

Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE MAY 8, 2017

BRAINWASH, INC.

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-069
Business Name: BrainWash, Inc.
Business Address: 1126 Folsom Street
District: District 6
Applicant: Jeffrey Zalles, President
Nomination Date: January 30, 2017
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

BrainWash, Inc. is a combination laundromat, internet café, restaurant and entertainment venue in the South of Market neighborhood founded by Susan Schindler in 1989. Schindler had worked as a party planner and initially sought to open a nightclub but changed her mind after learning that the neighborhood lacked a laundromat. BrainWash offers over 30 high-tech washers and dryers, a 49-seat internet café and restaurant open daily until 2 a.m., electronic displays at the cafe indicating when clothes are ready, pinball machines, a juke box and live entertainment such as comedy, poetry readings and all-age music shows. Interior wall space is covered with art work by local artists to sell their work. A parklet allows customers to enjoy café beverages and food outside.

BrainWash gives back to the community by serving as a gathering spot and venue for community meetings and by partnering with local government agencies to offer laundry services to homeless individuals at no charge. Through this partnership, City agencies provide homeless individuals with vouchers that can be redeemed at BrainWash for laundry services. The program was envisioned by Jeffrey Zalles, the current owner of BrainWash. In addition to serving South of Market residents, BrainWash attracts customers from outside the neighborhood who enjoy the unique amenities or wish to attend an event onsite. Tourists are also drawn to the establishment, which has received a significant amount of national and international media attention over the years, including an article in Smithsonian Magazine, appearances in television shows on the Food Network and reviews of its café and restaurant by newspaper food critics. BrainWash is known for its stand-up comedy open mic, one of the oldest in the Bay Area.

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

No, the applicant has not operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years.

1122 Folsom Street from 1989 to Present (28 years)





OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

PER CRITERION 1: Has the business operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, face a significant risk of displacement?

Yes. BrainWash is currently at risk of closure or displacement. Ongoing construction of an adjacent six-story 112-unit apartment building has resulted in declining business and revenues. The company is unlikely to sustain itself for much longer without assistance, and its lease expires in 2019 with negotiations for a new lease to begin soon.

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

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the South of Market neighborhood's history and identity.

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:

- BrainWash is associated with tradition of serving as a neighborhood laundromat, café, restaurant and entertainment venue. It was one of the earliest documented business models of its kind.
- BrainWash has contributed to the identity of the South of Market neighborhood by functioning as a neighborhood laundromat and combination café, restaurant, and entertainment venue. It was the first and only laundromat in the West SoMa neighborhood when it opened in 1989. It is unique in that it features high-tech washers and dryers, meals and beverages at its café, free internet Wi-Fi, and live entertainment programming, thus also promoting artistic and cultural expression in addition to providing a basic neighborhood service.
- 1122-1126 Folsom Street is considered a "Category A Property," indicating the presence of a historic resource. It is a contributor to the California Register-eligible Western SoMa Light Industrial and Residential Historic District. It was also identified on page 178 of the LGBTQ Historic Context Statement for its association with Clementina's Baybrick Inn, a South of Market bar that welcomed lesbians of color.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
 - Smithsonian Magazine, 04/1997, "It all comes out in the wash," by Chiori Santiago.
 - San Francisco Chronicle, 1/27/1990, "49 Reasons the City is Super," by Pat Steger.
 - Time Out: London's Weekly Guide, 10-13/1993, "Dispatches: San Francisco," by Alix Sharkey.
 - America West Airlines Magazine, 3/1997, "A Clean Break," by Wendy Neri.
 - Details: the music issue, 7/1993, "San Francisco: BrainWash."
 - Arena: The British Magazine for Men, Summer/Autumn 1991, "A City on a Hill."
 - Metropolitan Home, May 1990, "The Inside Track on Where to Eat, Stay, Play, and Shop: San Francisco."
 - The Magazine of Design and Style, April 1990, "Wash N' Nosh."
 - Flipside, March/April 1991.
 - Prism Magazine, March 1990, "Brainwashed," by M.M.
 - San Francisco Examiner, 12/11/1989, "South of Market laundry-case opens," by Louis Trager.
 - San Jose Mercury News, June 28-July 4, 1991, "Rockin' n' washin'," by David Plotnikoff.
 - San Francisco Focus, August 1991, Letter from the Editor: Recipes for Success," by Mark K. Powelson.





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EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

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REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

- Food Arts, March 1990, "Spin Cycle Supper Club," by Kelley Regan.
- San Francisco Chronicle, 6/25/1990, "City Visions and a Laundromat," by Pat Steger.
- San Francisco Chronicle, 11/29/1989, "Bay City Beat," by Herb Caen.
- The Tribune, 3/24/1990, "The hip crowd comes clean at South-of-Market hot spot."
- San Francisco Focus, May 1997, "Bay Beat: BrainWash."
- San Francisco Examiner, 11/17/1992, "Sparky Takes off in 'This Modern World,' by Tom Tomorrow and Bill Griffith.
- Restaurants & Institutions, 8/8/1990, "Where It's Funky."

BrainWash has also been featured in San Francisco Focus' Best of the Bay Area: the Ultimate Insider's Guide and Lonely Planet travel guides.

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

Yes, BrainWash is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its tradition as a neighborhood laundromat and combination café, restaurant and entertainment venue in the South of Market neighborhood.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that BrainWash 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:

- Laundry services.
- Café function.
- South of Market location
- Entertainment function
- Industrial interior design and signage
- Company branding and logo
- Juke box
- Pinball machines
- Practice of displaying artwork by local artists

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURES OR TRADITIONS THAT DEFINE THE BUSINESS

Following are the core physical features or traditions that define the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Laundromat and café.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include BrainWash currently located at 1126 Folsom Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Manager
Legacy Business Program



Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE MAY 8, 2017

BRAINWASH, INC.

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

<i>Application No.:</i>	LBR-2016-17-069
<i>Business Name:</i>	BrainWash, Inc.
<i>Business Address:</i>	1126 Folsom Street
<i>District:</i>	District 6
<i>Applicant:</i>	Jeffrey Zalles, President
<i>Nomination Date:</i>	January 30, 2017
<i>Nominated By:</i>	Supervisor Jane Kim
<i>Staff Contact:</i>	Richard Kurylo legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR BRAINWASH, INC. CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1126 FOLSOM STREET.

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 May 8, 2017, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





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OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes BrainWash, Inc. 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 BrainWash, Inc.:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Laundry services.
- Café function.
- South of Market location
- Entertainment function
- Industrial interior design and signage
- Company branding and logo
- Juke box
- Pinball machines
- Practice of displaying artwork by local artists

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical features or traditions to maintain BrainWash, Inc. on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Laundromat and café.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on May 8, 2017.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –



**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-069
Business Name: BrainWash, Inc.
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Applicant: Jeffrey Zalles, President
Nomination Date: January 30, 2017
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim

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

1122 Folsom Street from 1989 to Present (28 years)

PER CRITERION 1: Has the business operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, face a significant risk of displacement?
_____ ☒ Yes _____ No

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? _____ ☒ Yes _____ No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? _____ ☒ Yes _____ No

NOTES: BrainWash is at risk of displacement or closing. Construction of a six-story, 112-unit apartment building directly adjacent has severely affected business. Revenues are down nearly 20% and cashflow is negative. Without some form of assistance, BrainWash cannot sustain itself through what is likely to be a long construction period. In addition, the present lease expires in 2019, and lease negotiations will begin prior to BrainWash's 30th year of business.

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: March 24, 2017

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 6



City and County of San Francisco

JANE KIM
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January 30, 2017

Regina Dick-Endrizzi, Director
San Francisco Small Business Commission
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 110

Dear Regina:

I would like to formally nominate BrainWash as a candidate for the registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco. BrainWash was opened in 1989, by Susan Schindler, who noticed that there were no laundromats in the South of Market Neighborhood. Susan wanted to not only supply the community with a local place to do laundry, but to create something new and quintessentially San Francisco. BrainWash's innovative idea was to be not only a laundromat, but also a coffee shop, a restaurant, and an entertainment venue. BrainWash has been a staple of the community and has received much adulation ever since.

BrainWash has received rave reviews, and has been featured in national news outlets. It has been voted the 'Best Laundromat', 'Best Cybercafe', 'Best Non-Bar Night Spot', 'Best Open Mic', and more. In 1997, BrainWash became the only laundromat to be featured in Smithsonian Magazine. In 2004, Yahoo! awarded BrainWash with the distinction of being the "most unusual internet café" in the world. A glowing review in the San Francisco Chronicle described BrainWash as "a multi-tasker's Shangri-La." In another Chronicle article, Pat Steger included BrainWash in her list of "49 Reasons the City is Super". BrainWash has been featured in print ads and commercials, and has appeared on three separate Food Network programs. In the movie "Contagion," Jude Law can be seen doing his laundry at BrainWash. In short, BrainWash has been an important item on the list of things that make our city so unique.

Today, BrainWash employs seventeen people, most of whom are minorities and residents of San Francisco. It provides laundry facilities to its neighbors and those who travel from other areas because they enjoy getting their clothes clean in such a unique and fun environment. Thanks to many travel publications, BrainWash is a destination for tourists from around the globe. On top of all that, BrainWash hosts the longest running live stand-up comedy open mic in the Bay Area. Over the years, many successful comedians have dropped in on BrainWash's open mic events — performers such as Paul Mooney, Hannibal Buress, Faizon Love and the late Robin Williams. The laundromat not only serves as a place to clean cloths, but has also been an important space for local comedians to hone their craft.

Since buying BrainWash in 1999, Jeffry Zalles has carried-forth the legacy that Susan began, including supporting local charities. BrainWash works with 8 separate local agencies to provide services to individuals who are homeless. One service involves providing homeless people with laundry services. This program involves city agencies giving homeless people vouchers that can be redeemed at BrainWash for laundry services. It has been an important program for improving the lives among the San Francisco homeless population.

Their business would be greatly missed by many if they were to go away. I am proud to nominate BrainWash as a candidate for the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jane Kim", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Supervisor Jane Kim

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. 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:		
BrainWash Inc. dba BrainWash Cafe/Laundromat		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Jeffrey Zalles		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
1122 Folsom St. San Francisco, CA 94103		(415) 255-4866
		EMAIL:
		jeff@brainwash.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE:
www.brainwash.com		
APPLICANT'S NAME		
Jeffrey Zalles		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE		
President		
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
3 Dokes View Circle Greenbrae, CA 94034		(415) 999-5333
		EMAIL:
		jeff@brainwash.com
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:		SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0324871		C2130189
OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff		
NAME OF NOMINATOR:		DATE OF NOMINATION:

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.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1122 Folsom Street	94103	1989
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1989 - Present	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

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.

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

Jeffrey Zalles

Jan 11, 2017



BrainWash

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.

BrainWash opened in 1989 to much fanfare in the local media and in publications around the world. The combination of a coffee shop, a restaurant, an internet café, a laundromat and an entertainment venue was both new and different.

If one were to summarize the history of BrainWash in one sentence, it would read something like this... BrainWash was an accident.

It was a day in 1987, and Susan Schindler was searching for a location to house a nightclub she planned on opening in the South-of-Market neighborhood of San Francisco. As she describes it:

“I was having a beer with the guy named Don who owned a store called the Balloon Lady on Howard Street between 8th and 9th. He - and the store - are no longer with us. Don had invited me for a beer at a building on 9th and Howard which housed a bar which the locals called 'lipps' because it had a big neon sign that spelled 'Phillips' but the 'Phil' had burned out years ago, and all that was still lit on the old sign was 'lipps'. The building has since become the nightclub AsiaSF. Don wanted me to consider taking over the building for my intended nightclub location. It was a derelict bar, and he wanted to improve the neighborhood near his store.

“In the course of conversation, out of the blue, Don said, ‘You know I love this space, but every time I look at that wall (it was the southern wall behind the bar), all I ever see is a line of washers and dryers.’

“‘Why?’ I asked, in response to what could only be considered a bizarre comment at best.

“He replied, ‘Because there is no laundromat south of Market, and people are always coming into the store asking where they can go to wash their clothes.’

“‘Are you kidding?’ I asked. ‘There's no laundromat South of Market? Where do you send them?’

“He shrugged his shoulders and said, ‘I don't know - sometimes the Mission, sometimes the Tenderloin. Depends.’

“That was my ‘Ahaa!’ moment.”

With a revised plan, Susan continued her search and eventually found the building on Folsom Street that would house the most unique laundromat on Earth — Café Laundré.

BrainWash was an accident — Part 2

It's been said that BrainWash got its name because it just happened to be located across the street from the building where Patty Hearst had been held captive in the 1970s. Don't believe everything you hear. As Susan tells it:

“I was at my kitchen table reading the Sunday paper and looking at coupons (the only thing that would make it more Jewish is if I had been eating a bagel). I saw a coupon for Tide and suddenly, the letters of the word “Tide” on the cover of the box on the coupon swirled around and made the word 'Brainwash.' And no, I was NOT hung over or stoned. I phoned a few friends and they were unanimous in their preference for BrainWash over Café Laundré.”

Looking for a new adventure, Susan sold her creation to Jeffrey Zalles in 1999.

BrainWash is at risk of displacement or closing. Construction of a six-story, 112-unit apartment building directly adjacent has severely affected business. Revenues are down nearly 20% and cashflow is negative. Without some form of assistance, BrainWash cannot sustain itself through what is likely to be a long construction period. In addition, the present lease expires in 2019, and lease negotiations will begin prior to BrainWash's 30th year of business.

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

BrainWash has not ceased operation in San Francisco since its opening.

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

BrainWash is not a family-owned business.

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

The original owner of the business was Susan Schindler. Jeffrey Zalles purchased the business in 1999 and remains the current owner.

