



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

A Summer of Pain for Local Businesses

Some Forced to Flee, Others Holding Their Breath

By Matthew S. Bajko

Navarrete's Black Belt Academy anticipated marking in December its 14th anniversary of operating a taekwondo school at the corner of Church and 24th streets. And founder Fernando Navarrete, a 6th degree black belt martial arts master, was expecting his 37-year teaching career would continue for the foreseeable future.

But both the business and Navarrete's teaching "sadly" became casualties of the coronavirus outbreak, as his wife and fellow martial arts instructor, Toni Navarrete, noted in an email to their students in late July. It announced their decision to sell their business and home in order to relocate to Merida, Mexico, by late September.

"Master Navarrete and I did all we could, but ultimately we just lost too many students, and it became impossible for us to pay our bills," wrote Toni Navarrete, who has a 4th degree black belt, in the couple's emailed goodbye. "We got a small PPP loan and spent all our savings trying to keep the school afloat, but recently, it came to the point where we are being forced to sell our home and our belongings and will have to leave the city that we have called home for a lifetime because we simply can no longer afford it."

Talking to the *Voice* Aug. 10 after conducting their last zoom class with a dozen students, the couple expressed a mix of sadness, acceptance, and resolve about



What Did You Do During Your Summer Pandemic? If you were like (left to right) Sloane Mullin, Clara Keough, and Anna Keough, you made some art for the neighborhood on Elizabeth Street. As the girls put it: "Our inspirations for this chalk project this summer were the videos we saw on the app called Tik-Tok. Many people were using this triangle collage as murals in their bedrooms, while others used chalk and drew the design on their driveways. We were interested in trying it out! We planned a week in advance in order to chase down the necessary supplies, including a case of chalk and masking tape. It also gave us something fun to do over the weekend while staying physically distant from others." See pages 13 and 14 for more Noe Valley creativity.

Photo by Kate Keough

the situation they had unexpectedly found themselves in. They were moving into the Bolinas home of Toni Navarrete's mother for several weeks as they searched online for a home to buy in the capital of the Mexican state of Yucatán.

"There was no way to pay our mortgage, our taxes, and maintain the school

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Leaving Noe Valley: Toni and Fernando Navarrete were forced to sell their popular martial arts academy on 24th Street after the Covid-19 shutdown. Photo by Matthew S. Bajko

J-Church and 48 Back in Service

But Routes and Vehicles Aren't What They Used to Be

By Matthew S. Bajko

After months of being mothballed due to the coronavirus outbreak, the J-Church rail and 48-Quintara bus lines returned to service in late August. Both are running on truncated routes, however, as the city's Muni service continues to be hammered by the pandemic.

The two lines, which each cross through Noe Valley, came back on board Saturday, Aug. 22. The timing had been planned to coincide with the start of the new school year, yet the city's public school students remained at home for remote learning, and their return to campuses was unclear.

But three days into the return of Muni Metro service, the system was shut down again, due to overhead electrical wire issues in the subway and an employee in the command center testing positive for Covid-19.

Buses are likely to be providing service on all of the subway lines—the J-Church, K-Ingleside, L-Taraval, M-Ocean View, N-Judah, and T-Third—through the end of the year. On the J-Church line, buses should arrive at stops every 15 minutes.

Inbound riders of the J-Church now must transfer at the intersection of Church and Market streets and catch a bus headed downtown. The J-Church buses turn around at that stop and head back through

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Lola's Showcase Of Artistry

A Quiet Corner of Sanchez St. Hosts Art to Wear and Admire

By Megan Wetherall

If you have walked or driven past 1250 Sanchez St., right at the corner of Clipper, you will no doubt have had your eye caught by the bold lettering of *LOLA* on the gray awning, as well as the inimitable hand-painted dresses, tops, and skirts displayed on dress-form mannequins in the windows.

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

This is the eclectic studio, storefront, and gallery space of Lola Herrera, who recently welcomed me in to share some of her story and creations.

I was immediately struck by the abundance of natural light, the high ceilings, the gentle hum of a sewing machine in the background (manned on this particular day by Lola's husband, Giovanni Herrera), and the warm, willowy presence of Lola herself, standing against a backdrop of her painted textiles.

Lola Herrera, née Nielsen, is the youngest of five children to a father of Danish descent and a mother of Irish-Hungarian ancestry. She grew up in Montgomery, Ala., where her father was in the Air Force. She was, and remains, a self-declared tomboy.

"I have my favorite clothes and wear them to death. I am always like this," she shrugs, looking down at her functional black pants and navy sleeveless shirt with purple snaps. "Or I'm covered in paint. I'm interested in my clothes for other people, not for me."

There was no sewing machine in her childhood home and she never aspired to be a designer. Her artist's journey took her to the California Institute of the Arts, where she officially studied modern dance but spent most of her time in the art studio. "I've always been making things,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



Fall Opening: Designer Lola Herrera readies to hold her first exhibition of the Covid era, showing her own wearable art and the landscape paintings of Willa Owings Sept. 4 to Oct. 8 at Lola's Art Gallery on Sanchez Street. Photo by Megan Wetherall

OPENSFHISTORY



Early Hardware Options. Four men stand ready to serve at the hardware emporium at 4071 24th St., circa 1925. The storefront was home to the Wooden Heel from 1981 to the early 2000s, then Mike's Shoe Repair. Most recently it was the curio shop Rare Device. *Photo and information courtesy OpensFHHistory.org/Western Neighborhoods Project/David Gallagher/Agnes Manning Collection*



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Sold Data from San Francisco Association of Realtors MLS



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vs.			
Jun - Aug 2020	18	\$1,546,000	\$1,120
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This year has been a very different year than most.

COVID-19 restrictions have caused many to reconsider aspects of their lifestyle, and our real estate market trends are reflective of that.

If you want more information or an interpretation on the current data, we are certainly available by **phone, text, or email** to address any questions about the housing market and provide information on how this may impact you.



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Photo by Jack Tipple

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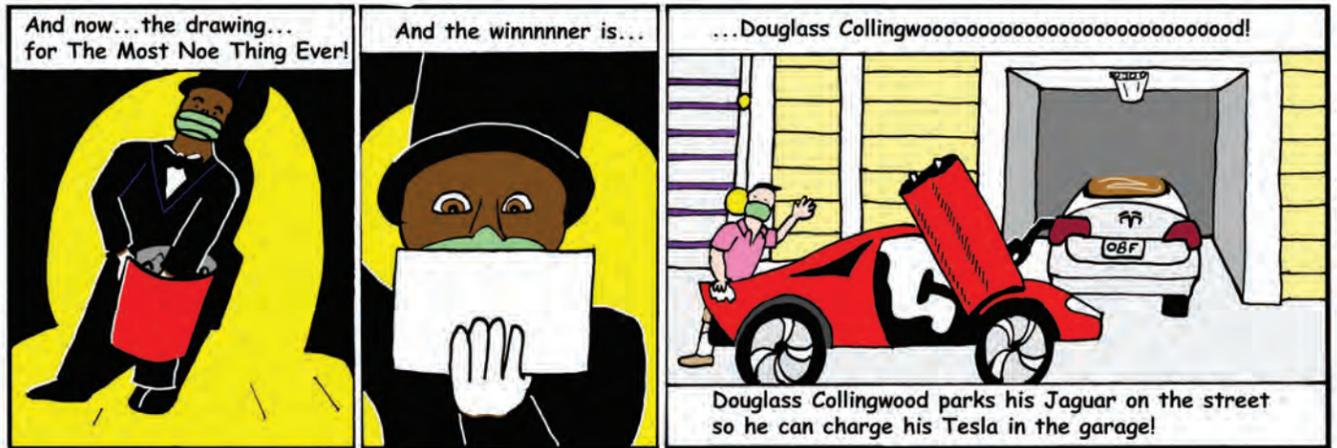
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THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN



LETTERS

Fragile Planet, Toxic Emissions

Editor:

For years, I have noticed pretty much every time I venture out, and constantly in front of my house, people in their parked cars on their phones. The phone part is fine. Don't text/talk while driving and all. But the part I can't wrap my head around is, nine times out of ten, they leave their engines running.

I'm not talking about a five-minute call. I'm referring to people like the dude in front of my house today who has been on his phone for a half hour, with his SUV engine running. Do some think that if the car isn't moving, the exhaust coming out of their tailpipe doesn't count?

If you care about the planet, consider how much carbon you are spewing into the atmosphere. It's so easy: *Turn off your engine* if you are not in motion. Do it for the planet. The angel in me cries for the Earth, the devil in me hopes he runs out of gas.

SF'ers used to be so green. What happened?

J Reed

Wear a Mask

Editor:

I live in Noe Valley near limited-traffic Sanchez Street. I work from home and often walk on Sanchez during my work breaks. I am disappointed by the number of people refusing to wear masks.

I am most disturbed by parents, with children, not wearing a mask. I wear my mask for my friends, my neighbors, and especially for the children. Why aren't the parents wearing masks? I care about their children. Why don't they care about me?

I am not religious, and don't believe in a day of reckoning. However, if there is such a day, I don't want to learn that I infected a child with a deadly disease for being too self-absorbed to wear a face mask. Regardless of judgment, I know my afterlife would be spent in purgatory.

Edward Bell

More Black Voices Needed

Editor:

Great piece on black voices in Noe Valley [July/August 2020 *Voice*]. I'd love to see this as a regular exploration of changes that can be made to improve diversity in our neighborhood.

Phillip Kobernick, 26th Street

Blinded by the Lights?

(This was addressed to the San Francisco Public Library.)

We have been pointing out to various public officials, who seemed unconcerned, that all of the ceiling lights in the Noe Valley Branch Library have been blazing brightly all day and all night for six months!

Are you not worried about (a) electricity waste and (b) the example that this sets to all who look out their windows and see this energy wastage night after night, month after month? Is this going on at other branches? I'm sure PG&E is delighted, but don't we taxpayers have to pay this electrical bill?

It's your call, but if it were me, I would have sent someone over back in March to flick a few switches.

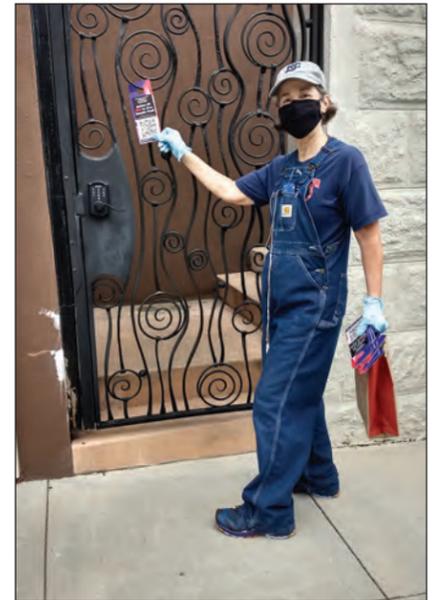
Bill Yenne, Noe Valley resident

Action-SF in Action

Editor:

As someone who started my political career almost 60 years ago leaving flyers on people's doorsteps, before door hangers may have been invented, I feel like I am returning to some prior incarnation, like at the end of *The Wizard of Oz*, where Dorothy ends up at home. But here's the news: Noe/Castro volunteers from Action-SF are distributing door hangers to 750 Noe Valley homes in support of raising the last \$5,000 toward our \$50,000 goal. The money goes directly to grassroots Senate campaigns in swing states around the country.

We started the drive July 4 and want to finish by Labor Day. Over 170 donors are supporting six campaigns. Look for us at



Castro resident Donna Di Meo distributes scannable door hangers as part of an Action-SF drive to raise money for campaigns in swing states. Photo by Pam Card

the Saturday Noe Valley Farmers Market and on your door.

Charles Spiegel, Action-SF.com

Fair Oaks Street Calming

Editor:

A group of your neighbors has banded together to ask for traffic calming in the area. We have seen a dangerous uptick in traffic accidents, speeding, large trucks routing through the area, and stop-sign running in the past few years, which we wish to bring under control.

For now, we are focused on the part of Fair Oaks Street between Dolores and Guerrero and 22nd and 24th streets. Would you be willing to sign a petition that we can deliver to Supervisor Mandelman in early September? If so, sign the petition at Change.org/CurbTheTraffic. Thanks for your help in keeping the Fair Oaks Street area safe.

Kim, Siobhan, Susie, and Mary Louise Fair Oaks Neighbors

Are You Registered?

Editor:

However you plan to vote and whatever party you like, please make sure you're registered to vote, particularly if you have recently moved.

All you need to do is go to the California secretary of state's website. The link is <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>.

The website is very easy to use. It asks for your basic information (name, last four digits of your Social Security number, birth date, and CA driver's license or ID number), and then it lets you know whether you're registered. If you need to re-register, it gives you a link to do that. St. Aidan's Church via Kit Cameron

CRIME SNAPSHOT

It was a long hot summer for the kind of crimes that Noe Valley residents find so maddening—car break-ins and thefts of personal property.

