



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Noe Valley 2025

The new year started off drier than our soaking December. Citizens of Noe gratefully grabbed a seat at the 24th Street parklets or the Town Square where there'll soon be yoga, music and dancing.

¿Dónde Está Mazook?

This January edition allows *Voice* reporters, editors, columnists and the Crossword to take an additional break while the creative writers of our nabe showcase their wares. We'll do the same again in August.

It's appropriate at this time to acknowledge some of the creative people that make this neighborhood so unique. Elizabeth Dekker and her Art Haus at 3977 24th Street showcases her wonderful paintings and mixed media. Art Haus also features art classes for kids and kids at heart.

Almost across the street at 3980 24th, artist and craftsman Basil Racuk creates one of a kind fashions and accessories from leather and silk and more.

How About a Warmup?

Didja eat yet? Noe Valley is the perfect place for nourishing fare— known for decades for the best coffee and bagels. Now you can count in Shari's Dumpling Kitchen at 3913 24th Street. It joins Firefly,NOVY (I'm on my 79th Chicken Wrap) and Mr. Digby's (best burger ever) in insuring we're fortified for Spring

Words About Our Sponsors

Those who buy and sell property in Noe Valley have excellent agents ready to assist them. In addition to getting the best deal for your dollar, many of them support the *Voice* through advertising. Thank you Rachel Swann, Jessica Branson, Claudia Siegel, Danielle Lazier, Stefano DeZereg, Hugh Groocock, Lamiisse Droubi and the entire team at Corcoran Icon. They and many other small businesses enable the level of professionalism that makes *The Noe Valley Voice* the best newspaper of its kind.

And a belated Happy Birthday to our premier kids store Small Frys at 3985 24th Street. They celebrated 40 years in business in 2024.



Elizabeth Dekker Sports the Classic American Denim jacket made by Basil Racuk.

• Grace D'Anca •

Buttons

Ancient royal blue tin
yellow roses almost worn away
dented top hard to open
buttons scattered
into the linen closet
among line dry scented sheets
my mother would apply
hospital-cornered.

Tiny cocoa-colored buttons
my grandmother covered for her
hand-made peau de soie dress I
would resurrect decades later

along with Bakelite buttons
shaped like mountains
snipped from dark wool coats
too shabby to wear
wool repurposed in braided rugs
shipped across the country
along with the cherry rocker
rescued from frozen winter rafters.

Blue buttons
all hues, forms, functions
origin unknown
I cannot part with
stashed now in the secret space
behind the O'Keefe and Merritt
stove
the door hard to open without a
plyers.

I wait and know
the time will come
for them.

More poetry
by Grace D'Anca
on page 7



Photo by Jack Tipple

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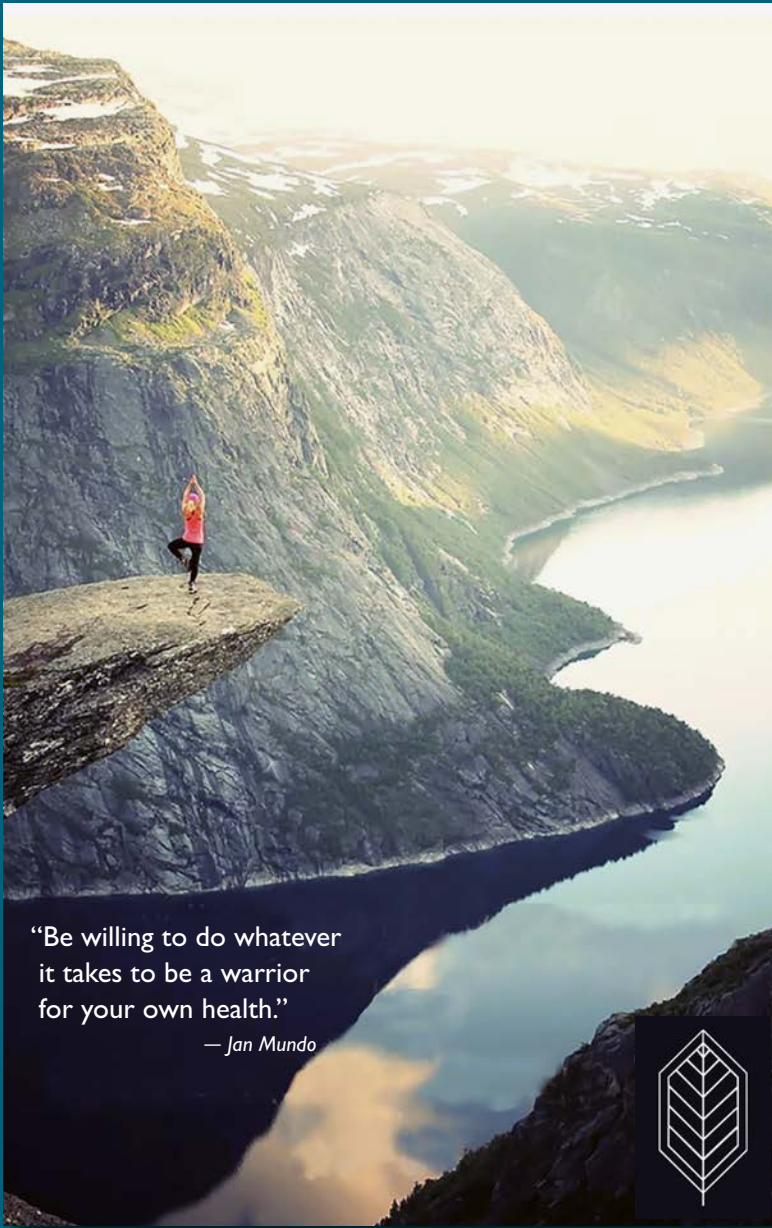
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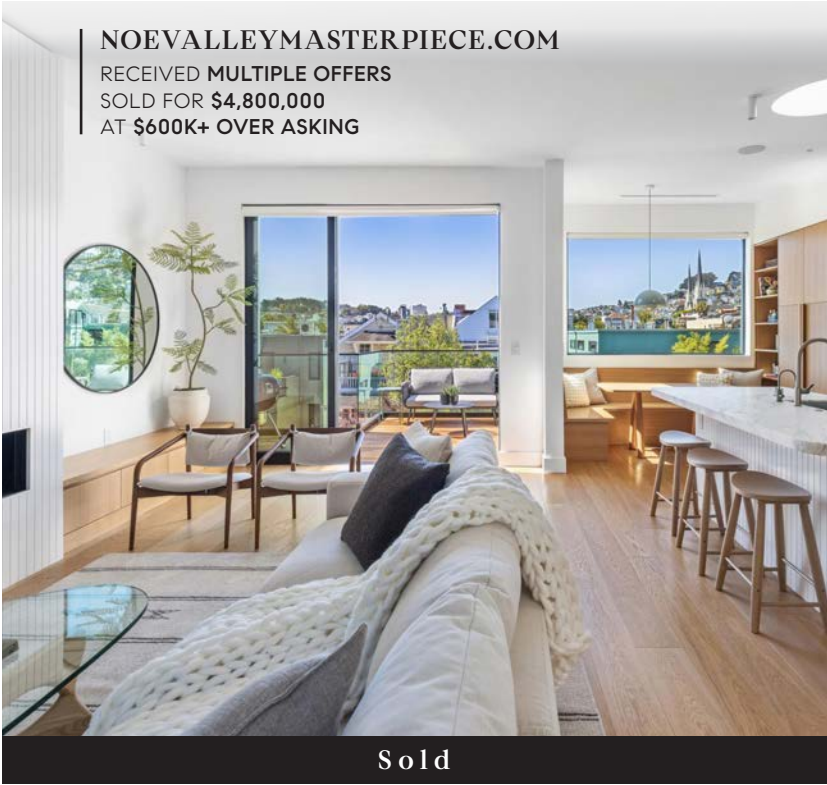
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Writers!

