VIEW, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1459 18TH STREET, #214.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 13, 2020, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes The Potrero View in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at The Potrero View:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

Monthly free community newspaper publication.

Publication covering the Potrero Hill area.

Absent -

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain The Potrero View on the Legacy Business Registry:

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on January 13, 2020.

| | Regina Dick-Endrizzi Director |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| RESOLUTION NO | |
| Ayes – Nays – Abstained – | |







Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

Legacy **Business**

Application Review Business Registry Sheet

| Application No.: | LBR-2019-20-007 | |
|--------------------------|---|-------------|
| Business Name: | The Potrero View | |
| Business Address: | 1459 18th St., #214 | |
| District: | District 10 | |
| Applicant: | Bettina Cohen, Marketing Manager | |
| Nomination Date: | July 15, 2019 | |
| Nominated By: | Supervisor Shamann Walton | |
| | applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, w | |
| break in San Francisco | operations exceeding two years? X Yes | No |
| | from 1970 to 1972 (2 years) | |
| 953 De Haro Street from | n 1972 to 2006 (34 years) | |
| 2325 Third Street, Suite | 344 from 2007 to 2016 (9 years) | |
| 1459 18th Street #214 fr | rom 2017 to Present (2 years) | |
| CRITERION 2: Has the | applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the ide | entity of a |
| particular neighborhood | or community? X Yes No | |
| CRITERION 3: Is the ap | oplicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditio | ns that |
| | luding craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes | No |
| NOTES: N/A | | |
| DELIVERY DATE TO H | IPC: November 25, 2019 | |
| Richard Kurylo | | |





City and County of San Francisco

SHAMANN WALTON

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July 15, 2019

Office of Small Business Attn: Small Business Commission City Hall, Room 110 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place San Francisco, California 94102

The Potrero View Attn: Bettina Cohen 1459 18th Street, Number 214 San Francisco, CA 94107

Re: Legacy Business Nomination for The Potrero View

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for Bettina Cohen's application to recognize The Potrero View as a Legacy Business.

Since it first began publishing in August 1970, The Potrero View has broken many stories concerning not only the District 10 community, but San Francisco as a whole. The View's stories have kept our communities engaged and informed of community events, including the elections of notable politicians and leaders. It has championed a number of initiatives, including the closure of the Hunter's Point and Potrero Power Plants, as well as scrutiny on bus re-routing, benefiting the community as a whole.

The Potrero View's coverage of small merchants and businesses has contributed greatly to their economic health and neighborhood vibrancy. Its features on schools, churches, homeless services, health care facilities, and non-profits have nurtured community engagement and giving to these important community resources. For almost five decades, The Potrero View has been a pillar of community engagement and discussion, and will continue to do so with support from the City.

Supervisor Shamann Walton, District 10

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

| NAME OF BUSINESS: | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| The Potrero View | | | | |
| BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake | te in the business): | | | |
| Steven Moss, Editor and Publisher | | | | |
| CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS: | TELEPHONE NUMBER: | | | |
| 1459 18th Street | (415) 643-9578 | | | |
| San Francisco, CA 94107 | EMAIL ADDRESS: | | | |
| · | editor@potreroview.net | | | |
| MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS: | MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE: | | | |
| ☑Same as Business Address | | | | |
| | MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE: | | | |
| | | | | |
| WEBSITE ADDRESS: | | | | |
| www.potreroview.net | | | | |
| FACEBOOK PAGE: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| TWITTER NAME: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| APPLICANT'S NAME: | APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER: | | | |
| Bettina Cohen | | | | |
| APPLICANT'S TITLE: | APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS: | | | |
| Marketing Manager | | | | |
| SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER: | | | | |
| 1076668 | | | | |
| SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable): | | | | |
| | | | | |

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

| ZIP CODE: | START DATE OF BUSINESS |
|--------------|--|
| 94107 | August 1970 |
| DATES OF OPE | RATION AT THIS LOCATON |
| August 1970 | to May 1972 |
| ZIP CODE: | DATES OF OPERATION |
| 04407 | Start: June 1972 |
| 94107 | End: December 2006 |
| ZIP CODE: | DATES OF OPERATION |
| 04407 | Start: January 2007 |
| 94107 | End: December 2016 |
| ZIP CODE: | DATES OF OPERATION |
| 04407 | Start: January 2017 |
| 94107 | ^{End:} present |
| ZIP CODE: | DATES OF OPERATION |
| | Start: |
| | End: |
| ZIP CODE: | DATES OF OPERATION |
| | Start: |
| | End: |
| ZIP CODE: | DATES OF OPERATION |
| | Start: |
| | End: |
| | 94107 DATES OF OPE August 1970 ZIP CODE: 94107 ZIP CODE: 94107 ZIP CODE: 2IP CODE: 2IP CODE: |

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

| I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business. |
|---|
| I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations. |
| I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) |

are current.

I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.

| I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the |
|--|
| public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San |
| Francisco Sunshine Ordinance. |

| I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted | as part of |
|--|------------|
| the application may be used by the City without compensation. | |

| I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the |
|--|
| business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement |
| on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds. |

| Starn Moss | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------|--|
| Bettina Cohen | July 21, 2019 | M | |
| Name (Print): | Date: | Signature: | |

THE POTRERO VIEW Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

The first issue of *The Potrero View* (the "View"), San Francisco's oldest continuously published community newspaper, hit the streets on August 1, 1970. A front-page announcement in Volume One, Number One summarized the paper's mission and provided a glimpse into how the four-page inaugural issue made its way into print:

"A regular neighborhood newspaper is the first step in the effort to bring this community together in order to solve our common problems. It will provide facts about events and issues as well as a forum where views of various segments of the community may be expressed. Letters will be printed as space allows. All this will help us to get to know each other better and to produce a better understanding of urban problems as they exist on Potrero Hill.

"This effort is a continuation and expansion of the work of Bill and Jodie Dawson who for six months have produced "Hills & Dales," a newsletter for the Hill. Now with some additional volunteer help, we've been able to put out this first issue of *The Potrero View*."

Dubbing themselves the "Potrero Hill Mob," Bill and Jodie Dawson, Lenny Anderson, Micky Ostler and Rose Marie Sicoli launched *The Potrero View* out of the Dawson's 284 Connecticut Street home. Aspiring to emerge into a newspaper that could influence municipal policy decisions, they received guidance from Eileen Maloney, a transplanted New Yorker who had journalism experience at Long Island's *Newsday* and San Francisco's *Progress*. The Mob met in July 1970; Eileen came on board as the *View*'s first editor.

