



# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## Call the Midwife!

The Root Is Home Birth Central In San Francisco

By Megan Wetherall

Each year, more than 10 babies are born at home in Noe Valley under the care of licensed midwives Kelly Murphy and Kara Engelbrecht, who each run their own practice out of a shared space at 1300 Sanchez St., aptly named The Root. Ever since the lives of these two women intersected at a midwifery conference in Michigan in 2008, they have been sharing and supporting one another on this journey, which they describe as devotional, a calling, and a life of service.

The roots of the word midwife date back to around 1300, from Middle English *mid* (with) and *wif* (woman), literally meaning a woman who assists women at childbirth.

“I am really drawn to the ancientness of it,” says Murphy, adding wryly that midwifery and prostitution are the oldest professions for women. “Meaning that women are with women when they give birth, and that’s a ceremony, it’s not a clinical experience. There is reclamation in what that actually means, and walking in our door means confronting that part.”

She’s right, because an entire wall in the front room at The Root displays a gallery of black-and-white, thumb-tacked photographs that capture all the intimacy, pain, rawness, and celebration of birth.

“We are the only office that exists for the homebirth community in San Francisco at this time,” Murphy explains, noting



**Presenting Travis Ray Elbogen:** Glowing mom Sarah Elbogen holds her days-old son, who joined the world with the assistance of a midwife from The Root. Photo courtesy Mike Elbogen

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## City Moves to Landmark Lyon-Martin House

Duncan Street Home Recently Sold for \$2.25 Million

By Matthew S. Bajko

San Francisco officials are moving forward to landmark the home where the late lesbian pioneering couple Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin lived throughout most of their 54 years together.

The Board of Supervisors unanimously voted in support of starting the process at its Oct. 20 meeting. The city’s historic preservation commission has 90 days to take up the matter and send it back to the supervisors for a final vote on adding the property at 651 Duncan St. to the list of local landmarks.

The 5,700-square-foot double lot includes the couple’s two-story cottage, built in 1908, and an undeveloped area the women had tended as a garden.

“If there is a deserving landmark, this is certainly it,” said District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin, who had visited the women at their home and is co-sponsoring the landmark request.

District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman spearheaded the effort to grant historic status to the property after David R. Duncan bought it for \$2.25 million in September. The home’s listing agent had advertised it pre-sale as “a once-in-a-lifetime development opportunity.” Neither Duncan nor a representative addressed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Tending the Sweet Spots in Buzzing Noe Valley

Bee ‘Guardian’ Works to Relocate Unwanted Hives and Their Tenants

By Matthew S. Bajko

With two decades of experience under his protective helmet, Philip Gerrie has become a go-to herder of *Apis mellifera*, or western honey bees, for people across the Bay Area dealing with swarming hives on their property. He will show up with his beehive boxes and specially designed vacuum to collect the buzzing homesteaders.

Within hours he can extract a colony of 5,000-plus bees. He estimates he has now overseen 250 extractions from people’s back yards or homes.

Call him a pied piper for the pollinators.

“I have always liked bees,” said Gerrie, 68, now retired from his career as a postal worker.

In the back yard of his own 26th Street home near the Upper Douglass Dog Play Area, where he has lived since 1981, Gerrie tends to six hives he maintains in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



**Using his understanding and care,** Philip Gerrie prepares to extract and move a swarm of bees from a backyard bird feeder to a more suitable home less exposed to the elements. Photo courtesy Mark Burnley

Photo courtesy Mark Burnley

OPENSFHISTORY



A 5229 6-15-37 PORTOLA DRIVE 24TH TO 26TH STS. "OBSERVATION POINT"

**Open Space.** This photo, taken in 1937 by the city's Department of Public Works, shows a view of Noe Valley and Bernal Heights from Observation Point. The spot was located above the grassy hills below Portola Drive between 24th and 26th streets. Photo and information courtesy OpenSFHistory.org / Western Neighborhoods Project / David Gallagher

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Photo by Jack Tipple

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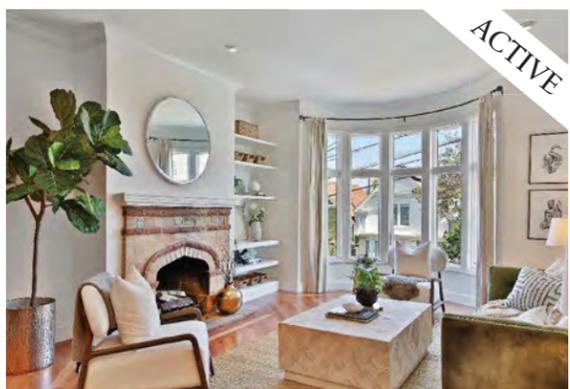
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Our local economy overall has weathered the pandemic well so far and tech companies seem to be circling the wagons to head back to work in 2021. No one has a crystal ball, but Jessica has successfully navigated difficult markets before. She has been an SF property owner for more than 20 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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**THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN**



**LETTERS**

**Seniors Zoom into Fromm Classes**

Editor:

Many seniors in Noe Valley attend classes at the Fromm Institute of Lifelong Learning based at USF. Fromm offers a wonderful variety of academic courses for seniors over 50, taught by emeritus professors of the same age. In the Noe Valley Town Square on 24th Street we can be heard discussing the Harlem Renaissance, the Violent Universe: Crashing Asteroids, Exploding Stars, and Hungry Black Holes, Immigration on Film, history, politics, architecture, and myriad other subjects.

Before the pandemic, if you had asked any student at the Fromm Institute what he or she enjoyed most about this university for older people, the answers would be something like, "No exams, no tests, no papers, just the sheer pleasure of learning. So many like-minded people, smart, inquisitive, friendly—stimulating, accessible

teachers—and having lunch with fellow students after class or before."

Sadly, like everybody else, the Fromm Institute has had to adjust in these difficult times. For a while, there will be no lectures in packed lecture halls or classrooms. No personal contact.

But we have adjusted well. Despite pervasive stereotypes about seniors being technophobic, cognitively impaired, impeded by poor psycho-motor skills, and all the rest, we have risen to the challenge of online learning. While web designers obsess over cool new interfaces and apps, seniors focus on content and are enjoying their classes on Zoom. Classes are going strong, with 1,200 students enrolled for the Fall Session.

After a while it is not so strange. We see or hear from fellow students, our friends, during the classes. There is reassurance in that. We know the professors and admire their efforts to engage us, choosing relevant and important topics, such as the Monday classes on politics and social policy. Professor David Peritz is addressing Urgent Issues, Extraordinary Politics, 2020: National Elections at a Time of Intersecting Crises and Political Polarization, for example. But there are also literary options and classes on music and architecture, with a class on Ulysses for the brave Joyceans.

Fromm allows you to engage as much or as little as you want. You can read all the recommended books or not read anything at all and you can participate in discussion through the Q & A option or remain silent. And then, of course, many of us chat after the session, with a glass of wine, often in the square, which has become a hub for the community we miss.

If you want to know more, swing by the square and look for us!

Or check out [FrommInstitute.org](http://FrommInstitute.org). Fromm's CEO tells me online enrollment for the current session is closed, but students can enroll for a prorated fee by calling the office at 415-422-6805.

Winter Session starts in February. Watch for the new catalog to be posted at <https://fromminstitute.org/course-catalogs>.

Maxine Einhorn  
 Noe Street

**An Ode to Otis**

I answered a class ad in 2017. A homeless man, living in a tent in Denver, had four kittens for sale. His cat had given birth in the tent. I got two of them, Otis and Bankski. These two little boys saved my life, in many ways. They gave me purpose. They prevented me from doing destructive things—if anything happened to me, what would happen to them?

Otis was the goofball. Everyone loved him. He was so extremely gentle with every human, even the vet. I would tell him he had a heart of gold. He loved clowning around. He loved preening his brother. He loved, most of all, going outside. He loved roaming. He felt it was his purpose to protect his family, so he became the warrior and chased all other cats away. His personality filled the room.

Otis never stopped wanting to nurse, a habit I hated. So every time he tried to nurse my sweater, or neck, I'd blow gently in his face. It was hard for him to learn, but eventually he stopped. I was so proud of him.

Finally, my solitary life was filled with happiness when I'd come home at night. I had two little guys who greeted me every day at the door. Their love was boundless. In many ways, they taught me how to love.

A speeding car killed Otis a few days ago on Jersey Street. I later learned cars frequently speed, and the neighbors have tried hard to get speed bumps installed.

My heart and house are empty. His brother and I are doing our best to get by. Otis' huge personality does not fill my house anymore. His goofiness is gone.

I hope the city of SF helps protect all the other cats and dogs on Jersey Street and installs speed bumps on Jersey. Nobody should suffer like I'm suffering now.

And to Otis, I want to tell you, thank you for saving my life. I will never let your brother out without a harness and leash, and I'll miss you forever.

Finally, I want to thank the neighbors who helped me. They took charge when I froze from being traumatized. They put him in a box and drove me to the hospital. If only all humans were this kind to others in their time of need.

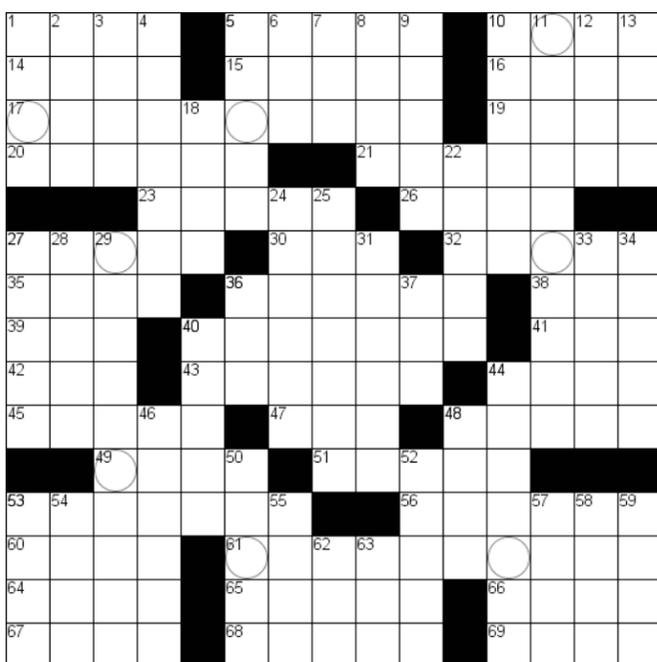
Danielle LaForte

**THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE**

**Terrific Crossword**

ACROSS

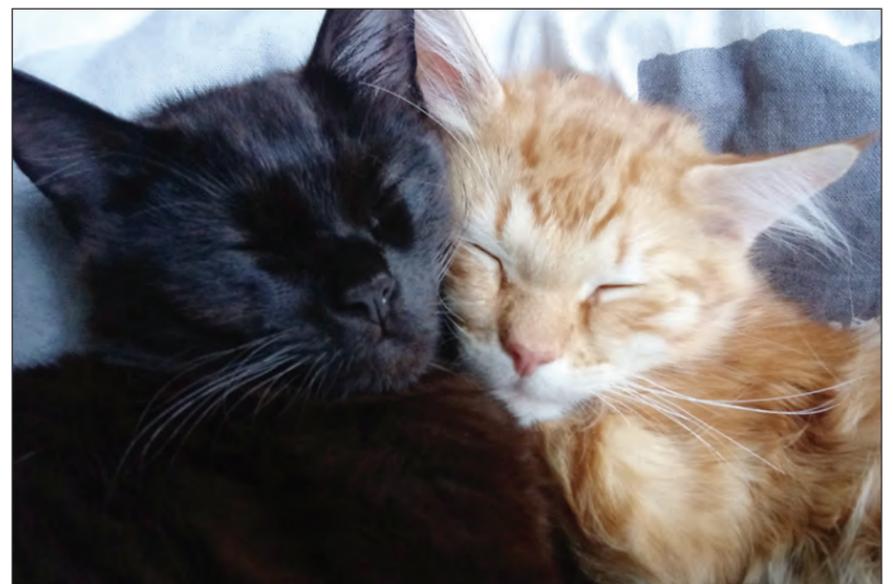
1. Joe Friday's grp.
5. Hurts severely
10. Potrero Hill street named for a state
14. Berry at Pressed Juicery
15. Gandhi's home
16. Tahoe alternative
17. What went into Trevi Fountain in a 1954 movie title
19. Mmes., south of the Pyrenees
20. Hawthorne's Miss Prynne
21. Sexual drive, slangily
23. "Get \_\_\_ of that!"
26. Proficiently
27. Make another attempt
30. Actor Brynner
32. "\_\_\_ bleu!"
35. Comply with a command
36. Fed Chair \_\_\_ Powell
38. "Fiat \_\_\_": UC Berkeley motto
39. A pop
40. Mani-pedi place on 24th that inspired this puzzle's theme
41. \_\_\_-Wan Kenobi
42. Do the wrong thing
43. Like much Noe Valley cuisine
44. Tell it like \_\_\_
45. Delay on purpose
47. Stat for Garoppolo
48. \_\_\_ water (facing trouble)
49. San Francisco \_\_\_ (old newspaper whose building still stands)
51. Merits
53. Matures
56. Stuck at a ski