We'd love to see your work in the next
Noe Valley Voice bi-annual Literary issue this
August.

Your essays, poems and short fiction deserve
to be shown to the thousands of Voice
readers.

Email your work to
editor@noevalleyvoice.com and include a
short biography. MS Word format preferred.

The word limit for essays and short fiction is
750. Submit no more than three poems
please.

Deadline is July 15, 2025
(but earlier is better).

Thank You for helping us to

Raise the Words!

LETTERS 73 CENTS

Getting Around in Noe

Editor:
I have seen several articles about the
addition of stop signs, moving the J
Church stops and the danger to pedes-
trians trying to navigate the traffic may-
hem on Church Street.

Driving Church street from 30th to
21st, the amount of traffic, the uneven
pavement and "pits" around the street-
car line, beg the question as to why
Sanchez is still allowed to be a "slow
street." The sidewalk on both sides of
Sanchez is wide. The road is much
smoother than Church.

Sanchez is a street that goes across
town and must be re-opened to traffic,
Church street cannot handle the current
volume, Sanchez is flat while Dolores
is a series of hills. If speed is an issue,
speed bumps can be added to slow cars
down.

It is only common sense that another
through street is needed to alleviate the
congestion on Church Street. It is time
to open Sanchez Street to thru traffic.

Thank you,
Michele Nihipali
*Born, raised in San Francisco, grew up
on Laidley St.*

More Wag, Less Bite

Editor:
I was jogging along the sidewalk on
Castro next to the Lick middle school
last week. As I passed a gentleman
walking his dog quietly on a leash, the
dog lunged 3-4 ft to bite me on the back
of my thigh. I didn't have a phone with
me, but I pointed out I had been bit, and
had I been a four year old, the situation
would have been a disaster for all.
Dogs need to be walked, but owner
responsibility is also required. It would
be a good idea to start reporting the
number of dog bits per month in the
Voice. It is important data, as is crime
activity.

Thanks,
Jerel Glassman
22nd St.

City College Journalism

Editor:
The Spring 2025 semester kicks-off on
January 13. Check out the journalism
courses offered. If you are a San
Francisco resident, tuition is FREE! We
also offer a late start course in Copy
Editing. The course begins January 30
at the Mission Campus in Room 217
from 6:10-9:25 p.m. on Thursdays only.
The department also offers 18-unit cer-
tificates in Data & Multimedia
Journalism, Photojournalism,
Newspaper Production, and
Entrepreneurship in Journalism. Before
signing up for a course, one needs to
register as a student. Go to the college
website at ccsf.edu. If you have ques-
tions, call Department Chair Juan
Gonzales at 415-517-4426. I hope to
hear from you soon!

