

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Merchants Ask Santa for a Very Merry Christmas

Holiday Window Displays Hope to Inspire Noel Shopping

By Matthew S. Bajko

Festooned in the two windows of the boutique When Modern Was are female French courtesans decked out in lavish costumes that spill open to showcase the store’s home décor merchandise.

“It is Marie Antoinette on steroids,” marvels store owner Dona Taylor of the creative displays imagined up by her friend and collaborator Victor Rivera. “Let an artist be creative, and this is what he does. I trusted him 100 percent,” says Taylor.

Rivera, also known as the drag queen Pat N Leather, first befriended Taylor as a customer of her store and began dressing its windows six years ago.

Now housed in a corner storefront at 4001 24th St. at Noe Street, the shop’s Parisian aesthetic inspired his theme for the holiday window displays he installed in mid-November with an assist from fellow drag queen Katya Smirnoff-Skyy.

“I want to attract people and have them say, ‘I got to look at this.’ You can’t get more lavish, rich, or more flamboyant than with Marie Antoinette,” says Rivera, who began his career in visual merchandising and costume design back in New York City

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Two New Pastors Seek to Engage The Neighborhood

Both Churches Continuing Food And Other Services This Winter

By John Ferrannini

Two Noe Valley churches have seen new pastors appointed in recent months—and both told the *Voice* they are seeking to guide their flocks toward greater involvement with the surrounding community.

The Reverend Rob Herrmann, 59, became the pastor at Bethany United Methodist Church at 1270 Sanchez St. on July 1, and the Reverend Dr. Peter Choi, 50, became pastor at the Noe Valley Ministry, a Presbyterian church at 1021 Sanchez St., in late September.

For Herrmann, it’s a homecoming of sorts. He’d been a pastor up in Sonoma County for the past three years at churches in Rohnert Park and Petaluma, and in Oakland for the two years before that, but he had been a member at Bethany when he’d first moved to San Francisco some years ago after giving up a hospitality career in New York

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Notre Dame: A lovely French courtesan and a sharp-eyed rabbit in When Modern Was prepare to wink at the judges to win the Noel Holiday Windows Contest. Photo by Jack Tipple



Nights to Remember: Noe Valleyans of all shapes and sizes journeyed to the Town Square on 24th Street on a clear Sunday night, Dec. 1, to see the annual lighting of the Christmas tree and sip hot chocolate and eat cookies. Many may return on Sunday, Dec. 29, 3:30 to 5 p.m., to light the menorah in a Chanukah Wonderland and watch a firetruck spill sweets into the hands of happy children. *Our cup runneth over.* Photo by Art Bodner

Church Street Clinic Helps Ease Post-Election, Pre-Holiday Blues

Advanced Students Provide Low-Cost Therapy

By Emily Hayes

Got the blues over the November elections, money worries, or the holidays coming up? If so, you certainly aren’t alone. Maybe it really is time to talk to someone.

An affordable option right in your back yard is the Church Street Integral Counseling Center, a nonprofit clinic that offers therapy at sliding-scale income-based rates from \$25 per session.

Based at 1780–82 Church St. in an Edwardian residential building, the clinic provides a safe, homey place to confidentially share your concerns while sinking into a comfortable couch decked out with soft, thick pillows.

Therapy is provided by about 30 advanced graduate students who are fulfilling the practical training requirements of a master’s degree in integral counseling psychology from the affiliated California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS).

The Church Street clinic runs about 200 in-person and online sessions per week for clients, most of whom live in Noe Valley and adjacent neighborhoods. People who seek services reflect the diversity of the area and include Latinx, queer, and trans clients, as well as marginalized community groups.

The clinic has been providing services for more than 40 years, but its mission may be especially important now.

The outcome of the presidential election in November was “terrifying” for some queer clients, says Quest Carrizales (they/them), a therapist trainee at the center.

“It really has had an impact on people’s sense of safety and security in the world,” Carrizales says.

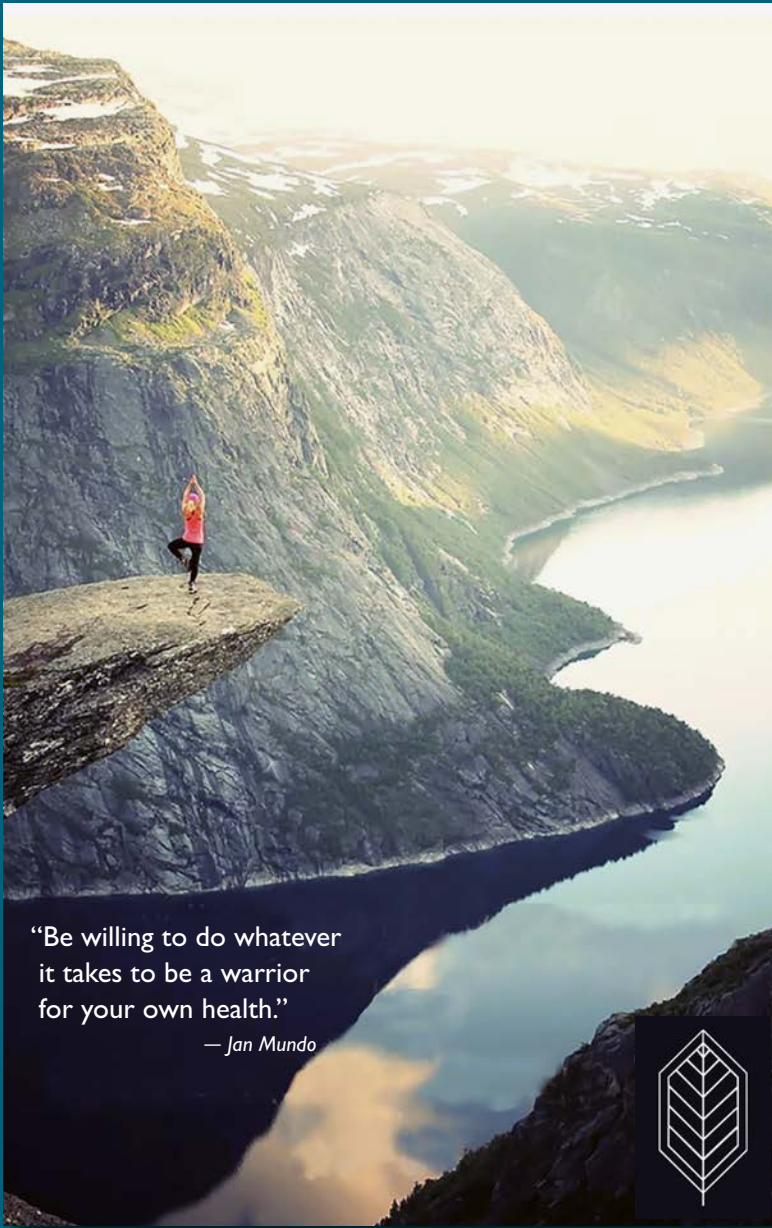
People are more anxious and are taking steps to take care of themselves, such as dropping off certain social media platforms to avoid encountering upsetting information, Carrizales says.

During the holidays, a client may be spending time with people who they know voted Nov. 5 in ways that are a rejection of their identity or values, says Ava Benezra (she/her), also a therapist trainee.

Benezra worked through Thanksgiving and plans to do the same through Christmas to accommodate those who need help. Some clients are doubling up on sessions during the holiday weeks, she says.

Carrizales adds that on top of the election and the holidays, the latter of which can be wonderful but challenging for some, it gets darker earlier, it’s often wet, and people typically don’t

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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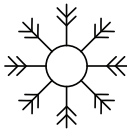
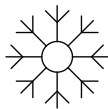
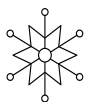
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As a longtime Noe Valley real estate expert and property owner who has more than 18 years of SF real estate sales experience, I want to thank you for your trust and support. As 2024 winds down, I’m looking ahead to what will likely be a strong first quarter in SF real estate. Though what the Fed will do with rates remains a mystery, it seems buyers are getting acclimated to the current mortgage interest rate levels. Properties that had a hard time selling were snapped up this fall and many sellers are now talking about entering the 2025 market. As a top SF realtor, Jessica is an expert at timing, strategy and preparing property for successful sales. If you are considering selling your home, make sure to interview Jessica, and let her intelligence, experience, and wisdom guide you! Her record of success speaks for itself.

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CRIME SNAPSHOT

Incidents Creep Up

The latest data from the San Francisco Police Department shows that shoplifting and burglaries remained Noe Valley’s peskiest crimes in October, bringing the total number of criminal incidents in the 10 categories that the *Voice* tracks monthly to 108.

October’s cumulative mischief-making surpassed that of both September (92) and August (98), according to the city’s digital map of incident reports.

The bulk of the incidents, 44, were classified as “larceny/theft.” Among those were 21 shoplifting reports, all of them in the vicinity of Castro and Jersey streets.

In addition, police recorded 14 “smash-and-grab” thefts from cars, four thefts of unidentified “other properties,” and four thefts of license plates or other items stripped from vehicles.

One positive note: there was only one package or “porch pirate” theft, once the scourge of neighborhood residents.

However, citizens reported 17 burglaries. The list included thefts from one home, one store, and six non-residential buildings, and from nine businesses in the Castro/Jersey streets area.

Five cars were swiped from Noe Valley streets, along with two motorcycles and one “other” vehicle. (One vehicle had been recovered by press time.)

Unfortunately, police also recorded

CRIME SNAPSHOT DATA														
Noe Valley Incident Reports October 2023 – October 2024														
Incident Type	Oct23	Nov23	Dec23	Y2023	Jan24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	May24	Jun24	July24	Aug24	Sep24	Oct24
Larceny/Theft	34	39	24	334	32	31	42	42	49	32	49	36	46	44
Burglary	21	20	5	187	19	19	16	14	13	33	39	21	16	17
Malicious Mischief	11	11	7	105	3	8	11	6	9	7	5	8	8	7
Motor Vehicle Theft	11	12	12	173	8	11	11	5	15	8	12	10	10	8
Assault	1	5	7	49	3	4	4	3	5	4	3	3	2	8
Robbery	3	2	2	22	2	1	1	0	1	1	2	3	2	0
Other Misc.	3	7	11	53	3	5	5	6	20	19	7	8	6	17
Fraud	2	5	1	37	4	4	3	4	3	4	0	5	1	5
Family D.Violence	0	1	0	7	3	0	3	0	4	0	0	3	1	2
Vandalism	0	0	2	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Totals	86	102	71	976	78	83	96	80	119	108	119	98	92	108

Source: Dataset titled “Map of Police Department Incident Reports: 2018 to Present” at <https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783/>. This set includes police incident reports filed by officers and by individuals through self-service online reporting for non-emergency cases. Disclaimer: The San Francisco Police Department does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or correct sequencing of the information, as the data is subject to change as modifications or updates are completed. The *Noe Valley Voice* scraped the June, July, and August 2024 data on Nov. 11, 2024. “Noe Valley” on the SFPD’s digital map is bounded by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.

Noe Valley Voice, December 2024

eight incidents involving physical violence. There were two alleged cases of aggravated assault, one involving a gun, and six incidents termed “battery,” defined as willfully or unlawfully touching someone.

The category of “other miscellaneous” contained 17 incidents, ranging from driving under the influence to filing a false police report.

Two reports of domestic violence involved violation of stay-away orders.

You can view the neighborhood crime statistics at [Data.sfgov.org](https://data.sfgov.org). We scraped the October 2024 data from the SFPD’s “Noe Valley” on Nov. 11, 2024. The dataset is titled “Map of Police Department Incident Reports: 2018 to Present” and can be found at [https://data.sfgov.org/Public-](https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783/)

[Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783/](https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783/).

“Noe Valley” is the area bounded by 21st, San Jose/Guerrero, 30th Street, and Grand View/Diamond Heights Boulevard. The neighborhood falls under two police districts, Mission and Ingleside. The current commander at Mission Station is Capt. Liza Johansen. To email Capt. Johansen, write Liza.tifee@sfgov.org. For station information, call 415-558-5400.

The head of Ingleside Station is Capt. Amy Hurwitz. Contact Capt. Hurwitz at 415-404-4000 or email Amy.Hurwitz@sfgov.org.

In an emergency, call 9-1-1. Otherwise, call the non-emergency line, 415-553-0123.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

LETTERS 73 CENTS

The City That Knows How?

Editor:

I was pleased to see on the front page of the October *Noe Valley Voice* the rendering of what lower Church Street might look like if the current upzoning plan was adopted. However, the rendering was incorrectly attributed to Neighborhoods United SF. I was the one who commissioned this rendering. Your readers can see other renderings of what Church Street, 24th Street, and Dolores Park might look like if the city’s upzoning plan was adopted, at <https://ChurchStreet.blog>.

