

McLaren Park champions continue to fight for needed improvements

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Gambier Plaza restoration is funded by yearly pancake breakfasts organized by Jeanne Crawford, above, and neighbors. (Photo by Judy Goddess)

Jeanne Crawford and her family live down the street from the Gambiner Plaza entrance to McLaren Park. Recently retired from teaching, Crawford begins each day with a three mile walk in the park. â??I need the exercise, but even more, I need that dose of nature, the quiet and wildness of it.â?•

Crawford is an active member of Help McLaren Park, one of several neighborhood groups committed to helping the S.F. Recreation and Park Department improve and maintain the Park. Her neighbor is one of its founders. Chuck Farrugi grew up playing in the park and wanted his children to be able to enjoy it

â?? with some improvements.

Until they organized, he said, the park was largely ignored by the city, he said. â??Families wouldnâ??t let their kids play there. The sand pits were empty, the playgrounds couldnâ??t be used.â?•

They reached out to the mayorâ??s office and their supervisor, but were told they were too far from the tourist area. Eventually they finally got support to improve the Peru Street playground. â??Peru street playground was our first victory,â?• Farrugia said. â??We finally proved we could get something done.â?•

Rec and Park has done some good things,â?• said Crawford. â??The Peru Street playground, a new picnic area, the amphitheater, and they hired a wonderful head gardener.â?•

But there are still problems, she said. â??The pathways are torn up, and potholes, cracks and roots make walking difficult. Itâ??s particularly hard for bikes, buggies and seniors. We want to attract more people and more bikes to the park. Itâ??s one of the cityâ??s hidden treasures.â?•

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Park neighbors thought the 2012 bond measure included money to fix the paths, but it turned out the money was earmarked for new construction. But after hearing from angry neighbors, RPD agreed to earmark funds to repair some paths, Crawford said. â??Unfortunately, theyâ??re also threatening to remove some trees to widen the paths.â?•

Digging in the Dirt

Last month saw the opening of Geneva Community Garden. April 21 will see the dedication of yet another new garden in our neighborhood: Sisterhood Gardens on Brotherhood Way. Despite the growing number of gardens, the waiting list for would-be gardeners grows even faster.

But one garden is looking for gardeners: the Brooks Park Community Garden at 400 Shields St. Justin Higgins, the new volunteer coordinator, and Peter Vaernet, who helps maintain the garden, did an audit of garden boxes. â??We have 52 dedicated gardeners. With at least 90 boxes, that leaves plenty of space for new gardeners,â?• said Higgins. â??We also welcome those who arenâ??t ready to make a full-time commitment, but want to do some work.â?•

Situated on the most southwestern peak in San Francisco, the park enjoys sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean, the Farallones and Mt. Tamalpais. It also boasts community barbecue pits, a large outdoor seating area, an outdoor ping pong table and a mini golf course. But itâ??s the chicken coops that make the garden unique. Theyâ??re empty now; Higgins is waiting for someone to bring them back.

The cost is $10 a year for a 3 X 7-foot box. If youâ??re interested in gardening or raising chickens, contact Higgins at 510-393-6888 or justin@selfless.io.

YMCA Trip to Harley Farms

The Mission YMCA is offering a trip on April 12 to the 100+ year old Harley Farms Goat Dairy in Pescadero. For $45, you can spend time with the goats, sample the farmâ??s famous cheeses and

enjoy a day with friends and neighbors. Contact Genny Pinzon: 415-452-7581.

Cayuga Community Connectors

Writers from LitQuake are teaching weekly writing classes to Cayuga seniors. Expect a chap book and public reading later this spring. And on April 21, Cayuga Connectors will dedicate four little free libraries, one of which will focus on childrensâ?? books in Chinese. Check www.cayugaconnectors.org or contact Patti Spaniak at 415-821-1003 x106 or patti@cayugaconnectors.org for more information.

The Art of Aging Gracefully Resource Fair

The free, 11th annual Art of Aging Gracefully Resource Fair will be held Tuesday, April 10, from 9:30 a.m. â?? 3 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center, 3200 California St. Lectures, exhibits by nonprofit organizations and businesses, and interactive activities make for an informative day. Register at https://jccsfcommunity.force.com/registration>AGRACE or call 415-292-1260.

Mayoral Candidates Forum

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The Dignity Fund Coalition will sponsor a Mayoral Candidates Forum on April 26 from 10:30 a.m. â?? noon at Herbst Hall, 401 Van Ness Avenue. Hear where the candidates stand on senior and disability issues, and be prepared to ask questions. www.sfdignityfund.org.

Category

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