Vol. XLIV, No. 6 June 2020

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

We Will Miss Mike Forever. Kamal (Mike) Omar of Shufat Market had a smile for everyone, as in this photo taken in May of 2018. He died in May of this year, but his family insists that joy be the watchword when we think of his passing. See our story on page 13.

Photo by Art Bodner

Bernie's Cup of Kindness

A Life Steeped in Coffee and Community

By Megan Wetherall

If there is one thing we can count on in Noe Valley, even during these unsettled times, it's the warm welcome that arrives with every cup of joe served by Bernadette Melvin, better known as Bernie, at her eponymous coffee shop on 24th Street.

That personal connection has been Bernie's gift to the neighborhood for more than three decades.

A third-generation Noe Valley local, Bernie was already a regular at what is now her own coffee shop during its tenure as Spinelli's back in the late 1980s, when she and her fellow James Lick middle schoolers would roam the streets in search of their caffeine fix.

When she was 14 and employed across the street at the florist Barbara's Blooms, she was also well placed to dash over for her latte. She went on to SOTA (now Ruth Asawa), where she discovered her passion for photography, and then to college to study business, but all the while she was still working at the florist and nurturing a plan to open her own flower shop.

Getting up before dawn for the flower market proved to be excellent training for a lifetime of early rising, and Bernie was always the first customer of the day at Spinelli's, where the staff would have her

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Serving Love: Through drought, recession, or shelter-in-place, Bernie Melvin has our coffee waiting.

Photo by Megan Wetherall

A Tale of Two Dads and How Their Family Grew

Newborn Son Arrives During Global Pandemic

By Matthew S. Bajko

Their son's pregnancy had already been a fraught one, with husbands Charlie Smith and James Loduca at moments fearful he would never be born. The morning of March 12, they had spoken to their surrogate, Kristin Veldhuisen, after a doctor's visit due to the complications she was enduring carrying the baby.

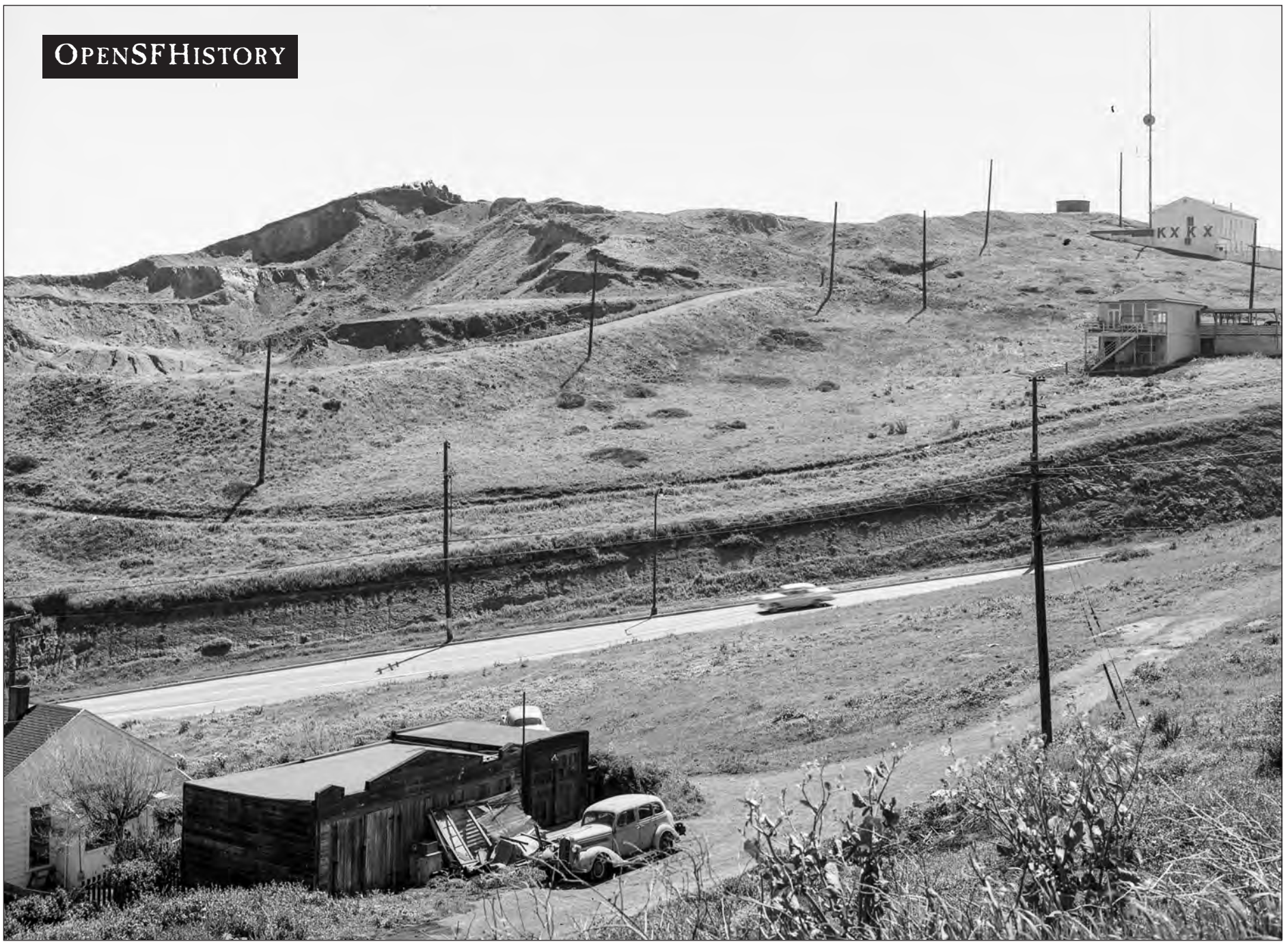
"I hung up the phone and said to James, 'I want him out now!'" said Smith. "James thinks I have this power where everything that comes out of my mouth becomes true."

Roughly 30 minutes later, the phone rang again and the couple learned that Veldhuisen's water had broken three weeks before the baby's due date and she was on her way back to the hospital. As Smith threw clothes into suitcases, Loduca broke the news to his coworkers at Twitter, as he was on a global call with associates at the time.

"Everyone erupted into cheers," recalled Loduca, the head of global inclusion and diversity for the San Francisco–based social media company.

The couple, however, were anxiety-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



A Diamond in the Rough. This 1957 photo shows a barren Diamond Heights well before the development that would take place in the 1960s. Looking south across Clipper Street the ravages of Red Rock Hill Quarry are evident.

Photo and information courtesy OpenSFHistory.org / Western Neighborhoods Project / David Gallagher

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More Noe History. The bulletin board at the Noe Valley Town Square became the latest home for the guerrilla campaign of postings by the OpenSFHistory project.
Photo by Jack Tipple

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The rules and logistics of SF real estate have changed, and Jessica has already proven her strategy in this market is highly successful. Jessica has navigated difficult markets before. She has been an SF property owner for 22 years and has been selling real estate here for close to 15 years. Right now you need her winning guidance and experience.

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135 Bennington | SOLD FOR $2,750,000
www.BeautifulOnBennington.com

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SOLD
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Covid-19 Text "COVID19SF to 888-777, see sf.gov/topics/coronavirus-covid-19, or call	311
Burned-Out Streetlights, city owned (wooden poles call PG&E)	311
District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman	415-554-6968
District 8 Community Liaison for Crime Prevention Jessica Closson	415-713-6877
Graffiti Removal, Tree Removal, Street Cleaning (DPW)	415-695-2017
Hazardous Waste Disposal / free pickup bulky items	415-330-1300
Homeless Services Street Outreach Services (SOS)	415-355-2250
Lost or Injured Animals Animal Care and Control	415-554-6364
Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services sfmayor.org	415-554-7111
NERT (SFFD Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams)	415-970-2022
Parking Enforcement DPT Dispatch	415-553-1200
PG&E Gas or electrical issues	1-800-743-5000
Pothole Repairs potholes@sfdpw.org	415-554-5810
Recycling Recology San Francisco	415-330-1300
Rent Board	415-252-4600
Sewer Problems, Overflows	415-695-2096
Tree Planting urbanforestry@sfdpw.org	415-554-6700
24th Street Community Benefit District (CBD)	415-519-0093
Water Leaks, Water Pressure	415-554-3289

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Norman Douglas, author (1868-1952)

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The *Voice* welcomes your letters, photos, and stories, particularly on topics relating to Noe Valley. All items should include your name and contact information, and may be edited for brevity or clarity. (Unsigned letters will not be considered for publication.) Unsolicited contributions will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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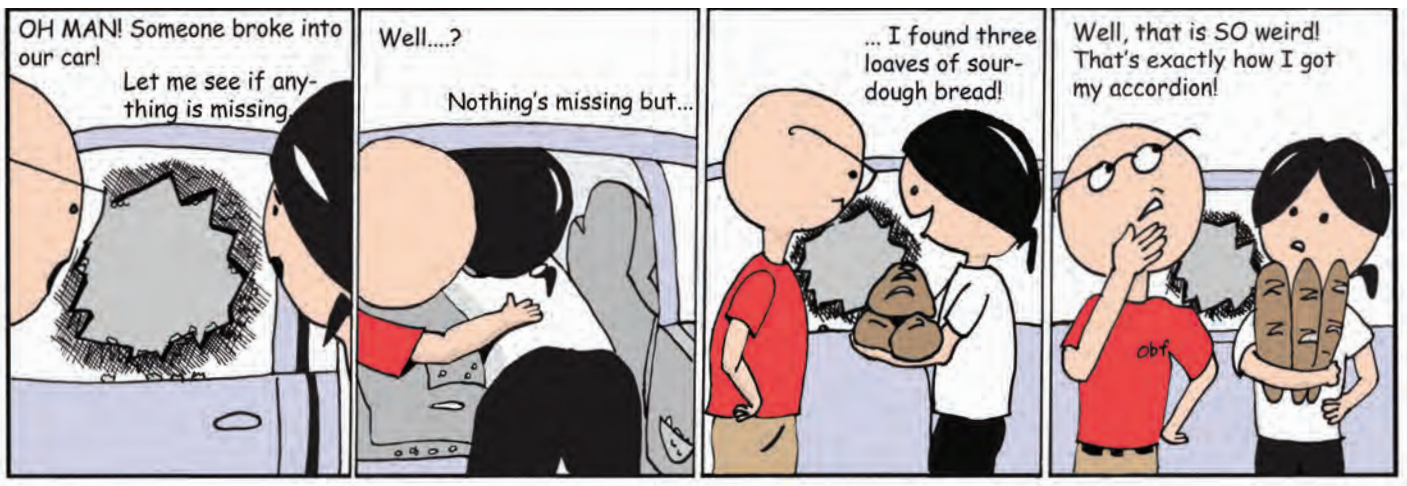
THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN



LETTERS

Good Use for a Stimulus Check

Editor:

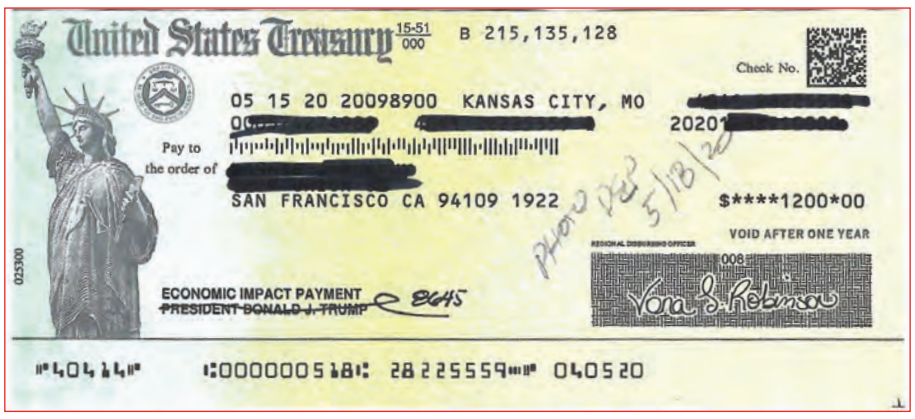
Donald Trump's putting his name on government stimulus checks added a completely unnecessary cost and delayed their arrival.

But since he was not the check signer, making his name 100 percent superfluous, one of our resistance group members decided to take a Sharpie (like the one Trump used to change the projected path of a hurricane) and black out his name before depositing their check.

Since the member is lucky enough not to have personal financial needs, she's donating the stimulus money to political campaigns and non-profits who can use it best, as all of these groups are suffering tremendously now, perhaps starting with the campaigns working to resist and unseat Trump.

Feel free to join our actions at resistry.net or ActionSFTeam@gmail.com.

Charlie Spiegel
Member of ActionSFTeam
Noe Valley resident



Safe Streets? Not Hardly

Editor:

My husband and I just moved into our newly renovated house on Elizabeth Street. In less than a week of being in our new house, the catalytic converters in our Prius were stolen.

From the comments on Nextdoor, it sounded like we were not alone. A veritable wave of this type of crime swept through Noe Valley during April and May.

So much for your article by Corrie Anders about safe streets and low rates of opportunistic crime in Noe Valley ["Stay Safe the Watchword in Quiet Noe Valley," May 2020].

I enjoy reading the *Noe Valley Voice,* but this article was just out of sync with reality.

Welcome to the 'hood.

Your neighbor,
Mary Yoklavich

You're Welcome

Editor:

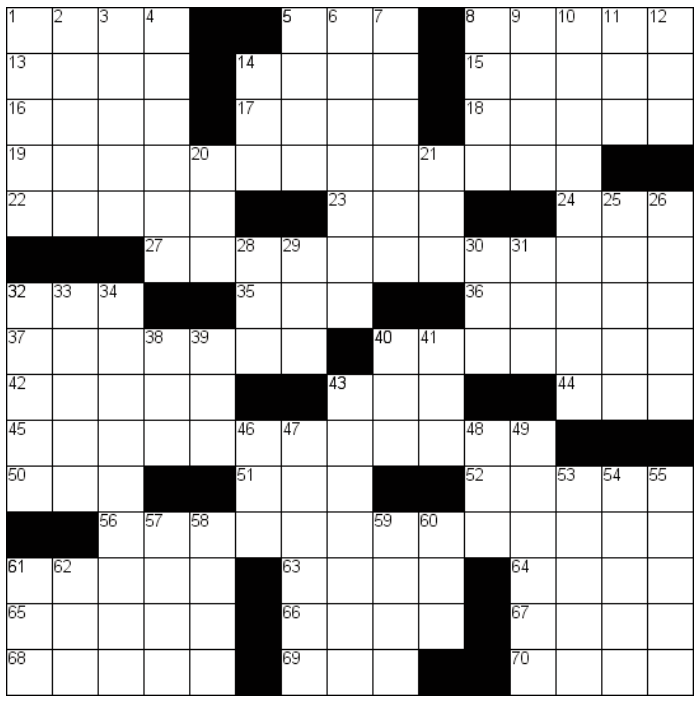
Thank you for the copy of the *Noe Valley Voice.* As usual, great coverage of the neighborhood news.

