



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

John Hornor Gets Wet and Goes the Distance



Sunrise Strokes. John Hornor, 73, makes his way through miles of waves to become part of the oldest U.S. relay team to swim the English Channel.
Photo by Sunny McKee, courtesy SF Dolphin Club

Both a Dolphin and a Goat, He Swims the Channel Like a Train

By Kathryn Guta

Noe Valley resident John Hornor, 73, knows what it means to stay active after retirement. While many septuagenarians might be content to play a game of pickleball or bounce a grandkid on their knee, Hornor routinely conquers the waves.

On Aug. 15–16, Hornor and five other members of the San Francisco Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club successfully completed a team swim of the English Channel (EC), a 21-mile course from Dover, England, to Calais, France. The six swimmers, including two women, were all over 70. That meant their cumulative age was 439 years, making them the oldest American relay team to accomplish the Channel feat.

The “Old Goats,” as the club’s older swimmers are affectionally known, swam one-hour legs in a rotation that continued for 15 hours and 10 minutes. While one team member swam, the others rested, snacked, or watched from a boat traveling alongside.

How does one accomplish something as mythic as swimming the English Channel?

In an interview in the back yard of his self-built Cesar Chavez Street home, Hornor described the journey, one that began more than four decades ago.

He admits he was not always an accomplished swimmer. In fact, he only started at age 30, when a surgeon

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Happier Donuts: Ratha Vann smiles as customers continue to stop by with offers of help a week after the Oct. 2 robbery of her store on 24th Street. *Photo by Sally Smith*

Happy Donuts On the Mend After Robbery

Customers Step Up With Condolences and Cash

By John Ferrannini

Ratha Vann, longtime manager of Happy Donuts at Church and 24th streets, has a message for the Noe Valley residents and others who came out to support the small business after a brazen robbery at the store in October.

“Thank you for everyone who helped us,” Vann said in an interview with the *Noe Valley Voice*.

Store employee Monica Kang was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

It’s Been a Tough Year for Russian Eatery Birch & Rye

Chef Anya El-Wattar Hopes for Stronger Neighborhood Ties

By Matthew S. Bajko

As the chef-owner of a Russian eatery whose February 2022 opening in Noe Valley coincided with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Anya El-Wattar has found herself thrust into the global spotlight.

Rather than ignore the conflict and focus solely on the kitchen of her Birch & Rye restaurant, El-Wattar has chosen to express public support for Ukraine.

Collaborating with other local chefs, she hosted a fundraiser a few months after opening at 1320 Castro St. It raised \$108,000 for the nonprofit World Central Kitchen, which feeds Ukrainian and other refugees caught in the cross-fire. She spoke to local and national

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Christmas Fair Unites Baltic Communities

A Celebration of the Gifts of Three Cultures

By Matthew S. Bajko

Since its launch in 2014, the San Francisco Baltic Christmas Fair has grown into a cherished yuletide tradition for the Bay Area’s Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian communities. Held annually at the Latvian Lutheran Church in Noe Valley, the event is a mixture of holiday market, traditional foods, and cultural gathering.

“It is a very important event for us. It gives people the opportunity to bring their skills and talents out into public in a sort of low-key but fun and festive way,” said Marin resident Linnea

Bartling, one of the fair organizers with the San Francisco Estonian Society. “Because of the size of our communities, we don’t have tons and tons of events throughout the year where we have opportunities to do that, so people really look forward to it.”

This year’s fair is set to take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2, at the church, also known as Latvian Hall, at 425 Hoffman Ave., between 24th and 25th streets. The event is free, and each person who comes through the door is given a raffle ticket for the chance to win a prize.

“We really welcome people to come to taste the food and do a little shop-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



A Jewel of a Festival: Each December, people flock to Hoffman Avenue to share the foods, music, and arts of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. *2022 photo courtesy Latvian Lutheran Church*



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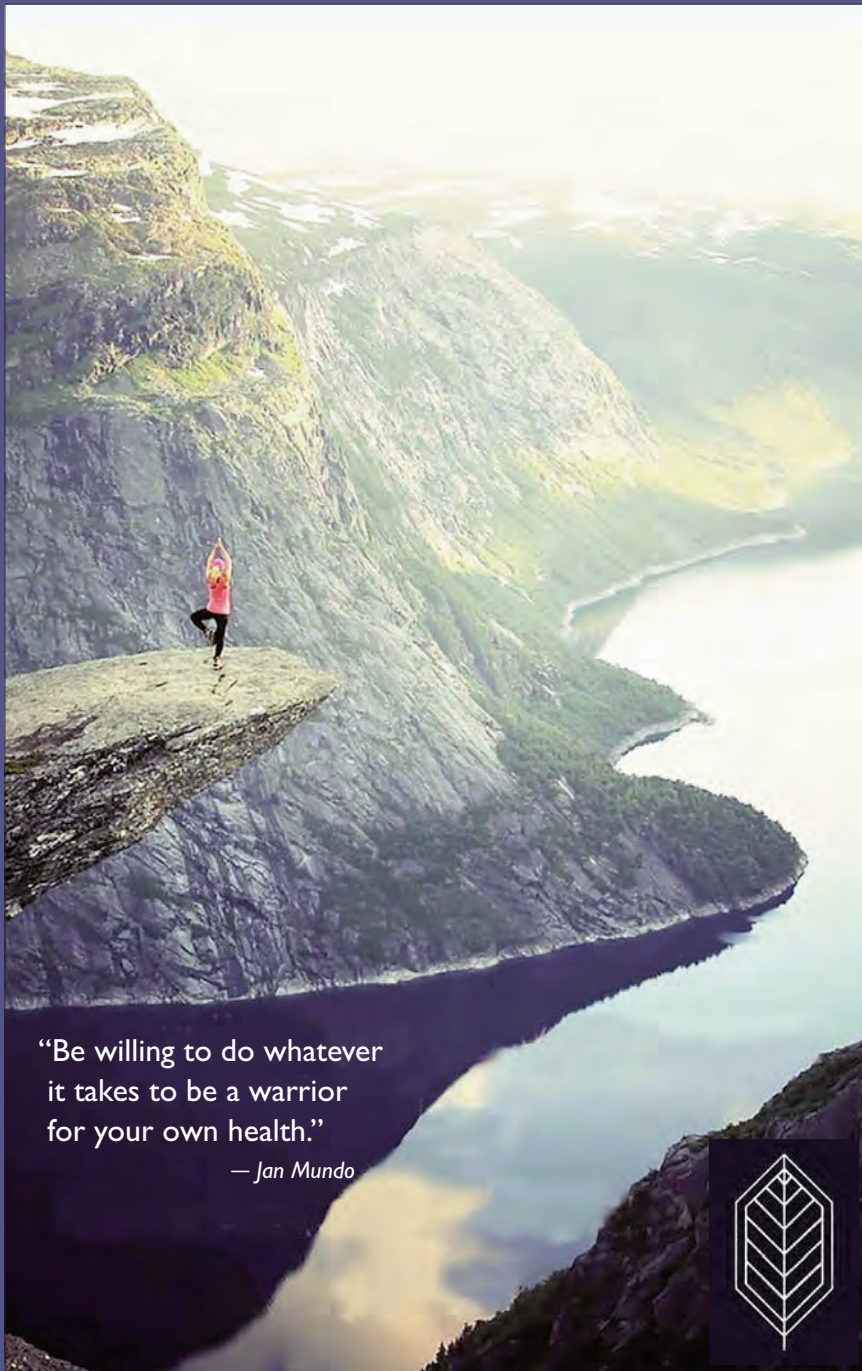
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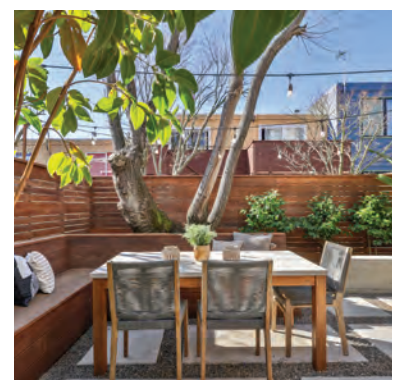
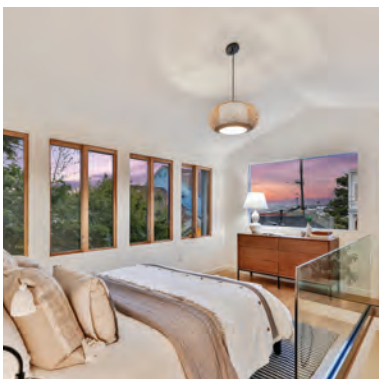
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LETTERS 66 CENTS

Thankful for Walkers' Support Editor:

In May, I discovered the Noe Valley neighborhood walking group started by Rudy Stadlberger, 99. Rudy would lead with his walking stick accompanied by a friend or relative. There was a wonderful article about Rudy in the Noe Valley Voice last spring [March 2023].

We would meet Saturday mornings at 10 a.m., starting out at Sanchez and 24th Street and climbing up Valley Street. At the crest of that challenging hill, we would circle up and take a photograph. I walked with the group on several Saturdays and forged new friendships with fellow Noe Valley residents of all ages.

On Saturday morning, July 1, while walking with the group, I had a freak fall on the hard pavement and broke my femur and hip. I knew from the second I fell that the pain was severe and I couldn't move. Debra, a specialist in bodywork, came to my aid and reassured me until the ambulance arrived. I was taken to CPMC for three days and then transferred to Modesto for surgery. I then spent a very successful month at the Jewish Home for rehabilitation.