- chalet, maybe
60. "Too bad!"
61. Attire for Columbo
64. Germany's Konrad Adenauer, Der \_\_\_
65. Very strange
66. Clothes
67. Blacken a bit
68. Downtown street near Steuart
69. Stuffed shirt
- DOWN**
1. Thin strip of wood
  2. Long (for)
  3. 3, 4 and 5, on golf courses
  4. Like some supplements
  5. Teensy-weensy
  6. 12 meses
  7. '70s dictator Amin
  8. \_\_\_ Plaza in SF
  9. An Obama daughter

10. *The Little Mermaid* witch
11. Towel material
12. Germany, to Meg Ryan: Abbr.
13. Garden tool
18. Hard to hold
22. *Barnaby Jones* actor
24. Celeb chef Curry
25. Jimmy with a schnozzola
27. Draws (in)
28. Critic Roger
29. Type of warriors in a big Asian Art Museum display in 2013
31. *Reading \_\_\_ in Tehran*
33. "Little Marco," to his tormentor
34. Be real
36. Where rds. meet
37. Comfy shoe, for short
40. Spills the beans
44. Bugs
46. Rafael Mandelman, by training
48. Move slowly (along)
50. Stringed instruments
52. Kitchen gizmo
53. Nos. on college transcripts
54. Vex
55. Get ready (for)
57. "What you \_\_\_ your own time is your business"
58. *Othello* bad guy
59. Govt. crash investigator
62. Before
63. *Big Momma's House* actress Long

**Solution on Page 22**  
 Find more Crosswords at [noevalleyvoice.com](http://noevalleyvoice.com)



Sweet dreams, Otis (right). Bankski and your mom miss you.

Photo courtesy Danielle LaForte

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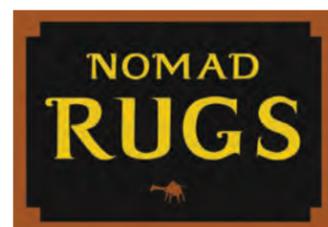
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**CRIME SNAPSHOT**

Noe Valley experienced a drop in crime in September for the third consecutive month. Good news. But there still were upticks in several categories.

San Francisco Police Department data showed 58 incidents reported in September in the 10 categories the *Noe Valley Voice* tracks monthly. The total was down from 63 in August and 101 in July. Among the incidents were 14 burglaries—five more than in the previous month—and three robberies, including a carjacking that caused serious bodily harm. (See story at right.)

“Larceny/theft”—incidents like package thefts and car break-ins—continued to dominate the charts, however. Twenty-five incidents were reported in September, compared to 21 in August.

The main declines were in motor vehicle thefts and “malicious mischief.” Car thefts went from 11 in August to 2 incidents in September.

In all, there have been 724 incidents reported in Noe Valley the first nine months of the year (in our snapshot of 10 categories).

The *Voice* collected the data for September on Oct. 20, 2020, from the database titled “A Digital Map of San Francisco Police Department Incident Reports From 2018 to the Present,” found under Public Safety at the website [Data.sfgov.org](http://Data.sfgov.org). Note the map defines Noe Valley as the area loosely bounded 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 number at 415-553-0123 or file a police report online at [sanfranciscopolice.org](http://sanfranciscopolice.org). To contact Mission Station Captain Gaetano Caltagirone, call 415-558-5400 or email [Gaetano.Caltagirone@sfgov.org](mailto:Gaetano.Caltagirone@sfgov.org). Ingleside Station Captain Christopher Woon can be reached at 415-404-4000, or by emailing [Chris.Woon@sfgov.org](mailto:Chris.Woon@sfgov.org). In an emergency, call 911.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

**Noe Valley Incidents Reported January–September 2020**

Incident Reports	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	YTD
Larceny/Theft	37	31	29	48	41	49	26	21	25	307
Burglary	15	15	8	11	20	20	17	9	14	129
Malicious Mischief	9	13	8	9	2	6	10	10	5	72
Motor Vehicle Theft	9	8	9	16	9	14	15	11	2	93
Assault	3	2	1	1	2	1	5	1	0	16
Robbery	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	3	15
Other Misc.	5	6	3	6	7	4	4	4	5	44
Fraud	4	6	0	4	3	4	2	3	4	30
Fam. Domestic Violence	1	0	0	5	2	1	2	2	0	13
Vandalism	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>724</b>

**Local Resident Injured in Upper Noe Carjacking**

By Tom Ruiz

At 5:30 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 22, Noe Valley landscape architect and habitat preservationist Joe Howard was getting ready to depart his home near the corner of 28th and Dolores streets. He was headed out for a design meeting in Fairfield for the Pacific Flyway Center, which tracks the seasonal migrations of large numbers of bird species.

After packing his truck parked in his driveway, he went inside his home to get some freshly made coffee for the road. When he walked back out his door, he felt a sharp blow to his head, causing him to stagger back into the house.

Hearing the sound of a truck starting up and realizing it was his, he stumbled outside and tried to stop the person or persons who were driving away. He crashed into the passenger side of the truck, suffering a further blow when he collided with the windshield, which shattered as the truck sped off.

Returning to his home, Howard called a friend who lived around the corner on Guerrero Street. She called 911, and police and paramedics arrived quickly. After assessing the gash on the back of his head, they rushed him to Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital, where he was treated for a head wound and concussion.

Howard, now at home and recovering, said hospital staff told him the head injury, which required eight staple-stitches to close, could have been caused by the butt of a gun.

Sgt. Kyle Wren of the SFPD’s Robbery Detail, who has been assigned to the case,

said in mid-October the investigation was still ongoing. The truck, a Ford F350, was recovered in West Oakland a few days after the carjacking and towed to the SFPD CSI unit for examination and to determine whether DNA evidence, including from a T-shirt left behind, could be obtained. The vehicle’s camper shell had been stripped.

Another interesting piece of evidence recovered on 28th Street was a black mask. It also was being tested for DNA.

Sgt. Wren gave kudos to the neighbors. “The neighborhood has been helpful, responsive, and understands and looks out for each other,” he said.

Howard also received many supportive comments on Nextdoor after a neighbor posted an account of the carjacking and a picture of the missing truck. Neighbors living a few houses down saw the posts and mentioned that their truck had been stolen twice from in front of their house.

According to SFPD Public Information Officer Tiffany Hang, motor vehicle thefts in the Ingleside Police District, where Upper Noe is located, have increased 86 percent year over year in 2020 thus far.

SFPD Sgt. Wren and Officer Hang said they would continue to keep the *Voice* informed of any progress in the case. ■

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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In this 1963 photo by artist and friend Imogen Cunningham, Ruth Asawa poses before the redwood doors she carved by hand for her home in Noe Valley.

## Book Traces Ruth Asawa's Life in Art and Family

This past summer, the *Noe Valley Voice* shared the news that Ruth Asawa (1926-2013) had been honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a Forever stamp featuring depictions of her iconic wire sculptures.

We also made mention of another tribute: the April publication of *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa*, a biography by former *Wall Street Journal* columnist and current U.C. Berkeley lecturer Marilyn Chase.

In this issue, we are pleased to print an excerpt from Chase's book, courtesy of the publisher, Chronicle Books. (See "Home and Workshop in Noe Valley," below).

*Everything She Touched* follows Asawa from her childhood in rural Southern California and forced internment in an Arkansas "relocation" camp during World War II, to her flowering at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where she crossed paths not only with artists Josef Albers and Buckminster Fuller but soon-to-be-husband Albert Lanier (1927-2008).

She and Lanier moved to San Francisco in 1949, and married their twin loves, family and creativity, in a house on a hill a few blocks from 24th Street. During their Noe Valley years, Asawa created the bronze mermaid fountain at Ghirardelli Square (1968), the *San Francisco* fountain at the Grand Hyatt near Union Square (1970), and the origami-inspired *Aurora* sculpture on the Embarcadero (1986). She also co-founded the Alvarado Arts Workshop, a model for arts programs in city schools.

In describing the new biography, Chase writes that Asawa "forged an unconventional path in everything she did—whether raising a multiracial family of six children, founding a high school dedicated to the arts, or pursuing her own practice independent of the New York art market."

Asawa's works have been exhibited at the Whitney and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, at a major retrospective in St. Louis (2018), and in museums and galleries around the world. Her tied-wire sculptures are on display at the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park and in the sanctuary of the Noe Valley Ministry on Sanchez Street. A colorful tile mosaic, created by children under the guidance of Asawa and son Paul Lanier, is the centerpiece of the schoolyard at Alvarado Elementary School.

*Everything She Touched* (\$29.95) is filled with photographs and interviews with family members and friends. It can be found in Noe Valley at Folio Books.

## A Home and Workshop in Noe Valley Excerpt from *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa* (Chronicle Books 2020)

By Marilyn Chase

The quest for space to live and work drove Ruth Asawa, her husband Albert Lanier, and their six children from their crowded Saturn Street house to a neighborhood in the city's Outer Mission district, now known as Noe Valley, south of Market Street.

The sunny hollow, sheltered from fog coming off the ocean, boasted the best weather in the city. The land had been part of a 19th-century rancho owned by the city's last Mexican mayor, José de Jesus Noé. Through the mid 20th century, it was a neighborhood of working-class houses. Gentrification would make it a magnet for tech tycoons like Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg in the 21st century. But back in 1960, the intersection of the Outer Mission and Noe Valley had a funky, family-friendly air.

A tip from a friend drew them to a humble cedar-shingled house dating back to just after the 1906 earthquake, when the city experienced a building boom. Designed in a rustic style pioneered by Bernard Maybeck, it had originated as a two-bedroom honeymoon cottage for a newlywed couple. The house had some quirky features, like an organ loft. It needed a massive overhaul when the Laniers bought it in 1960.

But it had a sunny garden and room to expand up and down. Though the house was modest and unassuming from the outside, its Douglas fir living room had high-beamed ceilings for Ruth to hang her sculptures from, and space to add a workshop-studio and sleeping quarters for their children, now aged 1 to 10. One museum director would say it was like entering "a rustic cabin ... a gold miner's cabin," and finding a cathedral of art within: "high ceilings, wood interior, with sculptures ... it's magic."

Getting it into shape for a family of eight took time. So Ruth spent the summer up on the Russian River with her

half-dozen kids. Albert had bought a simple barn north of the city, in the town of Guerneville. He chose the spot because it was close to their Black Mountain College friend and fellow artist Marguerite Wildenhain's pottery workshop, Pond Farm, where their son Paul would later study for three summers. The Laniers' rural retreat was a primitive structure with a smoky firepit but plenty of space to unroll sleeping bags for visiting friends and guests. As Albert and Ruth's sons grew, they would later remodel the property.

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Meanwhile, Albert renovated the Noe Valley house with thrift and gumption. He used recycled and repurposed materials. His work team included friends, schoolboys, odd jobbers, a few union

workers, and alcoholics who stashed empties around the site. "We kept finding them for years after," Albert said. He paid their sons Hudson and Xavier \$1.25 a weekend for helping with the house, with an extra quarter on Sundays, which they spent at the local Bud's Ice Cream store.

The motley crew transformed the house into a five-bedroom home, enlarging the living space up and down without losing any precious garden space. It now had a large kitchen, an attic bedroom for the girls, and dormitory-like sleeping quarters for the boys, suspended between Ruth's studio and the backyard. It had a brick terrace in front, and a deep backyard for growing things.

Albert and Ruth planted a sentimental garden, fragrant with roses, wisteria, bleeding heart, rosemary, columbine,

and iris. A teenaged Xavier would craft spherical white lamps according to a geodesic dome design licensed from Buckminster Fuller. Anticipating the future "high-low" style of design, there would be art by Asawa and Albers mixed with furniture from secondhand shops Albert called "junk stores."

Over time, Albert would use savings to buy adjacent houses and take down the fences that divided their backyards, making a family compound and opening up a communal garden. Albert and Ruth's fruit trees, vegetables, and herbs would feed their family and fill gift baskets for their friends, continuing the Asawa truck farm tradition of shared harvests.