Be safe and stay well.

Ozzie Rohm

THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

Tom Swift 2020



ACROSS

1. It becomes inari at Hamano Sushi
5. HDTV screen type
8. Like spiked punch
13. Before long, to Shakespeare
14. Secret competitor
15. Endure
16. Actress Spelling
17. Type of capacitor in a DeLorean time machine
18. With "#" a major feminist movement
19. "Sterling Bank refused me as a client," Tom cried…
22. Gangster Lansky
23. Animation frame
24. Ocean
27. "Pass Church, Sanchez, and Noe and turn north on Castro," directed Tom…
32. ASCAP rival
35. "Whoopee!"
36. Hurl hard
37. Like some editions
40. Current user of the old San Francisco Merchandise Mart building
42. Chinese-born American architect
43. Mrs. in the Mission
44. Curving path
45. "Aesthetic Dentistry found some decay that wasn't there before," said Tom…
50. AT&T web offering
51. Coll. in Columbus
52. What happens there, stays there
56. "The seafood at Fresca is outstanding!" Tom enthused…
61. Get up
63. Big do
64. Loss's opposite
65. Metal fastener
66. Zest
67. Therefore
68. Sorority members
69. Author Deighton
70. Cleave

DOWN

1. Actress O'Neal
2. Two ___ (unfair fight)
3. Quick raid
4. Int'l relief org. for kids
5. Whopper
6. Like potato chips
7. Showtime series about a serial killer
8. Kind of "shish wrap" at Sultan's Kebab
9. First family member
10. Athens or Sparta
11. ___ de Waart, onetime SF Symphony director
12. "God" word that's an anagram of 11-Down
14. First stop en route to LAX, perhaps
20. ___ Magnon
21. "The Greatest" boxer
25. North Pole assistants
26. Bill ___, the "terrorist" that Palin said Obama was "palling around with"
28. Order at The Dubliner
29. Small amount
30. Trio after F
31. All ___ up (irate)
32. Window cover
33. Pier 39 performers
34. Rash
38. Ending for cloth or cash
39. Acapulco uncle
40. "La-la" preceder
41. ___-Mart
43. Fight that's less than a brawl
46. Nail site
47. Jerusalem's land
48. XIV x IV
49. *The Right Stuff* aviator Chuck
53. Be harshly bright
54. Set straight
55. Church assembly
57. Like clothing at Mary's Exchange
58. Caresses
59. Modern Persia
60. One behind bars
61. Curved line
62. Word before Bravo or Lobo, in John Wayne films

Solution on Page 22
Find more Crosswords at noevalleyvoice.com

CRIME SNAPSHOT

With this issue, the *Noe Valley Voice* is reviving our "Crime Snapshot," a column designed to give readers a quick picture of the number and types of criminal offenses being reported in Noe Valley.

The table below shows data for the first four months of 2020, January through April. The *Voice* collected the numbers on May 27, 2020, from Data.sfgov.org, a site that in its Public Safety section offers a digital map of San Francisco Police Department incident reports from 2018 to the present.

As you can see, there were 330 incidents of serious crime reported in Noe Valley during the period. The most common incidents were those classified as "larceny/theft," which includes things like property stolen from cars and package thefts from local doorsteps. Over the first four months of the year, there were 145 such thefts in Noe Valley, with the largest number, 48, occurring in April, the first full month after the city issued its stay-at-home orders.

Citizens also reported 49 cases of burglary—break-ins to a home or business—and 42 stolen vehicles during the four-month period.

There was a single case of domestic/family violence in January—a number that rose to five in April during the quarantine.

The *Voice* will continue to add to this table in future editions, as new data come in. Note that "Noe Valley" on the city's digital crime map is an area bounded roughly by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.

To report an incident on your block, call the non-emergency line at 415-553-0123 or file a police report online at sanfranciscopolice.org. In an emergency, call 911.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

Crimes Reported in Noe Valley January – April 2020

Incident Reports	January	February	March	April	TOTALS
Larceny/Theft	37	31	29	48	145
Burglary	15	15	8	11	49
Malicious Mischief	9	13	8	9	39
Motor Vehicle Theft	9	8	9	16	42
Assault	3	2	1	1	7
Robbery	2	1	0	2	5
Other Miscellaneous	5	6	3	6	20
Fraud	4	6	0	4	14
Family Domestic Violence	1	0	0	5	6
Vandalism	1	0	0	2	3
TOTALS	86	82	58	104	330

San Francisco Real Estate Market Starts to Rebound

Shelter-in-place caused steep drops in activity across the board in what is typically the busiest selling season of the year. However, activity has been picking up since bottoming out in late March/early April, and will presumably continue to do so well into the summer as shelter-in-place restrictions and property-showing rules ease. If you've had any thoughts of buying or selling a home, schedule a virtual strategy session with us by visiting www.calendly.com/teambrannigan.

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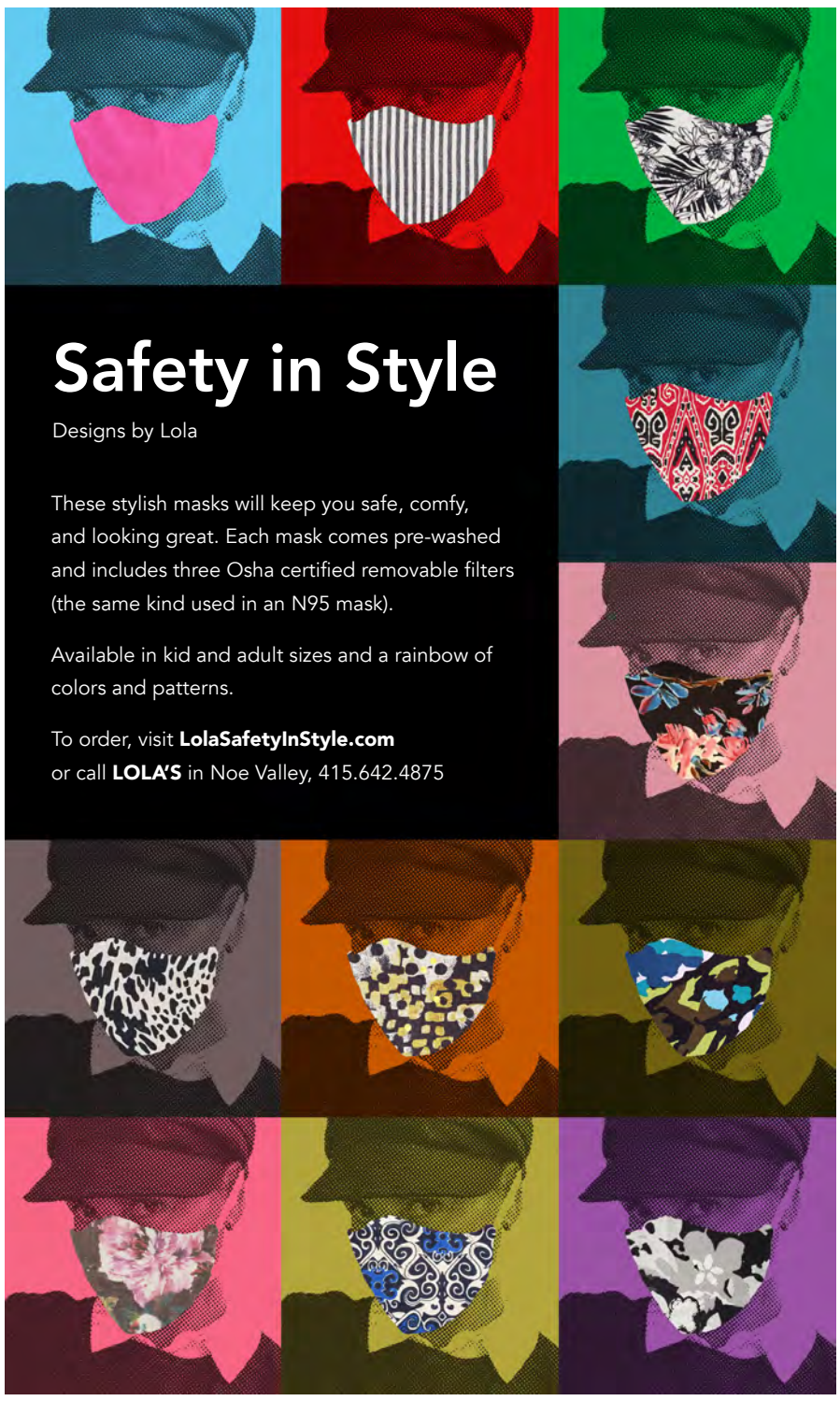

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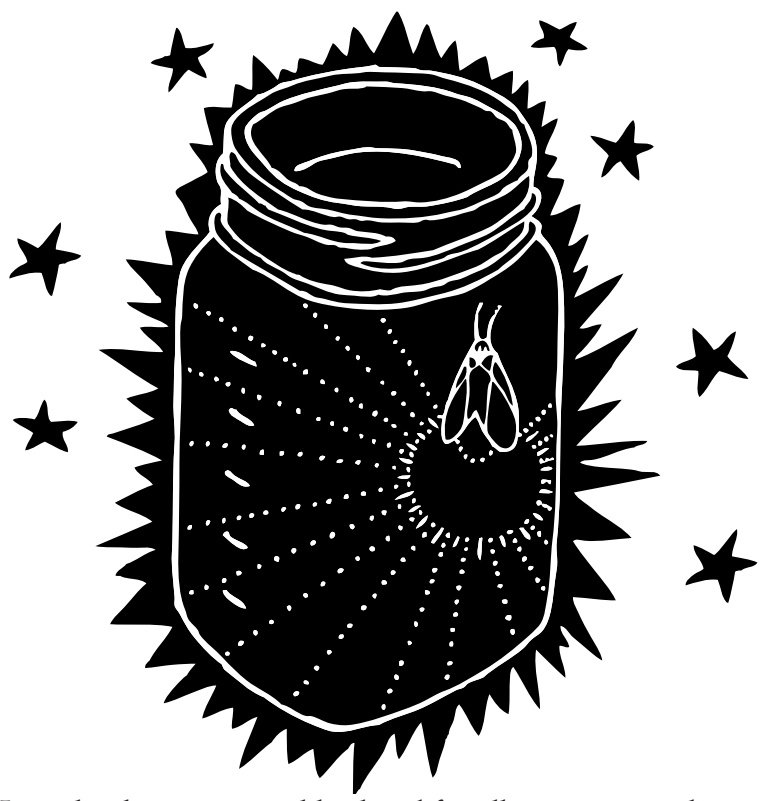

Huge thanks to our neighborhood for all your support by purchasing gift cards while we hunker in place (fireflysf.com/giftcertificate). We're definitely coming back as soon as possible and can't wait to cook for you again. And eventually, there will be hugs!

4288 24th Street
San Francisco, CA

fireflysf.com
415.821.7652

Flocking to the Rescue

The Neighborhood Rallies to a Bird Call for Help

By Megan Wetherall

In the back room of The Animal Company, one of the oldest businesses in San Francisco, new life is flourishing. Despite the dark cloud that descended upon local commerce in March, this spring has turned out to be an exceptionally busy time for store owners Rick and Ellen French.

They have welcomed some 70 baby birds over the past couple of months, with more expected soon. "Spring is baby season," declares Rick French. The shop's current menagerie includes parakeets, conures, and budgerigars, as well as African grey parrots, eclectus parrots, and red-bellied parrots.

The avian adventure all started with Ellen French discovering by accident, when she ran a little plant store in Berkeley in the 1980s, that her hands were less green-thumbed and more attuned to the little feathered friends she had brought in to the shop for a lark.

The business became Your Basic Bird and planted the seeds for the Frenches' eventual purchase of The Animal Company almost 20 years ago, at its original address on the corner of 24th and Douglass (now Philz), before it moved down the hill to Castro Street near Jersey in 2012.

Rick French enjoys an affectionate banter with Remy, a 9-month-old African cape parrot with whom he has developed a special connection. *Photos by Megan Wetherall*

In the Nursery

While the store is especially known for the variety of birds it hand-rears and the couple's expertise in all things related, it also serves the many dog and cat owners in Noe Valley with all the food, toys, treats, and accoutrements their four-legged pets might need.

"We used to do a lot of bird-breeding ourselves," explains Rick, "but it was very laborious with running the store full-time as well, so we finally farmed out a lot of it to friends and partners who are mostly in the Sierras."

Sometimes they receive an egg a day before it hatches, and sometimes they take over the care of a baby when it is a week or two old, having been given a head start by the parents. Other times a baby bird is neglected by its parents, and Ellen will need to nurse it back to health, often requiring her to get up several times a night to mix and warm the formula to hand-feed the chick with a syringe.

The baby birds at The Animal Company get special attention from co-owner and bird whisperer Ellen French. She and husband Rick take the birds home to Berkeley each day so they can nurture and hand-feed the chicks at night.

Because very young birds need this kind of round-the-clock care, it is necessary for the babies to commute back and forth between the Frenches' Berkeley home and the Noe Valley store. The chicks ride in Coleman ice coolers converted into temperature-controlled condos, which can be niftily plugged into the cigarette lighter in the couple's Ford.

A Plea for Paper Towels

Rick describes The Animal Company's customers as dedicated, tight-knit, and loyal. "It's been generations that people have been coming into the store, since long before we had it."

Never was that more evident than this March, when the influx of baby birds coincided with a severe shortage of paper towels, due to the Covid quarantine. "All the birds are hand-fed until they are 8 to 16 weeks, depending on how fast they mature. They're not in the nest. Ellen's the parent," Rick explains.

"In order to socialize them and make them friendly, they have to identify with people. So as they're growing, you have them in little containers lined with paper towels and bedding and, well, they eat a lot and they poop a lot. And you've got to clean them a lot. We go through that stuff. It's very labor and material intensive."

Rick and Ellen posted a notice on Nextdoor asking for donations, and the response was immediate: people rushed to bring the precious rolls to their door. "It's a very generous neighborhood."

Other Family Members

In their home in Berkeley, which has a nursery currently teeming with newborn birds, the couple also have three dogs: a stubborn teenage Burmese named Phoebe (who sometimes visits the store), a geriatric lab, and a rescue called Albert P. French. Then there is Benny, an African grey parrot who holds court in the couple's bedroom. He was born with defects and a metabolic bone disease because his parents didn't feed him properly.