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.

Included in the Legacy Business Registry application are magazine articles written about BrainWash at the time of its opening in 1989.

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.

None known.

CRITERION 2

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

BrainWash employs 17 people, most of whom are minorities and residents of San Francisco. It provides laundry facilities to its neighbors and those who travel from other areas because they enjoy getting their clothes clean in such a unique and fun environment. Thanks to many travel publications, BrainWash is a destination for tourists from around the globe. On top of all that, BrainWash hosts the longest running live stand-up comedy open mic in the Bay Area. Over the years, many successful comedians have dropped in on BrainWash's open mic events — performers such as Paul Mooney, Hannibal Buress, Faizon Love and the late Robin Williams. Some of today's favorite comedians got their starts at BrainWash, including Ali Wong, Louis Katz, Mo Mandel, Sheng Wang, Brent Weinbach and Al Madrigal, the "Senior Latino Correspondent" on the Daily Show. BrainWash is a regular stop for scores of comics who aspire to follow in their footsteps.

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

BrainWash has been used as a backdrop for numerous films, documentaries and commercials, including three separate Food Network programs and the movie "Contagion." It hosts the longest running stand-up comedy open mic in the Bay Area Mondays-Fridays. It is often used as a meeting place for community gatherings and business meetings. Founders of some of the most prominent businesses in the tech world, including Uber and Airbnb, could be seen regularly at BrainWash sitting with their laptops for hours developing their concepts.

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

In 1997, BrainWash became the only laundromat to be featured in Smithsonian Magazine. In 2004, Yahoo! awarded BrainWash with the distinction of being the “most unusual internet café” in the world. A glowing review in the San Francisco Chronicle described BrainWash as “a multi-tasker's Shangri-La.” In another Chronicle article, Pat Steger included BrainWash in her list of “49 Reasons the City is Super.” BrainWash has been featured in print ads and commercials, and has appeared on three separate Food Network programs. In the movie "Contagion," Jude Law can be seen doing his laundry at BrainWash.

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

Many comedians, including the late Robin Williams, but no historic person I am aware of. Comedians Ali Wong, Louis Katz, Mo Mandel, Sheng Wang, Brent Weinbach and Al Madrigal, the "Senior Latino Correspondent" on the Daily Show, have all performed at BrainWash. Jude Law can be seen doing his laundry at BrainWash in the movie “Contagion.”

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

BrainWash is proud of the work it does with local charities. Several years ago, owner Jeffrey Zalles was approached by a representative of one of the many agencies that work with the city's homeless population. She lamented that getting her clients to clean their clothes was a challenge. At the time, their policy was to provide money to be used at a local laundromat. However, as one might expect, too often that money ended up somewhere else. Jeff came up with the idea of a program whereby clients would be issued vouchers that could be redeemed at BrainWash. Rather than give them money, BrainWash staff would take their vouchers and start the machines for them. The program has been very successful and currently serves eight different agencies and hundreds of their grateful clients.

In addition, the art wall at BrainWash provides local artists an opportunity to display and sell their wares at no cost.

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

BrainWash serves the West SOMA community of residents and workers, providing food, entertainment, laundry and dry-cleaning services, and a place to “hang out.” Patrons range from high-tech workers to singles to neighborhood families. In addition, in cooperation with local agencies, the business provides laundry services to those who suffer from poverty and hard times.

The construction of the first Parklet on Folsom Street has made BrainWash a gathering place for neighbors.

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

No.

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

BrainWash has been an important item on the list of things that make our city so unique. It is a destination for tourists who leave with a positive feeling for the business and the City that hosts it. At the neighborhood level, the loss of BrainWash would be a major blow to the people who either enjoy its ambiance or depend on it for essential services. The charitable agencies and their clients we serve would no longer be able to get the laundry services they badly need.

CRITERION 3

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

One could describe BrainWash as the quintessential neighborhood business. It is a coffee shop, a restaurant, a laundromat and an entertainment venue. With plenty of outdoor seating thanks to the first Parklet on Folsom Street, it's an oasis for neighbors wishing to enjoy food and drink while soaking up the fresh air and sunshine. It's a place to go that can make the everyday chore of doing laundry a pleasant experience. Add to that the synergy that exists between BrainWash staff and its customers and you have a business that fills many needs as a community anchor.

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 business's historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

BrainWash is essentially the same that it was when it first opened in 1989. The only change being its gradual evolution as a comedy venue and periodic changes to its menu. BrainWash is committed to maintaining its tradition of being a laundromat and café.

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.).

The industrial interior design and signage remains unchanged. BrainWash branding and special logos can be spotted everywhere, both inside and out.

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.

The Legacy Business Registry application includes numerous pictures of BrainWash beginning at its opening in 1989.