Of the 184 neighborhood incidents reported to the San Francisco Police Department in June and July, 75 fell into the "larceny/theft" category.

The majority of those (43) involved car break-ins and valuables stolen via unlocked doors or broken windows. The rest ranged from package thefts to shoplifting to stolen license plates.

Burglary incidents, or break-ins to homes and businesses, also rang alarm bells. Thirty-seven were reported to police in June and July.

Motor vehicle thefts were significant as well, with 29 reported in Noe Valley over the two-month period.

There was a single case of assault in June, but police responded to five such cases in July. Not a good sign.

The table below shows numbers for 10 categories of crime. All have been culled from the database "A Digital Map of San Francisco Police Department Incident Reports From 2018 to the Present," found under Public Safety at Data.sfgov.org. The *Voice* collected the June and July data on Aug. 10, 2020.

Note the city's digital crime map defines Noe Valley as the area bounded roughly by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.

To report an incident on your block, call the non-emergency number at 415-553-0123 or file a police report online at sanfranciscopolice.org. To contact Mission Station Captain Gaetano Caltagirone, call 415-558-5400 or email Gaetano.Caltagirone@sfgov.org. Ingleside Station Captain Christopher Woon can be reached at 415-404-4000, or by emailing Chris.Woon@sfgov.org. In an emergency, call 911.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

Noe Valley Incidents Reported January–July, 2020

Incident Reports	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	YTD
Larceny/Theft	37	31	29	48	41	49	26	261
Burglary	15	15	8	11	20	20	17	106
Malicious Mischief	9	13	8	9	2	6	10	57
Motor Vehicle Theft	9	8	9	16	9	14	15	80
Assault	3	2	1	1	2	1	5	15
Robbery	2	1	0	2	2	2	2	11
Other Miscellaneous	5	6	3	6	7	4	4	35
Fraud	4	6	0	4	3	4	2	23
Fam. Domestic Violence	1	0	0	5	2	1	2	11
Vandalism	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	4
TOTALS	86	82	58	104	89	101	83	603

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Noe Valley Voice welcomes your letters. Email editor@noevalleyvoice.com. Please include your name and contact information. (Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication.) Be aware that letters may be edited for brevity or clarity. We look forward to hearing from you.

Remembering 'Pretty Ricky'

Ricky Bernard Cornns,
Oct. 18, 1966 – Feb. 6, 2020

By Corrie M. Anders

One less fan is cheering the home team at The Bar on Dolores. The Day Street Posse is one member short. Youths at the Hebrew Cultural Community of San Francisco are missing a devoted mentor. And a family is mourning one of their own: Ricky Bernard Cornns, who suffered a fatal stroke on Feb. 6, 2020. He was 53.

Cornns, a bachelor and Church Street resident, had survived several strokes in recent years, but his death stunned his family and friends. "This one hit him unawares," said his brother-in-law Osayahde Nesbitt. "He was alone at the time. His roommate thought he was asleep."

Cornns, the youngest of six siblings, was born at San Francisco General Hospital to Ann Lou Cornns and Ira Wesley Cornns on Oct. 18, 1966. He attended Fremont Elementary, Henry Middle School, and graduated from Challenge to Learn High School.

At six-foot-four and almost 300 pounds, Cornns was impossible to miss when he was out and about in Noe Valley and the Mission, where he lived most of his years. "People would look at his size and make assumptions about who they thought he was," Nesbitt said. "When you'd meet him, you'd realize he was the most genuine and sincere person you could ever meet."

A love of sports, taste for Miller High Life, and the tavern's friendly atmosphere drew Cornns to The Bar on Dolores, at 29th and Dolores streets. As an adolescent, he played team basketball and

continued to shoot hoops throughout his life. Also a die-hard 49ers fan, he owned mounds of memorabilia of Joe Montana, Ronnie Lott, "and so many others," Nesbitt said. "You name it, he had it."

Cornns was an avid comic book collector, too. During the heart-rending task of sorting his belongings, family members discovered a vast store of comic books, mostly Marvel superheroes, in pristine condition.

From a young age, Cornns acquired nicknames, the first being Pretty Ricky, because "he liked to dress up—and he would dress very well," Nesbitt said.

Damon Bell, a bartender and part owner of The Bar on Dolores, said, "I called him Slick Rick, The Young and the Rickless, Fast Times at Rickmont High, and If It Ain't Rick, It Don't Need to Be Fixed." When Cornns walked through the door, people would call out a new name, Bell recalled with a chuckle. "It got to the point where total strangers would start" fashioning monikers, sending ripples of laughter through the bar, he said.

On display at Cornns' Feb. 29 memorial service was a portrait of Cornns wearing a butcher's apron, his face sporting a classic goatee. Featured in the May 2005 issue of the *Noe Valley Voice*, the photo was taken at Drewes Bros. Meat Market on Church Street, where Cornns worked his way up from helper to butcher. His employment there ended after 16 years, when his friend and store co-owner Josh Epple died in a motorcycle accident in 2014. The site is now the home of Baron's Meat & Poultry.

Cornns was also a member of the Day Street Posse, a group named after the athletic field at 295 Day St., officially known as Upper Noe Recreation Center. Since the 1950s, families and friends have hung out at the sprawling park, hosting picnics or playing baseball or basketball.



Ricky Cornns was working at Drewes Bros. Meats when he posed for this portrait by Najib Joe Hakim featured in "Faces of Noe Valley," *Noe Valley Voice* May 2005.

The longtime Church Street resident is survived by his 96-year-old mother, Ann Lou Cornns; sisters, Yvonne Quinn (Tony Quinn); Lynda Clemons (Matthew Clemons); Salema Cornns-Nesbitt (Osayahde Nesbitt); brother Michael Cornns (Marjorie Robinson); and many nieces and nephews, all of San Francisco. He was preceded in death by his father, Ira Cornns, brother Ruben Bledsoe, and nephew Rafael Fuentes Lee.

"I've been going to Day Street Park since I was about two years old," said Reed Harrington, 47, a lifelong friend of Cornns' who also worked with him and Epple at Drewes. "We all had the same things in common, such as we grew up in that neighborhood, and we worked in that neighborhood and lived in that neighborhood."

Reed purchased a nameplate with Cornns' name for the rec center, where four similar plaques are mounted in honor of "the fallen Day Streeters." "Ricky's name is the only one going on this year," Reed said, noting that a commemoration would be held after the Covid crisis was over.

"Rick was always a good guy, trust-

worthy," said Chris Faust, who chairs the Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center. "He showed concern for the neighborhood and neighbors. You could count on him to keep an eye on things."

Nesbitt said Cornns' kindness was nurtured within the Hebrew Cultural Center, a faith community that follows "the spiritual practice of ancient Hebrews" and is based in the Bayview District.

Cornns was president of the center's young men's group, which focused on developing boys into men of integrity, and he helped develop a summer school program that offered recreational activities and tutoring. "He was a big guy with a big heart," and "he was the real him all the time," Nesbitt said. ■

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Fifth Noe Valley Girls Film Fest Virtually Here

The Watch Party Is Sept. 12

By Karen Topakian

When six teens—Maggie and Ella Marks, Caitlin and Charlotte Kane, Hannah Tawadrous, and Eleanor Mullen—put their minds to the task, neither Covid-19 nor shelter-in-place could keep them from fulfilling their dream of holding the Fifth Annual (Virtual) Noe Valley Girls Film Festival.

The festival will take place via Binge-Wave.com on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 4 to 6 p.m., PDT. In addition to the top 10 five-minute films made by girls under 16, the online-screening watch party will feature an appearance by Netflix and YouTube star Colleen Ballinger, known for her “comically talentless” Miranda Sings character.

The festival has received 70 film submissions this year, from young filmmakers in the U.S., Columbia, Italy, Poland, U.K., and China. Though that number is fewer than in previous years, the organizers are pleased with the films’ quality and excited about the competition.

It won’t be possible this year to hear the applause or see the excitement of hundreds of fans spilling out of their seats in the upper hall at the Noe Valley Ministry.

But festival co-organizer Maggie Marks, 13, is looking on the bright side. “Now the finalists can see their films and be a part of the festival,” she says. Filmmakers, supporters, and movie lovers from around the world can attend the free event.

The team of six has spent months screening, reviewing, grading, and dis-



“Audience Favorite” Mollie Weiss accepts her prize from festival presenters (left to right) Maggie Marks, Kamila Baker, and Juliette Cuthbert at last year’s Noe Valley Girls Film Festival. ©2019 Ted Weinstein

cussing the film entries, to arrive at the finalists based on eight criteria: originality/creativity, direction, writing, cinematography, performances, editing, storytelling/pacing/entertainment value, and sound/music.

“Overall, what we’re looking for is good quality and a meaningful message,” says Maggie. “The main thing we like to look for is, will other people enjoy watching it.”

At the end of the show, the festival judges will name three winners in each of two categories: girls under the age of 10 and girls ages 11 through 15. The winners in each category will receive cash prizes of \$350 for first place, \$200 for second, and \$100 for third.

Caitlin Kane, 13, says meeting with her co-organizers by Zoom this year has created some challenges. But she too is optimistic about the festival. “We can persevere through challenges and can bring

people together in times like these.”

In past years, the girls held bake sales and put up posters in Noe Valley to raise funds and create awareness about the festival. They couldn’t do the bake sales this year because of the city’s health orders.

Still, Caitlin says, the festival is lucky to have money in the bank, as well as friends in the neighborhood.

“We only have to provide prize money,” notes Caitlin. “This year we are going from overflow,” from online donations and money raised at last year’s festival from selling T-shirts, candy, and popcorn.

Both Caitlin and Maggie love the festival, for different reasons. Caitlin enjoys doing the work that builds up to the festival and seeing a year’s worth of work pay off.

Maggie’s favorite part is the festival itself. “We get to watch all the wonderful films, and see the audience’s faces, especially the girls, light up with joy. And it shows we have reached our goal of inspiring girls to be filmmakers.”

The Noe Valley Girls Film Festival was founded in 2016 by Charlotte Kane and Ella Marks (both age 12 at the time) and their younger sisters Caitlin and Maggie (then each 9). The girls liked to make films and decided to hold a film festival for all the kids of Noe Valley so that the best films could be seen by real live audiences.

Caitlin Kane and Maggie Marks love making films and see themselves as part of the next generation of Bay Area filmmakers. Caitlin urges girls to take risks and keep trying. “You could take first prize,” she says.



An interview with YouTube and Netflix star Colleen Ballinger, aka Miranda Sings, will be a feature of this year’s Noe Valley Girls Film Festival on Sept. 12.

There are two ways to find the link to the Sept. 12 festival. Go to the festival platform BingeWave.com or to the Noe Valley Girls Film Festival website at nvqff.com.



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The Cost of Living in Noe

Suddenly Last Summer

By Corrie M. Anders

After three straight months of inactivity, the Noe Valley real estate market shook off the coronavirus blues and sprang to life over the summer.

Buyers purchased 16 single-family detached homes in June—including one for more than \$5 million—and another 14 in July, according to data provided to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Global Living San Francisco.

The number of new owners picking up keys in June and July (30) was almost as many as during the same two months last year (34).

Corcoran President Randall Kostick said potential homeowners were eager to go shopping, after coronavirus fears had kept them in quarantine from March through May.

“It was pent-up demand,” said Kostick, noting “it was very difficult to show property” during the spring, due to health restrictions imposed by the city.

Those restrictions were eased during the summer, and people were allowed to inspect properties if neither the owner nor tenant was present.

Buyers also bid up the amount they were willing to pay for a home in Noe Valley—by an average 5 percent in June and 12 percent in July. That was on par with overbids in the summer of 2019.



Victorian details were retained in the façade of this lavishly remodeled cottage on Valley Street near Dolores, selling in July for \$3.8 million. Photos by Corrie M. Anders



This hillside property on Valley Street near Castro sold for \$5,250,000, making it the most expensive June sale in Noe Valley. Its open-plan interior was designed by architects Kevin Hackett and Ross Levy.

Bonus cash to the seller was evident in the sale of June’s most expensive home: a four-bedroom, four-bath house in the 400 block of Valley Street, between Castro and Noe streets. The property sold for \$5,250,000—5.1 percent above its owner’s asking price of \$4,995,000.

Originally built in 1911, the craftsman-style home had been re-designed and modernized by architects Kevin Hackett and Ross Levy. They brought light and air to the interior spaces by using abundant glass, exposed timber beams, high ceilings, and an open staircase leading to a rooftop deck with bay and southern views. Other selling features were a deluxe kitchen with Miele appliances, radiant floor heat, a backyard patio with a gas fire pit, and a Savant Smart Home System.

A buyer paid an even higher premium for what turned out to be July’s most expensive home, also located on Valley Street but this time in the 100 block, between Church and Dolores streets. The accepted bid of \$3.8 million was more than 15 percent over the seller’s asking price (\$3,295,000).

