

**March Neighborhood News**

**March 18 General Membership Meeting**

Join us for the March General Meeting on Zoom. Login information is posted below and also posted on the website at [www.CorbettNeighbors.com](http://www.CorbettNeighbors.com). Flyers will be delivered the week of March 9th, and we will also send an email reminder on the 17th.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81070920781?pwd=rWiwfWVoE0AUqVk7bHMr9LZlKnID5x.1>  
Meeting ID: 810 7092 0781  
Passcode: 748390

Local Phone #1+305 224 1968

Our Speakers:

**Carolyne Cook**, principal of Theresa Mahler Early Education School, is an experienced early education principal skilled in early childhood education, community outreach, program evaluation, curriculum development, and public speaking.

**John Collins**, is the current Principal of McKinley Elementary School and previously was a special education teacher at West Contract Costa Unified School District.

**Terry Asten Bennett**, President of Castro Merchants, was born and raised in the Castro. She cares about our community, which guides her in running her business that we all know and love, Cliff’s Variety.

If you have any questions or suggestions for speakers for upcoming meetings, let us know at [info@corbettneighbors.com](mailto:info@corbettneighbors.com).

**CHN Updated**

We have updated our masthead to recognize 20 years of serving our community. A 20th anniversary party is in the works.

In the late 1960s or early 1970s, Mae Silver, [historian and author](https://www.maeksilver.com/books-written-by-mae-silver/), founded Twin Peaks East Neighborhood Association (TPENA), which covered approximately the same boundaries as CHN today. TPENA was responsible for the first street trees (Chinese elms), restricting Corbett Avenue from Twin Peaks tourist buses and large passenger vans, the petition for undergrounding utilities/removal of telephone poles, and maintaining our parks.

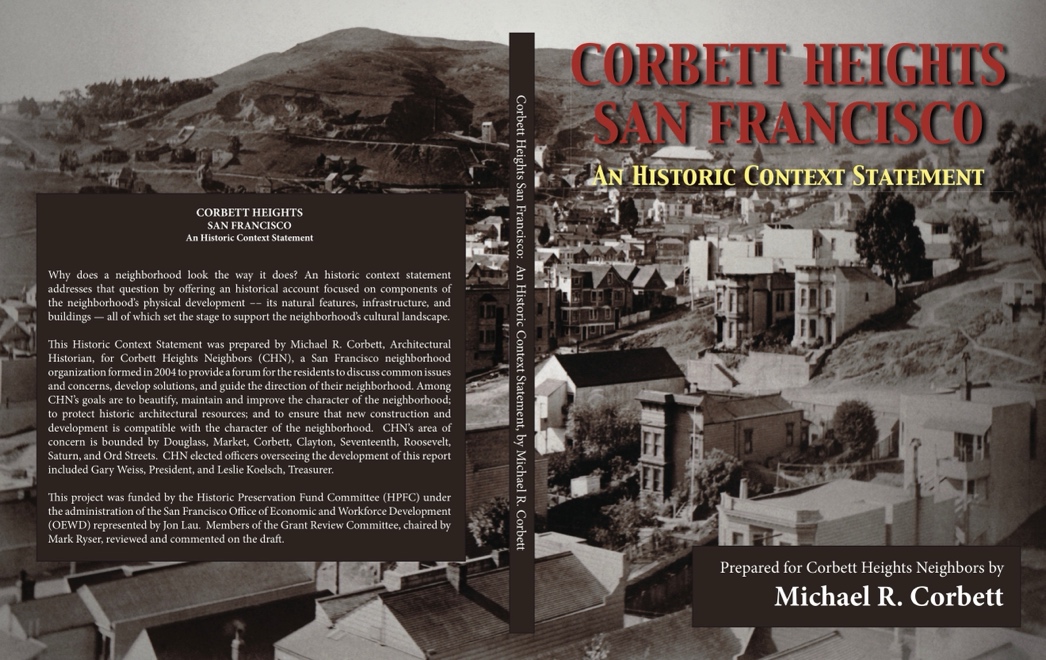


The last of the Mars Street telephone poles, 2008

TPENA came to an end about 2000 and then it was revived in 2004 by Gary Weiss, and renamed, Corbett Heights Neighbors. 2024 will be the 20th year of CHN. Notable achievements of CHN over the 20 years include saving the SLOPE Community Garden from development, completion of the undergrounding program in 2009—a 30 year effort, maintaining the street parks continuously over the decades, the completion of the *Corbett Heights Context Statement* in 2017, and the recent makeover of Al’s and Merritt/Danvers Parks.