While my injury has curtailed my walks, it has been a reminder of the power of community to provide support and encouragement as the body heals and resets.

I've received frequent texts inquiring of my status and cards and offers of help when I got home. I live in a multi-generational home I share with my middle daughter and her family on

Clipper Street. Several members of the walking group have visited, brought me lunch, and shared news of their walks. On one of the walks, the whole group sent me a video and a cheer from the top of Valley Street. How amazing is that for community spirit?

I hope to be making my way to the Noe Cafe with my walker soon. I am building strength and balance and bearing weight on two feet now. I will always be grateful that I discovered this part of the Noe community and for the new friends I have made.

Joanne Kini

Everyone Can Be Active Editor:

I'm one of your neighbors. You see me at our Noe Farmers Market as part of Action-SF.com, offering information about how San Franciscans can help progressive candidates who are making positive differences nationwide for the sake of our country, and our planet. We are all in this together.

In July, I supported Danica Roem's candidacy for the Virginia State Senate in her Nov. 7, 2023 election. I hosted a fundraising party at my house, called it my birthday party, invited neighbors, and anyone I could think of.

Roem, a Virginia Delegate already, a journalist covering local news, and a singer in a metal band, became the first transgender member of a state legislature in the U.S. in 2017. She is now running for the State Senate. Briefly, in 2020 and 2021, Democrats controlled the Virginia legislature and were able to pass legislation expanding access to voting, strengthening gun violence prevention, raising the minimum wage, ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment, protecting the environment and more, proving that elections do matter.

Throw a party? I can do that! Write letters to voters? I can do that! Door knock? I can do that! Talk to my neighbors at the Farmers Market? I can even do that. Virginia is the LAST state in the South that protects reproductive

rights. We can step up to support them! Visit the Action-SF website and sign up to join us as we plan our 2024 efforts.

Every one of us has a platform and everyone can be active for good. Thanks for being a voter and an activist!

Nicole Wendel
ActionSFTeam@gmail.com

James Lick Scores Again Editor:

Your October article on the new turf field recently installed at James Lick Middle School, which my house faces, led me to understand the metamorphosis unfolding in front of my eyes, and ears. From across 25th Street, I have been hearing more students more often sounding happier. And the school has become more of a school. The soccer field is only one of several outdoor improvements in recent years, including two gardens, tables, murals, and physical accessibility improvements.

I had the extraordinary luck to buy my house in Noe 17 years ago, because it had three perceived "defects," per my local realtor: 1. No floor had the three bedrooms some buyers demand. 2. The building had no garage. (By the way, much less of a problem now, thank you, millennials!) 3. It was across from a public school. Calling a nearby school a defect perplexed me, because where I grew up, schools were amenities. I now wonder how much of that "defect" concealed racism against the diverse population a San Francisco public school brought to our less diverse homeowner community.

A green field takes me back to my early understanding of a school as one with a green space where students can experiment and try new experiences, and I say this as someone who hated school-organized competitive team sports.

Thank you, JLMS PTSA, donors, and the charity that helped make this change—America SCORES!
Charles Spiegel

CRIME SNAPSHOT

Noe Valley recorded 85 criminal incidents during September, a drop from 90 in August, according to the San Francisco Police Department's digital map of incident reports.

As usual, the "larceny/theft" category racked up the most incidents (26). There were eight car break-ins, four shoplifting cases, one stolen license plate, one bicycle theft, two package thefts, and 10 unspecified "other" thefts.

The number of burglaries also remained high, with 23 reported to police. Of those, 15 took place in residential buildings. Seven of those were "hot prowls," where the occupants were at home at the time of the break-in. In addition, two stores and six other types of buildings were hit.

Eleven cars and one truck were stolen in September, though three were later recovered. There also were three "other" incidents in the motor vehicle theft category, totaling 15.

One robbery, one domestic violence incident, two assaults, six reports of fraud, and eight "malicious mischief" incidents also showed up in the September data, which the Noe Valley Voice scraped from Data.sfgov.org on Oct. 13, 2023.

The dataset includes police incident reports filed by both officers and individuals through self-service online reporting. For non-emergency cases, call or file reports online via 3-1-1 or at <https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org>, or go to a police station, including Mission Station, 630 Valencia St., or Ingleside Station, 1 Sgt. John V. Young Lane. Both cover Noe Valley, the Castro, Glen Park, and beyond. Call 9-1-1 if a crime is in progress.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

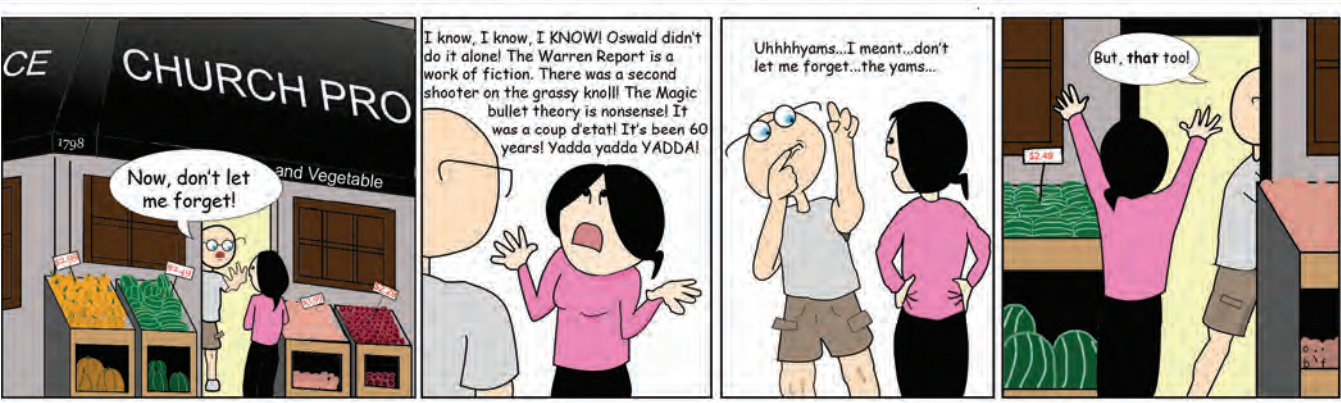
CRIME DATA 2023

Noe Valley Incident Reports September 2022 – September 2023

Incident Type	Sep22	Oct22	Nov22	Dec22	Jan23	Feb23	Mar23	Apr23	May23	June23	July23	Aug23	Sep23	YTD
Larceny/Theft	28	41	41	26	32	17	21	15	34	30	35	27	26	237
Burglary	16	25	10	17	11	10	13	13	7	19	25	20	23	141
Malicious Mischief	10	7	7	6	3	4	9	9	4	16	13	10	8	76
Motor Vehicle Theft	16	13	25	10	15	10	14	10	10	20	27	17	15	138
Assault	5	7	3	1	7	3	8	2	5	3	2	4	2	36
Robbery	1	4	1	1	1	0	3	0	1	4	2	3	1	15
Other Misc.	5	10	6	1	5	5	6	5	0	3	1	4	3	32
Fraud	0	0	4	6	3	3	1	0	3	6	2	5	6	29
Family D.Violence	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	6
Vandalism	2	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	7
Totals	83	107	98	70	79	55	76	55	66	102	109	90	85	717

Source: Dataset titled "Map of Police Department Incident Reports: 2018 to Present" at [Data.sfgov.org/Public-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). This dataset 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 gathered its September 2023 data on Oct. 13, 2023. "Noe Valley" on the SFPD digital map is bounded by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.

THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

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Noe Resident Swims the Channel With the Dolphins

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recommended he swim to help correct a back issue.

After a year, he built up to one mile at Balboa Pool. He wanted to go further but was frustrated by his lack of ability to do the pool turns. By chance, he met Dahlia and Jack Kamesar at a Noe Valley party, and they offered a solution to his dilemma: there are no turns in open water swimming! The neighborly couple followed through by picking him up at 5:30 a.m. for an Aquatic Park “morner” swim. He never looked back, joining the Dolphins in 1981.

The twice-weekly early “morner” carpools from Noe to the Dolphin Club enabled him to mix his aquatic dreams with work and parental responsibilities. They also taught him discipline. The Dolphiners depended on him to show up. So he did.

Hornor became immersed in the culture of open water swimming. Four years after joining the club, he participated in cross-current swims to Alcatraz and the Golden Gate. He scoured the walls of the Dolphin Club boathouse at Lake Merced and saw that a number of members had completed the EC crossing, both solo and relay. Maybe he too could try the world’s most iconic marathon swim. After all, as Dolphin Club President Diane Walton declared recently, “The pilgrimage to Dover and the crossing of the Channel are in the Dolphin Club’s DNA.”

The Training

There was no hesitation in December of 2022, when Old Goat team captain and former solo EC swimmer Duke Dahlin, 75, asked if Hornor would be



John Hornor (left) and team member Julian Sapirstein celebrate the victory after reaching French soil near the rocky Plage du Cap Blanc-Nez. Photo by Lance Oram; courtesy SF Dolphin Club

interested in an EC relay swim. Hornor was all in. “Now it was my turn!”