Potrero Hill resident Ruth Passen started contributing to the *View* in January 1971. That spring, Ruth assumed editorial duties from Eileen. In 1972, Ruth succeeded the Dawsons as publisher of *The Potrero View*.

The Potrero View began publishing its issues from offices in the basement of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House in June 1972, not long after community advocate Enola Maxwell was elected director of the nonprofit. "The Nabe," as 953 De Haro is affectionately called by locals, is a Potrero Hill landmark, dating back to 1922, and has continuously housed churches or

nonprofits that have a mission to serve community members in need, with an emphasis on youth and education.

A collaborative friendship developed between Ruth Passen and Enola Maxwell during the more than three decades the *View*'s headquarters were in the Nabe's basement; Enola hired Ruth to be the Nabe's office manager in the late-1970s.

Ruth served for more than three decades at the helm of *The Potrero View*, working alongside volunteer writers and proofreaders. Ruth retired from the free monthly paper in 2006, turning the reins over to Steven Moss.

A keen interest in civic engagement and community-building, as well as a dedication to Potrero Hill, led Steven, then a six-year Kansas Street resident, to succeed Ruth as the *View*'s publisher. At the time, Steven was directing San Francisco Community Power, a nonprofit that trained and employed low-income Bayview, Dogpatch and Potrero Hill residents to deploy energy- and water-saving devices, as part of a successful effort to close the Hunters Point and Potrero power plants. Steven met Ruth as a result of his community activism, and periodically wrote articles for the paper. In her eighties, Ruth was looking for a worthy successor when she decided to sell the paper to Steven in 2006.

The Potrero View office moved to 2325 Third Street in 2007. By 2010, the View expanded its coverage area to include the growing neighborhoods of Mission Bay and South of Market, as well as, for a brief time, the Bayview. The business relocated once more to 1459 18th Street in January 2017. Steven Moss has improved the quality of the View's articles, maintaining a strong commitment to civic journalism. He continues to serve as editor and publisher today.

Nearing a half-century of continuous community coverage, *The Potrero View* continues to publish stories about local personalities, mom and pop businesses, land use issues, schools, and other topics of local interest. It prints 11,000 issues monthly. The *View* has reported on news stories which have helped community residents more effectively engage civically, related to land use, transportation, and energy. It's championed a number of initiatives, including the election of notable politicians, such as Nancy Pelosi; the closure of the Hunters Point and Potrero power plants; and covered public bus re-routings and the provision of public amenities. It regularly features stories on local artists, musicians, and the cultural scene.

In February 2019, Ruth Passen passed away. Her legacy lives on through the continued success of *The Potrero View*.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

The *View* has been in continuous operation since April 1970.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

The *View* is not a family-owned business, though it has had significant staff continuity over long periods of time.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

The View's ownership history is as follows:

1970 to 1972: Bill and Jodie Dawson

1972 to 2007: Ruth Passen 2007 to Present: Steven Moss

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for more than 30 years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application. Note that the *View* maintains electric or print archives that date to 1970.

f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

The historic resource status of the building that houses the business is classified by the Planning Department as Category B, Unknown / Age Eligible, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

From its earliest days, the *View* has reported on land use, transportation, candidates for local office, ballot initiatives and mom-and-pop businesses. There was a gossip column, "The Nose Knows." Friends, neighbors, acquaintances and even a 49ers football player would find their name under the "Birthdays" column. The *View* has celebrated births, mourned deaths and illuminated stories about the community's artists. It has been a forum for discussion of issues, giving voice directly to readers through the publication of opinion pieces and letters to the

editor. The *View* has provided many pages worth of low- or no-cost ads to local nonprofits that cater to underserved communities in its coverage area. It's always been free to the public.

The *View's* regular coverage of neighborhood merchants has reinforced "buy local" activities. Its features on schools, churches, homeless services, healthcare facilities and nonprofits has helped nurture community engagement in charitable causes. The *View's* monthly Community Calendar provides a free bulletin board for a wide variety of cultural events, volunteer opportunities and public meeting announcements. Its monthly birthday announcements and kids' photo contest have given children and their parents great joy.

Newspapers provide an historical record of the communities they serve, vital to the fabric of any neighborhood. Print editions of the *View* continue to hit the streets on the first of each month; a few weeks later an online edition is published on the *View*'s website. A digital archive going back to the first issue can be found there. The archives help preserve local history, while adding to the legacy of *The Potrero View*.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

The *View* covers significant events in the neighborhood. It has regularly endorsed candidate for the District 10 seat on Board of Supervisors and covered of local elections. It provides a bulletin board of upcoming events in its monthly Community Calendar. The View sponsors a monthly Kids' Photos contest for schoolchildren. Winners see their photos published and receive cash prizes.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

The *View* is itself an historical record that has chronicled its own story from its origins, with calls for volunteer support and periodic reports on the paper's growth and struggles. The paper's history can be traced through back issues on the website's online archives. *The Potrero View* is a member of the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association, is listed on SFNNA's website and is identified under community resources in the Potrero Dogpatch Merchants' Association's and Potrero Boosters annual business directories and monthly newsletters. *View* coverage has been picked up by the *New York Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The book *Images of America, San Francisco's Potrero Hill*, by Peter Linenthal, Abigail Johnston and the Potrero Hill Archives Project, refers to *The Potrero View* on page 127. Below a picture of *View* staff is a paragraph of text that begins: "The first issue of *The Potrero View* appeared on August 1, 1970..." The last sentence of text states: "The award-winning, all-volunteer *View* is a true community newspaper, drawing its inspiration from the diverse talents, interests, and concerns of the neighborhood it serves."

Elsewhere in this book, on page 119, there is a picture of a block party with several members of the community and the text identities Ruth Passen as editor of *The Potrero View*, alongside Art Agnos, who would be elected mayor of San Francisco later in the year.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Ruth Passen and Enola Maxwell are significant people associated with *The Potrero View*. Ruth was a longtime *View* editor and publisher, dedicating more than three decades to the business. Enola was a community advocate who became director of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House and soon after offered the *View* space in the basement for its headquarters. The *View* remained in this location for more than 30 years, owing largely to the collaborative friendship between Ruth and Enola.

Local politicians who live in the area and whose campaigns for office were covered in the *View* have included Art Agnos and John Burton.

