



ON TARGET: Tonight, the Human Rights Commission and the Immigrant Rights Commission this evening will discuss the impact federal immigration raids have on San Francisco communities. Mayor Gavin Newsom's policy of notifying federal authorities when undocumented youth are suspected of felony crimes is likely to be addressed. The San Francisco Democratic Party passed a resolution this month condemning the policy.

Squeezing the fun out of festivals

City fees, falling sponsorships could spell end of unique events

By Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer

Justified or not, San Francisco's reputation as a hedonistic, fun-loving place is derived in large part from The City's collection of festivals, street fairs and parades.

That "only in San Francisco" experience could begin to fade away, however, due to a cascade of ever-increasing city fees, dwindling corporate sponsorships, and a reliance on tenuous alcohol and beverage sales.

As a result, some are predicting that many of The City's street fairs — which range from outré gatherings such as the Folsom Street Fair to more traditional events like the North Beach Jazz Festival — might vanish by next year.

"I think this is going to be the make-or-break year for about a half-dozen festivals, including ours," said Brad Olsen, founder of the How Weird Street Faire that takes place every May in SoMa. "The City bankrupts these events with the fees they charge."

One event, the San Francisco Blues Festival, a tradition in The City since 1973, has been canceled this year due to a lack of sponsorships.

Mike Farrah, director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, said The City has been in contact with the event's backers to see what can be done to revive it.

Mayor Gavin Newsom is committed to keeping The City's vibrant mix of festivals and parades, said Farrah — but officials also have an obligation to their citizens.

"The City is struggling with revenue, and we have to make sure our streets stay clean and people are safe," Farrah said.

To stage a special event on city's streets, organizers often have to get approval from a litany of city agencies. Collectively, all the agencies fall under San Francisco's street closure approval department called the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation, or ISCOTT.

Olsen said the various city fees can total up to about \$40,000, including a \$9,500 charge paid to the Police Department to have required officers at the event. The How Weird Street Faire — which drew up to 10,000 people in 2007 — has been without incident in its nine years of existence, Olsen said. Nonetheless, each year it has to pay for a squadron of about 10 officers, he said.



Drawing them in: San Francisco's street fairs help attract visitors and generate revenue, organizers say.

Other hefty charges event organizers face come from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, which oversees Muni as well as The City's parking enforcement.

The agency charges a per vehicle fee of \$8 per hour to re-route buses around special events — a cost that is slated to go up to \$14 an hour per bus in 2012. Event organizers also must pay for parking control officers.

"We want to do everything we can to encourage and support the events that make San Francisco such a fun city to live in and visit," Muni spokesman Judson True said. "Our fees are set only to cover the costs of our work on such events."

Covering the costs of events is an issue on both sides.

Olsen said he covers The City costs for the How Weird Street Faire through donations and by taking a cut of vendor sales. Despite growing in popularity, however, the festival has never brought in a significant profit, he said, and most years he's lucky to break even.

John Wood — who runs the San Francisco LoveFest, an annual event that took place in October, and included a parade down Market Street and an "outdoor dance club" in Civic Center Plaza — said many events rely heavily on alcohol sales to keep their organizations afloat. The irony, he said, is that successful alcohol sales mean more, costlier police officers and the increased risk that neighborhood groups will oppose the events.

"We thought about charging admission to enter, but a city ordinance requires that we only ask for a donation," Wood said. "If The City wants us to keep paying for all these bills, they're going to have to give us another way to raise revenue."

Wood's event attracted 100,000 revelers last year, the first in which he earned money instead of losing it. His payments to The City, however, totaled \$130,000, he said, including \$50,000 for off-duty police officers.

"If we have a bad weather day and people don't show up, we could lose a lot of money," Wood said. "That could make the end of Love Fest."

Robert Leon, who has organized the Haight-Ashbury Street Fair since 1979, said The City fees for the event have increased from about \$6,000 to \$8,000 five years ago, to \$12,000 to \$15,000 now. "It's definitely more expensive and costs are going up," Leon said.

