

San Francisco

Undertown RPG Group

July 18, 2010

Who are the Undertown RPG Group? We're an online Dresden Files RPG group. Some of us actually live in San Francisco; the rest just enjoy making up stuff about it. Thanks go out to our current members: Aine, Bloo, Enjorous, Fyrchick, Luminous, Markkus, Mystic, Tordon, and our GM, Mij.

We also recognize the contributions of past members: Ahrrrie, Booklover, DwightFry, FaithMage, Knight Disciple, paulHarkonen, and Themostocles. Thanks guys!

we had to choose just one word to describe this city, it would be “Cosmopolitan”. It was originally inhabited by Native Americans, settled by Spaniards, governed by Mexicans, fought over and eventually bought by Americans, emigrated to by Asians, and adopted by alternative cultures – and managed to blend them all. Spend a day wandering the Presidio or fishing off Pier 39. Take a tour of the city by cable car and see our famous row houses. Explore our asian heritage in Japantown or Chinatown. Explore our counter-culture in Haight-Ashbury. Look for all the locations you've seen in television shows, movies, commercials (who can forget Rice-a-Roni?), books, and art.

But cosmopolitan has a bad side too. After all, the brighter the light, the darker the shadow. Find yourself in the wrong section of the city too late at night, and losing your wallet or car could be the best you can hope for.

Introduction

In this guide, we'll present our version of San Francisco. A lot of it is true, some of it is questionable, and the rest is totally made up. We'll let you decide what's what.

San Francisco: “Baghdad by the Bay”

Welcome to San Francisco – or Frisco, as it's known to the locals. Gateway to the western United States for generations of people looking for wealth, power, or just a fresh start. If

Economy

San Francisco is one of the principal financial centers on the West Coast of the United States. It got its financial start with the California Gold Rush of 1848. Wells Fargo and Bank of California were both started with gold field proceeds. That gold also fueled a lot of entrepreneurs; Levi Strauss and Domingo Ghiradelli, for example.

Other names you probably know as well.

Of course, you know those names because they made it big. But the entrepreneurial spirit that drove those folks is still alive and well. In fact, companies with 10 or fewer employees make up 85% of the businesses in the city. Don't think these are all "Mom and Pop" shops, however (though there are a lot of those). San Francisco has made a concerted effort to tie itself financially to Silicon Valley, it's tech-savvy neighbor to the south. So the start-up with three employees might be trying to broker deals with Tokyo for the latest in cell phone technology. Or, in keeping with the cosmopolitan nature of the city, they might also be negotiating with Hong Kong to import rare vases.

The biggest industry in San Francisco, however, is definitely tourism. The city hosts millions of visitors each year from a variety of countries, and generates billions of dollars in income from them. San Francisco is a popular location for conventions and conferences, and the city has put a lot of work into creating the necessary atmosphere and infrastructure to support it. The Moscone Center is recognized as a world-class convention center; and there are over 200 hotels in the city, many of them with 4- or 5-star ratings.

Climate

Mark Twain, who lived in San Francisco for several years, is famously misquoted as saying that the coldest winter he ever spent was a summer in San Francisco. The city has a very cool climate similar to those seen in parts of the Mediterranean. A jacket is almost always a good idea here. The annual average temperature is around 60°F (16°C), and rarely varies more than 15 degrees from that average. Annual humidity is

84%. In the summer months, the weather tends to be clear and sunny; in winter, cloudy and overcast. The winter is also when the city gets the bulk of its precipitation, typically in the form of rain.

Like everything else, though, the weather in San Francisco varies. On the western and northern sides of the city, the weather tends to be cooler, cloudier, and wetter. Sunset, Richmond, the Presidio, and Marina all fit this description. The eastern and southern neighborhoods, by contrast, tend to be more sunny and dry.

And no discussion of climate could be complete without mentioning the fog. Few cities are associated with fog as much as San Francisco. How many other cities have a daily fog forecast? In summer, the fog comes in thick and billowing along the western side of the city in the evening, and often persists until the middle of the following day. In winter, the fog tends to cling to the ground in northern neighborhoods, and is often accompanied by drizzling rain.