The four-bedroom, four-bath house, once a small Victorian cottage, had been renovated in 2014 and enlarged to 2,480 square feet. Amenities included an open floor plan, a gourmet kitchen with Viking range, dual-zone heating, smart house technology, oak flooring throughout, one-car parking, and a lush backyard garden.

The most intriguing numbers in this summer’s data may be those that show the rise and fall in the average single-family-home sale price, year over year. In the Corcoran sample, the average price in Noe Valley in June 2020 was \$3,189,625,

Rents Get More Affordable As Vacancies Pop Up

The large two-bedroom apartment was located in a Victorian duplex two blocks off 24th Street. It came with a modern kitchen, washer-dryer, and private patio, and was cat-friendly with a 12-month lease. The last tenant paid \$4,200 a month. Now the landlord was asking \$3,595.

According to the experts, this scenario, describing a real vacancy in Noe Valley in August, was a clear example of how six months of the coronavirus has altered the rental landscape in San Francisco.

Yes, it’s true. Rents are lower, and empty apartments are taking more time to find new occupants. Landlords are offering move-in incentives and price breaks to keep current tenants from moving out.

J.J. Panzer, a real estate broker with 18 years of experience in Noe Valley, said the decline in rents in the neighborhood was significant.

“Rents are off 10 percent from where

they were this time last year,” said Panzer, who heads RMC, a rental management firm at 1234 Castro St.

The *Noe Valley Voice* sampling of Noe Valley rentals on Craigslist (see table above) also shows evidence of declines, both from June to August and year over year.

The average rent for a one-bedroom in Noe in August 2019 was \$3,179. This August, it was \$2,933—lower by 7.7 percent. The two-bedroom average went from \$4,687 to \$3,872, a drop of 17.4 percent.

According to a *Voice* count, there were 210 rental vacancies in Noe Valley on Craigslist in the second week of August 2020. That is more than double the number (93) in the same week last year.

Despite its weaker condition, Panzer expects the Noe rental market to stay healthy in the long run.

“Noe Valley has hung on better than

Noe Valley Home Sales*						
Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
Single-family homes						
July 2020	14	\$1,100,000	\$3,800,000	\$2,122,500	16	112%
June 2020	16	\$1,150,000	\$5,250,000	\$3,189,625	29	105%
May 2020	4	\$1,900,000	\$4,500,000	\$2,693,750	13	107%
July 2019	17	\$1,550,000	\$4,360,000	\$2,712,647	24	110%
June 2019	17	\$1,305,000	\$5,900,000	\$2,556,618	22	110%
Condominiums/TICs						
July 2020	8	\$1,350,000	\$2,360,000	\$1,692,500	27	103%
June 2020	4	\$1,295,000	\$1,710,000	\$1,502,500	57	100%
May 2020	3	\$925,000	\$1,565,000	\$1,348,333	75	100%
July 2019	12	\$1,170,000	\$2,850,000	\$1,623,000	15	115%
June 2019	10	\$847,500	\$1,730,000	\$1,332,100	11	122%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
July 2020	1	\$2,675,000	\$2,675,000	\$2,675,000	7	99%
June 2020	1	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	19	100%
May 2020	2	\$2,225,000	\$2,800,000	\$2,512,500	78	98%
July 2019	9	\$1,410,000	\$4,250,000	\$2,198,543	37	112%
June 2019	2	\$1,277,211	\$2,700,000	\$1,988,606	13	117%
5+ unit buildings						
July 2020	1	\$3,850,000	\$3,850,000	\$3,850,000	29	96%
June 2020	0	—	—	—	—	—
May 2020	2	\$2,225,000	\$2,800,000	\$2,512,500	78	98%
July 2019	1	\$2,775,000	\$2,775,000	\$2,775,000	100	93%
June 2019	0	—	—	—	—	—

*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. NVV9/2020

or 125 percent of what it was in June 2019. But that average dropped in July to \$2,122,500, just 78 percent of what it was in July a year ago.

Meanwhile, the value of condominiums appeared to hold steady.

According to the data, condominium buyers purchased 12 homes in Noe Valley in June and July. On average, they paid close to or slightly more than the seller’s asking price.

June’s average sale price for a condominium was \$1,502,500, but there were only four properties sold, too few to make generalizations about. The average price of the eight sold in July was \$1,692,500. That was higher than last July’s number, \$1,623,000, by 4.3 percent.

June’s costliest condo was a two-bedroom, two-bath unit in the 4300 block of 24th Street, between Hoffman and Home-

stead streets. The sale price was \$1,710,000, which was \$40,000 less than the seller’s list price. The 1913 building had been a storefront bakery until it was converted to residential in 1943. The newly renovated property, with 2,400 square feet of living space, featured an open floor plan, modern kitchen, three-car parking, and a shared courtyard.

The most expensive attached unit sold in July was a three-bedroom, three-bath home in the 4000 block of Cesar Chavez Street, between Noe and Sanchez streets. A buyer paid \$2,360,000—\$11,000 more than the list price. The 2,160-square-foot property had been extensively remodeled. Contemporary features included a chef’s kitchen with Borsch appliances and an island with waterfall edges, a glass wine cellar, and a large back yard. The unit did not come with a garage. ■

Noe Valley Rents**					
Unit	No. in Sample	Range June 2020	Average August 2020	Average June 2020	Average August 2019
Studio	4	\$1,500 - \$2,800	\$2,168 / mo.	\$2,292 / mo.	\$2,389 / mo.
1-bdrm	70	\$1,995 - \$3,999	\$2,933 / mo.	\$3,099 / mo.	\$3,179 / mo.
2-bdrm	65	\$2,700 - \$6,750	\$3,872 / mo.	\$4,125 / mo.	\$4,687 / mo.
3-bdrm	45	\$3,500 - \$9,500	\$5,762 / mo.	\$6,118 / mo.	\$7,323 / mo.
4+-bdrm	16	\$4,995 - \$18,000	\$8,146 / mo.	\$8,840 / mo.	\$11,544 / mo.

** This survey is based on a sample of 210 Noe Valley apartment listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Aug. 5 to 12, 2020. In August a year ago, there were 93 listings. NVV9/2020

other neighborhoods in town,” he said. “All of the things we know and love in Noe Valley have helped it remain a pretty attractive neighborhood.”

Some San Francisco renters, “those living in not as attractive apartments or neighborhoods,” Panzer said, are now thinking they might like to live in Noe Valley. “They’re playing musical chairs.”

Crystal Chen, an analyst for Zumper, a national online rental listing service, agrees. “Even though rents are going down, I don’t think Noe Valley has been as impacted” as other parts of the city, she said.

For one thing, “it’s a family-friendly neighborhood and it’s hard to uproot your entire family,” Chen said. Families with children represent 41 percent of Noe Valley’s population, according to city data.

Also, well-paid tech workers, working from home in SOMA or in luxury towers downtown, want to move to less expen-

sive areas like Noe Valley, she said. “They want to shift to something that is more affordable and has more space.”

On the other hand, Noe Valleyans, some of whom have lost or changed jobs, may be looking for greener pastures themselves.

Panzer says many have started to bargain.

“Most tenants these days are pretty savvy about asking for a reduction,” he said. “The owner is asking a rent of \$3,800, and they [prospective tenants] say, ‘I’ll give you \$3,100.’”

The landlords he represents know that renters, this fall anyway, are in the driver’s seat.

“The wait can be challenging these days,” Panzer said. “In Noe Valley, you might wait four to eight weeks to get a good tenant.”

—Corrie M. Anders

Rough Summer for Noe Businesses

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as it was currently running,” said Fernando Navarrete, who was born in Mexico City and has family in Merida.

Toni Navarrete, a third-generation San Franciscan, noted their soon-to-be new hometown was recently named “the second safest city in the Americas. It’s beautiful but incredibly hot.”

After closing their physical space March 16, they launched the zoom classes April 1. But enrollment dropped from 200 students down to 120, as not everyone welcomed learning martial arts over a computer screen.

“It’s horrific,” Fernando Navarrete said of virtual teaching. “To see us and copy what we are doing off a screen is very different from watching us in person. We are very hands on.”

They were allowed to open their doors over the summer to offer an educational camp. Their storefront could safely accommodate just 10 students, though, and not many families felt it was safe to sign up their children for the indoor classes.

“Some classes we had only two kids sign up,” said Fernando Navarrete.

By the end of July, they had made the decision to cut their losses and leave the country. Commuting from a cheaper location in the Bay Area wasn’t an option, due to the long hours they work.



The store’s health rules and a sanitizer dispenser guard the door at Just for Fun at 3982 24th St. But there is plenty of space inside and a plethora of school supplies for visitors to peruse. Photo by Sally Smith

They also didn’t want to leave their students “in the cold,” said Fernando Navarrete, as their young charges, in addition to their parents and siblings, had come to feel like family.

Luckily, Fernando Jaime, an 8th degree black belt master who owns a martial arts school in Rocklin, Calif., agreed to take over the Noe Valley school, at 1201 Church St. His daughter, Macey Jaime, who has a 4th degree black belt, moved into the city’s Mission District over the summer to become the lead instructor.

“Her dad was willing to save our school,” said Fernando Navarrete. “Good for us, she is an excellent instructor.”

Macey Jaime told the *Voice* she was optimistic about the school’s future, as people, especially children, “get tired of being only on the computer.” She plans to take every precaution to provide a safe environment for her students.

“If kids have not been doing anything physical at home, they can come here,” she said. “We have the resources to do it here and be safe here.”

Fashion No, Fish Yes

The health crisis created a summer of struggle for most merchants along the 24th Street commercial corridor. Some

also opted to close up shop, like children’s bookstore Charlie’s Corner and Astrid’s Rabat Shoes. Soon to join the empty storefronts will be the clothing boutiques Rabat and Cotton Basics.

Yet, along with the closures came news of openings.

In mid-August, Firefly, the beloved bistro at 24th and Douglass, announced a seismic retrofit of its building had been completed so it could begin offering food-to-go ordered from fireflysf.com (Tuesday through Saturday, 4 to 8 p.m.). Among the curbside attractions will be potato, kale, and plantain enchiladas; pork meatballs with cucumber salad; and Firefly’s signature fried chicken.

And by September the new fish market Billingsgate should be open at 3859 24th St., after its renovation of the former Pete’s Cleaners.

Co-owner Adrian Hoffman told the *Voice* he and his business partners were hopeful they would be given the go-ahead by the city to welcome customers in late August. Their concept for the location called for 60 percent of it to be a fishmonger’s and the other 40 percent to operate as a sit-down restaurant offering such staples as oysters and lobster salad, accompanied by a glass of wine.

“We are opening the fish market first,” said Hoffman. “You will be able to buy everything you need to make a full seafood meal at home.”

Nearly all of the food they planned to serve would be available for purchase to go, he added. The location is part of Four Star Seafood & Provisions, which offers online sales via its website, FourStarSeafood.com.

“Our home-delivery service has been ongoing, and we have quite a few customers who live in Noe Valley,” said Hoffman.

Dubliner Loves Haystack

Nearby at the Dubliner, owner Ken Yeung in March had to temporarily close the bar he has run since Jan. 1, 2013. He then resorted to selling drinks to go, but sales were lackluster, he told the *Voice*.

He then applied with the city to construct a parklet in the parking spaces in front of his establishment, at 3838 24th St. The seating for upwards of 20 patrons debuted in July. Per the city’s rules that bars need to serve food if they offer outdoor service, Yeung teamed with Haystack Pizza up the street.

“It keeps us alive and helps cover the bills,” said Yeung.

Nonetheless, it is still a struggle to keep the business afloat. He is only open from 3 to 8 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays, and sales are 15 to 20 percent of normal.

“This is a band-aid that is getting us by until we can reopen,” said Yeung.