Juan Gonzales
City College



• Jan Masaoka •

Wild Fennel

Wild Fennel

Wild fennel grows where others don't
In sandy soil, in sun or shade
Wild fennel thrives when others
won't—
Its foliage delicate, yet unafraid.

Sometimes bitter; more often sweet
Sometimes unruly; at other times,
confined
Seldom admitting either error or
defeat,
Its victory its blossoms: glorious, yet
refined.

We knew not then what lay in store—
Wild fennel doesn't grow here any-
more.

Jan Masaoka has lived on
Alvarado St for 39 years. In this
time she's read every issue of the
The Noe Valley Voice from cover
to cover.

WHO TO CALL AT CITY HALL

NVV 12/2024

San Francisco Information Line www.sf311.org 311 or 415-701-2311
Burned-Out Streetlights, city owned (wooden poles call PG&E) 311
District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, mandelmanstaff@sfgov.org 415-554-6968
District 8 Community Safety Liaison Dave.Burke@sfgov.org
Graffiti Removal, Tree Removal, Street Cleaning (DPW) 415-695-2017
Homeless Services Street Outreach Services (SOS) medical care 415-355-2250
Lost or Injured Animals Animal Care and Control 415-554-6364
Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services sfmayor.org 415-554-7111
NERT (SFFD Neighborhood Emergency Response Teams) 415-970-2024
Parking Enforcement (blocked driveway) DPT Dispatch 415-553-1200
PG&E Gas or electrical issues 1-800-743-5000
Pothole Repairs potholes@sfdpw.org 415-554-5810
Recycling Recology San Francisco (free pickup bulky items) 415-330-1300
Rent Board San Francisco phone counseling 415-252-4600
Sewer Problems, Overflows 415-695-2096
SFMTA or Muni Call 311 or email MTABoard@sfmta.com 415-701-2311
Tree Planting urbanforestry@sfdpw.org 415-554-6700
24th Street Community Benefit District (Noe Valley Association) 415-519-0093
Water Leaks, Water Pressure 415-554-3289

"Never go to bed mad. Stay up and fight."
—Phyllis Diller, comedian and actor (1917–2012)

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

Special Thanks To

THE SWANN GROUP

Thank you to Rachel Swann and her team Drew, Brian, Bryant, Rachel H, and Jayson for 8 years of service to the Noe Valley Merchants & Professionals Association. Your inspiration and creativity have led us through some of our darkest times to the brightness on the other side. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Noe Valley and the success of the business community.

THANK YOU TO THOSE RESIDENTS AND THE NVMPA MEMBERS WHO SUPPORT OUR WINE WALK, WHICH KEEPS OUR CAFE LIGHTS ON!

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- Subs Inc
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- Noe Valley Wine Shop
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- Whole Foods
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- Noe Valley Town Square

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- Middle School Open House:**
Thursday January 16 from 6:30pm-7:30pm
- Catholic Schools Week Open House:**
Sunday January 26 from 9:00am-10:15am



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• Grace D’Anca •

If I Could Go to The Olympics

If I could go to the Olympics
it might be summer
when I had that record player
in a green tweed plastic case
when I played Born Too Late
over and over

if I went to the Olympics
in summer it would be
in the two-piece bathing suit
my very first one. I would have perfected
my high dive
with the double somersault
my nose plugs would not fall off
my eyes would not smart
from the jello blue water
that would not stream
from the bathing cap
with the chin strap
stinging my eyes shut

it would be summer
and I would not huddle
in the dingy towel
my mother crafted
from her worn terry robe

I would open my arms wide
stilt up on my toes
as if to fly
powered by my beatific smile

instead of wishing
I could die
in front of the cool kids
from the private school

if I could go to the Olympics
it might be winter
I would embellish
my high-top skates
with that milky white polish
so unused bits coagulated
on the ribs of the bottle neck
cold from the storage closet

I would save my allowance
to have those skates sharpened
at the shoe repair
next to the pizza parlor
I would beg Aunt Emma
a spinster who t
took care of priests
to make me red and white
pom poms to dance
off the ends of my laces

I would plead with my mother
to let me wear my old
tap dance costume
royal blue
with silver sequin swirls

I would perfect my
shoot the duck
and toe dance sprint
across the mirror of ice
I might even wear
some lipstick and rouge

I would be spectacular
that little gal
from Minnesota
announcers would say

If I could go to the Olympics
it would be in winter
if only my mother didn’t call me
by my real name
from across the rink
just as the street-lights came on

just as I perfected my routine
and was ready for the roses
my mother called me
by my real name
Come in
daddy will be home for dinner
soon she would say.

House of Memory

I speak of the oval oak desk
that squeaks on wooden wheels
in the corner
next to the fireplace
we never used

I speak of the scent
of LePage glue
fossilized in the drawer
in the desk
in that corner
next to the black horse
hair rocker with no arms

I speak of my father
when he snapped
the carved wood fru fru
atop the back of that chair
raging in Sicilian

I speak of my mother
tsk tsk tsking
at his anger
how this
comforted me

I speak of phone jams
on Saturday nights
in junior high
sitting at that desk
with light only
from the tarnished brass
lamp, longing
to belong

I speak of wishing
we had a party line
like Marilee up the block
she said she listened
to grown-up calls
she had brothers
she was the one
who washed the dishes
the brothers did not

she made her first cake
with her mother
on a Saturday afternoon
when she was nine

her mother taught Catechism
was a convert
Lutheran before
had chin hairs
and thought she was
always right

I speak of the dark wood table
with flower decals sitting
along the back wall of the basement
lost to the house sale when
my father moved to me
across the country

I speak of the trinkets
in the old Fannie Farmer box
in the linen closet
tucked between starchy sheets
and stiff towels, impeccably
folded by my nurse mother’s
sandpapery fingers

I speak of the cats still adoring
of me after tossing them
down the laundry chute
into my old bassinette
filled with dirty laundry
when I was six or seven

I speak of waking and walking
through that house of memory
as it used to be.