The distinctive front-page banner artwork of *The Potrero View* is a sketch of the sweeping view over San Francisco Bay by longtime Potrero Hill artist Giacomo Patri.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Every month, the *View* publishes in-depth articles that inform people who live and work in the community of local news. It provides a voice for the community by regularly seeking feedback from business and neighborhood leaders, frequently quoting them in news articles. It often runs stories about nonprofits that serve low-income families in the community. Reporters cover City Hall, the Port of San Francisco and a variety of community meetings.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

The *View* covers the economically and ethnically diverse neighborhoods of Potrero Hill, Dogpatch, Mission Bay and South of Market, the epicenter of San Francisco's most vibrant growth in development, population and jobs. Residents live in dwellings that vary from single family homes to public housing, market- and below-market-rate condominiums and apartment buildings. Advertisers include longtime local merchants who are able to reach customers who live in walking distance of their stores and restaurants.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

This does not apply.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

If the *View* were to cease publication, readers would lose in-depth coverage focused keenly on local issues provided by a free, independent neighborhood newspaper. Public meeting announcements and cultural events could no longer be listed in the paper's Community Calendar; local businesses such as The Good Life Grocery and Farley's would not be able to reach customers through the advertisements they run, nor would these and other merchants new and old receive the free press that a neighborhood newspaper routinely provides them in local color stories. Readers' viewpoints would not be printed as opinion pieces or letters to the editor. A monthly photo contest for schoolchildren would no longer be offered. Businesses that distribute the paper for free would not be able to provide a complimentary incentive for customers to visit and pick up a copy. After almost 50 years of having a neighborhood newspaper, Potrero Hill would lose a part of its identity, a thread in the fabric that helps hold the community together.

Editor and publisher Steven Moss wrote in a March 2018 editorial, "The *View* continues to fill a niche that no other source occupies: substantive news and information about the people, places, and events influencing our community. No other media regularly covers what's going on in our schools, with local merchants, and residents' lives and deaths, among other neighborhood concerns. For many, the *View* provides an essential contribution to what makes Dogpatch and Potrero Hill special."

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

The *View* is a monthly gift to its readers, offering civic journalism as embodied in editorials, letters to the editor, photographs, cartoons, artwork, book reviews, humor, a community calendar and advertisements, printed every month, available free at local stores, libraries and the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

The Potrero View is committed to maintaining its historical tradition as a monthly newspaper serving the neighborhoods of Potrero Hill, Dogpatch, Mission Bay and South of Market.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Not applicable.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates that the business has been a newspaper for 49 years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.

The Potrero View, historical photos:



Ruth Passen, *View* editor and publisher for over three decades, with Sala Burton and Enola Maxwell. Photo: Bob Hayes



Early staff photo published with an August 2015 article celebrating the *View's* first 45 years.



View staff in 1979.



View staff, circa 1997. Left to right: Abigail Johnston, Denise Kessler, Judy Baston, Winifred Mann, Ruth Passen, Lester Zeidman, Bernie Gershater, Vas Arnautoff, and Lisa Allman.

Hills and Dales



THE POTRERO VIEW



Mobile drug clinic for Hill rejected

Hill and Dale view evolves

We hope you find this first issue of THE POTRERO VIEW informative. It will appear the first of every month with news and view ever the first of every month with news and view ever the Hill.

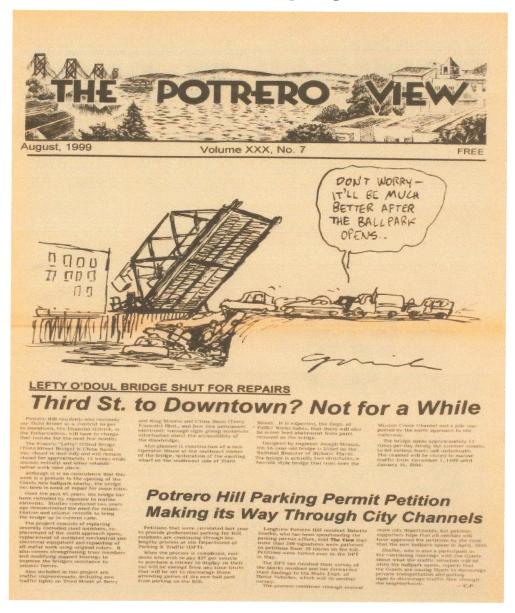
A regular neighborhood newspaper is the Hill.

A regular neighborhood newspaper is the thing of the provide facts the first to bring this community together in order to solve our common problems, it will provide facts about events and issues as well as a forum where views of various segments of the community may be expressed. Letters will be printed as space allows. All this will help us to get to know each other better and to produce a better understanding of urban problems as they exist on Pottero Hill.

in 6-4 vote

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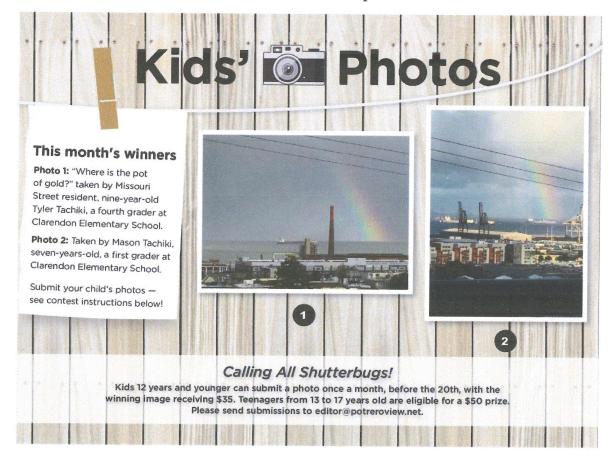
The *View*'s front page, August 1999. An article about the Lefty O'Doul Bridge on Third Street being closed for repairs ran below a cartoon expressing an awareness of the traffic that would be coming to the area in a balloon that reads: "Don't worry, it'll be much better after the ballpark open."





Potrero Hill artist Giacomo Patri contributed the distinctive sketch that has become a trademark of the *View*'s legacy. This sweeping view of San Francisco Bay has graced the front page since 1983.

Below, the *View's* monthly Kids' Photos contest offers schoolchildren a chance to see their photos published. Winners receive cash prizes.



San Francisco Chronicle

Local issues pressing for S.F. community papers

MEDIA

By John Wildermuth

Published 4:00 cm PDT Manday August 0, 20



Photo: Chad Ziemendorf, The Chronicle

Steven Moss, publisher of the Potrero View, stops for a portrait at Farley's coffee shop in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the publication in San Francisco, Calif., on Friday, August 6, 2010.

PG&E is brightening the street lights along Persia Avenue in the Excelsior. Richmond District residents are upset that Muni buses are now running along 15th Avenue. The reopened Potrero Hill public library is boosting business on 20th Street.