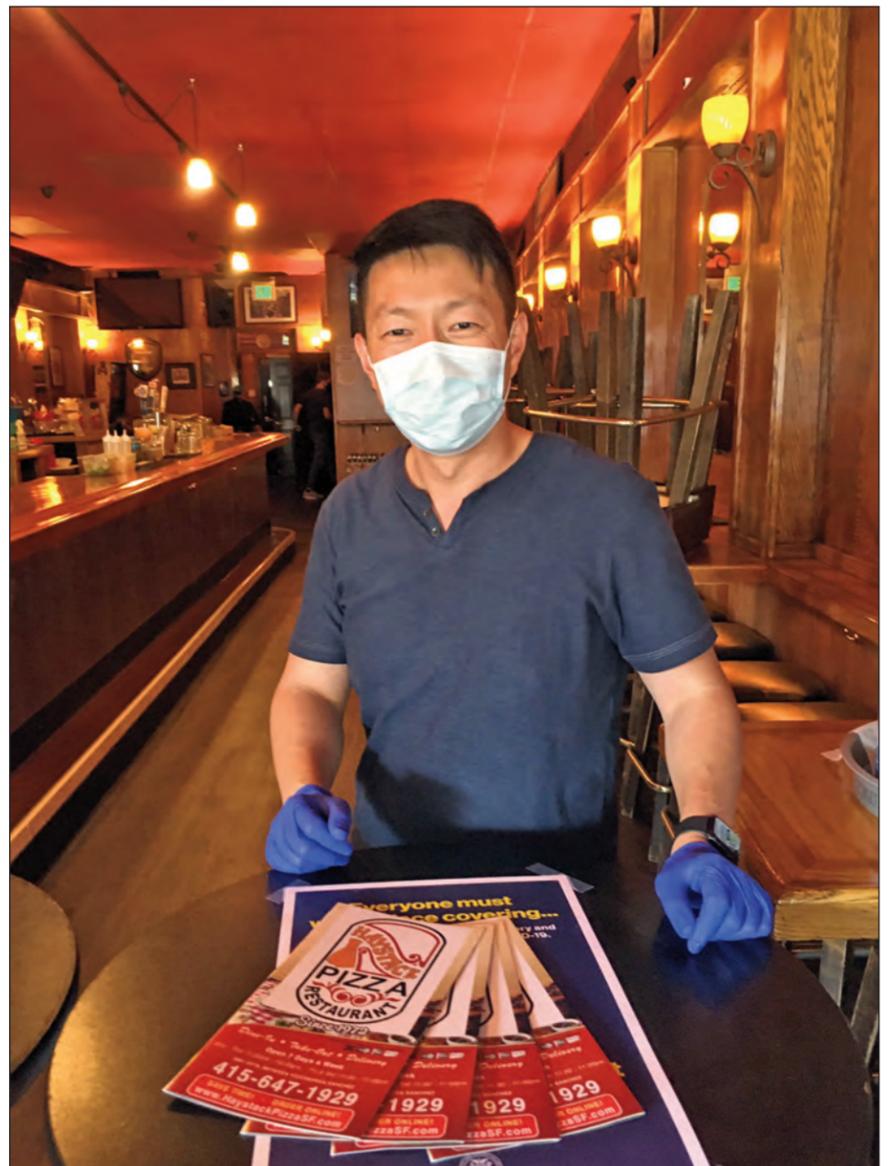
Don’t Forget Just for Fun

The spring and summer have also been rough for Just for Fun, co-owned by David Eiland and Robert Ramsey. After being forced to close in March, they resorted to offering local delivery service to their customers who emailed in orders.

They were allowed to reopen in June, and after seeing a crush of customers come in to stock up on art supplies, puzzles, birthday cards, and gifts, Eiland said business has been down 50 to 75 percent of normal. The store has cut back on its staffing as one cost-saving measure, and longtime sales associate Bobby Penny departed at the end of August after working there for 12 years.

“It is not getting any better. If anything, it is getting a little worse,” Eiland said in mid-August. “Now that school is back, things have tapered off. And there was very little back-to-school shopping this year.”

Known for its Halloween window displays, the store’s holiday merchandise



Ken Yeung displays menus from Haystack, with which he’s partnering to offer food and wine or other potables at a parklet in front of his Dubliner Bar on 24th Street. Photo by Sally Smith

usually would be stocked by now but won’t be brought out this year until mid-September. With trick-or-treating in doubt, Eiland decided it didn’t make sense to replace the face masks he had for sale in the front of the store with Hal-

loween costumes.

“I think if we sell anything, it will be more decorations than costumes this year,” said Eiland. (News he likely didn’t

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Your Noe Valley Expert

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COVID-COMPLIANT SHOWINGS BY APPOINTMENT

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COMPASS

24th Street Rolls With the Punches

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

know then: Sanchez Street is hosting a Halloween parade!)

Because Just for Fun has two connected retail spaces at 3982 24th St., with a normal capacity of 120 people, it can have half that many in the store at any given time, to allow for social distancing. But Eiland joked that limiting the number of customers has yet to be an issue.

“Having more than 60 people at once is not even a question,” he said. “We did put down markers throughout the store to give people an idea for how far apart they should be. People have been really good about wearing masks. We have had some issue with the sanitizer, as we are asking people to use it before approaching the cash register.”

As for the store’s future, Eiland said it all depends on whether they will be forced to close their doors again.

“We will be around through the first quarter of next year at least, unless they shut us down again,” he said. “We used up our reserves during the three months we were closed. There is nothing to fall back on, and I am not going to use my retirement savings.”

Lights on at Gallery of Jewels

A block away, Jen Rose Norberg, senior manager the past two years at Gallery of Jewels, has seen a steady stream of customers since the store reopened July 15 with a brand new interior. Closed since March 17 due to the health crisis, the store suffered a blow in the early morning hours of Sunday, May 31, when someone smashed the store’s windows and most of the display cases.



Manager Jen Rose Norberg and store co-owner Bill Hoover stand in front of a newly renovated Gallery of Jewels. The store, which had been burglarized in May, is proud to be a phoenix rising among Noe Valley businesses. Photo by Art Bodner

The culprit(s), likely taking advantage of police being diverted to Black Lives Matter protests that weekend, stole an undisclosed amount of fashion jewelry. The more expensive fine jewelry had been locked away.

“It was the biggest break-in the store has ever had,” said Norberg, an employee since 2012. “It was a huge amount.”

Rather than shutter Gallery of Jewels, which marked its 30th anniversary at

4089 24th St. in April, Bill Hoover and his wife, Dona Taylor, chose to remodel their jewel box of a space and welcome back customers when the city gave retailers the go-ahead (June 15).

“What it amounts to is Dona and I believe in the neighborhood, and we would like to be one of the few businesses that stimulates new growth, or the phoenix factor,” said Hoover. “We believe in the neighborhood, and it will come back.”

Hoover would like to learn the identity of the Good Samaritan who stapled heavy plastic sheeting around the store’s broken front window, closing off access until Hoover could arrive later that morning.

“Quality people live in this neighborhood,” he said. “We are hopeful the business climate will improve and we will see new growth.”

Sparkly New Interior

Their customers now encounter a bright, light-filled store with bluish-gray cabinets and a gold chandelier providing a focal point.

“Passersby have been saying how beautiful the store looks. Our foot traffic has been pretty good,” said Norberg, who lives nearby. “We have been more busy than I expected. I think people are excited about the new look.”

Due to the pandemic, the store is limiting customers to two at a time. It also

asks they wear masks. The staff is wearing masks and sanitizing the jewelry before and after customers try the pieces on.

“The pandemic is tough,” said Norberg. “All we can do is look forward to the future and keep doing what we are doing. We certainly aren’t giving up.”

‘Martialing’ Support

As for the Navarretes, they are unsure whether they will try to open a martial arts school in Merida. They have been invited to teach at other schools there, and they hope their students in Noe Valley will continue on under the tutelage of the Jaime family, at the newly named Jaime’s Martial Arts.

“The Jaimes have put a lot on the line to move here and keep the school going in the middle of a pandemic, and if [students] quit, it will put them in a situation similar to ours,” noted Toni Navarrete in her email. “They are only able to do this because Ms. Jaime will not have a mortgage, insurance, and all the rest of the expenses we have, but they are not a wealthy family or corporation, but rather small business owners like us.”

“Just give them a chance to win your trust and loyalty,” wrote Toni Navarrete. “They have a great deal more knowledge than we do and embody the same principles that are the cornerstone of our program.”



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Lola's: A Gallery That Knits Us Together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mostly three-dimensional, but also painting.”

In 1989, after six years in L.A., she and her then boyfriend Giovanni headed north to San Francisco. Finding herself in a much colder climate, Lola was inspired to start making reversible hats, out of fleece, cotton, remnants, and patchwork.

That is how she taught herself to sew. She sold the hats on consignment through a boutique in Hayes Valley which showcased a collective of artists. People liked them, and one day the owner of the store offered Lola a dress form he no longer needed.

“That was an interesting moment,” Lola now recalls, “because once I saw that in front of my eyes, I thought I can do anything I want in terms of clothing, because I have this thing I can build on. Some designers have a concept in their mind and make a sketch. The way my brain works is much more three-dimensional. I do everything in space. As long as I have a dress form or a real person in front of me, I can conceptualize a design. I work on the form itself in order to understand the pattern.”

So that's when Lola started making clothes, sometimes printing onto fabric using carved linoleum blocks. A friend suggested she make yoga pants, for which she designed a Buddha print, and she gradually created a line of clothes that she sold at local festivals in the Bay Area.

When a fellow designer was spotted by a rep wearing one of Lola's yoga pants in New York, Lola got a phone call and soon after, her first order for \$7,000. At that point, she took a “leap of faith” and moved her studio out of her garage near Tower Market into a private space in the Mission and hired her first seamstress.

For the next few years, Lola traveled



Lola Herrera is very attached to her mannequin. “As long as I have a dress form or a real person in front of me, I can conceptualize a design,” to create the one-of-a-kind pieces her customers delight in.

back and forth between New York and San Francisco, visiting the trade shows, getting her orders, and making the clothes and shipping them, and this continued until the financial crash of 2008.

“That was kind of a blessing in disguise,” Lola tells me. “I was well supported. I was managing five employees. But I wasn't totally happy with the ham-

ster wheel. Before the market crashed, I would think, What if all this went away and I could just do my art? I was getting into something I didn't really want to be in.”

The ensuing period was painful, Lola admits. “I had revolving debt and I was barely surviving.” But then at the end of 2009 she had the opportunity to do a pop-up right before Christmas at a store at 1303 Castro St., a few steps from 24th Street, and she seized it.

“This made total sense to me. I had all these samples and merchandise sitting around in my studio. It was great from day one. I started to do more custom work and special-occasion pieces. I was making meaningful connections in the community. In Noe Valley people don't follow orders in terms of what they are supposed to wear. They have a more individual appreciation, and that resonates with what I do.”

Lola says that was the beginning of a great chapter she is still enjoying, and it allowed her to grow on an artistic level.

She moved into her current location, a former dog-grooming business and then briefly a yoga studio, in March 2013 and describes it as a “perfect, uplifting space with everything I need.” She continues to work one-on-one with her customers, whom she calls “my greatest resource, because everybody is different and people appreciate that they are going to get something special that will fit well because everything is made on the premises.”

Many of Lola's pieces are sewn from fabrics she has first hand-painted, for example, using acrylic textile paint on ponte knit or silk shantung (wedding dress fabric). She also works with leather and makes bags as well as leather jackets in fabulous colors, some reversible and others beautifully lined. There is even a dress

made from a collage of mixed fabric. Last winter, she made Mondrian-pattern tops using remnants of cashmere sweaters. Each piece stands alone as a work of art, whether a seemingly simple top or a floor-length gown.

Lola notes that with the street closures on Sanchez Street there has been a lot more foot traffic, especially now that she is making her own masks. With her three-dimensional sensibilities, Lola used her own face instead of a generic pattern, then prototyped it on her husband and friends. The masks are form-fitted, which she says takes a little getting used to, and attach behind the head with two sets of flexible knitted elastic from the U.K. Priced at \$28, each comes with three N95 filters that she has made individually.

If necessary, she can customize a mask for the smaller or larger head and is proud to have sold more than 700 so far. She hand-washes her own mask every three days or so, soaking it overnight in hot water and dish soap.

Before shelter-in-place, Lola hosted monthly solo art shows in her store. The wine-and-cheese receptions attracted crowds that would squeeze into the small gallery space, often spilling amicably onto the sidewalk.

The walls currently display a collection of works by photographer Paul Edward Blackburn. “We have lots of talented artists in the community, so the calendar fills up fast. We kick off every exhibition with a party. I miss that...”

After pressing pause for several months, Lola is now ready for her first “Covid art opening,” featuring the California landscapes in pastels, watercolors, and acrylics of local artist Willa Owings. The show will run through September and will include a reception on Friday, Sept. 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. Lola will admit five visitors, wearing masks, in the shop at a time. While the rest of us wait our turn outside, Owings' musician husband Bud Owings will play jazz across the street by the church.

“In Noe Valley, people don't follow orders in terms of what they are supposed to wear. They have a more individual appreciation, and that resonates with what I do.”

—Lola Herrera

When I ask Lola about the source of her inspiration as an artist, she says she has a constant flow of ideas from the natural world as well as the city, but these stay very much “below the conscious realm.” She says she has no fear of getting

lost on her artistic path and in fact regards “mistakes” as exciting opportunities taking her into new terrain. “Life and being alive is inspiring.” ■



Lola's display of handmade masks is an art object in and of itself.

Photos by Megan Wetherall



Jewelry, family photos, and paintings—her own and others'—form the back cloth for Lola's studio and gallery on Sanchez Street.

J-Church Trains Now Back to Buses

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Noe Valley to the route's outbound terminus at the Balboa Park Station.

When the subway service returns, riders of the J-Church will need to enter the Church Street subway station to catch a train headed downtown. The J line has been shortened and will no longer enter the underground tunnel that runs beneath Market Street.

Because Muni can only run one-car trains on the J-Church line, it presents problems for passengers wishing to maintain a safe social distance from one another.