Grace D’Anca’s poetry has been featured in the *Noe Valley Voice*, Forum, Raquet Journal, Community Living Campaign journals, Elder Litquake publications, and also included in Deborah Slater Dance Theater’s *In The Presence of Absence*. She is also a member of Cosmic Elders and Drama With Friends theater ensembles, and of Dance Generators inter-age



January Sunset from Gold Mine Hill.

Photo by Sally Smith



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• Jack Tipple •

Helen Marie Colgan
3/10/55 — 7/18/24

We met in Noe Valley and after marrying, lived on Sanchez and later Homestead Street. In July of last year, she died in Tulsa after a brief battle with an aggressive form of breast cancer. The chemotherapy was hard on her but she went through it, loving our son and extended family of friends as best she could.

Her memorial gathered many—most of whom didn’t know her well, but were attracted to her cheerful and outgoing nature

She loved coffee and could drink it all day and into the night. She claimed she could still sleep soundly. She hated cilantro, the Republican Party, and Hip-Hop. She was a rescuer of dogs.

After an interview with actor Cary Grant, she went on stage and took the water glass he had used.

Her gifts to me were always stylish and useful: a set of Pyrex nesting bowls—a woolen throw she brought from her trip to Ireland.

She was as she said “born to be Mom” and her greatest joys came while raising our son Daniel.

She cherished her Irish heritage, Irish dance, it’s land and people. She enjoyed an Irish coffee or two at The Dubliner when Vince Hogan owned it.



She had moved to Tulsa, OK in recent years to be close to her sister Mary. We talked on the phone on occasion, mostly about Daniel and though we had divorced, we were friendly and coopera-

tive in continuing to care for our adult son.

I sometimes teased that she should have been a cop due to her strongly

expressed opinions about driving and other drivers. But I still pay attention to the advice she gave about stopping behind another car in traffic: “Always be able to see their rear tires.”

She lived in Baltimore when we met and fell in love. It was before email and the internet, so we wrote letters to each other. I was never happier to get the mail.

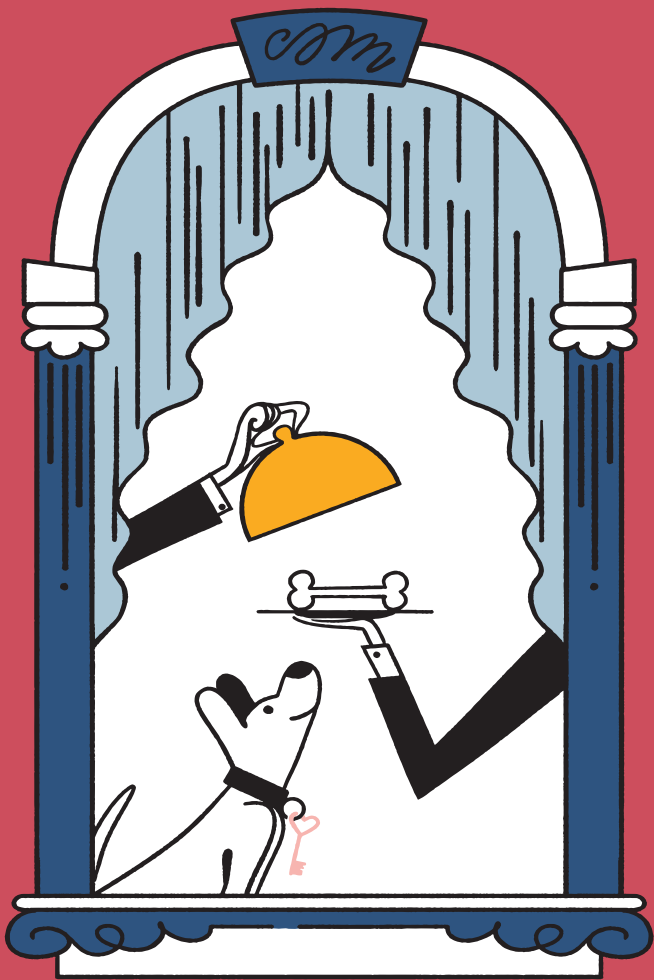
The last time I took her hand was while leading her to the car after her cataract surgery. I cherish that moment of warmth and trust.

Thinking of her now, I find it hard to believe she’s gone— to where I don’t know— and though I’ve experienced the deaths of family and friends before, hers has struck particularly hard.

The world was richer when graced with her redwood colored hair and infectious smile. Those she touched will forever sing her praises.

Goodbye dear Helen— until we meet again.

Jack Tipple is an artist working in pen and ink and is editor and co-publisher of *The Noe Valley Voice*. He now lives in Mill Valley with his cat Freyja.



“good bones”

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Farmers Markett fresh at the Noe Valley Town Square.