In my view, this whole debate is focused on the wrong question. As others have said, we do not have a “housing crisis.” We have an “affordable housing crisis.” The upzoning plan does next to nothing to solve that very real crisis. Nor will the so-called “free market” ever solve this problem. Real estate developers and speculators are in business to make money, not to create affordable housing. Instead of concocting upzoning plans, we need to make a plan to preserve existing affordable homes, and to create and maintain public housing and non-profit-run housing at affordable prices. Either that or continue to watch working-class San Franciscans be driven out of town while the city becomes more and more a mere playground for the rich.

In Paris, a city to which many have compared San Francisco, fully one quarter of all residents live in affordable, public housing. Why can’t we do the same thing in the City That Knows How?

Marc Norton
40-year resident of Noe Valley



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

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

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CO-PUBLISHERS/EDITORS
Sally Smith, Jack Tipple

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND EDITORS
Corrie M. Anders, Associate Editor
Heidi Anderson, Matthew S. Bajko, Owen Baker-Flynn, Karol Barske, Michael Blake, Jan Brittonson, Kit Cameron, Chris Faust, Michael Feliciano, John Ferrannini, Matt Fisher, Jan Goben, Kathryn Guta, Emily Hayes, Suzanne Herel, Liz Highleyman, Jeff Kaliss, Doug Konecky, Elliot Pogor, Roger Rubin, Tom Ruiz, Karen Topakian, Megan Wetherall

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Art Bodner, Pamela Gerard, Najib Joe Hakim, Charles Kennard, Beverly Tharp

ACCOUNTING
Jennifer O. Viereck

PRODUCTION
Jack Tipple, André Thélémaque

DISTRIBUTION
Jack Tipple

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Jon Elkin

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Pat Rose, Jack Tipple

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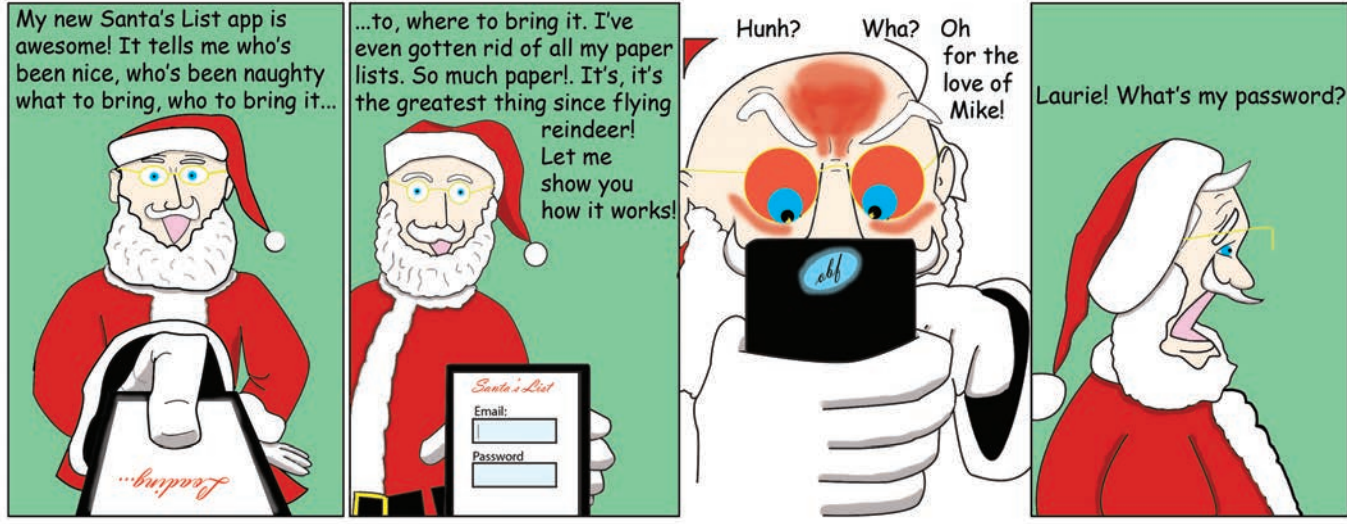


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THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN



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Tuesday, December 24:
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Christmas Eve:
Vigil of Christmas and Children's Pageant, 4:30 pm

Wednesday, December 25:
Christmas Day Mass
8:00 AM and 9:15 AM

Saturday, December 28:
Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)
3:30 - 4:30 pm in the Church, or by appointment

Vigil Mass of the Holy Family:
4:30 pm

Sunday, December 29:
Feast of the Holy Family, 4:30 pm

Wednesday, January 1:
Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
9:15 am

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Christmas Eve Service and Children's Pageant
Tuesday, December 24, 5:00 pm

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Tuesday, December 24, 8:00 pm

Christmas Day service
Wednesday, December 25, 10:00 am

Feast of the Holy Innocents
Sunday, December 29, 10:00 am

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Labyrinth Walk

Sunday, December 8, 6:30 pm
A Peaceful Meditation
by Candlelight

Christmas Sing-along

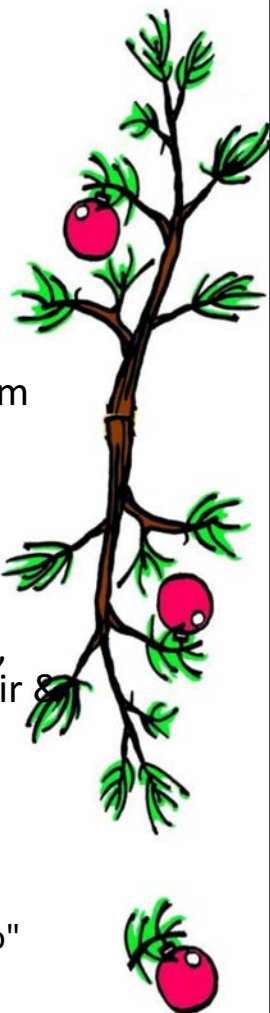
Sunday, December 15, 10:30 am
Sacred and Secular Favorites

Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday, December 24, 5 pm
Service of Lessons and Carols,
With Noe Valley Ministry Choir &
Guest Musicians

New Year's Eve Service

Tuesday, December 31, 6 pm
Meditative Service for "Letting Go"



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Blue Christmas, December 15 at 2:00 pm
For those who struggle at Christmastime

Christmas Eve, December 24
Storytelling & Carols at 5:00 pm
Child care available

Christmas Day, December 25 at 9:00 am

Weekly Services:

Sundays at 8:00 am and 10:00 am
Child care available at 10:00

Wednesday Evening Prayer at 6:30 pm *

Morning Prayer
Monday, Wednesday, Friday * at 7:30 am

Contemplative Prayer
Tuesday & Thursday at 9:00 am *

Christmas & Sunday services are both in person and online,
along with Monday & Wednesday Morning Prayer.
* Services with asterisks are online only.

Email office@staidansf.org for connection info.

Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church

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Phone: 415.285.9540

www.staidansf.org





As the year comes to a close, we’d like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our clients, neighbors, and friends. Your trust and support have made 2024 another successful year for the Droubi Team.

Whether you’re buying, selling, or simply dreaming of a new home, we’re here to help you every step of the way. May your holiday season be filled with peace, joy, and the warmth of family and friends. We look forward to serving you in the New Year.

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Lee C.

Curious About the Noe Valley Real Estate Market?

There are always twists and turns in SF real estate, but in broad terms the market is improving. As the city's first real estate blog, established 2002, our website and biweekly newsletter are your go-to source for information. Scan the QR to see the latest.



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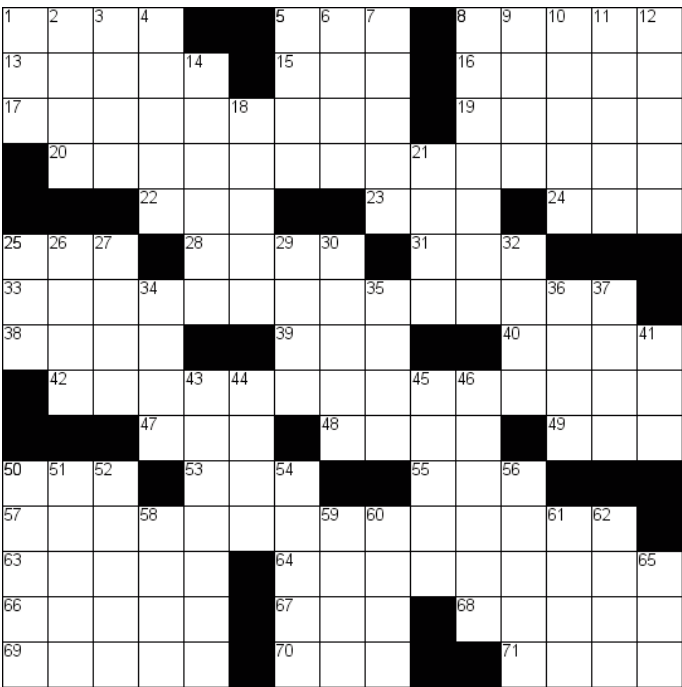
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THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

Sins of Omission

ACROSS

- 1. Serb or Croatian
- 5. Beaver-built barricade
- 8. Defer for later discussion
- 13. Ancient souvenir
- 15. Partner of all
- 16. E.A.P. part
- 17. Arouses curiosity
- 19. "Beauty and the ____"
- 20. *Where drowned sailors lie, in a saying
- 22. Musical Yoko
- 23. Second-person pronoun
- 24. Suffix with crock or mock
- 25. Neighbor of Nev.
- 28. Local med school, for short
- 31. ____-mo (replay feature)
- 33. *Between 168 and 175 lbs. in boxing
- 38. "Star Wars" princess
- 39. Rapa ____ (Easter Island)
- 40. Noisy
- 42. *Military branch for Chester Nimitz
- 47. Nail application at The Upper Hand
- 48. No ____ Traffic
- 49. ____ Talks (big name in short speeches)
- 50. Gardner once married to Sinatra
- 53. Phone book listings: Abbr.
- 55. Bambi's aunt
- 57. *Popular breakfast order at Cracker Barrel
- 63. "Love, ____, and obey"
- 64. Erroneous
- 66. Before "This" and



- 10. Yours truly
- 11. Concentrated beam
- 12. Way in
- 14. Breakfast pastry that's a portman-teau
- 18. Adam's grandson
- 21. Suffer defeat
- 25. Sickly
- 26. God, to Gaston
- 27. Backwoods "anti"
- 29. Email command
- 30. Goethe's soul-seller
- 32. Leer salaciously
- 34. Alexander ____, secretary of state under Reagan
- 35. Part of "GWTW"
- 36. Ken Jennings, on "Jeopardy!"
- 37. Adjust, as a piano
- 41. Mom's mate
- 43. Hard to fire, as a professor
- 44. Blond race in "The Time Machine"
- 45. "There ____ atheists in foxholes"
- 46. Colder cousin of a steppe
- 50. Dislike intensely
- 51. Stringed instrument
- 52. In ____ (very irritated)
- 54. Stationary
- 56. Wearing ____ (smiling broadly)
- 58. Crane ____ Park at Potrero Point
- 59. Quick scissor cut
- 60. Unreturned tennis serves
- 61. San ____, Italy
- 62. End of many Shakespearean plays
- 65. Diminutive dog

DOWN

- 1. ____ Lanka
- 2. Advance, as cash
- 3. ____ California (north of Baja)
- 4. Old, in the Mission
- 5. Amount of medicine to take
- 6. Picnic pests
- 7. Unkempt
- 8. Lebanese salad
- 9. Actor Baldwin

December 2024 Noe Valley Voice
Solution on Page 21
Find more Crosswords at
www.noevalleyvoice.com

Holiday Windows And Parklets on Display

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and has called San Francisco home since 2005.

Taylor hopes the fanciful display will net her a win in the inaugural Noel Valley Holiday Windows & Parklets Contest being sponsored this December by the neighborhood’s merchants association.

“I am pretty known for my windows but have never had anything this elaborate,” says Taylor.

Because of the contest, “we are going big this year with holiday decorations at Mr. Digby’s and NOVY,” the owners of the two restaurants alerted customers in a November email about their Christmas plans. “Stop by and see what we’ve done to bring a little extra cheer to the neighborhood and wish us luck!”

Seasoned Greetings

At the spice shop Perfectly Seasoned, co-owner Matthew Green replicated the store’s building and interior in cardboard for a winning window display at 4017 24th St. Incorporated into the scene are the shop’s new San Francisco Series of nine seasonings inspired by nine different San Francisco neighborhoods. There is a marinara seasoning that Green concocted called North Beach, while the Presidio is represented by a wild game seasoning. The Noe Valley blend is made with sweet herbs.

Green’s partner in the business and life, Phuong Mai, hopes the window contest will draw media attention to Noe Valley this month and, with it, more holiday shoppers. Not everyone riding Muni, he says, realizes that if they get off at 24th Street there is a vibrant commercial corridor along the blocks leading up to Diamond Street.

“Noe Valley is a sleeper neighborhood for sure. From the J-Church route, 24th Street is sort of tucked away, so riders don’t know a block away are these great shops,” says Mai. “I hope this event draws more people to the neighborhood.”