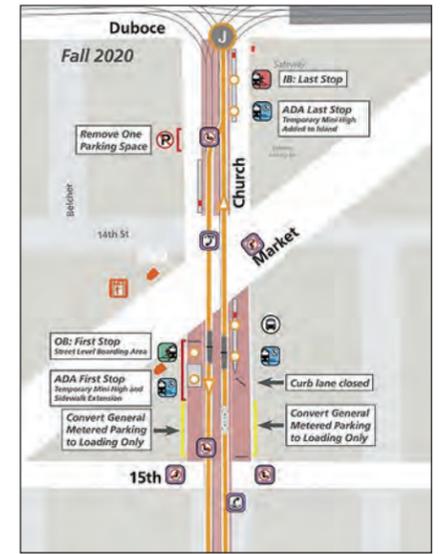
Thus, transit officials decided it was safer not to have J-Church trains entering the busy subway, where passengers could

crowd on to the cars. They also wanted to avoid overcrowding of platforms in general.

The offset for riders of the J line should be faster service, as transit planners expect the surface-street trains (when they return to service next year) will arrive at their stops every six to nine minutes. For vehicle drivers, the change in the route also means cars will no longer be allowed on Church Street between 15th and Market streets.

As for the 48-Quintara bus line, it is no longer servicing the hillier parts of its route, along Grand View Avenue, Hoffman, and Douglass streets in Noe Valley. The temporary route change also means the bus line will no longer run westbound all the way to Ocean Beach. Instead, its last stop is at the West Portal subway station.

From 24th Street headed to West Portal, the buses will turn left on Diamond,



In August, J-Church trains began rolling again, but on a shorter route, ending at Market and 15th streets (left). After a series of glitches, however, the SFMTA called a temporary halt and replaced the trains with buses. The transit agency also unveiled a plan to build a new boarding platform for the J line south of Duboce Avenue (right). *Graphics SFMTA*



Little did we know in March 2007, when this photo was taken, that 13 years later we'd be yearning for a chance to hop on a crowded J-Church and ride to the Embarcadero, perhaps to join the tourists on the ferry to Sausalito. Those were the days. *Photo by Pamela Gerard*

right on Clipper, and left on Portola to join the regular route. Two temporary bus stops have been created at Diamond and 25th streets and at Clipper and Douglass.

Buses headed eastbound from Portola will turn right on Clipper, left on Diamond, and right on 24th Street, and then pick up the regular route headed toward the 24th Street BART Station. Temporary stops will be at Clipper and Douglass, and on Diamond at 25th and 24th streets.

Buses should arrive at stops every 10 to 14 minutes. The line's last eastbound stop will be at 20th and Third streets in the Dogpatch neighborhood.

Buses on the 24-Divisadero line, which services parts of Noe Valley and had continued to run, should also now arrive every 10 to 14 minutes.

The neighborhood's other bus line, the 35-Eureka, is not returning for the foreseeable future.

The operating subway and bus lines will run daily from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

For a list of current Muni changes visit <https://www.sfmta.com/blog/major-muni-service-expansion-august-22>. ■



On Aug. 25, three days after Muni Metro trains were put back into service, the system shut down again, due to an electrical wiring problem and an employee testing positive for Covid-19. *Photo courtesy SFMTA*

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Survival Signs

Though relatively unscathed by the murders, pandemic, and wildfires threatening our country and the Bay Area, residents of Noe Valley feel deeply the angst and anxiety that comes with isolation and uncertainty.

Here are how some neighbors have taken action to respond to the threats real and unseen. Hope is alive and freely available.

Please take time to support local businesses. Use their take-out and online offerings and mask up when you visit those able to open. You'll want them to be available for us when the danger has passed.

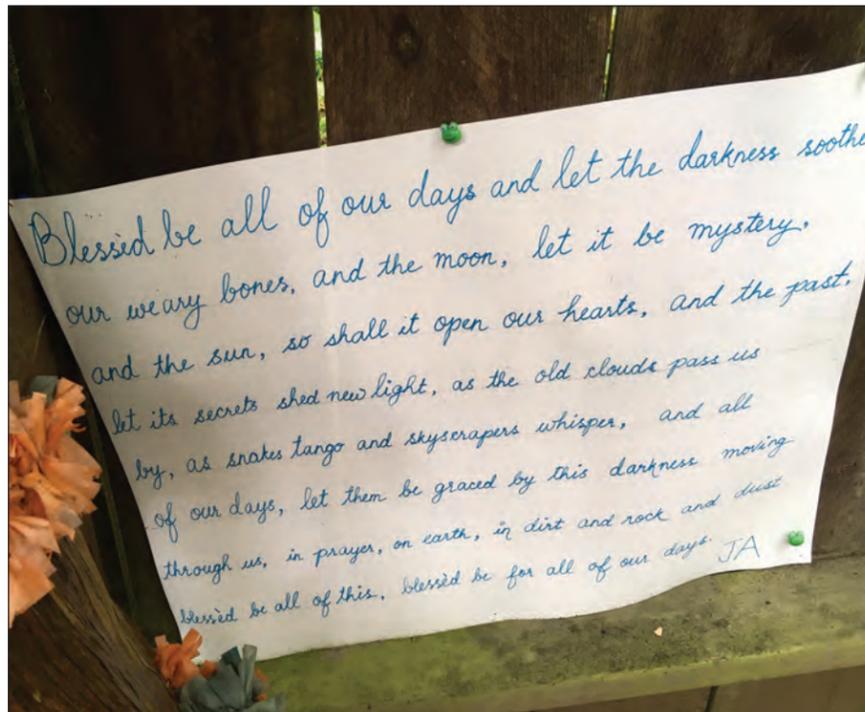
—Jack Tipple, Sally Smith



Sidewalk Beauty. How to beat the blahs during our Covid lockdown? Grab some tape and chalk and get down to it. Elizabeth Street artists (left to right) Anna Keough, 12, Sloane Mullin, 14, and Clara Keough, 14, can show you how. Photo by Kate Keough



Mattering Reminders. This display on a Day Street Park fence contains QR codes so viewers can scan and learn more about the references. Photo by Najib Joe Hakim



Words Blossom. The poet JA reminds those climbing a stairway in Diamond Heights to dream of a good today while hoping for a better tomorrow. Photo by Sally Smith



Brave Hunter. Luca Camarillo, 2, consented to pose by the fairy village he found in the Noe Valley Scavenger Hunt. Photo by Sally Smith

More Signs on the next page



Baseline Lesson. Teaching peace can confer a lifetime of wellness. This start was displayed on Jersey Street between Castro and Noe streets in August. Photo by Pamela Gerard



Photo by Najib Joe Hakim



Steve Drew has been making an unusual garden at 169 Duncan St. For each day in quarantine, he's added a faux floral creation using recycled materials. His neighbor, Bruce Lamott, alerted the Voice, praising Drew for deriving beauty from these challenging times.

Photo by Bruce Lamott



Dog-gone. A poignant reminder to keep your lighter-than-air pets leashed at all times.

Photo by Najib Joe Hakim



Who's Afraid of Bill? A warning on the construction site fence at Sanchez and Cesar Chavez streets was creatively ignored in August.

Photo by Kit Cameron

Camp Mather. You've probably heard of it. The one-week family camp that's open exclusively to San Francisco residents.

I went to Camp Mather every summer from the age of 3 to when I was 10 years old. That one week was the highlight of my summer. I was so excited to sleep on a top bunk, to have dessert every night, to go swimming in the lake every day.

But what the city kid in me was most excited for was freedom. By the time I was 8, I was allowed to cross the only road that runs through Camp Mather on my own.

The whole camp was open to my friends and me. We could go wherever we wanted and eat as much candy as our stomachs could handle. I would glimpse my parents chatting on the cabin porch as I whizzed by on my bike. My Camp Mather uniform was a swimsuit, flip-flops, dirt-caked feet, and layers of sunscreen and mosquito bites.

Every morning, I made a beeline for the sugary cereal (something I was seldom allowed at home) and filled a dozen different glasses with chocolate milk, orange juice, and lemonade, which I mixed together in my "science" experiments.

Half my day was spent returning to my favorite place: the general store. I'd shyly pile my Camp Mather allowance in front of the cashier and leave them to sort out the change. I savored my peppermint patties and bright pink lollipops dipped in sour sugar.

Back at the lake, I had to wear a life jacket because I was too nervous to take the swim test. My friends and I swam to the giant pontoon in the middle and lay on it until we were dry and sun-soaked, then cannonballed back into the sparkling icy green water.

OTHER VOICES

fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction • the noe valley voice

Camp Mather

By Astrid Utting



2012 Photo courtesy Astrid Utting

In the grass, we draped our towels over our big donut-shaped pool floaties and sat in them eating chips and hot dogs for lunch.

One year, I felt injustice at the fact that they had pie for dessert every night and no cake. If this week was my only chance to binge on sugar, shouldn't it be cake?

Some days, my friends and I spent hours practicing our dance for the

talent show. The three of us bought matching light-blue Camp Mather shirts, and our moms French-braided our hair for the performance. We were so nervous and proud to perform on the tiny outdoor stage in front of an audience of parents, kids, and exhausted toddlers.

The end of the week always came too fast. We drove off, sticky hands and noses pressed against the window,

hoping we would get in the next summer.

I haven't been to Camp Mather in four years. Since then, I've started middle school. Graduated middle school. Become a freshman. I've been on the swim team and performed my first dance solo in front of hundreds of parents and grandparents. I now know how gross lemonade and chocolate milk tastes mixed together. More importantly, I have plenty of freedom. I use my babysitting money to go buy sweets from neighborhood shops. I have a Clipper card.

So what happened in those four years? I grew up. Grew up enough to lose the excitement of crossing the street and paying for things on my own.

My family was thrilled to get into Camp Mather this year. We were bummed but understood when it was cancelled due to the coronavirus. I don't know when I'll be back. Returning would be a blast, but I know I won't be that excited by the once forbidden freedoms.

I miss Camp Mather. But maybe it's the age I used to be that I miss more.

Astrid Utting is a Lowell High School sophomore currently attending via distance learning. She lives with her family on Duncan Street.

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

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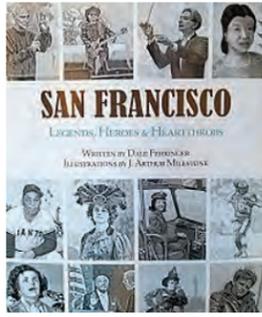
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NOE KIDS

Myles and Remi

By Katie Burke

Myles Marcus turned 12 on Aug. 31. Remi, his brother, will turn 10 in October.

“When we turn 10, we get to go somewhere on a plane,” Remi says. Not this year.

“We wanted to go to Australia,” Myles says.

Mom, Angela Laffan, is from Australia. She is an oncology nurse practitioner at UCSF, in gastrointestinal oncology and cancer survivorship. Dad, Cooper Marcus, grew up mostly in San Francisco, spending a few childhood years in England. He is a data science project leader with Presence Consulting Group. The family lives on Douglass Street.

They recently returned from a trip to Guerneville. “We rented a house with another family, who has our dog’s brother,” Myles says. The two families bought their cavapoos from the same litter on Memorial Day two years ago. The Marcuses’ dog is named Ziggy.

They also have a betta fish named Lama, a birthday gift for Remi one year. “It is not spelled ‘llama’ like an animal,” Remi points out.

Myles is entering seventh grade at St. Philip’s on Elizabeth Street, which presently operates by distance learning but may later stagger students at different times, using the church, auditorium, and science lab for extra space.

Remi is beginning fourth grade at Alvarado on Douglass Street, though he won’t be back on campus for the



Myles and Remi Marcus, 12 and 9 respectively, are ready for the pandemic to end, so they can take off their masks, hang out with friends, and “go somewhere on a plane.” Photo by Art Bodner

foreseeable future.

“I’m probably going to do a little pod in my back yard with my friends,” he explains. They will all do their school’s distance-learning curriculum under a nanny’s supervision.

“Literature is probably my favorite subject,” Myles says. “But my hardest subject would also be literature.” He loves reading, and says being graded on comprehension and vocabulary is “a bit harder but fun.”

“I like art the best,” Remi says. “I like clay.”

What about the pandemic is hardest for the kids?

Myles says, “Not being able to see my friends, having to wear masks all the time, and not really being able to do stuff outside.”

Remi says it’s not being able to go to Bar 717 Ranch, a camp the family got to visit last summer. “One of our grandmas was a counselor there, and my dad went there as a kid.”

Myles adds, “There’s nothing good coming out of this time, I feel. I learned

the building. It feels weird.”

“I like that we can interact more with my mom and dad and our dog,” Remi says.

They appreciate that their mom makes them salmon balls and financiers, which are cakes with raspberries inside. Their dad provides tech support and plays board games with them.

Myles particularly likes a sci-fi board game called Scythe. Remi favors Imperial Assault, also a sci-fi board game, set in the *Star Wars* galaxy.

“Right now, I’m reading *A Bad Deal for the Whole Galaxy*, the second book in a sci-fi series,” Myles says.