CAFE

Laundromat

BRAIN
WASH

WASH











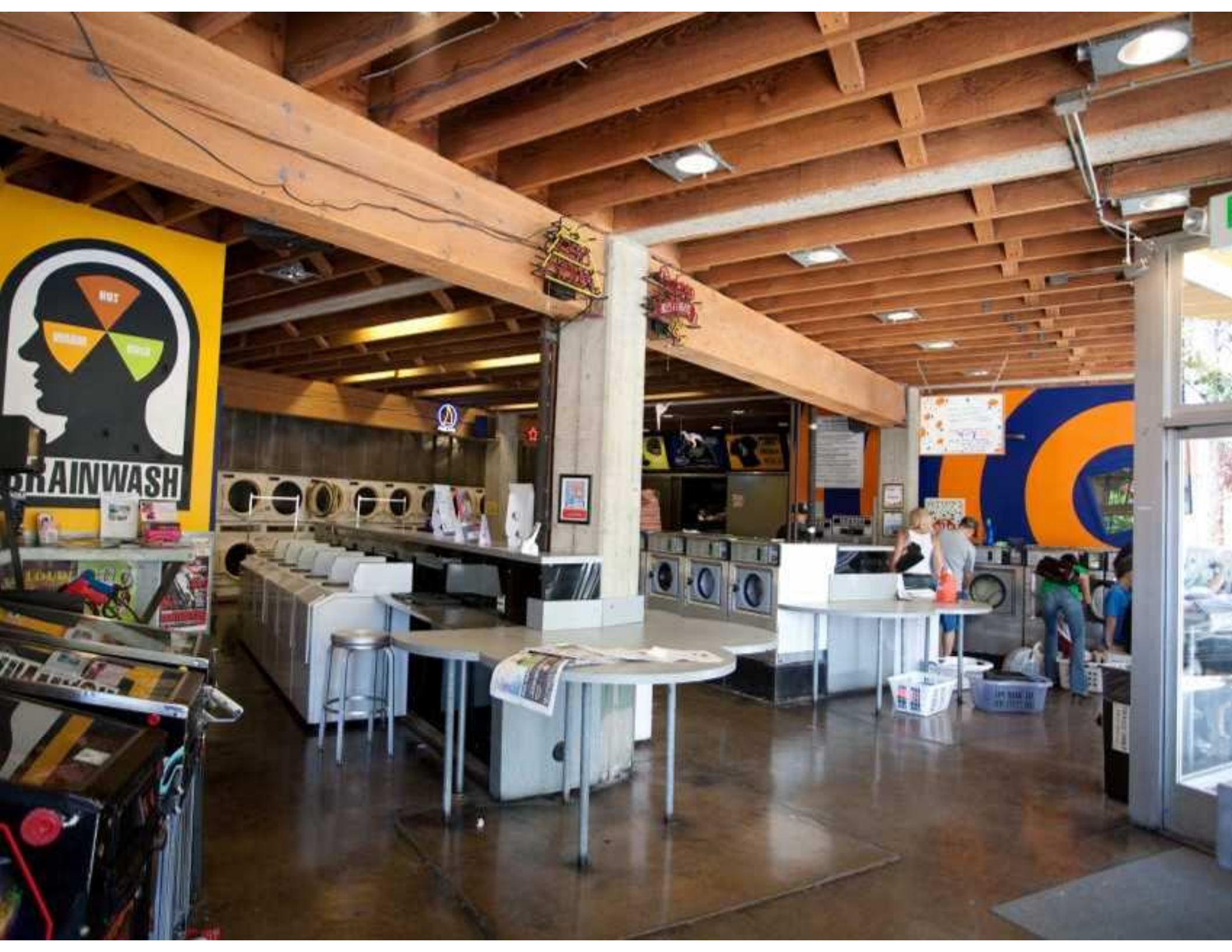












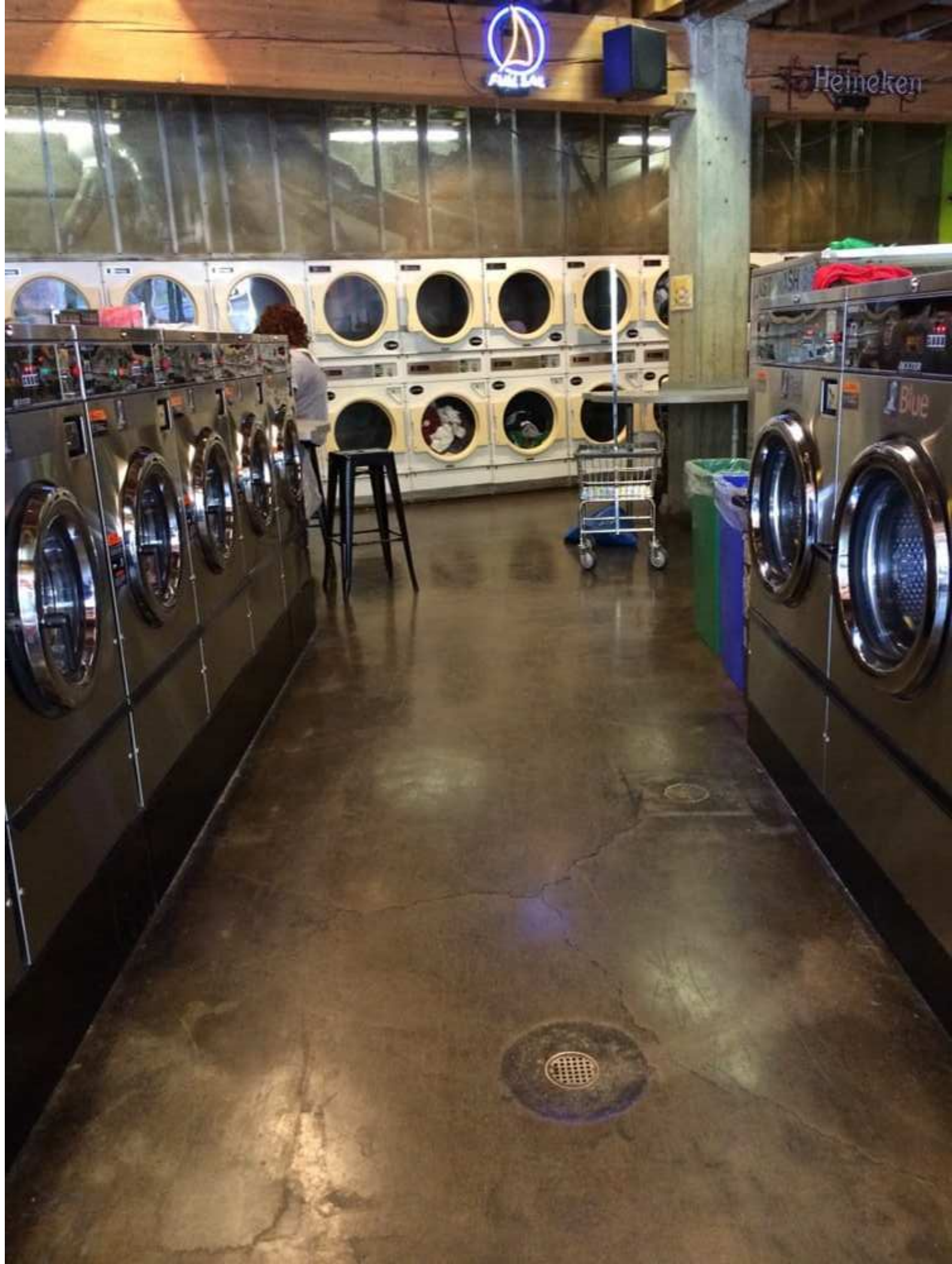










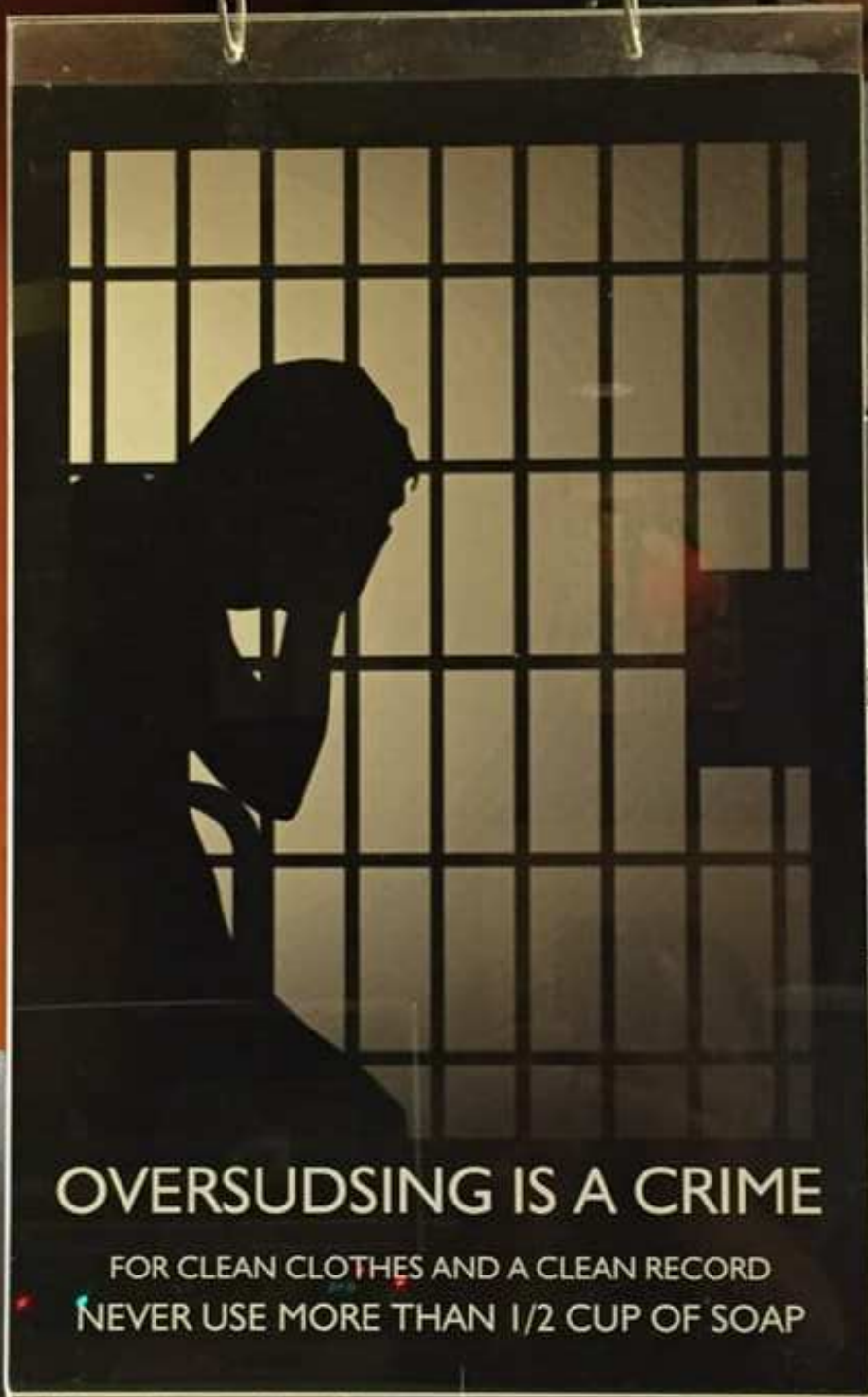






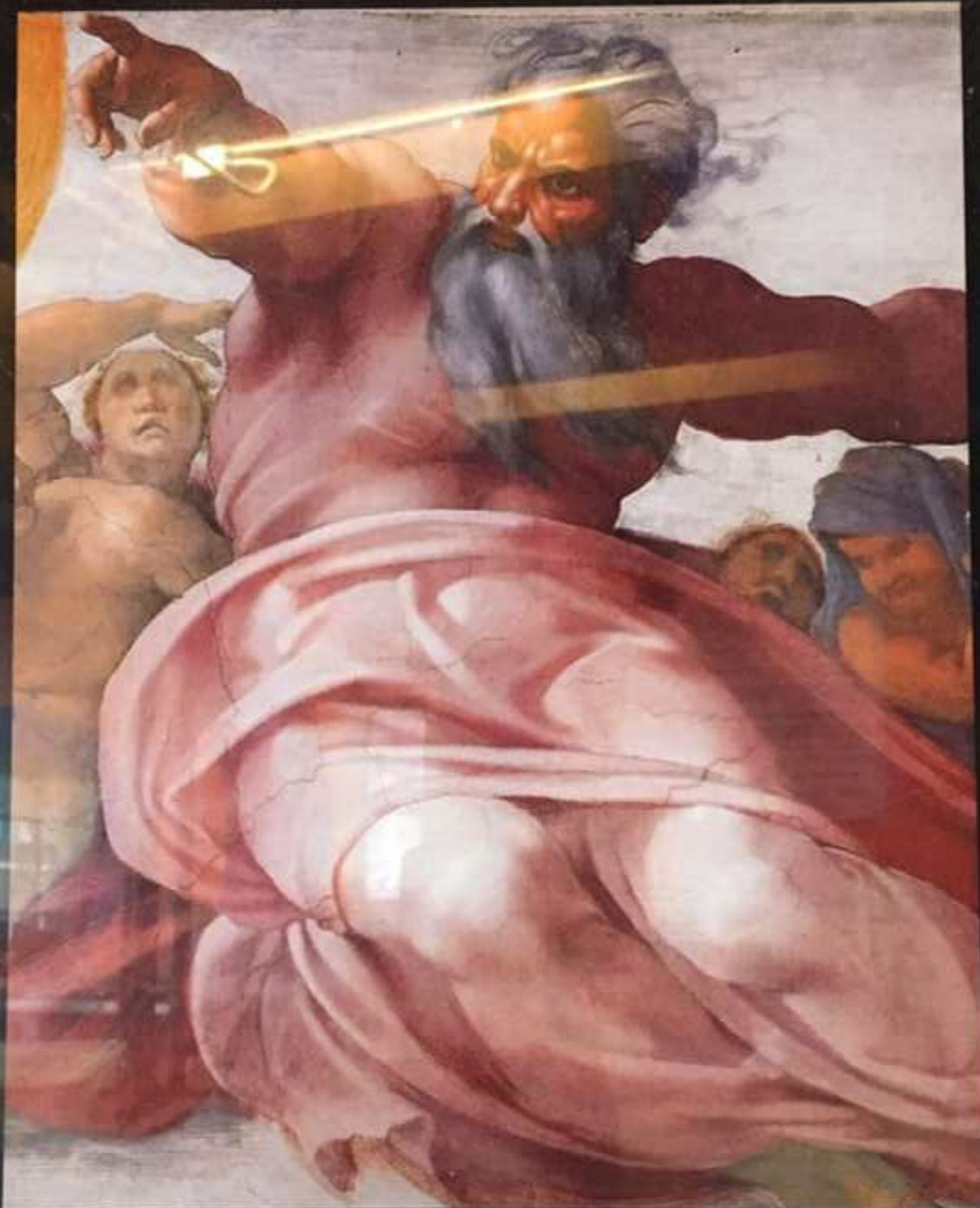






OVERSUDSING IS A CRIME

FOR CLEAN CLOTHES AND A CLEAN RECORD
NEVER USE MORE THAN 1/2 CUP OF SOAP



Thou shalt not ober-suds thine wash!

Leviticus ch.11 vs.22

I command thee useth not more than 1/2 cup of thy soap.



A MEDIA HISTORY



Smithsonian

SEPTEMBER 1997



Ironing Out Those
Washday Blues

[PAGE 84]

It all comes out in the wash



BY CHIORI SANTIAGO

THIS IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE IN A BAD MOOD. THE reason for my grumpiness is a couple of weeks' worth of dirty clothes stuffed into two shopping bags. I couldn't face an afternoon at the laundromat on the corner, a purgatory of leaky machines, petroleum-strength coffee and dog-eared copies of auto-repair journals. So, on a friend's suggestion, I've hauled my bags across the bay to the Brain Wash, a different kind of laundromat in San Francisco. I can tell at a glance that this is not the washhouse of my mother's day, where entertainment meant staring at the clothes tumbling in the dryer, and my spirits have revved up like a washer on spin cycle.

Sure, the change machine balked at my dollar bills, spitting them back as if sticking out its tongue. And I've forgotten to bring soap. But the young woman behind the counter sells me a 40-cent scoop of house detergent from a huge container and congratulates me for having bought "bulk" ("Much better for the environment," she explains). Before long my dirty clothes are sloshing away, and I stroll across the floor to the Brain Wash Cafe, where I can buy a latte and settle down with a copy of the free neighborhood weekly. A few minutes later, a musician wedges himself into the strip of space between the roomful of washers and the coffee bar, plugs in

his microphone and launches into loud, earnest lyrics accompanied by the bass thrum of dryer cylinders and the soprano whir of gyrating washers.

By the time I stuff my clothes into one of the big dryers, I'm dancing across the concrete floor and wishing I had more dirty clothes. I'm even willing to do someone else's wash just to hang out a while longer. I've discovered a subculture that unites a spectrum of humanity, from the guy with the shaved head who's folding an entire wardrobe of black clothes to the mother of three who's commandeered a couple of "big whopper" machines.

Once, colleges furnished students with special boxes for shipping laundry home to Mom. Today, with Mom at work and the kids doing their own wash, laundromats are becoming a watering hole in every sense—part nightclub, part meeting place. The Bobs, a popular a cappella group, celebrate the possibilities in their five-song "Laundry Cycle." "I've never washed clothes with a strange man before," they croon in "Share a Load"; "But what the hell, let's try it!"

In the song, a couple starts out sharing a load and the next thing they know, their garments are cohabiting. In Travelers Rest, South Carolina, Annie Ables hosted a wedding in her laundromat for two patrons who met while folding clothes. The bride "marched from the back between the washers and dryers," Ables told the *Wall Street Journal*. "It was beautiful." At Stan Klein's Rock & Fold in Chicago customers are treated to neon lights, movies on five screens and gospel music pouring from overhead speakers. "People seem to want something spiritual when they're doing laundry," Klein explains.

On the home front, too, the chore of doing laundry has undergone a major transformation. Washing machines, once one of the great luxuries of the postwar era, are one of the few commodities that cost less today than a generation ago. In 1947, when many families didn't own a toaster, let alone a washing machine, the average washer cost \$240, or about \$1,770 in today's dollars. For a present-day family, the price of a washer is about \$380. Americans wash a whopping 200 billion pounds of laundry every year, and manufacturers of detergents, stain removers, and washers and dryers spend huge sums to get their products to that insatiable market.

Still, in many parts of the world, the laundry is done as it has been for at least 4,000 years: people haul their baskets to the nearest river, pound the clothes clean on the rocks, and spread them in the sun to bleach and dry. Perhaps the oldest known records of washday are those that appear in the wall paintings in Egyptian tombs dating from around 2000 B.C. One of them depicts men bending over the wash, two scrubbing the fabric, two folding, while two more twist the fabric to dry it.

According to Pliny the Elder (*SMITHSONIAN*, November 1995), a washday miracle occurred in 600 B.C. when the



Phoenicians mixed goat's tallow and wood ashes, creating soap. They had discovered the advantage of a surfactant—a substance that reduces the surface tension of water, enabling it to better penetrate fabric, loosen dirt and hold that dirt in suspension until it's rinsed away.

Humankind now had the three ingredients for a good, clean wash: water, agitation and surfactant. Here's how washing basically works. Let's say you're out gardening in your backyard, and at the end of the day you're wearing one grimy T-shirt. The dirt, if you could see it through a microscope, clings to the fibers in your cotton shirt the way trail-side burrs stick to your socks. You can turn the hose on your T-shirt and get it fairly clean, because the onrush of the water will loosen the grip of many of the dirt particles and carry them away.

Most body oils, though, repel water molecules. To get rid of that yellow ring around the neckband, you need to rub it with surfactant (you'll find it in your bathroom disguised as a bar of soap). Surfactant compounds are made up of molecules that act like microscopic magnets. One end of the "magnet" attracts dirt; the other end is attracted to water (these



At the Brain Wash in San Francisco, patrons can grab a bite or listen to live music and poetry readings while juggling loads. The trend toward hip, multiservice laundromats is spreading.

compounds are produced by mixing animal fat with lye from wood ashes, a formula used by the Celts when they made their *saipo*, from which the word “soap” is derived). The dirt-loving end gloms on to body oil, and the water-loving end loosens the oil from the cotton fibers, keeping it suspended. Add a little elbow grease, and the dirt washes away.

In other words, if you have ready access to running water and your wardrobe is minimal, laundry isn’t a big deal. Mariners of old had a nonchalant approach: they stuffed their dirty doublets in a bag, fastened it with rope to the ship and tossed the bag overboard, letting the sea agitate the load as they sailed. Sir John Hoskins borrowed the idea in 1677, when he tied linens in a bag and used a wheel-and-cylinder device to squeeze water through it in the first recorded clothes-washing mechanism. The more common method involved tubs of water (often cold) and plenty of elbow grease. Hot water is more effective—the heat helps dissolve oil and grease—but fuel was precious.

Where wardrobes expanded, so did the laundry. English estates of the 17th and 18th centuries refined it to an art. Prosperous households could devote substantial space to such

amenities as bleach houses, hot-air closets and rooms devoted to ironing and folding. Batteries of servants did the hot, dangerous work of boiling laundry in copper tubs, stirring it with wood “scrubbing sticks” and then flattening everything between the rollers of a mangle, which could crush fingers, even whole limbs, in an inattentive second.

In Colonial America, tackling the wash was such an arduous process that some households did it only four times a year. One letter from 1760 notes that “Grandmother Blum is so deep in her Quarterly wash this Weeke that she has no time only to send her love.” The labor-saver of this generation was a “pounder,” a pole capped by a block of wood drilled with holes. Moved up and down in a “pounding barrel,” the device suctioned water through the clothes, anticipating the action of the modern washing machine. By the next generation, wooden washboards were widespread.