Geography

San Francisco sits on a peninsula of land surrounded by the Pacific Ocean on the west, the Golden Gate Strait to the north, and San Francisco Bay on the east. The peninsula itself is very hilly, as anyone who has ever tried walking around (or driving a stretch limo) in the city can attest. San Francisco has been called "the City of Seven Hills", but this is a misnomer. Exact numbers vary, but everyone agrees there are significantly more than seven. Some, like Telegraph Hill, are points of interest in their own right.

The "official" elevation of the city is 60 feet, but that doesn't really tell you the story. The elevation varies from 0 feet to 750 feet – often in a very short distance. The hills are very steep,

particularly in the center of the city. The terrain becomes less steep (but still impressive) as you move toward the ocean on the western side of the city, except for Golden Gate Park, which is generally flat. The eastern side of the city is also very flat.

Contrary to popular myth, and despite the 1906 earthquake, the San Andreas Fault passes south and west of the city. There's a rumor that a ley line runs adjacent to the fault; or perhaps that the fault is itself a ley line. If that's true, it represents a vast source of potential power – for the wizard insane enough to tap it.

What's What in San Francisco

San Francisco, true to its cosmopolitan nature, has a rich and varied history. It was founded by Lieutenant José Joaquín Moraga and Father Francisco Palóu in 1776, who named it for Saint Francis of Assisi. It passed from Spanish control to Mexican control as a result of the Mexican War of Independence in 1821, and was then sold to the growing United States at the conclusion of the Mexican-American war – just in time for the California Gold Rush of 1848.

The Gold Rush is one of the defining events in San Francisco's history. In one year, the population of the city swelled from 1,000 to 25,000. Though many of the arrivals were americans from the east, a large percentage were immigrants from Japan, China, and Mongolia. Regardless, they were all looking to start a new life and maybe get rich. "Gold Fever" was everywhere, and martial law was imposed to stem the tide of lawless behavior. The situation persisted until California was made a state in 1850.

The second defining event occurred in 1906. By this time, the city boasted a population of

400,000 people, and was a financial powerhouse, with Wells Fargo and Bank of California based there. Its exotic blend of cultures also attracted tourists and the idle rich alike. But on April 18th at almost exactly 5:12am, the greatest earthquake in U.S. history and arguably one of the most significant earthquakes in known history occurred in San Francisco. The shock wave ruptured gas lines in buildings throughout the city, and caused a conflagration that required three days to control. 225,000 people became homeless, and tent cities remained set up in the Presidio, Japantown, and other neighborhoods for the next two years. Rebuilding took most of the next decade, and monetary losses were eventually estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars. As a result, San Francisco fell behind other west coast cities like Los Angeles.

But though it was down, the city definitely wasn't out. Over the course of the next several decades, San Francisco re-defined itself. It didn't throw away anything that was already there; it just blended in new ideas. This process reached an apex – and San Francisco had its last defining moment – with the Free Love movement of the late sixties. San Francisco became the epicenter of an earthquake of a very different kind. Over 100,000 people ("hippies") gathered in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, and brought alternative lifestyles to national, and eventually international, attention. Haight-Ashbury continues to evoke a "Free Love" feeling to the present day.

The Mundane Community

San Francisco is always characterized as a city with low crime, a city where everyone feels safe. But if you look at the crime statistics, it really isn't all that different from other cities of similar

size (or the national average, for that matter). Kind of makes you wonder if the “low crime rate” isn’t White Court propaganda to attract the best and brightest in technical fields and help bring in tourism dollars.

Regardless, the mundane community has a number of notable groups, which are discussed below. These groups are here because their members are, by and large, mortals without access to supernatural powers and/or abilities. In fact, in most (but not all) cases, they also aren’t aware that such powers and abilities exist.

The San Francisco Police Department

The SFPD; the cops. Generally overworked and underappreciated. We’ve heard that other cities have “special” units to deal with the weird things that occasionally happen. As far as we know, no such unit exists in San Francisco, at least not in any official or organized sense. The party line from the police is always a variant of “Nothing to see here folks; move along.” If any pockets of enlightenment exist within the force, they are staying well hidden.