Rick's voice is tender as he talks about Benny: "He has scoliosis so he's all bent up, but he's my little pet. We didn't expect him to live at all. His door is always open because he can't fly, but he talks like crazy and calls the dogs in my voice. 'Phoebe! Albert! Come here, cut that out!' Then the phone will ring and he shouts, 'Hello!' It cracks you up."

Business is down at the moment because The Animal Company typically boards about 50 birds at a time, and right now their customers are staying at home and not taking vacations, but Rick says the store is otherwise its "normal craziness," and they have managed to keep all six of their employees, albeit with reduced hours.

New Nests in Noe

Matching a prospective owner with the right bird takes time, as there are many considerations, such as cost (from about $60 for a budgie up to $3,500 for an African grey parrot), lifestyle, and whether the household is occupied by a family or a single person.

"We advise them [customers] while they handle a few birds," says Rick, after which regular visits are established, to facilitate bird-owner bonding until the youngster is fully weaned and ready to make the transition to its new home, usually by four months.

One day last month, a masked mother and two daughters sat in the back bird room with their heads nestled together cooing softly, visiting and bonding with their new parakeet—Coco or Theo, they're not yet able to tell the sex.

Rick feels people need the companionship of an animal more than ever now, which is why the local animal shelters are nearly empty.

"Birds have become the companion of

A parakeet learns to relax with its new human family.

choice, especially for kids. So many people come in and say, 'I don't like birds, I'm getting this for my daughter,' but as time goes on, you'll see that person and bird have bonded. They'll say, 'I never realized the personality of a bird and how I could come to love that little animal,'" Rick says.

"Couples will come in, and one wants it, the other doesn't, but the one who wants it wins out, and the one who didn't want it ends up having the affair with that animal. It's funny how that works out."

The recent outpouring of support from residents of Noe Valley has meant a great deal to the Frenches. "We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the neighborhood. It's really humbling." ■

The Animal Company, 1307 Castro St., is open weekdays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sundays, noon to 5 p.m. During shelter-in-place, limited numbers of customers are allowed in the store at any one time.

Back to Bernie's Beginnings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

coffee waiting. When Safeway and Costco started offering cut-price flowers, Bernie decided, at 21, to switch gears. She took the job Spinelli's had offered her as nighttime supervisor at the coffee shop.

"I was terrified," she remembers. "I knew nothing about coffee and being a supervisor. I told them I'm just making flowers over there."

But they recruited her all the same, and by the time she graduated from college she had received several promotions and was running Spinelli's most profitable coffee shop downtown, "loving coffee," and giving training classes to the shop's new hires. Bernie's Cafe serves Spinelli's Coffee to this day.

After the Seattle coffee company Tully's purchased Spinelli's in 1998, Bernie rose through Tully's ranks over the next several years, traveling to Salt Lake City, Sun Valley, L.A., and beyond, overseeing the opening of franchises.

By 2007, Bernie could see that Tully's on 24th Street was failing and there were changes afoot in management that didn't bode well. There were also two Seattle coffee shops on the block, the other being Starbucks. "Tully's wasn't great about creating a community because they were too busy," and customers were turning to more home-grown businesses.

It Was Meant to Be

When Tully's decided to end its lease at 3966 24th St., Bernie was given a tip-off, as well as the phone number of the landlord. Her first thought was to offer the number to a friend, another Noe native, who ran a deli in the South Bay.

"I told him you have to move back to 24th Street because people miss you! He took the piece of paper and slid it back to me and said, 'Bernie, I'll loan you some money. Open your own coffee shop.' I felt physically ill because it was like someone handing you a winning lottery ticket. It all made so much sense, but it wasn't my plan." Her backup plan was to work at Banana Republic. "It's easy, I thought. I don't have to get dirty anymore." Or work in the marketing department for the San Francisco Giants.

But why not take a leap? "My mom always taught me to be open to the unexpected, and I thought, of course I can do this." She met with the landlord, who told her that generations of his family had been raised in the Victorian building. (It remains home to two sets of longtime neighbors, including the guardians of Peppermint Lion, the resident cat and mascot of the coffee shop.)

Fortunately for Bernie, she'd always been driven. "My mom will tell anyone: Bernie has been a boss since she was two. And I will give my all to anything that I do or to a person." She still has the same three best friends she had in middle school.

She was confident she would have the support of the community and her family. "I knew the hardest part would be making sure that my staff would buy in and see my vision, that I wasn't just employing them, that they would be part of my family. And they are."

Caring Came Naturally

Bernie talks a lot about her beloved Grandmother Rose, who emigrated from Newfoundland, Canada, in the '50s and settled in Noe Valley as a single mom to Bernie's mother, Deborah. Rose worked at Pat's Cafe at 24th and Mission, where she met Bernie's grandfather, a policeman. He adopted Deborah, and he and Rose went on to have six more kids.

Bernadette Melvin poses with her date for the junior prom, Emilio Aparicio, a friend who would later become one of her most loyal customers.

"I was the first of many grandchildren. I love babies but I think that's why I never ended up having my own kids, because I helped raise so many of my cousins, as well as my younger brother Dennis, who is deaf and has a lot of learning difficulties."

Bernie's father was in and out of their lives but never lived with them, so it was up to Bernie to help look after her brother from the age of 11. Their mother always had to work. "My mother is an amazing woman. She was a waitress for years at Noe Valley Pizza, where La Boulangerie is now." This might be why Bernie hates pizza to this day and preferred her grandmother's home cooking.

Bernie has an uncanny ability to read people and make them feel seen and heard. As a little girl she was taught sign language, and for a few years she attended a special school for the deaf and their siblings. "People would see my brother and me walking down the street, so I had to not be shy. I had to speak up for him, sometimes defend him."

Only Yesterday

She says it's very special having the store on the ground floor of a Victorian. "It's like having neighbors at home. We all take care of one another." On the other hand, when her work day is over, she has to separate and head home to her studio in the Mission.

"I've been calling it Nosy Valley since I was 12 or 13," Bernie chuckles affectionately. "It's not a bad thing. It's just how this neighborhood has always been, probably because so many natives live here. I get stopped in the street and asked about my groceries!"

She describes the interior of the coffee shop as like her kitchen, a familiar comfortable place. And she's noticed her customers prefer her to not make changes. The same collection of black and white photographs adorns the walls, and she rotates them only on rare occasions, to the consternation of some.

Before the shelter-in-place, a typical day at the coffee shop saw a steady stream of regulars chatting as they stood in line to order while Bernie and her baristas bustled merrily behind the counter. Within the cozy space, friends clustered at small tables; others bent over their screens, spending hours in their home away from home.

Bernie is a natural networker and has a gift for connecting people or helping them problem-solve. For a solid year, she posted pictures of customers on her Instagram page. "I went back the other day and looked through them. And each time, there would be a person with a crowd of people behind them, the store filled with that energy and buzz. When it's like that, it actually makes me feel at peace. Watching people out on the benches on a sunny day, everyone talking, coming back in for refills. A customer having a sneezing fit and nobody thinking anything of it. Things that would be so normal. Our world has changed now. No one is going to be sitting next to anyone anytime soon."

Slow Realizations

The current situation has taken a toll on Bernie, and she admits to feeling emotionally drained. "I didn't expect to have to take all my chairs and put them up against my counter to keep people six feet away from me in a place where people used to lean up against the counter and touch me and want to hug. It's very bizarre. I think we're all experiencing a weird thing about space. I have accepted that I have to make the best of it and that anything is possible because I didn't think I'd be wearing a mask to work 10 hours a day."

During her early morning drive to work, where she used to listen to music and navigate streets that were already alive with traffic, she now drives in silence through the hushed streets of San Francisco. "I have to tell myself on my way here every single morning how grateful I am that I can go to work, because so many people cannot, and that I made a commitment to be here for the community and for my staff."

Beautiful Things

Bernie has reduced her hours—she's now open from 5.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. That put an end to the 15-hour days she had worked before and the very real burnout she was experiencing. A year ago she didn't know how much longer she could continue. Now that she doesn't have that same adrenaline to prop her up, she can see that living that way was not sustainable and that this spring's enforced slowing-down has been, as she puts it, "a blessing."

An illustration was one recent day in May when a woman came in who had been a customer for as long as Bernie could remember but who usually was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Residents Embrace Slower Sanchez Street

Cars Limited on Blocks From 23rd to 30th

By Matthew S. Bajko

Bikers, joggers, walkers, and children in need of some exercise and fresh air have claimed a portion of Sanchez Street from vehicular traffic. At least for the time being anyway.

With the city's residents under shelter-in-place orders due to the coronavirus outbreak, City Hall leaders and transportation officials have been restricting cars from traveling on certain thoroughfares in order to give people more space outdoors but at a safe social distance. Delivery trucks and people who live on the chosen streets still have vehicular access to them.

All other traffic is being rerouted to surrounding streets, although cars can cross at certain intersections. In Noe Valley, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency closed down most blocks of Sanchez Street between 23rd and 30th streets in mid-May.

"Due to the Covid-19 health crisis, the way we get around and where we are going are changing. Many San Francisco residents need to walk and take other modes of transportation for their essential trips," wrote transportation planner Brian Liang, with the SFMTA's Livable Streets/Sustainable Streets subdivision, in a May 19 email announcing the closure of Sanchez Street. "However, sometimes it is difficult to maintain the six feet of social distance on many sidewalks. Because of this, many pedestrians are choosing to walk in the street, exposing themselves to swiftly moving vehicle traffic."

While the Slow Streets corridors are in effect 24/7, people can still park in the spots along the designated streets. SFMTA officials stressed that people walking, running, or biking do not have exclusive right-of-way over motor vehicles and must still take pedestrian safety precautions while in the roadway.

SFMTA is targeting neighborhoods that have lost Muni service due to the reduction in transit lines the agency is operating during the health crisis. Neither the J-Church subway line that runs along Church Street in Noe Valley nor the 48-Quintara bus line that traverses 24th Street and Grand View Avenue is running.

Walkers, cyclists, and toddlers take the SFMTA's decision to "slow" Sanchez Street in stride. Meanwhile, cars stay home or find other routes.

Photo by Art Bodner

Reaction in the first days was overwhelmingly positive, with residents taking to the online site Nextdoor to express their approval. Some even asked that the street closure be made permanent, while others called for a segment of Church Street to be added to the list of slow streets.

"What a nice amenity for the neighborhood. My neighbors with their three young daughters were on their way there yesterday morning with scooters and bikes in tow. Imagine 24th closed to cars, how much nicer it'd be running errands there," noted Nelson Minar.

The Upper Noe Neighbors residents' group had worked with Supervisor Rafael Mandelman's office to bring the Slow Streets program to the neighborhood in late April.

"The desire to make more room for pedestrians on Sanchez Street was already brewing in mid-April. Neighbors grumbled on Nextdoor.com about passing maskless joggers and weaving around double-wide strollers," noted board member Chris Faust.

Additional Slow Streets the group discussed with city leaders included 23rd, 25th, and Jersey streets for an east/west connection, added Faust. In nearby Glen Park, Chenery from Elk to Brompton has also been turned into a Slow Street.

In a Facebook post May 20, Mandelman wrote that he expected "an east-west route in Noe Valley and a route serving Castro, Mission Dolores, and nearby neighborhoods soon."

It is unclear how long the slow streets will be in effect. To learn more about the program and to see a map of the impacted streets, visit SFMTA.com/SlowStreets. ■

Bernie's: Where Our Heart Is

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

quiet and kept to herself. They were alone and the woman said, "Bernie, you and I never get a chance to talk, but I've always wanted to tell you that I was your grandmother's lawyer."

Bernie lost her grandmother, the "core" of the family, many years ago, and the following day was to be her birthday. She looked at the woman in amazement and burst into tears. "I told her she was like a messenger, and she said, 'Oh my God, Rose was such a wonderful lady. She used to tell me so many stories.' When she left, my mind was blown. How come over all these years she felt too rushed to have that moment? Let me tell you, the only reasons for crying back here are beautiful things."

She also had a couple who put $1,200 on a gift card for first responders. "They told me, whoever comes in in a uniform, we're supporting them and we're supporting you. So all day long, nurses and doctors and firemen and police officers come in and I give them their coffee and explain [it's free], and they're just shocked. They love it. These are the incredible things that are happening behind the scenes."

Another pleasant surprise has been that the majority of Bernie's customers right now are people she has never seen before, the invisible locals who left on buses each day to work in the South Bay at Facebook, Instagram, or Google. "They say, 'Bernie, do you know how nice it is to come here every day? I never knew it was here,' and they're amazed when I have their drink ready and they ask me, how do I do it? I'm so glad they don't have to go back to work until January."

The espresso machine may be humming, but it will be quite some time before Bernie's will be back to what it was.

"We all have to change our perspective and reinvent who we are and what we do. This is affecting our whole world. Cafes were built on community and gathering, and nobody is going to gather for nine to 12 months, until there is a vaccine," laments Bernie. She is bringing in plants to fill some of the emptiness created by the absence of people.

The other day, her mom asked her what hurts the most, and she replied: not having babies in her arms behind the counter. "I haven't touched a baby in over two months. A customer came in the other day with her three-week-old, and I started crying because usually the moms say, 'Please, take this child so I can go and sit by myself for five minutes.' These are the little things about community, right?" ■

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A Couple With Quite a Story to Tell Their Children

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ridden as they made arrangements for friends to watch their 2-year-old daughter, Charlie Loduca-Smith, and 14-year-old ridgeback-pitbull mix, Hayden, while they booked flights so they could get to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., to meet their son.

August "Gus" James Loduca-Smith entered the world that Thursday a healthy baby boy weighing 7 pounds, 10 ounces.

"You can imagine for us—it was a very complicated pregnancy, where on more than one occasion we thought it may have ended poorly for us—to hear our surrogate Kristin's water broke early really freaked us out," said Loduca. "We went to Minnesota with high levels of anxiety. Only with the advantage of retrospection and a healthy baby we can say, 'Wow! What magnificent timing this kid has."

By then, the novel coronavirus had already rampaged its way through Asia and Europe and was spreading on both coasts of the United States. Late Friday, March 13, San Francisco officials announced the first restrictions on large gatherings due to the health crisis. Initially planning to spend a week at the hospital before returning home to Noe Valley, Loduca advised Smith he felt they should instead fly back immediately.

Hospital officials agreed it would be safer for the baby to travel sooner than later and wrote a letter stating as such so the couple could book airfare. Nonetheless, they had to contact several airlines before one agreed to allow them onto their aircraft with a three-day-old infant.

Sanitizing the Plane

They splurged on business class seats as a safety precaution and devised a plan where Smith would carry Gus strapped to his chest covered under a blanket and Loduca wouldn't touch either of them during the four-hour flight.