More than a dozen storeowners have signed up to decorate their windows or parklets for the contest. It officially kicked off Sunday, Dec. 1, coinciding with the annual lighting of the holiday tree in the Noe Valley Town Square near the intersection of 24th and Vicksburg streets.

Santa Claus was scheduled to make a joint appearance that afternoon with the Grinch at the store Just for Fun, 3982 24th St., so families could get photos of their children with the yuletide visitors.

Which Windows Will Shine?

A select group of judges will walk 24th Street on Tuesday, Dec. 17, to determine the winners of the window contest. Various Noe merchants have donated prizes for the gift baskets to be handed out to the storeowners with the funniest, most elaborate, and most San Francisco window or parklet.

“I don’t want the prizes. I am putting it on, so that would not be fair,” says Taylor, though she admits she wouldn’t mind being declared a winner in one of the categories.

Taylor offered her assistance in organizing the contest to Dave Karraker, who owns the nearby MX3 Fitness gym. He had pitched the idea to the Noe Valley Merchants & Professionals Association (NVMPA) as a way to build word of mouth about the



The glamorous Parisian lady in a holiday window designed by Victor Rivera was attracting shoppers on Thanksgiving weekend to the vintage art boutique When Modern Was at 24th and Noe streets. Photo by Art Bodner

24th Street corridor throughout San Francisco and attract customers from outside Noe Valley this Christmas.

“It is something I have had in mind for a long time,” says Karraker, who says he took the concept from the town of Westport, Conn. He has fond memories of taking holiday strolls on Westport’s Main Street and seeing how all the store windows were decked out.

He is hopeful to replicate that “magical moment” this year in Noe Valley.

“There is no reason why neighborhoods in San Francisco can’t do something similar,” says Karraker, who was still figuring out what to do with the gym’s windows when he spoke with the Voice ahead of Thanksgiving week.

Santa Visits Easy Breezy

The NVMPA, in concert with the Noe Valley Association, is holding a series of events in December to draw in customers to the neighborhood’s shops and eateries. A Winter Wine Walk will take place from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, where participants pay \$40 for a wine glass at the Noe Valley Town Square and enjoy different wines poured at participating businesses as they shop.

The neighborhood will also be festive on Saturday, Dec. 7, when crowds stream in for the annual Baltic Christmas Fair at the Latvian Lutheran Church at 425 Hoffman Ave., from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Santa will be there for picture taking.

Then Mr. Claus will return to 24th



Santa’s reindeer have landed at a new holiday destination on Castro Street called Terrasol. The shop is full of trees from floor to ceiling embellished with ornaments. Photo by Jack Tipple

Street on Sunday, Dec. 15, to dash into Easy Breezy, at 4028 24th St. (times to be announced).

The merchants association is also planning to host a Night Market from 4 to 8 p.m. in the Town Square, 3861 24th St., on New Year’s Eve, as Dec. 31 falls on the last Tuesday, the new tradition’s day each month.

“Our new, comprehensive ‘Noel Valley’ celebration is designed to get people off Amazon and down into the streets to support local small business-

es,” says Rachel Swann, president of the NVMPA for the past eight years. “It can’t be underestimated how important the holiday shopping season is to these small businesses, some of which depend on this time of the year for up to 20 percent of their annual revenue. We hope folks from around the Bay come to Noe Valley to experience the holidays in this very special San Francisco neighborhood.”

Also taking place at the Town Square, at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, will be the second annual “Tuba Christmas” concert. According to organizer and conductor Lori Karns, some 50 tuba and euphonium players, ranging from middle and high school enthusiasts to professionals and retirees, will present a lineup of brassy Christmas carols.

Chanukah Wonderland

Chabad of Noe Valley and Gan Noe Preschool will hold the 25th annual Chanukah Wonderland from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 29, in the Town Square.

Along with the lighting of the giant menorah will be crafts for kids and a gelt parachute drop from atop a San Francisco Fire Department firetruck.

For more information about those and other events, go to noevalleytownsquare.com.

For information about the Night Market, see noemerchants.com. ■

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- Morning Prayer Tuesdays & Thursdays, at 8:30 am, from Dec 3rd to Dec 24th in the sanctuary
- Labyrinth Walk, Friday, Dec 13th at 7pm
- Christmas Eve Family Service 4pm
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Church Street Clinic Offers Low-Cost Therapy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

want to go outside as much. “They are having an experience of being in the dark—literally—more frequently,” Carrizales says.

Someone on Your Side

How can counseling help? At the holiday dinner table, it can make a world of difference to know you have a safe, trusted space where you will be able to share hurtful experiences and that your therapist is on your team, holding you in mind, even if they are not physically with you, Benezra says. She also advises people not to minimize feelings of grief, pain, or heart-break, but instead to make space for them and seek validation.

Therapy can also guide people toward developing self-awareness and regulating their emotions, which can help during vacations and holidays with family. The time with family can be an opportunity for curiosity, noticing our feelings, learning about ourselves, and experiencing relationships in a way that feels better, Carrizales said.

“So, it’s a matter of how do we get you the support you need so that you’re okay through that time,” Carrizales says.

For many of the students at the center, psychotherapy is a second career.

Carrizales, who is originally from Venezuela, has a software degree and spent many years working as a consultant, but then decided they wanted a job that offered more human connection.

Benezra, who grew up in the Castro neighborhood, has worked in progressive politics and community organizing



Quest Carrizales sits on the doorstep of Church Street Integral Counseling Center at Church and 30th streets, where Carrizales and other graduate student therapists strive to give people the support they need to carry them through difficult times. Photo by Art Bodner

client,” Stone explains. “The therapist is going to be really curious about you and what you want and isn’t going to be really prescriptive about what you need to do to be okay.”

There also is an emphasis on exploring the here and now. Since 2020 and the early days of the Covid-19 epidemic, the center has been offering virtual sessions as well as therapy in person. Benefits of virtual counseling include accessibility, convenience, and maybe less fear for clients, Carrizales says.

On the other hand, the therapeutic relationship may have more depth with in-person sessions.

“As a clinician, I just get so much more information about the client and the client gets so much more information about me when we’re sitting in a room together,” Benezra says.

Stone notes that the center’s counselors can help clients with a spectrum of issues, including anxiety, loneliness, grief, work stress, body image issues, sexuality, and relationship or family concerns.

A typical session lasts 50 minutes, but can be longer depending on a client’s needs, for example with couples or families.

Therapists can brainstorm ways to help clients make space for difficult feelings, and some also organize and run group therapy sessions, Stone says.

“Come on in and see if talking to a clinician helps,” Stone suggests. ■

Church Street Integral Counseling Center is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and weekends from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For an appointment, call 415-648-2644 or submit a request online. In addition to matching clients with students, the center can provide referrals to licensed psychotherapists.



Clinic Director Deborah Stone says people can take advantage of a variety of options at Church Street Integral Counseling Center, including zoom and in-person therapy and group therapy.

with the goal of improving representation of marginalized groups. But she wanted to shift toward more direct care of people.

Both therapists say they were attracted specifically to the Church Street center, which has a Gestalt psychology and existential orientation.

According to the center’s website (www.ciis.edu), the therapeutic approach is “holistic, multicultural, and mindful,” and is guided by a social justice mission. The goal is to integrate the mind, body, and spirit.

The Client Is the Expert

The model values subjectivity, says Deborah “Debbie” Stone (she/her/they), clinical director of the Church Street center. The client is the expert, and the therapist has a menu of options they can use, says Stone, who herself trained at the center and who also has her own private practice.

“We don’t have a traditional medical model where the doctor [necessarily] knows more about health than the



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New Pastors at Bethany and Noe Valley Ministry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

City. He'd also worked as a resident chaplain for St. Francis Memorial Hospital.

"I've always loved this community," he said in a phone interview with the Voice. "It's exciting coming back to a place that nurtured you and to be able to give back. It's like the hero's journey—not to pat myself on the back, but it's Joseph Campbell—you go out on a quest for the thing and bring that back to where you came from."

Herrmann said that back East, he'd worked in a luxury hotel, where "people pay a lot of money, and a few blocks away people didn't even know where their next meal was coming from." The juxtaposition left him feeling empty and meaningless, and he went to San Francisco to study psychology at City College of San Francisco, though upon taking courses he "felt it wasn't right" for him either.

"I was reading a lot of Carl Jung—'follow your bliss'—and decided I'm a church boy, that's what my bliss is," Herrmann said. He subsequently went to seminary at the Pacific School of Religion.

He's now been out of divinity school for six years and has enjoyed his first three months back at Bethany as pastor.

"They have a long history here of reaching out to the LGBTQ community when it wasn't popular to do that, as well as social action," he said.

To that end, the church is continuing



Most recently serving as a pastor in Sonoma County, Rob Herrmann took the reins at Bethany United Methodist Church in Noe Valley on July 1.



Bethany UMC sits at the corner of Clipper and Sanchez streets. Photo by John Ferrannini

to collect food for the students and families at Noe Valley's Mission Education Center (this month on Dec. 19), prepare and serve meals to the unhoused through the Interfaith Winter Shelter Program (Dec. 30), and "Ring Out Danger" by ringing bells in opposition to gun violence on the first Friday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

Herrmann feels that Bethany can and should focus on the Noe Valley neighborhood.

"It's a smaller church," he said, "but I think [people] are realizing we can be strongest as a neighborhood church focused on neighborhood action."

Herrmann said Bethany made a presence at the recent Sanchez Street block party, and he wants anyone who's interested to come to the 10:45 a.m. service on Sundays.

Also, the church will join Songbird Studios for a Holiday Sing Out and Caroling Extravaganza on Saturday, Dec. 14, 5 to 8:30 p.m. And Bethany will hold Christmas Eve services at 4 and 7 p.m. (For more information go to www.Bethanysf.org or call 415-647-8393.)

"All are welcome and we look forward to seeing folks there," Herrmann said.

New Chapter at the Ministry

Peter Choi is even newer at the Noe Valley Ministry than Herrmann is at Bethany. When the Voice spoke with him Oct. 14, he'd only been there two weeks.

"It's going really well—obviously, it's the early days, it's the honeymoon stage," Choi said. "But I'm really thrilled to be getting to know the community."

Choi, who went to divinity school at the Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich., has been in ordained ministry for almost 20 years. He's spent the past 10 years at City Church San Francisco in Lower Pacific Heights.

Asked why the change, Choi said, "It felt like the closing of a chapter after brewing there 10 years. The church [City Church SF] has gone through a leadership change, and it's a new season."

He will still be "affiliated with the church to some degree," because as an academic he is involved in a theological study center there, the Center for Faith and Justice.

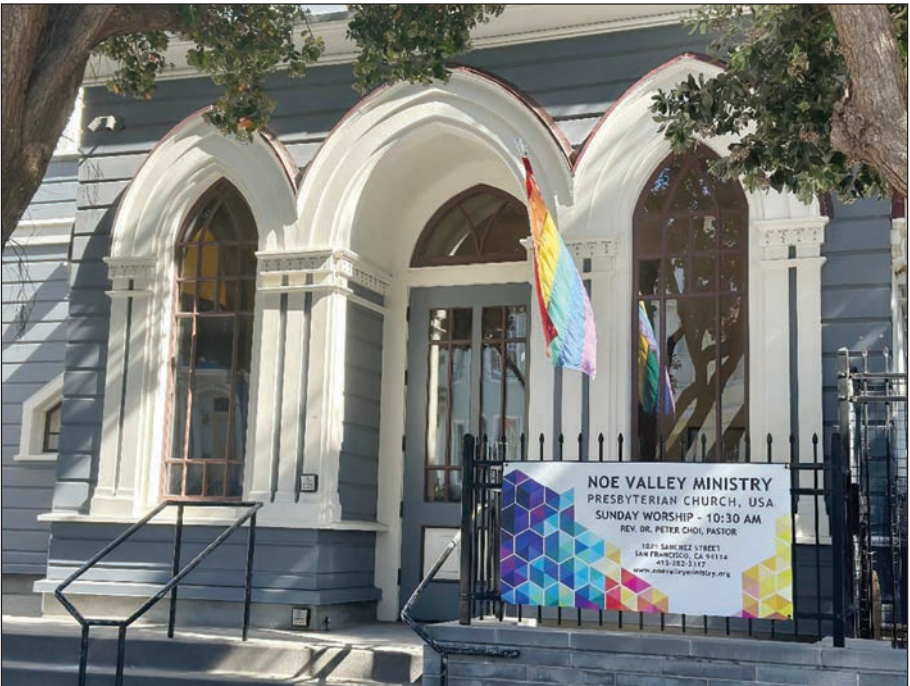
Choi said he was led to the Noe Valley Ministry because he was "looking for a way to stay connected to the work of pastoral ministry and hit it off from the start with the pastoral nominating committee, and I experienced openness on the part of the leadership to a new chapter and new possibilities."



Peter Choi comes to the Noe Valley Ministry after serving as pastor for 10 years at City Church San Francisco.

"They've also been a community in transition for a number of years," he said of the Noe Valley church.

"They've been with an interim pastor for two, maybe three, years, and it's been a season of discernment for the church community to understand who they are—who we are—and find their place in a changing, diverse community, engaging more with the neighborhood and community surrounding them.... There's a lot to engage with in that discernment process."



The Noe Valley Ministry Presbyterian Church is on Sanchez Street between Elizabeth and 23rd streets. Photo by John Ferrannini

GRAZIE

On October 31st, at 2.30am, a fire broke out in the upper unit of our building on Sanchez street; along with our two children (4yo and 8mo), we all were able to get out before the fire took the building. The firefighters were able to put out the fire but the building was severely damaged and our apartment, flooded with water, is no longer habitable.

That night, we were displaced and, on top of all damages to our stuff in the apartment, the following night, after sneaking into our apartment, some looters ransacked the house, stealing our valuables.

Right away, a lot of people reached out to us willing to help in all possible ways: taking care of our children, providing food and clothes, offering storage and hospitality or simply letting us know to count on them.

This made us feel part of this great Noe Valley community.

We found a new house in the neighborhood and we just moved in, ready to start over while staying close to this incredible community, our new extended family!

We would like to thank each of you, especially

- All the firefighters.
- The broad Noe Valley community, The Sanchez Slow street community, The Noe Valley Town Square Community, Primeros Pasos, St Paul Cathedral and The Noe Valley Voice.
- The Noe mom's whatsapp group - more than 800 amazing moms.
- The parents, staff and teachers from TECA - Thomas Edison Charter Academy - particularly the TK parents and teachers Ms Baer and Ms Ingrid, who helped and supported us in a lot of ways.
- The beloved nanny community at Upper Noe Recreation Center and our incredible nanny Isela, that we consider a part of our family.
- Ivonne from Martha and Bros at Church St.
- All our friends who helped us with the moving, babysitting our children, and offering us their house to stay after the displacement.
- Our neighbors Michael, Stephanie, Ben, Frank & Viki, Tosh & Margaret, Ben & Eleonore.
- All the people that stopped by and supported us with their kindness.

Grazie a tutti!
(Thank you everybody!)

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Adriano,
Angelo



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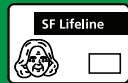
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The Cost of Living in Noe

Buyers Gobble Up Homes

By Corrie M. Anders

Delighted with a sizeable inventory of homes for sale and the lowest mortgage rates in two years, Noe Valley shoppers snapped up 15 single-family detached homes in October.

They also purchased seven condominiums as well as seven small apartment buildings, according to data supplied to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Icon Properties.

The last time buyers bought that many detached homes in Noe Valley was two and a half years ago, back in March 2022.

A primary motivator, according to Corcoran Icon CEO Randall Kostick, was the stockpile of properties to choose among. Kostick noted that 96 homes had become available in September, nearly double the new listings in August (54).

“The demand is so high [in Noe Valley] that if we have inventory, we get it sold,” he said.

At the same time, mortgage interest rates, which had hovered around 7 percent all year, had slid to 6.2 percent in September—a level not seen since February 2023.

On average, buyers made offers in a speedy 15 days and paid 5 percent more than the sellers’ asking price.

Two homes, both of them older properties that had been gutted and reborn with modern amenities, sold for close to \$5.5 million.

The most expensive—a four-bedroom, six-bath Victorian in the 200 block of Chattanooga Street between



A dramatic renovation helped transform this vintage Edwardian into a four-bedroom, four-bath luxury home on 27th Street. Amenities included view decks, a chef’s kitchen with a large island and counter seating, air conditioning, and skylights. At \$5,430,000, the house was the second most expensive property sold in October.

23rd and 24th streets—took just 11 days to garner an offer of \$5,475,000, 3.4 percent more than its asking price (\$5,295,000).

The home retained its 1900 façade but underwent a renovation that featured a balcony, a cathedral ceiling with skylight, radiant heat, floor-to-ceiling glass, a media room, a heated covered patio, and a separate garage and workshop.

Designed by Parcel Projects Architecture and showcased in the upscale magazine *Dwell*, the 3,050-square-foot home was equipped with high-end Boffi and Miele appliances and a retractable glass roof leading to a deck with a cedar hot tub and 360 views.

The next most expensive home was a charmer located on the central 400 block of 27th Street between Sanchez and Noe streets. After three weeks on the market, the seller accepted an offer of \$5,430,000 or 7.9 percent below their asking price of \$5.9 million. (In 2013, the two-bedroom house sold for \$1.1 million.)

The John Anderson-style home, built in 1900, was given a contemporary makeover to accommodate four bedrooms and four bathrooms in 4,075 square feet of living space. Among its assets were a chef’s kitchen with a large island and counter seating, a sliding glass door that opened onto a personal deck, several skylights, a gas fireplace, white oak floors, a soaking tub in the primary bedroom suite, a gym, a garden, views, and a one-car garage.

Condo buyers also hastened to make offers in October, typically taking just two weeks to do so and paying 12 percent over the seller’s asking price.

The costliest condo was a gem found in the 500 block of 27th Street, high on the hill between Noe and Castro streets. The buyer paid \$2.3 million—15.3 percent above the list price (\$1,995,000)—for the three-bedroom, two-bath unit with 1,995 square feet of living space.



Located on a leafy block of Chattanooga Street, this home’s humble façade belies its remodeled interior, which attracted an offer of \$5,475,000 in October. The house has a retractable glass roof leading to a private aerie with a cedar hot tub and 360-degree views.

Photos by Corrie M. Anders

Noe Valley Home Sales*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
Single-family homes						
October 2024	15	\$818,800	\$5,475,000	\$2,786,453	15	105%
September 2024	11	\$1,885,000	\$6,800,000	\$3,170,775	39	107%
October 2023	8	\$975,000	\$7,000,000	\$3,616,250	14	105%
Condominiums/TICs						
October 2024	7	\$1,265,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,814,286	13	112%
September 2024	3	\$1,075,000	\$2,655,000	\$1,826,667	46	118%
October 2022	11	\$ 918,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,669,636	24	100%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
October 2024	7	\$1,250,000	\$4,999,000	\$2,326,286	41	100%
September 2024	1	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000	10	100%
October 2023	8	\$775,000	\$3,850,000	\$1,942,625	44	103%
5+-unit buildings						
October 2024	0	—	—	—	—	—
September 2024	1	\$2,085,000	\$2,085,000	\$2,085,000	31	84%
October 2023	1	\$1,925,000	\$1,925,000	\$1,925,000	102	92%

*This survey includes all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. Noe Valley is loosely defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The *Noe Valley Voice* thanks Corcoran Icon Properties, San Francisco, for providing sales data. NWV12/2024

The remodeled residence occupied two levels in a five-unit building originally constructed in 1998. The home featured high ceilings, a gourmet kitchen complemented by a large island and Ann Sacks tile, air conditioning, a fireplace, a bedroom suite with a walk-out patio, one-car parking, and a deck with views of downtown and San Francisco Bay.

Buyers also picked up the front door keys to seven two- to four-unit buildings. Four of the sales were two-flat buildings, which are popular among unrelated buyers who often occupy individual units as tenants in common.



A condominium in this sleek five-unit building on 27th Street sold in October for \$2.3 million. The three-bedroom, two-bath home featured a chef’s kitchen, a bedroom with a walkout patio, and one-car parking..

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Noe Valley Rents**

Unit	No. in Sample	Range November 2024	Average November 2024	Average October 2024	Average November 2023
Studio	5	\$1,995 – \$2,395	\$2,218 / mo.	\$2,223 / mo.	\$2,269 / mo.
1-bdrm	19	\$1,775 – \$4,500	\$2,984 / mo.	\$2,975 / mo.	\$3,025 / mo.
2-bdrm	18	\$2,995 – \$7,950	\$4,573 / mo.	\$4,195 / mo.	\$4,055 / mo.
3-bdrm	16	\$3,750 – \$11,000	\$6,504 / mo.	\$6,683 / mo.	\$5,855 / mo.
4+-bdrm	7	\$4,795 – \$9,995	\$7,111 / mo.	\$9,197 / mo.	\$7,431 / mo.

** This survey is based on a sample of 65 Noe Valley rental listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Oct. 14 to Nov. 11, 2024. In November 2023, there were 119 listings. NWV12/2024



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Lola's Is All a-Glow

The Sanchez Boutique Has Extra Sparkle This Time of Year

By Matthew S. Bajko

In mid-November, Lola Herrera began setting up her eponymously named store for the holiday shopping season. New this year is a Christmas tree by the front door decorated with wool felt ornaments priced at \$10 to \$18.

At first, Herrera wondered if she had ordered too many of the soft little bears, dogs, and toadstools made by the eco-friendly Friendsheep. But the first day the ornaments were on display, she sold close to 30. "Being on the slow street helps," says Herrera.

Her boutique and gallery, Lola San Francisco, sits at the corner of Sanchez and Clipper, and people stroll by on the walkable Sanchez throughout the day. Herrera makes the most of her large glass windows to draw in customers. Cute animal figures, wearing red and green scarves, beckon hello.

A lifelong artist, Herrera says it was due to Covid's arrival in 2020—and to a \$50,000 federal loan supporting business owners impacted by its disruptions—that she made a pivot from selling just her own clothing line to carrying gift items four years ago. "I just woke up one day in October that year with the idea," she recalls. Clothing sales had been down, and people were working from home "in their pajamas on their Zoom meetings," she says.



Herrera utilized the government funds to order a sleighful of items made by artisans in the U.S. and around the world. It turned out to be a successful move.

"I think [the store] has become a destination for some people, which is great," says Herrera, who relocated her clothing store from 24th Street to the Sanchez storefront in 2013. "I try to carry a variety of gifts that are reasonably priced, so people can get a number of gifts here without having to break their



The felt reindeer, mice, and dogs made by Friendsheep are among the most popular gifts Lola Herrera is offering at her boutique and gallery at 1250 Sanchez St. Photos by Sally Smith

bank account." She also still makes and sells her own clothing, as well as jewelry, bags, and tiny clay sculptures.

Specific to the season are Christmas tree pins (\$48 to \$80) made by Billie Beads, based in Brooklyn, N.Y. The beaded pins, as well as ornaments designed as reindeer, peace doves, gingerbread people, and candy canes, are made using the glass mosaic technique called millefiore.

A favorite with Lola's customers are soy-based candles made by Zoet Studio from beeswax and essential oils. They are shaped as trees, igloos, and a tiramisu cake (\$16 to \$22), as well as a castle (\$38). Herrera also carries the Canadian company's small cactus candles (\$12).

The shop also has items Herrera created via the vendor Counter Couture to celebrate the neighborhood. There are organic cotton hats sporting the word

"Noe" (\$40), tea towels emblazoned with a crow above "Slow Sanchez" (\$12), and a "Noe Valley" tote bag featuring a blue bicycle (\$20).

Using a painting she did of a cityscape, Herrera created a design for unisex hoodies (\$175). "Some see San Francisco in it," says Herrera, though she didn't have a specific city in mind when she created it.

Naked Decor tea towels, potholders, and oven mitts come in designs featuring cats and dogs (\$12–\$16). Lola's also offers "fabulous socks" made by Hooray Sock Co. (\$12 a pair), a business launched in Noe Valley in 2017 by Hongsun Yoon and Tim Carpenter.

Year-round, Herrera carries a collection of handblown glass vases made by U.K.-based Ivore. They come shaped liked cactuses and mushrooms (\$32) or as tapers (\$42). "They are really popular and come in fun colors," she says.

Other products from the U.K. are artist Donna Wilson's hand-painted mugs and plates, designed to look like the faces of cats, dogs, and people (\$32 to \$48). Herrera also sells serving trays (\$55) and coasters (\$48 for a set of four) created by San Francisco-based artist Linda Trunzo.

"I am a good shopper. I think I have very good taste," says Herrera. "I do listen to people's requests as well."

A customer who works as a chef suggested she carry tea towels made by Geometry (\$18). "He said they are the best," Herrera says. One towel features the recipe to make latkes for Chanukah.

Lola San Francisco, 1250 Sanchez St. (415-642-4875), is open Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. Throughout December, the shop is exhibiting works by six local artists: Kate Marsh, Willa Owings, Kim Pablonia, Shiva Pakdel, Ellen Rosenthal, and Linda Trunzo. ■

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MORE FOOD TO EAT

Musakka, a Comfort from Mesopotamia Kitchen

One of the pleasures of living in Noe Valley, and San Francisco in general, is the diversity of the food options. Around every corner, you'll find restaurants that masterfully represent their cultural heritage.

When it comes to Mediterranean cuisine, one standout dish in the neighborhood is the **Musakka Plate** from **Mesopotamia Kitchen** at 3915 24th St., between Sanchez and Noe streets. For \$18.95, you get a well-portioned plate that includes rice, salad, and warm pita.

This musakka presents like a pasta-less lasagna. It is a layered dish that features tender eggplant, zucchini, bell peppers, mushrooms, celery, spinach, and potatoes, along with melted mozzarella and a rich tomato sauce. Each



Photo courtesy MesopotamiaKitchen.com

bite of the hearty dish brings warmth and satisfaction. The rice and pita are perfect accompaniments for soaking up every last bit of sauce, while the dressed salad offers a bright, refreshing contrast.

What keeps me coming back to Mesopotamia Kitchen is the home-made taste of the musakka. It's perfect for a cozy weeknight dinner. On those evenings when Katie and I are too busy to cook but we still want something that feels nourishing, this dish always delivers.

If you too are looking for a meal that brings warmth and comfort during a hectic week, we recommend giving it a try.

—Matt Fisher, on the beat for More Food to Eat

Have a suggestion for a dish to try in Noe Valley? Send an email to MoreFoodtoEatNoeValley@gmail.com.



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Crossword guy Michael Blake entering the highlight of his Civic Center tour



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The Upper Noe Aces celebrate victory as this fall's volleyball league champions in the 10 and under category. Photo courtesy SF Rec & Park

Upper Noe Girls Crowned Volleyball Champs

The Girls Play Sports program hosted its fall volleyball league playoffs for 10 and under and 14 and under divisions in November. The Upper Noe Aces won the 10U championship, while the Richmond Rec team won the 14U championship. Congratulations! Thank you to all of the players, parents, and coaches for an amazing season. Interested in playing? Email cindy.liu2@sfgov.org.

Winter Session Registration begins on Saturday, Dec. 14, at 10 a.m. Sign up at sfrecpark.org/register. Open Gym will not be available at Upper Noe on Saturdays during winter session, as the rec center hosts Jr. Warriors games. Spectators are welcome to sit in on the exciting action on Friday evenings and all day on Saturdays. Jr Warriors registration and team info can be found at https://anc.apm.activecommunities.com/sfrecpark/activity/search?activity_select_param=2&viewMode=list/.

Indoor Zumba classes are transitioning to a fee-based system in January. While these classes will remain drop-in with no registration required, they will begin utilizing the Play Pass system. Outdoor Zumba classes will continue to be free of charge at Upper Noe Rec (295 Day St.).

San Francisco Youth Baseball League registration has begun for those looking to hit the diamond this winter and spring. See <https://sfybl.com/>. Many classes and activities at Upper Noe are drop-in and free. Call the office at 415-970-8061 or visit www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com for more information.

To learn more, join Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center, the park's stewardship group. If you see something to fix, contact San Francisco Customer Service (311) either by phone, web, or the city's phone app. Park personnel rely on your 311 reports to support service requests. For issues related to Joby's Dog Run, open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., call 311 or email info@fundogsf.org.

—Chris Faust, Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

Upper Noe Winter Session (Jan. 7 to March 8, 2025)

Rec Center Hours, 295 Day St.: Tues. to Fri., 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Sun. and Mon. closed; outside activities only. Park grounds daily, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Tuesday 9–10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE 10–11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Free Play) 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Pickleball all ages FREE 12–1 p.m. Pilates (18+) 1:30–2:30 p.m. Strength & Flexibility (18+) 2–3:30 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE 4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10) 4–6 p.m. Jr. Warriors basketball practice 6–7:30 p.m. Open Gym (18+) FREE 6–7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (18+) 6:30–7:30 p.m. Yoga Vinyasa (18+)	Wednesday 10–11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Free Play) 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Open Gym (adult) FREE 12–1 p.m. Feldenkrais (18+) 1–6 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play) 2–5 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE 4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10) 5:30–7:30 p.m. Advanced Drop-In Volleyball (18+) 6–7 p.m. Tennis Intermediate Live Ball (18+)	Thursday 10–11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)	10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Pickleball (18+) FREE 12–1 p.m. Pilates (18+) 1:30–2:30 p.m. Strength & Flexibility (18+) 2–5 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE 4–5 p.m. Petite Bakers (ages 3-5) 4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10) 5:30–7:30 p.m. Open Gym (18+) FREE 6–7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (18+) 6:30–7:30 p.m. Yoga Vinyasa (18+)	Friday 9–10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE 10 a.m.–1 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play) 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Open Gym (adult) FREE 2–3:30 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE 3–6 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play) 4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10) 5–8 p.m. Jr. Warriors Games 6–7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 10-12)	Saturday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Jr. Warriors Games 9:30–10:30 a.m. Family Zumba—Play Pass \$ 11 a.m.–4 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
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STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular feature of the Noe Valley Voice, introducing new stores and restaurants in Noe Valley. This month, we spotlight a new eatery that many lovers of Italian food in the neighborhood have already discovered: Fiorella on 24th Street.

FIGORELLA

4042 24th St. between Noe and Castro streets

415-875-9894

<https://www.fiorella-sf.com/>

Some of the best seats in the house at Fiorella are the six at the back bar in front of a window that looks onto the restaurant's wood-fire pizza oven. The seating area is unique to the Noe Valley location, one of four in the Fiorella family of classy Italian bistros.

"Our wood-fire ovens are definitely the centerpieces in all of our restaurants' kitchens. Our Clement Street location gives you a little bit of a view into that, but Noe Valley is our first true pizza bar," says co-founder Brandon Gillis.

Gillis launched Fiorella with fellow chef Boris Nemchenok in 2015 at the Richmond District location. The one in Noe, at 4042 24th St., where Patxi's Pizza used to be, opened in late June.

"We had probably three separate lease negotiations in Noe Valley leading up to us opening there," says Gillis.

The menu changes seasonally, but the standouts this fall have been Fiorella's pizzas, ranging in price from \$18 to \$25. Among the biggest hits, says Gillis, is the Swiss chard and guanciale pie, which also comes with fior di latte, pecorino romano, garlic, and pickled onions.

Added to the menu in December will be a special quattro formaggi pizza made with four cheeses: fior di latte, provolone, fontina, and parmigiano reggiano. Part of the restaurant's Good Neighbor Pie program, the quattro formaggi was selected by students at Alvarado Elementary School as their favorite of three pies they were given to taste-test. With each one sold at the restaurant, 15 percent will be donated to the school.

Among the pasta dishes (\$17-\$25) is a traditional spaghetti pomodoro with a simple tomato sauce, basil, butter, and parmigiano reggiano. A favorite with Noe Valley diners has been the radiatore alla vodka diavolo pomodoro in a cream sauce with chili, vodka, basil, and parmigiano.

There are various antipasti options (\$9-\$19) to start a meal with, including herbed chicken wings and the kid-friendly Nonna's Meatballs, served with marinara, parmigiano, and parsley. A bestseller has been the wood-roasted octopus served with tomato braised butter beans, hazelnut and cherry pepper gremolata, Castelvetrano olives, and a fennel herb salad.

Weekend brunch features an egg sandwich on a house-made poppyseed bun served with cheese, Calabrian aioli, and a choice of bacon or Fiorella's breakfast sausage (\$14). Also on the menu is the Fiorella Burger, with house-ground beef, cheese, aioli, onions, lettuce on a poppyseed bun, and a side salad (\$20).

The dessert menu currently has four items (\$10-\$12), including a blueberry almond cake and a strawberry sorbetto.



Whether you're sitting next to the wood-fire oven or near the restaurant's entrance, Fiorella on 24th Street near Castro Street provides a warm and cozy dining experience.

Photo by Art Bodner

There is an extensive wine list, plus beers and a cocktail menu heavily focused on spritz drinks.

As a departure from the masculine-sounding names of more traditional Italian restaurants and to suggest a slightly more feminine aesthetic, notes Gillis, the owners chose to call their eatery Fiorella. Meaning "little flower" in Italian, the name also offers up a double entendre since flour is the main ingredient in their dishes.

"It seemed connective to the design of the spaces, which are not very masculine spaces," says Gillis. "It definitely sounds softer and mildly friendly. That is how we landed on it."

There are no red-and-white-checked tablecloths or candles in old Chianti wine bottles at the tables inside Fiorella. The look and feel is more clean and minimalist, with a large bar and waiting area for patrons at the entrance.

The main dining room, which seats 68, is split in two by a large bookcase adorned with bottles of "O-rancini" orange wine (\$66) made in Mendocino along the top shelf and glass vitrines adorning the middle shelf. Curtains on the bottom row block views into the banquette built on the other side of the shelves.

People will find Fiorella to be a cozy place for family meals, Gillis says. "Families are a part of our DNA at Fiorella."

Also, he says, those who may wish to take someone out on a date or hold a business meeting will feel comfortable dining there. "It is built around the idea you can have all these different experiences, and each experience feels appropriate."

The restaurant is open Monday through Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m. It is also open for lunch Friday through Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. On Fridays, Fiorella reopens from 5 to 9:30 p.m.; on Saturdays from 4:30 to 9:30 p.m.; and on Sundays from 4:30 to 9 p.m.

So far, the busiest time is lunch. "What the data... is showing is the real appeal of Fiorella is lunch. People definitely, as soon as 12 o'clock hits, they are coming in and ordering pizza, pasta, and meatballs," says Gillis.

He does allow that brunch on the weekends is a work in progress.

But he has "no complaints. Noe Valley has been very kind to us. We are really grateful to be here," Gillis says.

Starting on Christmas Eve and running through New Year's Day, Fiorella will offer a special supplementary menu with four savory dishes and one dessert. Gillis was still working on it when he spoke with the *Voice* in mid-November.

For Chanukah this year, which begins on Dec. 25 and runs through Jan. 2, the restaurant will be selling latkes in house and for takeout or delivery. Fiorella will be closed on Christmas, however, but open on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

"We will be closing on Christmas Eve half an hour early," notes Gillis.

—Matthew S. Bajko



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Dec. 1: The tree is LIT at the Noe Valley Town Square, 5-7 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 1, 8 & 15: FOLK YOGA offers free all-level classes; bring water and a mat. 11 am-noon. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 1-25: A Noe Valley Holiday **WINDOWS** & Parklets Contest will be judged Dec. 18, starting at 10 am at the Square, 3861 24th. noemerchants.com

Dec. 3-Jan. 1: Lola Gallery features ART by Linda Trunzo, Shiva Pakdel, Kate Marsh, Ellen Rosenthal, Kim Pabilonia, and Willa Owings. Tues.-Sun., noon-6 pm. 1250 Sanchez; lolasanfrancisco.com

Dec. 5: The Noe Valley WINE WALK begins at the Town Square, 3861 24th St., at 4 pm. noemerchants.com

Dec. 5, 12, 19 & 26; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30: Family STORYTIMES are Thursdays 10:15 am and 11 am. Space is limited to 20 children. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 5, 12, 19 & 26: Mutiny Radio hosts free OPEN MIC comedy at The BAR on Dolores on Thursdays, 8 pm. 1600 Dolores. 695-1745.

Dec. 6 & Jan. 3: Bethany Church RINGS Out Danger to oppose gun violence. Bells toll first Fridays, 9:30 am; bethanysf.org

Dec. 6: First Fridays' **COMEDY NIGHT** at The Dubliner is 9 to 10:30 pm. Dubliner, 3838 24th. 826-2279; gleckler:joe@gmail.com

Dec. 7 & Jan. 4: The Noe Valley KNITTING CIRCLE meets 10 am to 12:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey.

Dec. 7: The BALTIC **HOLIDAY** Fair offers crafts and edibles. 10 am-4 pm. Latvian Hall, 425 Hoffman. 647-9398

Dec. 7: Omnivore Books welcomes Emily Luchetti's fourth annual JAM Pop-Up, noon to 3 pm. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Dec. 7: Make a mason jar SNOW GLOBE at the Noe Valley Library. 3-4 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

C A L E N D A R

Dec. 7-28: The Noe **FARMERS** Market has fresh produce, food, and music Saturdays 8 am to 1 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 7-28: Shuffle along with NOE WALKS on Saturdays. Meet at 24th and Sanchez 10 am.

Dec. 8: Singer/songwriter Alie Halla and violin/cello player Nina Garcia perform at ACOUSTIC Sundays. 1-3 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th.

Dec. 8: WALK a labyrinth in the Valley Ministry, 6:30 p.m. 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317; noevalleyministry.org

Dec. 8: The Simas Trio of SF Symphony fame plays a **CLASSICAL** concert at Music on the Hill. 7:30 pm. St. Aidan's Church, 101 Gold Mine Dr. 820-1429; mothmuse2@yahoo.com

Dec. 10 & Jan. 14: It's LEGO and Board Game Night. 6-7:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 13: Bethany Church hosts a LABYRINTH walk at 7 pm. 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 13: The Noe Valley FILM CLUB screens *The Holdovers*. 2 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 14: The Randall Museum's free Winter CRAFT DAY features gnome sculptures, cards, and laser-cut ornaments. 10 am-2 pm. 199 Museum Way. 554-9600; randallmuseum.org

Dec. 14: Join the Bethany Sing Along and **CAROLING** Extravaganza from 5 to 8:30 pm. 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 14: The Noe Valley Library hosts a discussion on A.I. with Stanford's DATA Science Director Chris Mentzel. 2-3 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 14: Rhythm & Motion offers a free DANCE workout, 4 pm. Town Square, 3861 24th.

Dec. 15: Volunteers for the monthly Noe Valley CLEANUP DAY meet at the Town Square to pick up supplies. 10 am-noon. 3861 24th. togetherSF.org

Dec. 15: The Noe Valley Ministry hosts a Christmas SING ALONG. 6:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez. noevalleyministry.org

Dec. 15: TUBA Christmas performs holiday classics at the Noe Valley Town Square. 1-3 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 19: Bethany holds a FOOD drive for Mission Education Center families. Donate non-perishables at 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 20: The Short Stack BOOK CLUB discusses *The Last White Man* by Mohsin Hamid. 3-4 pm. the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 20: The family-friendly CASTRO Night Market features LGBTQ+ artists and live music. 5-9 pm. 18th & Castro.

Dec. 21: Best Medicine hosts standup at SF COMEDY Underground, aka Noe Valley Farm, on third Saturdays. 7:30-9:30 pm. 1828 Castro. Eventbrite; Bestmedicinethebay@gmail.com

Dec. 22: Bell Appeal gives a HAND-BELL concert. 1 pm. Bethany UMC, 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 24: Noe Valley Ministry holds a **CHRISTMAS EVE** Service at 5 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 282-2317; noevalleyministry.org

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve services at Bethany UMC are 4 pm (family) and 7 pm. 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 28: The Main Library celebrates KWANZAA, lighting the first candle of the kinara, followed by music and food. 1-5 pm. 100 Larkin. 557-4400; sfpl.org

Dec. 28: City Guides offers a Noe Valley WALKING TOUR 2-3:30 pm. 451 Jersey. Space is limited, registration

required: 375-0468; sfcityguides.org

Dec. 29: **SWING SHIFT** performs songs from the great American songbook. 1-3 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 29: Chabad of Noe Valley and Gan Noe preschool host CHANUKAH **Wonderland**, with a giant menorah, music, and a firetruck gelt drop. 3:30-5:30 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. chabadnoevalley.org

Dec. 30: Prepare and deliver MEALS to the unhoused, starting 2 pm at Bethany Church, 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 31: The Noe Valley **NIGHT MARKET**, with local vendors, food, and entertainment, is from 4 to 8 pm, on last Tuesdays. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noemerchants.com

Jan. 7: Join Noe Valley Ministry in delivering meals to the homeless Jan. 7. Call 282-2317 for info. 1021 Sanchez; noevalleyministry.org

Jan. 7, 14, 21 & 28: Glen Park Rec Center hosts 6 pm MOVIE NIGHTS: *The Payoff* (1930) Jan. 7, *Rain* (1932) Jan. 14, *Bowery at Midnight* (1942) Jan. 21, and *Penny Serenade* (1941) Jan. 28. 70 Elk. 239-4007.

Jan. 12: Pianist Aaron Diehl performs "Stride and Ragtime" at a NOE MUSIC. 4-6 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. noemusic.org

Jan. 15: Historian Evelyn Rose gives a TALK to "Deconstruct the History of Rancho San Miguel." 6-7:30 pm. Glen Park Library, 2825 Diamond. glenparkhistory.org

Jan. 15: The group Upper Noe Neighbors MEETS at 7 pm at Upper Noe Rec Center, 295 Day. uppernoeneighbors.com

SKIP JANUARY! The next *Voice* Calendar will be for the February 2025 issue. The deadline for calendar items is Jan. 20. Events in Noe Valley receive priority. Email calendar@noevalleyvoice.com

CHILDREN’S FICTION

Singer Ani DiFranco’s picture book *Show Up and Vote* (illustrated by Rachelle Baker) explains how the voting system works. Ages 3-6.

In *This Land*, Ashley Fairbanks and illustrator Bridget George explore the histories of our homelands. Ages 4-8.

Etta Extraordinaire Goes to the White House, written by Roda Ahmed and Charnaie Gordon and illustrated by Chloe Burgett, encourages children to work together. Ages 4-8.

A young snorkeling enthusiast tries to help an endangered reef in *Gracie Under the Waves* by Linda Sue Park, with illustrations by Maxine Vee. Ages 8-12.

National Book Award winner Pete Hautman writes about a boy who finds a furry companion in *Answers to Dog*. Ages 9-12.

CHILDREN’S NONFICTION

The editors of Quarry Books offer photo-illustrated instructions for making crafts in *Super Fun Crafts for Kids: Bead, Crochet, Knot, Braid, Sew!* All ages.

David L. Harrison describes the ecosystem of a tree in rhythmic text in *A Tree Is a Community*; illustrated by Kate Cosgrove. Ages 4-8.

The Life-Changing Magic of Baking is a guide for beginners by Joy Wilson and Cliff Wilson, illustrated by Tatiana Kamshilina. Ages 6-10.

Humorous tales from mythology are told in *Greeking Out: Heroes and Olympians*, by Kenny Curtis and Jillian Hughes, illustrated by J. Espila. Ages 8-12.

All Things Friendship: A Guide to Celebrating Old Friends, Making New Ones, and Navigating Sticky Social Situations is written by Sara Jin Li and Camila Rivera and illustrated by Edith Kurosaka. Ages 8-12.

CHILDREN’S EBOOKS

In *Apples and Pumpkins*, written by Anne Rockwell, illustrated by Lizzy Rockwell, a family prepares for autumn. Ages 2-4.

Brendan Wenzel’s picture book *Hello Hello Opposites* compares the different features of an array of animals. Ages 2-4.

In *One Light*, written by Christie Matheson and illustrated by Anuska Allepuz, Mouse lights a candle when she feels lonely on a dark night. Ages 3-6.

Spaceboy, by David Walliams with illustrations by Adam Stower, is a mystery set in the 1960s. Ages 8-12.

Twelve-year-old Skye is reunited with her long-missing father and brother in *The Shape of Lost Things* by Sarah Everett. Ages 8-12.

TEEN FICTION

S.M. Beiko’s *The Door in Lake Mallion* is the second book in the fantasy/adventure Brindlewatch Quintet. Ages 12-17.

In *Something Like Right* by H.D. Hunter, a biracial boy falls in love when he transfers to an alternative school. Ages 12-18.

In *The Loss of the Burying Ground* by J. Anderson Coats, shipwrecked teen girls must work together to survive. Ages 14-17.

Teens face the complications of first queer love in *Don’t Let It Break Your Heart* by Maggie Horne. Ages 16 and up.

TEEN EBOOKS

Thief of the Heights, by Son M. with illustrations by Robin Yao, is a graphic novel set

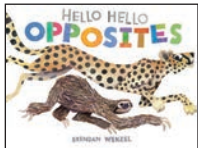
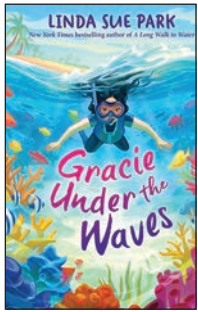
CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Sins of Omission by Michael Blake

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MORE BOOKS TO READ

Reading in a Winter Wonderland



If you’re looking for diversion over the holidays, check out the events this month at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library at 451 Jersey St. (see column at right). Children will get a kick out of building snow globes (Dec. 7) or creating LEGO igloos on Board Game Night (Dec. 10). Adults might enjoy hearing Stanford Data Science program director Chris Mentzel talk about “everyday” artificial intelligence on Dec. 14.

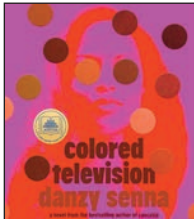
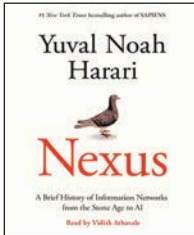
Meanwhile, librarians Madeleine Felder, Amy Lewis, and Mary Fobbs-Guillory (branch manager) invite you to peruse the new additions to the branch’s book and movie collections.

Voice bookworm Karol Barske, working from her office at the North Pole, has written short descriptions of the titles in hopes of illuminating the works.

To put items on hold snow-globally, head over to SFPL.org or get the mobile app for the catalog at <https://sfpl.org/services/mobile-resources/library-catalog-mobile-apps/>.

If you need to talk with a Noe Valley librarian, call 415-355-5707.

The branch points out that all San Francisco Public Libraries will be closed on Christmas Day, Wednesday, Dec. 25, 2024, and on New Year’s Day, Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025.



in Muqadas, a vertical city stacked above disease-infested waters. Ages 13-17.

Spectacular: A Caraval Holiday Novella is the fourth in a fantasy series by Stephanie Garber, illustrated by Rosie Fowinkle. Ages 13-18.

Despite her special powers Mona doesn’t want to be chosen queen, in the romantic fantasy *Divine Mortals* by Amanda M. Helander. Ages 14-17.

In David Ferraro’s “queernormative *Bridgerton*-style” mystery *A Vile Season*, the god of vampires challenges Count Lucian to become mortal and search for vampire hunters. Ages 14 and up.

In the graphic novel *Girllmode*, by author Magdalene Visaggio and artist Paulina Ganucheau, a recently transitioned new kid in high school looks for ways to be true to herself. Ages 14 and up.

ADULT FICTION

The Mighty Red by Louise Erdrich revolves around the guests at a North Dakota wedding.

Linked characters find their relationships thrown into chaos in *Rejection*, a novel in stories by Tony Tulathimutte.

The psychological thriller *Entitlement* by Rumaan Alam deals with the pitfalls of wealth and philanthropy.

A Dublin lawyer and his brother, a competitive chess player, grieve the loss of their father, in *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney.

ADULT NONFICTION

Rebecca Nagle reports on the removal of Native Americans to treaty lands in *By the Fire We Carry: The Generations-Long Fight for Justice on Native Land*.

Zahav Home: Cooking for Friends and Family, by Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook, offers heart-healthy Middle Eastern recipes.

Yuval N. Harari analyzes the impact of digital communication in *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI*.

Roland Allen defends the use of a simple tool in *The Notebook: A History of Thinking on Paper*.

ADULT EBOOKS

In Danzy Senna’s novel *Colored Television*, a Los Angeles writer is tasked with creating “the Jackie Robinson of biracial comedies.”

LIBRARY EVENTS

Storytimes are on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m., Dec. 5, 12, 19 & 26. Tickets, limited to 20 children with care-taker, are available at the reference desk beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Children and their families can make a **Crayon Rubbing** on Friday, Dec. 6, from 3 to 4 p.m.

The Noe Valley **Knitting Circle** also welcomes those who crochet and macrame, and meets on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Create mason jar **Snow Globes** at a workshop for ages 7 and older, on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 3 to 4 p.m.

Alicia Reyes offers Pan-American companion **Plant Stories** on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 2 to 3 p.m. Space is limited; first come, first served.

Get drop-in **Tech Help** from the library staff on Monday, Dec. 9, from 2 to 3 p.m. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org.

Family LEGO and **Board Game Night** is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

All ages can make a **Felt Craft** at a workshop on Wednesday, Dec. 11, from 4 to 5 p.m. Space is limited; first come, first served.

The Noe Library **Film Club** screens the 2023 comedy/drama *The Holdovers*, on Friday, Dec. 13, from 2 to 4:15 p.m.

Chris Mentzel, director of the Data Science program at Stanford, discusses **Everyday Artificial Intelligence** on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 2 to 3 p.m.

Recreate the **Northern Lights** in pastels, with artist Dana Merrill, on Sunday, Dec. 15, from 2 to 3 p.m. Space is limited: first come, first served.

Super Soccer Stars teaches workshops for parent/caregivers and ages 0 to 1, 11:15 a.m., and ages 2 to 3, 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., Monday, Dec. 16; reservations required: 415-355-5707.

The Short Stack **Book Club** discusses *The Last White Man* by Mohsin Hamid on Friday, Dec. 20, from 3 to 4 p.m. Copies are held at the Noe Valley circulation desk for checkout.

Meet at the library for a **City Guides Walking Tour**, “Village Within a City,” exploring historic sites in Noe Valley, on Saturday, Dec. 28, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Space is limited: registration required.

All events take place at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library, 451 Jersey St. For information, call 415-355-5707 or visit sfpl.org.

An American spy infiltrates an anarchist collective in France in *Creation Lake*, a novel by Rachel Kushner.

Oliver Radclyffe’s memoir *Frighten the Horses* describes the perilous journey of transitioning.

Hope for Cynics: The Surprising Science of Human Goodness by Jamil Zaki offers ways to balance negative thinking.

ADULT DVD/BLU-RAY

Concussed: The American Dream is a 2024 sports documentary starring Brett Favre and Jim McMahon.

Coup! is a 2023 comedy/thriller set during the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, directed by Joseph Schuman and Austin Stark.

Furiosa, A Mad Max Saga is a 2024 origin story directed by George Miller and starring Anya Taylor-Joy and Chris Hemsworth.

Goodbye, Hello is a 2024 comedy/drama directed by Jack Cooper Stimpson, featuring Steve Guttenberg.

Kinds of Kindness is the latest dark comedy directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, starring Emma Stone and Willem Dafoe (2024).



Annotations by Voice bookworm Karol Barske

BRANCH HOURS

Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library 451 Jersey St., 355-5707						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	11-6	10-8	12-8	10-6	1-6	10-6

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A Shaggy Dog Story

Longtime Voice contributor and beloved friend Florence Holub, who passed away in August 2018 five months shy of her 100th birthday, wrote and illustrated this piece 33 years ago, for the December 1991 issue. It's the tale of a scruffy stranger who padded into Noe Valley one day in search of a home.

The stray dog who wandered up our steep hill 10 years ago was a pitiful-looking creature with thick gray matted fur, head hanging low, and a slow ponderous pace. Our mailman offered this undocumented bit of lore: “Old dogs always come to the top of a hill to die.” This statement, as well as his appearance, reinforced the already sympathetic inclination of the residents of our block, and since we didn’t know what to call him, my husband Leo dubbed the canine Underdog.

Our neighbor, the late Janet Pera (a tenderhearted animal lover), was the first to put out a bowl of water, and with this small act of kindness the dog settled into the life of our street.

During the ensuing days, bowls began to appear on doorsteps up and down the block, and as Underdog made his daily rounds, his steps became quicker and his head was held higher. It became apparent that he was not about to die.

At first, he slept in the open carports below the apartments at Church and 21st streets until driven away by nocturnal headlights. Gradually, he gravitated to our house, sleeping on the front porch, where we had placed a blanket for him. Strangely, he never barked, although our old dog Fred, who was indignant, barraged him with furious “yaps” through the cracks around the front door.

Underdog remained so reticent we wondered if he was mute. But perhaps this trait had allowed him to survive as a street dog—he looked as if he had been wandering for some time.

At first, he allowed no one to touch him. Whenever a contact gesture was made, he retreated backwards, just out of reach. After days of offering reassurance, however, Leo was able to touch him, and slowly the dog responded. Then he allowed Janet to pet him, but she fled home in tears, crying, “The poor animal has lumps all over him!”

This was true, but fortunately the lumps turned out to be just big clumps of matted fur, which Leo set about

FLORENCE’S FAMILY ALBUM

Illustrated Reminiscences by Florence Holub

getting rid of.

Each day on our front stairs, Leo struggled with comb and brush to dislodge the tangles, but it was a futile effort. The combings did improve the shaggy fellow’s appearance, however, and, we assumed, his chances of finding a home. But we were not nearly as concerned about his coat as we were about his neck, because strays were picked up regularly by the Animal Care and Control van. To help Underdog avert this fate, a local telephone network sprang up, with the neighbors pursuing every possible lead to find a haven for this hound—before the dog-catcher caught up with him.

Just when we had almost given up hope, our neighbor Rhea, the widow who lived across the street, informed us that she was considering adopting the dog. It didn’t take long—all she had to do was look into his trusting eyes. The rapport was mutual, and the decision to take him home was made.

The next day, in celebration, the four of us—Rhea, Leo, myself, and Underdog—went to the groomer, who offered his expert opinion. He said that Underdog was in excellent health, was accustomed to being groomed, and was only about three years old. As to his breed, he was less certain, but he judged him to be a schnauzer. Because of the heavy matting, the groomer estimated that Underdog was carrying six months of neglect on his back, so he clipped him down to the skin, but he left the traditional schnauzer moustache.

We chose a red collar and leash, then Rhea took him home to his new life as a pampered house dog. He proved to be adaptable, intelligent, housebroken, and musical! This was important because Rhea had shared musical evenings with her late husband Ted—she at the piano and he on the flute. It had come as a delightful surprise one evening, as Rhea played at the keyboard, to hear her pet raise his voice in a high-pitched, lilting accompaniment. After that, they often performed together. Rhea became convinced that he preferred French music,

so she usually chose Debussy or another French composer for their duets.

On Underdog’s second visit to be clipped, the groomer stated firmly, “This dog isn’t a schnauzer after all, he’s a standard gray poodle,” and proceeded to give the appropriate clip, complete with top knot.

Underdog was now a sturdy, fine-looking animal with a long thin tail ending in a plume, and perfect white teeth through which an amusing pink tongue hung out. He had become so elegant, in fact, that Rhea renamed him Jacques.

Jacques had a delightful way of welcoming his human friends. He would bound into the air, five feet or more, again and again. Whether Rhea had been gone for five minutes or five hours, she got the same joyful reception.

Conversely, whenever young men walked up 21st Street, Jacques, from behind the wrought-iron gate, would bark angrily until they were out of sight, perhaps sparked by the memory of some earlier mistreatment.

Rhea, like so many widows, had been left with an empty home and terrible loneliness. But Jacques changed all of that. A beautiful relationship developed between them as they became a familiar sight walking around the hill-top—the lady and her gray poodle. On their daily outings, they met other people walking their dogs, and a whole new social life evolved for Rhea during the following months, until illness struck. Then various neighbors, or Rhea’s nurse, took turns walking Jacques.

Upon Rhea’s death, the neighborhood was spurred into action once again, expanding the network until it extended along the Peninsula. One man came from Woodside, but alas, he had a larger dog in mind. Then a tiny lady who had once raised poodles came by. She led Jacques back and forth on the lead. He performed to her satisfaction, and she took him home with her. Within a few days he was leaping happily into the air, she reported, and in a

few weeks he was singing as she played the piano.

We thought all was well, but she phoned not too long after that, to say she was obliged to return him, upon doctor’s orders, because he was too large for her to handle. This was apparent when I arrived at her apartment to pick him up. In recognition, he jumped up and down explosively and nearly knocked his frail mistress down.

Our neighbor Janet then found a new mistress for Jacques, and so for a few months the late Alice King, who worked at the Bank of America on 24th Street, could be seen walking a gray poodle around the neighborhood. But Jacques, for some strange reason locked away in his memory, was unable to accept Alice’s grown son, so she was forced to return him.

Undaunted, we put together an illustrated flyer and posted it everywhere, including the open-air flower shop operated by Barbara and Louis Bischoff, next to Aquarius Records [where Lit’l Lizards is now 3961 24th St.]. The flier caught the attention of the owner of Aquarius, Butch Bridges. Butch was familiar with poodles because his mother had always had one, so when he saw Jacques, he was impressed.

At their arranged meeting, Jacques was trembling from a disquieting day of unexpected changes, but when his prospective owner knelt to reassure him, he calmed down. Butch then led him home to a new and more athletic lifestyle. In keeping with this new lifestyle, he altered the dog’s name to Jock. There was a change in the music, too. Instead of French classical, it became strictly rock ‘n’ roll.

During a short period of adjustment, Jock barked his benefactor from room to room, but the response he received was only one of kindness, patience, and firmness, until he recognized this young man as a friend. In a few days, Jock was leaping into the air joyously every time his master returned.

They became constant companions, and could often be seen walking or jogging around 26th and Church streets. They tended the store together, made business calls with Jock sitting regally in the back seat of Butch’s foreign sports car, and even went shopping on 24th Street.

I met them one day during the Christmas rush, and Butch told me, “Jock’s getting along fine, everybody loves him—even the old cat accepts him—and he’s transferred completely to me.” Then, proudly, “He’s a good dog!”

Butch and Jock had three great years together, but then Jock fell ill, and when his vital organs stopped functioning properly, his master performed the last act of kindness—he held his dog in his arms as the doctor put him to sleep.

Jock is buried in Marin County, close to a house near a wooded area, where he and Butch used to wander on weekends.

As Christmas approaches, I am reminded of the joy we all felt for the good fortune of our furry friend—Jock, alias Jacques, alias Underdog. ■



and now for the

RUMORS

behind the news

News of the Whirled

By Mazook

THE BIG ELECTION DAY, Nov. 5, has come and gone. In Noe Valley, according to the San Francisco Department of Elections, of the 16,498 who are registered to vote, almost 92% (14,358) cast their ballots. Citywide, the voter turnout was just under 80%.

The DoE defines the perimeter of our neighborhood as a line drawn on 30th Street, Guerrero, 22nd Street, Grand View, and Diamond Heights Boulevard. Note that the “Noe Valley” boundaries changed in 2022.

In the new Noe Valley vote for President, only 861 (6%) voted for Donald J. Trump. Kamala Harris won handily here with 13,040 votes (91%). Trailing both was the Green Party candidate Jill Stein with a mere 225 votes (1.57%). The vote for Robert F. Kennedy was miniscule, 75 (.52%).

Among the votes for U.S. Senator representing California, winner Adam Schiff got almost 92% in Noe for the remaining partial term and the new six-year term. Republican Steve Garvey garnered just 8.33%. Our rep in the House of Representatives, Democrat Nancy Pelosi, won 90% of our vote, while Republican Bruce Lou scored only 10%.

For the California State Senate, 90% in Noe voted for Democratic incumbent Scott Wiener, and 10% chose Republican Yvette Corkrean. State Assemblyman Matt Haney, a Democrat, prevailed for reelection over Republican Manuel Noris-Barrera, winning 91% of the vote.



WE DIDN'T NOE whom we wanted for mayor. The mayor's race was extremely close. Daniel Lurie squeaked by with 29%, with incumbent London Breed getting 28%, Aaron Peskin 25%, Mark Farrell 15%, and Ahsha Safai just 2.5% in Noe.

In the race for City Attorney, David Chiu vanquished Richard Woon with 90 percent of the vote. Sheriff incumbent Paul Miyamoto beat Michael Juan (85% to 15%). And District Attorney Brooke Jenkins came away with 68% in Noe Valley to Ryan Khojasteh's 32%.



PROPS TO PROPOSITIONS: As did the rest of the state, Noe (83%) voted in favor of Prop. 2, which authorized bonds for schools. For Prop. 3, to protect same-sex marriage, Noe voted emphatically yes (94%). It passed statewide too.

Prop. 4, bonds for water and climate protection, passed with 86% saying yes here, and Prop. 5, which allowed more bonds for affordable housing, passed by the same number (but failed statewide). Prop. 6, eliminating involuntary servitude for incarcerated persons, passed here (86%) but failed in California.

Prop. 32, which would have raised the minimum wage, also failed statewide, disappointing Noe's residents, who were 77% in favor.

Prop. 33, a sneaky one authorizing local governments to enact residential rent control, failed by a 61 to 39 margin. Prop. 34, restricting the spending of prescription drug revenues, also failed, 62% no to 38% yes (but passed statewide).

Noe voters gave Prop. 35, providing long-term funding for Medi-Cal, a resounding yes (77%), and so did Ca.

And finally, 57% of Noe Valleons said yes to Prop. 36, which increased the penalties for drug and theft crimes.

Statewide, it passed with 68% approving.



WEIGHING THE MEASURES: In the San Francisco votes, Measure A, supporting renovation of school facilities, passed in Noe (81% to 19%). The same enthusiasm (81%) applied to Measure B, a \$390 million bond measure to repair trauma centers, clinics, and shelters to reduce homelessness.

Measure C, which would create a city inspector general, passed 61 yes to 30 no, but Measure D, which would have eliminated some city commissions, failed, with 59% of Noe voters saying no.

The competing Measure E, which would create a task force to review the need for city commissions, failed by a very close vote in Noe of 50.1% no to 49.9% yes. However, it passed citywide with 52.9% in favor.

Also failing in Noe was Measure F, which would have allowed police officers to continue working for the department after retiring (with pension payments deferred); 59% here said no.

Measure G, which would fund affordable housing for low-income seniors, families, or people with disabilities, passed in Noe (and the city), 59% in favor. Measure H to increase retirement benefits for firefighters won citywide but failed here, with 52% saying no.

After that no, the city said yes to everything.

In Noe, Measure I, increasing retirement benefits for nurses and 911 operators, passed with 73%. Measure J, funding programs serving children, youth, and families, passed (85% for).

When it came to Measure K, permanently closing the Upper Great Highway to private vehicles, 67% of Noe Valleons wanted to close it and build a park. As for measure L, to tax transportation network companies (Uber) and autonomous vehicles to fund public transit, we said okay by a 63 to 27 percent margin. Measure M, changing various business taxes, passed in Noe Valley, with 76% nodding their heads yes.

Measure N, which supported loans to train more paramedics, firefighters, police, nurses, etc., needed a 50% plus 1 affirmative vote to pass. Noe Valley helped, voting 50.05% yes, 49.95% no. N narrowly passed citywide with a yes vote of 51.72%.

And lastly—whew!—Measure O, supporting reproductive rights and services, was overwhelmingly approved in Noe with 91 percent of voters saying yes. (The city voted 84 percent in favor.)



THE LIFE'S WORK OF RUTH ASAWA: In October, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) announced it would host “the first major national and international museum retrospective of the groundbreaking work of Ruth Asawa (1926–2013).” As you may or may not know, Asawa was a prolific artist and a much loved resident of Noe Valley for over 50 years.

According to the press release, the show will premiere at SFMOMA from April 5 through Sept. 2, 2025, and feature more than 300 artworks, including sculpture, drawings, paintings, prints, and design objects, from both public and private collections. It will also explore “the ways her longtime home and garden served as the epicenter of her creative universe,” as well as highlight her collaboration with others and her dedication to arts advocacy, especially in schools.

In addition to Asawa's own work,” the press release adds, “the exhibition will include a select number of works by peers and mentors with whom Asawa engaged in creative dialogue, including Josef Albers, Imogen Cunningham, Buckminster Fuller, Ray Johnson, Hazel Larsen Archer, Merry Renk, and Marguerite Wildenhain.”

After Sept. 2, the retrospective will travel to New York City, Bilbao, Spain, and Basel, Switzerland, and close on Jan. 24, 2027, which would have been Asawa's 101st birthday.

Notes SFMOMA Director Christopher Bedford, “This exhibition provides an opportunity to celebrate the legendary Ruth Asawa, who was both a widely acclaimed artist and a hometown inspiration whose impact can be very much felt today.”

Mark your calendars. Truly a show we should not miss.



FIRE SALE: Life goes on in our valley. Engine Company No. 44 is looking for a new owner. The building, at 3816 22nd St., was erected in 1909 as a fire station accommodating horse and wagon use. In 1917, it was updated with new motorized firefighting equipment.

The firehouse protected Noe Valley and the Castro until 1958, when the engine company was relocated to new quarters at 1935 32nd Ave., according to the SFFD's guardiansofthecity.org website.

A year later, the fire department sold the Mission Revival style building at auction to artists Beth Van Hoesen and Mark Adams for less than \$15,000. The couple renovated the building but kept many of its distinctive firehouse features. It is one of 25 firehouses in San Francisco that were converted to single-family residences after 1906.

Adams and Van Hoesen lived and worked in the home for 40 years, often getting together with artist friends Wayne Thiebaud and Ruth Asawa. After their deaths, their estate was sold in probate court. In 2007, new owners launched a major remodeling.

Now the historic home has been listed for sale with an asking price of \$7.95 million. According to the real estate broker at Compass, the four-story home has been modernized to include an elevator, a chef's kitchen, skylights, and a gym. It has five bedrooms and six baths, and a two-car garage. But the good news is it still has a fire pole and a spiral staircase, and its original lookout tower.



DESIGN OF THE TIMES: Two new interior designers have moved into the neighborhood. Opening last month at 4071 24th St. near Castro is interior designer Kristen Peña. “I moved my studio to Noe Valley to be much closer to my home.

“Travel has always been a big part of my life,” Peña says. She attended architecture and design school at UC Berkeley, and launched her career first in advertising and then in children's clothing design. Along the way, she studied and traveled in Europe, Southeast Asia, Morocco, and Africa, among other places.

An award-winning designer, she has been recognized by *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Decor*, *House Beautiful*, *Real Simple*, *Luxe*, *Rue*, and many other publications. She was picked to show in the San Francisco Decorator Showcase in 2017, 2019, and 2020.

In her work, “we guide the design plan from the early stages of assessing our clients' needs, [through] the intricacies of working with architects and contractors, and through the complexities of buying, ordering, and installation,” says Peña. Her studio is called K Interiors.

Just opened last month at 649 Diamond at Elizabeth is interior designer Robbie McMillan. McMillan moved to Noe Valley from his studio on Union Street to be near his residence in Bernal Heights. He is a co-founder with Marcus Keller of the design firm AubreyMaxwell (in 2012). “Art plays a central role in our work, with carefully curated pieces adding depth and character,” the partners say.

“I can get to work from home in just

eight minutes,” says McMillan, “and I feel very connected to this neighborhood.” He says it was a perfect fit, since many of his clients live in Noe Valley. He shares the space with his longtime associate Mickey Coleman, who is a general contractor at Abbeyside Construction.



ALL BOOKED UP: Downtown Noe Valley was delighted when the new Noe Valley Books opened its doors on Nov. 20, in the space at 3957 24th St. where Folio Books closed last February, much to the dismay of the neighborhood.

It was supposed to be a soft opening, but the store soon filled with shoppers passing by, who had been surprised to see the door open.

“We were really looking for a soft open to work out our kinks,” said bookstore owner Katerina Argyres.

Argyres said some customers brought the staff champagne to mark the occasion. Others brought flowers.

Last May, Argyres, who used to be a Folio manager and then a co-owner, had set up a GoFundMe to raise money to refurbish the space and hire her former co-workers. Seven hundred plus donors have helped the bookstore raise more than \$153,000.

“We are so grateful to the neighborhood,” Argyres said. “The neighborhood's patrons are a dream clientele.”

Because Noe Valley Books is focused on bringing in fresh inventory, Argyres said the shop had temporarily halted accepting donations of used books. But, “we will be taking donations again” in the future, she said.

Hours at the store are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday.



FÉLICITATIONS, MON AMIE: Kudos to neighbor Cara Black, the author of more than 20 popular crime novels featuring French private investigator Aimée Leduc. Last month, the French Consul, in a New York ceremony, presented Black the Médaille d'Or du Rayonnement Culturel awarded by the international organization La Renaissance Française USA.

The honor was for Black's “distinguished work” in sharing historic and cultural insights about the city of Paris and her “contributing to French cultural understanding.”

As is her tradition, Black will be traveling with fans to Paris in April. She says she has a few spaces open for people who might want to spend a week—April 20–26 or April 27 to May 3—touring sites associated with the Leduc mysteries or with her second World War II thriller, *Night Flight to Paris*.

Those interested can email Meg at whalenmj55fmail@gmail.com or visit “April in Paris 2025” at Black's website, carablack.com.



I DREAMED I GOT A TICKET: On New Year's Day 2025, parking in Noe Valley is set to become *A Nightmare on 24th Street*. To increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists, late last year the state legislature passed and Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB-413, the “Daylighting Law,” which prohibits vehicles from stopping, standing, or parking within 20 feet of the approach side of a crosswalk, whether the crosswalk is marked or not. Citations (a \$40 fine) will start being issued in January.

There is a statewide movement to repeal the law. We'll see what happens.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS: Don't forget to shop in Noe Valley and support our local businesses. 2025 will be a challenging year for all of us. See you in the next Rumors column in February 2025. Ciao. Mazook. ■



THE
SWANN
GROUP

A NOTE OF GRATITUDE TO OUR CLIENTS AND COMMUNITY IN 2024!
WISHING YOU AND YOURS JOY, PEACE, AND PROSPERITY
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON. HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
-THE SWANN GROUP



20 Newman St. | Bernal Heights
2 BED | 1 BATH | \$1,175,000

BEHIND ITS CHARMING FACADE, THIS HOME PRESENTS A CAPTIVATING PIECE OF SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY, HAVING BEEN CRAFTED FROM TWO EARTHQUAKE SHACKS. METICULOUSLY RENOVATED AND MODERNIZED, THE MAIN LEVEL BOASTS A SPACIOUS OPEN-PLAN LIVING AND DINING AREA, CHARACTERIZED BY STUNNING EXPOSED BEAM CEILINGS AND PICTURESQUE VIEWS OF LUSH GREENERY FROM EVERY WINDOW. THE CHEF-INSPIRED KITCHEN FEATURES STAINLESS STEEL APPLIANCES, SOAPSTONE COUNTERTOPS, CUSTOM CABINETRY, AND BEAUTIFUL TILES, CREATING AN INVITING SPACE FOR CULINARY CREATIVITY. THE PRIMARY BEDROOM IS A SERENE RETREAT, COMPLETE WITH DOUBLE CLOSETS FEATURING CUSTOM BUILT-INS, VAULTED CEILINGS, AND FRENCH DOORS THAT OPEN ONTO A SUNNY PATIO ADORNED WITH SUCCULENTS AND A RAISED VEGETABLE GARDEN. A COZY SECOND BEDROOM IS PERFECTLY SUITED FOR USE AS A HOME OFFICE OR GUEST ROOM. CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN THE BASEMENT, YOU'LL FIND LAUNDRY FACILITIES AND AMPLE STORAGE. JUST MOMENTS FROM HOLLY PARK AND THE VIBRANT SHOPS AND CAFES OF CORTLAND STREET, THIS HOME IS ALSO MINUTES AWAY FROM NOE VALLEY, GLEN PARK, THE INNER MISSION, AND CONVENIENT ACCESS TO MUNI/BART AND HIGHWAYS 280/101. WITH AN IMPRESSIVE WALK SCORE OF 95, THIS PROPERTY TRULY EMBODIES THE ESSENCE OF URBAN LIVING.

765 Market St. #32H
Bespoke Four Seasons Residence
2 BED | 2.5 BATH | CALL FOR PRICING

EXPERIENCE THE PINNACLE OF LUXURY AT SKY HOUSE, AN EXTRAORDINARY TWO-BEDROOM RESIDENCE ON THE 32ND FLOOR OF THE PRESTIGIOUS FOUR SEASONS PRIVATE RESIDENCES. BOASTING SWEEPING VIEWS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY, YERBA BUENA GARDENS, AND THE VIBRANT MISSION BAY SKYLINE — THIS RESIDENCE IS A SERENE RETREAT AMIDST THE CITY'S MUSEUM CORRIDOR AND THE UPSCALE DESIGNER BOUTIQUES OF UNION SQUARE. TRANSFORMED BY AN EXTENSIVE REMODEL, SKY HOUSE EMBODIES MODERN SOPHISTICATION. EVERY DETAIL HAS BEEN METICULOUSLY CRAFTED, FEATURING A FULLY TRANSFORMED KITCHEN, CUSTOM CABINETRY, SPA-LIKE BATHROOMS, AND STATE-OF-THE-ART ELECTRICAL UPGRADES. BESPOKE FINISHES AND MASTERFUL TEXTURES CREATE AN AMBIANCE OF ENDURING ELEGANCE AND CONTEMPORARY SOPHISTICATION. BEYOND ITS EXQUISITE DESIGN, SKY HOUSE OFFERS AN ELEVATED LIFESTYLE ENRICHED BY THE EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES OF FOUR SEASONS LIVING. RESIDENTS ENJOY IN-ROOM DINING AND BESPOKE SERVICES, INCLUDING TAILORED WINE CONCIERGE PROGRAMS AND ACCESS TO A CURATED ART EXPERIENCE, ENSURING EACH DAY UNFOLDS AS A CELEBRATION OF LUXURY, CULTURE, AND UNPARALLELED EXCLUSIVITY AND COMFORT.



750 Sanchez St. | Eureka Valley
4 BED | 2 BATH | \$7,495,000

RARE HOME WITH ADJACENT LOT = ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES! PERCHED IN ONE OF SAN FRANCISCO'S MOST SOUGHT-AFTER ENCLAVES, THIS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY A BEAUTIFULLY APPOINTED HOME PAIRED WITH A RARE ADJACENT LOT. WITH BREATHTAKING DOWNTOWN VIEWS, THIS PROPERTY PROVIDES THE CANVAS TO CREATE SOMETHING EXCEPTIONAL: PERHAPS A POOL, A GUEST HOUSE, OR A VISIONARY PROJECT THAT'S ONLY LIMITED BY YOUR IMAGINATION. OPPORTUNITIES LIKE THIS, WITH SO MUCH POTENTIAL IN ONE OF THE CITY'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS AREAS, ARE NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND. THE HOME ITSELF IS FULLY DETACHED, OFFERING PRIVACY AND CHARM, SURROUNDED BY MATURE TREES AND LUSH GREENERY. INSIDE, YOU'LL FIND A PERFECT BLEND OF CLASSIC ELEGANCE AND MODERN COMFORT, FEATURING TALL BOXED CEILINGS, HARDWOOD FLOORS, AND AN OPEN-CONCEPT LIVING SPACE. THE MAIN LEVEL INCLUDES THREE SPACIOUS BEDROOMS, WHILE THE TOP-FLOOR PRIMARY SUITE OFFERS PANORAMIC VIEWS, A PRIVATE DECK, AND AN ADJACENT LOUNGE FOR ULTIMATE RELAXATION. OUTSIDE, MULTIPLE DECKS AND PATIOS PROVIDE IDEAL SPACES FOR ENTERTAINING OR QUIET RETREATS. JUST MOMENTS FROM DOLORES PARK AND THE VIBRANT NOE VALLEY, THIS PROPERTY COMBINES URBAN CONVENIENCE WITH THE EXCLUSIVITY AND POTENTIAL THAT FEW PROPERTIES CAN OFFER. SQ.FT. OHP FLOOR PLANS, PARTIALLY INCLUDES BASEMENT.

THE SWANN GROUP - MEET THE TEAM:



RACHEL SWANN



RACHEL HOOPER



BRYANT COVARRUBIAS



DREW RAHER



BRIAN TODD



KRISTAL POLLACK

415.225.7743
Team@SwannGroupSF.com
CalRE# 01860456

CONNECT WITH US:
f @SWANNGROUPSF | @THEREALDEALSf
WWW.SWANNGROUPSF.COM



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