Albert built Ruth a large butcher-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



The Asawa-Lanier family, Christmas 1962. The image was captured by friend and photographer Paul Hassel.

Photos printed with permission from *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa*, by Marilyn Chase (Chronicle Books, 2020)

## An Artist's Life

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

block table with space to set extra plates for visiting neighbors, friends, and artists who stopped by. She'd share duties like making salad dressing, and teach friends how to whisk up a batch of gravy, then quietly set them a place.

"Ruth is a feeder," Albert would say. That table saw many years of epic family potlucks on American holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, as well as celebrations of the New Year in Japanese style, when 125 guests would come to eat sushi, sashimi, and home-cooked mochi—pounded rice cakes that bring good fortune to the festive table.

The master plan of the home, studio, and garden fulfilled Ruth's dream of merging a family home and a working artist's studio with an urban garden. The house became the hub of activity that satisfied her needs—now increasingly inseparable—to make art and to rear her children under one roof, with Albert as chief engineer and architect.

"Albert had incredible space sensibilities," said architect Bill Bondy, who would become a draftsman for Albert's firm. "He would organize around space and light." Albert's designs were a blend of form and function, spare of ornament, producing airy, open dwellings out of modest space and materials.

Lessons learned from building the Minimum House at Black Mountain stuck with Albert. He wanted a dwelling open to the outdoors, bringing in the light. He used practical materials like pegboard, stainless steel, and butcher block in the kitchen before they became hallmarks of industrial chic. He incorporated artisanal touches like handmade tiles. His credo of maximum



Ruth Asawa stands before the life masks she created of friends and family in her home studio in Noe Valley. This 1988 photo was taken by local photographer Terry Schmitt.

From *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa* by Marilyn Chase (Chronicle Books, 2020)

effect with minimum effort was a legacy of Buckminster Fuller's engineering and Josef Albers' aesthetics.

Albert defended his aesthetics with an acid tongue that could be comical or cutting, depending on which side of the debate you found yourself. He slammed a local library for being so vulgar and encrusted with kitsch that it needed only a lighted jukebox and neon cocktail glass with a girl on the rim to complete the effect. Albert's design sense would get him invited to serve on the city's Landmarks Board; his "abrasive" style would get him fired from it.

After the tight quarters of their Alpine and Saturn Street homes, Ruth reveled in the space in Noe Valley. "We are moving to a bigger house so that we could get all of our 6 children in. The house will have a big workshop for all of us," she wrote to Lou Pollock at the Peridot Gallery.

The studio workshop accommodated Ruth's artistic output. And the house inspired and invited her to pursue two additional art forms: hand-carved wooden doors and life masks, which adorned the exterior. For the entrance, Ruth began carving massive redwood double doors with an abstract design of interlocking waves and whorls, a pattern reminiscent of Josef Albers' design class exercises known as "meanders." She let each of her children work at carving curls, so they contributed their hands to part of the whole.

Not all of the kids immediately

appreciated living with artist parents in a handcrafted house.

"Please, Mom, can't we have a normal American door?" asked Hudson as he approached his 10th birthday. "This house is freaky enough as it is." Eventually, as Ruth told a friend, he became resigned and made a model of the family's living room for a school project. But he still protested having to lay stones in the garden while his friends were out playing. "Look, you and Dad can work all the time if you want to," he said, "but I'm going to play some and work some."

"As a child, I wanted to be called Linda or Kathy, rather than Aiko," Ruth's oldest daughter said. "I wanted my mom to dress like June Cleaver, not in holey jeans, holey sweatshirt, holey sneakers."

As an adult, Aiko abandoned the *Leave It to Beaver* sitcom standard of motherhood. "Now as an artist, I appreciate it," she said. She saved the holey jeans and sweatshirt.

The house's shingled exterior was a perfect space to hang the life masks Asawa was casting of her family and friends. Mounted there by the dozens, the masks formed growing clusters of three-dimensional portraits.

Life-casting sessions became a regular feature of the Laniers' social gatherings. Guests would lie down while Ruth framed their faces with cardboard and coated their skin with Vaseline. Then, inserting straws in their nostrils as

breathing tubes, she would slather their faces with quick-setting plaster.

It was fun for the adventurous and a challenge for the claustrophobic. When dry, the cast became a mold for the masks. Guests emerged shining with a slick petroleum jelly on their faces to await the final creation in buff or terra cotta clay. Over time, the faces populated the outside of the house, like a band of benign spirits. ■

### Asawa Through the Eyes of Her Children

The San Francisco non-profit SCRAP is holding a special Zoom event on Thursday, Nov. 19, 7 to 8 p.m., titled "Ruth Asawa—Through the Eyes of Her Children." Daughter and curator Aiko Cuneco and son and artist Paul Lanier will talk about their mother's legacy and impact on arts education. They'll also share stories about growing up in Noe Valley. Tickets start at \$25. All proceeds will benefit SCRAP, dubbed "San Francisco's creative reuse depot." Ruth Asawa served as the first board president for SCRAP, founded in 1976 to provide low-cost art materials to artists, students, and teachers. Rsvp to [scrap-sf.org](http://scrap-sf.org).



The Voice thanks Chronicle Books for lending permission to print this excerpt and photographs from *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa* by Marilyn Chase, published in April 2020. We also thank the Asawa-Lanier family, many of whom are our neighbors in Noe Valley.

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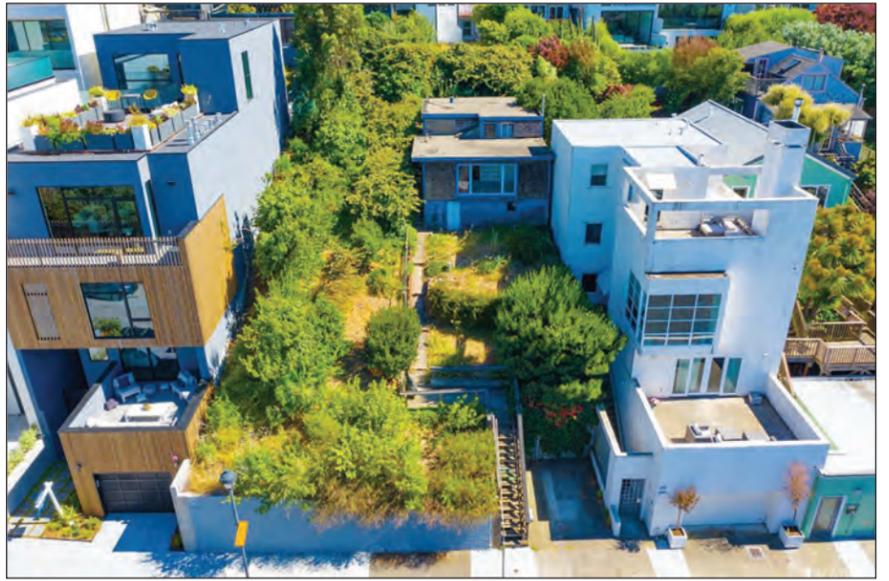
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The small cottage that Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon shared for most of their 54 years together sits at the back of a double lot at 649–51 Duncan St. Photo courtesy TheGoods-SF.com

## Landmark Status Sought for Lyon-Martin House

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the supervisors last month during their hearings about the landmark request.

San Francisco Heritage and the National Trust for Historic Preservation are both supportive of seeing the property become a city landmark. A new group, Friends of the Lyon-Martin House, has formed to push for the designation and includes leaders of the GLBT Historical Society as well as friends of the late couple.

Lyon and Martin met in Seattle in 1952 and moved to San Francisco the following year. They bought the 756-square-foot home atop a steep hill in Noe Valley in 1955 and turned it into a gathering place for the city's lesbian community.

Both worked as journalists and co-founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first political and social organization for lesbians in the United States. In 2004 the couple was the first to be married by San Francisco officials in defiance of California's prohibition of same-sex marriage.

When the state Supreme Court tossed out the homophobic law, the women were the first same-sex couple to legally marry in California, on June 16, 2008. Weeks later, on Aug. 27, Martin died at the age

of 87 in San Francisco with Lyon at her side. This past spring, Lyon died at the age of 95 on April 9.

A citywide LGBTQ context statement released in 2015 included the Lyon-Martin house on a list of LGBTQ historic properties likely eligible for designation as a city landmark and for listing on the California and national registers of historic places. While the state and federal listings are largely honorific, a city landmark designation provides a level of protection to a property should new owners submit plans to raze it in order to build a larger structure.

In addition to property owners, a member of the Board of Supervisors or the city's planning department working with the historic preservation commission can seek adding a property to the list of 288 local landmarks currently in San Francisco.

Four sites in the city have been granted landmark status due to their importance to LGBTQ history. The Lyon-Martin house would be the first focused solely on lesbian history.

Mandelman noted the Lyon-Martin house "is of historic value to San Francisco and the LGBTQ rights movement across the world and it should be appropriately recognized and preserved. This is the beginning of the process but a critical step for the city to weigh in on what happens to the site in the future." ■

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## A Pied Piper for Pollinators

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

his apiary. He also has six hives hosted by other residents of Noe Valley. All the hives contribute to the honey he collects and sells in local stores under the brand Noe Valley Apiaries.

“This season, I harvested 60 gallons of honey,” Gerrie said during a phone interview in early October.

### Kinder and Gentler

Much has changed since the *Voice* first profiled the apiarist in its November 2005 issue. Apart from being able to focus full-time on his bee business, Gerrie has grown increasingly more comfortable around his insect charges.

“I used to put on a full-size bee suit when I first started. Now I just use a hood to cover my face,” he said. “I have a lot of respect for them and have come to enjoy them more over the years. I understand them.”

He rarely gets stung these days and is comfortable enough to wear shorts around his bees.

“When I first started out, I could not imagine beekeepers wearing shorts,” said Gerrie. “I thought to myself, what if they fly up inside my shorts and sting my leg. I am now out there in shorts because they don’t do that.”

### Real Drama Queens

Between April and August is prime bee-swarming season. When a beehive becomes too crowded, half of the group will leave en masse, along with an elderly queen bee, to start its own colony, usually within a 50-foot radius. It could be in a hole in the trunk of a tree, a window on the side of a house, or even an abandoned bird feeder.

“Usually, it is the kids who move out of the house. But in the bee world, it is



Because his recent visit to a home on Vicksburg Street was to relocate the bees, not extract honey, Gerrie gathered their combs too, for reassembling at the bees’ new digs.

Photos courtesy Mark Burnley

the queen who moves out and leaves the house to her kids,” said Gerrie. “When bees swarm, they are looking for the best nest location.”

A past president of the San Francisco Beekeepers Association, on whose board he still serves, Gerrie charges anywhere from \$300 to \$1,000 for his bee-extraction services. The price depends on the size of the swarm.

“If the hive has been there for a while, it can be a huge nest,” he noted.

Key to the job is collecting the queen. Otherwise the hive will die out, as bees tend to live no longer than seven weeks and need to replenish themselves to maintain a hive.

“A queen bee lays 500 to 1,000 eggs a day in season. Slows down in the winter,”

said Gerrie.

When he fields calls from people wanting a swarm removed from their yard, Gerrie can sense over the phone their trepidation at dealing with the creatures.

“People almost always have a lot of fear about them. I don’t because I do it all the time,” he said. “The bees, they can sense if you are nervous or afraid.”

Tending to his hives, Gerrie said he develops an almost intimate relationship with his bees. Humans have domesticated honey bees to the point where they are very gentle, he said.

“Bees are considered livestock,” Gerrie explained.

He doesn’t consider his bees to be his pets, and under city guidelines, he is classified as a rancher. He prefers the term guardian.

“I like the opportunity to show other people this little wonder of nature,” said Gerrie.

He harvests his hives’ honey between May and September. During the colder months, the bees are less active and tend to remain in their hives to stay warm.

### Giant Hornets? Mites Mightier

Earlier this year, the national press swarmed around reports of giant hornets, dubbed “murder hornets,” being found in the Pacific Northwest. Media stories buzzed about the Japanese insects decimating America’s domestic bee population. But Gerrie swatted away such hypothesizing.

“They are using science in locating the giant hornets’ nests and destroying them,” he noted. “What they should have done with coronavirus they are doing with the Japanese hornets. They are contact trac-

ing them and burning them in their nests.”

What most concerns him is another import from Asia, the Varroa destructor or Varroa mite, which feeds on honey bees. The parasitic pest can cause a honeybee colony to collapse, and the honey bees have yet to develop a natural resistance to the mites.