"I didn't drink anything that day so I wouldn't need to use the bathroom on the plane," noted Smith (during an interview via Zoom with the *Voice* while seated next to Loduca on the stoop of their home not far from Noe Courts Park).

Loduca took charge of sanitizing their seats. He boarded the plane first to wipe everything down, cover the air vents overhead with duct tape, and put up a scrim to isolate them from other passengers.

As it turned out, there were only seven people on the flight, and the airline upgraded everyone to business class. They landed at San Francisco International Airport at 2 p.m. Monday, March 16, 30 minutes before Mayor London Breed announced the city would begin sheltering in place as of midnight.

"When we landed, I was so excited to hug Charlie," said Smith.

A sense of relief didn't come until 14 days later when the family, having sequestered themselves at home, knew no one had contracted the virus. "I did not realize how much anxiety I was carrying with me until day 14 rolled around. In the middle of the afternoon, I burst into tears," said Loduca.

It wasn't the first time a natural disaster had upended their plans. They were to have been married in Big Sur in 2017, but the El Nino rains that winter washed away bridge access to California's central coast. They were forced to postpone their nuptials, and then came the birth of their daughter. The couple eloped last year and had a simple wedding ceremony on Italy's Amalfi Coast at a hillside spot overlooking the Mediterranean.

With 2-year-old Charlie and new baby "Gus" safely in their arms, husbands James Loduca and Charlie Smith plan to celebrate Fathers Day with a walk in a park.

Photo courtesy Loduca-Smith family

Stay-at-Home a Struggle

Caring for two small children during a global health outbreak has been challenging, as they strategize on how to keep everyone safe and explain to their daughter why they now must wear masks on walks and can't visit with family or friends. None of the kids' grandparents have been able to hold or meet Gus due to the need to social-distance right now.

"I don't know about you, but this is my first global pandemic. We are all managing as best we can," said Loduca, who returned to work in May after taking eight weeks of parental leave. "Everyone's struggle is different. I don't know anyone yet where it is not a struggle in some way."

Their daughter has broken down in tears, wanting to go back to daycare and see her friends. A sociable child, she didn't understand at first why she could no longer hug people.

"At the beginning of this, I didn't like the parent I had become. I was chasing after her with a bottle of Purell and yelling at her not to touch anything," said Smith.

They refer to their facial coverings as "superhero masks." And they turned social distancing into a game, explaining to their daughter at first that it was a "space day" and they needed to give their friends and family a lot of space.

"It has been space day now for two months," noted Smith.

The morning the couple spoke with the *Voice,* Charlie had told them, "When this is over, I am hugging everyone."

"Me too, girl!" joked Loduca.

Until that time comes, the family is taking it one day at a time.

"I am focusing on gratitude and all of our many blessings," said Loduca. "Even at the end of a hard day, we are safe and we are healthy."

Dreams of Fatherhood

Loduca, 46, and Smith, 36, first met in 2013 while participating in the AIDS/LifeCycle, a fundraiser for the Los Angeles LGBT Center and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. At the time, Loduca was the AIDS Foundation's vice president for philanthropy and public affairs, and Smith was a successful filmmaker.

When they became a couple in 2015, Loduca was already planning to become a father. Both men wanted to have two children, and they knew they wanted to find a surrogate willing to have an ongoing relationship.

"We were sort of agreed we wanted that casual, holiday card relationship with our surrogate," said Loduca.

As it happened, Veldhuisen and her husband were looking to be matched with a gay couple that their own three children could get to know. A relative of hers had come out as being part of the LGBT community, and Veldhuisen didn't want her two sons and daughter to only learn about gay people through the teachings of their Christian church.

"She wanted to create an opportunity for her kids to learn about LGBT people and make up their own mind," said Loduca, elected this year as president of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, having been appointed to the oversight panel by Breed. "She wanted a gay couple and that they would have a relationship with their kids. Talk about a match destined to be. We do so much work in LGBT advocacy and in trying to win change in hearts and minds."

After selecting an egg donor, they had two fertilized eggs implanted in Veldhuisen, but only one came to term. They chose to be surprised by the gender and had agreed if it were a boy they would name him August, as they felt it sounded "old world" and "European."

If they had a daughter, Smith one day suggested they name her Charlie, as despite not liking the name for himself, he always felt it was a wonderful name for a girl. As it turned out, Loduca was planning to surprise him over a romantic dinner that he wanted to choose that name.

"I was so annoyed because I had already thought of it," joked Loduca.

In hindsight, they are now glad they had only one child at first.

"Being new parents is a big undertaking. I don't know if we would have been prepared to have twins," said Loduca.

Smith agreed that it was more special being able to focus on one baby instead of siblings as first-time parents.

"We got to bond with Charlie and give her lots of attention," said Smith, who recently completed his first year in graduate school to become a marriage and family therapist.

Hoping to Share

To break down stereotypes about gay fathers, the couple decided to post about their journey as new parents on social media. Their posts went viral, racking up thousands of likes and drawing international media attention.

On Instagram they have nearly 49,000 followers. They intend to continue to document their newly expanded family online, but Smith admitted they have had "little bandwidth" to do so since bringing Gus home.

They are looking forward to when the children's bookstore Charlie's Corner and nearby clothing store Mapamundi Kids can return to regular business operations. And they have continued to patronize Noe Valley Bakery, Philz Coffee, and the restaurant NOVY.

"We are very intentional on giving places like that our business," said Loduca.

Even as restrictions on retail businesses are lifted and more stores open their doors, the couple intend to remain cautious about what activities they engage in, with a newborn baby at home. For Fathers Day they expect to find a safe place where the family can go for a walk together.

"Charlie and I agreed we are going to be extra cautious and extra conservative," said Loduca. ■

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New Entries in the Noe Family Album

Top Left: Proud Mom Kristen Gianaras holds newborn Frances Ann McCaffery who joined the world April 22nd. Her nickname is Frankie.

Top Right: Mike McCaffery, wife Kristen and Frances pose for their first family portrait.

Above: "It's been surreal welcoming a child into the world during this time," Kristen says, "but we're finding the silver linings where we can. Because of the shelter in place order Mike and I have had ample time to bond with her and we're soaking in every minute."

Above: Kathryn Gianaras holds niece Frances. Kathryn and Kristen are co-owners and managers of NOVY restaurant. Says Kristen, "I'm very grateful to have Kathryn running the ship at NOVY. She has allowed me to enjoy this time and not be stressed. And she's an amazing aunt (Thea in Greek) to Frankie."

Father, Brother, And Friend

Shopkeeper Kamal (Mike) Omar Dies at 72

By Jeff Kaliss

News of the death of Kamal (Mike) Omar, the smiling mustachioed proprietor of Shufat Market on 24th Street, saddened his many customers and friends, as well as his large extended family, both here and in his native Palestine.

But Mike's daughter Suhad, who grew up in the apartment above the store with her two sisters and brother—and their mother, Nemeh—wants to share joy, in accordance with the family's Muslim faith, about the timing of her father's passing on May 13, 2020.

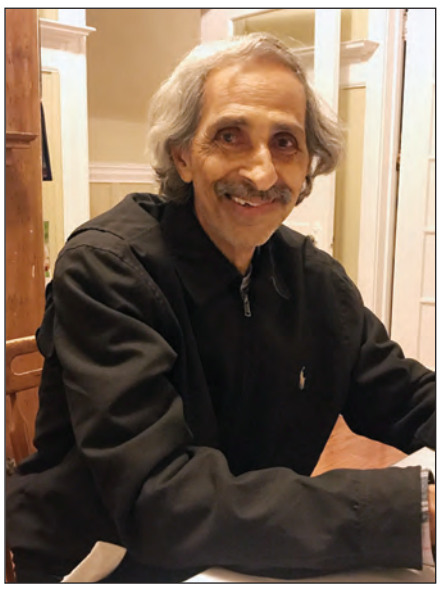
"It was during Ramadan, on the first night of Laylat Al-Qadr, which is also known as the Night of Power," she writes in a note to the *Voice*. "It is considered the most blessed and excellent of all nights, and it means that Allah granted him mercy and forgiveness, and a peaceful path to Jannah (heaven)."

Over the five decades Mike Omar worked at Shufat beside his brothers Jamil (James) and Kamel (Willie), most of us saw him more as dispensing mercy and forgiveness than needing it for himself.

"He had no enemies," testifies brother James, in an interview at the store, his smile hidden by a Covid mask. "For him, everyone else came first."

"He'd give the shirt off his back," says Mike's daughter Sereen, standing beside her uncle. "He never got angry, never got upset. If you said something hurtful, it was in one ear and out the other. If customers were a dollar short, he would just let them go."

"We wouldn't have the customer skills we have if it weren't for my father," adds Ahmad.



Even in his latter years and despite severe illness, Kamal (Mike) Omar stayed attentive to his customers' needs. Shufat Market and the community at large will miss his soft-spoken hello and kind concern.

Photos courtesy Suhad Omar

After his father Mike's diagnosis with prostate cancer four years ago, Ahmad sought to balance part-time work at Shufat alongside a second career, as did his sister Tina. Both learned "how you handle a customer with care, joy, and happiness. Because if anyone tried to provoke my father, he'd say, 'Take a drink if you like, it's on me.' And the next day, that person would come back and say, 'I'm sorry for my actions.'"

Shufat had always been a labor of love for the Omar brothers and their offspring, but Mike was particularly dutiful. Until the Covid crisis, the shop, at 3807 24th St., had been a reliable source of food, drink, deli offerings, and convenience items from eight in the morning till two the next morning, every day.

"My father used to put in 12- to 16-hour shifts," remembers Ahmad, "then come home and deal with us, make us laugh."

"I'd tell him, 'Take a break!'" James recalls. "He'd say, 'I'm okay, you go.'"

Questioned about retirement for a 2010 *Voice* story by Tim Innes, Mike, then 62, responded, "What would I do? Being busy keeps you young!"

The in-store TV provided some relief, James notes. "My brother liked comedy a lot, like *Sanford and Son* and *All in the Family*, and he was a big Niners fan."

Mike, who was born on Feb. 20, 1948, and spent his adolescence in Nicaragua before settling in San Francisco, also enjoyed joking with his customers in fluent Spanish as well as English, while maintaining Arabic as his family language. He and James made occasional homecoming trips to Shuafat, the village near Jerusalem after which the store was named, where they'd been raised by their father Mouhammed Omar, the store's founder (in 1972).

Mike Omar "trusted the Noe Valley customers, they became friends and extended family," says Sereen. "He saw generations grow up in front of him, and it meant a lot to him." Even while hospitalized at UCSF, "instead of worrying about his cancer," says Ahmad, "he'd talk about, 'Did you get this for the store, did you get that for that customer?'"

"His life revolved around his community—his neighbors, his patrons, he loved and adored them," Suhad says. "They were the ones who gave him his light and his soul."

After Mike's decision to spend his last days at home with family, following his release from UCSF in early May, said Ahmad, "We got maybe 50 phone calls from Palestine, people crying, 'We don't want to believe this, it's not him.' It would break your heart, in a great way, how much he impacted so many people."

Over the three-day mourning period after Mike's death from the cancer, the Omars received bounties of flowers and cards, and Shufat had many condolence visits from patrons. One of them, Robin Wilson, posted to Facebook on May 14, "This incredible man, who took care of so many people, crossed over last night. He and his family are legends in our neighborhood." Mary Kathryne Teahan responded with a tale of how Mike "gave me milk and bread when I was waiting for a paycheck, as a young 20-year-old."

Rafael Mandelman adjourned a Board of Supervisors meeting in Mike's honor. A candle-lit vigil was held in front of the store. Mike was given an Islamic burial in Livermore.

On the 40th day which traditionally concludes mourning for Muslims—that will be June 23 for Mike Omar—Suhad says she'll share "my father's favorite 'dulce,' baklava made with hand-picked walnuts from his best friends in Suisun Valley, fresh phyllo dough, earthy seasonings, and butter, which we clarify ourselves. And we'll be handing it out at the store."

The pandemic has closed down Shufat's deli operation and shortened the closing time to 8 p.m. But Ahmad assures, "We children will be managing the business as much as we can, continuing our father's legacy." ■

As news spread about Mike Omar's passing, Shufat began to fill with flowers and cards in tribute to a man whose life touched many,.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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SHORT TAKES

Bookstores Reopening Curbside

Our neighborhood bookstores are taking advantage of San Francisco's go-ahead for curbside retail, but just two out of three are reopening with high hopes for their brick-and-mortar future. Omnivore Books on Food, 3885A Cesar Chavez St., and Folio Books, 3957 24th St., have staff at the ready to meet customers at the door.

At Omnivore, you can order a cookbook (or two or 10) and prepay at omnivorebooks.myshopify.com, or order and pay at the shop's entrance Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you'd like to browse before buying, the Omnivore staff will bring books to the door for your perusal. Masks are required for safety. Omnivore will provide gloves and hand sanitizer. BYOM.

Housing Loophole Closed—Demolitions Need Full Vetting

It's going to become a little harder to tear down an older house in Noe Valley and replace it with a so-called monster home.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed legislation May 19 that closes a loophole in the review process for certain residential demolitions.

The new legislation will require any application seeking permission to demolish a home to undergo a full review process, including approval by the San Francisco Planning Commission.

Prior to this, homeowners or developers could skip the more rigorous review process if the home was worth or sold for at least $2.2 million.

"Speculators will easily pay $2 or $3 million for a lot with an older 1,000-square-foot home, knock it down, and build a 5,000-square-foot mansion that they can flip for millions in profit with only limited review," said District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, the legislation's author.

"This pattern has repeated itself relentlessly all across the city in neighborhoods like Noe Valley and Dolores Heights," Mandelman said, "where one older, smaller home after another has been knocked down and flipped into a mega-mansion."

The change may not have a major impact, according to the Planning Commission, which said it had received only 10 applications citywide since 2018 to demolish houses using the $2.2 million loophole.

The commission also noted that instead of opting to raze a property, owners in the future might seek permits for renovations that fell just short of demolition.

However, Jacob Bintliff, Mandelman's legislative aide, called the new measure "a small piece we can take care of right now" while continuing to work on the larger issues of residential demolition and housing affordability.

The change will affect any demolition proposals filed after Feb. 11, 2020, the date the legislation was introduced. It now goes to Mayor London Breed, who is expected to sign it into law by mid-June.

—Corrie M. Anders

Orphan Eleven author Gennifer Choldenko will visit the Bookworms Book Club via Zoom on Friday, June 19, 5 p.m. RSVP to foliosf.com/bookworms.

For the latest Cara Black or other new fiction (or nonfiction), call the Folio Books hotline at 415-275-1839 or email orders@foliosf.com. (Please note: This is not the store's main number.) The store will call, text, or email whether they have the book you want in-store or would have to order it.