Photo by Jack Tipple



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SUN JAN 26	HSIAO-CHING CHOU & MEILEE CHOU RIDDLE • FEASTS OF GOOD FORTUNE • 3:00 P.M. FREE! Covering everything from traditional Lunar New Year to Thanksgiving - take a seat at the Chou's family dinner table and celebrate the joy of the mother-daughter bond in cooking together.



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• Susan Broxon •

Sweet Sailing Mr. Santos

From my 27th-floor window, I gazed at a classic summer evening in San Francisco. The city bustled below, and a soft fog draped the skyline, bringing a wave of crushing reality. My dear friend, Victor, was no longer in the picture.

Weeks earlier, his sister Maria called to inform me of his sudden passing. His close friend discovered him resting in bed at home; the cause was unconfirmed. In town for the memorial gathering, I stayed at the Westin St. Francis on Union Square to honor Victor's victory in a holiday dance contest held in one of their historic ballrooms in December 1991. As the city lights shimmered, I caught a wistful glimpse into the Harry Denton Starlite Room across the street, where we also spent magical evenings dancing the night away.

Victor, affectionately known as "Mr. Santos," was born on the vibrant island of Puerto Rico and raised in Georgia. He arrived in San Francisco in 1981 at the age of twenty-five. Although I lived in the city from 1984 until late 1985, we did not cross paths until early 1991, shortly after my return.

On my first day as a switchboard receptionist at a now-defunct healthcare company, I felt anxious. When the boss introduced me to the company's founder, I extended my hand and blurted out, "Welcome!"

Moving on to the Membership Accounting department, I met Mr. Santos. His jovial greeting and gentle demeanor melted my butterflies away. Every mid-morning, his infectious laughter echoed from the lunchroom where he gathered with colleagues. Meanwhile, I sat stuck at the front desk, fielding each unrelenting drone from the switchboard, torn between obligatory duties and a longing to join the fun.

Months later, on my birthday, he and his co-workers invited me to the former Club Interlude at the Holiday Inn across from our office. It became a regular hang-out until I left that job and began working in the Financial District. San Francisco's rich diversity often leads to unexpected yet authentic connections. Mr. Santos and I were a true example as we discovered shared interests. Exploring the trails in the liberating outdoors, from Half Moon Bay to the breathtaking beauty of Muir Woods cemented our camaraderie.

In nature, we tossed our troubles away



and engaged in mental games in an era before iPhones and search engines. On one excursion, we skillfully listed over forty different neighborhoods and districts in San Francisco.

After rejuvenating our bodies, minds, and spirits, we commemorated each adventure with a well-deserved happy hour.

In addition to his talent for dancing, Mr. Santos wrote profound poetry. However, his most remarkable gift was his effortless yet stirring impact on people.

My Italian landlord, Auntie Mary, in the Marina District, lit up every time we came by. Once, during a visit, she reached for his hand, and tears streamed down her majestic ninety-three-year-old face.

Even more affecting, an embittered former friend I once dubbed as "the angry man" genuinely announced, "You know, I like Mr. Santos."

I sensed similar traits in my limited time with his extraordinary sister, Maria. Unfortunately, my arrival and her departure back to Georgia occurred too close together.

Thankfully, I got to make an on-foot jaunt to Noe Valley. There, I sat in the Square and gathered my bearings. I never lived in the neighborhood, but visited frequently when my sister, Janet, resided there from 1985 to 2003. The connection deepened when my nephews, Aidan, and Finn, arrived in 2000. Mr. Santos was also a friend of the community.

When Janet got engaged in 1999, Mr. Santos assisted her in moving from her apartment on Cesar Chavez to her fiancé Tom's place on Sanchez. Later, I stopped by, hoping to avoid the heavy lifting. The timing was perfect. I heard the ring of their cheerful laughter before I saw the three of them round the corner of 24th

Street, sipping smoothies from Martha & Brothers.

Shortly before the twins' birth, Tom's brother Dan and his wife Linda hosted a baby shower at their spectacular home in Upper Noe Valley. The joy was indescribable, and it was especially touching to catch Mr. Santos and Tom spontaneously embracing each other, just because.

In the summer of 2003, just before Janet and her family moved to Brunswick, Maine, I took Finn and Aidan to the Day Street Recreation Center. The boys were playing in the playground when Mr. Santos arrived, and they didn't seem to notice him. After a while, he stepped away to find shade.

Minutes later, Finn rushed up to me. With an earnest expression on his cherubic two-year-old face, he asked, "Wher Miher Santos go?"

In 2006, Mr. Santos and I dined at the old Noe Valley Pizza, marking our first visit to the neighborhood since 2003. For me, it also represented a temporary farewell. The nostalgia grew stronger when Tony, the restaurant's founder, escorted us to our table. Shortly after, I returned to my hometown of Newport Beach.

We stayed connected over the years, but at one point, communication lapsed. Gratefully, we revived the kinship through traditional letter writing.

Mr. Santos eventually secured a position at the UCSF School of Pharmacy and retired in 2020. By then, our friendship had adjusted to lost time, distance, and lifestyle changes. During my visits to town, we chose simple outings at a café near his place in the Upper Sunset. Our meetups sometimes began awkwardly but always concluded comfortably, reminiscent of old times.

San Francisco holds a cherished place in Janet's and my hearts, but for Mr.

Santos, it was the setting for nearly his entire adult life. Fueled by a passion for the city's culture and beauty, he remained until the end.