The confidence that the Dolphin Club had instilled in Hornor intersected with his desire to get back in shape after knee surgery in 2021 and shoulder surgery in 2022. It gave him a challenge and a goal. But he needed to find a trainer. The first thing he did was join the University of San Francisco’s master swim program and try out for one of its limited slots with Coach Chris Wagner. Wagner looked at his strokes and said he thought he could work with Hornor but it would take a series of “baby steps.”

Wagner stressed stroke efficiency. Hornor’s arms were going way across his body instead of crawling straight ahead, like on a train track. “You are doing the hula while swimming”—a reference to the hula classes that Hornor was taking with Old Goat team leader Dahlin, who also doubled as a hula teacher. Wagner’s last words

before Hornor departed for the Cliffs of Dover were: “You have to do railroad tracks all the way to France, John.”

Favorable Conditions

The Old Goats hired a fishing vessel called the Sea Satin, with Captain Lance Oran at the helm. A knowledgeable captain is essential to the success of any crossing, as the captain knows the notorious tides and changeable weather patterns. The group joined the Channel Swimming and Piloting Federation (CS & PF) and obtained an official observer to certify that EC crossing rules were observed.

In July, Hornor’s wife Nancy, 71, who is also a Dolphin Club member, verified her husband’s qualification for the swim by clocking him in San Francisco Bay. Hornor got medically cleared by his doctor, and then the Hornors were off to London on Aug. 14. There was no time for second thoughts, as conditions turned favorable the very next day. The swim would start that night at 11:30 p.m.

The challenges of a channel swim are many: The distance is 21 miles, but due to currents it can be as long as 24 miles. There is the cold water and the danger of hypothermia. On the night of Aug. 15, the water temperature was 63 degrees Fahrenheit, somewhat comparable to the San Francisco Bay at that time of year.

While the swim has been done in either direction, currently England to France is the only option. The regulations state that once determined, the order of swimmers may not be changed. The transfer time between swimmers may be no more than five minutes. A year ago, a British team with a combined age of 449 completed an EC swim but was disqualified due to a mistimed exchange—a transfer over the five-minute limit.

No flippers, snorkels, neoprene suits, or shark cages are allowed. Sharks are

not considered an issue in the channel, but there are stinging jellyfish to contend with.

Hornor jumped in the water as the sixth of six relay swimmers. He wore all that was allowed: a silicone bathing cap, a speedo suit, ear plugs, and goggles. It was dark. All those early morning swims in the Bay with his fellow “morners” would pay off. He turned on his blinky (flashing light) and he was off. When the sky lightened from pitch black to pale pink, he saw arms waving, a signal it was time to rejoin the boat and let the next person swim. He was surprised the time went by so quickly.

For his second hour of swimming, he let his mind roam and imagined looking down from outer space and seeing a dot crossing the English Channel. His team let him know that he had started to drift too far from the boat and he snapped back to his “railroad track” form.

The last part of the EC swim is the most challenging, as the north/south current is strong. You might be able to see France at last, but getting there is difficult. According to Hornor, it is called “the graveyard of solo swimmers.”

The ideal place to land is a narrow beach at Cap Blanc-Nez (Cape White Nose). The Old Goats just missed this mark, but landed nearby. Team member Julian Sapirstein, 73, was on for this leg of the journey, but Hornor was so inspired he asked the certifier to let him swim behind Sapirstein so that he too could touch French soil.

Both men emerged victorious from the sea but were met with yet another obstacle: a shoreline of jagged rocks that gave them some nasty cuts. Hornor was able to pick up a small white rock, which he later presented to their leader, Dahlin. Hornor and Sapirstein had only 15 minutes to revel on shore, as immigration changes post-Brexit required channel crossers to get right back on the boat to England.

On Dry Land

The accolades have poured in. There was a ceremony at the Dolphin Club and a certificate from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors saying the Old Goats’ achievement embodied the enduring power of human resolve.

As two spirited granddaughters charge into Hornor’s back yard eager for the end of this interview, he mentions that the current record for the oldest solo English Channel crossing is held by South African doctor Otto Thaning, who accomplished the feat at age 73.

Does Hornor have any thoughts of breaking that record when he turns 74?

Holding one girl in his arms while the other scrambles to replace her, he shakes his head ‘no’ and says he has better things to do.

But he will always love swimming in open water, he says, because: “Whatever is bothering you before a swim doesn’t bother you after.” ■



Dolphin Club relay team members, from left to right, Duke Dahlin, Julian Sapirstein, Tom Neill, Joni Beemsterboer, John Hornor, and Sunny McKee, stand beneath an auspicious rainbow on Dover Beach the day before their swim. Photo courtesy Joel Smart



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All throughout the process, she kept us well-informed and promptly responded to our questions and concerns. In the end, our place closed within a month of the open house.

Stephanie & Jim



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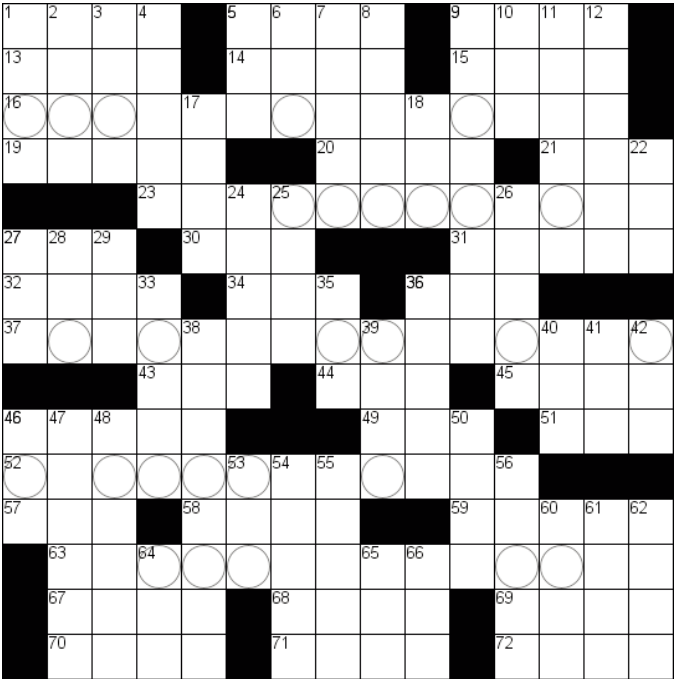
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THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

Noe Valley's
Hidden Alleys
Editor's Note: Five local
alleys are hidden here. The
second part of the two-
part clues tells what
streets the alleys are
flanked by.

- ACROSS
- 1. It's styled at Green Twig
 - 5. Mountain
 - 9. AT&T Park officials
 - 13. Queen ____: style of many Noe homes
 - 14. "____ Ha'i" (South Pacific song)
 - 15. Bar from the kitchen?
 - 16. Meat sauce (Douglass|Grand View)
 - 19. Bread machine cycle
 - 20. Cast a ballot
 - 21. Aquarium wriggler
 - 23. Doggedness (Church|Chat-tanooga)
 - 27. ____-Lite: 24th Street gym
 - 30. Prefix with classic or natal
 - 31. Words before "red" or "running"
 - 32. Ding-a-ling
 - 34. Matterhorn, for one
 - 36. Crime lab evidence, briefly
 - 37. Involving two or more universities (Vicksburg|Church)
 - 43. Maze runner
 - 44. Longing for Japanese money?
 - 45. Dalmatian mark
 - 46. Japanese immigrant to U.S.
 - 49. Campsite residue
 - 51. It's "split" for Andersen's soup
 - 52. Statement of financial position (Vicksburg|Sanchez)
 - 57. "Evil Woman" band,



- briefly
- 58. "My, my!"
 - 59. Firefly handouts
 - 63. Talkative quality (Dolores|Fair Oaks)
 - 67. "____ a Spell on You": 1956 song revived by Creedence
 - 68. A sufficient amount, in slang
 - 69. Part of ER (abbr.)
 - 70. Gives a look-see
 - 71. Architect Saarinen
 - 72. Coin flip
- DOWN
- 1. Dove's opposite
 - 2. "Auth. unknown"
 - 3. About, in a memo
 - 4. KNBR postgame summary
 - 5. Mystery carrier
 - 6. Have a meal
 - 7. Advil competitor
 - 8. Ballet rival of Bolshoi
 - 9. Volunteering at the Symphony, perhaps
 - 10. Miss Piggy's coy reply
 - 11. Part of PTA
 - 12. Oration
 - 17. First family's home?
 - 18. Sault ____ Marie, MI
 - 22. Late lamented Mayor Ed
 - 24. Wince, e.g.
 - 25. Wing it alone
 - 26. Diarist Nin
 - 27. Org. in the 2022 book G-Man
 - 28. It's charged in physics
 - 29. ____ Time: Upper Noe Rec service for young parents
 - 33. Kentucky college with antislavery roots
 - 35. Paper-towel layer
 - 36. Firmly packed
 - 38. Bad news for Giants fans
 - 39. Jacob's second wife
 - 40. iPhone download
 - 41. It may be stubbed
 - 42. Greek H
 - 46. "May ____ excused?"
 - 47. ____ Mae (college money provider)
 - 48. "Hang On, ____" (1965 #1 hit)
 - 50. Heights of fashion?
 - 53. When tripled, 19th & Mission saloon
 - 54. Host at a roast
 - 55. Fishing net
 - 56. Basic precept
 - 60. 20,000 Leagues... captain
 - 61. Puts into service
 - 62. Armenia and Latvia, formerly: Abbr.
 - 64. "____ será, será"
 - 65. Yours and mine
 - 66. E.T.'s ship

Solution on Page 21
Find more Crosswords at www.noevalleyvoice.com

Birch & Rye Plants Stronger Roots in Neighborhood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

press and was prominently featured in *Bon Appétit* last December, addressing why despite the online trolling she had received, she refused to stop referring to her establishment as a “Modern Russian Kitchen.”

“I think for me, it is about staying authentic. Ultimately, I think what it takes to weather a storm is a balance between authenticity and connection,” El-Wattar told the *Voice* during an interview in early October.

Seated at a table in the restaurant’s covered patio in the back, El-Wattar said dropping the word *Russian* from her cuisine would be disingenuous. She has based her menu around the foods of her native Russia, having grown up in Moscow and then left for the United States at age 18 to attend Columbia University.

“I grew up in that culture. I am telling that story,” said El-Wattar.

For a start, Birch & Rye serves homemade rye breads, borsch, and caviar (with caviars procured from elsewhere than Russia). But there are California touches, such as vegan tasting menus and “grenki” toast made with sour dough.

Her cooking has brought accolades from food critics, with Eater SF naming El-Wattar its 2022 Chef of the Year. Birch & Rye was a 2023 James Beard Awards semifinalist for Best New Restaurant, and since last year has been the only Russian restaurant in North America featured by the Michelin Guide. (She said she hoped to secure one of its coveted stars in the 2024 edition.)

“At this cozy nook, Chef Anya El-Wattar combines her upbringing and restaurant chops to offer a unique, ingredient-focused interpretation of Russian cuisine that is in equal measure indulgent and fresh,” raved the guide’s editors in highlighting Birch & Rye among 17 new restaurants that opened in 2022.

“I finally feel that we are able to catch our breath,” said El-Wattar.

Still, she won’t soon forget the messages she received at the start of the war, such as “Go back to Russia” and “All Russians deserve to die.” It was a scary time, she recalled.

“When we are scared, we turn against each other,” she said. “Isolating and hating Russian Americans is not the answer for this.”

The verbal attacks have subsided, but the last two years has been “a whirlwind,” said El-Wattar. “For me, this felt like more than what I bargained for when I intended to open the restaurant.”

An Invitation to Noe Valleyans

The notoriety, combined with the remnants of a three-year pandemic, led to a feeling of feast or famine, El-Wattar said. Birch & Rye became mainly known as a destination restaurant, with 70 percent of its customers coming from outside Noe Valley. Many local diners shied away.

“What I want to highlight [now] with this more expansive phase of the restaurant is we are opening our doors wider to the neighborhood,” said El-Wattar, who lives in the Presidio but joked she is a Noe Valleyan at heart based on how much time she spends in the neighborhood.

To make the restaurant more inviting to local customers, she has instituted



Birch & Rye chef-owner Anya El-Wattar is eager to report the James Beard Foundation is co-presenting a special evening at her restaurant to sample modern Russian cuisine on Wednesday, Nov. 29, 6 to 8 p.m. For details, see Birch & Rye on Facebook. Photo by Art Bodner

several changes, such as reducing prices on the menu. Thus, for example, an order of petite rye bread that had been \$14 is now \$12. Her vegetarian stroganoff made with einkorn noodles and mushrooms went from \$33 to \$29.

“We were getting feedback from neighbors that the prices were on the higher end, and they considered us a special occasion restaurant,” said El-Wattar. “At the same time the same neighbors were saying, ‘We love the food. We love your restaurant. It is just a little bit out of our reach.’”

She is trying her best to respond, she said. “We don’t want to exclude ourselves from being part of the neighborhood [by] being too much of a special occasion restaurant.”

Named Host Chef at Taste

At the same time, El-Wattar is proud of the recognition Birch & Rye has received and the new business it has attracted to Noe Valley. Her restaurant was the only new one in Northern California recognized by the James Beard Foundation. It selected her to be the host chef of its Taste of America event, set to take place Feb. 4 at the Four Seasons in San Francisco. El-Wattar is one of only 20 chefs chosen from the Bay Area to present food to the upwards of 400 attendees.

“We pride ourselves on being both a destination restaurant and bringing attention to Noe Valley as a destination,” she said. “It is something we feel like, we think is a service we are providing to the neighborhood.”

With dishes unfamiliar to most American palates, like *zrazi*—a potato and beluga lentils dish—or *pelmeni*—made with chicken and noodles—El-Wattar acknowledged the menu at Birch & Rye can be a little intimidating. It is something she has tried to address with her staff, so they can answer any questions diners have.

“Our biggest challenge is to figure out how to make this restaurant and its offerings more approachable, not just more affordable—where you come in and feel like it is an experience you are comfortable with on a Wednesday night or whether it is a business dinner, a family or couple, or single people coming in and just having a drink.”

Brunch May Be Expanded

El-Wattar emphasized that she has designed her menu to feature a variety of à la carte options at different price points that suit customers coming to Birch & Rye for a romantic night out or just a quick bite with friends.

“You are able to curate your own experience now,” she said, “or come in

with the family and have dinner on Wednesday or Thursday. It doesn’t have to be an all-night affair.”

She is also planning to extend Sunday brunch to Saturdays.

“Nobody wants to go across town to have brunch. They want to go in their own neighborhood. That is my experience,” she said.

The menu will still depend on what is in season. For instance, the fall menu is featuring a wood-roasted lamb instead of pork ribs, and an Ora King Salmon dish instead of sea bream.

“We try to change the menu extensively every three months to highlight the seasonality of winter, summer, spring, and fall. It changes as does the produce at the markets. We love our farmers markets, so we want to high-

light what is available.”

Special Dinner Nights

She has also started hosting special events, such as an all-you-can-eat Sunday barbeque buffet that cost \$40 per person and included two drinks. El-Wattar has also teamed up with other chefs to offer special dinner nights, such as the five-course tasting dinner (\$98 per person) she hosted Oct. 29 with guest chef Nelson German from AlaMar Dominican Kitchen.

“We want to find a way to engage the neighborhood more. We are happy to open once a night to have those community nights,” said El-Wattar.


And she encourages people with ideas to share them with her or her staff. “We really want to hear from our neighbors, she said. We want to hear from you to learn and evolve. We want to become even more neighbor-friendly.”


At the same time, El-Wattar remains committed to showcasing at Birch & Rye what the Russian culture is capable of, no matter what headwinds she and her business face.

“If we hold on to that vision of having Russian culture, yet excellent behavior, excellence in food service and hospitality, maybe we can change some hearts, we can change some minds and bridge the gap, so there is less hatred and more understanding,” said El-Wattar, adding that she has no desire to return to her homeland. “I am so crushed by what is happening and ashamed. I am ashamed of being Russian right now.”

She just wants to share the dishes created by her mother, grandmother, and the other women in her life.

“This is simply me telling my story through food,” said El-Wattar. ■





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Aid and Comfort For Happy Donuts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

working at the 24-hour eatery on Monday, Oct. 2, when two men, each brandishing a gun, walked into the store at 5:38 a.m. and demanded money.

“I was scared,” Kang said. “I was shocked about the gun in front of me. Luckily, there were two people working with me. Normally, I’m by myself.”

None of the employees was injured in the robbery, but the intruders took more than \$1,500 in cash, as well as the store’s ATM machine.

Two days later, San Francisco police announced the arrest of two suspects in the case, identified as Jacques Tucker, 32, and Lloyd Gage, 33.

Police alleged the pair also were responsible for two similar robberies “in and around the Mission District.”

Customers Stream In

Happy Donuts is a popular destination, for early morning commuters to late-shift police officers pausing for a pick-me-up.

The outlier crime shocked the Noe Valley community—and spurred people to action. One of those was Julian Weisser. Weisser put up posters around the neighborhood, saying “Tomorrow I’m Buying You a Donut.” The morning of Oct. 4, he arrived at 9 a.m., ready to purchase 100 donuts, for anyone and everyone who came in the shop.

“It just so happened that three kind people came up to me that morning and gave me \$60 more to put towards donuts,” Weisser, a local entrepreneur, told the *Voice*. “I was sad to hear about the theft. I wanted to support Happy

Donuts and rally the community. I didn’t have any grand plans other than to buy some donuts for folks. It was heartening to see the community turn out. It was lovely to have multiple people contribute money to buy more donuts.”

Other residents came to the store and offered to help in the cost or cleanup of any property damaged in the robbery.

Kang said that “many people came and gave us their phone numbers to call them if they [the robbers] came back.

“We got so many phone numbers,” she said.

Among others who lent their support was District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman. He took to X (formerly Twitter) to praise law enforcement for its quick apprehension of suspects.

“Great work by @SFPD for arresting the two suspects wanted for the armed robbery of Happy Donuts in Noe Valley,” Mandelman wrote.

Dave Burke, a civilian employee of the police department who works as the public safety liaison for District 8, also thanked the SFPD and the local community.

“I am pleased and gratified by the swift and deliberate work of the San Francisco Police Department in apprehending these robbery suspects,” he stated. “I can’t say enough good things about the one silver lining here, the large group of dedicated Noe Valley neighbors—led by Julian Weisser—who showed up to support Happy Donuts in its hour of need.”

Details of Arrest

In an Oct. 10 press release, the San Francisco Police Department said crime investigators had developed “probable cause” to suspect Tucker as one of the robbers in the case.

While conducting a surveillance on



Monica Kang, left, and Ratha Vann are still recovering from the scary robbery Oct. 2 at Happy Donuts but say they have been touched by the outpouring of support from the community.

Photo by John Ferrannini

Oct. 4, police saw what they thought was the suspect’s car going to “pick up a second male believed to be one of his co-conspirators,” the department said.

“Officers followed the suspect vehicle until the suspects could be safely apprehended,” the press release continued. “Officers observed the suspect vehicle park in the area of Silver Avenue and San Bruno Avenue. When Tucker exited the vehicle,” police said, they took Tucker and Gage into custody without incident.

After obtaining a search warrant, police reported they went to Tucker’s residence and “seized the clothing and shoes worn by [the suspect] during the robberies, as well as two pistols, and merchandise [allegedly] stolen in the crimes.”

The two suspects remained in custody in late October. Each was charged with multiple counts, including robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, false imprisonment, and use of a firearm during commission of a felony.

Back in Business

The day after the assault on the store, Vann told KRON-4 News that for safety reasons Happy Donuts might need to shorten its hours.

A week and a half later, Vann told the *Voice* the business would stay open around the clock.

That means, at least for now, Noe Valley residents, and those passing through, will still be able to enjoy their glazed donuts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. ■



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Christmas Fair Brings Sparkle to Latvian Hall

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ping. It is a fun environment for that,” said Bartling.

Vendors set up shop in the main hall, which has a small stage.

Lisa Powell, writing in the December 2007 *Voice*, noted that “the Latvian Church bought the three-story building on Hoffman in 1952 from the neighborhood’s Finn community, which once used it as a sports hall (and ballroom). The distinctive front doors, hand-carved by a Latvian artist from Toronto, featured the eight-pointed star, a traditional Latvian ornament. (Latvia, famous for its ornaments, amber, and *dainas*, or folk songs, is also the birthplace of the first decorated Christmas tree, dating back to 1510.)”

The 2023 fair is the ninth iteration of the current fair, as it wasn’t held in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. Organizers brought it back in 2021, with attendees and participants required to wear masks.

Last year’s fair raised \$2,000 for Nova Ukraine, a nonprofit based in Palo Alto assisting with humanitarian efforts in the Eastern European country’s war with Russia. When the *Voice* spoke with fair organizers in October, they had yet to decide on this year’s beneficiary.

Estonian Choir Will Sing

They are expecting to have the Estonian cultural choir perform, about 20 vendors selling various merchandise, and upwards of 400 people in attendance throughout the day.

“A lot of our events have not so many people, so it is so nice to see our hall full of people of all ages,” said Sunnyvale resident Māra Linde, one of the fair organizers with the Northern California Latvian Association. “I really love the sound of our hall when it is full of people.”

Linde grew up in Tukums, Latvia, then moved to Riga. Her family came to the U.S. in 2010 and has been involved with Latvian Hall ever since. A soprano with the Latvian choir, she traveled with the choral group this summer back to her home country to see family and participate in a song festival.

“I’m a stay-at-home mom but a full-time Latvian,” joked Linde, who has two children ages 17 and 23 with her husband.

Talking to the *Voice* at Latvian Hall last month as the church prepared to



The Latvian Lutheran Church on Hoffman Avenue will be filled with joy on Saturday, Dec. 2, as the Bay Area returns for the ninth Baltic Christmas Fair. 2021 photo courtesy Linnea Bartling

host a theater festival, Linde said she looked forward each year to trying Estonian and Lithuanian foods at the Christmas fair.

“Every year we have Santa too,” she noted.

Handmade Gifts

San Francisco resident Sylvia Vientulis has been attending events at Latvian Hall since she was a child. Her mother had fled then Soviet-controlled Latvia shortly after the end of World War II and resettled in the city.

“I don’t have the language, so it is lost on me. But what I adored about it, and still adore about it, is there is a very strong connection between the Latvians and the Baltic community in general that exists here,” said Vientulis, who lives in the city’s Lands End neighborhood and works for the Noe Valley Association on its website and graphics needs.

“Given the history of those countries, and how many people had to flee the Soviets, I think those countries have really relied on all kinds of interesting ways to find community in different geographic locations. This is an example of it,” she said.

A multimedia artist who calls her business Monkey Print, Vientulis each year sets up a booth at the Christmas Fair to sell her ceramics, holiday ornaments, and some prints.

Feast Like a Latvian

She also makes a traditional Latvian saffron raisin bread, called *klingeris*, that has become a bestseller.

“The bread goes in a heartbeat,” said Vientulis, who usually is assigned a spot near the stage in the hall that is accessed from the street level. “I will do round loaves \$14 or \$15 each. It is beautiful to eat toasted for breakfast.”

space to people speaking different languages and traditional cultural offerings,” said Vientulis. “It is a hidden gem cultural event.”

A Christmas Secret No More

For much of its history, the fair had been somewhat of a well-kept secret, noted Bartling, who was born in the U.S. to parents who were World War II refugees.

“Originally, we really started it for our own communities,” she said. “We spread the word throughout our own communities mostly.”

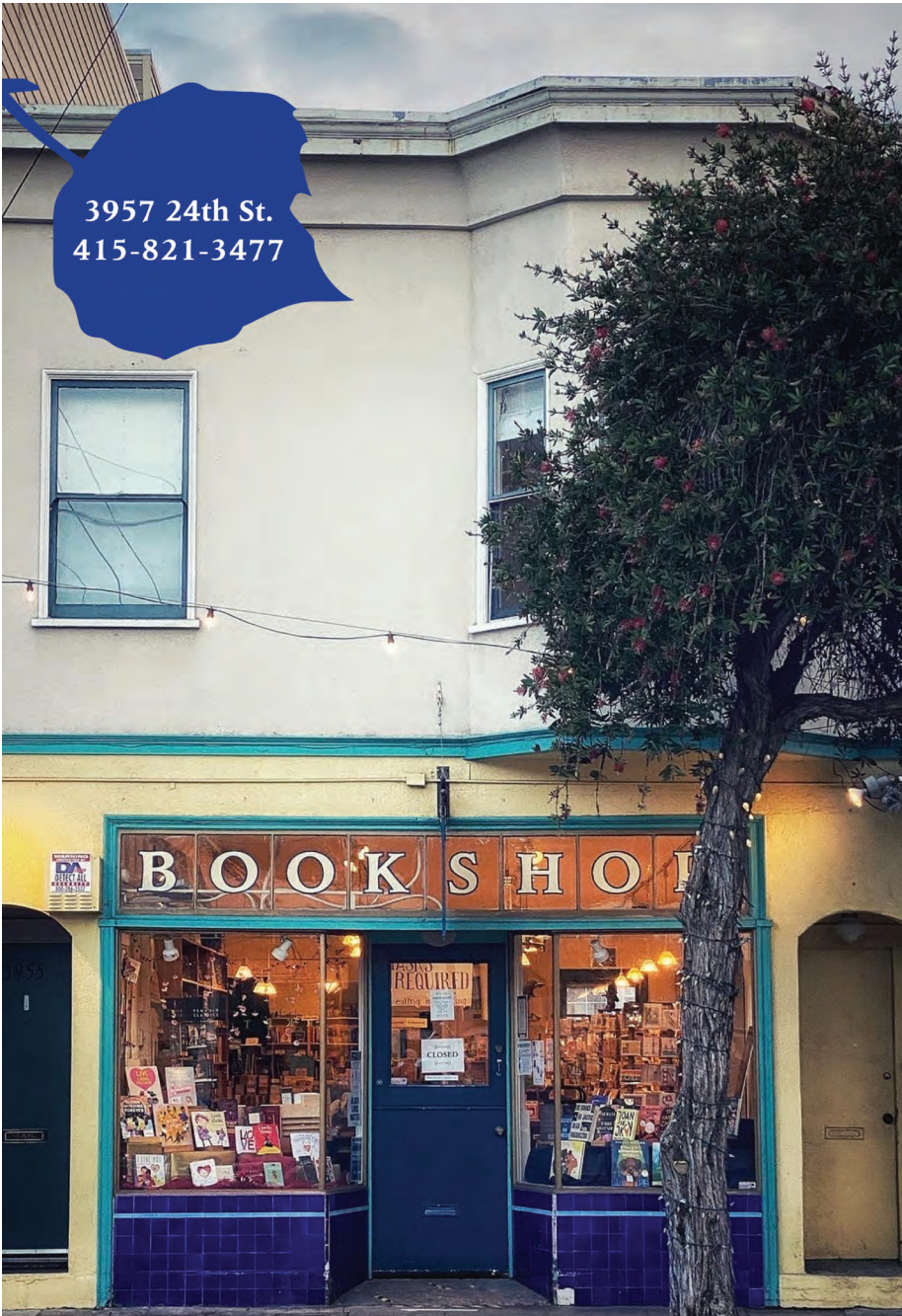
To the fair organizers’ delight, and a bit of trepidation, the *San Francisco Chronicle* last year named the event one of the best places in the Bay Area to buy Christmas gifts. While it helped bring wider public attention, the organizing committee wasn’t sure whether they could handle a large influx of people, said Bartling.


“It was wonderful. We had wonderful guests,” Bartling told the *Voice*. “People said no matter what their background was, they enjoyed the day.”

One issue for anyone thinking of attending the fair is parking, as Latvian Hall doesn’t have a parking lot. It can be hard to find an open parking space on the nearby streets of the hilly residential area. Fair organizers told the *Voice* they encourage attendees to car-pool and advise them to be prepared for a walk.

“We tell people to look for parking down on 24th Street, where it is better, and to be prepared to walk up the hill,” said Bartling.

For more information about this year’s fair, visit its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SanFranciscoBalticChristmasFair>.





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SHORT TAKES

Lunches Packed With Love

Bethany Methodist Church knows how to walk the walk when it comes to helping feed people living on the streets. Six times a year, church volunteers make sandwiches and deliver them at community night walks organized by the multi-faith San Francisco Night Ministry.

Congregation member Cathy Personias says, “Engaging in this program helps me look at the tent camps and people hanging out on the sidewalk with (I hope) a little more compassion.”

You can join the Bethany crew and help assemble the meals at noon on Sunday, Nov. 12, at the church, located at 1270 Sanchez St., at the corner of Clipper Street. The church is also looking for donations of the food items, including deli meats, fruits, cheese, bread, juice, chips, and packaged desserts. For more information, contact Bethany at 415-647-8393 or bethanysoffice@gmail.com.

Sip. Stroll. Shop.

Get those taste buds ready for the Noe Valley Wine Walk on Thursday, Nov. 30, from 4 to 7 p.m., sponsored by the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association. During the walk, Noe’s shops and restaurants will become tasting stations offering sips of wines from local merchants, including Noe Valley Wine and Spirits, 3821 24th St. The stores also will hand out special treats and discounts.

Your \$30 ticket will get you a glass (thank you, Novy and Mr. Digby’s), which you can fill and sip from as you start your Christmas shopping. Mary Fobbs-Guillory, branch manager of our Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library, has channeled her inner artist to make the tasting map (*see map below*).

Truck on down to the Noe Valley Town Square to pick up your glass, starting at 4 p.m.; tickets will be available there and at other spots.

You can feel good knowing that proceeds will help support the Merchants’ “Keeping the Lights On” project, which brings the lights to 24th, Castro, and Church streets throughout the year.

When you’ve had enough of the grape, sashay over to Noe’s Nest at 1257 Guerrero St. for an afterparty from 7 to 8 p.m., with dessert and hot drinks (no more wine!). Add that to your ticket for \$5.

Go to the Merchants’ website at nvmpa.com and hit the Events tab for more information.



The Dior Quartet, composed of (l. to r.) Tobias Elser, Joanne Yesol Choi, Noa Sarid, and Caleb Georges, will perform Nov. 11 and 12 at the Noe Music series at the Noe Valley Ministry on Sanchez Street. Photo courtesy Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto

New Music From Dior

Noe Music will continue its tradition of pushing the boundaries of chamber music with concerts Nov. 11 and 12 by the Dior String Quartet, the quartet-in-residence at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Canada, and more recently at Stanford University.

With roots in Korea-Canada, the St. Lucia, Israel, and the U.S., the artists plan a program featuring Haydn, Janáček, Kevin Lau, and Shostakovich on Sunday, Nov. 12, 4 p.m., at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.

The day before, on Saturday, Nov. 11, the quartet will perform two special programs for children and families, at 10:30 a.m. and again at noon.

Tickets, running \$15 to \$60, are available at the door or on the Noe Music website (noemusic.org). As the shows regularly sell out, you might want to reserve in advance. (That goes for the series’ Dec. 2 and 3 concerts as well, featuring Brooklyn-based jazz pianist Jarrett Cherner and virtuoso vocalist Sarah Elizabeth Charles.)

Resound Lifts Our Hearts

With its fall concert, titled “My Heart Be Brave,” San Francisco’s mixed-voice Resound Ensemble hopes to convey through music its “dream of a world of justice, freedom, and peace.”

Among the works to be featured in three evening concerts Nov. 10 to 12 are Derrick Skye’s “A Vision Unfolding,” Joel Thompson’s setting of Maya Angelou’s poem “The Caged Bird Sings for Freedom,” and Zanaida Stewart Robles’ “Can You See?” with lyrics taken from protest signs.

The program also will include pieces by Rosephanye Powell, Rollo Dilworth, Reginal Wright, Alysia Lee, Ysaÿe M. Barnwell, Sydney Guillaume, Melanie DeMore, and the concert’s title song by Marques L.A. Garrett.

Made up of volunteer singers from a variety of backgrounds, Resound has performed at the San Francisco Symphony and at choral festivals

around the country, including at Carnegie Hall.

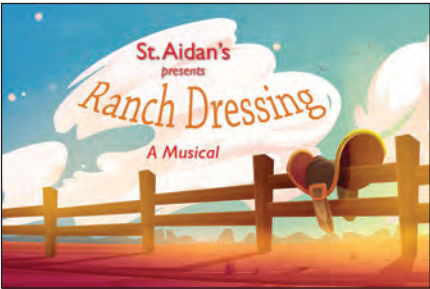
The concerts all begin at 7:30 p.m., and take place at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.

Tickets are available through the group’s website (resoundensemble.org) and run \$10 to \$30.

Nov. 5 Will Be a Classic

On Sunday, Nov. 5, you’ll have two chances to hear classical music in Noe Valley. At 3 p.m. at Bethany Methodist Church, the eight musicians comprising Friends Playing Chamber Music will play selections from Rachmaninoff, Kodály, and Beethoven at the church, 1270 Sanchez St. The performance is free, but RSVPs are encouraged at Eventbrite.com.

And then, from 5 to 7 p.m., you will be given the luxury of an intimate performance by baritone Simon Barrad and Ukrainian pianist Kseniia Polstiankina Barrad at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. Sponsored by Lieder Alive! the duo will offer works by Wolf and Schumann and “An Odyssey of Ukrainian Songs.” Tickets are available through liederallive.org and start at \$25.



An ever-mirthful band of actors will be staging their 17th musical comedy, *Ranch Dressing*, at St. Aidan’s Church on Gold Mine Drive the weekend of Nov. 10–12.

Saddle Up for Ranch Dressing

We all need a good chuckle right now, and St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church promises belly laughs the weekend of Nov. 10 to 12, as the members and friends present their 17th musical about the goings-on at the fictitious St. Dymphna’s Church. This year’s show, *Ranch Dressing*, has a country-western theme woven throughout the boisterous singing, slapstick humor, and bad puns.

Writer/director John Wilk is on his eighth “Dymphna,” as the comedies are referred to at the church. Musical wizard Scumbly Koldewyn is on his twelfth. And Dave Franquist, who shaves off his beard once a year to play Mother Mary, has been in all 17. The choreographer is Deborah Shaw, former dance director at City College. “It’s very camp and zany,” says St. Aidan’s member Betsy Eddy.

You can join the merriment on Friday, Nov. 10, or Saturday, Nov. 11 (7:30 p.m.), or Sunday, Nov. 12 (2 p.m.). St. Aidan’s is at 101 Gold Mine Drive. Tickets, ranging from \$10 to \$35, are available at brownpapertickets.com/event/6159755 and at the door.

Art Songs by Women Composers

On Sunday, Nov. 19, at 7:30 p.m., the Left Coast Chamber Ensemble will update our (mostly male) notions of classical music with its concert “Art Song and Keyboard Music of California,” at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. The program will feature works by both contemporary and historical women composers, including Elinor Remick Warren, Carrie Jacobs-Bond, Addie Camsuzou, and Vivian Fung. Rounding out the evening will be works for piano and guitar by Gabrielle Smith and Henry Cowell.

The Bay Area group of more than a dozen classical musicians has been

An Extra Sweet Nutcracker

You can’t have too many Nutcrackers for the holiday season. And a performance that combines the classically trained artistry of the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra with puppets has to be sweet.

On Saturday, Nov. 25, the renowned Puppet Company joins the orchestra at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St., to present *Nutcracker Sweet* at the child-friendly hour of 2 p.m. As with all SFCO concerts, there is no admission charge.

Puppeteer Randal Metz has been creating stories with nimble creatures for almost 50 years and is most often seen in a puppet theater at the Oakland Zoo. For this performance he’ll bring three different kinds of puppets.

Darcy Rindt, who directs the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, explains, “Children get to see how puppets work. There are some hand puppets, stick puppets, and marionettes on a stage.”

The performance has “a few little fireworks,” she adds. “There’s confetti. A little bit of education. The marionettes wander out amongst the children.”

To find out more, visit the orchestra’s website, thesfco.org. —Kit Cameron

around since 1992, and its mission goes far beyond performing and musicianship. They are committed educators who collaborate with artists and scholars. Every year, they sponsor a musical composition contest.

Tickets range from \$15 to \$35 and are available through their website <https://leftcoastensemble.org>.



The annual tree lighting at the town square is set for Friday, Dec. 1. Photo by Art Bodner

Holiday Tree Lighting

One of the surest signs we are into the holiday season is the annual tree lighting at the Noe Valley Town Square, which this year takes place on Friday, Dec. 1, at 5 p.m. Plans are still being finalized, but Town Square manager Leslie Crawford promises caroling, face painting, and edible treats. If the event is anything like last year’s, there will be performances by local school kids, taekwondo artists, yuletide singers, and Mission High cheerleaders. The square should also be filled with light two weeks later at the annual Chanukah Wonderland. Find the latest in the Events section at noevalleytownsquare.com.

This month’s Short Takes were reported and written by Kit Cameron.



THE BRANNIGAN TEAM BUYING & SELLING AT THE SAME TIME?

When it comes to buying a new home at the same time you sell your current home, **planning is key** and **timing is critical**. Everything must fall into place at the right moment. With the proper strategy, you won't have to worry about double mortgage payments or end up without a place to live for a period of time.

TIPS TO MAKE THE PROCESS SMOOTHER

- ✓ Make necessary repairs or improvements to prepare your current home for the market.
- ✓ List your home with a real estate agent. Don't forget to ask them for referrals to another experienced agent if you're relocating to a different city.
- ✓ Determine how you will fund the down payment, such as drawing from your current HELOC, retirement funds, savings, or a bridge loan.
- ✓ Get pre-approved for a new mortgage so it's already in place when you find your next home.
- ✓ Have a contingency plan in case you can't find a new home before the sale of your current home closes (e.g. live with family or friends, rent back from new owners, or rent some kind of temporary housing).

REMEMBER

IF POSSIBLE, COORDINATE THE TIMING OF THE CLOSINGS OF BOTH HOUSES

Often, you can close on your old home just prior to closing on your new home. If this isn't possible, you will need to have a plan in place for that time gap.

Working closely with an experienced real estate agent will help you protect your interests and make the process go smoother.



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COMPASS



Photo: Amanda Brauning



Santa photos are back!
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The Cost of Living in Noe

No Bones About It: Market at a Standstill

By Corrie M. Anders

A stylish four-bedroom, four-bath home on a hill near Douglass Dog Play Area sold in September for \$4.5 million. It was the month’s most expensive residential property.

But few Noe Valley real estate watchers were barking for joy. The 27th Street house was among only three single-family detached homes sold in September.

Condominium sales also were arthritic. Buyers purchased just five condos (after 10 in August), according to data provided to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Icon Properties.



A buyer in September paid \$3,490,000 for the top two floors of this building in the heart of “downtown” Noe Valley. Aside from commanding views of the city, the Sanchez Street condominium offered four bedrooms, five baths, and a private deck.

Photos by Corrie M. Anders



This hillside home on 27th Street—at \$4.5 million Noe Valley’s most expensive sale in September—closed escrow in just two days. Built in 1939, the renovated property featured four bedrooms, a gourmet kitchen, and views from three decks.

Corcoran CEO Randall Kostick said the weak sales reflected a marketplace in which both buyers and sellers have become disengaged.

“Buyer confidence has deteriorated a bit, mostly due to higher [mortgage] interest rates,” Kostick said. Current interest rates, at 7 percent or above since early August, are forcing people “to pay a lot more” each month.

At the same time, Kostick said, there is a shortage of homes for sale. Homeowners would rather sit tight than trade a low mortgage rate for an inflated one.

“It’s not very attractive if you sell at 2.5 percent and buy another at a 7.5 percent interest rate,” he said. “The only people selling right now are people that have to sell because of a job relocation, death in the family, or divorce.”

Designer Details

The sellers of the house on 27th Street accepted a bid that was 4.2 percent less than their \$4,695,000 asking price. As for the buyers of the property, they may not have needed a mortgage. The parties closed escrow and exchanged the keys just two days after

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						
September 2023	3	\$1,500,000	\$4,500,000	\$2,596,667	74	105%
August 2023	5	\$1,485,000	\$3,950,000	\$2,496,000	92	102%
September 2022	4	\$2,850,000	\$4,050,000	\$3,362,500	7	108%
Condominiums/TICs						
September 2023	5	\$1,050,000	\$3,490,000	\$1,588,000	26	102%
August 2023	10	\$925,000	\$1,800,081	\$1,402,508	35	104%
September 2022	8	\$1,050,000	\$1,850,000	\$1,500,000	22	102%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
September 2023	2	\$2,100,000	\$2,504,000	\$2,302,000	26	99%
August 2023	3	\$985,000	\$1,600,000	\$1,348,000	44	99%
September 2022	5	\$1,550,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,250,000	26	118%
5+-unit buildings						
September 2023	0	—	—	—	—	—
August 2023	0	—	—	—	—	—
September 2022	0	—	—	—	—	—

*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. NWV 11/2023

the home was listed for sale.

Located in the 700 block of 27th Street between Diamond and Douglass streets, the home, originally built as a one-bedroom cottage in 1939, underwent a major renovation in 2006 by Topetcher Architects of San Francisco. The redesign created a new third floor, expanded living areas and decks, and maximized views of the city with floor-to-ceiling windows, including one in a stairwell.

A central fireplace, multiple skylights, all-new kitchen appliances, and dual heating systems warmed up the home’s 3,500 square feet of living space (including a one-car garage).

Noe Valley’s most expensive condo-

minium was as large and as pricey as many detached homes in the ’hood. A buyer paid \$3,490,000—9.2 percent above the asking price (\$3,195,000)—for the home, occupying the top two floors of a two-unit building constructed in 2007 in the 1000 block of (Slow) Sanchez Street, between 24th and Elizabeth streets.

Among the many amenities in the four-bedroom, five-bath abode, with 2,750 square feet of living space, were a chef’s kitchen with bar seating, a fireplace with built-in bookshelves, two terraces overlooking a Norfolk Island pine, one-car parking, and a private rooftop deck with sweeping views of San Francisco Bay. ■



Giving Thanks with Gratitude



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Noe Valley Rents**

Unit	No. in Sample	Range October 2023	Average October 2023	Average September 2023	Average October 2022
Studio	8	\$2,005 – \$2,700	\$2,384 / mo.	\$2,345 / mo.	\$2,338 / mo.
1-bdrm	36	\$2,250 – \$4,500	\$3,117 / mo.	\$2,700 / mo.	\$3,229 / mo.
2-bdrm	50	\$2,800 – \$7,800	\$4,534 / mo.	\$5,190 / mo.	\$4,182 / mo.
3-bdrm	24	\$3,800 – \$12,000	\$6,196 / mo.	\$6,989 / mo.	\$6,447 / mo.
4+-bdrm	5	\$5,995 – \$16,500	\$9,797 / mo.	\$11,731 / mo.	\$8,550 / mo.

** This survey is based on a sample of 123 Noe Valley rental listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Sept. 10 to Oct. 9, 2023. In October 2022, there were a total of 146 listings. NWV 11/2023

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STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular Voice feature, spotlighting new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. We have announced Lehr's revival in past stories and Rumors Behind the News. But here's a closer look at the unique specialty store and its enthusiastic new owner.

LEHR'S GERMAN SPECIALTIES
1581 Church Street
(415) 341-0024
<https://lehrssf.com/>

Unlike last year, when Hannah Seyfert reopened Lehr's German Specialties on Nov. 27 less than a month before Christmas, this holiday season she has had months to prepare for the all-important shopping season. She started stocking items for the upcoming holidays in October and will be rolling out even more in the weeks ahead.

She is selling more than 20 varieties of stollen, a German Christmas bread (starting at \$7.99), and lebkuchen, traditional German gingerbread (starting at \$5.99). Especially popular is the Niederegger marzipan, an almond-flavored candy (starting at \$4.99), while Seyfert encourages patrons to also try the Spekulatius, cinnamon-spiced cookies (starting at \$6.99).

"It is very important, and thankfully last year everything came together," Seyfert said of the holiday shopping season. "It will be a big time for us again."

New this year for customers of the beloved shop at 1581 Church St. is a station where people can select various small chocolates to use as treats in advent calendars, or they can purchase pre-filled ones (starting at \$9.99). Also available are tea Advent calendars (\$12.49) and picture Advent calendars (\$12.99).

The shop is also selling a variety of gift items, from candleholders (starting at \$20) and nutcrackers (starting at \$80) to ornaments (\$5 and up). One holiday gift comes from the Ore Mountains near the Czech-German border and is known as a "German smoker." It's like a nutcracker, but the figure's mouth is used to burn incense (starting at \$40).

"All of our wooden Christmas decorations are handcrafted in Germany. We will offer exclusive, hard-to-find items in limited quantities," said Seyfert. "Some of the ornaments have 50+ pieces assembled and painted by hand. Purchases are supporting German artists as well (many are old or have disabilities)."

Preserving a Legacy

Seyfert, who grew up in Hanover, Germany, had been a regular of Lehr's since moving to San Francisco in 2016 to be with her husband, Alex. They had first met in 2009 when they were roommates in Chemnitz, Germany.

He ended up moving to the Bay Area a decade ago to pursue a career in the tech sector, but the two kept in touch. Their friendship evolved into a relationship, and after three years of dating long distance, they wed.

After learning that the original owner, Brigitte Lehr, planned to shutter the store after 48 years in business, Seyfert couldn't imagine going without the hard-to-find German treats that Lehr stocked. Out of the blue she called up Lehr about taking over the business.

"I would not know where else to get



Lehr's owner Hannah Seyfert says Friday is the day she receives her shipment of breads and pastries from Hahdough German bakery in Hayes Valley. The fresh pretzels arrive on Saturday.
Photo by Art Bodner

my sausages and bread. I was panicking when I learned Brigitte was closing," Seyfert said. "This place is a piece of *heimat*—home in German—for a lot of German expats. I am selling much more memories here than just food."

Lehr connected her to a real estate agent, who requested Seyfert submit a more formal proposal. While imbibing a few beers seated at the Valley Tavern's garden, Seyfert crafted a plan that won over Lehr.