“I’m reading *The One and Only Bob*, a second to the book called *The One and Only Ivan*,” says Remi.

Their favorite Noe Valley places are Bacco for Italian food, Hamano for sushi, Inle Burmese Cuisine, Noe Valley Bakery, and Subs Inc. for lunch and ice cream. They like the outdoor dining popping up in the neighborhood, and they say having Sanchez as a slow street is fun.

Before Covid-19, Myles played tennis on a camp team and at the Bay Club. Remi played goalie at soccer camp and recently joined the San Francisco Seals Soccer Club.

Remi hopes to play soccer professionally as an adult, maybe for an Australian team. “There could be a new team someday that I might like,” he says.

Myles aspires to political office, “maybe President,” he says. “At least a senator.” His platform would be “equal rights for everybody.” ■

not to take whatever you’re doing for granted ever again.

“We left school to go to Australia, and while we were in Australia, our schools closed. We were never back in

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

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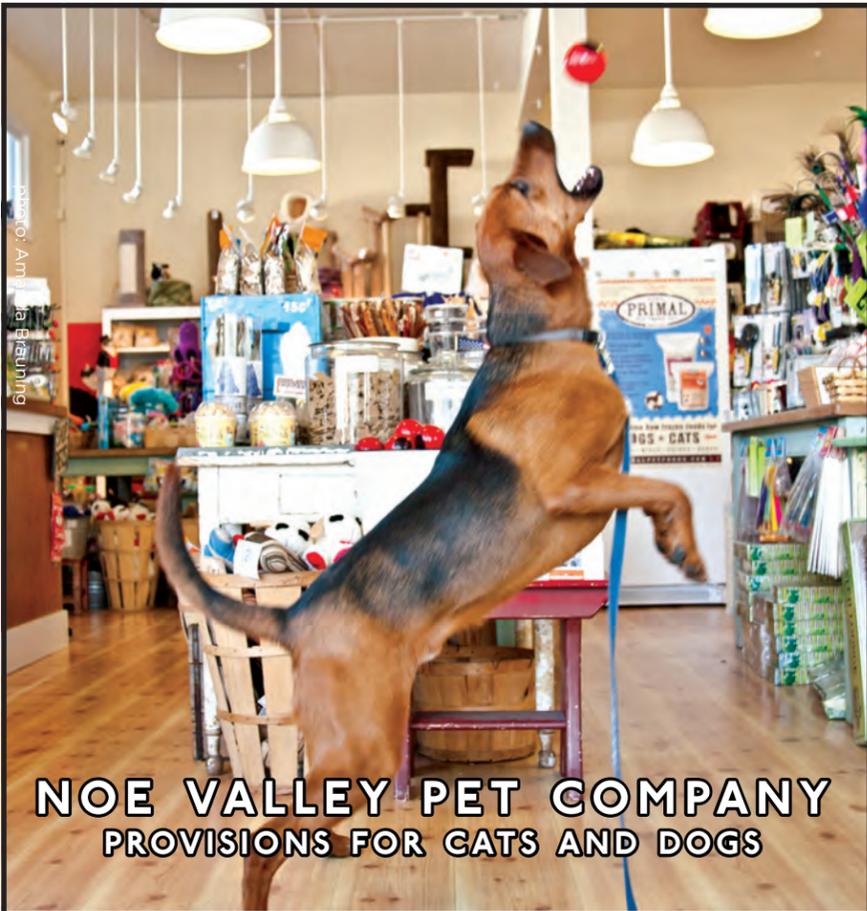


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SEPTEMBER

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

Sept. 1-30: Resilient Noe Valley seeks HALLOWEEN VOLUNTEERS for a socially distanced parade next month "along Slow Street Sanchez." Email resilientnoevalley@gmail.com.

Sept. 1-30: Yoga Mayu offers online classes and OUTDOOR YOGA classes, with reservations required ahead of class. 4159B 24th. For a schedule, yogamayu.com.

Sept. 1-30: 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.

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

Sept. 1-30: Bird & Beckett bookstore hosts Friday JAZZ live-streaming from the shop. 7:30-9 pm. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com.

Sept. 1-Oct. 24: The SF MIMETROUPE releases a nine-part series of radio play podcasts, "Tales of the Resistance," every two weeks, on facebook, instagram, and twitter. sfmt.org.

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

Sept. 2-30: The corner of Clipper and Sanchez hosts live JAZZ and Latin music from Just Fell Out of Trio on Wednesdays and Sundays, weather permitting. 1-5 pm. Bud Owings, 415-816-7348.

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

Sept. 4: The Sustainable Streets Division of the SF Metropolitan Transporta-

tion Agency hosts a virtual PUBLIC HEARING at 10 am. <https://meet.sfmta.com/meetings/KHYT22GZ>.

Sept. 4: Lola San Francisco exhibits the landscapes of local artist WILLA OWING. Reception 5-7 pm, five masked viewers at a time. 1250 Sanchez. 642-4875; lolasanfrancisco.com.

Sept. 5-26: The Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET is open from 8 am to 1 pm (8 to 9 am for seniors); masks required, six-foot distancing, and prepared food available to-go only. 3861 24th. 248-1332; noevalleyfarmersmarket.com.

Sept. 6: Political group ACTION SF hosts a virtual meeting, open to all, from 1 to 2:30 pm. Email actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com to get the Zoom meeting link.

Sept. 6: The Stratus Duo performs a livestream CHAMBER MUSIC concert at Bird & Beckett. 5-6 pm. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com.

Sept. 10-25: SF Camera-work hosts an online BENEFIT AUCTION, "See How Beautiful I Am." Register for bidding at sfcamerawork.org.

Sept. 11: The SF HISTORICAL SOCIETY and Big Quiz Thing present the third SFHS SF TRIVIA Night. 5-6 pm. Register at sfhistory.org.

Sept. 12: The fifth annual Noe Valley GIRLS FILM FESTIVAL, featuring short movies by elementary and middle school girls, will be screened at 4 pm, online at a link posted to nvff.com.

Sept. 13: Omnivore Books hosts a free discussion, "Make DUMPLINGS with Samantha Mui," author of Melting Pot. 3 pm. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com.

Sept. 13: San Francisco poet NEELI CHERKOVSKI reads from his work at Bird & Beckett. 2-4 pm. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com.

Sept. 13: The NOE MUSIC Mainstage features an interactive performance by the Telegraph Quartet. 7 pm. noemusic.org.

Sept. 18-20: Chabad Noe Valley celebrates ROSH

HASHANAH with a Friday service at 6:45 pm; and Saturday and Sunday morning services, shofar sounding, and lunch, starting at 10 am. 3781 Cesar Chavez. Reservations at chabadnoevalley.org.

Sept. 18-Nov. 11: Noe Valley artist Kit Cameron is one of the exhibitors in the Sanchez Art Center's annual "50/50" show. 1220 Linda Mar, Pacifica. 650-355-1894; sanchezartcenter.org.

Sept. 19: Castro Community on Patrol offers virtual VOLUNTEER TRAINING for community safety. 2-4 pm. For information: info@castropatrol.org.

Sept. 21: The Left Coast Chamber Ensemble offers a virtual CONCERT, "Soft-Spoken." 7:30 pm. youtube.com/leftcoastensemble.

Sept. 23: Omnivore Books hosts a free discussion with Ivy Mix, author of SPIRITS of South America. 6:30 pm. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com.

Sept. 23: The NOE MUSIC Listening Club features a "deep listening experience" with countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo. 7 pm. noemusic.org.

Sept. 26: NOE MUSIC Kids features "The Magic of Chamber Music," the first of a three-part interactive performance by the Friction Quartet. 9:30 am. noemusic.org.

Sept. 29: Anne Evers Hitz discusses "San Francisco's Lost Department Stores: Six Bygone Establishments That Defined an Era" at the SF HISTORY Association's virtual meeting. 7 pm. The Zoom link and password will be sent the morning of Sept. 29. sanfranciscohistory.org.

**Socially Distant
Fall**

The next *Noe Valley Voice* Calendar will appear in the **October 2020** issue. The deadline for items is September 15.

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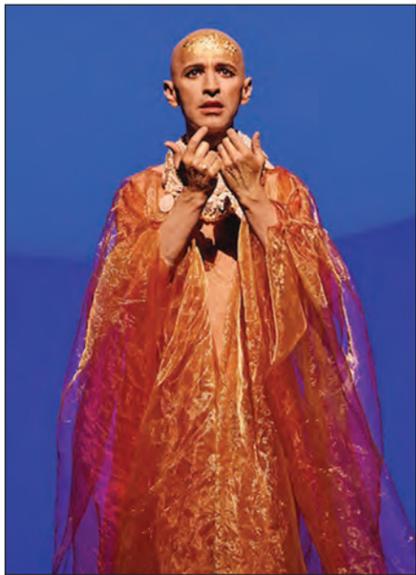
SHORT TAKES

Slow Streets on the Run

Slow is spreading! The city's Slow Streets program, which limited traffic on Sanchez Street from 23rd to 30th Street back in April, may grow to include a few more blocks in Noe Valley this month. Duncan Street from Valencia to Sanchez is the latest local candidate for enhanced pedestrian and two-wheeled travel. According to the SFMTA, slowing Duncan "might start sometime" in September. If you see barriers and signs going up, you'll know it's slow time.

Slow Streets' cousin, Shared Spaces, is also expanding. It allows approved parking-lane use by businesses for al fresco dining or physically distant retail. Voila the parklet in front of the Dubliner Bar and street tables for Saru on 24th Street. Also gaining access to parking spots are Wink SF, the Diamond Street Café, and La Ciccia on 30th Street.

In other street news, 18th Street between Collingwood and Hartford in the Castro is now closed to cars Sundays, 2 to 7 p.m. To find out more, see <https://sf.gov/shared-spaces>.



At 7 p.m. on Sept. 23, you can join Noe Music in a conversation with counter-tenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, star of last year's New York Metropolitan Opera production of *Akhaten*. Photo by Karen Almond

Noe Listening Club Resonates

After a successful shift last spring from in-person concerts to twice-monthly Noe Listening Club events, Noe Music is expanding its online season for the fall.

The classical series will host a virtual concert Sunday, Sept. 13, 7 p.m., by the Telegraph Quartet, a group awarded the prestigious 2016 Walter W. Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the grand prize at the 2014 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition.

On Wednesday, Sept. 23, 7 p.m., you can discuss music with counter-tenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, who sang the title role in the New York Metropolitan

Opera's production of Philip Glass' *Akhaten* last November (and who nearly lost his voice to thyroid cancer a decade ago). Everyone is welcome.

San Francisco's Friction Quartet will offer an online, interactive kids' three-part concert series, "The Magic of Chamber Music," starting Saturday, Sept. 26, at 9:30 a.m.

To book tickets for any or all of these events, go to noemusic.org.



Ruth Asawa's intricate wire sculptures are now memorialized forever on U.S. postage stamps. A pane of 20 stamps features 10 sculpture images and an early photo of the artist, before she arrived in Noe Valley.

Ruth Asawa Stamp Issued

As *Voice* readers know (see *May 2020 Issue*), the late sculptor Ruth Asawa has been honored by the U.S. Postal Service with a Forever stamp. The sheet of 20 stamps, with images of 10 of the artist's wire sculptures, was issued Aug. 13. Asawa, who died in 2013 at the age of 87, was a resident of Noe Valley for much of her adult life.

Asawa's youngest daughter, Addie Lanier, spoke about the stamp on behalf of the family: "To have our mother's artwork featured on a series of Forever postage stamps is one of the highest honors any American can receive. The postal service is such an essential part of our democracy that reaches every single household across the United States. Our family is thrilled these affordable stamps will bring her iconic and beautiful artwork into homes across the country."

The sheet or "pane" of stamps also features a photo of Ruth Asawa taken in 1954 when she was 28, with a drawing of her next project on the table in front of her. Sheets can be purchased at the Noe Valley Post Office at 4083 24th St., or online at usps.com/shopstamps, for \$11.

Interestingly, this year also saw the publication of a new biography of Asawa, *Everything She Touched*, by San Francisco author Marilyn Chase. It focuses on how Asawa "was a trailblazer in every aspect of her life," including the co-founding of a children's art program at Alvarado Elementary School.

Businesses Get Creative

Covid-19 has been hard on stores in Noe Valley. Several have had to close. Yet some have thrived or found new ways to survive. How did they do it?

Olive This Olive That, at 304 Vicksburg, remained open during stay-at-home orders as an essential food business.

"We were positively affected," says owner Janell Pekkain. "People were staying home and cooking, so people discovered us who hadn't before." But she knew other businesses were not so lucky. She

decided to help, first by selling cookbooks for Folio Books while they were pandemic-closed. Then she became a drop-off and pickup spot for pantry boxes of fresh food supplied by Salt & Honey. She also stocked products from other small businesses like Bayview Pasta, Pass the Sauce (salsas), and Estrellita's Snacks (plantain, yucca, and yam chips).