Wet clothes were spread on the ground or draped over a bush to dry, until the clothesline became widely available in the 19th century, and with it a technological marvel, the clothespin. The early friction types of these fasteners were whittled in dozens of variations, from the knob-top versions



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TRAVELLER'S

WORLD

REISEN
für Anspruchsvolle

SAN FRANCISCO

Wäschewaschen: Die Insider können es gar nicht erwarten, bis die Wäsche schmutzig ist. Dann müssen sie ins *Brain Wash*, den zur Zeit heißesten Treff. Dieser Selbstbedienungswaschsalon im South-of-Market-Viertel ist ein High-Tech-Wunder mit angeschlossenem Café, eine Kreation der 43jährigen Susan Schindler. Zum Hauptwaschgang gibt's Panini-Sandwiches und Clorox, Espresso mit Weichmachern, oder **Killer-Chili** mit Amstel-Bier und Fleckentferner. Dazu Live-Musik am Sonntagmorgen, dekoriert mit Laser-Kunstwerken von Steve Hornbuckle und ART LUX. Im (sexuell aufgeschlosse-



nen) San Francisco sind die Unisex-Klos ein Erlebnis: eines für Leser, eines für Schreiber. Vor dem riesigen Computer-Bingo-Board vergißt man leicht das Schleuderprogramm. Kein Wunder, daß Brain Wash zum neuesten Single-Treff avancierte (1122 Folsom Street, Tel. 415-431 92 74, täglich 7.30 bis 2 Uhr).

Helmut Werb



Brainwash Cafe & Laundromat

1122 Folsom Street San Francisco 415-861-food

As well-designed as the building is, as satisfying as the omelets are, as funky as the music can be, it is tempting to dismiss the Brainwash Cafe & Laundromat as a simple gimmick. True, way back in the early 1980's a laundromat in Champaign, Illinois started offering beer to its customers and made the local news. But it is a far cry from a few drinks to a vibrant and active cafe, especially one set in San Francisco. This is not to say that the Brainwash has not had its own fair share of press. The owner, Jeffrey Zalles, has been covered in every media outlet from Smithsonian magazine to cable television's Food Network. The real reason for the interest, however, is that the Brainwash is a great place to visit.

Located in SoMA, the Brainwash gets sun through its multi-paned windows at least two-thirds of the day, a major premium in San Francisco. Add to that the fact that you can get a table almost anytime except during San Francisco's Weekend Brunch Rush Hours (10am-1pm, Saturday and Sunday anywhere in town). Plus in the evenings live entertainment often takes over, offering a range of options from spoken word to open mike comedy to musical performances. Combined, all of the above results in a cafe so engaging that it is much more convenient to bring an extra set of clothing with you than to go home. You can always wash the ones you're wearing at the laundromat.



49 Reasons the City Is Super

Here's why San Francisco is a championship kind of town

BY PAT STEGER
CHRONICLE SOCIETY EDITOR

There are at least 49 reasons San Francisco is a world-champion city. Some of the city's bests are small, but some are very big indeed. They all add up to making San Francisco unique, without even mentioning the cable cars, the song, the bridges, or the football team. It makes you wonder why people want to live anywhere else, and here are 49 of the best reasons to live here.

1. Best hamburger: Indoors, Balboa Cafe; outdoors, the snack bar at the Olympic Club golf course.

2. Best potpourri: At Agraria on Nob Hill, a smell that's gone around the world.

3. Best place to see yuppies: The booths at the bottom of the stairs at Pos-Trio.

4. Best place to see the Establishment: Captain's Cabin in Trader Vic's, the home of the mai tai that has circled the globe.

5. Best hip clothes: Ralph Davies for duds, 22 Steps for shoes, Billyblue's for neckties. Also, the Junior League's Next-to-New shop on Fillmore, where designer clothes can be found cheap and clean.

6. Best view: Almost any corner on Russian Hill. If you really want to be picky, maybe it's the view from Vallejo, just past private little Russian Hill Place, overlooking one of the city's best small parks, Ina Coolbrith on Taylor.

7. Best cheap thrill: Driving out-of-towners down Filbert, between Hyde and Leavenworth, one of the steepest hills.

8. Best expensive thrill: Really doing the opening of the opera; and without a doubt, the War Memorial Opera House is one of the world's best-looking.

9. Best bread: Joyce Goldstein's Italian peasant bread at Square One, the French dough whole wheat from Patisserie Franciscan on 18th Street, and almost any good sourdough (even if it is from Acme in Berkeley).

10. Best bike ride: Through Sea Cliff to the California Palace of the Legion of Honor with a stop at Thiggy's at Lincoln Park Golf Course, where great homemade soup (\$2) is served. Incidentally, the public golf courses of the city are also bests.

11. Best ice cream: Rory's on Fillmore; great ice cream piles.

12. Best dinner at home: Fresh cracked crab with homemade mayonnaise.

13. Best salad: The celery root at the Franciscan Club. If you're not a member, buy celery root, peel it, slice it in long strings with a hand-held slicer or a food processor, then place in a sauce of mayonnaise and red wine vinegar (preferably from France). Serve cold.

14. Best movie theater: The Kabuki 8, where the \$3.50 bargain matinee lasts until 4 p.m. (until 4 p.m. on weekends) and there is validated, free parking. There's also a world-class snack bar including cream soda, items from Just Desserts, and if you buy the giant-size popcorn, you get a free refill.

15. Best creamed spinach: At the downtown Olympic Club's Thursday night buffet; if you're not a member, then there's the creamed spinach at Vic's or at the House of Prime Rib, probably the best place for pigging out because you can get seconds on everything (great mashed potatoes).

16. Best walk with dogs: From the St. Francis Yacht Club to Fort Point.

17. Best pizza: Quattro formaggio at the Cafe Roma in North Beach (try to sit at

one of the outside tables; for nouvelle pizza, Vicolo).

18. Best street for browsing: Outer Sacramento, dotted with boutiques (great finds at Forrest Jones; unusual ones at American Pie; best wearable art at Virginia Breier) and antique shops (Robert Heiring for English), and it's fun to watch the beautiful people getting clipped through the windows at David Oliver's and at Roy's.

19. Best tub: The French hydro-massage at Mister Lee's; best tubs with a view: Mandarin Oriental Hotel's guest bath-rooms.

20. Best duck ponds: Palace of Fine Arts.

21. Best place to eat a shrimp or crab Louis: Swan Oyster Depot on Polk.

22. Best french fries: The chili-pepper fries at Rings.

23. Best bookstore: The Green Apple on Clement. A hang-out for survivors of the beat generation and a great place to get imported and used books, records, and tapes; open until midnight.

24. Best mission: Mission.

25. Best parties: Those at the home of Gordon and Ann McGuire have the best private chef —

26. Best home: Any perfectly redone Victorian, which means that the bathroom will not be next to the kitchen.

27. Best (and least expensive) fitness and beauty program: Walking the hills for exercise; fog moisture for the skin (if that doesn't work, the best facial is at Votre Deaute on Sacramento); and fresh bay breezes for revitalizing.

28. Best foreign magazine store: European Book Co. on Larkin (all the top

one of the outside tables; for nouvelle pizza, Vicolo).

29. Best high: The view from the Carnelian Room at the Bank of America.

30. Best buildings: Transamerica Pyramid; City Hall, with its beautiful rotunda.

FEELING TRIUMPHANT ABOUT WHERE WE LIVE



Watching the surfers at Fort Point makes an exciting spectator sport.

Saturday, January 27, 1990

San Francisco Chronicle

PEOPLE

There are fabulous views from every angle.



The perfectly refurbished Victorians.

31. Best show: "Beach Blanket Babylon" with someone who has never seen it.

32. Best cake: La Nouvelle Patisserie on Union (Danielle Steel Trains likes the marzipan icing) and the St. Honore cake at Victoria Pastry on Stockton.

33. Best chocolate: Custom-made from Joseph Schmidt and truffles at the Candy Jar.

34. Best hot dog: Hot dog with sauerkraut (\$3.50) at Stars, and it's even better if chef-owner Jeremiah Tower is there.

35. Best free spectator sport: Watching the surfers and waves at Fort Point, the swimmers at Aquatic Park and the barstool jocks at Pat O'Shea's.

36. Best portrait photo: Russ Fischella, especially if you look like you this year.

37. Best hair: Any style that makes you feel like you're in the city.

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European fashion and home magazines as well as Time Out from London, with free parking in the adjacent lot.

42. Best place for tea: The Japanese Tea Garden when the cherry blossoms bloom in February.

43. Best dance floor: Townsend; for small, cozy dancing, there's the small floor at the Compass Rose in the St. Francis.

44. Best deli: Molinari's in North Beach.

45. Best shopping: LaRocca's, Man's, and Wal-

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61. Best foreign magazine store: European Book Co. on Larkin (all the top

27. Best place to air your dirty laundry and make friends: Brain Wash.

Time Out

FILM SPECIAL

'Hard Boiled

John Woo

Hard gra

Ken Loach

Hard ad

Kieslow

finest f



Hotshot

San Francisco dispatches

Brainwash is not your average launderette. For a start it's located on Folsom Street in the heart of San Francisco's clubland. Upstairs is a nightclub with cabaret shows scheduled to run no longer than a heavy wash cycle. Downstairs, there's the coffee bar, where many a lonely launderette encounters his/her soul mate, and shares a tumble-drier before the night is through. And for the computer-literate there are tables with built-in terminals, via which they can access the Well.

The Well is San Francisco's computer bulletin board. Anyone owning a PC and a modem can, for a small monthly subscription, access this system and communicate with thousands of other users. The Well prides itself

'Are your chakras out of tune? Then send off now for seven tuning forks in a velvet case'

on catering for all tastes, and one is hard-pushed to imagine a special interest it doesn't yet address. Feeling horny? Then punch up *alt.sex.wanted*, type in your desires, sit back and wait for a response. Of course, you could be more specific and put yourself on *alt.sex.bondage* or even *alt.sex.bestiality*.

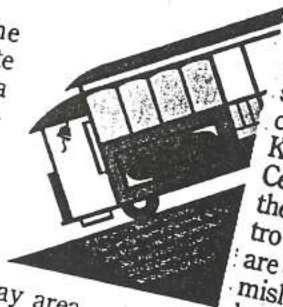
Nothing doing? Then why not scan through *alt.drugs.recipes* and see if there's a new MDMA derivative you

fancy concocting in your bathroom laboratory tonight. Or, if you prefer a particularly Californian brand of rock 'n' roll to sex and drugs, perhaps you'll key into one of the various 'conferences' (as each of these information networks is known) that revolve around the Grateful Dead, such as *deadlit*, or *feed-back.dead*.

Initiated in 1979, the Well was once the private virtual playground of a small, select band of computer boffins, hackers, technophiles and scientists. But its growth has matched the proliferation of the PC, and it now has tens of thousands of subscribers in the Bay area alone. And it doesn't stop there, or even at America's borders; since the Well is part of Internet, the largest computer network on Earth, subscribers can access a whole world of data. See that nerdy guy in the corner there? While his smalls are drying he could be having a conversation through cyberspace with some dissident student in Peking. Then again, he's probably still searching for someone to sit

Of course, futuristic global communications are not the only growth industry in San Francisco. After all, this

city gave birth to the hippy movement, and old habits die hard. The New Age is doing brisk business. Are your chakras out of tune? Then send off now for a full kit, including seven tuning forks in a velvet case. In need of some celestial assistance? Why not call toll-free, quote your credit card number, and have the (otherwise anonymous) 'founder' of Star Life 'synchronise his higher self with yours'.



For those who prefer a personal touch, there is no shortage of choice. In a city stuffed with storefront churches, my favourite is Karma Moffat's Psychic Centre, on 18th Street, in the predominantly gay Castro district. The windows are crammed with a curious mish-mash of Tibetan embroidery, contemporary handmade American ceremonial garb and home-made audio cassettes. Apparently Karma specialises in an ersatz religious ceremony incorporating Tibetan 'singing bowls', native American 'sweat' ceremonies, and a bit of 'rolfing' thrown in for good measure. Sadly, I was unable to attend, but I felt a little closer to the great man after reading his bumper sticker, which said: 'Perform random acts of beauty and shower strangers with kindness.' Only in America, as they say.

Alix Sharkey.

PIZZA
LESS DOUGH

RESTAURANTS WHERE

MARCH 1997

ART • AUDIO BOOKS • BILLI BI • THE BARD • CLOONEY • COYOTES

AMERICAN WEST

A I R L I N E S M A G A Z I N E

A Clean Break

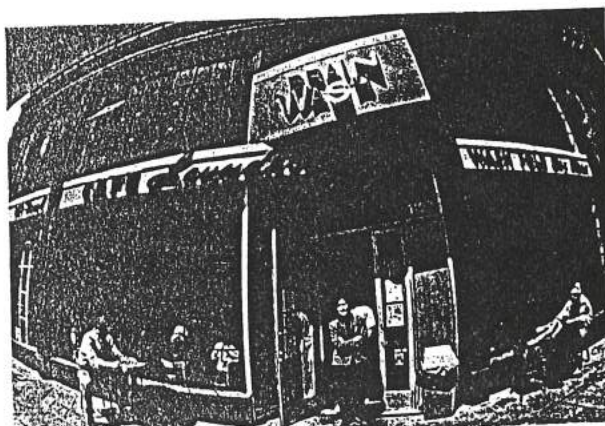
Doing laundry likely isn't your idea of a good time, but plenty of people are having loads of fun doing just that at BrainWash, a funky cafe/laundromat in San Francisco. For the past seven years, this hip hangout has been putting a fresh spin on a mundane

task by offering a whole laundry list of creative cuisine, nine microbrews, live music five nights a week, pin-ball machines and a computer connected to other cafes in the area via the San Francisco Net—all while your threads are spinning and soaking in the adjacent room.

BrainWash is the brainchild of owner Susan Schindler, who came up with the idea based on her philosophy that "everyone needs to do laundry and everyone needs to eat, so why not have some fun?" And fun is what she's made it, with quirky furniture, local artwork on the walls, and restrooms labeled "Readers" and "Writers." Though the idea of enjoying a Caesar salad with your spin cycle may sound strange, the clientele doesn't seem to think so: BrainWash is one of the busiest laundromats in the city, according to Schindler, and last year it was named "Best Laundromat" by *San Francisco Weekly*.