Maintained by Friends of the Slope



This book is available at [Purchase Context Statement](https://secure.sfparksalliance.org/give/303994/#!/donation/checkout)

​The goals of CHN are to maintain and enhance the character of our neighborhood, particularly by maintaining our small parks, working with elected and appointed officials, and advocating for the betterment of the neighborhood. Specifically: to beautify, maintain, and improve the character of the neighborhood; protect historic architectural resources; ensure that new construction and development is compatible with the neighborhood; maintain its street parks; increase security; provide community outreach and an educational forum; and encourage friendly association among neighbors.

**80 Ord Street (56 Clara Avenue)**

Following up on houses on Ord Street (see the February Newsletter featuring 18 Ord at the Vulcan Stairway), we find that 80 Ord (56 Clara) is also one of the oldest houses on Ord between 17th Street and Ord Court. (This house can be seen on the front cover of the Context Statement (history book) above, circa 1910.) Another [photograph](https://opensfhistory.org/Display/wnp33.00786.jpg) taken about 1895 shows the family of Carlo Balzarini (1851-1927). Balzarini is in the San Francisco directories as living at 17th and Clara as early as 1884, having filed a Declaration of Homestead for the 26’ x 126’ lot (*The Daily Examiner*, 2 January 1884, p. 4). Two of Carlo Balzarini’s four children remained in the house until 1940 before moving to a house near Stern Grove. Balzarini was a steward at Campi’s Italian and Swiss Restaurant, one of San Francisco’s earliest restaurants, which opened in 1859.



Carlo Balzarini

Photo credit: Mark Schenkel



Balzarini Family: Seated: Viola, Katherine Murray (wife), Arthur, Carlo, Sr., Ethel, Carlo, Jr.

Photo credit: Mark Scheckel

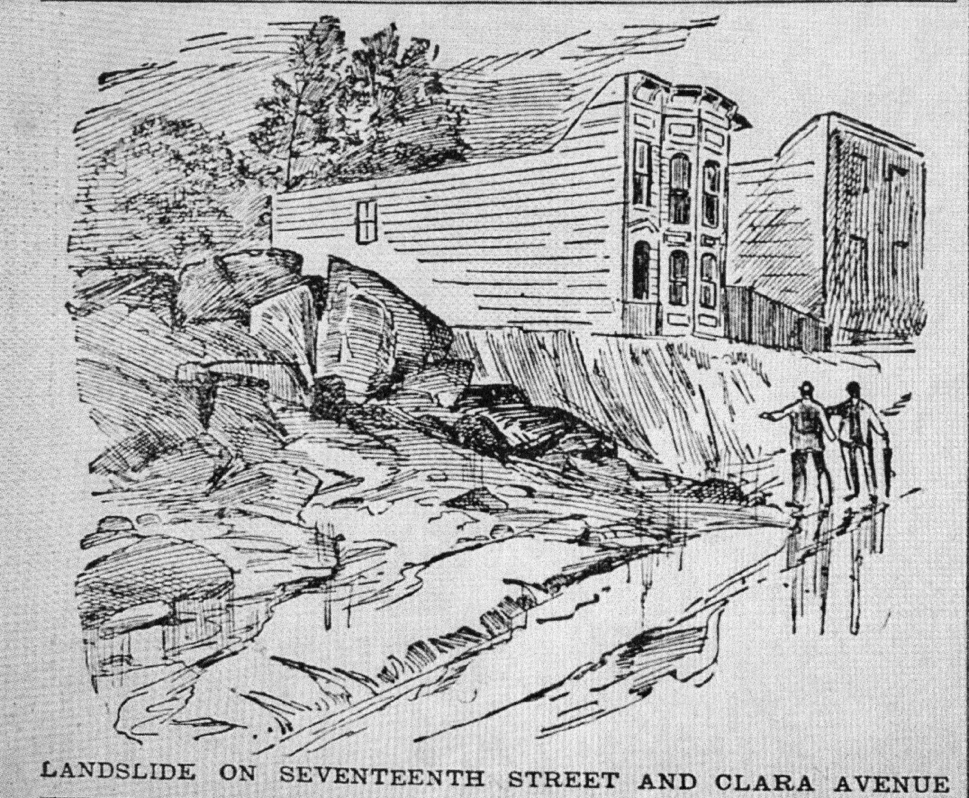
Landslides at Seventeenth and Clara (Ord)