The Yakuza

The Yakuza as a whole is the largest criminal organization in the world. Unlike other criminal organizations, the Yakuza is not interested in maintaining a low profile. Instead, members often dress in flashy clothing, or wear pins or other insignia identifying their clan. In Japan, Yakuza houses often have signs indicating their purpose. In the United States, however, the Yakuza have adopted a much more discrete, low-key persona.

The origins of the Yakuza can be difficult to trace. The various gangs that make up the organization often tell different stories, and those sto-

ries are often different from “official” histories. However, the majority of these origin stories involve some kind of an “outsider” – a dispossessed samurai (called ronin) or kabuki-mono (“crazy ones”) for example. It is possible Yakuza members adopt flamboyant lifestyles to honor these origins.

The Yakuza have a very complex, hierarchical management structure. Simply put, however, at the top of the hierarchy is the supreme boss, called the *kumicho*. Underneath him are *saiyokomon* (senior advisors) and *wakagashira* (First Lieutenant), who are involved in running particular regions or cities, often with a number of gangs. Each of these gangs is, in turn, run by a *shateigashira* (Second Lieutenant).

In addition to this hierarchy is the sometimes more important principle of *oyabun-kobun* (father-child). Simply put, this is loyalty between a superior (oyabun) and subordinate (kobun). The subordinate must provide unswerving loyalty to the superior; in return the superior must provide protection and guidance to the subordinate. This principle is very strongly enforced in the Yakuza.

Yakuza members follow several important rituals. The first is the ritual of initiation, which is how a person joins a gang. Rituals vary, usually depending on the focus of the gang, but most involve an exchange of sake. Another ritual is *irezumi*, or full-body tattoos. These tattoos may be shown or concealed, depending on circumstances. The final ritual is *Yubitsume*. This ritual is used as a form of apology or penance, and involves cutting off the pinky finger on one’s dominant hand.

San Francisco has several Yakuza gangs, all operating out of Japantown or the Western Addition. The gangs are arranged in a tiered fashion; typically, new recruits join the lowest tier

gang, the J-Town Rat Pack. Those who demonstrate the necessary skills, drive, and most importantly loyalty, are promoted into the middle-tier gang, [NEED A NAME]. Those who excel there can be promoted to the highest-tier organization, [NEED ANOTHER NAME].

Each of the gangs has its own area of specialty. The J-Town Rat Pack focuses on “traditional” Yakuza activities: prostitution and gambling. The [MID-TIER GANG] focuses on [???]. The highest-tier gang, [HIGHEST-TIER GANG], focuses on industrial espionage, covert information gathering, and high-tech crime.

The Yakuza in San Francisco are part of the Yamaguchi-gumi family, which is based in Tokyo. The wakagashira for San Francisco is Kenichi Tsokoda. Tsokoda is a very intelligent and driven man. He and the upper echelons of his organization are aware of the local supernatural community, enough so that he has in the past hired “consultants” for his endeavors. The majority of the membership, however, is not aware.

The Tongs

Like the Yakuza, modern tongs are family-run criminal organizations. However, this was not always the case. Tong means “hall” in Chinese, and the tongs started as aid societies for the flood of incoming Chinese workers during the Gold Rush years. They would provide shelter, protection, and necessities such as clothing; and also help immigrants to find jobs or get started in the gold fields.

Soon, though, the tongs began to provide other services – and benefits – as well. Unlike the Yakuza, however, the tongs preferred to keep their other activities secret. As a result, they developed two distinct personalities. To the public, the tongs continued to be aid societies that

provided immigrants with the assistance they needed to get started in a new country. But behind their public facade, the tongs began to recruit talent from both the community and the new arrivals.

As the tongs’ power and size grew, they became more organized. Consisting mainly of Chinese immigrants – many undoubtedly of questionable history – it’s not surprising they adopted the same type of hierarchy as is seen in Chinese Mafia (Triad) organizations. The similarities have led some to speculate that the Triad controls the tongs; but this is not the case. The tongs (whether or not they have a criminal element) are fiercely independent organizations, even fighting between themselves to gain advantage. In fact, in the early 1900s, San Francisco went through a period of intense inter-tong fighting called the Tong Wars.