Prepayment is preferred, but you can pay when you pick up. Staff will be glad to help you browse, behind the mutual safety of Folio's dutch door. The shop is open seven days a week, 2 to 6 p.m.

Folio also is resuming its popular Bookworms Book Club for the 8- to 12-year-old set, albeit on a virtual basis. Gennifer Choldenko will reach across the ether via Zoom Friday, June 19, at 5 p.m., with her newest book, *Orphan Eleven*. RSVP at foliosf.com/bookworms.

The tale at Charlie's Corner, 4102 24th St., is not so rosy. On May 29, Charlotte Nagy notified customers, "At this time I am trying to figure out whether Charlie's can continue here or if I need to re-envision Charlie's in a new location with a different business model. For now, all memberships are paused. If you have book orders, I will do my best to fulfill them for curbside pickup through June. Email me your requests at charlotte@charliescorner.com or info@charliescorner.com."

Still, all is not lost. Charlie's will continue its story times via YouTube, at noon and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Safety Training for Pets and People

Resilient Noe Valley and Resilient Diamond Heights continue their free online disaster preparedness trainings with three sessions in June. Each begins at 6:30 p.m. and lasts for an hour. Access is by Zoom (sign up for free at zoom.us/freesignup/).

Safety preparedness for pets is the topic for the first training, on Tuesday, June 2. The presenter will cover making a disaster plan that includes your pet, providing basic pet first-aid during stressful times, and training your pet to respond safely during a disaster.

The Tuesday, June 16, session will teach basic psychological first-aid and ways to reduce stress during and after a disaster and cope with new and unfamiliar conditions.

Fire safety will be presented Tuesday, June 30, by San Francisco Fire Department personnel. Learn how to prepare for and prevent a home fire, respond to one, and recover afterward. The training will include instructions on using a fire extinguisher, installing a smoke alarm, and making home safety checklists and family disaster plans.

To sign up for a class, go to empowers.org/resilient-noe-valley or empowers.org/resilient-diamond-heights. You will receive a Zoom invitation, which will include the online link for the training you've selected.

Kim Dang has been joined by 10 volunteers and the kitchen staff at her Eric's and Alice's restaurants in delivering meals to ill or homebound seniors. *Photo courtesy Susie Mao*

Kim Dang, Local Hero

In March, Kim Dang, the co-owner of Eric's and Alice's restaurants, began cooking soup at Eric's and delivering it for free to homebound seniors nearby. She now is cooking for 50 senior, immunosuppressed, or ill people in three neighborhoods—Noe Valley, Bernal Heights, and the Mission—five days a week. Dang's daughter, Susie Mao, organizes the delivery efforts of local volunteers Helen Burrows, Van Hausman, Allen Huang, Mine Ipek, Filip Kesler, Alice LaRocca, Lauren Packard, Sue Rhee, Yuko Shah, and Rose Titcomb. Food is cooked and delivered Monday through Wednesday, and Friday and Sunday.

At first, Dang did everything herself. She saw her project as her gift to the neighborhood, a thank-you. But as her workload increased, she realized she had to accept offers of help, at least when it came to delivering the food.

The menu also changed over the months. "Soup would be boring five days a week," Mao said. Now, soup is one of five meals. They now include sautéed prawns, braised tofu, and other tasty items from the Eric's kitchen.

Dang is still not accepting monetary donations. "People support us a lot. This time, I can do something for them."

Eric's has been in Noe Valley at 1500 Church St. since 1991, and Alice's at 1599 Sanchez St. since 1996. During the city's long quarantine, they have remained open, but for pickup only. To help support these longtime restaurants (and thank Kim Dang and family), you might want to place an order. Call Eric's at 415-282-0919 or Alice's at 415-282-8999.

Free Posters Make 'SF Strong'

Three college juniors home early from canceled classes, internships, and summer jobs have joined forces to use their extra-long summer break to do some good, and gain practical experience at the same time. Kinga Hope Csikszentmihalyi, Alexandra Lewis, and Miriam Streicker-Hirt co-created SF Strong.

Inspired by Orlando Strong (the community reaction to the murder of 49 people at the Pulse nightclub in 2016), the three decided to distribute 8,000 posters in San Francisco to shore up spirits during the Covid quarantine. Orlando "seemed to have a united response through posters," said Streicker-Hirt, who lives on 22nd Street.

Artist Susan Stanger created four lively, graphic posters illustrating the themes wash your hands, stay six feet apart, we're in this together, and a space for your own message, photo, or drawing.

The group met (virtually) with experts in branding, marketing, and community organizing to get advice on designing the campaign. The original plan was to ask local businesses to offer stacks of posters to customers, but because so many businesses had closed their doors, they doubled up on virtual distribution. You can download free copies of the posters at suzine.com, Stanger's website.

The three students hope seeing their posters around town will help foster community, as well as reinforce behavior. As Streicker-Hirt says, "It's hard to meet your neighbors in a pandemic."

Three Local Parishes Share a New Bond

The Archdiocese of San Francisco has announced new pastoral assignments for its three Noe Valley parishes.

The Archdiocese stated in an April letter to parishioners that Father Mario P. Farana, who has led St. Paul Catholic Church since 1993, would be given expanded duties, starting this July. In addition to leading St. Paul's, he will officiate at St. Philip the Apostle Church and at St. James Catholic Church.

The three churches will represent a newly formed "cluster," of which Farana will serve as lead pastor.

"St. Philip Parish and St. James remain as parishes, but Father Farana will coordinate the priests who will be serving those parishes, which form a new cluster," church spokesperson Mike Brown told the *Noe Valley Voice* via email.

The three churches are in close proximity, with St. Paul's at 221 Valley at Church Street, St. Philip the Apostle at 725 Diamond at Elizabeth, and St. James at 1086 Guerrero at 23rd Street. The parishes also operate schools and other activities.

In addition, the Archdiocese appointed Father James G. Liebner as the cluster's second in command. Like Farana, he will be based at St. Paul's.

Father John Mary Chung will remain as pastor at St. Philip the Apostle. "There will be another round of parochial assignments, and it is possible that he will be included among those assignments," Brown said. St. James pastor Shouraiah Pudota will be named parochial vicar at St. Veronica Parish in South San Francisco.

Priests and other church officials usually begin their new assignments in July. But the city's current health orders may delay the changes.

"Because it is not possible to predict yet when it will be safe to move from one parish rectory to another, the normal July 1 date for these changes remains fluid," the Archdiocese stated in its April 21 announcement.

In late May, San Francisco still had not yet permitted in-person church services. However, the Archdiocese invited parishioners to come together in other ways.

"You may attend any live-streamed Mass in the Archdiocese remotely via the Archdiocesan website," wrote San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone in a pastoral letter on May 12. "You will also find there an Act of Spiritual Communion and other resources (sfarch.org/keeping-the-sabbath)."

—Corrie M. Anders

Short Takes were compiled and written by Richard May.

The Cost of Living in Noe

Real Estate on Hold in April

By Corrie M. Anders

The coronavirus pandemic brought Noe Valley's residential real estate market to a virtual standstill in April.

With shoppers sidelined by the city's health orders, buyers purchased just two single-family detached homes in the neighborhood, according to data provided to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Global Living San Francisco.

That was a considerable falloff from the 17 sales of a year ago in April, usually the kickoff month for the home-buying season. (There were 12 transactions in March of this year.)

Condominium sales also were restrained. Four condos closed escrow in April, compared with 10 in the same month last year. (Buyers purchased seven units in March.)

A two-bedroom condominium on the top level of this historic building at Valley and Sanchez streets sold in April for $2,175,000. It and six other units occupy the former St. Paul Primary School, converted to residential use in 1999.

Photos by Corrie M. Anders

Buyers paid the asking price of $3.5 million for this remodeled John Anderson home on Alvarado Street. The three-bedroom Victorian was the most expensive home sold in Noe Valley in April.

"Things came to a grinding halt," said Corcoran President Randall Kostick.

In a special order aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19, Mayor London Breed asked all but essential workers in San Francisco to shelter in place, starting March 16. Since then, the lockdown had been extended through May.

Kostick noted sellers appeared wary of putting their homes on the market at a time of such uncertainty. There were three dozen new home listings in April, compared to 76 a year earlier.

"April would normally be the start of the spring season, and you'd see properties coming into the market," he said. "I don't know if we've ever had an April with 36 listings in Noe Valley."

Kostick said a scarcity of homes for sale, a stock market that crashed in late February as the severity of the virus came into focus, and an initial confusion over the rules for real estate professionals all played into the recent decline in real estate activity in the neighborhood.

In addition, there were severe limits on when and how prospective buyers could see properties for sale. At first, only virtual tours were permitted.

"When you can't show it, you can't sell it," Kostick said.

The rules were relaxed in mid-April to allow shoppers to view unoccupied properties that could not be viewed online. (In May, the city further loosened restrictions to allow prospective buyers to visit homes as long as the owners or tenants were not present.)

The most expensive house sold in April was a three-bedroom, 3.5-bath Victorian in the 500 block of Alvarado Street, between Castro and Noe streets. It sold for the seller's asking price of $3.5 million and never hit the open market.

A John Anderson home constructed in 1908, the building had been remodeled to afford 2,400 square feet of living space. Featured amenities were a dining room with bay windows, spacious living areas with high ceilings, a designer kitchen, a walkout deck overlooking a park-like back yard, a media room, and one-car parking.

A buyer paid $2,175,000 for the costliest condominium in April, nearly 8.9 percent below the seller's asking price ($1,998,000). The two-story, 1,753-square-foot residence included two bedrooms and two baths, high ceilings, a modern kitchen, fireplace, a private patio, panoramic views, and parking for one car. The condo is one of seven units within the St. Paul Primary School building at the corner of Valley and Sanchez streets, which was converted to residential housing in 1999. ■

Noe Valley Home Sales*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price ($)	High Price ($)	Average Price ($)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
Single-family detached homes						
April 2020	2	$1,850,000	$3,500,000	$2,675,000	10	107%
March 2019	12	$1,410,000	$4,988,000	$2,329,917	22	109%
April 2019	17	$1,300,000	$3,600,000	$2,264,647	17	108%
Condominiums/TICs						
April 2020	4	$1,275,000	$2,175,000	$1,715,000	10	112%
March 2019	7	$670,000	$1,760,000	$1,177,857	24	110%
April 2019	10	$495,000	$ 2,390,000	$1,281,650	17	118%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
April 2020	1	$3,350,000	$3,350,000	$3,350,000	64	96%
March 2019	0	—	—	—	—	—
April 2019	3	$1,900,000	$2,798,000	$2,482,667	21	104%
5+-unit buildings						
April 2020	2	$5,750,000	$6,965,000	$6,357,500	46	100%
March 2019	0	—	—	—	—	—
April 2019	1	$2,200,000	$2,200,000	$2,200,000	97	88%

*Survey includes all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. Noe Valley for purposes of this survey is loosely defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The *Voice* thanks Corcoran Global Living San Francisco for providing sales data. *NVV6/2020*

Noe Valley Rents**

Unit	No. in Sample	Range May 2020	Average May 2020	Average April 2020	Average May 2019
Studio	4	$2,275 - $2,940	$2,571 / mo.	$2,350 / mo.	$2,423 / mo.
1-bdrm	42	$2,400 - $5,985	$3,218 / mo.	$3,227 / mo.	$2,980 / mo.
2-bdrm	24	$3,200 - $8,500	$4,672 / mo.	$4,278 / mo.	$4,476 / mo.
3-bdrm	17	$4,600 - $7,500	$5,630 / mo.	$5,887 / mo.	$6,412 / mo
4+-bdrm	11	$5,695 - $19,000	$9,126 / mo.	$9,684 / mo.	$15,960 / mo.

** This survey is based on a sample of 98 Noe Valley apartment listings appearing on Craigslist.org from May 3 to 10, 2020. *NVV6/2020*

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NOE KIDS
BY KATIE BURKE

Madeleine Starling to the Rescue

Madeleine Starling and best friend Phoebe sit atop a Noe Valley hill. Madeleine hopes to open an animal rescue one day. *Photo by Art Bodner*

Madeleine Starling, who will be 10 in July, can already see her future: she will be saving animals. For now, she is biding her time on 26th Street. She lives there with her parents, Sarah and Rob Starling, and her younger brother Kieran. (He will turn 7 in June.)

Madeleine goes to Live Oak School and will be in fifth grade this fall. Kieran will be in first grade at Alvarado School. Mom is an IT specialist for the IRS, and Dad a software engineer for Metaswitch.

Happily for Madeleine, her family has a dog, an English Cream Retriever named Phoebe.

"She's a year and a quarter old," Madeleine says. "She sleeps in my room and home-schools with me. Every morning when I wake up, we go outside and play ball, because she insists that I have to."

Of course, Madeleine is doing school from home because of the coronavirus. She switched from Alvarado to Live Oak in third grade. "I love Live Oak," she says. "It's my favorite school ever."

Asked what she misses while sheltering in place, Madeleine answers, "Well, not being able to see my friends, and there are actually a lot of good things. Can I say those, too?"

(Yes, you can.) "Horseback riding is the only thing we can do, and that's my absolute favorite thing in the world."

At her lessons at Moss Beach Ranch, Madeleine likes to ride a horse named Callie. "She's my favorite horse in the world. She's a pony. She looks like an Icelandic horse, but she's not. She's a mix of a bunch of horse breeds, so she's a mutt, but for horses."

What makes Callie so special? "She's hard"—meaning she doesn't listen—"and usually I'm scared of hard horses, but one day I got bucked off a few horses and I was scared, and my riding instructor put me on Callie and I was fine. She's really, really fun because I trust her."

One more thing about Callie: "She's obsessed with food. She'll take any chance she can to get grass, and that's why I'm probably her favorite lady, because I always give her a bunch of treats."

When Madeleine gets older, she plans to open an animal rescue, her dream since she was 7 years old.

"I've loved animals since I was born," she says. "On my first year alive, my mom got me a bunny. I started loving bunnies and then it went to all the equids, all the things related to horses and also unicorns. Then it went to dogs and cats and then all of the animals. Even sometimes if I see a bug dying, I'll help it."

Madeleine's animal rescue will be in either "Sausalito, England, or somewhere in the middle of America where it's not that expensive."

Her vision? "I [will] rescue all animals, and there are so many horses. It's in a big town or city, and everyone has a place to work. All the money everyone makes is donated to the farm and the animals."

Madeleine also sees a family in her future. "I'm going to adopt two kids, and I'm going to marry a horse," she says. "I'm just kidding—I'm not going to marry a horse."

Family life didn't always appeal to Madeleine. "At first, I didn't want to have any kids, but my best friend, Becca, talked me into it because she's also going to live there. She will only have kids if I have kids, because she wants her kids to have playmates."

