

\$5,000 collected for doggie nose job

Diner mascot's restoration bill paid

By Suzanne Herel
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Before the Doggie Diner head grew into a pup icon, it was a doodle on young Will Bachman's paper lunch bag.

The storied head was created by Bachman's father, Harold, around the time the 40-year-old Richmond firefighter was born.

Yesterday, Bachman joined his family and his 80-year-old father at a San Francisco fund-raiser that collected about \$5,000 — enough to pay off the cult statue's nose job at the hands of the Department of Public Works.

As a youngster, Bachman had a model of the doggie head propped in a corner of his San Ramon bedroom.

"I thought it was cool, but I didn't know what it would become," Bachman said of the miniature mascot. "I just knew I was the only kid who had one."

The dachshund head was repaired this summer after a proboscis-shattering nosedive onto

Sloat Boulevard in gusty winds April 1.

The operation cost \$25,000 — \$15,000 of which was paid by the city of San Francisco.

On June 30, Department of Public Works unveiled the refurbished head, perched on a sturdy new steel pole outside the Carousel restaurant on Sloat Boulevard at 46th Avenue. A crowd of hundreds shrank the bill by about \$5,000, said Department of Public Works spokesman Alex Mamak.

The grinning, candy-apple red dog, wearing a chef's hat and bow tie, is the only one left standing of more than two dozen, which used to rotate on poles outside Doggie Diner restaurants from the '60s

through the '80s.

More than four decades ago, the elder Bachman was commissioned by Doggie Diner owner Al Ross to transform the stubby-legged mascot Ross had been using.

In all, 12 heads — including the one on Sloat — are known to remain, said John Law of Emeryville, who owns three: Manny, Moe and Jack. He had carted his litter to Centro Latino de San Francisco in the Mission District for yesterday's event.

Mayor Willie Brown proclaimed yesterday Harold Bachman Day, and the retired artist accepted the praise humbly, continually expressing astonishment that his creation had engendered

such a following.

"I never in my wildest dreams thought this would happen," he said. "I'm glad so many people like it."

Bachman, whose artwork once appeared on billboards all over the Bay Area, still draws. A cartoon print of the doggie head sandwiched among the presidents on Mount Rushmore was for sale, along with coloring books and candy bars.

But Will Bachman still prefers his dad's casual doodlings.

"Whenever he sends a letter, he draws the doggie head and himself standing next to it," he said.

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Harold Bachman, creator of the Doggie Diner head, reunited with three of his creations at a fund-raiser.