It's also gained some renown, of sorts, after appearing in commercials for Clorox and Snapple, in a Robert Cray video and in a

recent episode of the TV series *Nash Bridges*, starring Don Johnson. It even has been the site of a wedding, as well as the starting point of several romances that have resulted in both marriage and divorce. But don't ask for details: BrainWash isn't in the business of airing other people's dirty laundry.



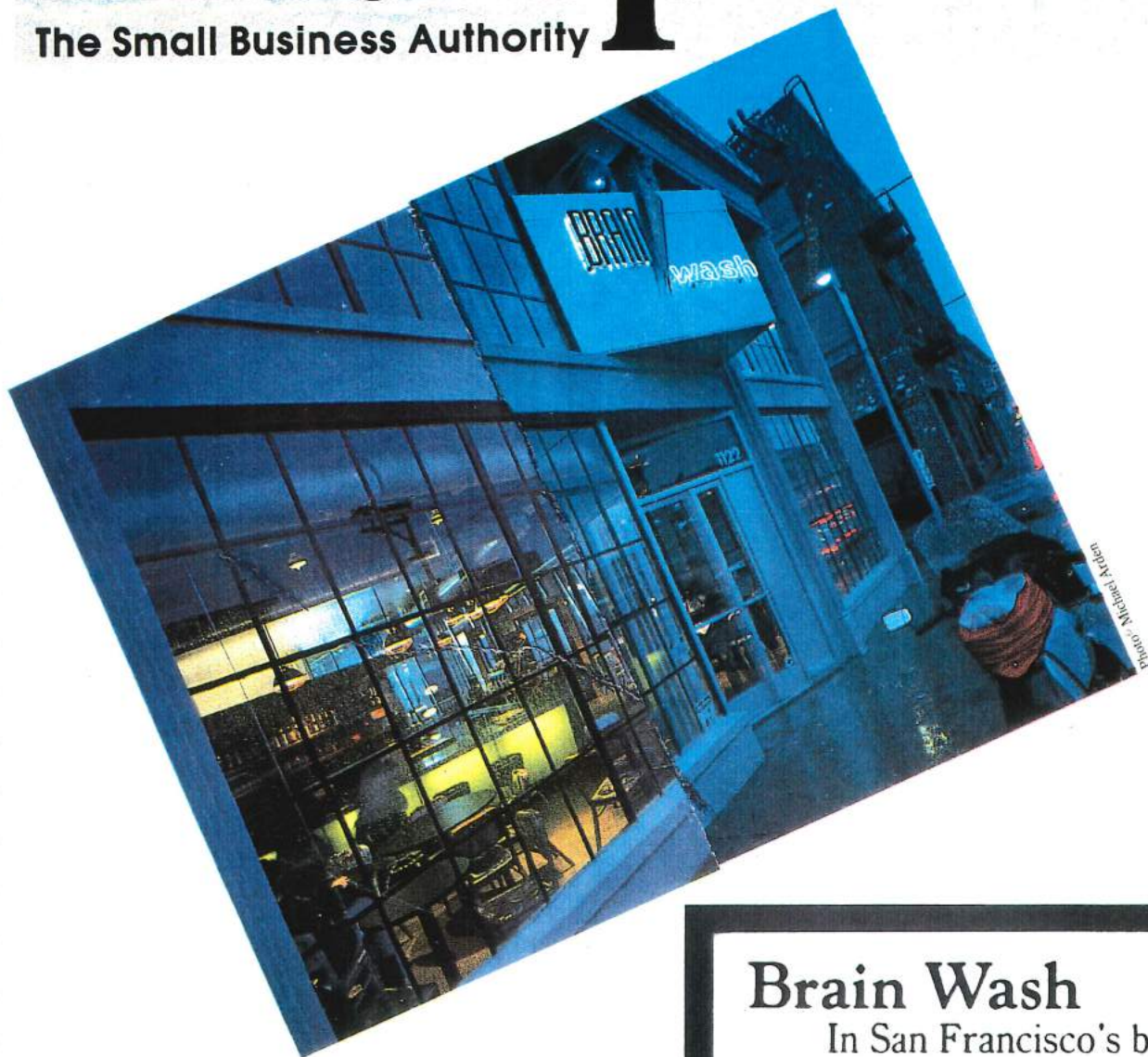
BrainWash: the place for washing and noshing.

—Wendy Neri

Entrepreneur[®]

The Small Business Authority

October 1990



Brain Wash

In San Francisco's bohemian SoMa (South of Market Street) district, Susan Schindler's Brain Wash cafe/laundromat does a brisk business. "I get bored with everything very quickly," says Schindler. "So I started thinking of how to make a laundromat fun." A combination of high-tech washing machines, electronic displays and a 49-seat cafe serving soups, salads and sandwiches draws all sorts of customers from artists to yuppies.

Details

July 1993 \$2.00

Clubs
THE 300 BEST
NIGHTS OUT
IN AMERICA

the music issue

Starring

Perry Farrell
dis
rs
n



San Francisco **BRAINWASH**
1122 Folsom St., 415-255-4866

An airy, postmod laundromat with a wraparound bar, café, local bands, poetry readings, and SFNet, a computer bulletin board linking pellerhead poets to their coffeehouse brethren throughout the Bay Area.

...Groux
Rick Rubin
and
... Tom Jones



ARENA

Woody Allen in Las Vegas
Rik Mayall in turmoil

trav

The Arena world

California dreaming
Fun in Acapulco
Fear of flying

Why **Julie Burchill**
has never been abroad
Why **Tony Parsons**
hates Britain's beggars

Fashion on the move!
Suits that go places

THE NEW LASS
The sex war continues

A 29

PHOTOGRAPHY TROY WORD

A CITY ON A HILL

San Francisco: picture-postcard perfect
ON SAN FRANCISCO'S Folsom Street there's a typical Californian haunt - Brain Wash, a combined café and laundromat (specializing in that strange hybrid of Italian, French and American cooking called 'Californian cuisine'). "I want to change the way

Most of California seems like a grandiose camp site, with everything thrown up overnight. Here, nothing looks permanent, making the landscape look even more intimidating, even more untamed

people think about laundry," says its owner, Susan Schindler. "This is an environment where people can turn something they hate into something they love."

San Francisco is a deceptively quaint residential Eden, an urban paradise on the edge of the world. This is a city with more than its fair share of charm, a kaleidoscopic jumble of Victorian and Painted Lady houses (what Tom Wolfe called "those endless staggers of bay windows"), of perpendicular hills, ornamental cable cars and European bonhomie. The Bay Area includes Marin County, San Jose, and Oakland, yet it's San Francisco that's been sprinkled with stardust, San Francisco that's become an affluent Bohemia. San Franciscans - aggressively narcissistic, quietly intellectual - are fiercely proud of their heritage; they know they've been dealt a good hand, and they are not about to throw it away.

The city blends an energizing mixture of the Oriental and the European, giving a richness in its architecture, cuisine and especially its people that can be found nowhere else in the world. The city, too, has long been a magnet for the politically and sexually outspoken. Towards the end of World War II, when the US military began systematically purging its ranks of gays, the most popular debarkation point was San Francisco. Many stayed, as did the beats, the poets, the musicians and activists who assembled here in the Fifties.

Even today, 25 years after San Francisco became the focus of the Sixties zeitgeist, the city's liberalism is still a force. Though AIDS has ripped out all but the heart of the city's gay community, in the Castro Street area - once called the Golden Gay Ghetto - you still see men openly hugging each other and holding hands. And, though the bath houses have gone, the leather shops and bars remain.

"San Francisco is a city of cults and religions," wrote Peter Ackroyd, "a city of strident white minorities, a city of people who wear respective uniforms and who wield the impersonal vocabulary of liberation. They have done what they came such a long way to do: they have lost themselves. But what exactly is it that they have found instead?" The answer is freedom, however contrived that might seem.

On Stinson Beach, on the peninsular above San Francisco, a group of affluent white teenagers played volleyball on the deserted sand. Watching them walk back to their cars, on their way back to school, I suddenly felt insanely jealous. What a place to grow up, I thought, what a place to spend your youth, frolicking in the sand on the Wild West Coast, drowning only in the luxury of good fortune.

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METROPOLITAN

MAY 1990 • \$3.00

● **CHICAGO:** Less is not a bore

plethora o

Mirador fo

Angeles' P

owners Pa

stated style, letting chef Carol Brandin's food hold forth. The menu includes mesquite-grilled lamb with couscous, seared red snapper with *chermoula*—a Moroccan salsa—and lush ginger custard for dessert. 1400 North Wells St.; 312/951-6441. ● **TEMPE, ARIZONA:** *Tablescapes* takes party rentals beyond heavy white

diner dishes and thick-rimmed glasses. Ware in nine bold colors, wonder can stemware and charger plates

Special touches include

center:

linens in public at **SAN FRANCISCO:** Wash your dirty the city's reviving South of Market district. Architects Jeremy Kotas and Anthony Pantaleoni employ a tilted diagonal

en my Kotas and Anthony Pantaleoni employ a tilted diagonal glass-and-metal wall to separate the 32 shiny, computerized washers from the restaurant, where the inexpensive menu features breakfast fare, chili, sandwiches, haute pizzas and sweets. 1122 Folsom St.; 415/861-WASH or 415/861-FOOD

Comb and John Randolph (metal chandeliers are endearingly

matched) with inexpensive food (a great grilled-chicken sandwich is \$6.75).

Better still, half of the profits support **Artspace**, the

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Craft Enterprises' major opening

show, **American Craft At The Armory**,

runs May 11 to 13 at the Seventh Regi-

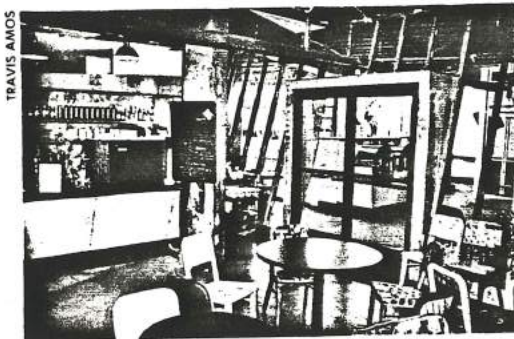
ment Armory, Park Ave. and 67th St.;

212/420-1140. ● **BALTIMORE:** *Decades*

of Design runs April 27 to 29 at Inner

Harbor's Festival Hall, 914/725-0292.

TONING DOWN the glitz: For Mirador's low-key interior, designer



"MY POST-PUNK laundrette" is how Susan Schindler describes Brain Wash, her techy café/washateria that's one of San Francisco's hottest hangouts.

glass-and-metal

glass-and-metal wall to separate the 32 shiny, computerized washers from the restaurant, where the inexpensive menu features breakfast fare, chili, sandwiches, haute pizzas and sweets. 1122 Folsom St.; 415/861-WASH or 415/861-FOOD

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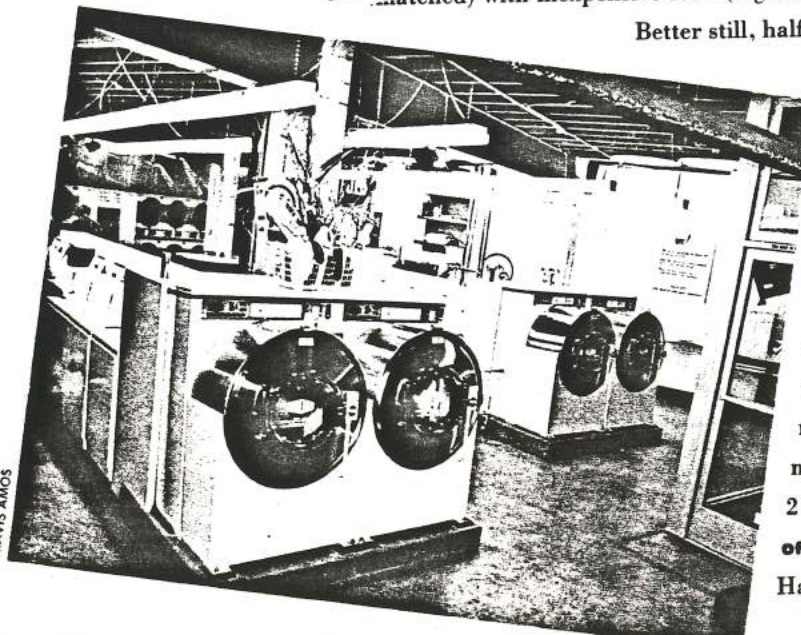
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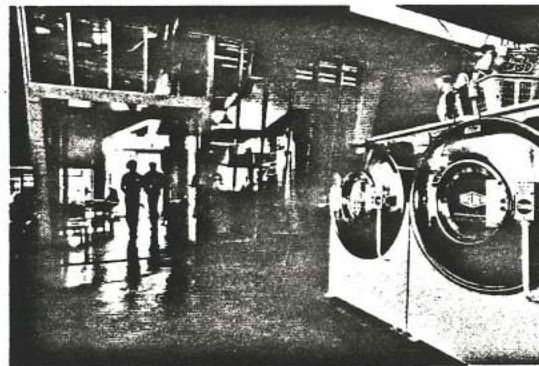
WASH 'N' NOSH

Those who have been wringing out the praises of Brainwash café and laundromat—the latest hangout for the (dirty) black T-

Down in the suburbs they're satisfied to sit in front of the big-screen TV with a bagel dog and a Coke and watch *Sincerely*

Yours—The Liberace Story.

"This is just a relaxed, friendly neighborhood place. It's not romance," explains Nina Myers, owner of the Mountain



shirt crowd, might be agitated to learn that the idea did not originate here.

The Oasis laundromats-cum-eateries down in Mountain View and San Jose did it first.

Of course, unlike Brainwash, the Oasis chain has no imported beer, no neo-industrial architecture, no eggplant-and-feta pizzas, and very little attitude (so little time, so many ripped Levis to wash).