Madeleine says little brother Kieran will be involved too: he wants to build the barn at the rescue, with his friend Nicholas.

Madeleine's favorite place to meet animals in Noe Valley is Upper Douglass Dog Park. As for favorite spots to eat with humans, there's Hamano Sushi and Casa Mexicana.

She also likes Barney's, but explains, "I don't like the food there because I'm vegetarian, but I like their milkshakes." ■

Katie Burke is a writer and family law attorney, who lives where Noe Valley meets the Mission. Her Noe Kids column features interviews with Noe Valley kids ages 4 to 12. In April 2020, Burke published a collection of profiles of San Francisco children, titled *Urban Playground* (SparkPress). Know a great Noe Valley kid? Email katie@noevalleyvoice.com.

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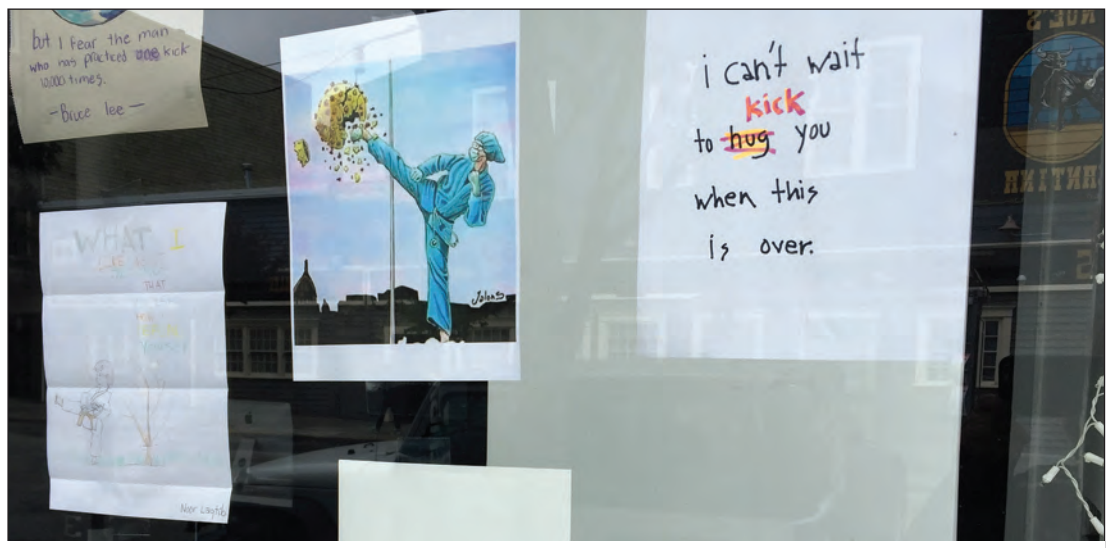

Missing You. The front windows at Navarete's Black Belt Academy at Church and 24th Streets are filled with letters and artwork from students who are being kept away from classes due to COVID-19. *Photo by Jack Tipple*

June 1: The Left Coast CHAMBER ENSEMBLE streams a concert, "Sheltering Music," on YouTube. 7:30 pm. 617-5223; leftcoastensemble.org.

June 1-7: Community Music Center's FIELD DAY 2020, free musical performances to benefit scholarships, will be broadcast on Facebook and YouTube. 647-6015; sfcmc.org.

June 1 & 15: Bird & Beckett bookstore hosts POETRY READINGS followed by a virtual open mic on YouTube. 7-9 pm. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com.

June 1-30: The San Francisco Public LIBRARY offers story times and career coaching online; access the events page at sfpl.org.

June 1-30: The SF-Marin Food Bank needs delivery drivers and VOLUNTEERS for its Pop-Up Pantries and warehouse distribution. Learn more at sfmfoodbank.org.

June 1-30:: Noe Valley OVEREATERS Anonymous at St. Aidan's meets via Zoom, Monday through Saturday from 7 to 8 am. 314-0720 or 779-6273; oasf.org.

June 1-30: The 30th Street SENIOR CENTER's Mission Nutrition program offers takeout lunches for people over 60, weekdays and Saturdays. 9:30 am-1:30 pm. 225 30th. 550-2226.

June 1-30: Charlie's Corner offers virtual STORY TIMES daily on YouTube. Noon and 3 pm. For info: charliescorner.com.

June 1-Jan. 19, 2021: John Martini leads a virtual tour of Sutro's Glass Palace at the SF HISTORICAL SOCIETY website, sfhistory.org.

June 2: Resilient Noe Valley offers a free PET EMERGENCY preparedness seminar on Zoom. 6:30-7:30 pm. To sign up: empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley.

June 3-24: The Castro FARMERS MARKET is open every Wednesday, 2:30 to 7 pm, with the first hour reserved for seniors and others who may be at greater risk. Noe at Market. pcfma.com.

June 3-24: Holy Innocents Episcopal Church holds a VIRTUAL POTLUCK Wednesdays on Zoom. 7 pm. For sign-up info: 824-5142; holyinsf.org.

June 4: LITQUAKE on Lockdown features online readings by Marke Bieschke *(Queer: The Ultimate LGBTQ Guide for Teens)* and Daniel Mallory Ortberg (Something That May Shock and Discredit You). 6-7:15 pm. Sign up at litquake.org.

June 5, 12, 19 & 26: Bird & Beckett bookstore hosts Friday JAZZ in the Bookshop. 7-8:30 pm. Call to confirm 586-3733; birdbeckett.com.

June 6-27: The Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET is open from 8 am to 1 pm (8 to 9 am for seniors and more vulnerable guests; masks and six-foot distancing are required; prepared foods available to-go only. 3861 24th. 248-1332; noevalleyfarmersmarket.com.

June 7: Political group ACTION SF hosts a virtual meeting, open to all, from 1 to 2:30 pm. Email actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com to receive the Zoom meeting link.

June 11: LITQUAKE on Lockdown features online readings by Tom Barbash *(Dakota Winters)* and Alka Joshi *(The Henna Artist)*. 6-7:15 pm. Sign up at litquake.org.

June 11: The NOE MUSIC Listening Club, formerly NV Chamber Music Series, features the first of Kai Christiansen's three-part series "Motives That Move Us." Visit noemusic.org for info on how to join.

June 13: Guitarist Michael Groh and his quartet perform GYPSY JAZZ at Bird & Beckett. 7:30-10 pm. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com.

June 16: Resilient Noe Valley offers a Psychological FIRST-AID seminar on Zoom. 6:30. To sign up: empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley.

June 19: Folio Books' BOOKWORMS Club on Zoom features Gennifer Choldenko discussing Orphan Eleven. 5 pm. RSVP for sign-in, foliosf.com/bookworms; 821-3477.

June 20: SOMArts hosts a virtual summer solstice fundraiser, "Please Stand By," hosted by LOL McFiercen and Yves Saint Croissant, on Twitch. RSVP to pleasestandby.eventbrite.com. 863-1414; somarts.org.

June 23: LIEDER Alive hopes to host a performance by soprano Heidi Moss Erickson, mezzo soprano Kindra Scharich, and pianist John Parr at the Noe Valley Ministry. 7-9 pm. 1021 Sanchez. liederalive.org.

June 25: NOE MUSIC Listening Club features the St. Lawrence String Quartet performing "Haydn Discovery." For concert or other info, visit noemusic.org or call 648-5236.

June 30: Resilient Noe Valley offers a FIRE SAFETY seminar on Zoom. 6:30. To sign up: empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley.

July 5: As part of LaborFest, Shaping San Francisco leads a four-hour BIKE TOUR, of the city's labor history. Noon-4 pm. Meet at 518 Valencia. RSVP to shaping@foundsf.org.

Zoom with a View

The next *Noe Valley Voice* Calendar will appear in the **July/August 2020** issue. The deadline for items is June 15. Write calendar@noevalleyvoice.com Noe events receive priority.

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STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular Voice *feature profiling new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, we spotlight a local chocolate maker who offers pickup or delivery to homes throughout San Francisco.*

BearPhoenix Chocolates

415-683-4949
BearPhoenix.com

From the kitchen of the Victorian home he shares with his partner, Jeremy Allen cooks up scrumptious chocolate confections and molds them into bite-sized bonbons. The flavorful mixtures are coated with dark, milk, or white chocolate from the Guittard Chocolate Company, which started in San Francisco and is now based in Burlingame.

Options include the patron favorite J. Turdle, made with Jack Daniel's whiskey and salted caramel, layered with milk chocolate/pecan gianduja in a dark chocolate shell, and the unique Rootbeer Float, a creamy rootbeer ganache infused with genuine sassafras and sarsaparilla in a white chocolate shell. At any given time, BearPhoenix sells nine different variations.

Launching in June will be Allen's latest creation, Fig & Fire, a salted caramel made with figs and habanero peppers, covered in dark chocolate. It took him roughly a month to settle on the final ingredients and the proper proportions.

"When you bite into it, you first taste the sweetness of the caramel and the earth notes of the fig. Then you get the dark chocolate feel, and then at the very end you get the heat of the habanero on the back of the throat as the chocolate finishes," said Allen in a recent phone interview with the *Voice*.

With people sheltering in place due to Covid-19, Allen has noticed a small uptick in sales in recent weeks. He makes sure to practice social distancing when handing over purchases to customers and no longer accepts cash payment.

"Sales haven't skyrocketed but have increased more than what they had been," he says. "I am taking this time to think about some different chocolates and what I want to change or what I want to add to my line. This is as good a time to do it as any."

The Ohio native relocated from Columbus to San Francisco eight years ago this August. He did so to move in with painting conservator James Bernstein, as they had fallen in love after meeting two years prior via an online dating site.

Into art himself, Allen signed up for a class and incorporated baking goods, such as a homemade cheesecake, into his works. His interests soon turned to chocolate as he was intrigued by the technique of "tempering" cocoa into a molten form that can then be manipulated into different shapes and enhanced with additional ingredients.

He signed up for an online class with the Canada-based Ecole Chocolat Professional School of Chocolate Arts, which also has a location in downtown San Francisco, to learn the craft of chocolate making.

The palette at BearPhoenix includes flavors like Rootbeer Float, Fig & Fire, and J. Turdle, which is made with salted caramel, pecans, milk and dark chocolate, and a nip of Jack Daniel's.

Jeremy Allen is creating confections that will no doubt quicken the hearts of many a Noe Valley resident: chocolate bonbons and butter brittle. *Photos by Pamela Gerard*

"I kept telling myself I am not going to do this professionally. I think that helped, at least for me, because it allowed me to explore a little bit more than some of my colleagues," said Allen. "They were sticking with stuff they could sell down the line. I was exploring flavor combos that would not necessarily sell but were cool to design."

In 2018, he decided to go public and seek a cottage food operator permit from the city. He launched his small business out of the couple's home a few months before Christmas that year, and it has slowly built up a following.

"Some of them are my harshest critics, so for them to say they were really enjoying it and some saying, 'I've traveled the world and never tasted anything better,' I decided let's sort of see where this might go," said Allen. "If it stays something small, on the side, and I enjoy doing it, where is the harm in that?"

His business' name harkens to Allen being a "bear," the term used to refer to beefy gay guys, and to his spirit animal being that of the phoenix.

"It just seemed a natural conclusion to combine the two," said Allen, with the added bonus of the phoenix also appearing on San Francisco's official flag.

As a cottage food operator, Allen is limited to offering only nonperishable items, and he has to stay at or below a cap of $50,000 in total annual sales. He is also restricted from shipping his chocolates. He can only do local deliveries or arrange in-person pickups.

For now, Allen has no plans to quit his job as a service manager for a bank branch downtown to focus on making chocolate full-time. "I didn't get into it for the money, I got into it for the love of chocolate."

His bank branch has remained open during the current health crisis, and orders for his chocolates have also continued to come in. Some are from his loyal customers, and others from friends and family. "Some of my coworkers as well. Some to support me and others because they love my chocolate," said Allen.

Customers can order the chocolates in various-sized gift boxes and pick out which flavors they want and in what amounts. A box of four runs $12, a box of eight is $22, and a box of 12 costs $32. The largest box comes with 27 bonbons and costs $75.

"Probably the most popular order is the box of eight bonbons," said Allen.

His butter brittle can be ordered in separate bags. A small with five to six pieces costs $8, the medium with eight to nine pieces is $15, and the large with 24 to 30 brittle pieces is $35.

The best way to order is via the website, BearPhoenix.com, where customers will find a field to send an email and note their chocolate choices. They can arrange to either pick up their order at his home in Noe Valley near the Philz Coffee on 24th Street or have Allen deliver it to them in the city.

"I have a little scooter and I've taken my chocolate all over the city," said Allen. "There is no limit on the ordering amount, as long as I can fit the order into my backpack."

—Matthew S. Bajko

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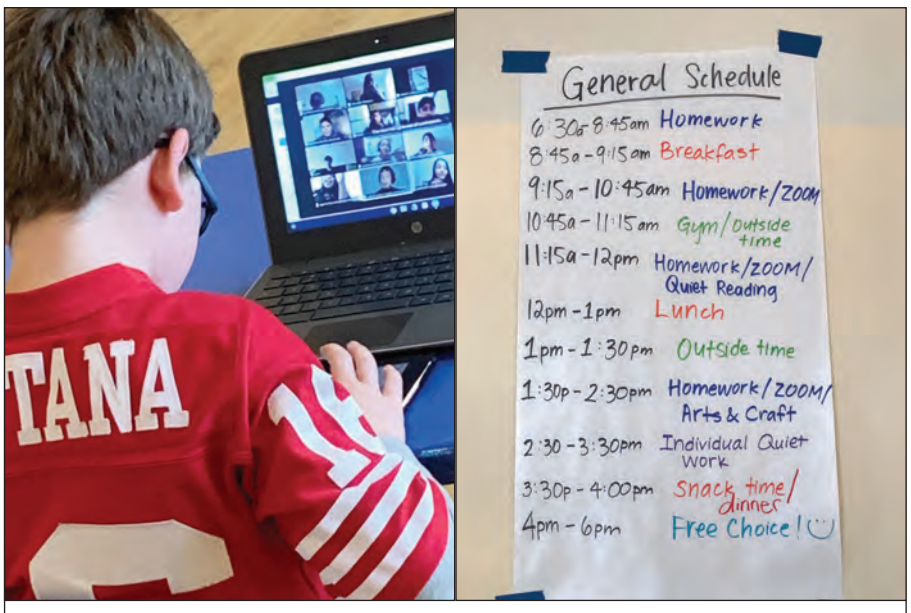

The staff at Upper Noe Rec Center has been doubling as distance-learning tutors, helping the children of emergency and healthcare workers keep up with classwork during shelter-in-place. Here's a glimpse of the staff and students' schedule—almost 12 hours. *Photos courtesy Cheryl Woltzen*

Summer Camp Is Happening!