For San Francisco's vibrant neighborhood newspapers, local issues are the ones that bring in readers.

"We serve as the neighborhood hall and the village square," said <u>Steven Moss</u>, publisher of the Potrero View, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this month.

The 16 mostly monthly papers that are members of the 22-year-old **San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association** cover just about every part of the city and combine to put out about 300,000 copies each month. That doesn't include other city papers that publish less frequently.

"A lot of the core papers have been around quite awhile," said <u>Glenn Gullmes</u>, a trustee of the association and editor and publisher of the West Portal Monthly. "We've got a niche."

The free papers generally feature an eclectic mix of stories focusing on local issues, neighborhood reviews, crime news, columns and community event listings, tucked alongside as many ads as possible.

That local focus is essential, Gullmes said. Using volunteers and a few low-paid stringers, the papers can cover neighborhood issues in a way larger, more regionally oriented papers like The Chronicle could never do.

"Even if the larger papers had dedicated reporters to cover local meetings, no large daily would be able to cover all these meetings," he said.

The Potrero View "is really my local paper," said <u>Ann Crone</u> as she sat outside Farley's coffee shop on 18th Street. "It's fun to read when you know the people and places."

But local newspapers aren't a "one size fits all" business, Gullmes cautioned.

"Every neighborhood paper has its own style," he said. "What works in one doesn't necessarily work in another."

The San Francisco BayView, for example, bills itself as a "national black newspaper." Its current issue features a story by Nyese Joshua telling why she's running for District 10 supervisor alongside pieces about black pot farmers and conditions in Haiti.

Proud sense of advocacy

El Tecolote, which also celebrates its 40th anniversary this month, is a bilingual paper out of the Mission that makes no apology for being an advocate.

"We do get involved in issues that affect the community," said **Eva Martinez**, executive director of Acción Latina, the nonprofit that publishes the paper. "We want to see how we can best serve the people who read our paper."

The Potrero View shows what a concerned local paper can accomplish over four decades, said Moss, who took over from the newspaper's founder, **Ruth Passen**, in 2006.

The current anniversary issue looks back at some of the paper's - and the community's - victories over the years, including a fight against then-Supervisor **Dianne Feinstein**'s 1977 effort to force porn shops and theaters to move to a "combat zone" in the industrial areas below Potrero Hill and the 2002 battle to stop Mirant Corp. from expanding the **Potrero Power Plant**.

"We try to do pieces that take on complex community issues," such as push for development in and around Potrero Hill, said Moss, who has a day job as executive director of **San Francisco Community Power**, an environmental group, and is a candidate to replace the termed-out **Sophie Maxwell** as District 10 supervisor.

'Like dealing with family'

But the paper also includes news about local elementary schools, a police-supplied list of local crime statistics, and a community calendar that includes art shows, concerts, fundraisers and other local events, along with plenty of pictures.

Running a neighborhood paper requires a delicate sense of balance, Moss said.

"We get some angry letters," he said. "But a neighborhood newspaper is like dealing with family. You're telling secrets and have to draw the line somewhere."

Those same concerns that can spark a testy late-night phone call or sharp words at the local coffee shop also show just how important local issues are in a city like San Francisco.

"Most people here identify more with their neighborhood than with the city as a whole," Moss said. "People are from the Bayview, Potrero Hill or Glen Park, then they're from San Francisco."

That's just fine with Moss and other local publishers, whose businesses are inextricably linked to their own neighborhoods.

"We're not looking for the hipsters, the young people who move around a lot," Moss said. "The people who settle down and become part of the neighborhood - they're our readers."

■ Menu





SERVING THE POTRERO HILL, DOGPATCH, MISSION BAY, & SOMA NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE 1970



View Celebrates 45 Years of Community News

Published on August, 2015 − in News − by Lester Zeidman

he idea of starting a print newspaper today would be seen as quaint. The ease of communicating in the Internet age is sharply different than the challenge faced 45 years ago by five Potrero Hill residents who wanted to keep their neighbors informed about important goings-on.

Bill and Jodie Dawson, together with Lenny Anderson – whose conscientious objector status during the draft required him to

do "community service" – Micky Ostler, and Rose Marie Sicoli, took up just that challenge. In January 1970 they launched, out of the Dawson's Connecticut Street house, a newsletter they called "Hills and Dales." This precursor to *The Potrero View* was written on a legal-sized sheet of paper. Its articles were typed on a blue stencil and printed on St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church's mimeograph machine. The handout was distributed through local businesses, free. At the time it was the only way to effectively disseminate local news to immediate neighbors.

Hills and Dales came out sporadically, but its founders remained convinced of the need for a community newspaper, and began broadening its scope to cover the social issues of the day. Wanting to become a real newspaper, one that could get City Hall's attention, the group turned for guidance to Eileen Maloney, a transplanted New Yorker who had newspaper experience at Long Island's *Newsday*, and San Francisco's *Progress*.

The founders met with Eileen on July 13, 1970. By the end of the meeting Eileen was on board as editor. Thanks to her, the Potrero Hill Mob, as they called themselves, produced the first issue of *The Potrero View* on August I, just three weeks after that fateful evening.

The new name was Ostler's inspiration. He was looking out his window one morning, and the title "The Potrero View" came to him. It simultaneously acknowledged the community's "famous view" and "our point of view." As there'd be a political slant to the paper, the Mob wanted all to know —especially City Hall — that this newspaper was from Potrero Hill.

Gone were the days of typing stencils for mimeographing. Articles were typed on IBM Selectrics, headlines were created with rubdown type, and photographs were made into screened prints. These elements were pasted on layout sheets, which were delivered to the printer by hand, via car or bicycle, as late as midnight before the day the paper was scheduled to go to press. This laborious process continued more or less without the aid of computers until the late–1990s.

"A regular neighborhood newspaper is the first step in the effort to bring this community together in order to solve our common problems," read a statement in *The Potrero View*'s first issue, which was published "in the hope that Potrero Hill might come together." The Mob grew. By the end of 1970, many new volunteers were participating, mostly unnamed, until the first staff box appeared in November 1970. The staff numbered seven people, six listed as "contributors." Realizing money was needed to continue functioning the Mob suggested that readers subscribe for a mere \$2 per year.