“They are the biggest problem for bees in San Francisco,” said Gerrie. “The mites can travel by latching onto bees and then go from one hive to another.”

### Bumper Year for Honey

He has not noticed any decline in the local honeybee population. But Gerrie told the *Voice* that for some unknown reason, his hives produced more honey this year than they had done over the previous three.

“This year, my hives have been very productive. I have no idea why,” he said.

Asked if he planned to retire from the beekeeping business, Gerrie replied, not in the foreseeable future. As long as he remains healthy and able to physically care for his hives, he sees no reason to find new homes for them. It takes less than two hours a day to maintain them and keep his bees happy.

“Beekeeping gives me satisfaction in being able to produce a food, honey, directly from the local flora,” said Gerrie. “It is a lot of work but worth the effort. And, in the process of capturing bees, I am able to share the wonder I feel with working with honey bees.”

Anyone with a bee invasion can call the city bee club’s swarm hotline at 415-997-9276. To learn more about Gerrie’s bee business, and where to buy his honey, visit his website, [noevalleybees.com](http://noevalleybees.com). ■



After vacuuming the bees, queen included, into a flight-proof box, Gerrie transports his charges back to his apiary on 26th Street or to a new location in Noe Valley.



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# Midwives Thrive Serving Local Families

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

they are two of fewer than 10 midwives specializing in home births in the city (as opposed to nurse midwives who practice in birth centers).

Before they opened The Root in 2015, they used to commute between homes around town. “There is a lovely intimacy for families to have their midwife come to their house, but they also love coming here and seeing each other. It’s great that this cafe just opened up across the street,” she adds, referring to the recently remodeled Spin City Coffee (now called Noe Cafe). There is a certain irony in the fact that this site was once occupied by a weight-loss clinic.

At The Root, women can also consult a physical therapist who does pelvic-floor work, an acupuncturist who specializes in women’s health, and a massage therapist. Pre-Covid, this was a space where women could come together, which Murphy says was very much their intention in founding it. “There is wisdom that comes through when women sit and commune together. We always had circles here, and we really look forward to that return. We [women] have a lot to say,” she says.

Midwifery care typically includes appointments every four weeks for the first 26 weeks of pregnancy, then every two weeks up to 36, then weekly up until the birth (sometime between 37 and 42 weeks), and then the care continues for six weeks postpartum. “Normal birth takes anywhere from an hour to three days,” says Engelbrecht. “Ideally, we get there once she’s in active labor, and we set up all our gear. We are prepared for a lot of different complications.”

Once the mother is approaching the pushing stage, a second midwife is called in so that there is a dedicated practitioner for both mother and baby, should any issues arise. In Engelbrecht’s experience, one in five home births needs to be transferred to a hospital, “usually tired first-timers with a long labor.”

## ‘Total Warmness’ and Expertise

When Grace Randick became pregnant in August 2019, she knew she wanted to have the baby at her home on Greenwich Street. After all, she and her two sisters were delivered at home. She started to interview midwives. When she met Engelbrecht, she felt an instant connection.

Randick, then a nurse at Laguna Honda Hospital, was impressed by the way Engelbrecht answered all of her clinical questions. “It was total warmness, backed with real professionalism.”

She had most of her visits at The Root, “a magical space,” and even squeezed in her baby shower before shelter-in-place suddenly hit. “It was the crazy unknown. I was very stressed out being a first-time mom, not knowing how birth was going to go and having fears of needing to be transferred to the hospital.”

In the end, Randick had her son, Leon Sage Snegg, at home on Earth Day, April 22, 2020, in the presence of her husband Marc, her mother, sister, and team of three midwives. It had been a long labor, and Leon had difficulties breathing at first.

“They kept really calm,” Randick said of her midwives. “People don’t realize that they are equipped for every scenario and they are very well versed in neonatal resuscitation. After Kara gave him PPV [Positive Pressure Ventilation] and got some gunk out of his stomach and lungs, he did great.”

Randick said that when she later took Leon to the pediatrician, he was surprised



It was all smiles when baby Leon Sage Snegg arrived on Earth Day, April 22, surrounded by (from left) midwife Kara Engelbrecht, apprentice midwife Brigette Barnato, dad Marc Snegg, mom Grace Randick, grandmother Mary, and aunt Taja. Not pictured but also present at the birth was midwife Sue Baelen.

to learn that midwives had this breadth of skills and training. Randick marvels at the quality and sensitivity of the postpartum care she received from Engelbrecht.

“They do amazing electronic charting too, so that I can look back and see my whole birth through their notes, including when they gave him interventions. We were able to process the birth and my feelings as many times as I wanted to until I felt complete.”

## Midwifery Comes First

Kara Engelbrecht says she was introduced to “all this birth work” through the arrival of her own two children, now 17 and 20. She and husband Jon Pruett met in high school in the South Bay, and while their children were young she started working as a doula, offering non-clinical support at some 200 births in a hospital setting before embarking with a passion

on three years of midwifery training.

Kelly Murphy, meanwhile, “heard the call” to be a midwife in her mid-20s, after migrating west from Long Island. “This is a lifestyle, not a vocation, and we navigate that in all of our other relationships, including marriages. People who partner with us know that probably midwifery will come first and then you come second, and that’s not for everyone.”

Murphy trained at a birth center in El Paso, and attended 165 births in a really condensed time. “It was quite foundational training, but everything I have learned beyond the textbooks has come from my own lived experiences attending births. We can’t really learn about what birth looks like in a book because it’s so varied. But you have to start somewhere...”

## An Epidemic of Calls

Part of that learning has been prioritized



Devoted friends and midwives Kelly Murphy and Kara Engelbrecht sit beneath the display of birth photos that inspires visitors to The Root, their midwifery center at 1300 Sanchez St.

Photo by Megan Wetherall

ing their own self-care with exercise, nutrition, bodywork, and rest, as they each attend between 30 and 40 home births every year.

Engelbrecht ruefully shares her “Achilles” as a midwife—she’s a terrible napper and she admits there are times when she would just love to turn off her phone. “We are not extroverted people. It’s hard to talk all day,” Murphy speaks for both of them. “If I’m feeling fatigued, I know I have to remember what a gift it is to be invited into people’s lives and their births.”

During the first week of shutdown, Murphy and Engelbrecht fielded hundreds of phone calls at The Root. Their advice was to stay the course, to continue the program they were in. “We were unsure what it was going to look like, even for us,” Murphy recalls.

Interestingly, when things were really uncertain in San Francisco, the hospitals started calling them as well, to ask whether the midwives could go to the births of their patients if people were unable to come to the hospital. Engelbrecht says they were even asked, should it come to that, if she and Murphy could help teach them how to do home births.

As Murphy puts it: “Midwifery is not a luxury item. It’s always going to exist, regardless of the circumstances and the factors. If you look around the world when there are crises, midwives are the ones who come out.”

## Trying Times for Pregnant Moms

Glen Park resident Sarah Elbogen is an OR nurse whose second child was due the last week of October. “I know the medical field, and when I got pregnant with my first child [in 2017] I did research about C-section rates in the city and actually they were pretty high” in local hospitals.

Instead, she chose a home birth with Engelbrecht’s practice: “It ended up being the best health care I have ever had in my entire life.”

She was looking forward to having Engelbrecht by her side once again, especially after a rollercoaster of a pregnancy that has included some serious “ups and downs,” both personally and professionally.

Along the way, her hospital, anticipating New York City levels of Covid, remotely retrained all the OR nurses to be ICU or ER nurses. “The idea of us being floated to the ER or ICU was fairly terrifying, but we didn’t have a choice,” Elbogen says.

It turned out there was no need to deploy her to another department, but on her last shift before maternity leave in September, she was called in at night for an urgent craniotomy on a Covid-positive patient with a brain bleed. To her relief, she ended up outside the operating room in the reserve team.

## Hello, Baby Brother

Since she has finally been able to put her feet up a little during this most tumultuous of years, she and husband Mike Elbogen have been snuggling with 2-year-old son Xander and reading him *Hello Baby*, as they gear up for the arrival of Xander’s little brother.

Sarah’s face lights up when she shares the best thing about home birth: “Being in your own bed right after eating whatever you want.”

\*\*\*

*As the Noe Valley Voice went to press, we received word from Sarah Elbogen that her infant son, Travis Ray, had been safely delivered at home on Oct. 22. “The midwifery team was amazing, we are all so grateful,” she wrote. “We could not have had a better outcome.”*



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Something Fishy is coming to 24th Street.

Photo by Jack Tipple

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IMAGE: SONPHOTO.COM

# The Cost of Living in Noe

## Buyers Have Plenty to Choose From

By Corrie M. Anders

Buyers pushed aside coronavirus worries and purchased 11 single-family detached homes in Noe Valley in September, including a designer home costing more than \$6.5 million.

They also bought 10 condominiums, double the number in the same month last year.

And according to data supplied to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Global Living San Francisco, brisk home sales during the month continued to attest to the neighborhood's popularity.

"Noe Valley is holding its value better



A buyer in September took the keys to this newly built showcase home on Duncan Street at a cost of \$6,520,000, almost 7 percent less than the seller's asking price. The four-plus-story house featured five bedrooms, a gourmet kitchen, an elevator, terraced garden, panoramic views, and a three-car garage.

than other places in town," said Corcoran President Randall Kostick.

Buyers and sellers, at least of single-family homes, took a relatively quick 16 days to seal their deals in September. In addition, condominium sellers were rewarded with an average 5 percent more than the price they were asking.

"There are still eager buyers out there," Kostick said.

However, the picture could look different next month.

For one, Kostick said, the number of Noe Valley homes entering the marketplace this September was 20 percent higher than in the past three Septembers.

Secondly, the total inventory—new listings plus properties that remained unsold—was the largest in 10 years (since the peak of the Great Recession).

"We suddenly have a lot of houses on the market, compared to what we normally have. That means more choices for buyers and not as much urgency as there once was," he said. Buyers can survey the field.

"If things continue the way they have,



Twice renovated in recent years, this shared building on Valley Street is the home of a three-bedroom condominium that sold in September for \$1,860,000. Amenities included a kitchen with limestone counters, a south-facing deck and garden, and a garage with an electric car charger.

Photos by Corrie M. Anders

### Noe Valley Home Sales\*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
<b>Single-family homes</b>						
September 2020	11	\$2,000,000	\$6,520,000	\$3,155,847	16	101%
August 2020	14	\$1,635,000	\$5,375,000	\$3,047,929	50	99%
September 2019	11	\$1,600,000	\$4,500,000	\$2,932,734	20	112%
<b>Condominiums/TICs</b>						
September 2020	10	\$799,000	\$1,860,000	\$1,500,800	27	105%
August 2020	16	\$875,000	\$2,700,000	\$1,542,091	33	104%
September 2019	5	\$1,205,000	\$2,925,000	\$2,149,200	15	113%
<b>2- to 4-unit buildings</b>						
September 2020	0	—	—	—	—	—
August 2020	16	\$875,000	\$2,700,000	\$1,542,091	33	104%
September 2019	2	\$1,755,000	\$3,100,000	\$2,427,500	87	97%
<b>5+-unit buildings</b>						
September 2020	0	—	—	—	—	—
August 2020	0	—	—	—	—	—
September 2019	0	—	—	—	—	—

\*This 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 *Noe Valley Voice* thanks Corcoran Global Living San Francisco for providing sales data. NVV11/2020

we might see a price break in the future," he said. Still, he said, prices "would not go down by a lot."

Buyers took their time evaluating the contemporary showcase in the 600 block of Duncan Street near Newburg Street, built in 2019 and listed for sale in January of this year for \$7,250,000.

After a price cut and re-listing April 27, the home finally sold in September for \$6,520,000—6.8 percent below its asking price (\$6,995,000).

The new owners will luxuriate in one of Noe Valley's largest homes, with 5,675 square feet of space on four-and-a-half stories, enough to accommodate five bedrooms, 4.5 baths, floor-to-ceiling glass walls, a gourmet kitchen with a 20-foot marble counter, two gas-burning fire-

places, a wine cellar, media room, and a three-car garage. Special features include a 30-foot glass light well, a living wall of plants, and a central elevator to the roof terrace affording views of downtown and Twin Peaks.

September's most expensive condominium was located in a two-unit Victorian in the first block of Valley Street between Dolores Street and San Jose Avenue. It had been remodeled in 2006 and renovated again 10 years later.