Summer Camp is coming to Upper Noe Recreation Center on June 15. Rec and Park will oversee 25 camps in three summer camp sessions: from June 15 through July 2, July 6 through July 24, and July 27 through Aug. 14. Each session will include a camp for ages 6-9 and 10-12.

To minimize the risk of transmitting Covid-19, each camp session must last at least three weeks and be limited to 12 kids. Also, the same groups of staff must attend to each distinct group of campers. Because of these restrictions, the rec center and park grounds are likely to remain off limits to the public.

Emergency Child Care Program and scholarship-eligible families began registering on May 26. All other families can register on June 6. For information on camp offerings, see sfrecpark.org. Note: The regular Summer Session classes and activities at Upper Noe, 295 Day St., have been cancelled.

Also, remember the situation is fluid. For day-to-day updates about any potential classes and events, go to uppernoerecreationcenter.com or call the rec center office at 415-970-8061.

Meanwhile, consider buying a gift card to a local Noe Valley business and donating it to Upper Noe Rec Center. You get double the value when you give.

—Chris Faust, Chair, Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

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RUMORS
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Light at the End of…

By Mazook

PHASE 2B DETERMINED: Since Covid-19 besieged the world, it has become a daily struggle everywhere, including in Downtown Noe Valley. All of our merchants—restaurants, bars, barbers—have tried to make ends meet and create a path to normalcy in the weeks after Mayor London Breed's March 16 order, which required all but essential ones to stay at home and limit social interaction.

That order was lifted for most businesses in the city on a new timeline the mayor outlined May 28. It looks like there is hope that soon our lives will be less restricted. In Phase 2B, starting June 15, restaurants will be able to open for outdoor dining, and businesses will be able to allow in-store shopping.

In this phase, 24th Street will participate in the "Shared Spaces Program," which, according to Breed, will enable more flexible use of "sidewalks, full or partial streets, and other nearby public spaces like parks and plazas for restaurant pickup and other retail activity…." What's more, "the public right-of-way could be used for outdoor restaurant seating."

Our supervisor, Rafael Mandelman, a member of the city's Economic Recovery Task Force, had this to say: "Outdoor dining and shopping should be a centerpiece of our economic recovery this summer, and [I] look forward to working with merchants and community to make this experiment a success in the commercial corridors of Church and 24th streets in Noe Valley, Glen Park, the Castro, and Mission."

Said the mayor's office, final details of the permit process will be available by mid-June at SF.gov.org.

☎☎☎

SUNNY AND SHARED: A central player in Noe Valley's response will be the Noe Valley Association, which with taxes from property owners along the commercial strip, oversees the daily maintenance of the streets. It also is a sponsor of the Noe Valley Town Square.

NVA director Debra Niemann says her first concern about what could turn into a DNV street fair is "we will have to clean up afterwards." But "we will do whatever we can to make this Shared Spaces Program work," she says. "We hope to work with the Noe Valley Town Square, with Rec and Park, and our merchants as soon as the guidelines from the city are released."

Noe Valley Town Square events director Leslie Crawford is waiting for guidelines, too. Meanwhile, she met with Supervisor Mandelman and others. "We are quite excited to get this going!" Also in on the meetings was the square's music director, Richard Hildreth, ready to plan events to soothe our ears.

☎☎☎

THANK YOU, FACEBOOK: We're sure you also heard that two local restaurants, La Ciccia and The Liberties Bar & Restaurant, each received $100,000 from Liberty Hill residents Mark Zuckerberg and wife Priscilla Chan.

"I was contacted on Easter Day by Mr. Zuckerberg, who asked me if there was a way they could buy a large amount of food so that food could be prepared and then distributed over the next several weeks to health workers, hospitals, and people in need and also homeless shelters," says La Ciccia owner-chef Massimiliano Conti, "and we could take the margins needed to support our business and prepare the food we thought was appropriate given the circumstances.

"I told him I liked the idea and we would work on moving forward, and since then on April 16 we reopened for takeout, we rehired over half of our staff, and now serve about 200 meals a week for people in need," says Conti. "I prepare a variety of meals, including lasagna, chicken, pork, and salmon dishes."

Conti opens the kitchen (291 30th) Tuesdays to Sundays from 4 to 8 p.m., currently for pickup only. His business had declined more than 70 percent from pre-Covid days, and in the last two months there has been a large spike in wholesale prices. "I used to pay 79 cents a pound for onions, and now it is up to $1.50, and ground beef has gone from $5.50 to $8 a pound."

"I am very grateful to everyone in the neighborhood who has supported us, and I am so happy that I can give back my labors to our community," says Conti. He returned his Paycheck Protection Program loans, "so other small businesses could get the assistance."

Liberties owner Ian Duggan tells pretty much the same story. "I was contacted by Mr. Zuckerberg, who wanted to know if I was willing to hire back workers to prepare dinners to distribute to medical workers, those in need, and homeless, and he would provide funds to buy the ingredients and pay for our employees," says Duggan. "I agreed to reopen and received funds to start up my kitchen again."

He says he is preparing 20 to 30 meals a day. The bar and restaurant, at 998 Guerrero St., is open every day until 2 a.m., and serves takeout meals from 4 to 9 p.m.

Duggan is also serving grab-and-go meals he calls "service meals," with sandwiches and salads for $10, or a pizza or a curry dish with rice and vegetables for 15 bucks. If you order a beverage the price is reduced by $5.

"I am grateful for this opportunity," says Duggan.

☎☎☎

PIVOTING IN PLACE: Adrian Hoffman, Ismael Macias, and his brother Esteban Macias will soon be opening their new oyster bar and fish shop, Billingsgate, next to the town square, at 3859 24th St. "We hope to be ready for a final inspection by the city by the beginning of July and open soon after we get the go-ahead, which I estimate to be by August 1," says Hoffman.

Hoffman and the Macias brothers are fish wholesalers and longtime chefs who operate Four Star Seafood. They moved their fish operations from Pier 45 to a spot on Egbert Street last year, and they have 13 delivery trucks. This was lucky timing, since their spot at Pier 45 went up smoke last month when a huge fire struck the pier.

"We changed our business model on March 15 when we learned that restaurants were going to close and the many that we served would not be placing any orders," said Hoffman, a Noe resident. Four Star then began offering home delivery to local neighborhoods. "By March 19 we had our website up and running, and saw a spike in orders, especially in Noe Valley," he says. "Since that time, we have expanded our menu to include poultry and beef to meet the rising demand, and become an online grocery store."

Another innovator is Nancy Guettier, who lives on 25th Street and owns and operates her new shop for kids, Nancyland. The shop opened in January in the long-vacant spot last occupied by Good News at 3920B 24th Street, but had to close on March 17, because of the stay-at-home order, which allowed only stores selling essential goods to remain open. So Guettier restocked her inventory to include 50 percent of essentials, including baby food, diapers, wipes, soaps, and toilet paper, and reopened on April 27.

Then on May 20, "Two men from the city came into the store because they had received an anonymous complaint about the shop. After I told them I was selling essential baby goods, they looked around and said there wasn't 50 percent of essential goods being offered and I would have to limit sales to door service only." She says she was shocked at how arbitrary they were in their determination.

Navarrete's Black Belt Academy, our local taekwondo studio on the corner of 24th and Church, closed their doors in mid-March. But they immediately began offering classes via Zoom to their 150 students, with about 100 participating in 30-minute classes, says Tori Navarrete, who teaches with her husband, Master Fernando Navarrete.

And over at SF Bistro Grill, 1305 Castro near 24th, Hasim Zecic and Senijad Felic began selling the menu items cooked in their kitchen for pickup at the front window (see *Voice* April 2020). Recently, they've also transformed their restaurant into a grocery store and wine shop.

☎☎☎

THAT'S SHOE BIZ: At May's end, Astrid's Rabat Shoes closed its doors forever, after a 43-year run in Noe Valley. Owner for the past 33 years, Hal Doder, is over 90 years old and decided that it was time to retire and travel the world. His wife Astrid passed away in 2001.

According to store manager Veronica Ruedrich, all 1,100 pairs of shoes in stock were donated to St. Anthony's Foundation for the needy. Doder had made yearly contributions to St. Anthony's for over 30 years.

Still, many on 24th Street were sad to see the store go.

Another bit of bad news, reported May 27 by Mission Local's Michael Toren, was that "an employee at the Noe Valley Whole Foods at 24th and Sanchez was recently diagnosed with Covid-19 and sent home to quarantine." According to Amazon, which owns Whole Foods, when there is a verified case of Covid-19, the store is closed and given a thorough cleaning.

Resilient Noe Valley reported in its digital newsletter that Whole Foods Noe Valley informed the group that the store, on the same day it found out about the diagnosis, "brought in an independent commercial cleaning company, one that specializes in deep cleaning for hospitals and senior living homes. They follow all the CDC guidelines for effective cleaning, including correct chemicals and contact times. This was in addition to the daily regular cleaning regimen completed by each WF team."

Earlier in the month, there was a similar case at the Whole Foods at Market and Duboce.

☎☎☎

WEB PIONEER: Family, friends, and neighbors were shocked at the beginning of May when they learned that Noe Valleon Frederick Roeber had passed away. His brother Jim Roeber, who lives in Sonora, confirmed that "Frederick died on May 6, very unexpectedly," and because he was the youngest of seven children and has parents in their 90s, it was "a surprise to us all." The family is waiting for the formal autopsy as to cause of death.

I first met Frederick Roeber in 2011, and he appeared as the answer to one of my local quiz questions: Who is the current owner of the landmark on the corner of Sanchez and 21st, the house Mayor "Sunny Jim" Rolph built for his mistress back in 1930?

The answer was Frederick Roeber and his wife, Gina Sanfilippo, who purchased the Tudor-style home from its longtime owners, the Salaman family, in August 2008 for $4.3 million. Curiously, this landmark house was built without a kitchen. Roeber, who was in the process of restoring the crumbling house, said, "Legend has it that since this was the house of the mayor's well-tended mistress, she had no need of a kitchen." (Food was cooked in the next house down the hill on Sanchez.)

There is a grand hall on the second floor with a fantastic view and leather flooring, where parties and receptions were held. It has a large fireplace made of Hetch Hetchy stone.

Frederick Roeber (born in 1967), a physicist and software writer, was one of the founding fathers of the World Wide Web, with past affiliations that included CERN, Netscape, and Google. He said to me, "I don't think much that I wrote still survives. My actual documents were hosted on machines that are now long dead." As for his status as a founder of the Web, he said modestly, "I like to think that I helped kick the can down the road a bit."

His friend and neighbor Carolyn Kenady says, "He received a BS in Physics from Caltech in 1990. He was a scientist, thinker, and explorer through and through, and attended our yearly fall neighborhood party on Sanchez and participated in our 'History Corner Photo Exhibit'—telling neighbors stories about the interesting history of the 'mayor's house.'"

Says his brother Jim Roeber, "He was a very private person, somewhat of a recluse, but fell in love with the city when he arrived here in 2001, and loved Noe Valley and his house and was passionate in its restoration.

"He also loved to deep-sea dive around the world and went on many trips over the years… and he had a great love for his school, the California Institute of Technology ('Caltech'), and the projects he was afforded the opportunity to participate in while there."

Jim is the trustee of his brother's family trust and says there is a lot of work ahead of him. Oh, and what's going to happen to "the mayor's" house, pray tell? "He gifted it to his school, Caltech," says Jim.

There was a memorial held in the front courtyard of his residence on May 23, attended by about two dozen friends and neighbors. Refreshments were served to the masked and socially distanced mourners, who listened to a cello recital by friend and neighbor Hans Kolbe, accompanied on violin by high school student Dante Falzone. Jim Roeber and others there shared anecdotes about Frederick Roeber. Sadly, he was just 53.

☎☎☎

THAT'S 30. Remember, according to orders from Mayor Breed on May 28, when you go out for any reason you must wear a mask when you come within 30 feet of anyone else. Good luck, Noe Valley. ■

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COMPASS

MORE BOOKS TO READ

Our Virtual Life

With all San Francisco libraries closed until further notice, Noe Valley librarians Denise Sanderson and Catherine Starr want to remind you to draw upon the San Francisco Public Library website (sfpl.org) for ebooks, audiobooks, music, films, newspapers, magazines, online classes, and virtual story times.

In the spring, SFPL normally hosts a series called Big SF Play Dates. However, since no one can play "live" at this time, the librarians suggest you check out some old-fashioned play activities you can do at home: https://sfpl.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/big-play-ideas.pdf.

During these pandemic months, the library staff continues to be very busy in the field. In May, their major projects included site-monitoring at homeless shelters, contact tracing of people exposed to Covid-19, and the preparation, packaging, and delivery of meals to the *many* thousands in need in the city.

The librarians' book and film recommendations for June are included on this page. Should you need assistance with your library card or have a different query, please call 415-557-4400, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Books: Adult Fiction

❖ A biology grad student fills her apartment with poisonous plants in ***Hex*** by Rebecca Dinerstein Knight.

❖ ***The Other Bennet Sister*** by Janice Hadlow tells the story of Mary, the bookish "ugly duckling" of the five sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*.

❖ Katy Simpson Smith's historical novel ***The Everlasting*** follows the love stories of four characters, each living in Rome in different centuries spanning 2,000 years.

❖ In ***The Book of Kane and Margaret*** by Kiik Araki-Kawaguchi, two teenage lovers disrupt a World War II internment camp in Arizona.

Books: Adult Nonfiction

❖ Joe Yoon offers a textbook for health in ***Better Stretching: Nine Minutes a Day to Greater Flexibility, Less Pain, and Enhanced Performance, the Joe Therapy Way.***

❖ In ***Three Brothers: Memories of My Family,*** Lianke Yan describes his childhood in rural China during the 1960s and '70s.

❖ Ned Baldwin's ***How to Dress an Egg: Surprising and Simple Ways to Cook Dinner*** offers some basic techniques that will liven up your recipes.

❖ ***The New Gardener's Handbook: Everything You Need to Know to Grow a Beautiful and Bountiful Garden,*** by Daryl Beyers, covers the basics of cultivation.

eBooks

❖ The after-effects of a brutal crime in 1976 Texas are the subject of ***Valentine,*** a novel by Elizabeth Wetmore.

❖ Stephanie Thornton's novel ***And They Called It Camelot: A Novel of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis*** explores the life of the former first lady.

❖ In ***How to Be an Artist,*** Jerry Saltz offers insights and practical tips for artists in all fields.

❖ Brian P. Ramos suggests ways to improve one's body, mind, and spirit in ***The Art of Stress-Free Living: Reprogram Your Life From the Inside Out.***

Children's Fiction

❖ Dog Bob is being followed by a cat in ***Up on Bob,*** written and illustrated by Mary Sullivan. Ages 3 to 7.