Other local examples of making lemonade from lemons are Terra Mia Ceramic Studio, 1314 Castro St., which put together paint-at-home kits of its ceramics, glazes, brushes, and sponges; and Bistro SF Grill, across the street at 1305 Castro, which transformed itself into a deli and grocery offering produce, to-go meals, and wine, beer, and ice cream.

You can do your part by patronizing these and other Noe Valley small businesses.

Chabad Celebrating Outside

Chabad of Noe Valley is hoping for a stretch of calm weather in September. During High Holy Days, it will hold services outdoors. The community is welcome at all events, as long as masks are worn and physical distancing maintained.

The synagogue, at 3781 Cesar Chavez St., will celebrate the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, with a candle-lighting service on Friday, Sept. 18, at 6:45 p.m. Then on Saturday, there will be a 10 a.m. morning service and an 11:15 a.m. children's program with shofar (ram's horn) trumpeting, followed by a community lunch. The new year celebration concludes on Sunday, Sept. 20, with another morning service, shofar, and lunch.

A week later, on Sunday, Sept. 27, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement and fasting, begins at Chabad with Kol Nidre prayers at 6:30 p.m. It will continue all day the next day from 10 a.m., and end with a community meal to break the fast.

The synagogue says please make reser-



Olive oil is just one of the essentials luring customers these days to Vicksburg Street's Olive This Olive That. Owner Janell Pekkain is offering Bayview Pasta, Estrellita's yucca snacks, and salsas from Pass the Sauce.

vations at chabadnoevalley.org. *Shanah tovah* and have a good fast!

Help 10,000 Students Eat

The San Francisco Unified School District is looking for volunteers to help distribute school lunches at outdoor sites throughout the city. Nearly 10,000 SFUSD students receive free meals each weekday.

There are 18 Grab and Go Meal Pickup sites, including James Lick Middle School on Noe Street. Volunteers at the sites will distribute bags of food each Wednesday from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Each bag has meals for five days.

To help, you must be at least 18 years old. Apply at sfusd.edu/services/health-wellness/nutrition-school-meals/volunteer.

Short Takes were compiled and written by Richard May.



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(on the corner of 24th near Church Street)

STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular *Noe Valley Voice* column featuring new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, we spotlight a small grocery specializing in the unique spices of India.

INDIAN MARKET AND LIQUOR
 1546 Guerrero St. at Duncan Street
 415-304-1559
 SFIndianMarket.com

Amid the milk, wine, and produce at this market at the crossroads of Noe Valley, Bernal Heights, and the Mission, shoppers will find a plethora of products from India, the kind of items rarely stocked on chain grocery shelves.

They run the gamut from dals, papads, and ghee to Indian spices, sweets, and ready-to-eat foods, like palak paneer (an Indian cottage cheese in spinach curry), pao bhaji (spiced vegetables and mashed potatoes), and paneer makhani (cottage cheese in a mild spicy curry). There are also cans of the popular Indian soda called Thumbs Up—look for a blue can with a red thumbs-up logo in the cooler in the back left corner—owned by the Coca-Cola Company.

“Everything that Safeway doesn’t carry, we sell,” said owner Harpinderjit “Harp” Singh, who grew up in Punjab, India, and moved to the Bay Area in 2010. “We don’t have such a store like ours in the neighborhood.”

Two years ago, Singh opened his Indian market in Pacific Heights. However, he decided to relocate it last November to



Indian Market and Liquor, which moved into the corner storefront at Duncan and Guerrero a few months before the coronavirus outbreak, promises masks, toilet paper, and other essentials, as well as an abundance of Indian spices and ready-to-eat foods. *Photos by Pamela Gerard*

the corner spot at Guerrero and Duncan to be closer, Singh says, to where more people of South Asian descent live in the city.

Four months later, the coronavirus struck, leading to runs on everything from flour to toilet paper at the city’s larger grocery stores.

Unlike the national chains, Singh says, he hasn’t had any inventory problems, because most of his vendors are located in India. A chalkboard on the store’s facade still notes Indian Market has toilet paper and flour in stock, in addition to face masks.

“Business has been very good. People like to buy at neighborhood stores now for safety reasons,” he says. “My staff and I have been wearing masks and using hand sanitizer to be safe.”

The biggest draw for customers, says Singh, is the wide selection of spices,

such as fennel seeds, cumin, garam masala, and coriander (\$2 to \$3 a pack), and also fresh curry leaves (\$1 a branch). Another popular item is compounded asafoetida powder (\$4.99 for 3.5 ounces), known as hing in Indian recipes, a spice made from the dried sap of the roots of Ferula plants.

“People like to buy spices,” Singh says. Various varieties of rice and flour, such as Makki Atta cold-water corn flour (\$2.99 for two pounds), line the shelves in the aisle to the left of the store’s entrance. The store also stocks 45 different chai teas from all over the world (\$4 to \$5).

In the middle aisle accessed from the back of the store are the spices, various lentils (\$3.99 a bag), and specialty Indian-cooking supplies. The store carries Indian Kolhapuri Jaggery (Gud), a natural sugar (\$7.99 per package), and also ghee or

clarified butter (\$24.99 for 3.5 pounds or \$6.75 for 8 ounces).

Different snacks from the purveyor Haldiram’s are for purchase, such as moong dal, a salty fried split mung bean (\$2.99), and kachori, a crispy stuffed snack made from chickpeas flour (\$3.75). There are also bags of poha thick, or puffed rice (\$6.99), and boxes of fruit biscuits (\$4.99) made with dried papaya from the famed Karachi Bakery in Hyderabad, India.

The store also offers free same-day delivery in San Francisco for orders of \$50 or more, according to its website, as well as other discounts and specials for online orders.

The market is open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Tuesdays through Sundays, and is closed Mondays.

—Matthew S. Bajko



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and now for the RUMORS behind the news

Mask Transit

By Mazook

SUMMER AND SMOKE: It appears Mother Nature is telling residents of Noe Valley, or in fact residents of the entire Bay Area, to stay at home. With Covid seeping round the world, the word is, Take a staycation. By the third week of August, the rule became, "Stay at home with your windows closed," as the smoke from the north, east, and south fires, coupled with high temps in our valley, made air quality extremely bad. "Unhealthy" was what the experts called it.

So now when I leave my house, I must bring my cloth mask, my sanitizer, and my N95 mask to put inside the cloth mask, not only to protect myself and others from the virus, but to protect my lungs from the smoke particulates. Geez! It's the layered look.



AROUND THE PARKLETS: Hopefully, by press time the fires will be out and the smoke gone, and we will have returned to basic Covid, so I can resume my daily walks on the streets and hills of Noe Valley with all my neighborhoodies.

Over the summer, we have seen some stores close, but a lot of our restaurants and drinking establishments are struggling to stay open. In the last month, many have been building parklets on the sidewalks and in spaces in front of their eateries, to serve their dishes for pickup or delivery, or for consuming outside in the open air.

On June 12, Bacco on Diamond Street was one of the first to open for sidewalk dining. (See below for more on this ristorante italiano.)

Lupa Trattoria, at 4109 24th, put two tables on the street and also is serving dinners in their rear patio.

NOVY, of course, continues with outside seating that they initiated two months ago. Ah, those heaters sure help.

Around the corner, The Peaks Bar at 1316 Castro, self-described as "one of the oldest old-school dive bars" in SF (founded in 1938), is reopening with food and drink after building a parklet in two parking spaces in front.

For the past two months, the Valley Tavern has been surviving by serving Bistro SF Grill specials in their beer garden in the back yard (open for several years), and they're building a parklet in the front parking space as well.

The "real" parklet in front of Urban Remedy and Martha & Bros. Coffee was reopened by the city, so one can now sit, eat, drink, and enjoy the parade of walkers on the sidewalk.

Another parklet has been built for table service in two spaces in front of the popular Saru Sushi (24th near Vicksburg). It has three booths that seat four and five booths that seat two patrons. Incredibly, the parklet seems to have matched the sushi bar's indoor dimensions. They have been busy the past two months with takeout orders, offering free delivery within a two-mile radius of Downtown Noe Valley. Saru's menu includes rolls, nigiri, and a few omakase (chef's choice) options. FYI, they are no. 8 on SF Eater's Aug. 26 list of "Top 19" sushi spots in San Francisco.

Across the street, Hi-Way Burger & Fry still has two tables in front, as does Haystack Pizza. However, many of their patrons can be seen eating burgers and pizza in the Noe Valley Town Square.

And believe it or not, the long-awaited Billingsgate seafood store and oyster bar located next to the Town Square should be opening soon, the minute the city signs off on the permits.



CHOW AL FRESCO: Lovejoy's Tea Room on Church at Duncan Street has built a tea

parklet out front, which opened in August. "It has been real good so far, and we are offering three tables for four and four tables for two," says co-owner Celine O'Driscoll. She said they started food pickup service "on Mother's Day" and now are open for table service Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Next door, Bernal Heights Pizza has put four tables out on the sidewalk. However, the hidden secret is they had already opened their backyard patio when open-air dining became okay, and they were offering seating space for families of more than four at their park-style tables and benches. There are two televisions out there, so you can watch the Giants, A's, and the NBA.

Chloe's Café, which opened in 1987 on the corner of Church and 26th, started pickup service two months ago. They launched "Chloe's Small Business Relief Initiative" on GoFundMe, with proceeds going directly to staff. The goal was \$1,000, and so far \$3,000 has been donated.

"We are surviving," say Chloe's longtime manager T.J. Jackovich, "and doing better now that we have six tables on our sidewalk and are open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day."

Up 26th Street, at 1299 Sanchez, the new Noe Café (see July/August Voice, page 20) is serving freshly roasted coffee and pastries at its seven sidewalk tables and a mini parklet in front of that, which has three more tables.

Of course, Toast at Church and Day has table service on Church and also around the corner on Day. It has been a very popular outdoor-service restaurant since before Covid.

Even La Ciccia at the end of Church is now providing al fresco service in front of the restaurant, with five tables on 30th.

The Bar on Dolores is applying for parking spots, so it won't be long before they're doing the same.



BUON APPETITO: Owner Shari Dominici is moving her restaurant Bacco from its longtime location on Diamond near 24th to 3913 24th St., the space where Savor was until it closed in November of last year. She says she has given her current landlord notice and will move at September's end, and she believes she can reopen at the new space in the middle of October.

She opened Bacco with her husband Paolo and their partner Vincenzo Cucco in 1993. Paolo passed away 11 years ago, and Dominici continued to operate the restaurant as sole owner, while Cucco stayed on as head chef.

"I am so excited to be moving into that space and happy that the landlord has been very helpful in working with me on this move, and a real good guy," says Dominici. "We will have tables in the patio ready for food service when we open." Also, she says Cucco is "extremely happy" he will be moving into his new and much more spacious kitchen.

Bacco's most popular dishes are the rigatoni and the risotto. "We make the pasta from scratch ourselves," Dominici says, and the menu will retain its Italian flavor. "The first thing I am looking forward to doing is creating an herb garden in the large planter in the middle of the back patio."

She says she is hoping to add something new to the menu, now that they have a larger kitchen—"something I have always wanted to do"—but would not say what it would be except "it will be a surprise."

The Valley Tavern has also come up with an innovative way to remodel its kitchen: Honeycomb Credit, a crowd-funding group that is based on the East Coast, with this being their first West Coast program.

According to Tavern owner Declan Hogan, it was "great news" that the bar has raised \$90,000 in loans from its patrons, each of whom will receive money back in monthly repayments. As an added incentive, Hogan says customers who contribute \$1,000 or more get 20 percent off their bill until 2022.

Honeycomb produced a YouTube video starring Hogan describing the program. You can find it at <https://youtu.be/UQO63KwhhNA>.



VEGGING IT UP: The great news in Upper Noe Valley was that Church Produce, located on the corner of Church and 30th, reopened



Noe Valleyans waved signs and stamped their envelopes on "Save the Post Office Saturday," an Aug. 22 nationwide protest of President Trump's campaign against mail-in voting. Photo courtesy Peggy Cling

on March 12. The best news, however, was that the families who first opened the shop in 1978, but sold the business in 2008, are now operating it again.

The most delightful news is that the old reasonable prices for the produce are back. For example, on the day I was there in August, the market sold huge avocados for 33 cents each and a basket of strawberries for 99 cents.

"We had to clean out the mess and then remodel, which took us until mid-April. We had hoped to open in mid-May, but it was a long process to get the city to sign off on all the permits," says Yianni Kintis, who is running the business now with his sisters Fotini and Dimitra Kintis and their father George.

"We all love this neighborhood and all the support we have received from our regular customers, who are coming back," says Yianni, "and we are just working to make thing better."

Church Street Produce opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 8 p.m., seven days a week.



GONE GROCERY: "It is with a heavy heart that I share some news with you: Douglas will be closing these premises at the end of August... [but] fortunately this is not the end of our story," wrote co-owner Michael Molesky in an August letter posted on the window of his popular grocery, wine, and food emporium at 1598 Sanchez St. at 29th.