View Oasis. "Here, you don't have to run out to the store because you've got three kids complaining that they're hungry. They can watch TV, eat a snack, or play video games."

The Oasis already has 13 franchises around Northern California and another 17 are expected to open within the year in such places as Oakland, Hayward, and Cupertino.

Meanwhile, Clean and Lean down in San Diego seems to promote the philosophy that you should earn your washer by first working up a good sweat at the adjoining gym or in the tanning booth down the hall. Or perhaps the thinking is that after a full aerobic workout, you won't have to worry about shrinkage from excessively hot dryers.



Washtag im Café

Brain Wash: Ein neues Konzept für ein altes soziokulturelles Phänomen Nordamerikas, den Waschsalon



Das Design ist laut und lebendig. Längst gibt's in Kalifornien eine ganze Reihe von Ketten auf diesem Sektor. Motto: Clean and lean. Also 'sauber und schlank'.



Die Konzeptidee ist verblüffend simpel in ihrer Logik: Offriere dem Benutzer eines Waschsalons ein gastronomisches Umfeld, in dem das Warten Spaß macht, und er wird den Ort nicht mehr mit einem Stoßseufzer der Resignation ansteuern, sondern gerne kommen – irgendwann auch ohne Wäschebündel.

Das „Brain Wash“ in San Francisco hat die Idee mit einem ausgefallenen Interieur und mit absoluter Alleinstillung in der Stadt am Golden Gate umgesetzt.

South of Market (SoMa) ist „andere“ San Francisco. Touristen verirren sich nur hierher. Industriebauten, Fabriken, Lagerhäuser, Werksbetriebe prägen das Benbild – ein Arbeits- und Wohngebiet, das sich vom Zentrum aus nach Süden erstreckt. Die SoMa-Region ist ein Zentrum für Kunst und Kultur, das sich in den letzten Jahren stark entwickelt hat. Die SoMa-Region ist ein Zentrum für Kunst und Kultur, das sich in den letzten Jahren stark entwickelt hat.

unansehnlich auf den flüchtigen Blick. Doch wer sich Zeit nimmt, genauer hinzuschauen, entdeckt möglicherweise den spröden Reiz dieses Viertels, das – noch – als Geheimtipps gehandelt wird.

Eine Vielzahl kleiner Restaurants, Bistros, Bars und Kneipen – meist unscheinbar von außen, innen von avantgardistischem Chic – läßt erkennen, daß der Stadtteil sich zu einem begehrteren Adressen entwickeln wird.

Liebe auf den ersten Blick

„Für mich stand von vornherein fest, daß ich mich hier und sonst nirgendwo mit meinem Laden niederlassen will.“ erklärt Susan Schindler, Inhaberin des „Brain Wash“. Allerdings wollte sie ursprünglich eine Bar im SoMa eröffnen. „Aber als mir auffiel, daß hier weit und breit kein Waschsalon gab, da habe ich alle Pläne umgeworfen.“ Das Eckhaus an der E Street war für sie die erste Station des ersten Brain Wash. „Die ersten Kunden sind gekommen, als ich die Zettel verteilt habe.“

klar hat sie im Zentrum des Raumes
erhas erwor delten Bar. Die
einmal die kleine Kunstwerke
drauf, bis sie der individuell mit
computer oder Grafik gestaltet
maschinen box, Plakate und Bilder
„Ohne e Wänden, inklusive Pl
das ein f zum allgemeinen Geb
Der a runden den lockeren, u
erfol yentlichen Eindruck der
gere liehkeit ab, die offensichtlich
zen den Stil der neuen SoMa-
t wihr (Künstler, Designe
tiffer. Denn die überwiege
eindeutg-zwischen im Cafe.
Sie sind inzwischen als K
Klientel, die ohne Wäschbün
del kommt, einfach auf einen
Cappuccino reinschau (der
berühmt) oder auf einen
ein Bier und auf einen
Platz und auf einen

verrückt in Detailfragen“, er
scheidet in vielem aber
dem Bauch“.

Susan Schindler: „75 Prozent der Washkunden nutzen auch das Café-Angebot. Die Nachfrage ist viel größer als erwartet.“ Die 43jährige Unternehmerin plante ursprünglich eine Bar.

...konzept und Outfit an je-
den x-beliebigen Standort zu
übertragen. Die erste Systema-
tisierung eines Wash & Food-
Konzeptes wäre das nicht. Die
"Oasis Laundromats-cum-Eat-
eries" sind seit einiger Zeit in
Kalifornien aktiv und verfügen
über 13 Franchises und weitere
Betriebe. Weitere 17 sollen
in diesem Jahr eröffnet
werden. Und eine weitere Di-
ffizifizierung der Waschsalons
folgt sich an: In San Diego
Clean and Lean ("sauber
chlan") mit Trimm- und
Fitnessstudios auf der Phi-
losophie, daß zur reinen Wä-
scherei ein gesunder Körper ge-
hört. Angelika Les-

**Absolut verrückt
in Detailfragen**

Susan Schindler ist nicht der Typ, der Umsätze parat im Kopf hat. Was absolut nicht heißt, daß die 43-jährige Unternehmerin unprofessionell an das Brain Wash herangegangen wäre. Im Gegenteil, sie ist nach eigener Einschätzung „absolut

den müssen. An einen
bau des Küchenbereichs
nicht zu denken. Die Ka
muß mit Croissants und S
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weiches und einer täglich wech
selnden Suppe überschaubar
und in Zubereitung und Lager
ung leicht abzuwickeln sein.
Für abwegig hält Susan Schind
ler die Frage nach einer Brain-
Wash-Kette nicht, und es gah
auch schon verschiedene Ange-

[illegible]

FLIPside

MARCH / APRIL
1991
\$2.00

recently
compilation 7")

Also in the news is that Brain-
wash a cafe/eatery/laundry mat
have been having some free all
ages shows with bands in the
milder vein such as Harm Farm,
and I hear that Steel Pole are/
were or have performed there
mellowed, and incognito under
the moniker of the Steel Pole
Bathtub Jazz Quartet. Booking
being done through KUSF's
Alycia Rose who is also helping
book the Chameleon club as well
now.

contacted by the Cha-
12-

HELL
ACCUSED, AGG
BORN AGAINST, FASTBACKS
GLYCINE MAX, HUNGER FARM
KILLING JOKE, LOOMPANICS ULTD.
SKINNY PUPPY, WEATHER BELL

X

magazine

WASH S PR P

MARCH
1990



PRISM 4

BRAINWASHED

I gather the clothes strewn across my floor and stuff them into a pillow case. Then I put on my tattered but beloved sweats and head to Brain Wash, the first real SoMa laundromat.

Should have known something was amiss when I heard the name... Brain Wash. Like many of the district's clubs and dives, it sits in an old converted warehouse. It's all windows and high ceilings and the chairs and tables are decorated with "laundry art."

I use the side door, not the main entrance at Folsom and Seventh — Thank God I didn't parade my sweats through the cafe and bar where the best-dressed laundry set I'd ever seen sat sipping espresso. Inside, I cram my laundry into two digital-display washers and self-consciously dig a wadded five from my pocket. (The state-of-the-art change machines take ones, fives and twenties).

I deposit the quarters, dump the All-TempaCheer, and debate whether to chance cold stares for a hot cup of coffee. Full loads take a long time, I think, even in the hippest laundromat.

So I brave the bar, my sweats not nearly as beloved as before. And even though the best-dressed-laundry-set doesn't bat an eye, the coffee is good and strong from behind my sunglasses.

- M.M.

San Francisco Examiner BUSINESS



EXAMINER/JUDITH CALSON

Susan Schindler decided SOMA needed a hangout and a laundromat, so she's opening Brain Wash, where the dressed-in-black crowd can do laundry while grabbing a bite and a cold one.

South of Market laundry-cafe opens

Suds, food and suds for the too hip

By Louis Trager
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

Can a laundromat be too hip?

A possible answer to that question is coming to the South of Market district this month.

Brain Wash invites you to cure those washday blues by tossing quarters into state-of-the-art washers and driers, eating moderately priced prepared food and tossing back a cold one.

The business will also offer wash-and-fold and dry cleaning services. All this amid high-tech decor and, presumably, no lack of people dressed in black.

The Brain Wash breakthrough

is the brainchild of owner Susan Schindler.

Her resume looks impeccable for a San Francisco entrepreneur: Free Speech-era student at UC-Berkeley, third-grade teacher in Watts, jewelry design student in Stockholm, unpublished sex novelist and co-owner of a party-planning firm.

Schindler, 43, was making a doomed search for a place to start another nightclub South of Market when she realized that what the area lacked were a hangout and a laundromat.

The brainstorm started with a real estate developer-friend's musings about getting into the laundromat business for the high financial return.

"The cafe just came about natu-

rally because it seemed like a great idea for the neighborhood," Schindler says. "The two together — it just seemed beautiful."

"You're stuck for over an hour doing a wash. My friends and I always rush out to the first place you can get doughnuts or ice cream or something."

Ergo, a hangout-laundromat on Folsom Street with concrete floors, beamed ceilings, a juke box with the obligatory eclectic selection of 45s, counter seating and a menu ranging from beer to espresso and baked apples to chili.

For number fans: 49 seats in a 1,000-square-foot cafe; 32 washers and 24 driers in a 2,500-square-foot, attendant-served laundromat.

A diagonal glass wall between the two business elements will keep the sounds and smells on their own sides. It also will allow Schindler to keep the cafe open till 2 a.m. on weekends while closing the laundromat at 11 p.m.

The standard rates will be \$1.25 for a top-loading washer, \$3 for the jumbo 35-pounder and 25 cents for 10 minutes on a dryer. Automation allows Schindler to get a quick count on the quarters and to change prices instantly for a special.

A typical lunch with a beer will set you back another \$6 or \$7.

She'll put in televisions only if customers insist "they really need to see their soaps, or they really need to see their ballgame." But she'd sooner have live acoustic music for Sunday brunches when she can get the requisite permits.

The grand opening festivities are Friday night, by invitation. The place is scheduled to open for business — and the true test of whether they can keep the fabric softener out of the pizza — the next Monday.

Schindler bought the fixer-upper building for \$750,000, partly with the proceeds of an Edwardian building in the Haight that she rehabilitated.

"I have a (South of Market) building only I could love," she says. "When I first saw this building, I knew it was Brain Wash."

She borrowed some of the \$1.4 million that's gone into Brain Wash and expects to gross about \$600,000 in the first year of business.

Despite all the last-minute hassles, she's willing to speculate about adapting the idea elsewhere: "We might have Brain Wash II — The Sequel."

eye

June 28-July 4, 1991

San Jose Mercury News



DAVID PLOTNIKOFF
Music Writer

I KNEW it the minute I stepped out of the car and looked down Langton Alley. I'd made an error and now I was going to pay for it.

It was a balmy San Francisco night two Saturdays ago, and my driver and I were late for an appointment. Perhaps if I hadn't been so rushed, things would have been different. I looked down the unit alley at the three street urchins — mere shadows shambling around the little mini-park at the corner of Langton and Seventh Street. That sinking feeling that something was terribly amiss hit me like a load of wet towels. "How could we let this happen?" I said to the driver. "We forgot the laundry."

Well, I thought, I'm here to do the job. If it means sitting in a rock 'n' roll laundromat sans blanchissage — watching other people's clothes thrill to the spin cycle and luxuriate in the tumble dry — so be it. I'm a professional, and this is business.

As it turns out, there were many others at Brainwash in the same tub, so to speak. The front of the operation is a very cozy, atypical South-of-Market neighborhood cafe featuring beer, espresso, baked goods, sandwiches, genuinely

See LAUNDRY, Page 18

Laundry and live rock
on the gentle cycle in SoMa

Rockin' 'n' washin'

LAUNDRY, from Page 17
friendly service and a good view of the pedestrian circus that is Folsom Street.

The back half of the facility is a clean, well-lighted place for sheets, towels, stray socks and the like, separated from the cafe by a glass partition. While several of the predominantly thirtysomething post-collegiate patrons were keeping one eye on the clock and the other on the back room, most were absorbed either in conversation or reading material that ranged from Thrasher magazine to Guy de Maupassant.

The prototypical Brainwash patron has two college degrees, one good suit and a cat named either Sid Vicious or Salieri. He or she would sooner skateboard down the Filbert Steps blindfolded than ever consider buying a house equipped with a washer and dryer.

While Brainwash is not the first local facility to merge the cafe al, it is the only one we know of that has yoked live rock 'n' roll into the experiential troika. It also is an oasis of civilized manners and cleanliness in the Folsom nightlife jungle — a place to gather one's wits before wading into the fray.

Brainwash has the feel of an East Village loft — it's in the heart of the Folsom scene, yet somewhat aloof from the tawdry tableau unfolding on the other side of the tall windows.

The seats at the little 12-stool bar began filling up at 9 p.m. as the Pounding Birds, a hipper-than-thou jazz/folk/rock combo, made their pre-concert adjustments in a corner by the front windows.

The band was as intense as a wet tube sock, and many people didn't even bother to look up from their journal-writing — but it didn't matter much. This is high-concept nightlife, and the concept of doing the wash while being serenaded by a folk-rock band in a hip, post-industrial cafe was far more important than the quality of the components.

Brainwash

1122 Folsom St., San Francisco
Admission: No cover
Details: Live music
Tuesdays-Thursdays and
Saturdays at 9 p.m. (415)
861-3663

Forty-five minutes later, the band was still tooling around. In any other venue, this would be unforgivable. But why fuss, when the clothes are going to dry at their own pace anyway, right?

The phone rang and the woman behind the bar answered it. After a pause, she bellowed at the band, "Hey, what kind of band are you guys?"