Tong hierarchy, as mentioned previously, is similar to that of Triad organizations. Each gang is run like a family, with a head called a *Mountain Master*. Underneath him are a deputy and two other senior advisors. Under the deputy are three officers, one of whom is the *Red Pole*. This person is responsible for day-to-day operations of the gang. Under the Red Pole are the gang members, usually called *49ers* and initiates, who are called *Blue Lanterns*.

As with the Triad, symbols are very important to the tongs. Each tong has a distinctive symbol for its headquarters, though they are often hidden or disguised. Also, tong members, like their Yakuza counterparts, often have intricate tattoos that may cover major portions of their bodies. In addition, many believe tong members have a set of secret symbols they use to communicate covertly with other tong members. Finally, tongs have initiation ceremonies for Blue Lanterns. These vary from tong to tong,

but often involve the blood of an animal such as a chicken or goat that is mixed with wine and drunk by the initiate.

The tongs have, in general, adapted with changing times. Modern-day tongs have moved from focusing on people from a particular region or ethnic group to focusing on a common vocation or belief set. The tongs, however, remain headquartered in Chinatown. We are providing a list of some of the more prominent tongs currently in operation, along with their focus and any known criminal activities.

- The Bou Yah Tong. This tong tends to attract [???]. They have a strong criminal element that deals in illicit gambling operations.
- The Chang Sing Tong. This tong is also known as the “fighter tong” as it tends to attract martial artists. This tong has no known criminal element.
- The Hen Gui Tong. This tong tends to attract [???]. They deal mainly in prostitution and pornography, but also do some drug running.
- The Wei Chi Tong. This tong tends to attract engineers and scientists. They have no known criminal element.
- The Wing Kong Tong. This tong tends to attract [???]. Many believe this is the largest criminal tong in San Francisco. They deal mainly in extortion and contract killing, but also have interests in gambling.
- The Zai Jian Tong. This tong tends to attract merchants – particularly traders. They have a strong criminal element that deals in drug running (mainly opium) and

illegal artwork. They also perform some extortion operations.

The Native Americans

TEXT

The Venatori Umbrorum

TEXT

The Eye of Thoth

TEXT

The Supernatural Community

The supernatural community of San Francisco is a lot bigger than most people realize. “Cosmopolitan” applies here as well. Of course, not all of these groups have a significant presence in the city; some of them, in fact, don’t have one. And of course, it’s possible there are groups missing from the list.

The Black Court, The Jade Court

Neither of these courts has any known influence in San Francisco.

The Red Court

The Red Court has no presence in San Francisco today, but that wasn’t always the case. Records are sketchy, owing to the Earthquake, but everyone knows the Red Court ran San Francisco back in the Gold Rush days. Then, they were essentially wiped out during the Earthquake. They may be trying to get a toehold again; there have been unconfirmed rumors of Red Court agents in the city. But their current goals, if any, remain a mystery.

The White Court

House Valetta, under the leadership of Demetrios Valetta, is the face of the White Court in San Francisco. Accounts vary, but everyone agrees he's been here at least a hundred years. The story is that he was on the outs with House Raith, and came to San Francisco to lay low. Then, when the Red Court got booted out, he took advantage of the opportunity. As a result, he has regained some measure of his previous stature in the White Court.

Demetrios' daughter, Antonia (a.k.a. "Toni"), runs Pandora, the most exclusive brothel in the city. Despite the fact that she is engaged in the world's oldest profession, Antonia considers herself a progressive. She convinced her father to take the unusual step of moving into the political arena. As a result, the White Court has virtually total control of the political scene in San Francisco.

The Fae

The Fae don't appear to have an *active* presence in San Francisco, but don't take that to mean they have *no* presence. It's more accurate to say that any tensions between the Summer and Winter Courts have historically been settled without getting anyone else (supernatural or mortal) involved. There are a number of known gates into the NeverNever in and around the city, and both courts have an emissary here.