When our beloved city came under fire from the public and the media, he defended it with compelling statistics on continued tourism. He emphasized its resilience and innovation, highlighting that San Francisco remains one of the greatest cities in the world.

The day after the gathering, I carried a small bag containing Mr. Santos' ashes. I started at a tourist-packed Marina Green and eventually found a quiet spot on a pier overlooking the Bay Bridge. As I discreetly sprinkled a handful of ashes into the water, I recalled the last text I had sent him: an article about "The Happiest Cities in the U.S.," which ranked San Francisco in the top ten. Disturbingly, that text went unanswered.

To address Finn's question: Where did Mr. Santos go? I cannot say, but I can imagine him sailing smoothly through a timeless tunnel of peace.

Sweet sailing, Mr. Santos.

Susan Broxon's debut piece, "Farewell for Now," appeared in the November 2003 edition of the Voice. Recent revisits to the community inspired "Sunshine and Strawberry Smaltz" (October 2022), Sundry Sunday (January 2023), "Savoring the Sentiment" (August 2023) and "Bittersweet Street Sensation" (January 2024). She currently lives in Newport Beach.

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

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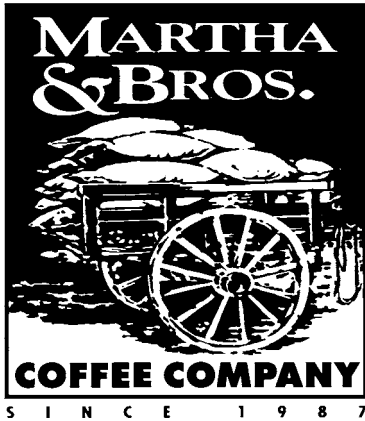
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• Jeff Kaliss •

Happy Hour at Pier 23

“I didn’t know what time it was”,
but I could see I could smell
that here I was,
right at the left side of the San Francisco Bay
and here she was,
that lucky old Sun
settling down for a scotch
at the end of her day,
at a glowing brass-top table
in a worn-out wooden saloon.

So I kept her company a while,
wondered what she’d think about the music.

Well, she started singing along
to her setting self:
“I didn’t know what year it was.”
How would you, Sun?
Just another go-around for you.

For us, in here
at the pub on the pier,
our digitized downtown
is spending its annuities
on the pretty Twenties of a century ago,
yearning towards her old-time youth,
the trilling tickle of her piano,
the breathy summons of her sax,
the primal pulsing of her strings.

This is what makes us want to keep wanting,
keep watching for whatever keeps coming whenever.

“Oh, what a lovely time it was,
and sublime it was, too.”

The Sun smiled duskily at this, still singing,
ready for another round,
musing on how she’d share this with the Moon.

Jeff Kaliss is an award-winning music journalist and author, and a poet with an MFA in Creative Writing from San Francisco State University. He’s contributed to the Voice since 1979.

Oil Change at K West

This is Daly City
and daily life,
you gotta love it.
This is my while in this world,
my sidewalk seat
on Outer Mission Street,
in the fleeting of the few last days
of the old year.

I am what waits
while other lives drive by,
underneath an undistinguished sky.
Here is how it works,
and hear it:
Happy Holidays! they say,
going away from,
coming together with,
they fatten up their friendliness
at Taco Bell and Jack-in-the-Box,
they reinforce their rolling
at O’Reilly Auto Parts.
All this is what it gets us.

And over there
a place for rent,
in a three-story box
with a balcony;
ante up the first month’s fee
and you can sit there seeing
how time passes Daly City,
or look up to where
the strangely purposed seagulls,
distanced from their surging ocean,
mock the busyness, and laugh
at my wordy contemplation.

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• Daniel Murphy •

Mountain Grade

From my hillside perch, I watch a car climb
through the darkness up the mountain grade.
Its headlights throw white against the blackness,
as the old car makes its steep ascent.
Rounding the final turn, the red tail lights,
first one, then both, disappear into the void.
Now, only darkness on the mountain road.
Then, a silver plane flies the midnight sky
into the light of the eternal stars.

A Happy Dog

Memories, the faded images of bygone events
become living stories as we shape and share again.
Even tall stories often carry an essential truth;
anecdotes passed from family to the listening child,
now remembered when a decision must be made.
Or laughter from the past comes to ease some present pain:
that lost five dollar-bill which will never be found again,
or the ice cream wrapper, licked a century ago
by a happy dog, still make us smile as the tale unfolds..

Walking a Little to the Left

I walked down my road a little to the left.
The people on the left saw me to their right.
The people on the right thought I was too far to the left.

When I helped a traveller find the middle,
The people on the right thought he was going their way,
And the people on the left felt I wasn't doing all I should.

When I saw a bump in the roadway, I moved to pass it by.
From the right I heard, "We knew you'd come our way."
And from the left they said, "You're drifting to the right."



Lloyda and Dan Murphy, during a recent family visit to Coit Tower.

Dan Murphy, a retired trial attorney and frequent contributor, tells us that he has been writing Verse since he won the Ina Coolbrith Poetry Award at St. Mary's College in Moraga. That's where he met his wife Lloyd who was visiting from Lone Mountain, San Francisco's College for Women. They live in a Victorian on Church Street.