"A good one."

"They say they're a good one. Right. Hey, it's free."

At almost 10, the Birds started on a slow, somnolent folk number. People in the back stopped folding their wash and began to filter in. It was not a barn-burner, as club shows go. The semi-acoustic group seemed subdued and disjointed. Perhaps they were wondering if they made the right decision when they put the colored sheets in with that white load.

LETTER

F R O M T H E E D I T O R

Recipes for Success

In any other city in America it would have been a joke. But San Francisco worships at the altar of the edible. So no one snickered when a combination restaurant/laundromat called Brain Wash opened south of Market. No one blinked at the fact that it served twenty-one brands of beer and twelve coffee drinks (not counting decafs).

But a *Washington Post* food writer visiting our fair city recently shook her head in wonder—not so much at the concept of having something to eat while your T-shirts tumble, but more at the astonishing notion that newspapers sent their restaurant reviewers to critique the place!

"If you want a measure of how spoiled San Franciscans are when it comes to eating, note that a *San Francisco Chronicle* restaurant reviewer complained that Brain Wash has 'an uninspired menu.' " Uninspired? For a laundry?

The discouragingly circumspect review brings up another point. In the Bay Area, restaurant critics wield godlike power. People depend on reviewers to steer them away from culinary danger and toward interesting discoveries. But taste is highly individual, and restaurant reviewers sometimes let subjectivity reign—which can wreak havoc on the establishments they cover.

In this special issue, we turn the tables. We interviewed a dozen top local chefs and restaurateurs and polled several dozen more to let them tell their side of the story.

One frequent complaint: too many critics know too little about the business. "Reviewing restaurants should not be on-the-job training," says the owner of a popular local fish restaurant.

Do some critics demand and receive special treatment? Do all of them dine anonymously? "Hell, yes," fumed one chef to the first question, and "Hell, no!" to the second.

What both critics and the dining public need to understand, says another chef, is that restaurants are not a glamour business. They are a sweat business. "There's no such thing as an eight-hour shift in the restaurant business," says award-winning chef Howard Bulka, formerly at the Mandarin Hotel's Silks, now at Earl's. "There's a certain naïveté some people have thinking that the food is always perfect, the service is hopping, the crowd looks good, the martini is perfectly chilled and perfectly stirred, and if you drop your fork, there's another one in front of you instantly." When all that does come together, it's not just a dinner. "That's a miracle," says Bulka. "And people should understand it's a miracle." ♦

Mark K. Powelson

SAN FRANCISCO FOCUS®

FOOD ARTS

Volume 3 Number 2 MARCH 1990

Spin Cycle Supper Club

San Francisco—It's your first day off in weeks and you're left with no clean clothes. Let's face it, regardless of necessity, no one *wants* to do laundry in his spare time.

But **Susan Schindler**, co-owner of **r.s.v.p.**, a Bay Area event-planning firm, seems to have found a great way not only to motivate people to perform this dismal task, but even to enjoy it. She calls her method "brainwashing," and it sprang from her search for a perfect nightclub location in the South of Market (SoMa) area. Her fruitless hunt

all day; poached eggs are served until noon. "Real Food" includes chili, sandwiches, pizza, "soup de day," and panini sandwiches, supplemented by assorted snacks and sweets. Thirsty? Perhaps a glass of fresh orange juice would satisfy, or maybe some mineral water. Choose a cappuccino, one of four types of espresso, or a café mocha. Beer, wine, and champagne are also available.

There are two unisex restrooms at BrainWash and, true to the creative atmosphere, one door is labeled *Readers*, the other *Writers*. The Readers Room is papered with *Dirty Laundry* and *Howard the Duck* comic strips. In the Writers Room, a green chalkboard serves as

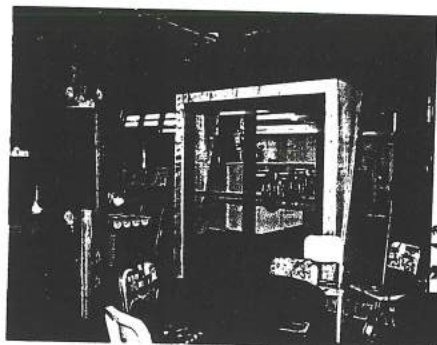


PHOTO BY TRAVIS AMOS



led to the discovery that what SoMa *really* needed was services, and a place to hang out. So she set out to provide both.

A "neoindustrial-style cafe and laundromat," **BrainWash** opened in December. With concrete floors and beamed ceilings, Schindler describes the decor as "high-kitsch and low-tech." A glass wall with doors separates work from play; a juke box stocked with 45s provides music while 32 state-of-the-art computerized washers and 24 dryers help agitate the work along. There are also a few tables and chairs set about the laundry area and a full-time attendant available for assistance.

While awaiting the time to fluff and fold, you can slip into the 49-seat cafe and enjoy conversation and a bite from a moderately priced menu. Warm baked apples with cream, muffins, bagels, croissants, and toast are available

wallpaper; chalk and erasers are provided.

If you enjoy the food and atmosphere but are *still* not roused to join the domestic activity, BrainWash also provides a wash-dry-and-fold service, and dry cleaning may be introduced in the future.

Schindler views BrainWash as a place where work becomes fun, where people will come "to meet, to socialize, and to accomplish something constructive." So far, she reports, the response has been excellent; BrainWash already attracts an eclectic neighborhood crowd including writers, artists, photographers, journalists, and the like. BrainWash opens every morning at 7:30; on Sunday through Wednesday closing hour is 11 p.m., Thursday through Saturday, 12:30 a.m. Last call for dryers is one hour prior to closing.

—KELLEY REGAN

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Vacation is a time for getting away from the stress of work and everyday life. Share your trip with loved ones back home and other readers here.



Bruce Fessler/The Desert Sun

Diner with a difference: Patrons of Brain Wash in San Francisco enjoy lunch.

San Francisco

Look for good, clean fun at Folsom Street laundromat

BY BRUCE FESSIER
People/entertainment editor

I can think of a dozen good reasons for going to San Francisco. But I never thought going to a laundromat would be up there with cable cars, the Golden Gate Bridge and all those other things Tony Bennett sings about.

But I've got to come clean since visiting the Brain Wash Cafe and Laundromat on Folsom Street.

This joint makes you want to soil your clothes just to clean them.

Brain Wash is the brainchild of Susan Schindler, a graduate of Berkeley's Free Speech movement in the '60s who has turned a laundromat into a bohemian meeting place. You can savor good, moderately priced food and drink for a light dinner or lunch, enjoy local artwork, play pinball and listen to cool, cutting-edge music while your laundry is being tossed and dried in a back room.

Brain Wash has come out with two live albums of original music recorded on the premises and you can't hear the churning of washers or dryers on either one.

Arnie Montes, who's been working at this laundromat for five years (which in itself is remarkable), says Brain Wash has been getting people from the East Bay, Marin County and the Peninsula bringing their laundry in.

Now they're going for the tourist-trade.

"We get a ton of tourists," Montes said. "We have discount cards at visitors bureaus. They love it. We get postcards from Germany, the United States and all over Europe."

Now, you might expect a laundromat like this to take you to the cleaners when it comes to actually washing your clothes, but that's not the case. A top-loading washer is \$1.50 and a jumbo, 35-pound washer is \$3.50. Dryers are 25 cents per eight minutes.

Music is featured five nights a week, and the bands play jazz, bluegrass, rock and classical. On Acoustic Wednesdays, you could hear a classical string quartet. Fridays and Saturdays focus on unplugged alternative rock. They generally stay away from punk. If it gets too loud, you wouldn't be able to hear the buzzer go off on your wash.

Brain Wash is at 122 Folsom St. between Seventh and Eighth streets among several rock and acid jazz nightclubs. It has two phone numbers for information, depending upon your areas of interest: (415) 431-WASH or (415) 861-FOOD.

Montes said Schindler is now looking to expand to other sites on the West Coast. There could one day be an entire franchise of hip Laundromats with fine food, art, music and pinball. Who knows, maybe they'll even replace comedy weddings as the newest wrinkle in supper clubs.

-Share your recent vacations with us. We'll publish the best ones. Send your story and photos to the Sunday Features editor, The Desert Sun, P.O. Box 2734, Palm Springs, CA 92263. Or fax your story to 778-4654.

City Visions and a Laundromat

A black and white portrait of a young man with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a patterned bow tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. In the bottom left corner, he is holding a white plate with some food on it. The background is dark and out of focus.

Jim Morrison at the museum buffet party

San Francisco Chronicle

THE LARGEST DAILY CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

HERB CAEN



Through a Glass Lightly

★ ★ ★

BAY CITY BEAT: S.F.'s Andy Aaron, who does the monthly anagrams for Spy magazine, comes up with this for Mayor Art Agnos: "Gay Man's Orator" . . . In case you never heard of it, Spy is a satirical N.Y. monthly that is almost as clever as it thinks it is. Unfortunately, Spy is hard to find in this undernewsstand town. No, undernewsstand is not a word . . . Now then: you know that drink called the Redeye? Right, beer and tomato juice. Not as bad as it sounds. Writer Edwin Heaven has begun bottling the stuff under the brand name of "Redeye" and hopes it does better than his Pet Rubber, which he brought out at the height of condomania. It never took off . . . Lou's Pier 47 Club, that ever-swinging place on Jefferson at the Wharf, is putting on a quake fund-raiser tomorrow through Sunday, with such talent as Mark Naf-talin, Nick Gravenites, Jules Broussard and Denise Perrier. Door charge is only \$2 in the aft and \$5 at night and it all goes to charity . . . Another first for Folsom St.: a cafe-coin-laundry called Brain Wash, opening next month; 34 washers, 24 dryers, 49-seat cafe overlooking the rinse cycle.

November 29, 1989



By Matthew J. Lee/The Tribune

Brain/Wash's cafe offers refuge from the bustle and noise of the laundry room.

The hip crowd comes clean at South-of-Market hot spot

When Susan Schindler thought about opening a coin-op laundry, she had a definite concept in mind.

"I wanted to create a sort of informal place that would also encourage people who weren't doing their wash to come in and hang out," said Schindler, the co-owner of r.s.v.p.*, a party-planning firm that specializes in one-of-a-kind events.

The result is Brain/Wash, which opened in December to become San Francisco's first cafe and coin-op laundry. It's also the only coin laundry available to residents in the South of Market area.

Schindler admits her never-ending quest for the slightly bizarre was the prime motivation for creating a cafe/laundry. Without a doubt, her new business is a reflection of her personal style.

Brain/Wash is located at 1122 Folsom St. in San Francisco and is open Sundays through Wednesdays from 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Thursdays through Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to midnight.

From the outside, the establishment resembles just another nightclub in South of Market. But a glance inside reveals a wacky and artistic interior, complete with concrete floors, beamed ceilings, neon lights and a glass wall that divides the cafe from the washing area.

The washing area is in the back of the cafe and houses 32 computer-run washers, 24 dryers and a wash-and-fold and dry-cleaning service counter. An attendant is on duty for customer assistance.

After putting in their loads of wash, patrons can walk into the cafe and order moderately priced items from a menu that includes sandwiches, chili, soup, pastries, coffee, soft drinks, beer and wine.

And patrons don't have to worry about running back and forth between the cafe and laundry to see if their wash is finished. Each washer and dryer is numbered and a board with corresponding numbers on the cafe wall lights up to indicate when a washer or dryer finishes its cycle.

While having a sandwich or coffee, customers can listen to tunes from the Brain/Wash juke box.



Brain/Wash's Susan Schindler.

"This is a killer juke box filled with a variety of 45s donated by some personal friends from

THE TRIBUNE

Oakland, California

Saturday, March 24, 1990

the NOSE

San Francisco

Brainwash—1122 Folsom

At Brainwash, they encourage graffiti, to the point that they installed walls and a ceiling of green chalkboard in the bathroom, whose door bears the sign "Writers." (The other room is labeled "Readers," and has walls decorated with cartoons and a pastel psychedelic dot pattern.) You'd think since they provide the chalk, people could come up with something more interesting to say:

"I will not talk in class.

I will not talk in class."

"John Lennon lives."

"John Lennon is one legged."

"I eat hate dirty underpants."

"SID 57-79"

"Leave Tobasco Jones alone."

"The best blow job I ever had was in 1972. I'll never forget it. A girl named Marie, turned out to be a dyke and burned rug regularly. But boy could she swallow paste."

"Liar."

"Fiction. 'A Million Hundred Tries.' Available in July (free)."

"Je craquez, vous craquez

—Bober ze French kitty-kat" (Accompanied by picture of kitty cat with beard and glasses.)

"Is it too late for me to have my body pierced? I mean — in terms of exploring physical sensation without being trendy? I really want to know. — Raisa G."

"The answer is yes. It's too late."

"It was over before you started."

"Don't look up here. The joke is in your hand." (Written above toilet.)

"BINKAFRUPPERYAMMAGROMMTI."

— Cate Corcoran

DOPE BUSTS

From BILLIE HOLIDAY
to JERRY GARCIA

SHOOT THE
PRESIDENT?

Stand On the Spot Where
Ford Almost Bit It

PATTY
HEARST



LIBRARY MUSEUM

An informal field guide to the Bay Area's

sunglass culture

SAN FRANCISCO FOCUS



MAY 1997 / \$2.95

BRAIN WASH

This laundromat and café is really a triple-threat situation. You can grab a drink, a light snack, or a full meal while you do your wash ... and soak up some live music, too. Wednesday nights feature acoustic singer-songwriter types; Thursdays are set aside for a jumble of rotating DJs; Fridays feature rock bands in the "unplugged" format (touring acts and locals such as self-proclaimed psycho-acoustic popsters the Krinkles); and Saturdays blend acid-jazz records with piquant jazz acts such as Broun Fellinis and Pigeon Talk. But the biggest draw at Brain Wash these days is Monday night's Ian Brennan Show, featuring the iconoclastic singer-songwriter and a veritable orchestra of his friends from the Bay Area music scene. 1122 Folsom, SF (415) 861-FOOD or (415) 431-WASH.