In 1893, the house at 56 Clara (80 Ord) almost slid into the street twenty feet below due to heavy rains and street grading. (Ever wonder about that massive concrete retaining wall and staircase?) Clara was being cut down to the official grade and the steady rains affected the Balzarini home and the property adjoining it (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 November 1893, p. 3.) A deep cut to bring Clara to the official level found the house on a bluff about twenty-feet high. A similar cut was made in the hillside on the 17th Street. The adobe and clay soil mixed with fine gravel made the ground unstable in rainy weather. At the corner was a 63’ x 109’ lot (now 90 Ord and 4300 17th), which rose at least twenty feet above the new sidewalk before the rains began. The land broke away, and the lot washed into the street. The home of Carlo Balzarini was endangered. The two story home was four feet from the shear clay bluff. Creaking joists and cracked plaster convinced Balzarini to vacate the house. The house to the right of Balzarini (72 Ord), evidently on ground that is rocky in nature was not likely to slide into the street *(San Francisco Call and Post*, 28 November 1893, p.3). The house to the right of 72 Ord belonged to Denis Kearney.\* It burned down in 1891 and Kearney declared the lot of no value due to the grading. It is now the Saturn Stairway, city property, acquired in 1916. The *Call and Post* commented, “The land that slid away loses nothing in value, but rather increases, as less grading will be necessary.”

\*Denis Kearney, the infamous founder of the Workingman’s Party in 1877, known for its contempt of the press and capitalists and for his strong anti-Chinese activism (“The Chinese Must Go!”) lived on Clara Avenue from 1884-1891. (See: *The Demagogue and the Demographer: Correspondence of Denis Kearney and Lord Bryce*, Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., ed.)

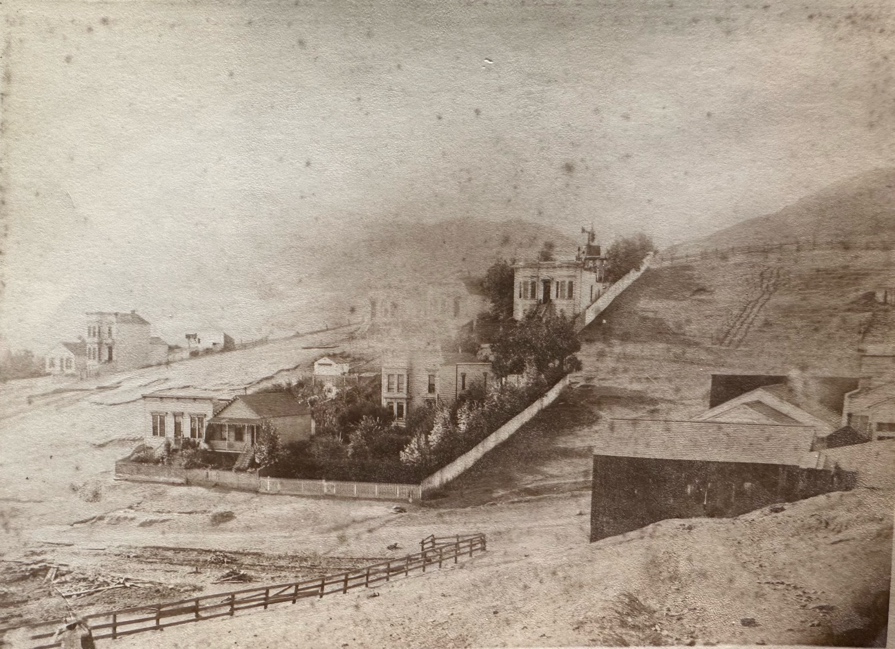
Kearney, as a committee member appointed by the Seventeenth Street Club in 1890, fought against the confiscation of land for grading.