According to Molesky, Douglas SF, which opened in June 2018, had been "doing good and growing pretty steadily.... But we have been in negotiations with our landlord for almost a year now, and we have been unable to sustain an agreement with our landlord to allow some consideration for the current conditions and give us a longer-term lease with some options.

"Amazingly, our take-out dinners have taken off during the pandemic, and we have prepared and served over 5,000 meals since the March shutdown," he continued.

"We are currently considering some options we have to open a short-term pop-up store in the neighborhood in or close to Upper Noe Valley, and at this point very optimistic we can find a suitable location and already have a couple in mind," said Molesky, "while we look for a space with a long-term lease or a property in the neighborhood we can buy."



WAVING GOODBYE: Sadly, Jack Epstein and his partner Marilyn Sitkoff have decided (for non-Covid reasons) to close Ocean Front Walkers. They opened the clothing and pajama store, featuring their own creations, in 1983, first in the "Lipton Tea" store on Sanchez and 25th, and since 2006 at 3977 24th St.

"We have a wonderful landlord who will give us some time to vacate and will be giving the entire inventory to various charity groups, to be determined," says Epstein.

Epstein and Sitkoff will enthusiastically continue the couple's other Downtown Noe Valley store, Chocolate Covered, at 4069 24th St. They stock chocolates from around the world and sell tin boxes with San Francisco images on them, to put the candy in.



THAT'S 30. Before I sign off, kudos go out to the 30 or so Noe Valleons who showed up at the Noe Valley Post Office on Aug. 22, at 11 a.m., as part of a national demonstration called "Save the Post Office Saturday." It was sponsored by MoveOn.org, to save the Post Office from malignment by Trump.

Another way we can support the USPS—and simultaneously honor a world-class artist and Noe Valleon—is to go buy a sheet of the newly issued Ruth Asawa stamps.

Ciao for now. ■



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best of it, without knowing
what's going to happen next.

-Gilda Radner

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 Email: actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com or ActionSFteam@gmail.com for link to virtual meeting first Sunday, 1:00-2:30 p.m.
 All 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
 Next volunteer patrol training Saturday, Sept. 9, 2-5 p.m. Sign up via website.
 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
 Street fair is the day before Mother's Day.

Friends of Billy Goat Hill

Contact: Lisa and Mo Ghotbi, 821-0122

Website: www.billygoathill.net

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. Meeting Dec. 4, 7 p.m., Umpqua Bank, 3938 24th St.

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.NoValleyMerchants.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.

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

SFPL To Go

LIMITED LIBRARY SERVICE

IT'S FABULOUS TO SEE YOU

Introducing SFPL To Go, our contact-free front door pick-up service. Now at the following locations:

- Eureka Valley
- Marina
- Excelsior
- Merced
- Main Library
- Mission Bay



Learn more at sfpl.org/sfpl-to-go.

San Francisco Public Library

ADULT FICTION

In *Migrations*, by Charlotte McConaghy, a guilt-ridden climate activist convinces a fishing boat captain to take her to Greenland so she can track the last flocks of Arctic terns.

A Nigerian woman copes with the death of the son she never knew in *The Death of Vivek Oji* by Akwaeke Emezi.

A woman leaves a psychiatric facility to search for the truth about her parents' murder in *The Wicked Sister* by Karen Dionne.

In *Space Station Down* by Ben Bova and Doug Beason, an ultra-rich space tourist makes plans to destroy the world's financial system.

ADULT NONFICTION

The Language of Flowers: A Fully Illustrated Compendium of Meaning, Literature, and Lore for the Modern Romantic by Odessa Begay is an anthology of floral lore.

Author Jesmyn Ward's meditation on hard work and perseverance, *Navigate Your Stars*, was based on a speech she gave at Tulane University.

In *The Pastry School: Sweet and Savoury Pies, Tarts, and Treats to Bake at Home*, Julie Jones offers a master class in baking and decoration.

Jennifer Ackerman offers new insights into bird behavior in *The Bird Way: A New Look at How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent, and Think*.

ADULT DVDS

Annette Bening portrays a woman whose life unravels when her marriage fails in the 2019 drama *Hope Gap*.

In the 2019 comedy *How to Build a Girl*, a 16-year-old from the British midlands reinvents herself as a rock critic.

Scorsese Shorts features early work, starting in the mid-1960s at NYU, by famed film director Martin Scorsese.

The 2019 documentary *The Booksellers* visits New York City's world of writers, sellers, and collectors, and includes interviews by Fran Lebowitz, Susan Orlean, and Gay Talese.

ADULT EBOOKS

Cherie Dimaline's novel *Empire of Wild*, about a woman whose husband disappeared in the woods after an argument, was inspired by the Canadian Métis legend of the werewolf-like rogarou.

Eerie events happen when a woman in western Queensland searches for her missing brother, in *Flyaway* by Kathleen Jennings.

In *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir*, poet Natasha D. Trethewey learns to cope with the murder of her mother by her stepfather.

Kirkland Hamill's *Filthy Beasts* describes his dysfunctional childhood in "a riches-to-rags tale."

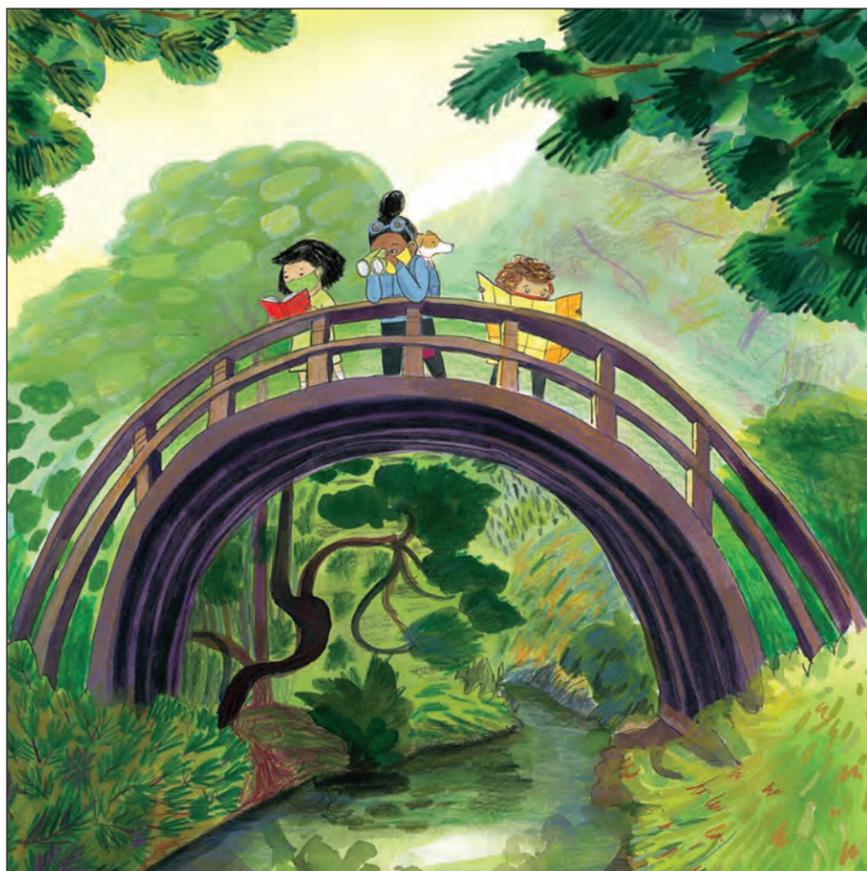


Illustration of the Japanese Tea Garden from *The Hike* by Alison Farrell, courtesy Chronicle Books

In Julie Abe's *Eva Evergreen, Semi-Magical Witch*, a young girl must prove she has the spirit to rise to the rank of Novice Witch. Ages 8 to 12.

Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Adventure is Jeff Kinney's follow-up to *Diary of an Awesome Friendly Kid: Rowley Jefferson's Journal*. Ages 8 to 12.

A young violinist discovers her family has a sanctuary for Tasmanian tigers in the Australian rainforest, in *Music for Tigers* by Michelle Kadarusman. Ages 8 to 12.

Pascal Jusselin's graphic novel *Mr. Invincible: Local Hero* won the Best Middle Grade Comic award at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. Ages 9 to 12.

CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

Shirley Chisholm Is a Verb is a biography of the first black woman in Congress, by Veronica Chambers, with illustrations by Rachele Baker. Ages 4 to 8.

April Pulley Sayre discusses geometry, construction, building, balance, and community in *Cityscape: Where Science and Art Meet*. Ages 5 to 8.

The challenges of helping a killer whale calf are described in *The Spirit of Springer: The Real-Life Rescue of an Orphaned Orca*, written by Amanda Abler and illustrated by Levi Hastings. Ages 7 to 11.

In verse, Margarita Engle tells the story of a Nicaraguan poet and folk hero, in *With a Star in My Hand: Rubén Darío, Poetry Hero*. Ages 12 and up.

CHILDREN'S EBOOKS

In the picture book *What Color Is Night?* Grant Snider explores the wonders and colors of nighttime. Ages 2 to 4.

The world is seen through many different viewpoints in *You Matter*, written and illustrated by Christian Robinson. Ages 3 to 7.

Do Not Lick This Book: It's Full of Germs, written by Idan Ben-Barak and illustrated by Julian Frost, tells about the microscopic world of microbes. Ages 4 to 8.

Facts about coronaviruses and ways to avoid them are covered in *Be a Virus Warrior! A Kid's Guide to Keeping Safe*, written by Eloise Macgregor, illustrated by Alix Wood. Ages 6 to 9.

Part of the Ordinary Terrible Things series, *Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness* by Anastasia Higginbotham is a picture book about racism and racial justice. Ages 8 to 12.

A boy discovers secrets in his Georgia town in *Coop Knows the Scoop* by Taryn Souders. Ages 8 to 12.

In *From the Desk of Zoe Washington* by Janae Marks, a girl gets a letter from her father in prison on her 12th birthday. Ages 8 to 12.

Annotations by Noe Valley Voice bookworm Karol Barske

MORE BOOKS TO READ

Books a Go-Go

At last, some good news for library patrons! The San Francisco Public Library has launched **SFPL To Go**, a front-door pickup service at certain library branches. In mid-August, the program got rolling at two locations: the Main Library and the Excelsior Branch (where it just so happens Noe Valley Branch Manager Denise Sanderson is co-piloting the service). Four more branches—Eureka Valley, Mission Bay, Marina, and Merced—were set to join Sept. 1.

There was no word, however, on whether the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library on Jersey Street would be included, or possibly put to another use. Due to the evolving pandemic, the SFPL is making decisions daily on where to deploy library staff in San Francisco, to serve at food pantries, perform Covid contact tracing, help with language translation, and, eventually, to staff learning hubs.

So how does SFPL To Go work? You call or go online to place a hold on your preferred title at one of the six branches. (See sfpl.org/sfpl-to-go.) Then you wait for a phone, mail, or email notification saying it's ready to pick up. Your book—or DVD, audiobook, or LP—will be at the library's front door.

If you have questions, or you need assistance with your library card, call 415-557-4400, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or go to sfpl.org anytime, day or night. There you'll find diversions for readers of all ages, including storytimes, book clubs, and virtual events. You can also follow the library on social media:

- Facebook: [@sfpl.org](https://www.facebook.com/sfpl.org)
- Instagram/Twitter: [@sfpubliclibrary](https://www.instagram.com/sfpubliclibrary)
- YouTube: [San Francisco Public Library](https://www.youtube.com/San Francisco Public Library)

Before you do, check out the book and DVD titles on this page, suggested to us by Sanderson and Noe Valley Children's Librarian Catherine Starr. We are grateful for their tips, which always give us something juicy to look forward to.

CHILDREN'S FICTION

Little Bear's Treasures, written and illustrated by Stella Dreis, encourages children to find their own treasures in the world. Ages 3 to 6.

Everybody learns to get along in *Cat Dog Dog: The Story of a Blended Family*, by Nelly Buchet, with

illustrations by Andrea Zuill. Ages 3 to 7.

In *The Hidden Rainbow*, by Christie Matheson, the reader can help the little bee find all the colors in the garden. Ages 4 to 8.

A girl discovers a magical elevator in her apartment building in *Lift*, by Minh Lê, illustrations by Dan Santat. Ages 5 to 8.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

A Restaurant Search by Michael Blake

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BRANCH HOURS*

Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library*						
451 Jersey St., 355-5707						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	12-6	10-9	1-9	10-6	1-6	10-6
Mission Branch Library*						
300 Bartlett St., 355-2800						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	1-6	10-9	10-9	10-9	1-6	10-6
Glen Park Branch Library*						
2825 Diamond St., 355-2858						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	10-6	10-6	12-8	12-7	1-6	1-6
Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Branch Library*						
1 José Sarria Ct. (3555 16th St.), 355-5616						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
12-6	10-9	12-9	10-6	1-6	12-6	

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



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be light
be bright
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