



AUTUMATTER

A bullet-shaped piece of granite, some four feet tall and three feet wide, was inadvertently deposited in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park four years back by a crane operator. Major annoyance, right?

Not to New Age and Hindu devotees, who began to flock to the boulder in droves. But don't look for the giant rock in the park today. This past January, the holy bauble was moved to the studio of Baba Kali Das, born Michael Bowen, the co-founder of the New Age Visionary Art Movement.

According to Kali Das, he discovered the giant stone in 1989 during a walk across the park from his Ashram Art Studio, culminating what he says was a "seven-year search" for a monument to the Lord Shiva. Realizing the stone was a "Shiva linga," he began leaving offerings. "I knew that energy placed there would attract others," he says, calling the stone a "psychic accumulator"

that showers worshipers with "radiant health and a calm mind."

Somehow word got around. Soon people started coming to the rock. In the end, an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* helped to attract the devoted and the curious in greater numbers than ever before.

"We soon had reports of incense and open candle flames that posed a fire hazard to nearby foliage," says Jack Immendorf, Recreation and Parks Commission president. Then, ever increasing media coverage, including an article in the *New York Times*, brought curious mobs, panhandlers, and vandals to the site of the stone as well.

That's why this past January, Immendorf offered the stone to Kali

Das on the national television show *A Current Affair*. Kali Das accepted and brought the rock to his art studio, which serves as a base for practitioners of devotional yoga as well as artists.

In its new setting, the stone's draw is appar-

ently undiminished. "It's not the site; it's the stone," says Kali Das. "People are coming here like ant streams, and the psychic energy is intense."

Geno Valle, a San Francisco hair designer who practices devotional yoga at the stone, agrees. "The stone's energy is always with me," he says. "As soon as I began my devotions, my

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clients increased and I made a lot more money."

One small problem: Some Hindus have contacted Immendorf to protest the stone's removal. "We thought Das

spoke for the entire Hindu community," Immendorf says. "We didn't mean to offend anyone. I hope they can get together and enshrine it at a mutually convenient place."