Ruth Passen became a contributor in the January 1971 issue and was promoted to "staff" in February. The first display ads appeared in that February edition; none of those original advertisers exist today. Chip's Liquors, "ask for Big Lou" – 18th and Connecticut streets – DeRosa Bros. Grocery, which celebrated its 50th anniversary, having opened in 1921 at 20th and Arkansas; The Fabulous Greek at 17th and Kansas, claiming to be "S.F.'s most talked about cocktail lounge"; and The Hollander, a restaurant on the corner now occupied by Goat Hill Pizza, whose advertisement was printed upside down.

When Maloney left the paper in the spring of 1971, "we were thoroughly schooled in her writing, editing and design styles," wrote Lenny Anderson on the occasion of her death in 1997, "and we tried to remain true to what she taught us. But none of us ever matched her ability to cut to the jugular and get the story." Lenny himself left the paper a year later.

By August 1971, the *View* was eight pages; the staff had to work hard to fill those extra column inches. Since a free press can also include a fun press, a recipe for "Carp Carousel," which appeared on Page 8, instructed readers on stuffing a fresh carp with chocolate cake and goat milk, boiling it "until tender" and serving the dish with lima beans "as a treat for the kids." Lovely. The *View* returned to four pages the next month.

By May 1972, the Mob had outgrown the space available to them on Connecticut Street. Their plea for help resulted in an "overwhelming response." They landed on the ground floor —which was part basement as well — of an annex to the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House, where they remained for the next 32 years. Riding this wave of success, they asked readers for a filing cabinet.

Political ads also appeared in the June 1972 issue, including a "Re-elect John Burton for Congress" ad, along with Potrero Hill's own Bob Gonzales advocating for the same seat. Shirley Chisholm bought an ad for her "outrageous" run for President, but the *View* recommended Democrat George McGovern in the June primary. George did not buy an ad.

The *View*, which today is San Francisco's oldest continually published neighborhood newspaper, abruptly disappeared October 1972. The November issue asked readers if they'd missed the paper and admitted to a month of reflection on what'd been accomplished and where money might be found to keep publishing. The original members of Hills and Dales had disappeared from the staff box. However, Ostler and Sicoli continued the relationship they'd developed working together on the paper; they married in 1978. New Mob members appeared who would last for decades: Janet Cox, Ruth Goldhammer, Peggy Ohta, Bob Hayes, Jon Greenburg, Vas Arnautoff, and Larry Gonick, among others, all joined Ruth Passen as regular contributors in 1970s and early '80s.

The December 1972 issue announced that McGovern had lost the election but won Potrero Hill in a landslide, with 62 percent voting for him. President Nixon, who would resign the office within two years, garnered less than 20 percent of the vote. As with all subsequent elections, Passen traveled to City Hall to retrieve voting results for individual precincts. Hill precinct votes were tabulated and laboriously typed out — tab, space, space, type — and noted in the *View*. In the same issue was the beginning of a new tradition; the appearance of the *View* Holiday Cookie Recipe. No fish or lima beans were involved.

It's hard not to see the present when you visit the past. Early *Potrero Views* contained many articles that reflect today's ongoing concerns. A plea for more mental health services; a lack of support for a potential "southern crossing" of the bay; and the aftermath of an oil spill were all noted in February 1971. By June 1972, a regional vote was held to decide the fate of the southern crossing, with a front page editorial titled "Southern

span yes or no." The eight-lane freeway was estimated to cost \$556 million and included a Bay Front Freeway that ran from San Mateo to the 280 freeway entirely on the bay. The *View* recommended a "NO" vote.

Last year the *View* printed an article headed "The Scents of Potrero Hill." It warmly described various aromas produced on the Hill, including First Spice Mixing Company at Mariposa and Arkansas streets, equating the scents emanating from that establishment to that of a restaurant. In August 1971, a View article titled "The Smells of Potrero Hill" had a little more to work with. "Ours is a more or less pleasant odor," said Mr. Markham of First Spice Mixing, and then indicted his neighbor across the street at the Safeway Coffee Plant, on 1501 Mariposa Street, as the worst olfactory offender. "'The smell of coffee isn't bad' remarked a kind receptionist, who gave the View a free cup of the stuff," and told them, "What you ought to do is check out that spice factory across the street." The Hill suffered what were known as "smell spells." The article mentioned a number of companies in "Butchertown" that were to blame: Royal Tallow and Soap Co., at 429 Amador Street; James Allen & Sons, a meat processing plant at Third and Evans; Pacific Rendering Co., "next to the dump," prompted the View to describe the aroma there as "viscous;" an employee declared that, "They pay me \$16,000 a year so I don't give a damn what it smells like." Another local offender was the Pioneer Soap Co. at 18th and Carolina, which processed tallow and phosphates to make industrial and laundry soap - "Globo" - which created what the View termed "a musky smell." It was acknowledged that little got done "until the smells reached Telegraph Hill."

The Potrero View followed up in December 1971, and reported that the Safeway Coffee Plant would "alleviate or possibly eliminate the odor" by September 1972, citing a petition from 29 Hill residents to the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District. The View also reported in February 1976 about the Best Foods Plant at 18th and Bryant, "a source of noxious odors to Potrero Hill residents since 1940" and their efforts to correct the problem.

Muni wanted to acquire eight acres of land in the "Dog Patch" area, reported the *View* in January 1972. The following month, a front page box apologized to the "people living near the

proposed Muni car-barn" for referring to the area as Dog Patch, stating that it was in fact "a concerned and active part of the Potrero Hill and in no way resembled the chaotic community of Li'l Abner comic strip fame." The front page also announced Enola Maxwell had been named the new executive director of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House after a five-month vacancy; at three different meetings board of directors "wrangled" with Ms. Maxwell's supporters. The final vote, however, was "marked by unity and cooperation." Maxwell headed the Nabe with vigor and charisma until her death in 2003

The paper continued in 1972 with more pleas for community help, and hopefully more money. "Right now this unique and remarkably local monthly is heading for the roughest period of its young life." By now, staff had declined to "lately well under ten," though 13 people were mentioned in the staff box. But the *View* continued on and by August announced its second birthday party at McKinley Park, with music, painting, and a glue-in.

Maxwell had a "modest proposal" whereby black people would refrain from being arrested for the summer. "Black people are the greatest supporters of the local police. We provide high-paying jobs for many people in the law enforcement field." She noted the "strange relationship" with law enforcement. "[Black people] claim fear of the police, yet were it not for Blacks the police force could be drastically cut."

Pete Chiotras celebrated his store's 50th anniversary on Rhode Island Street. "It was one of three Momma and Poppa groceries on Potrero Hill which remain with the original families," noted the article, as well as Pete's new "powerful" German Shepard dog that took up station near the front door. Concerns about future hold-ups were diminished.