The three-bedroom, 2.5-bath residence featured a chef's kitchen with limestone counters, a south-facing deck and garden, and car parking with an electric charger. The unit sold for \$1,860,000, 3.6 percent above its asking price (\$1,795,000). ■

### Noe Valley Rents\*\*

Unit	No. in Sample	Range October 2020	Average October 2020	Average September 2020	Average October 2019
Studio	24	\$1,499 - \$2,495	\$2,104 / mo.	\$2,120 / mo.	\$2,560 / mo.
1-bdrm	95	\$1,895 - \$3,995	\$2,717 / mo.	\$2,780 / mo.	\$3,319 / mo.
2-bdrm	93	\$2,700 - \$5,700	\$3,739 / mo.	\$3,953 / mo.	\$4,441 / mo.
3-bdrm	56	\$3,350 - \$29,000	\$6,006 / mo.	\$6,098 / mo.	\$7,916 / mo.
4+-bdrm	15	\$3,995 - \$22,500	\$7,208 / mo.	\$7,128 / mo.	\$10,348 / mo.

\*\*This survey is based on a sample of 283 Noe Valley apartment listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Oct. 4-11, 2020. In October a year ago, there were only 86 listings. NVV11/2020



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## WHO TO CALL AT CITY HALL

NVV11/2020

- San Francisco Information Line** [www.sf311.org](http://www.sf311.org) . . . . . 311 or 415-701-2311
- Covid-19** Text "COVID19SF" to 888-777, see [sf.gov/topics/coronavirus-covid-19](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:urbanforestry@sfdpw.org) . . . . . 415-554-6700
- 24th Street Community Benefit District (CBD)** . . . . . 415-519-0093
- Water Leaks, Water Pressure** . . . . . 415-554-3289

"There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered."—Nelson Mandela (1918-) from *A Long Walk to Freedom*



Just My Luck! I had my heart set on number 8.

Photo by Jack Tipple

# TEEN TALK

## Community—I Think I’m Finding It

By Astrid Utting

“Oh my gosh! There’s Bondi!” My sister squeals as she points at a hyper corgi puppy on a leash. We don’t know the owner’s name, but with Bondi’s furry waddle they are an easily recognizable duo.

Bondi’s owner also recognizes us as the neighborhood’s over-enthusiastic dog lovers, and waves a friendly hello. As we hurry across the street to say hi (yes we’re those people), I wonder if our pre-pandemic selves would have been in such a rush to greet someone we barely knew.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I texted, FaceTimed, Zoomed, played house party, and scrambled to get whatever virtual social time I could. But one day, after an online class where everyone’s videos were turned off, I realized I missed my biology table group. Of all the people in my life, why would I miss these three students, whom I rarely hung out with? But they kept popping back into my head. Then I thought, would I ever see my wacky theatrical English teacher again? Or what about the kid who was always late to Chinese class? Or the group of girls who sat in the same hallway as my friends and I sat at lunch?

These weren’t my closest friends. I could honestly only tell you half their names. They were more in the category of acquaintances. Still, until the pandemic, I hadn’t realized they were so important.

Last year, as a freshman at Lowell, which has about 3,000 students, I felt intimidated as I waded into the sea of unfamiliar faces the first week of school. But as the year progressed, the strange faces gradually became individuals I recognized, enough so that if I were to see them at the bus stop, we would exchange smiles and bits of conversation. I found common ground with my math table and biology groups over our shared test anxiety or the piles of homework waiting for us each night. Being able to engage in these casual interactions made me feel a part of my school community.

Now that I’m at home and in online school, the acquaintances in my life have changed—from my classmates to the people who are walking down the sidewalk or working in stores in Noe Valley.

Our local corner shop, Chuck’s Sun Valley Grocery, has been a constant source of comfort through the

pandemic. Whether I’m heading over for a carton of eggs, a pint of ice cream, or a pack of gum, I’m sure to get a brief nod from the owner, Chuck Rafidi, a man of few words whose tiny store somehow has everything. He recognizes us too. One day, in a surprising moment of chattiness, he laughed as he told my horrified mom about the number of boxes of Duncan Hines brownie mix my sister was buying on a regular basis. As they talked, my sister quietly ducked into the baking aisle...

Thanks to Sanchez Street becoming part of San Francisco’s Slow Streets program, I have grown fond of seeing the same little kids whizzing around on their bikes or scooters on the pavement. On the weekends, we enjoy chatting with our neighbors while listening to live music on our corner.

When Douglas, the fancy corner shop on Sanchez, closed in August, we felt the loss of the people behind the counter even more than their gourmet groceries. We miss laughing that they knew exactly what we were coming to buy: Olipops (a true San Francisco kid drink, sweetened with stevia leaf, fruit juices, and cassava syrup).

And of course, having adopted Ronnie, our chihuahua, during the

pandemic, we are quick to make friends with any four-legged creature that crosses our path. We especially look forward to laughing at Jackson, a friendly golden retriever puppy, as our dogs go into full-on crazy mode. When we walk by tiny, scruffy Benji, the owners are no longer surprised that we know their dog’s name.



As I continue to recognize the same people on the streets and in shops, it brings a sense of normalcy and familiarity during such a strange, disconcerting time. With many people no longer leaving the neighborhood for work or school, we have more chances to get to know one another and pave the way for a stronger community.

I still miss chatting with my classmates, but I’m grateful to meet my neighbors—and new friends—in Noe Valley. ■



Photo by Jack Tipple

Astrid Utting, 15, lives with her family near the corner of Duncan and Sanchez streets. As a new and we hope frequent contributor to the *Noe Valley Voice*, she wants to report on what local teens are thinking and talking about. If you have ideas for her, write [editor@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:editor@noevalleyvoice.com).



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# NOVEMBER 2020

**Nov. 1 & Dec. 6:** Political group ACTION SF hosts virtual meetings, open to all, from 1 to 2:30 pm. Email actionsolidarity@gmail.com to receive the Zoom meeting link.

**Nov. 1-29:** The corner of Clipper and Sanchez hosts live JAZZ and Latin music from Just Fell Out of a Trio band on Wednesdays and Sundays, 2-5 pm. Bud Owings, 415-816-7348.

**Nov. 1-Dec. 31:** Chris O'Sullivan leads a virtual discussion, "Bret Harte's Gold Rush," at the SF HISTORICAL SOCIETY. sfhistory.org

**Nov. 2-30:** Noe Valley OVEREATERS Anonymous at St. Aidan's meets via Zoom, Monday through Saturday 7 to 8 am. 314-0720 or 779-6273; oasf.org

**Nov. 2-30:** 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.

**Nov. 3:** Please VOTE. Polls will open at 7 am and close at 8 pm. sfelections.sfgov.org

**Nov. 5:** Moxie Yoga offers OUTDOOR YOGA at the Holly Park basketball court. 5:30 pm. Sign up at moxie.yoga

**Nov. 6-27:** Holy Innocents Episcopal Church hosts GAME NIGHT on Zoom. 7 pm. holyinsf.org

**Nov. 6-27:** Bird & Beckett bookstore hosts Friday JAZZ live-streaming from the shop. 7:30-9 pm. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com

**Nov. 7-28:** The Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET is open from 8 am to 1 pm (8 to 9 am for seniors); masks and six-foot distancing required. 3861 24th. 248-1332; noevalleyfarmersmarket.com

**Nov. 8:** The NOE MUSIC Mainstage features a performance by Third Coast Percussion. 7-8:30 pm. noemusic.org

**Nov. 9:** Oxfam hosts a Zoom panel discussion on "the intersection of music, food, and activism," with Darin Bresnitz and Greg Bresnitz, authors of *Snacky Tunes*. 5:30 pm. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

**Nov. 9:** ODD MONDAYS features virtual readings by Cara Black, Wayne Goodman, and Chia Chia Lin. 7-8 pm. To Zoom, go to the Odd Mondays Facebook page or email oddmondays@gmail.com.

**Nov. 10:** SF Neon offers a virtual tour of the Tenderloin with stories from Katie Conry from the Tenderloin Museum and Al Barna and Randall Ann Homan from SF Neon. 7:45 pm. sfneon.org

**Nov. 12:** Community Music Center hosts an online Zoom Music Lab workshop with Michele Rosewoman, "Creative Expression Through AFRO-CUBAN Rhythms." 5:30-7 pm. 647-6015; sfcmc.org

**Nov. 12:** The San Francisco Public Library's free virtual POEM JAM features readings by SF Poet Laureate Kim Shuck and three other laureates. 6 pm. 312-9685; sfpl.org

**Nov. 14:** LADYBUG GARDENERS work outdoors to tidy up the grounds of the Upper Noe Rec Center. 9 am-noon. 295 Day. Contact Joan at info@noevalleyreccenter.com.

**Nov. 17:** The SF HISTORY Association hosts a Jim Schein discussion, "Gold Mountain, Big City: Exploring Kenneth Cathcart's Chinatown Maps." 7 pm. The Zoom link and password will be sent the morning of the meeting. sanfranciscohistory.org

**Nov. 17, Noe. 19 & Dec. 7:** Noe Valley author Valerie Miner discusses her latest short-story collection, *Bread and Salt*, at three free Zoom events, including one Dec. 7 at the Odd Mondays series. valerieminer.com, foliosf.com

**Nov. 18:** Park Service Ranger Fatima Colindres shares the history and culture of the Ohlones, and a game called Staves. 3 pm. San Francisco Public Library, 312-9685; sfpl.org

**Nov. 18:** The virtual meeting of Upper Noe Neighbors features discussions of local topics. 7-8:30 pm. Rsvp to president@uppernoeneighbors.com to get the link.

**Nov. 19:** Sally Love Sanders offers POETRY Conference Calls with the organization CoviaWell Connected. 10-11 am. 877-797-7299; covia.org/services/well-connected

**Nov. 19:** Members of the Asawa/Lanier family attend a benefit for SCRAP, featuring a discussion of the legacy of artist RUTH ASAWA, who helped found the zero-waste arts non-profit. 7-8 pm. Rsvp to scrap-sf.org.

**Nov. 19:** The NOE MUSIC Listening Club features a virtual conversation and performance with cellist Joan Jeanrenaud and violist Hank Dutt from the Kronos Quartet. 7-8:30 pm. noemusic.org

**Nov. 21:** NOE MUSIC Kids features an interactive performance by the Friction Quartet, "Exploration of Musical Styles." 9:30 am. noemusic.org

### For Your Zooming Pleasure

The next *Noe Valley Voice* will be the **December 2020** issue, distributed the first week of December. The deadline for items is **Nov. 15**. Please email [calendar@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:calendar@noevalleyvoice.com) or write *Calendar, Noe Valley Voice*, P.O. Box 460249, San Francisco, CA 94146. Events in *Noe Valley* receive priority. Thank you.



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# SHORT TAKES

## Trips in Time and Space

This month the Odd Mondays reading series will take its audience to World War II Paris, 17th-century Japan, and immigrant Alaska.

Noe Valley resident Cara Black will read from her spy thriller *Three Hours in Paris*, about an American woman recruited by the British to assassinate Hitler. (The novel was an Amazon Best Book of the Month pick for April 2020.) Wayne Goodman will share “Out of Yoshiwara,” a story from his latest collection, *All the*



Appearing at Odd Mondays Nov. 9 will be Chia-Chia Lin, author of *The Unpassing*, about a Korean family living in Alaska. Joining her on Zoom with their own top sellers will be writers Cara Black and Wayne Goodman.

*Right Places*. It will transport you to one of Tokyo’s earliest red-light districts. Chia-Chia Lin will read from her award-winning novel *The Unpassing*, about an immigrant Korean family in Alaska. All three works are available at Folio Books, whether at the store (3957 24th St.) or online at foliosf.com.

The free reading will be live-streamed Monday, Nov. 9, at 7 p.m., on Zoom. To get the link or call-in phone number, rsvp Going or Interested on the Odd Mondays Facebook page or email oddmondaysnoevalley@gmail.com. Download the free, basic Zoom at [www.zoom.us/pricing](http://www.zoom.us/pricing).

## Noe Music Notable in November

Noe Music goes full-bore in November with three online musical events, two for adults and one for children.

On Sunday, Nov. 8, Third Coast Percussion will hit the high notes and the low from 7 to 8:30 p.m., as part of the Mainstage concert series. The Chicago-based ensemble is set to perform “Perpetuum, movement 3” by Philip Glass, “The Hero” by Clarice Assad, “Death Wish” by Gemma Peacocke, and “Aphasia” by Mark Applebaum, among other numbers. Tickets are \$20.