❖ When their parents are away, tooth fairy sisters April and Esme try to find a girl from Ghana with a tooth in the pocket of her red coat, in ***The Underhills: A Tooth Fairy Story,*** written and illustrated by Bob Graham. Ages 3 to 7.

❖ In ***Please Don't Eat Me,*** written and illustrated by Liz Climo, a bunny encounters a hungry bear in the woods. Ages 4 to 8.

❖ A high-energy young troublemaker regrets he carried out "The Best Idea Ever" in ***The Best of Iggy,*** written by Annie Barrows, with illustrations by Sam Ricks. Ages 7 to 10.

❖ John Patrick Green's graphic novel ***InvestiGators*** follows the adventures of Mango and Brash, the super spy alligator duo. Ages 7 to 10.

❖ A young Jewish girl in France is forced to go into hiding during World War II in ***Catherine's War,*** written by Julia Billet, illustrated by Claire Fauvel, and translated by Ivanka Hahnenberger. Age 8 to 12.

❖ In ***Here in the Real World*** by Sara Pennypacker, two children escape Rec Camp by taking sanctuary in their dreams. Age 8 to 12.

❖ ***Havenfall*** is Sara Holland's contemporary fantasy about a Colorado sanctuary and the girl who has sworn to protect it. Ages 12 and up.

Children's Nonfiction

❖ ***The Roots of Rap: Sixteen Bars on the Four Pillars of Hip-Hop,*** written by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Frank Morrison, starts with folktales, spirituals, and poetry. Ages 4 to 14.

❖ Andrea D'Aquino introduces a local artist who later became world famous, in ***A Life Made by Hand: The Story of Ruth Asawa.*** Ages 5 to 8.

❖ In ***Todos Iguales: Un Corrido de Lemon Grove / All Equal: A Ballad of Lemon Grove,*** Christy Hale tells the true story of the 1931 California incident that desegregated schools. Ages 8 to 11.

❖ Candace Fleming's biography ***The Rise and Fall of Charles Lindbergh*** describes the life and personal politics of the first man to fly across the Atlantic. Ages 12 and up.

Children's eBooks

❖ ***One Little Bag: An Amazing Journey,*** written and illustrated by Henry Cole, follows the cycle of a paper bag, from tree to grocery store. Ages 4 to 8

❖ A man who sheltered stray cats during the Syrian Civil War is honored in ***The Cat Man of Aleppo,*** written by Karim Shamsi-Basha and Irene Latham, with illustrations by Yuko Shimizu. Ages 4 to 8.

❖ In ***A New Kind of Wild*** by Zara Gonzalez Hoang, a boy who grew up in the forest adjusts to living in the city. Ages 5 to 7.

❖ ***The Cool Bean,*** written by Jory John and illustrated by Pete Oswald, is the third book in the series that started with *The Bad Seed* and *The Good Egg*. Ages 6 to 9.

❖ An autistic girl is determined to play baseball, in ***Get a Grip, Vivy Cohen!*** by Sarah Kapit. Ages 8 to 12.

❖ Two brothers endure life in a refugee camp in Kenya, in the graphic novel ***When Stars Are Scattered,*** written by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, with illustrations by Victoria Jamieson and Iman Geddy. Ages 9 to 13.

❖ Frances Hardinge's ***Deeplight*** is a fantasy adventure described as "*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* meets *Frankenstein*." Ages 12 and up.

DVDs

❖ A girl navigates her way through social challenges in ***Emma,*** the 2020 film version of the Jane Austen novel of the same name.

❖ Osgood Perkins directs the 2020 retelling of the fairy tale ***Gretel and Hansel.***

❖ Documentary ***Hiro's Table*** follows the career of master chef Hiroshi Obayashi over a 16-year span.

❖ Funk musician Betty Davis tells her story in the 2017 documentary ***Betty: They Say I'm Different.***

eVideos Via Kanopy

❖ The 2012 documentary ***Welcome to Kutsher's: The Last Catskills Resort*** describes the 100-year run of a "Borscht Belt" hotel.

❖ ***The Outrageous Sophie Tucker*** documents the long career of "The Last of the Red Hot Mamas."

❖ Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell star in the 1940 romantic comedy ***His Girl Friday,*** directed by Howard Hawks.

Annotations by Noe Valley Voice *bookworm Karol Barske*

Calandrinia Spectabilis: Magenta flowers in a garden of succulents strain to see the magnificent view of Bernal Hill from Noe and Duncan streets. *Photo by Pamela Gerard*

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Tom Swift 2020 by Michael Blake

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BRANCH HOURS*

Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library*
451 Jersey St., 355-5707

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	12-6	10-9	1-9	10-6	1-6	10-6

Mission Branch Library*
300 Bartlett St., 355-2800

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	1-6	10-9	10-9	10-9	1-6	10-6

Glen Park Branch Library*
2825 Diamond St., 355-2858

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	10-6	10-6	12-8	12-7	1-6	1-6

Eureka Valley–Harvey Milk Branch Library*
1 José Sarria Ct. (3555 16th St.), 355-5616

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	12-6	10-9	12-9	10-6	1-6	12-6

*Note: In compliance with city health orders, all San Francisco libraries have been temporarily closed to the general public. For updates, go to www.sfpl.org.

OTHER VOICES

fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction • the noe valley voice

The Bank Teller

By Doug Konecky

Photo and Illustration by Karol Barske

The masked man enters the 29th and Mission Street branch of Bay Savings and Loan at 2 p.m. There is no line: he is the only customer in the bank. His mask is blue, he is wearing a black knit cap pulled down to his eyebrows and yellow latex gloves like he is getting ready to wash the dishes.

A bank teller, wearing a lime-green jewel-neck blouse and a tiny gold crucifix hanging from a chain around her neck, looks up at the masked man from behind a 10-foot-high sheet of plexiglass. “May I help you?” she says.

“Do you have a piece of paper, please, and a pencil?”

“Of course,” she says. She tears off a piece of paper from a scratch pad and hands it through the slot under the glass, along with a yellow stub of a pencil.

“Thank you," says the man in the mask. He takes the pencil and draws a cartoon-like picture of a pistol on the piece of paper. He is clearly having difficulty drawing because of the gloves. He then hands back the piece of paper through the slot, along with the pencil, to the teller. She smiles and picks them both up. When she sees the drawing, she scrunches up her eyes to look closer.

“Ummm… I’m not sure what, um, what exactly is this?” she says, looking up at the man in the mask.

“Well, I didn’t have much time,” he says. “I could do it a lot better, if I had, you know, more time, these gloves, it’s hard…oh, for goodness' sake! It’s a pistol.”

The teller stares again at the drawing. She is the only teller on duty at 2 p.m. For three weeks now, there has been no business at all at the branch and the teller has had a lot of time on her hands. All of her fellow employees are afraid the parent company in Delaware will scale back operations and they will lose their jobs, so it’s liberating to have something useful to do and someone to talk with.

“Well,” she says, smiling to the masked man. “I can see it, kind of. This part, the long part.” She shows it to the man through the plexiglass.

“You mean, the barrel…”

“Well, yes, it looks more like, you know, a donut or something. But the rest, yes, I see it, it could be…why, of course. It’s a gun.”

“That’s right,” the masked man says.

“Okay,” the teller says. When the man doesn’t respond, she adds, “Thank you. Now, how can I help you today?”

“Excuse me, miss,” he says. “That’s a gun. Do you know what a gun is?”

“Ha ha, of course I do, but…”

“But what?”

“Well, this isn’t a gun," she says. "This is a picture of a gun.”

“Please, would you mind handing it back to me?”

“Of course, sir,” she says and slides the drawing back under the plexiglass. “Will you be needing the pencil?”

“No, not now, thank you,” he says, then takes the drawing, turns it toward the woman, and holds it up against the plexiglass so now she is staring directly at the drawing of the gun.

She shakes her head side to side. This frustrates the masked man with the knit cap and the latex gloves, so he then shouts:

“THIS IS A STICKUP!”

The teller scratches her chin.

“You shouldn’t touch your face,” the man says.

“Oh, right. Ha ha. Sometimes I forget.”

The teller looks around. Her supervisor has gone to lunch. The security guard is outside with his head down talking on his phone. The teller never understands who the security guard is talking to all the time because she is pretty sure he is deaf. There is no one in the bank but her and the masked man with the knit cap and latex gloves, and he is trying to rob her bank with a picture of a gun that he has just drawn on a piece of paper she has given to him.

These are strange times. People have lost their anchors. A strange compassion washes over her. The man looks nervous, and the closer she looks, the more she notices his soiled jeans and his plaid shirt with the frayed collar and one of the buttons missing.

“Sir,” she begins, in as kind a voice as she can muster, “how can I help you today?”

He pulls down the drawing so he can see her better. “I want…”

“Yes, sir?” She waits, and when he says nothing, she says, “There is no hurry.” And then, “Take your time.”

“I want…this bottle of hand sanitizer,” he says, pointing to the plastic bottle of Purell at the teller window, the same brand that has been placed at all the teller windows, as a means to control transmission of a dangerous virus.

“Well, sir,” she says, “why don’t you just take it?”

“Oh, I couldn’t do that,” he says.

“No, really, you can,” she says. “Please, take it. Please.”

“Oh no no no, I can’t do that, I’ve never, I would never…” he says.

She starts to say “The bank won’t mind,” but then isn’t so sure they won’t. The executives in Wuddid, Delaware, can be very prickly about bank robberies, although this one seems, to the teller, to be several cells short of a larceny.

Suddenly, the masked man blurts out: “I live out there, in back of the bank. You know?”

There is an alley behind the parking lot, with bank property on one side and a development of chic new condos on the other. She has seen people congregating in the alley when she leaves work. To the teller, the alley seems to be something either the condos or the bank would want to do something about, in terms of cleaning it up or helping the grizzled homeless citizens who gather there, but so far she has not heard word one about it.

She nods to the masked man.

“It’s just that I could, really, you know, use…” He falls silent.

“Sir, I understand. Take the Purell.”

“No, no, I can’t. But I will pay for it. How much is it?”

“Uh, sir, no one has told me, I can’t…”

The masked man looks like he is going to cry. His head falls against the plexiglass with a thump. She now notices that the wool in his cap has a hole the size of a half dollar. It couldn’t possibly keep his head dry in a rainstorm.

She knocks hard on her side of the plexiglass. The man jerks back up and stares at her.

“FIVE DOLLARS!” she says.

“Five dollars?” he says, smiling, suddenly energized, then, after he thinks about it, outraged. “FIVE DOLLARS FOR ONE CRUMMY BOTTLE OF…”

“Sir, sshhhh,” she says, glancing at the security guard standing outside.

He continues in a softer voice. “Five dollars for one crummy bottle of Purell? I could just walk across the street to the 99 Cents Store and pick up one of these for, for…you know…”

“Ninety-nine cents?” she suggests.

He stares at her. “I will give you 99 cents for this bottle,” he says.

“SOLD!” The teller says.

“Good,” says the man.

“Fine,” says the bank teller.

There is a short silence punctuated by the clanking of one of the few remaining 14-Mission buses running outside the bank. They both turn and look out the front window in the direction of the bus. They can see the bus has no passengers.

They turn back toward each other. The man frowns and looks down.

“Oh, dear. You don’t have 99 cents, do you?” says the bank teller, kindly.

“Well…”

“Sir, I have an idea. Do you still have that drawing?”

“You mean, the pistol? Uh, wait…” He rummages through his pockets, paper clips, crumpled-up tissues, a lock with no key. "Yes. Here it is…you’re right, it’s not very good.”

“Show me the drawing! I mean, the pistol!”

“You mean this?” He holds the drawing up to the plexiglass.

“Eeeeeeek!” she says. She knows it would be more effective if she screamed, but the security guard is talking on his phone outside the front door, and though she is sure he can't hear, she doesn’t want to take any chances.

“Eeek!” she loudly whispers.

Since she is loudly whispering, the masked man loudly whispers too.

"Are you afraid now?” he whispers, smiling.

“I am! I am! You are a very good bank robber!” she whispers.

“I am? Really?” He smiles wider.

“Please don’t hurt me,” she whispers again. She decides to throw that in, because she had seen lots of TV shows and…

“Oh, no, I won’t, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I would never…”

“Great! Now, take the bottle of Purell and get out.”

“Well, are you sure you’re all right? I didn’t want to…”

The teller hears a door open in the employee area behind her. She realizes Mr. Posey, her boss, has finally come in for the day and will enter the caged teller area at any moment.

“GET OUT OF HERE!” she shouts. “NOW!!

The masked man turns and hands the drawing of the gun back into the slot under the plexiglass. “You keep this,” he says, and grabs the hand sanitizer. “Tell your grandkids.” He stuffs the Purell into his pocket and runs out the side door into the empty parking lot.

The teller smiles as she watches him go, just as Mr. Posey enters and calls to her.

“Everything okay, Lillian?”

“Yes, sir,” she says.

“Lillian," he says. "I'm sorry but…the office… There will be a meeting tomorrow at noon. Can you please notify the others?” He turns and walks out of the bank, looking crumpled like a cancelled check.

Lillian stares at the door, now closing silently. She shuts her eyes, takes a deep breath, stares at the side door and back at the front door, then out the window.

That night, after work, Lillian gathers up every bottle of Purell in the branch, 20 in all, and puts them in a paper bag. She leaves the bank and walks to the edge of the alley behind the parking lot. The condos tower above the broken concrete and strewn fast-food wrappers on the pavement. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out the drawing of the pistol. She puts the paper on the ground, then places the bag with all the sanitizers on top of it. She walks back to her car and gets in. Before work tomorrow she will cross the street to the 99 Cents Store, buy as many knit caps as they have, and place them in the same spot in the alley. Then she’ll see what happens.

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Doug Konecky is a songwriter who has lived on Sanchez Street for 27 years. His latest CD, DAK’s Back!*, is available at daksback9@gmail.com. Hear music and read other stories at www.theworldofdak.com.*

The Noe Valley Voice invites you to submit fiction, creative nonfiction, or poetry for possible publication in Other Voices. Email OtherVoices@noevalleyvoice.com or write Other Voices, *Noe Valley Voice,* P.O. Box 460249, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include your name and contact information.

Valley Views

Chalk Talk. Inspirational messaging appeared on neighborhood steps in May. Above left at 27th street near Castro. And above right,, behind Diamond Heights Safeway.

Photos by Jack Tipple (left) and Sally Smith (right)

Thank You Noe Valley for Filling Bellies!

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for SF pet owners without stable housing

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drop off donations to our partner locations

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donate at Fundly.com/food-for-friends-support-full-belly-bus

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M-Sun 7am-1 pm

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Sat 10 am - 1 pm

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