September's front page declared the "View Shindig" a "Shining Success" and in fact, the community seemed to be actually coming together. View staff cooked more than 400 ears of corn; people shared food, music, and fun. Bob Saporiti and Friends were to play an acoustic set, "but due to technical difficulties played electric and turned in a fine set of rock n' roll." A

centerfold of pictures depicted people enjoying themselves at Potrero Hill's favorite park.

"And the *View* even picked up a few new subscribers and certainly some new friends," stated the article. Nineteen people were named in the staff box. It wouldn't be the last party at McKinley Park. The 1973 gathering was cancelled, but in 1975 the *View* declared their recent party a "Huge Success" but hinted broadly that "Wouldn't it be nice to have someone else sponsor" another party?

A year later, 1973, a new neighborhood identity seemed to be jelling, with the Dogpatch Community Development Association and Youth Council about to be forced to move as a result of the Muni car barn being "Plopped on Dogpatch." Dogpatch was described as "a community of 500 located at the bottom of Potrero Hill; it has 95 percent unemployment." Tempers flared when Dogpatch resident James Holley shouted "You're gonna put a cable car barn in the middle of Dogpatch when Muni doesn't have one black repairman." Apparently they did just that but the color of the Muni workforce changed as well.

The September 1973 issue debuted the masthead we're familiar with today. Giacomo Patri, who expanded on Jan Sabre's original sketches, designed it, and in 1978 added more waves to the bay. In the issue The Peace & Freedom Party announced the formation of a "food conspiracy" and The Mob declared "Our Hills Aren't Safe." By now, The Fabulous Greek had morphed into The Downbeat and Allen's Bar-B-Q was serving "eastern ribs and beef" at 300 Connecticut. Artist Ruth Cravath finally completed her statue of St. Francis at Candlestick Park, delayed due to the placement of a halo on the statue.

The *View* had successfully raised awareness of a lack of traffic signs on the Hill; it even got new supervisor Quentin Kopp to advocate for a stop sign at 18th and Connecticut. In November 1971, the paper reported that residents had erected their own homemade STOP signs; the Department of Public Works removed them. By April 1972, the Board of Supervisors approved a new sign in spite of DPW objections. In March 1974, a proposal to add stop signs was carried by Supervisor Bob

Gonzales; the *View* covered every detail. An editorial titled "Citizen Power" applauded a group of "angry citizens" from Arkansas Street who were "not interested in waiting for body counts" and successfully petitioned to "stop the carnage."

The December 1973 issue came in at just four pages. The price of a subscription was now \$2.50. Advertisers were holding steady. In February, O'Keefe's Tavern at 24th and Rhode Island placed a small ad touting its attractions: "40's records, \$.05 Juke-Box, Fireplace. Comfortable booths. Open since '33." Those of a certain age will tell you that O'Keefe's was THE place to go on Potrero Hill. With music, dancing, and always a good crowd — a swinging crowd, if you will — with that '40's music. Open weekends until 11 p.m.! Others of a certain age, albeit a bit younger, will mention the Garden of Earthly Delights at Mariposa and Mississippi, which advertised briefly in the *View* during 1973, as a very interesting place to go and have fun with live music and beer and wine. It stayed open much later.

Finally, 1974 saw a marked jump in advertisers. In December, there was one meat market; a new shoe repair shop, Toe Up at 1419 18th Street; a plant store; and six grocery stores, including the new Good Life Grocery advertising potatoes at "9¢/lb., Fresh Eggs, Large AA, 75¢/doz., and Home Made Breads, 49¢ and up." The store claimed that its low 15 percent mark-up was the source of it low prices and their slogan: "The More You Shop, The More We Stock," a tagline that never appeared again.

For *The Potrero View*, the more people who read the paper, the more it could produce and attract volunteers. The *View* consistently pleaded for more volunteers and delivery people but was also consistent in its content. There were editorials on issues important to the neighborhood; announcements and meetings were meticulously detailed; book reviews and sometimes a chess column appeared; sports events at Jackson Park and The Potrero Hill Recreation Center on Arkansas Street were reported on. There was a "Culture" column detailing fashion and music performers on the Hill; and a "Features" section detailing local events and profiling people, such as the Russian Molokans who had made the Hill their home since the early 1900s. There were stories on new businesses that were reviving the 18th Street commercial strip. Labor issues were always reported on, like the ILWU strike in 1971. The Victoria

Mews development, which started as a "mystery" in 1972, was followed through the entire Planning Commission debate and inspired the formation of the Potrero League of Active Neighbors. The "Wisconsin Site," first mentioned in October 1970, generated content well into the 1980's and beyond. Now known as Parkview Heights, it created plenty of controversy and kept the *View*'s typewriters humming for a long time.

The Pickle Family Circus came to the Hill. Dianne Feinstein's proposal to clean up the Tenderloin by moving its seedy businesses to southeast Potrero Hill generated the headline, "Feinstein to Discuss Porno at Meeting." (June 1977). The fight to establish district elections went on for years. All of it was chronicled in *The Potrero View*.

It looked like *The Potrero View* would survive after all. A front-page editorial in September 1975, still pleading for help, indicated that 5,000 papers were being published monthly and noted that 110 people had worked on the paper over the past five years. "*View* articles have even penetrated City Hall, bringing swift action from some Supervisors." The goal of the original Mob had been achieved!

In October 1976 the first full-page ad appeared: the Factory Store at 17th and Mississippi streets announced its "Grand Opening Sale (Save 50% & More!)." New stores and restaurants, like Goat Hill Pizza, Daily Scoop, Good Life Grocery, and S. Asimakopoulos, with its delicious souvlakia, emerged as regular advertisers. Dog Patch became comfortable with being called "Dogpatch" as more articles appeared referencing that small enclave. By the mid-1980s, the *View* carried more than 60 display ads in 16 pages.

In 1982 an editorial board was formed consisting of Passen, who had been editor since 1978, Vas Arnautoff, and Judy Baston, who was associate editor from 1986 until her retirement in 2000. In 2006 Passen retired as editor and publisher; Steven Moss took over the reins.

Forty-five years after its first issue, *The Potrero View* is a rich compendium of the Hill's history, describing all of the facets of community life as it was then, as we try to process it into what

our lives are now. A newspaper is a time machine; a physical manifestation of a place and point in time. No issues of the original Hills and Dales newsletters have yet been found, but the Potrero Library has hard-bound volumes containing some thirty-some years' worth of *Potrero Views*; all issues are in the process of being scanned for viewing online. Check out Archive.org, search for *The Potrero View*, and you can revisit the people, places, and times that make up a detailed history of the Hill. Take a walk around the Hill and visit the places and parks where many good times were enjoyed. That history is still with us; you can touch it and even feel it. And, yes, sometimes you can even smell it.

Rose Marie Sicoli-Ostler and Abigail Johnston contributed to this article.

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SERVING THE POTRERO HILL, DOGPATCH, MISSION BAY, & SOMA NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE 1970

Obituary: Ruth Passen

Published on April, 2019 — in Obituary — by Marc Passen and Risa Nye



Photo: Lester Zeidman

By Marc Passen

Adios, my Shana Rivka (Beautiful Ruth).

Shana Rivka was a pet name for Ruth Passen used by her devoted and adoring brothers. Ruth was a first-generation Californian, born in San Francisco to Morris and Nettie Elkind, who emigrated from Russia and Poland to escape discrimination against Jews. Ruth was the baby sister to her older brothers, Sam and Charles (Chuck). She was predeceased by Sam. Chuck resides in Southern California.

Ruth grew up in the Fillmore District when the neighborhood was a mix of Jewish, Africanand Japanese-American families. She gained an appreciation of diverse cultures through the community's natural integration. "My dad's philosophy was a good one," she once said. "He felt that as a Jew you should know about discrimination and not discriminate against others." Ruth attended John Swett Junior and Lowell high schools.

Ruth became politically active at a young age. While attending classes at San Francisco State University she joined a left-wing student group, where she met World War II veteran, Joe Passen, who passed away in 1992. They married in 1947, shortly after Sam wedded Betty Glass and right before Chuck married Rockie (Rokama) Kramer. Rockie fondly recalls a time when Ruth took her new sister-in-law shopping at a discount dented can store. Rockie was hooked, and became a lifetime thrifty shopper! A son, Marc, was born in 1950. A second baby, Nicky, was born in 1951 and predeceased Ruth in 1963.

In the early 1950s, Ruth's passion for progressive politics led her to speak out against the McCarthy era of hate and divisiveness.

After living in Los Angeles for seven years, Ruth missed her beloved San Francisco. She and Joe found a home on Potrero Hill and moved back in 1965. During the turbulent 1960s, Ruth became active in the anti-Vietnam War movement, and joined the Women's Peace movement. In the 1970s, Ruth supported workers' rights during the grape boycott led by United Farm Workers president Cesar Chavez.



Ruth Passen with Sala Burton and Enola Maxwell.
Photo: Bob Hayes

In the late 1970s, Enola Maxwell, Potrero Hill Neighborhood House (Nabe) director, hired Ruth to become the Nabe's office manager. It turned into a wonderful collaboration and friendship between two dynamic women.

During this period, Ruth got involved with an upstart neighborhood newspaper, *Hills & Dales*, which later changed its name to *The Potrero View*. Ruth became the editor of the free monthly paper, holding that position for more than three decades. She recruited people to volunteer, write, and proofread stories. The publication featured investigative reports on development plans, stories about crime, mom

and pop businesses, and even a gossip column, "The Nose Knows." Friends, neighbors,

acquaintances, even a 49er football player would find their name under the "Birthdays" column. Ruth retired from the *View* in 2008, turning the reins over to Steven Moss.



View staff, circa 1997. Left to right: Abigail Johnston, Denise Kessler, Judy Baston, Winifred Mann, Ruth Passen, Lester Zeidman, Bernie Gershater, Vas Arnautoff, and Lisa Allman.



Over the years, Ruth and Joe were liberalstrong supporters of progressive Democratic candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives. They hosted many fundraising events for Phillip Burton, Sala Burton and Nancy Pelosi. In the late-1980s, Ruth and Joe helped Art Agnos get elected mayor of San Francisco. When Pelosi became the first woman Speaker of the House, Ruth received a personal invitation to attend

the swearing-in event in Washington, D.C.

When Ruth took a break from trying to save the world, she loved to listen to jazz, opera, classical music, and Broadway musicals. Ruth and her "bosom buddy", Denise Kessler, religiously attend the annual Monterrey Jazz Festival in the 1950s and 1960s. They loved jazz so much that they booked passage on a jazz cruise to the Bahamas, featuring the Count Basie band! Ruth and Joe were season ticketholders of the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco 49ers. Ruth loved to travel, taking annual summer trips to Camp Mather, near



Yosemite National Park, visiting New York City, London, and Paris. When Marc started playing rugby football, Ruth became not only a big fan, but a fantastic sideline photographer of the sport.

Circa 1984; Denise Kessler and Ruth Passen flanking trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie.

Ruth had a way of connecting with people. Her easygoing style, wisdom, and acceptance created a space for others to share things with her that they weren't comfortable revealing to anyone else.

Ruth adored her two granddaughters, Natalie and Teresa. When the girls were little, she'd take them to Sally's, Goat Hill Pizza, and the Daily Scoop, where she'd proudly show them off. At Ruth's Rhode Island Street apartment, the girls would get her to smile and laugh, draping themselves with her silk scarves and posing as models. As the girls got older, Ruth would take them on marches against the Iraq War and on Martin Luther King Day.

She had a "forever young" persona that was never more evident than how she related to young people. Whether it was her granddaughters, nieces or nephews, or the Black and Brown kids at the Nabe, this little, grey-haired White lady had such an impact that those who knew her would approach years later to thank her for just listening and being direct and honest.

Over her lifetime, Ruth consistently demonstrated compassion and devotion to the causes of freedom, peace, and equality. She deservedly received the great love and respect by all who were fortunate to have known her. She will remain in our hearts forever.

Ruth is survived by Marc and his wife, Dianne, granddaughters Natalie Carsten and Teresa Sollom, Chuck Elkind and his wife, Rokama Elkind, and many nieces and nephews.

The family will hold a tribute and memorial to Ruth on May 4, 2 p.m. at the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Alzheimer's Association.

Aunt Ruth

by Risa Nye

Aunt Ruth used to chide me when I complained about being exhausted after chasing my young children around.

"In my day," she said, "we'd put the kids to bed, and then figure out how to save the world!"



Photo: Abigail Johnston

Saving the world meant throwing herself into the fray. She'd hoist a sign, march and demonstrate in the streets; for civil rights, social justice, against the bomb, the war, the next war, and the next. She kept her vast collection of politically-inspired buttons pinned to a large piece of felt, ready to stick on her hat or jacket as she headed off to the next rally or picket line: We Shall Overcome. Make Love, Not War. Another Mother for Peace.

I loved the time we spent together during my summer visits to my aunt and uncle's crowded Los Angeles apartment. During these critical pre-teen years, Aunt Ruth matter-of-factly shared some important tips. She showed me how to apply three shades of lipstick, how to shave my legs without

nicking divots into my shins, and how to have fun while shopping, things my mother hadn't taught me.

A constant parade of unemployed writers, between-gig actors, labor organizers, and fellow progressives showed up at the L.A. apartment, arguing politics over red wine and plates of pasta long into the night. Hugs and handshakes always followed the loud voices and f-bombs at evening's end. Things were not like that at my house.

When her family moved back home to San Francisco, my aunt began contributing articles and photographs to her neighborhood newspaper. She subsequently took on the roles of editor and publisher of *The Potrero View*, a three-decades-long labor of love. At the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House she helped organize afterschool programs, classes for adults, and events that celebrated the scrappy diversity of the "Nabe."

At an event honoring my aunt for her work, San Francisco's mayor read a proclamation loaded with "whereases," and declared a day in her honor. When he finished speaking, my father leaned toward me and pointed proudly at his "baby" sister. "Look at her; she's the richest person in this room." And I knew what he meant.

My aunt encouraged me to write, publishing my essays in her paper; my first bylines. Writing was her passion. She talked about composing a memoir, but never started it. "I'm not a writer like you," she told me once. "You do it for both of us."

Ruth never pandered to anyone. You could always count on her to be outspoken, feisty, honest, but kind, and a champion of the underdog. She would confront racism or social injustice wherever she found it, no matter who the guilty party might be. And she mastered the art of being cool without even trying.

When I went back to graduate school at age 58, I hoped I could model myself after Ruth. She was always able to engage effortlessly with everyone: young and old, well-off and well-

connected, or down-on-their luck. I often asked myself: "what would Ruth do?" And I knew that she'd act like it was no big deal to be sitting in workshop with students a few decades younger. I could imagine her saying, "Get over yourself and do the work you came to do."

In her 80's, Ruth slipped into the foggy world of dementia. It's not the world she tried to save so many years ago, but it was the world she lived in until her death. The sparkle was still in her eyes. At least, that's what I wanted to see. And I told myself that she may not recognize me anymore, but she knew I was someone who always loved her.

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Filing Date: November 7, 2019
Case No.: 2019-022005LBR
Business Name: The Potrero View
Business Address: 1459 18th Street, #214

Zoning: NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale) Zoning District

40-X Height and Bulk District

Block/Lot: 4036/027
Applicant: Bettina Cohen

1459 18th Street, #214 San Francisco, CA 94110

Nominated By: Supervisor Shamann Watson

Located In: District 10

Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625

shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

The Potrero View (the "View") is San Francisco's oldest continuously published community newspaper, beginning in 1970. Dubbing themselves the "Potrero Hill Mob," Bill and Jodie Dawson, Lenny Anderson, Micky Ostler and Rose Marie Sicoli launched The Potrero View out of the Dawson's 284 Connecticut Street home. Aspiring to emerge into a newspaper that could influence municipal policy decisions, they received guidance from Eileen Maloney, their first editor who had journalism experience at Long Island's Newsday and San Francisco's Progress. Potrero Hill resident Ruth Passen started contributing to the View in January 1971. That spring, Passen assumed editorial duties from Maloney, and in 1972, Passen succeeded the Dawsons as publisher of The Potrero View. She retired and turned the newspaper over to Steven Moss in 2006.

The Potrero View began publishing its issues from offices in the basement of the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House in June 1972, not long after community advocate Enola Maxwell was elected director of the nonprofit. "The Nabe," as 953 De Haro is affectionately called by locals, is a Potrero Hill landmark, dating back to 1922, and has continuously housed churches or nonprofits that have a mission to serve community members in need, with an emphasis on youth and education. The business relocated once more to 1459 18th Street in January 2017. Steven Moss has improved the quality of the View's articles, maintaining a strong commitment to civic journalism.

The business is located on the southwest corner of 18th Street and Connecticut Street in the Potrero Hill neighborhood. It is within a NC-1 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. When was business founded?

The business was founded in 1970.

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2. Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?

Yes. The Potrero View qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. The Potrero View has operated continuously in San Francisco for 49 years.
- ii. The Potrero View has contributed to the history and identity of the Potrero Hill neighborhood and San Francisco.
- iii. The Potrero View is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.
- 3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?

Yes. The business is associated with the tradition of community newspapers.

4. Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture? No.

5. Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?

No. The property has property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status code of "B" (Further Research Required).

6. Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?

No.

7. Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?

Yes. The Potrero View is a member of the San Francisco Neighborhood Newspaper Association, is listed on SFNNA's website and is identified under community resources in the Potrero Dogpatch Merchants' Association's and Potrero Boosters annual business directories and monthly newsletters. View coverage has been picked up by the New York Times and San Francisco Chronicle.

The book Images of America, San Francisco's Potrero Hill, by Peter Linenthal, Abigail Johnston and the Potrero Hill Archives Project, refers to The Potrero View on page 127. Below a picture of View staff is a paragraph of text that begins: "The first issue of The Potrero View appeared on August 1, 1970..." The last sentence of text states: "The award-winning, all-volunteer View is a true community newspaper, drawing its inspiration from the diverse talents, interests, and concerns of the neighborhood it serves."

Elsewhere in this book, on page 119, there is a picture of a block party with several members of the community and the text identities Ruth Passen as editor of The Potrero View, alongside Art Agnos, who would be elected mayor of San Francisco later in the year.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

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• 1459 18th Street, #214

Recommended by Applicant

• Monthly free community newspaper publication

Additional Recommended by Staff

• None

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No.

HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 18, 2019

1650 Mission St. Suite 400 San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

Reception: 415.558.6378

Fax:

415.558.6409

Planning Information: **415.558.6377**

Filing Date: November 7, 2019
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Zoning: NC-2 (Neighborhood Commercial, Small Scale) Zoning District

40-X Height and Bulk District

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Nominated By: Supervisor Shamann Watson

Located In: District 10

Staff Contact: Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625

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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR THE POTRERO VIEW CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1459 18TH STREET, #214, BLOCK/LOT 4036/027.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 18, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that the Potrero View qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby** recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for the Potrero View.

Location(s):

• 1459 18th Street, #214

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

• Monthly free community newspaper publication

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2019-022005LBR to the Office of Small Business December 18, 2019.

Jonas P. Ionin

Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:

SAN FRANCISCO
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