

Honoring the 20th Anniversary of the Loma Prieta Earthquake

By Gail Goldyne

The Marina changed after October 17th, 1989. The neighborhood was almost destroyed by the Loma Prieta earthquake and the strength of, and damage caused by, the earthquake shocked the residents. Most people were unprepared and didn't even know how to turn off their central gas valves – and, the smell of gas was everywhere – a very dangerous situation. There was an enormous amount of devastation (see www.sfphoenix.com), and the area was cordoned off for three weeks until all utilities were restored; water took two days, electricity one week, and gas three weeks.

From autumn into spring there were repairs and rebuilding everywhere. Many buildings, especially apartments, were unsafe and the renters moved to other neighborhoods which were built on solid rock – many, never to return to the Marina. Ski Circus, held an annual November pre-sale and sent out invitations by postcard (no email or internet yet), two-thirds of which were returned! For a while, it was mostly long-time residents of the Marina who stayed and frequented the shops and restaurants in the area. Once the neighborhood was rebuilt, many young, single people moved in and changed the character of the neighborhood to a hip, happening place as it is today.

During the months that followed the earthquake, neighbors got to know each other and a common bond was forged. Those of us who experienced this watershed event understand the importance of knowing our neighbors, shopkeepers, restaurateurs, local police, fire fighters, and everyone else who is part of the fabric of the Marina. We appreciate our community and forming relationships within our neighborhood has proven to be life-enhancing as well as a safety valve for a future disaster, when we will need to depend on each other as first responders for help and possibly, survival.

The San Francisco Fire Department's NERT program (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team) was started in early 1990 at the request of some of the citizens in the Marina so that in a future disaster we would have skills and supplies to survive if the City services are overwhelmed and not readily available to us. We learned first hand how frightening it was not to know what to do after a severe earthquake and the feeling of fear and helplessness. Never again will we be unprepared. The NERT program has been a resounding success and everyone (all ages) should take advantage of this vital and free training. For more information email sffdnert@sfgov.org, check the Web site at www.sfgov.org/sfnert, or call 415-970-2022.

The City is planning an array of earthquake related events Oct. 13th - 17th, called the Big Rumble (www.thebigrumble.org). A safety fair, fire department apparatus demonstrations, and other family activities will take place on the Marina Green from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 17th. The closing ceremony at 4:30 p.m. will be the highlight of the Big Rumble events, also on the Marina Green. A permanent Marina

Monument to the 1989 EQ is being planned, called mEQm (Marina EQ Monument – www.meqm.org), and the kick-off fund-raising campaign will be announced. The ceremony will include entertainment by chanteuse, Sony Holland, remarks by Mayor Newsom, Fire Chief Hayes-White, Supervisor Alioto-Pier, and others. At 5:04 p.m. (the moment the earthquake struck twenty years ago), the fireboats will provide a water display, and other surprises are planned.

The mEQm will be a focal point for neighbors to gather (our own Lotta's fountain) every Oct. 17th to remember the Loma Prieta EQ. It will honor the Fireboat *Phoenix* and the S.F.F.D., and the NERT program. Through interpretive signage, this monument will educate the public about the importance of disaster preparedness. It will illuminate the historical connection between the 1906 Earthquake, the 1915 Pan Pacific Exposition, and the Marina District. Also included will be seismic and liquefaction explanations, diagrams showing how the fireboat along with the portable hydrant system worked together to save the Marina from conflagration, as the water mains had cracked, and the how San Francisco will be a Resilient City (SPUR project) after a disaster. The monument design team is being led by Jim Maxwell and Cindy Beckman of Architects II, and includes renowned landscape architect and artist April Philips of APDW and architect and glass artisan Daniel Winterich of Studio Winterich. The original monitor of the *Phoenix* fireboat will be the focal point of the monument, to be located along the seawall promenade.

The steering committee for this project is Gail Goldyne (Director, MCA), Dennis Kennedy (Marine Engineer, ret. S.F.F.D.), and architect Jim Maxwell (Architect II). Volunteers to help with fund-raising for this Marina memorial monument are needed: --please call Gail Goldyne at 929-9121 or email GailGold@aol.com to offer your help. San Francisco Parks Trust is the fiscal sponsor for mEQm and donations should be made in their name (www.sfpt.org - McLaren Lodge in Golden Gate Park, 501 Stanyan St., S.F. 94117-1989 – tel 750-5105) and designated for “mEQm”. Come to the Marina Green the afternoon of October 17th and enjoy the festivities and memorial ceremony!

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