The best known gate to the Winter Court is on Alcatraz Island. Alcatraz has been host to a lot of very bad people over the years, and has a history of violence and occasional bloodshed. The best known gate to the Summer Court is in Golden Gate Park. Some believe that John McLaren, the Scotsman who created the park,

was in fact an agent of the Summer Court.

[ROBERT GOODFELLOW IS THE CURRENT SUMMER EMISSARY; HIS DAY JOB IS AS A FINANCIER IN THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT. STILL NEED A WINTER EMISSARY.]

The White Council

The White Council, as they do in many places, has a limited presence in San Francisco. Gracie Smythe-Hawkins, anthropologist, master herbalist, and wizard, is the local White Council representative. When she isn't in her beloved arboretum (the San Francisco Botanical Garden), she can usually be found at City Lights Bookstore. Gracie prefers to maintain a low profile in community politics. San Francisco has no assigned Grey Wardens.

Local Paranet Group?

[STILL NEED TO DEVELOP THIS GROUP. IF ANYONE HAS ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR NAMES, ETC., LET ME KNOW]

What's at Stake: Points of Conflict

Who Cares about the city? The Eye of Thoth, the police, the Venatori Umbro-rum

Who Cares about the status quo? The White Court, the politicians

Who Wants to Rock the Boat? The Red Court, the Asian Mafia, the Native American sect

San Andreas Fault TEXT

Asian Mafia vs. White Court TEXT

Native American Threat TEXT

Themes and Threats

There are tons to choose from, but here's what we focused on. The White Court rules the city. They control the politicians, and have deep hooks into the finances and entertainment industries. The Triad controls Chinatown. They have hooks into the police, but not enough to seriously threaten the White Court. The Red Court, at least according to the local rumor mill, is trying to get a toehold in the city. Some say it's driven by an old grudge. No appreciable influence from Faerie Courts or other Vampire groups, but there are some fringe groups, like a Native American sect, that act as "wild cards" in local affairs.

A City with Hidden Troubles

Theme: Bright Face, Black Heart

San Francisco works hard to be a safe, welcoming city for both tourists and residents. But scratch the pleasant surface, and you're likely to find some very nasty surprises underneath. If you're lucky, the surprise will only have claws, teeth, and a really bad attitude.

The "Asian Mafia" has been in San Francisco since the Gold Rush days. And true to its cosmopolitan nature, the city has both Yakuza and Tongs. There are several local Tongs that are run out of Chinatown. They stick mostly to prostitution, drug running, gambling, and extortion. The Yakuza can be found in Japantown and the Western Addition. They deal more with industrial espionage, high-tech crime, and information gathering. The two groups have a long and distinctly homicidal relationship that occasionally spills over into the civilian population.

Also, ever since the earthquake of 1906 (and some say even before), San Francisco has been a sometimes unwilling host to a large homeless population. They can be seen pretty much everywhere in the city, but seem to congregate in the northeastern neighborhoods, starting around Haight-Ashbury, and continuing through Tenderloin and out to North Beach and the Barbary Coast. Perhaps not coincidentally, these are also some of the neighborhoods in the city with the highest crime rates.

And, of course, the local supernatural community brings its share of troubles as well. The White Court may promote a safe city, but that doesn't mean the rest of the supernatural world just stops causing trouble. Places like the Presidio and Muir Woods have always had weird stories associated with them, as does Alcatraz. And there are those who believe that the immigrants from China and Japan brought more than their hopes and dreams with them.

A City with Corrupt Politics

Theme: Lax Morals, Loose Inhibitions

Common wisdom says that if you're a politician in this city, you're on the take. While that is certainly not true, the White Court does appear to control the significant positions of political power. Because of this, initiatives with White Court support tend to be passed, while those without tend to meet unanticipated obstacles.

A City with Growing Tensions

Threat: Old World, New Chinatown

The local tongs have found their pursuits stifled by the velvet stranglehold the White Court, through its political influence, has on the city.