Unlike many cities nationwide, San Francisco has managed to escape the full wrath of the current economic crisis. But Rob Cowan, a producer of the North Beach Jazz Festival, thinks The City could change drastically if it stops offering its trademark celebrations, and becomes less of a destination point.

"These events generate income and important tax revenue," Cowan said. "They're what attract people to San Francisco, because outside of the service industry there is not much to The City. And if you take events away, what do you have? You have Detroit. And I don't think anyone wants that here."

ureisman@sfxaminer.com

Rescue efforts fail to save drowning man

By Brent Begin
Examiner Staff Writer

A man rescued from the frigid waters of Ocean Beach on Sunday afternoon died at a local hospital, according to the Medical Examiner's Office.

Firefighters rescued the victim about 2 p.m. just south of the Cliff House, according to a dispatcher.

Emergency personnel administered CPR before he was taken to the hospital where he died, according to the Coast Guard.

Fire officials did not have information about what the man was doing in the water.

The medical examiner has yet to identify him.

Drowning statistics were not immediately available Sunday for Ocean Beach, but the treacherous currents have claimed several lives in the past decade.

bbegin@sfxaminer.com

THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Jennifer Rade

The celebrity stylist, best known for her work with Angelina Jolie, will be in San Francisco on Thursday for the opening of the sunglasses boutique ILORI's second San Francisco store, on Post Street.



Do you think San Francisco has a specific style? I think San Francisco has great style, the whole city. It's kind of like a West Coast New York. It has seasons that kind of affect the way people dress.

Why are sunglasses important? Besides the health benefits of sunglasses, it's a way to show your personality, too. You could be wearing the plainest outfit on Earth but you throw on a great pair of sunglasses and you change your whole look.

How can a person pick the sunglasses style that's right for them? People really get into a rut, especially with sunglasses, where they say, "That's my one pair I've had since 1989! If I had my way I would just want people to break out of their shells and experiment with more sizes and shapes and shells and fabrications of sunglasses. People need to really realize that sunglasses are a major accessory and a really important way to change an outfit. Sunglasses are something you need lots of; nobody has one bra, you shouldn't have one pair of sunglasses. That's how integral sunglasses are to a wardrobe."

What's it like to work with Angelina Jolie? I don't talk too much about her personally, but she's awesome. She's really smart and really funny.

— Katie Worth

Overtime adds up fast for police presence

The San Francisco Police Department requires staffing for each festival, and the number of officers assigned is determined by the captain of the district where the event takes place. Called 10B officers, after a city ordinance, the police are working overtime and receive, on average, about \$87 an hour, a bill festival producers have to foot, according to Lt. Nicole Greeley, who oversees the 10B program for the Police Department.

Greeley said captains look at alcohol use at the festival, past history and the type of event.

"Our captains look at a variety

of different factors before deciding how to staff these festivals," Greeley said. "There is definitely not a uniform formula."

In January, the Police Department announced it would be enforcing a seldom-used clause of the 10B ordinance to charge an extra \$6.25 an hour if an officer is using a motorcycle to patrol the area, and an extra \$13 an hour if an officer is in a police car.

The Police Department's pay is based on overtime rates, which can increase anywhere from 2 to 4 percent biannually, Greeley said.

— Will Reisman

The price of the party

To hold an event in The City, fees must be paid to various agencies:

Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation for temporary street closures (ISCOTT) filing fee: \$150-\$750 — set to go up July 1 to \$475-\$775

Municipal Transportation Agency: Charges for re-routing public transportation around event site: \$8 per hour for every trolley bus rerouted around site — will increase to \$14 an hour by 2012

Department of Parking and Traffic: \$74/hour for on-duty Parking Control Officers — will increase to \$76.72 on May 1

Fire Department: \$270 for inspection permit, \$90 for additional permits for heater

Department of Public Works: Rates depend on size and time of event. \$2,000-\$5,000 for average festival

Department of Public Health: \$100 for application plus food vendor inspection fees

Police Department: \$87/hour (on average) for off-duty police officers

Alcohol Bureau Control (state agency): \$25-\$50



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