BAY★BEAT

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A

Y

Our critics choose the best in arts and entertainment

GENERAL NEWS	B-10
COMICS	B-6
WEATHER	B-7
TV LISTINGS	B-8

San Francisco Examiner

Style

★ ★ ★ Tuesday, November 17, 1992 B-1

Andrea Brem-
bry interprets
the songs of
Billie Holiday
in "Lady Day
at the Emerson
Bar & Grill" at
Marin Theatre
Company.
[B-3]



SPARKY TAKES OFF IN 'THIS MODERN WORLD'

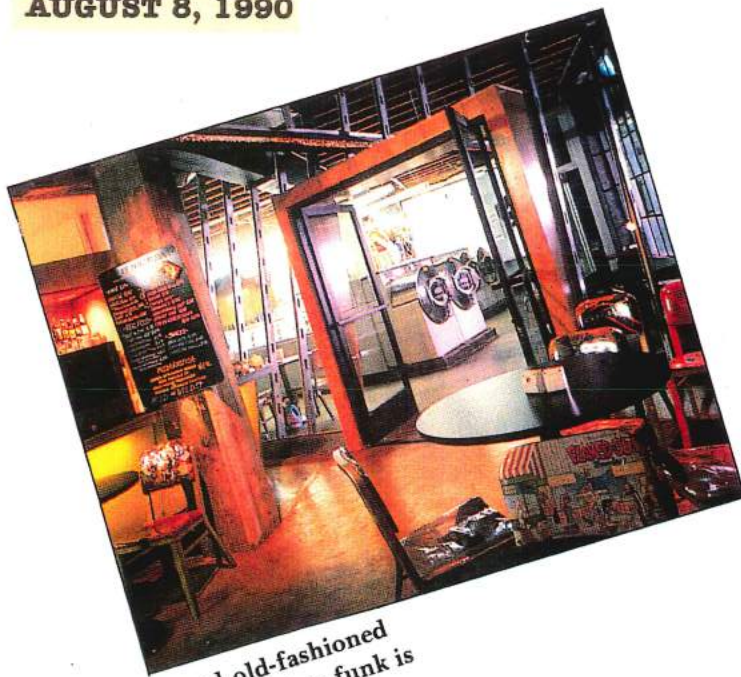


The creators of Sparky and Zippy acknowledge their respect for each other's work in this special strip, a tête à tête on their non-traditional cartooning styles

© TOM TOMMORROW / © BILL GRIFFITH

[®]RESTAURANTS & INSTITUTIONS

AUGUST 8, 1990



Good old-fashioned San Francisco funk is alive and well at Susan Schindler's whimsical Brain Wash, a cafe-cum-laundromat.

WHERE IT'S FUNKY

And what would San Francisco be without a bit of funk? Today, most of it is found south of Market. The Caribbean Zone's mezzanine cocktail lounge is an authentic section of airplane fuselage. Television screens in the cabin's porthole windows run continuous footage of a passenger's eye view of a runway during takeoff. High-decibel airport sound effects boost the sensation of being aboard a moving plane.

Brain Wash is a laundromat/eatery housed in a two-story industrial space. Owner Susan Schindler wanted to do something fun and offbeat. "The area didn't have a 'keep-it-simple, stupid,' and inexpensive casual hang-out place, or a laundromat. I wanted to change the way people think about doing their laundry."

A glass wall separates the cafe from the high-tech backdrop of modern computer-run laundry equipment. Customers nosh on burgers, pizza or chili, sip wine and read newspapers, oblivious to the steady rhythm of 32 churning washers and 24 thumping dryers.

R&I

San Francisco



TM

HIDDEN TREASURES SOUTH OF MARKET

A TASTY PROPOSITION

There are popular restaurants and bars aplenty in SoMa. Dozens of restaurants dishing up California cuisine and more include South Park Cafe, The Cadillac, Chevys, Julie's Supper Club (it'll remind you of "The Jetsons"), Eddie Rickenbacker's, Milano Joe's, Ruby's, The Fly Trap, The Half Shell, Brain Wash (a new cafe concept offering both trendy food and the opportunity to clean your clothes in the adjoining Laundromat), Ace Cafe, Eddie Jax, Embarko, Hamburger Marys and Max's Diner. (Max's Deli and Cafe To-

OF THE CITY

Listen to the
rhythm of the City,
scintillating, pulsating
with a spirit and vitality
that delights and
excites people from

Come to San Francisco. Shop, dine, be entertained.
Share in the excitement. Be a part of this dynamic
and beautiful city. Rediscover for yourself the
heart of the City!

**SEX OFFENDERS: Why Punishment
Doesn't Fix the Crime** by Marilee Strong

SAN FRANCISCO FOCUS

APRIL 1985 / \$2.50

BEST OF THE BAY AREA

the **Ultimate Insider's Guide**

Best Place to
Smell the Roses

Best Hamburger

Best Toll Taker

Brain Wash Laundromat/
club/café with a grunge but
clean crowd. 1122 Folsom St.,
San Francisco, 415/861-3663.

Best Masseuse

Best Martini

Best Place to
Talk Dirty

Best-Kept Secret

Best Seat at
the Geary

Best Bartender





SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Case Report

HEARING DATE: APRIL 19, 2017

Filing Date: March 24, 2017
Case No.: 2017-003782LBR
Business Name: BrainWash, Inc.
Business Address: 1126 Folsom Street
Zoning: NCT (Folsom Street Neighborhood Commercial Transit)/
65-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3730/014
Applicant: Jeffrey Zalles, President
1126 Folsom Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim, District 6
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

BrainWash, Inc. is a combination laundromat, internet café, restaurant, and entertainment venue founded by Susan Schindler in 1989 and located on Folsom Street between Rausch and Langton Streets in the South of Market. Schindler had worked as a party planner and initially sought to open a nightclub in the South of Market. She changed her mind after learning that the neighborhood lacked a laundromat. With the goal of making chores more fun, she opened BrainWash, the only laundromat in the neighborhood when it opened its doors in 1989. Nearly three decades old, it continues to offer over 30 high-tech washers and dryers, a 49-seat internet café and restaurant open daily until 2 a.m., electronic displays at the cafe indicating when clothes are ready, pinball machines, and a juke box, as well as live entertainment such as comedy standup, poetry readings, and all-age music shows.

The combination laundromat and café features large windows, concrete floors, and high, beamed ceilings. Its industrial interior design, signage and logos with company branding, and a tilted diagonal glass-and-metal wall separating the approximately 30 computerized washing machines from the café contribute to its “post-punk” aesthetic. Interior wall space is covered with art work by local artists to sell their work, signs on its all-gender restrooms read, “Readers,” and “Writers,” and a parklet on exterior allows customers to enjoy café beverages and food outside.

BrainWash gives back to the community by serving as a gathering spot and venue for community meetings, and by partnering with local government agencies to offer laundry services to homeless individuals at no charge. Through this partnership, City agencies provide homeless individuals with vouchers that can be redeemed at BrainWash for laundry services. The program was envisioned by Jeffrey Zalles, the current owner of BrainWash. In addition to serving South of Market residents, BrainWash attracts customers from outside the neighborhood who enjoy the unique amenities or wish to attend an event onsite. Tourists are also drawn to the establishment, which has received a significant amount of

BrainWash, Inc.; Cal's Automotive Center; Chinese Historical Society of America; Gino and Carlo, Inc.; Noriega Produce

national and international media attention over the years, including an article in Smithsonian Magazine, appearances in television shows on the Food Network, and reviews of its café and restaurant offerings by newspaper food critics. BrainWash is known for its stand-up comedy open mic, one of the oldest in the Bay Area; well-known comedians whose careers started at BrainWash include Ali Wong, Louis Katz, Mo Mandel, Sheng Wang, Brent Weinbach, and Al Madrigal, the "Senior Latino Correspondent" on the Daily Show. Other famous comedians such as Paul Mooney, Hannibal Burrell, Faizon Love, and the late Robin Williams have also performed at BrainWash.

BrainWash is currently at risk of closure or displacement. Ongoing construction of an adjacent six-story 112-unit apartment building has resulted in declining business and revenues. The company is unlikely to sustain itself for much longer without assistance and its lease expires in 2019 with negotiations for a new lease to begin soon.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

1989.

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

Yes, BrainWash qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. BrainWash has operated for 28 years, has made significant contributions to the neighborhood, and is at significant risk of displacement.
- ii. BrainWash has contributed to the identity of the West South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood by functioning as a neighborhood laundromat and combination café, restaurant, and entertainment venue. It was the first and only laundromat in the West SoMa neighborhood when it opened in 1989. It is unique in that it features high-tech washers and dryers, meals and beverages at its café, free internet Wi-Fi, and live entertainment programming, thus also promoting artistic and cultural expression in addition to providing a basic neighborhood service.
- iii. BrainWash is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its tradition as a neighborhood laundromat and combination café, restaurant, and entertainment venue in West South of Market.

While BrainWash has been in operation less than 30 years (eligibility Criterion I), it is currently at risk of closure or displacement. Ongoing construction of an adjacent six-story 112-unit apartment building has led to declining business and revenue. BrainWash is unlikely to sustain itself for much longer without assistance. The present lease will expire in 2019 and the business is looking to start negotiations on its new lease soon.

BrainWash, Inc.; Cal's Automotive Center; Chinese Historical Society of America; Gino and Carlo, Inc.; Noriega Produce

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

The business is associated with tradition of serving as a neighborhood laundromat, café, restaurant, and entertainment venue. It was one of the earliest documented business models of its kind.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

1122-1126 Folsom Street is considered a "Category A Property," indicating the presence of a historic resource. It is a contributor to the California Register-eligible Western SoMa Light Industrial and Residential Historic District. It was also identified on page 178 of the *LGBTQ Historic Context Statement* for its association with Clementina's Baybrick Inn, a South of Market bar that welcomed lesbians of color.

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

No. However, it has been identified as a contributor to a potential historic district: the California Register-eligible Western SoMa Light Industrial and Residential Historic District

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

Yes. The business is noted on page 178 of the *LGBTQ Historic Context Statement* for its association with Clementina's Baybrick Inn, which welcomed lesbians of color.

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

Yes. BrainWash has been cited in numerous publications including, but not limited to:

Smithsonian Magazine, 04/1997, "It all comes out in the wash," by Chiori Santiago; San Francisco Chronicle, 1/27/1990, "49 Reasons the City is Super," by Pat Steger; Time Out: London's Weekly Guide, 10-13/1993, "Dispatches: San Francisco," by Alix Sharkey; America West Airlines Magazine, 3/1997, "A Clean Break," by Wendy Neri; Details: the music issue, 7/1993, "San Francisco: BrainWash"; Arena: The British Magazine for Men, Summer/Autumn 1991, "A City on a Hill"; Metropolitan Home, May 1990, "The Inside Track on Where to Eat, Stay, Play, and Shop: San Francisco"; The Magazine of Design and Style, April 1990, "Wash N' Nosh"; Flipside, March/April 1991; Prism Magazine, March 1990, "Brainwashed," by M.M.; San Francisco Examiner, 12/11/1989, "South of Market laundry-case opens," by Louis Trager; San Jose Mercury News, June 28-July 4, 1991, "Rockin' n' washin'," by David Plotnikoff; San Francisco Focus, August 1991, Letter from the Editor: Recipes for Success," by Mark K. Powelson; Food Arts, March 1990, "Spin Cycle Supper Club," by Kelley Regan; San Francisco Chronicle, 6/25/1990, "City Visions and a Laundromat," by Pat Steger; San Francisco Chronicle, 11/29/1989, "Bay City Beat," by Herb Caen; The Tribune, 3/24/1990, "The hip crowd comes clean at South-of-Market hot spot"; San Francisco Focus, May 1997, "Bay Beat: BrainWash"; San Francisco Examiner, 11/17/1992, "Sparky Takes off in 'This Modern World,'" by Tom Tomorrow and Bill Griffith; Restaurants & Institutions, 8/8/1990, "Where It's Funky." BrainWash has also been featured in San Francisco Focus' Best of the Bay Area: the Ultimate Insider's Guide and Lonely Planet travel guides.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 1126 Folsom Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Laundry services
- Café function

Additional Recommended by Staff

- South of Market location
- Entertainment function
- Industrial interior design and signage
- Company branding and logo
- Juke box
- Pinball machines
- Practice of displaying artwork by local artists



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution HEARING DATE APRIL 19, 2017

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Information:
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Filing Date: March 24, 2017
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Block/Lot: 3730/014
Applicant: Jeffrey Zalles, President
1126 Folsom Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim, District 6
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

**ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR BRAINWASH, INC.,
CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1126 FOLSOM (BLOCK/LOT 3730/014).**

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 20 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, and is at significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the identity of San Francisco's West South of Market neighborhood; 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 April 19, 2017, 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 BrainWash, Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 20 or more years, has continued to contribute to the community, and is at significant risk of displacement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for BrainWash, Inc.:

Location (if applicable)

- *1126 Folsom Street*

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- *Laundry services*
- *Café function*
- *South of Market location*
- *Entertainment function*
- *Industrial interior design and signage*
- *Company branding and logo*
- *Juke box*
- *Pinball machines*
- *Practice of displaying artwork by local artists*

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 2017-003782LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on April 19, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

Resolution No. XX
April 19, 2017

2017-003782LBR
1126 Folsom Street; BrainWash Inc.

NOES:

ABSENT

ADOPTED: