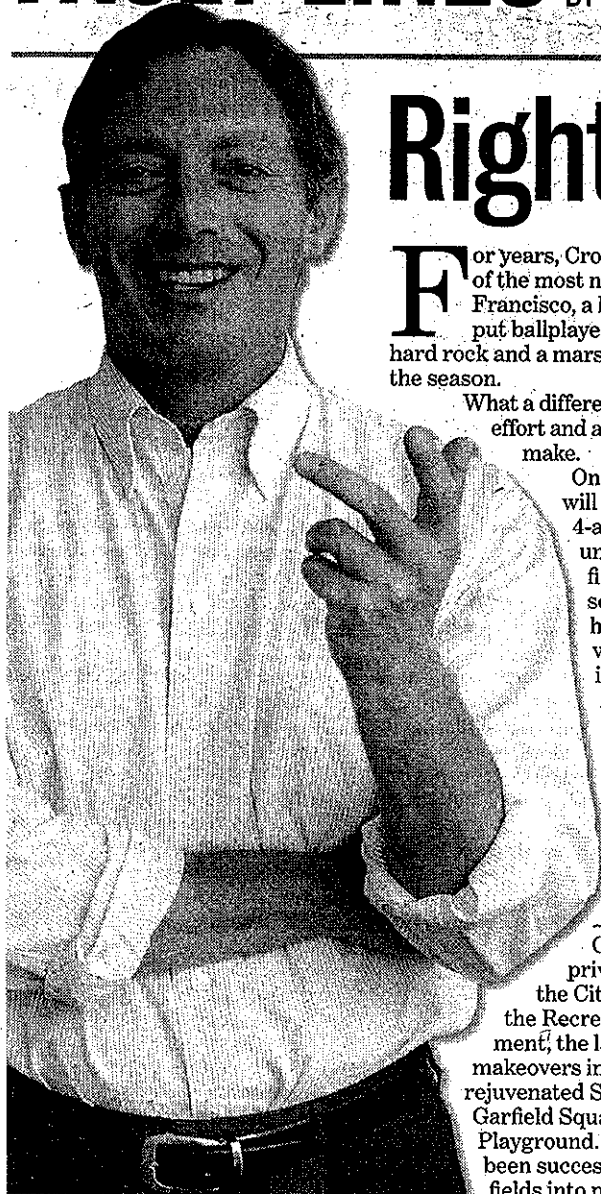


# FAULT LINES

BY KEN GARCIA · FOR BREAKING SAN FRANCISCO NEWS, VISIT SFEXAMINER.COM

## Right decisions, right reasons



**F**or years, Crocker Amazon was one of the most neglected parks in San Francisco, a large series of fields that put ballplayers somewhere between a hard rock and a marshy bog — depending on the season.

What a difference a little time, a lot of effort and a fair amount of cash can make.

On Sunday, San Francisco will officially reopen a new, 4-acre stretch of the park, unveiling what will be the finest collection of turf soccer fields in The City's history. And for someone who has been complaining about the state of San Francisco's playing fields for more than a decade, I can say that Crocker Amazon is a stunning testament to what can happen when the right people make the right decisions for the right reasons.

The renovation of Crocker Amazon is a joint private-public project of the City Fields Foundation and the Recreation and Park Department, the latest in a series of field makeovers in that partnership that has rejuvenated Silver Terrace Playground, Garfield Square and South Sunset Playground. While those projects have been successful in turning rundown fields into popular community assets,



EXAMINER FILE PHOTO

**Success story:** Crocker Amazon Park, long neglected, has reaped the fruit of a collaborative effort to renovate San Francisco's recreation areas.

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the \$10 million transformation of Crocker is by far the largest and most impressive display in that ongoing partnership.

When it is fully complete, the park will have new restrooms, a concession stand and picnic benches. All of the fencing has been replaced and, topping it off, is new high-tech lighting that will give teams a chance to play well past sundown.

"This has been a great opportunity to show what can work," said Susan Hirsch of the City Fields Foundation, which received its funding from Bill, Bob and John Fisher of the Gap family.

Because of the poor drainage at Crocker

before the turf fields were added, the park was essentially closed six months per year. The five new fields will increase the number of hours players can use the lacrosse and soccer pitches by more than 12,000 annually.

The City will hold a grand-reopening ceremony from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Sadly, the biggest competitive youth soccer tournament in San Francisco — the Golden Gate Invitational — which is being held Sept. 27-28, will be played at the Mojave-like Polo Fields because the host Viking Club organization had concerns about whether Crocker would be ready in time.

Proving that, in soccer and life, you miss some calls.