*…Adopt this grade and you confiscate the property of all these poor men, who bought these lots a year or so ago on the installment plan. There are some thirty or more of them who do not know anything about this scheme, and it is only fair that they should be notified that a proposition is on foot which involves their holdings. (The San Francisco Call and Post*, 26 September, 1890, p. 7.)



*San Francisco Call and Post*, 28 November 1893, p. 3

This early 1880s photograph of Clara Avenue and Douglass Street shows two one-story cottages on Clara (now 80 and 72 Ord) prior to the two-story houses that now exist and a larger house to the right. This information is consistent with information provided at purchase to the current owner of 80 Ord Street. The house on the right most is likely the one that belonged to Kearney that burned and is now Saturn Stairway. The Victorian house just below the Kearney house, currently 70 Douglass Street, exist in the 1880s photograph.



Corbett Heights Context Statement figure 14, 2017, circa 1880s



Garden at 80 Ord, 2024

Photo credit: Mark Schenkel

**Flag Stops**

CHN was informed by SFMTA that they will place 10 red zones on Corbett Avenue. There are 26 flag stops on the entire length of Corbett. Within CHN boundaries, between Douglass and Clayton, there are 14 flag stops. After several attempts to reach SFMTA to ascertain which 10 of the 26 stops on Corbett would have red zones, and not having received a response, we filed a Sunshine Ordinance request and received the following information. These are the 7 stops that will have 20’ red zones within in CHN boundaries. Contact us at [info@CorbettNeighbors.com](mailto:info@CorbettNeighbors.com) if you have any concerns or comments about any of the following proposed red zones.

**Corbett Avenue & Ord Street Inbound Corbett Avenue & Hattie Street Outbound**

**Corbett Avenue & Mars Street Inbound**

**Corbett Avenue & Mars Street Outbound**

**211 Corbett Avenue Inbound**

**328 Corbett Avenue Outbound**

**341 Corbett Avenue Inbound**

**3000 Block of Market Traffic**

In support of our concerns, Supervisor Mandelman arranged a meeting on March 4, 2024 of SFMTA, SFPD Mission Station, and DPW staff to discuss the issue of speeding and recent serious collisions on the 3000 block of Market.

In addition to Supervisor Mandelman, Captain Tom Harvey of Mission Police Station, Officer O’Connor, Officer Aloise of the Mission Police Station Traffic Company, Shannon Hake, SFMTA Traffic Planner, and DiJaida Durden, Deputy Director of Public Works, there were approximately 30 residents of the neighborhood in attendance.

We were all excited to hear that the 3000 block of Market will be one of the thirty-three sites in San Francisco selected for installation of a speed camera. A formal announcement is scheduled for March 19, 2024. SFMTA is currently is engaged in data collection and on-going speed surveys. [See AB645 text](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB645) for the many details, including fines.



**Mural**

“The Chant of the Earth, The Voice of the Land,” has been recently restored by its original artist, Betsie Miller-Kusz. The mural was first commissioned in 1983 by the Eureka Valley Trails and Art Network and funded by the city’s Neighborhood Beautification and Graffiti Clean-up Fund. Thanks to the Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association for initiating its latest update. There will be a dedication ceremony/celebration on Friday, May 3, 2024 from 5-8 PM, sponsored by Castro ArtWalk.

**Welcome New Board Member Jess Dal Santo**

In accordance with our Bylaws (2021), *Board Members V, Section 2*, the Board of Directors may by a vote of no less than 75% of the board members may make an interim appointment to the Board of Directors. No more than two appointments shall be made between Annual Meetings. That individual may choose to run for the board in the future election.

Jess's roots are in both the Southeast and the Midwest, but she's called San Francisco home for the past 13 years. She lives on Ord Street with her husband, two daughters, and their elderly pug. Her favorite things to do are running the hills around the neighborhood, trying out new restaurants, spending weekends in Tahoe, and exploring all corners of the city on bike adventures with the family. She is passionate about supporting the CHN community and ensuring our neighborhood is a safe and vibrant place to live for our diverse population. She has a special interest in improving the access to, and quality of, education in our community.

**Al’s Park**

Join your neighbors on March 16 from 1-3 PM for the monthly park clean-up!

Joey Accordino

Leslie Koelsch

Newsletter Committee

March 6, 2024

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