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It's a Jungle out there. This 24th Street palm may have escaped from Dolores Street.
Photo by Jack Tipple

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• A.D. Winans •

New Year’s Day Poem

Some things stick in your mind
Like dental cement
Your first kiss
The Kennedy assassination
The wild years
A trip down Highway 101
Foot stuck to the petal
Hugging the middle lane
At a hundred miles an hour
A break dance destined
To turn into a two-step shuffle.

Restless cursed with insomnia
I take a 5 AM walk through
The streets of Noe Valley
The neighborhood a ghost town
A sleeping lion waiting on its prey.

Back home a poem takes shape
Nibbles at my brain cells
A beggar hungry for food
But the cupboard is empty.

I retreat into the amnesia of yesterday
The lost treasure of my youth
A pirate with a graying beard
Destined to board forever
A midnight ghost ship
Rocking aimlessly at sea.

Mexico Dream Poem

I see you in my dreams
you are wearing a silk scarf
your smile hovers over me
like a hummingbird.

You stand at the public square
the women are selling pottery
the men playing cards.

A cat crosses the road
purrs against your slender legs
you an early century Madonna
with no need for church or man.
Sit cross-legged like Buddha

Words swirl inside my head
like helicopter blades
sweet fragrance of lilacs draws me in
sweet as a virgin spread across
a field of roses.

A.D. Winans is an award-winning native San Francisco poet, writer, and essayist. His work has appeared in over 500 Literary magazines, anthologies, and newspapers. He is the author of over eighty books and chapbooks of poetry and prose. He edited and published the acclaimed Second Coming magazine and press from 1972 to 1989. The press archives are housed at Brown University. Awards include a Pen National Josephine Miles Award for Excellence in Literature, a PEN Oakland Lifetime Achievement Award, and a Kathy Acker award in poetry and publishing

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COMPASS



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Noe Brims with Holiday Spirit

By Laura McHale Holland

Holiday gatherings, volunteer opportunities, musical and dramatic events, Christmas pageants, Santa visits, collection barrels for toys, food, and clothes—they're all here in Noe Valley this season. So, come on out and catch some spirit.

Hanukkah comes early this year, but it's not too late for you to help celebrate what Rabbi Michael Lerner of the Beyt Tikkun Community Synagogue calls "the first national liberation struggle." (Hanukkah commemorates the victory in 165 B.C. of the Maccabees over the occupying forces of Antiochus Epiphanes.) Neighbors—Jews and non-Jews, children and adults—are invited to not one, but two celebrations on Friday evening, Dec. 6.

The Hanukkah bash sponsored by the Jewish orthodox group Chabad of Noe Valley starts at 6 p.m. and takes place at 889 Elizabeth Street. "Everyone's welcome. You can expect a very lively and enthusiastic Jewish experience. It's not to be missed," says Rabbi Gedalia Potash. For more details, call Potash at 821-7046.

The Beyt Tikkun celebration will begin at 7 p.m. at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez Street, at 23rd Street. There will be a candle-lighting ceremony, followed by a telling of the Hanukkah story, singing, dancing, a Shabbat service, and a vegetarian potluck. Admission is a main course veggie dish to share. For more information about Beyt Tikkun, call 575-1432 or e-mail rabbilerner@tikkun.org.

A week later, Santa's sleigh will be



A blustery storm splayed branches and stirred up the leaves on 25th Street in early November, but the air was crisp and dry in Noe Valley by Thanksgiving. Temperatures were so balmy, in fact, some folks worried that Santa's reindeer might pass us by.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

pulling into town—for a whirlwind visit to 24th Street. On Saturday, Dec. 14, old St. Nick will listen to children's wishes at the Bank of America (corner of 24th and Castro streets) from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., as a favor to the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association. Incredibly, on that same day, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Santa will also hold forth at Zephyr Real Estate, a half a block down the street at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

What Every Neighborhood Should Have: A Book Designer or Two

By Olivia Boler

Admit it—it's unavoidable. If you take part in, to put it in a p.c. way, "December gift-giving rituals," and you also spend time on 24th Street, chances are you are going to make a pit stop at either Just for Fun, Cover to Cover Book-

sellers, or both. If and when you do, be sure to look for a little square book, approximately 7 by 7 inches, titled *What Every Woman Should Have*. Do this because underneath the title is a photo of women's garments hanging on a clothesline, or because you truly want to know what every woman should have, or for no other reason than that this gift/humor book was designed by two women one block up on Elizabeth Street at Herter Studio.

Caroline Herter, 48, is the owner and founder of Herter Studio, a self-described independent publishing studio for which Herter wears a variety of hats. The company, run out of Herter's flat, consists of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Street People Leery of 'Care Not Cash'

By Heidi Anderson

If you've heard the election results, then you know that Supervisor Gavin Newsom's "Care Not Cash" measure, known as Prop. N on the Nov. 5 ballot, was approved by 60 percent of San Francisco voters. (In Noe Valley, the vote was 59 percent.) Prop. N's passage means that

cash grants to the close to 3,000 homeless adults who now receive general assistance in San Francisco will be cut from \$395 to \$59 a month, starting as early as July 1. To make up for the cash reduction, the city has promised to provide vouchers for housing, food, and treatment programs.



Albert Mioduszewski is not directly affected by the passage of "Care Not Cash," since his veteran's benefits help pay his rent. However, he has sold the *Street Sheet* long enough to know that the city needs to provide more housing for the homeless.

Photo by Heidi Anderson

Will There Be Enough Hotel Rooms?