Although they have made inroads with the police department – enough to ensure their prostitution and drug-running activities go virtually uncontested in Chinatown – they aren’t enough to offset White Court control of the politicians.

It seems, though, that they may have a new weapon in their ongoing struggle. Historically, tongs are fiercely independent and fight between themselves as much as against others. Lately, however, violence between tongs appears to have virtually disappeared. There are rumors floating around that the reason is either an unprecedented alliance, or a power grab by one of the heads that has significant (though unspecified) backing. In either case, this development could have major impacts on the balance of power within San Francisco.

Who’s Who in San Francisco

Connor Bevan

Motivation: I will stand against the darkness for my fellow man

Face of: Venatori Umbrorum
TEXT

Li Bo Chen

Motivation: I will expand my power at any cost.

Face of: Chinatown, Wing Kong Tong
TEXT

Padre Guillermo Vicente Dionisio de Fausto

Motivation: ???

Face of: Mission Dolores
TEXT

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

Motivation: I won’t take sides

Face of: City Lights Books
TEXT

Gracie Smythe-Hawkins

Motivation: I just want to study

Face of: San Francisco Botanical Gardens, White Council
TEXT

Kenichi Tsokoda

Motivation: ???

Face of: Japantown, Yakuza
TEXT

Demetrios Valetta

Motivation: I will return to my former glory

Face of: The White Court
TEXT

What’s Where in San Francisco

The following sections contain information about various locations within the city. The neighborhoods, like everything else in San Francisco, come in a variety of types. You can get good neighborhood maps on the internet; we found a nice set at <http://sanfrancisco.about.com>, but there are plenty of other choices available.

Chinatown

Theme: May you Live in Interesting Times

Face: Li Bo Chen, owner of [NAME] trading company, and leader of the Wing Kong Tong.

Nestled in the northeastern section of the city, Chinatown has been around since the Gold Rush days. It was the first stop for many Chinese immigrants, and continues to be a community with many foreign-born residents. It is often referred to as “a city within a city” due to its strong sense of community and services that have continued through the years. While offering its residents a foothold in America, it also serves as a monument to Chinese heritage, preserving many of the unique cultures and customs of the people living there.

Among the cultural items it preserves are many Chinese myths and legends. During rebuilding efforts after the 1906 Earthquake (and some say even before), many homes in Chinatown were literally raised off the ground, and additional housing units built beneath. In some cases, entire underground sections were developed. Over time, sections have collapsed or flooded, and other sections have been added. The result is a labyrinthine network of tunnels and other spaces underneath Chinatown. Many of Chinatown’s buildings have entrances to this underground network. A lot of these spaces were (and still are) used for gambling houses or opium dens. Others are quick escape routes for Tong operatives. But listen to the gossip in the street, and you’ll hear stories of weird creatures and worse living in the more remote sections of the tunnels.

City Lights Books

Theme: Accorded Neutral Territory

Face: Lawrence Ferlinghetti, owner and proprietor.

A literary meeting place since 1953, City Lights is a landmark general bookstore, internationally known for its expert selection of books

and for its commitment to free intellectual inquiry. Owner and poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s store contains three floors of intellectual delights. Wind your way through twisty corridors and stacks of books, and climb or descend narrow creaking stairways. The basement portion of the store is Accorded Neutral Territory, and a poetry reading room. Enjoy a cup of espresso across a scarred and smoke-stained table from your direct foe while snapping your fingers for the latest in independent beat poets.

The Financial District

Theme: Peddling Wealth and Influence

Face: Robert Goodfellow, financier and Summer Court Emissary.

The financial district, or FiDi as it is known to locals, is home to the city’s largest concentration of corporate headquarters, law firms, banks, savings & loans and other financial institutions, such as the corporate headquarters of VISA, Wells Fargo Bank, the Charles Schwab Corporation, McKesson Corporation, Barclays Global Investors, Bechtel, Gap, the Union Bank of California and salesforce.com among others. The headquarters of the 12th district of the United States Federal Reserve are located in the area as well. Montgomery Street (“Wall Street of the West”) is the traditional heart of the district.