The popular Noe Listening Club will bring together two members of the famed Kronos Quartet, cellist Joan Jeanrenaud and founding violist Hank Dutt, for a reminiscent conversation and a performance of pieces from the Kronos’ boxed set, *25 Years: Retrospective*, on Thursday, Nov. 19, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tickets are free or pay what you can—\$5, \$10, or \$20.

Saturday, Nov. 21, the Friction Quartet finishes its three-part series for Noe Music Kids with a 30-minute “Exploration of Musical Styles” at 9:30 a.m. It’s free or a \$10 suggested donation. View parts 1 and 2 online at [noemusic.org/nmk](http://noemusic.org/nmk).

## Wiener and Mandelman Report From the Front

The Oct. 21 meeting of Upper Noe Neighbors was devoted to presentations from two officeholders. No, not Biden or Trump. Rather, State Senator Scott Wiener and District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman. The two brought the audience up to date and took questions from the floor at the Zoom event.

Wiener, who represents the one million people in State Senate District 11, covering San Francisco and northern San Mateo counties, gave a tally of wins and losses during his first term as state senator, launched in 2016.

He listed as an achievement the creation—with Sup. Mandelman—of a new, limited form of conservatorship, which he said aimed to house more kindly and effectively homeless people who are unable to care for themselves. He also noted the state’s approval of his legislation requiring insurance companies to cover a broader range of mental health needs, and passage of another law to speed up new housing starts, especially affordable housing. However, his bill to turn Pacific Gas & Electric into a public utility failed to pass, he said.

One of his main legislative goals, should he be reelected Nov. 3, is creating more housing near transit centers. “Almost half the housing built since 1990 has been in wildfire areas. Housing should be more abundant and sustainable,” Wiener said. Other goals include reforming the criminal justice system, expanding clean-energy sources, and seeing that people receive their food benefits.

When it was his turn, Mandelman gave constituents a pat on the back, saying the city thus far had avoided the kind of severe health disasters under Covid-19 other parts of the state and country were suffering. Asked about an outdoor basketball game at the Upper Noe Rec Center where players were not wearing masks, he said, “The spread is not outdoors. It is in the workplace, close quarters. It then spreads to households.”

In sharing his goals, he said he had recently introduced legislation called A Place for All, which would require the city to provide “safe sleeping villages” or sites for homeless persons. He also said he had garnered more money for the Noe Valley Town Square and was supporting a plan to make the Duncan Street home of famed LGBTQ rights activists Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon an official landmark. He also hopes to start in-person office hours again this month. Stay tuned for his newsletter.

Bad news included probable budget cuts in San Francisco due to the city’s economic and health crises. Another disappointment, Mandelman said, was the board’s approval of only one Police Academy class in the coming year. (Of the four scheduled, the board cancelled three.) On the other hand, six Mental Health Response Teams will be in place by the end of the year. MHRTs are the new alternative to sending police officers out on every 911 call. Mandelman said, “First-responders might be a peer advocate, a mental health worker, or an EMT,” rather than police.

To read complete notes on the meeting, go to Upper Noe Neighbors’ website, [uppernoeneighbors.com](http://uppernoeneighbors.com).

—Richard May



Tom Taylor spent most of his 77 years bringing rainbows and holiday cheer to people’s lives. He’s shown here with comedian Marga Gomez on Castro Street June 26, 2013, the day the U.S. Supreme Court struck down bans on same-sex marriage. Photo by Sally Smith

## Tom of Tom and Jerry Has Died

Tom Taylor and husband Dr. Jerome Goldstein became famous for their extravagant Tom and Jerry’s Holiday Tree, which drew thousands each Christmas to their home on 21st Street. They also generously gave of their time, home, and panoramic view of San Francisco for numerous fundraisers over the years, especially for LGBTQ civil rights causes.

Taylor and Goldstein bought the tree, a Norfolk Island pine, as a houseplant when they moved into their Dolores Heights cottage in 1988. The tree began life with them at 4 feet tall. At last measure, it was nearing 70 feet.

The couple, together for nearly 50 years, met in 1973. They were officially married in October 2013 at a massive street party outside their home. Taylor was a long-time survivor of AIDS and the caretaker of the rainbow flag at Castro and Market streets. He was told he did not have long to live in 1983. But he proved his doctors wrong. He was 77 when he died on Tuesday, Oct. 20.

The *Voice* would like to send its con-

dolences to Dr. Goldstein and family, and to thank him once again for the joy he and his husband Tom have given the world.

## \$2,000 Reopening Grants

San Francisco is offering new help to small businesses during the current economic downturn. Noe Valley merchants, professionals, and nonprofits may be eligible for up to \$2,000 for past, current, or future work done to make reopening safer for employees and customers during Covid-19. Lower-income neighborhoods have a \$5,000 ceiling.

Applicants must operate from a storefront open to the public and produce gross annual receipts of less than \$2.5 million. Permission from the owner of the building is required, as are general liability and workers comp. insurance.

Expenses that may be covered include outside barriers like planters, clear protective shields inside at the counters, and design work assistance. For specifics and to apply, go to [sf.gov/sf-shines](http://sf.gov/sf-shines).

*Short Takes were compiled and written by Richard May.*



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# STORE TREK

*Store Trek is a regular Voice feature on shops and restaurants in Noe Valley. This issue, we spotlight a Church Street salon that has reopened with a new look and—best of all—lower prices.*

## EPISODE SALON

1360 Church Street at Clipper Street  
415-641-1138  
415-810-7812 text  
<http://episodesalon.com/>

Up until this year, the longest that Episode Salon had closed its doors since opening in 2002 was for two months in the summer of 2018 when its location underwent a complete remodel. Then came the Covid-19 health crisis, which resulted in the business having to shutter in mid-March until it was allowed to reopen Sept. 14.

After seeing a burst of appointments due to pent-up demand, owner Steffon Yan said bookings leveled off. As of late October, his clientele had still not returned to the levels he was used to pre-pandemic.

“We have lost 50 percent of our business,” he said.

He was able to obtain a special federal loan for businesses impacted by the health crisis and worked out a deal with his landlord on his rent.

“Luckily, we have a good relationship with our landlord. Otherwise, we might have ended up like a lot of these small mom-and-pops in San Francisco that closed down,” said Yan.

He and his wife, Christy, co-own the salon and both work there as hair stylists



Christy and Steffon Yan have remodeled their Church Street salon Episode and now offer an array of hair and eyelash services in three studios within the space.

and eyelash experts. Last September, they redesigned three rooms in the space to serve as studios where they could offer lash services, like eyelash extensions and eyebrow shaping and coloring.

“A lot of people like to make their eyes more beautiful and appear to have more

energy with eyelashes,” said Yan. “We can make the eyes bigger and more distinguished. Women like it because it takes them less time to put on their makeup and gives them more time for finding a boyfriend or being with their husband and kids.”

The other upside, noted Yan, is clients spend “less money on mascara.”

In order to drum up business for their lash studio, Yan has cut his prices by 40 percent for the various lash services and is offering free eyelash consultations. Now a lash lift costs \$95, while a lash color or tint runs \$36. A full-set classic eyelash treatment, which runs from 90

minutes to two hours to apply, is now priced at \$120, while the extra-volume eyelash treatment that can take two to three hours to complete runs \$228.

“We won’t raise prices until the line is out the door and we can’t handle it,” said Yan.

Haircuts for men cost \$40 and run \$60 to \$70 for women, depending on the style requested. The salon also cuts hair for children (\$25) and offers various waxing services and styling needs.

To accommodate social-distancing requirements, Yan downsized from having seven stylist stations to six and removed the waiting-area furniture. Stylist Onlei Choi, who joined the salon two years ago after selling her own place in North Beach, continues to see clients.

Yan is looking for three other hair stylists to rent the other stations at his salon. He remains hopeful that business will tick back up as life returns to some semblance of normal.

“We have gotten a lot of support from people in the neighborhood. It is why I have stayed here for so long,” said Yan. “I hope people will support the business and keep us alive. Otherwise, the city will end up with only chains like Whole Foods and Target. I don’t think people want only the big potatoes to survive. I hope they want the small potatoes to survive, too.”

The couple lives with their two children in Millbrae. Used to working six days a week and hardly having any free time, Yan noted the one upside to the forced closure of his business for six months was being able to spend time with his children.

Despite the fact that his family has long worked in the hairstyling business—his dad’s dad cut hair and three of his five siblings are also hairstylists—Yan hopes his children follow a different career path.

“It is hard on the feet,” he quipped of cutting hair.

The salon, located at the corner of Church and Clipper streets, is open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturdays, and 9:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Sundays. It is closed Mondays.

—Matthew S. Bajko

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## Get ready to **VOTE**, San Francisco!

November 3, 2020 General Election

### Vote in person:

- At your Polling Place or the outdoor Voting Center in front of Bill Graham Civic Auditorium

### Return your Vote-by-Mail ballot:

- By Mail (must be postmarked by November 3)
- To any polling place or the outdoor Voting Center
- Any ballot drop-off location (see locations and hours at [sfelections.org/myvotinglocation](http://sfelections.org/myvotinglocation))

Learn more about your voting options at [sfelections.org](http://sfelections.org)

## and now for the RUMORS behind the news

### Where Did the Year Go?

By Mazook

**H**OLIDAYS, HERE WE COME: Hope you had a safe, fun, sane, and scary Halloween. Now it's time to celebrate the Armistice which ended the First World War on Nov. 11, 1918, at the 11th hour. World War I was called "the war that would end all wars," but there have been several wars since, so we now call Nov. 11 Veterans Day.

The irony of that day is that when our American Expeditionary Forces came marching home from Europe in the spring of 1918, and had victory parades (down Market Street in San Francisco), they brought with them the "Spanish Flu," which was the Covid-19 of 1918. It killed thousands in the Bay Area alone. By early 1919, it was a crime in Noe Valley and, of course, in the rest of San Francisco to be caught outside without wearing a mask. The fine was a stiff \$100, which Google tells me was \$1,500 in those days. A popular rhyme of the day was "Obey the laws, and wear the gauze. Protect your jaws from septic paws." Read more about "The Flu in San Francisco" in a feature by that name on PBS.org.

Not long after Veterans Day comes the day when we eat our Thanksgiving dinners, on the fourth Thursday in November (Nov. 26). We will be in our "residential bubbles" and may have to join virtually with family and friends anear and afar.

When December arrives in brave new Noe Valley, we will face the extra challenge of Christmas, and supporting neighborhood businesses that may or may not be holding the festivities of yesteryear, like "24 Holidays" on 24th Street.

And then it will be hats and noisemakers and hopefully a happy New Year! Moreover, we all will have 2020 hindsight.



**PROUD TO BE YELLOW:** Noebody can tell when this pandemic will be over, and noebody knows for sure what will happen in 2021 for Noe Valleons. But things in mid-October seemed to be looking up, since San Francisco was the first urban county in California to make it to the yellow tier of the state's reopening plan.

Downtown Noe Valley, along with the rest of the City and County of San Francisco, had reached Yellow in the State of California protocols, which status allowed many more businesses to reopen indoors, with of course the proper mandated precautions.

"Yellow" designates we are in a Tier 4 county, with minimal spread of the virus. So, on Oct. 27, permission was granted for "non-essential" offices to open at 25% capacity, with our indoor gyms expanding to 25% capacity without aerobic exercise, and indoor personal services such as waxing and skin treatment allowed.

And on Nov. 3, the indoor pools, bowling alleys, and fitness centers were set to open their locker rooms and showers. Our restaurants and local places of worship were to have their indoor capacity increased to 50%.

Getting out of the neighborhood was to be easier too, with movie theaters and indoor museums, zoos, and aquariums also allowed to increase their capacity to 50%. But, better check where you're going, first. On Oct. 30, Mayor London Breed "paused" some reopenings planned for Nov. 3. Oops!



**TAKING ACTION:** Our Noe votes will be cast on Nov. 3, and at least the political pandemic will be gone, we hope, by year's end.

Noe's activists have been very busy the past several months. Action SF, which was started by four local women who attended the first Women's March in January 2017, spent the summer working on its "Battleground 2020 Campaign," aka the Red to Blue Senate Fund, to swing six state senate



**We Like Masks:** Wigs, eye patches, and a pumpkin balloon were flying off the shelves at the One Stop Party Shop on Halloween, as customers shopped to raise spirits. Photo by Art Bodner

racers. Based on their early fundraising success, Action SF launched a second and final drive to support grassroots voter turnout in the most critical states in November: Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, and Florida.

Speigel reports since Memorial Day the campaigns together raised \$114,000.

In a related item reported by Angela Underwood in *Newsweek* Oct. 11, our zip code, 94114, came in at number 44 among the country's 42,000 zip codes in donating money to Joe Biden for President. Our 1,344 donations to his campaign totaled \$368,586. The total in California was \$34,886,302.