On a recent weekend in November, when the weather swung back and forth between storm and sun, several panhandlers stood at their usual posts on the sidewalks of 24th and Castro streets.

Among them was Anthony, a 50-year-old man who has been homeless for more than two years. Anthony, who preferred not to give his last name (like several others in this story), gets money by selling the *Street Sheet*, a newspaper put out by the Coalition on Homelessness. Like most of the people we talked to, he is skeptical of the new law.

"I'm just hoping the hotels will accept the vouchers we get," he says, while watching the pedestrian traffic outside Walgreen's on Castro Street.

Ironically, Anthony was set to receive his first government assistance check in November. "I start this week getting gov-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Jingle Bell Time Is a Swell Time

The Voice staff is grabbing the reins and shouting "Giddyup!" We're set to travel east and north of our fair valley in search of the best seats at holiday feasts. After that, there's a couch with our name on it—perfect for a long winter's nap in between 49er games. We think we've earned a break. This is the 10th issue of our 25th year of producing your favorite community newspaper. We love the work, but it wouldn't feel like December if we didn't do some goofing off.

We'll return refreshed and fattened in January and put together your February 2003 issue, due on the streets Feb. 1. Your deadline for all things of an editorial nature is Wednesday, Jan. 15. Your display ads need to be in by Friday, Jan. 17. (Call Steve at 239-1114.)

Maybe we'll see you during our mixing and mingling. If not, we wish you the best with a cheery jingling beat. □

• Julie Lekach House •

Listen to the Muzak

I have a special relationship with Muzak. Muzak, an American brand of background music, is not to be confused with music, which enriches my life daily. Pretty much I hate Muzak. Why take a great song and reduce it to a milquetoast tune? Muzak melodies tend to sound roughly, sappily alike, no matter the original genre. Ughhh!

When I moved to San Francisco in 1985, I worked for Bank of America. I was never in the big tootsie-roll headquarters building on California Street, but by 1988, I was close by on Montgomery Street. One Twenty Montgomery was a nondescript, mid-sized office building in a wind-swept corridor, convenient to BofA headquarters, public transit and downtown shopping. I worked on the 5th floor. Of course, the building had a bank of elevators.

Today, elevators and even gas stations have computer screens with supposedly entertaining media. Back in the 80s, we mostly got piped in music for the ride. One morning in the elevator on the way out to lunch, I caught myself humming along to the Muzak. Horrors! What was I doing? What was I singing?

I had to laugh. I was singing along to one of my older brother Edgar's compositions. It was probably one he had written in high school that I had heard him work on hundreds of times. Later on, he wrote pop songs to sell with his music partner, Richard, a professional musician he knew from our hometown, Buffalo, NY.

After lunch, I called Edgar, who lived in New York City, from my office (no cell



I found it particularly annoying while stuck in a small space. There was no escape from the most sappy songs around—think Karen Carpenter or Glen Campbell or Celine Dion.

Line dance choreographers seem drawn to these maudlin songs. And not only are the songs schmaltsy, they are often even sappier covers of the original songs. A Musk-style version of My Heart Will Go On is more than I can bear. Usually.

I take two line dance classes on Zoom every week. I used to take a break when Muzak-worthy songs were the dance tunes. As I folded laundry or checked email and the stock market during my pause, I would catch a glimpse of my teacher and his wife having fun stepping to the music. I was missing out!

So I unmuted and joined in, and the songs weren't so nasty after all. I decided to follow a modified Beatles' imperative: Take a sad (or sappy) song, and make it better. Dance to the Muzak!

Julie Lekach House has lived in Upper Noe Valley since 1990. She and her husband raised two daughters here. Currently, Julie is retired and enjoys folk and line dancing, Duolingo Japanese, writing for her memoir class and reading and traveling with her book group.

phones in 1988). How did I hear his song on my elevator ride in downtown San Francisco?

It turns out my brother and Richard had sold a bunch of their songs to Muzak. Edgar and Richard probably made two cents from my listening experience. But, wasn't it worth it? Two minutes of fame for Edgar and Richard in a West Coast elevator cemented a story that's still a fond and funny memory 35 years later.

Erratum.

Wait! Have I been totally honest? At the time of the elevator episode and for years afterwards, I did find Musak insipid.

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Special Thanks To

THE SWANN GROUP

Thank you to Rachel Swann and her team Drew, Brian, Bryant, Rachel H, and Jayson for 8 years of service to the Noe Valley Merchants & Professionals Association. Your inspiration and creativity have led us through some of our darkest times to the brightness on the other side. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Noe Valley and the success of the business community.

THANK YOU TO THOSE RESIDENTS AND THE NVMPA MEMBERS WHO SUPPORT OUR WINE WALK, WHICH KEEPS OUR CAFE LIGHTS ON!

A special thanks to these businesses that plug those lights in all year.

- Noe Valley Bakery
- Subs Inc
- Casa Mexicana
- Noe Valley Wine Shop
- Best Cleaners
- Easy Breezy
- Whole Foods
- Bernie's Coffee
- Martha's Coffee
- Dubliner Bar
- Eric Alexanderson
- Wells Fargo
- Noe Valley Town Square

NOE VALLEY NIGHT MARKET

Live music, local food and retail,
artist and more.

LAST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

December 31, 3pm - 7pm

January 28, 4pm - 8pm

NOE VALLEY TOWN SQUARE

3861 24TH ST, SAN FRANCISCO, CA