Japantown

Theme: What Happens in J-Town, Stays in J-Town

Face: Kenichi Tsokoda, wakagashira (1st Lt.) to the obayun (family head) in Japan.

Japantown lies one mile west of Union Square, and comprises six square blocks that includes a mall, hotels, businesses and residences. Mostly

owned by ‘outside interests’. Stronghold of the Yamaguchi-gumi, the most powerful Yakuza family in the United States.

The Western Addition (J-town) remained untouched by the 1906 fire and provided a haven for the bulk of San Francisco’s burned-out population. Tent villages were hastily erected in nearby parks to provide emergency accommodations for homeless families. Later these families crowded into small apartments which Western Addition homeowners had built into the attics, basements, and wings of their homes. Many property owners raised their houses and placed stores beneath them, and additional commercial buildings were constructed alongside homes. Thus began the mixed land use which later brought restaurants, theatres, saloons, and hotels to the area, many of which are owned by local Yakuza or Japanese based business. The warren of properties makes it almost impossible to find someone hiding here.

Mission Dolores

Theme: A Refuge from Evil

Face: Padre Guillermo Vicente Dionisio de Fausto, Padre of the church, and head of the local chapter of the Eye of Thoth.

Mission Dolores is the oldest surviving structure in San Francisco, having survived both the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, and the ensuing fires virtually unscathed. Unbeknownst to the many people that worship in the newer Mission Dolores Basilica nearby, it is still being used by the Church to house the local chapter of the secret organization, the Eye of Thoth.

Nob Hill Masonic Center

Theme: ???

Face: Connor Bevan, head of the local Venatori

Umbrorum.

The Nob Hill Masonic Center officially serves as one of the main centers for the Freemasons to perform community outreach. It is also a front. A good part of the profits from the various concerts, arts events, and so on at the center go to fund the Venatori Umbrorum branch of the local Freemasons. Not all members of the local Mason chapter know of this connection; only the top few, including Connor Bevan.

There is a hidden door to a stairway in the manager’s office; this stairway, wedged into the construction, leads to a tunnel running parallel to the parking garage for a short distance. It then connects to a series of underground rooms that house the information and tools necessary for the work of the Venatori. There are (of course) smaller caches around the city, but this is the main one. Between the wards engraved on the area, and the presence of a nearby church, the Venatori manage to keep smaller supernatural hunters away. The more dangerous sort are kept away primarily through a combination of secrecy, and aggressive enforcement of the boundaries.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Theme: The Place to go when you Don’t Want to be Seen

Face: Gracie Smyth-Hawkins, anthropologist, master herbalist, and Wizard of the White Council.

The Botanical Gardens are a 55-acre preserve near Golden Gate Park. They are also one of the few known “DMZ”s (*De-Magic Zone*) in the United States. Magic of all variety is either severely limited, or simply refuses to function in the gardens. This makes them a favorite location for members of the supernatural community to

have clandestine meetings and other activities. The fact that they also have access to a large moving aquifer/underground river from the gardens is probably a factor as well.

The gardens are also a main source of materials for local herbalists and healers. Hidden among the many tangled paths and foliage are a variety of herbs and other ingredients for various poultices and remedies. The density and variety of the flora makes it appealing to both the supernatural and mortal communities.

Gracie Smythe-Hawkins, who is the manager and head caretaker for the Botanical Gardens, is also a Wizard of the White Council. She both tends for the various herbs and medicinal plants in the botanical gardens, and studies the DMZ to see if she can gain a better understanding of how it works.

Tenderloin

Theme: ???

Face: ???

Nestled between successful commercial areas and high priced residential areas, the Tenderloin is a community of seedy character with a reputation for crime, particularly violent street crime such as robbery and aggravated assault.

Squalid conditions, homelessness, crime, illegal drug trade, prostitution, liquor stores, and strip clubs give the neighborhood its reputation. However, these conditions have also kept rents in the area more affordable to low-income and working class people. Surprisingly, the area has resisted attempts to gentrify and clean it up, always reverting to its former status as seedy crime ridden wasteland of lost souls. The Asian Mafia presence is very strong here.