Federal Election Commission records, released in August, compiled the list of the top 50 from Jan. 1, 2019, to July 31, 2020.

*Newsweek* noted, "Strongly liberal, San Francisco's neighborhoods, including Haight-Ashbury, Union Square, Mission District, and Noe Valley, donated nearly \$245 million to Democratic campaigns between 2015 and 2018, with donations averaging \$824 per donor."

Meanwhile, this just in: Sometime in the early morning hours of Oct. 30, one of the postal boxes in front of the Noe Valley Post Office was trashed. According to a local postal worker, somebody tried to break into the box and tamper with mail deposited the night before. After being unsuccessful, they tried to tear off the top of the box. That was also unsuccessful, the postal worker said.



**THE TOWN SCARE:** Noe Valley has for many years been a popular place for trick-or-treating in the city. While the pandemic may have dampened parents' enthusiasm for letting kids parade on 24th Street or make the rounds of houses in the neighborhood, it apparently did not slow business at our local Halloween emporium, One Stop Party Shop, at 1600 Church St.

"Actually," says One Stop owner Mardie Vandervort, "our business this year has been almost as good as last year. We have sold out of all of our decorations and find that many of our regular customers have returned to buy accessories, such as devil ears, eye patches, hippie garb, and lots of wigs."

She says the most popular costumes for kids this year were Spider Man for the boys and Witch for the girls, with many others walking out the door as pirates, with capes and eye patches.

Many houses in the neighborhood were adorned with all-hallowed decorations. One of my favorites was at 4274 24th St. (just below Philz Coffee), where an array of witches and pirates performed in the windows and in front of the garage, and a skull and crossbones flag waved over the door.

Across the street and down a bit, at 4247 24th, was probably the most poignant decoration in San Francisco. It had spiders imploring us all to vote to "end the nightmare."

I made a short video (somewhat bumpy but to the point) of this display. You can watch it at YouTube. Just key in Noe Valley Vote 2020. At the beginning, the first spider's message says, "Things will get truly scary unless you all...". Vote.



**THEY DID THE MONSTER MASK:** These past weeks, the Noe Valley Farmers Market at the Noe Valley Town Square has become a magnet for candidates and others promoting propositions on the ballot.

Well, one day as I was standing in line waiting for entry into the market, I encountered a group of five fifth-graders who were selling very stylish face masks they had made, to benefit a non-profit organization that supported undocumented workers.

One of the parents, Kim Quinteros (raised in Noe Valley and now living in Bernal), said the group of classmates (and Friends School) decided on Noe as the location to "pop up" their wares. "They were very motivated to spend time doing something that would help others in need in these times, so they started making face masks to sell for donations to their cause, which they had collectively agreed upon," said Quinteros.

"I think we all were quite surprised when they sold out all the masks in just over two hours, and raised \$1,000 to donate to their cause." Also a plus, she said, was the spiritual uplift they felt in doing the project.



**THE INS AND OUTS** in Downtown Noe Valley last month were pretty balanced. Out was our only key shop, Lock Central, located at 3977 24th for the past 14 years. Before Lock Central, it was Ames Lock and Security, which had been there forever (well, since the mid-1970s).

"We are continuing with our business, but it is now totally mobile," says locksmith Michael Young. "[We] decided to close the

storefront permanently since in-store sales dropped drastically during the pandemic." He adds, "We have over 2,000 customers in the neighborhood [who should] contact us by telephone (415-665-5398), especially when they need a duplicate made of their 'restricted keys' we hold in our files." He suggests you call rather than go online for any services you might need.

Yoga Mayu is out of their studio at 4159 24th St. and is live-streaming or holding classes outdoors now (see [Yogamayu.com](http://Yogamayu.com)). However, Moxie Yoga has taken over the Noe Valley space. It's their fourth in the city.

According to Moxie co-owner/operator Tanya Clark, "We are happy to be opening up in Noe Valley; it is a great opportunity. We will be ready to open that space by the end of November, as we may be allowed by San Francisco guidelines."

Also eager to open soon is Maxwell's Pet Bar, at 1734 Church St. Owners Jen and Kristi Maxwell "are excited to share that we're opening a new pet space in the former VIP Scrub Club location. Self-Wash reopens in mid-November, and then a full retail assortment including a sampling bar in December. We've lived in the neighborhood for 16 years (at Castro and Clipper) and have always dreamed of opening a business together in our community," says Jen.

"I worked for Williams Sonoma for 18 years and spent the last two years as a Category Manager for Health and Wellness at Pet Food Express. Kristi has been in the hair industry for 28 years and owns a shop in San Bruno. We'll offer the self-wash baths (spa bar), a full retail assortment focused on whole foods and nutrition, a treat bar, sampling bar (a broth, an elixir), and supplements including CBD."

Also new to the neighborhood, at 1001 Church on the corner of 22nd Street, is John James Designs. In its previous incarnation, the space was a cleaners and before that a grocery store. Now it is a flower shop that also has gifts and home furnishings. James wants everyone to know that planning events is his specialty.

There are new hours at the Noe Valley Post Office. It now opens at 9:30 a.m. instead of 9 a.m., but it still remains open until 5 p.m. on weekdays and 4 p.m. on Saturdays.



**OPEN FOR MONKEY BUSINESS:** Hooray for our public parks, which have opened further due to our Yellow status. Now Noe Courts and the kiddy playground in the Noe Valley Town Square are open for exploring.

Signs are posted at the entrance: Activity must be supervised by an adult. All children and adults must have their hands washed, wear masks at all times and stay six feet apart. Time is limited to 30 minutes, and no food or drink nor shared toys.

But other than that, have fun!

In other health news, residents were climbing the hills last month to see fake car crashes, and maybe a film star or two, in Noe/Eureka Valley. Crews for Marvel's new action movie *Sing-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* were stopping traffic at Noe and 21st streets to shoot stunts Oct. 17 to 24. The movie, due July 2021, is about a superhero and Kung Fu master (played by Canadian actor Simu Liu) who searches for peace and harmony while fighting injustice.



**DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?** Leslie Crawford, chief elf at the Noe Valley Town Square, sends this news flash: Lighting designer Josh Hubert has created a radio station that at night will play music along with a light show at the square. "We'll be doing holiday music and possibly have a playlist in the new year, of Noe Valley music that is in sync with the lighting." The radio station, she says, is GlowFidelity Internet Radio.

Crawford adds: "We'll be putting up the holiday tree Nov. 30 to Jan. 3. I believe there will also be a giant Menorah but am waiting for confirmation." Well, jingle bell rock!



**THAT'S ALL, YOU ALL:** See you next month when, hopefully, I will have the tabulated vote count for Noe. Ciao for now. ■

## CHILDREN'S FICTION

An owl helps a lion learn how to relax in **Arlo the Lion Who Couldn't Sleep**, written and illustrated by Catherine Rayner. Ages 3 to 7.

In **Feliz New Year, Ava Gabriela!** written by Alexandra Alessandri and illustrated by Addy Rivera Sonda, a shy girl visits her extended family in Colombia. Ages 3 to 8.

A girl and her grandfather spend a special day in Chinatown in **My Day with Gong Gong**, written by Sennah Yee, illustrated by Elaine Chen. Ages 4 to 8.

Evan Turk tells the story of a Renaissance artisan in **A Thousand Glass Flowers: Marietta Barovier and the Invention of the Rosetta Bead**. Ages 5 to 9.

A 12-year-old girl who wants to be like her comic-book hero, the Exceptional Eagirl, deals with changes in her life in **The Exceptional Maggie Chowder**, by Renee Beaugard Lute, illustrated by Luna Valentine. Ages 9 to 12.

In book one of the Teddies Saga, **They Threw Us Away**, by Daniel Kraus with illustrations by Rovina Cai, a band of discarded toys treks across the dump to find new homes. Ages 9 to 12.

Inspired by Greek mythology, **Spindlefish and Stars** by Christian M. Andrews is about a girl who wanders from island to island while searching for the father who deserted her. Ages 10 to 14.

## CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

In **Packs: Strength in Numbers**, Hannah Salyer shows how animals live in cooperative groups. Ages 4 to 9.

**Girl on a Motorcycle**, written by Amy Novesky and illustrated by Julie Morstad, is a picture-book biography of the first woman to ride a motorcycle around the world. Ages 6 to 10.

Mexican American Mario Molina won a Nobel Prize for his discoveries about the ozone layer in **Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved Our Planet**, written by Elizabeth Rusch, illustrated by Teresa Martinez. Ages 6 to 11.

Thirty authors and illustrators are featured in **The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love, and Truth**, edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson. Ages 10 to adult.

## CHILDREN'S EBOOKS

Students turn a vacant lot into a functioning farm in the true story **Harlem Grown: How One Big Idea Transformed a Neighborhood**, written by Tony Hillery, illustrated by Jessie Hartland. Ages 4 to 8.

Jillian Tamaki includes recipes in **Our Little Kitchen**, about a group of neighbors preparing a community meal. Ages 4 to 8.

Two friends have to say goodbye when one relocates with her family, in **Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away** by Meg Medina, with illustrations by Sonia

## MORE BOOKS TO READ

## In a Read State

Like other branches around the city, the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library on Jersey Street is still closed due to the pandemic. However, Children's Librarian Catherine Starr and Branch Manager Luis "Francisco" Cardona have offered the *Voice* their selection of new books and films at the branch. (Longtime Noe Valley Branch Manager Denise Sanderson has temporarily moved to a position as the San Francisco Public Library's Acting Southwest District Manager.)

Among the librarians' suggestions you'll find a book for kids about how the ozone layer was saved, new biographies of Jimmy Carter and Sylvia Plath, the much anticipated novel on the immigrant experience by Ayad Akhtar, and Kate Manne's treatise on male privilege, to name just a few. The annotations (see below) are by *Noe Valley Voice* bookworm Karol Barske.

Though the beautiful Noe Valley Library building must stand forlorn, the San Francisco Public Library is offering curbside pickup at nine other branches around the city: Eureka Valley, Excelsior, Marina, Merced, Mission Bay, the Main Library, and most recently Chinatown, Ortega, and Visitation Valley.

To place a hold on a title, go to [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org) and follow the steps at SFPL to Go. The library will let you know when your book or film is ready to pick up.

If you have questions about your library card, call 415-557-4400, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., or go to the website. Besides information on each branch and access to the vast library catalog, [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org) offers story times, book clubs, and a San Francisco History Center filled with digital newspapers, maps, and photographs.

Sánchez. Ages 5 to 8.

In **Feathered Serpent and the Five Suns: A Mesoamerican Creation Myth**, by Duncan Tonatiuh, Quetzalcóatl, the god of knowledge, persists in his efforts to create a human being. Ages 6 to 9.

Lori Alexander describes the origins of a physical competition for people with paralysis, in **A Sporting Chance: How Ludwig Guttmann Created the Paralympic Games**, illustrated by Allan Drummond. Ages 8 to 12.

Adventures ensue when two very different animals form a friendship, in **Skunk and Badger**, written by Amy Timberlake and illustrated by Jon Klassen. Ages 8 to 12.

The only girl in a set of quadruplets adopts a piglet in **Saucy**, written by Cynthia Kadohata, illustrated by Marianna Raskin. Ages 8 to 12.

Tim Wynne-Jones tells funny and insightful tales about growing up in **War at the Snow White Motel and Other Stories**. Ages 10 to 14.

A boy gets super powers from a magical object in **Ikenga** by Nnedi Okorafor. Ages 10 and up.

## ADULT FICTION

In the epic **Homeland Elegies** by Ayad Akhtar, an immigrant family searches for ways to belong in post-9/11 America.

Ken Follett's prequel to *The Pillars of the Earth*, **The Evening and the Morning**, follows three characters at the dawn of the Middle Ages.

**Jack**, Marilynne Robinson's fourth novel set in Gilead, Iowa, focuses on the son of a Presbyterian minister.

Phil Klay looks at the effects of war over

three decades in his suspenseful novel **Missionaries**.

## ADULT FICTION EBOOKS

**Daddy** by Emma Cline includes 10 short stories centered on "the dark corners of human experience."

In her short-story collection **Likes**, Sarah Shun-Lien Bynum contemplates the contradictions of everyday life.

## ADULT NONFICTION

**Let Love Rule** is a memoir by musician Lenny Kravitz, a man who describes himself as "deeply two-sided: Black and white, Jewish and Christian, Manhattanite and Brooklynite."

**Red Comet: The Short Life and Blazing Art of Sylvia Plath**, a biography by Heather Clark, draws on new materials to examine the literary talents of the author of *The Bell Jar*.

Journalist Jonathan Alter's **His Very Best: Jimmy Carter, a Life** tracks the many achievements of the Nobel Prize winning 39th president of the United States.

## ADULT NONFICTION EBOOKS

Arundhati Roy ponders authoritarianism and the struggles for freedom in Kashmir and India, in **Azadi**, subtitled "Freedom. Fascism. Fiction."

In **Entitled: How Male Privilege Hurts Women**, Kate Manne offers "a radical new framework for understanding misogyny."

## ADULT DVDS

In season three of **Killing Eve** (2020), adventures befall a security operative and an assassin whose lives have become linked.

The new series **Star Trek: Picard** stars Sir Patrick Stewart as starship captain Jean-Luc Picard.

A widow, played by Katie Holmes, adopts the philosophy of positive thinking in the 2020 film **Secret: Dare to Dream**.

**Bad Education**, starring Hugh Jackman, is a comedy based on a real-life public school embezzlement scandal.

## ADULT EVIDEOS Available on Kanopy

In the 2017 Golden Globe winning **Lady Bird**, a 17-year-old girl comes of age in Sacramento, California.

A strict father raising six kids in the forest is forced to enter the real world, in the 2016 comedy/drama **Captain Fantastic**.

Taika Waititi directed the 2010 comedy-drama **Boy**, about an 11-year-old in New Zealand who reconnects with his jailed father.

Buster Keaton stars in the 1926 silent comedy **The General**, about a man chasing after both his fiancée and his stolen train during the Civil War.

Annotations by *Voice* bookworm Karol Barske

Library Honors  
Indigenous Peoples

The San Francisco Public Library will celebrate local Indigenous Peoples during November with a series of free virtual programs and book lists.

"As the sign on Alcatraz says: you are on Indian Land," says San Francisco Poet Laureate Kim Shuck (Tsalagi/Euro-American). "Here in Ramaytush [Ohlone] territory, territory that was also the end point of the relocation programs that sent Indigenous people to cities, we have one of the largest and most diverse Native populations in the country."

Programs for adults will feature readings Nov. 9, 6 p.m., in honor of the 51st anniversary of the American Indian occupation of Alcatraz, led by the editors of *Red Indian Road West: Native American Poetry from California*. Poets Bradley Deetz, Jewelle Gomez, Senna Heyatwin, Stephen Meadows, and Linda Noel will read from the anthology and share new poems inspired by the Native American experience.

On Nov. 12, also at 6 p.m., Shuck (a longtime resident of Eureka Street) will host a Poem Jam spotlighting acclaimed Indigenous laureates, including Denise Low, former poet laureate of Kansas; Linda Noel, former poet laureate of Ukiah, Calif.; and Georgina Marie, current poet laureate of Lake County, Calif.

For youth, National Park Service Ranger Fatima Colindres will give a talk Nov. 18, 3 p.m., on the traditions and history of the Ohlone, the first inhabitants of the Bay Area. She also will demonstrate how to play Staves, an Ohlone game played with elderberry or willow tree branches.

At noon on Nov. 20, the Library partners with the human rights group Voice of Witness to celebrate the VOW title *How We Go Home: Voices From Indigenous North America*. Speakers will include Sara Sinclair, a writer and educator of Cree-Ojibwe and settler descent, and Ashley Hemmersan, of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, whose reservation spans the states of California, Arizona, and Nevada.

To find out about these and other events, visit [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org).

## CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Terrific Crossword by Michael Blake

L	A	P	D	M	A	I	M	S	U	T	A	H	
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(on the corner of 24th near Church Street)

**Action SF, the National Movement in Your Neighborhood**

www.facebook.com/actionsfsolidarity,  
http://www.action-sf.com/, or  
http://resistrypac.org  
Email: actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com  
Meetings: Virtual first Sundays, 1-2:30 p.m.  
All are welcome.

**Al-Anon Noe Valley**

Contact: 834-9940  
Website: al-anonsf.org  
Meetings: Wednesdays, 7:30-9 p.m.  
St. Philip Church, 725 Diamond St. (park on Elizabeth Street side; enter on 24th Street)

**Castro Community on Patrol**

Website: castropatrol.org  
Email: info@castropatrol.org

**Diamond Heights Community Association**

Contact: Betsy Eddy, 867-5774  
Address: P.O. Box 31529, SF, CA 94131  
Website: www.dhcasf.org  
Meetings: Second Thursday, 7 p.m. Call for location.

**Dolores Heights Improvement Club**

Email: info@doloresheights.org  
Website: www.doloresheights.org  
Meetings: Third Thursday of every second month. Bank of America, 18th and Castro.

**Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)**

Contacts: Deanna Mooney, 821-4045;  
Diane McCarney, 824-0303; or Sally Chew,  
821-6235. Address: 560 Duncan St., SF, CA  
94131. Meetings: Call for details.

**Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association**

Website: https://evna.org  
Address: P.O. Box 14137, SF, CA 94114  
Meetings: See website calendar. Castro Meeting Room, 501 Castro St., 7 p.m.

**Fair Oaks Neighbors**

Email: hello@fairoaksneighbors.org  
Address: 200 Fair Oaks St., SF, CA 94110  
The Fair Oaks Street Fair is traditionally held the day before Mother's Day.

**Friends of Billy Goat Hill**

Contact: Lisa and Mo Ghotbi, 821-0122  
Website: www.billygoathill.net

**MORE GROUPS TO JOIN****Friends of Dolores Park Playground**

Contact: Nancy Gonzalez Madynski,  
828-5772  
Email: friendsofdolorespark@gmail.com  
Website: friendsofdolorespark.org  
Meetings: See website.

**Friends of Glen Canyon Park**

Contact: Jean Conner, 584-8576  
Address: 140 Turquoise Way, SF, CA 94131  
Plant restoration work parties, Wednesday mornings and third Saturday of the month.

**Friends of Noe Courts Playground**

Contact: Laura Norman  
Email: lauranor@yahoo.com  
Address: P.O. Box 460953, SF, CA 94146  
Meetings: Email for dates and times.

**Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)**

Contact: Todd David, 401-0625  
Email: info@friendsofnoevalley.com  
Website: friendsofnoevalley.com  
Meetings: Two or three annually.

**Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center**

Contact: Chris Faust  
Email: info@uppernoerecreationcenter.com  
Website: uppernoerecreationcenter.com  
Meetings: Email or check website.

**Friends of Upper Noe Dog Owners Group (FUNDOG)**

Contacts: Chris Faust, David Emanuel  
Email: info@fundogsf.org  
Website: www.fundogsf.org

**Glen Park Association**

Contact: info@glenparkassociation.org  
Website: glenparkassociation.org  
Address: P.O. Box 31292, SF, CA 94131

**Juri Commoners**

Contact: Dave Schweisguth, M17-6290  
Email: dave@schweisguth.org  
Website: meetup.com/Juri-Commoners  
Meetings: Most last Saturdays, 9-noon.

**Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association**

Contact: Dr. Lisa Fromer, president  
Email: efromer3@gmail.com

Meetings: Quarterly. Email for details.

**Merchants of Upper Market & Castro**

Contact: 835-8720  
Email: info@castromerchants.com  
Address: 584 Castro St. #333, SF, CA 94114  
Meetings: Call for details.

**Noe Neighborhood Council**

Contact: Ozzie Rohm or Matt McCabe,  
Co-founders  
Email: info@noeneighborhoodcouncil.com  
Website: noeneighborhoodcouncil.com  
Meetings: Quarterly at Sally Brunn Library,  
451 Jersey St., with date publicized on  
website and Nextdoor.com.

**Noe Valley Association-24th Street Community Benefit District**

Contact: Debra Niemann, 519-0093  
Dispatch: To report spills or debris on 24th  
Street, call Billy Dinnell, 802-4461.  
Email: info@noevalleyassociation.org  
Website: noevalleyassociation.org  
Board meetings: Quarterly. See website.

**Noe Valley Farmers Market**

Open Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and  
Tuesdays, 3 to 7 p.m.; 3861 24th St. between  
Vicksburg and Sanchez.  
Contact: Leslie Crawford, 248-1332  
Email: info@noevalleyfarmersmarket.com

**Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA)**

Contact: Rachel Swann, 225-7743  
Meetings: Last Thursdays, Old Republic,  
4045A 24th St., 9 a.m. Call to confirm.  
Website: www.NoEvalleyMerchants.com

**Noe Valley Parent Network**

An e-mail resource network for parents  
Contact: Mina Kenvin  
Email: minaken@gmail.com

**Noe Valley Parents, San Francisco**

Listserv contact: noevalleyparent-  
owner@yahoogroups.com. Subscribe:  
noevalleyparentssubscribe@yahoogroups.com

**Outer Noe Valley Merchants**

Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500

Address: 294 29th St., SF, CA 94131  
Meetings: Call for details.

**Progress Noe Valley**

Facebook: facebook.com/ProgressNoeValley  
Email: progressnoe@gmail.com  
Website: progressnoe.com  
Meetings: Check Facebook page for current  
meeting and event schedule.

**Resilient Noe Valley**

Contact: Antoinette or Jessica  
Email: resilientnoevalley@gmail.com  
Newsletter signup:  
http://eepurl.com/gYuCD5  
Website: www.resilientnoevalley.com

**San Francisco NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)**

Contact: Noe Valley NERT Neighborhood  
Team co-coordinators Maxine Fasulis,  
mfasulis@yahoo.com; Carole Roberts,  
carole\_roberts@faludi.com  
Website: https://SF-fire.org  
Meetings: See website for free trainings  
scheduled throughout the year.

**San Jose/Guerrero Coalition to Save Our Streets**

Contact: Don Oshiro, 285-8188  
Email: contact@sanjoseguerrero.com  
Website: sanjoseguerrero.com  
Meetings: See website.

**Stand Up San Francisco**

Contacts: Laura Shapiro, Phyllis Ball,  
Paul Silverman  
Email: info@standupsf.net  
Website: standupsf.net  
Meetings: At offices of members of  
Congress, weekly.

**Upper Noe Neighbors**

Contact: Olga Milan-Howells, 756-4455  
Email: President@UpperNoeNeighbors.com  
Meetings: Bi-monthly on third Wednesday,  
Upper Noe Recreation Center, 295 Day St.  
Call to confirm.

**THE NOE VALLEY VOICE**  
editor@noevalleyvoice.com

All phone numbers are in the 415 area  
code, unless otherwise noted.

**Your Support is Vital****Become a Friend of the Noe Valley Voice**

Help the *Voice* Continue to Serve our Community



“... the *Voice* is the best neighborhood newspaper in the city, if not the state, if not the country.”

*Kristin Anundsen, Noe Valley Resident*

For over 40 years, the *Noe Valley Voice* has told the stories of many of the people, merchants, and animals who make this neighborhood one of the most sought after places in San Francisco to live, work, and shop. During that time, the *Voice* has become known as the best community resource of its kind.

Local businesses, institutions, and individuals who have purchased advertising space help us pay production costs and most of our contributing writers, artists, and photographers. We offer our heartfelt thanks to them.

But the past decade has seen a steady decline in our revenue, mostly due to competition from internet advertising options. And now the effects of Covid19 have added to our burden. It's becoming more difficult to produce the paper.

If you appreciate what we do and are able to help financially, please send a contribution check or money order (payable to the Noe Valley Voice) to:

Friends of the Noe Valley Voice, PO Box 460249, San Francisco, CA 94146

Questions? Email editor@noevalleyvoice.com

*Thank you!* Jack Tipple and Sally Smith, Editors and Co-Publishers

**We're Forever Grateful**

# The Swann Group's Featured Listings



New Price



729 Congo Street | \$3,495,000



256 Fowler Avenue | \$1,998,000

New Price



3428 22nd Street | \$1,748,800

Just Listed



3934 Cesar Chavez Street | \$1,695,000



394 Fair Oaks Street #3 | \$1,595,000

New Price



3426 22nd Street | \$999,000

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**Rachel Swann**  
415.225.7743  
rachel.swann@compass.com  
DRE 01860456

**Rachel Hooper**  
415.420.4482  
rachel.hooper@compass.com  
DRE 02081348

**Marcus Grogans**  
415.572.0064  
marcus.grogans@compass.com  
DRE 01993031

**Tanya Bolshakoff**  
650.291.7289  
tanya.bolshakoff@compass.com  
DRE 01468818

**Gregory Santos**  
415.410.8087  
gregory.santos@compass.com  
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