They signed a contract for Seyfert to acquire the business, and last fall Seyfert set about remodeling the storefront. She and her husband were working there last Thanksgiving when several women who lived nearby and grew up going to the store stopped by to drop them off some turkey for dinner.

"I have been really happy about the support of the neighbors and the community," said Seyfert, who lives nearby at 24th and Diamond streets.

There was no point in changing the store's name, said Seyfert, since people knew and loved Lehr's. She kept the store's old sign and hung up old photos of it in honor of the store's history.

"Brigitte built a legacy here," she said. "It is the only German store in San Francisco."

Throughout the year, Seyfert stocks frozen breads (\$6.99 and up) shipped from Germany that can be found in the freezers on the right side of the store near the entrance. She also sells a variety of sausages (starting at \$11.79) from the Continental Gourmet Sausage Co. in Glendale, Calif. Customers looking for Wurstmeister Benz sausages from Germany can order them via Lehr's website.

On Fridays, she gets a shipment of fresh pastries from the Hahdough German bakery in Hayes Valley, while on Saturdays she sells pretzels from Berkeley-based Squabisch (\$4.49).

"They sell like crazy," said Seyfert.

A big surprise has been how popular the muesli is.

"A lot of Americans love it. It is a super quick and easy breakfast," she said.

About 35 percent of customers are

German transplants like herself. For the remaining 75 percent who may not speak the language, Seyfert recommends they use Google translate if they need to read the product labels that are in German only.

"It is nice to see how open people are

to experiencing new flavors and experiences," said Seyfert.

Santa brought a surprise of his own to the couple last December, when Seyfert learned she was pregnant.

"No, of course not!" Seyfert said when asked if the pregnancy had been planned. "We found out in mid-December when we were so busy. People wanted their Christmas goodies!"

The tipoff came when her mom, in town to help out at the store, noticed she was eating pickles.

"I never liked pickles," said Seyfert.

She and Alex now have an infant girl named Leni.

"She is our first baby. We are really happy," said Seyfert.

Taking time off to spend time with her daughter, Seyfert couldn't move forward this year on an idea she'd had to open a Yuletide, a Christmas market like the ones she grew up with in Germany. She told the *Voice* perhaps she would have time to do the market in 2024, likely somewhere in downtown San Francisco.

For now, Seyfert is working on being able to offer delivery this month via Door Dash. She has teamed up with Too Good to Go to sell packaged foods that have reached their expiration date but are still good (at a discounted price). Customers can place their order with the app and stop by the store to pick it up.

"Label dates are so misleading," said Seyfert, who helped launch the app's marketing in the city in 2021.

Lehr's is closed Mondays. The rest of the week it opens at 11 a.m. and closes at 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, 6 p.m. on Saturdays, and 5 p.m. on Sundays.

—Matthew S. Bajko



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MON NOV 6	JEREMY SCHECK • SCHECKEATS - COOKING SMARTER: FRIENDLY RECIPES WITH A SIDE OF SCIENCE • 6:30 P.M. FREE! A TikTok superstar's debut cookbook.
TUES NOV 7	ERIN FRENCH • BIG HEART LITTLE STOVE: BRINGING HOME MEALS & MOMENTS FROM THE LOST KITCHEN • 4:30 P.M. FREE! Book signing event! Everyone can come to have their book signed, purchase from us for priority in the signing line.
SAT NOV 11	CAREY JONES & JOHN MCCARTHY • EVERY COCKTAIL HAS A TWIST: MASTER 25 CLASSIC DRINKS AND CRAFT MORE THAN 200 VARIATIONS • 3:30 P.M. FREE!
SUN NOV 12	JORDAN MICHELMAN & ZACHARY CARLSEN • BUT FIRST, COFFEE: A GUIDE TO BREWING FROM THE KITCHEN TO THE BAR • 3:00 P.M. FREE!
MON NOV 13	FUCHSIA DUNLOP • INVITATION TO A BANQUET: THE STORY OF CHINESE FOOD • 6:30 P.M. FREE! A celebrated author weaves decades of culinary experience and on-the-ground research into a spellbinding book about Chinese cuisine.

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UPPER NOE RECREATION CENTER

Years of Park Service: Cheryl Woltjen receives a well-deserved Certificate of Appreciation from San Francisco Rec and Park general manager Phil Ginsburg at the Upper Noe Block Party in 2018.

Photo by Chris Faust

Thank You, Cheryl

Cheryl Woltjen has departed Upper Noe Rec Center after more than 11 years as our facilities coordinator. Cheryl is the quintessential community builder, supporting programming, meetings, and events that brought us all closer. She will be missed, and we wish her well in her new position. Kuzuri Jackson remains in the rec center office as acting facility coordinator.

Fall Session at Upper Noe ends on Dec. 7. At that point, formal classes will take a break until Winter Session begins in January. Fortunately, the rec center will remain open and busy with free activities like open gym, free play, pickleball, and Zumba to provide fun and exercise. Drop in and join the fun.

You can also get involved by keeping the park healthy. If you see something, please say something. The most effective way to improve park conditions is to contact San Francisco Customer Service (3-1-1) either by phone, web, or the easy-to-use phone app. Park personnel rely on your 3-1-1 reports to support service requests.

For more information, call the office at 415-970-8061. For issues related to Joby's Dog Run, open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., call 3-1-1 or email info@fundogsf.org.

—Chris Faust, Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

Upper Noe Fall Schedule (Sept. 6 to Dec. 7, 2023)

Rec Center Hours, 295 Day St.: Tues.–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.

A Place to Play (free play)

10 to 11:30 a.m. weekdays

1 to 4 p.m. Saturday

Hours are subject to change.

Tuesday

9 to 10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE

10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pickleball (all ages) FREE

Noon to 1 p.m. Pilates (all levels)

1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Pilates (all levels)

2 to 5 p.m. Open Gym (youth)

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis Begin. (ages 8-10)

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Open Gym (adult)

6 to 7 p.m. Tennis Begin. (ages 18+)

6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Yoga

Wednesday

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Open Gym (adult)

Noon to 1 p.m. Feldenkrais (18+) FREE

2 to 5 p.m. Open Gym (youth)

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis Begin. (ages 8-10)

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Flag Football Junior Div. (ages 8-10)

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Flag Football Senior Div. (ages 11-13)

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Drop-In Adult Volleyball (advanced players only)

6 to 7 p.m. Tennis- Begin. (ages 10-12)

Thursday

10 to 11 a.m. Petite Bakers (ages 3-5)

10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pickleball (all ages) FREE

Noon to 1 p.m. Pilates (all levels)

1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Pilates (all levels)

2 to 5 p.m. Open Gym (youth)

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Mommy & Me Yoga

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis Begin. (ages 8-10)

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Open Gym (adult)

6 to 7 p.m. Tennis Begin. (ages 18+)

Friday

9 to 10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE

10 to 11 a.m. Tot Soccer (ages 3-5)

10 to 11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Auditorium Free Play)

11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Tot Soccer (ages 3-5)

2 to 3:30 p.m. Open Gym (youth)

4 to 5 p.m. Karate Kidz- Little Kickers (ages 6-8)

4 to 5 p.m. Volleyball League Upper Noe Team (ages 8-10)

4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis Begin. (ages 8-10)

5 to 6 p.m. Karate Kidz (ages 9-12)

5 to 6 p.m. Volleyball League Upper Noe Team (ages 11-14)

6 to 7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 10-12)

6 to 7:30 p.m. Girls Teen Open Volleyball (ages 12-17) FREE

Saturday

9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Family Zumba FREE

10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Open Gym

Dear Nannies and Caregivers,

The San Francisco Recreation Park Department is moving to a check-in system for drop-in programming. To help with this process, we ask that you share this flyer with families so that they may obtain a Play Pass card for their child. Once a family opens an account and a card is issued, then you may use the card to check the child in for the program.

A Play Pass card can be obtained in two simple steps:

Step 1: Register for a family account.

Step 2: Sign-up for a Play Pass card.

Register at www.sfrecpark.org/register

Hint: If you choose not to use the physical Play Pass card, take a photo of it on your cellphone and save it in FAVORITES, so it will be easy to access for your next visit.

PLAY PASS

Starting October 3

Sign up for a Play Pass to use at our rec centers for drop-in programming & easy equipment access

Play Pass users will be entered into monthly raffle drawings to win gift cards, Rec & Park swag & program discounts, tickets to events, & more

If you haven't taken any programs with us, you'll need to set up an account to get a Play Pass by scanning the QR code or visiting sfrecpark.org/register

Once you enroll online, you can pick up your Play Pass at any of our rec centers



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You're invited to submit your poems,
short fiction, essay or non-fiction piece
for possible inclusion in the January 2024
edition of *The Noe Valley Voice*.

750 word limit.
No payment, but your work will be seen
by thousands of readers of our print and
online editions.

Deadline: December 15, 2023

Email editor@noevalleyvoice.com

Thank you.



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Nov. 1-29: SFFD offers a NERT FULL TRAINING Class, scheduled for Wednesdays, from 5:30 to 9 pm. 2310 Folsom. 558-3200; sf-fire.org

Nov. 1-Dec. 16: CHUNG 24 Gallery exhibits “A Certain Slant of Light,” photos by Adrienne Defendi and Anna Rotti. Artist talk Dec. 16, 3-4 pm; Wed.-Sat., 1:30-6 pm. 4071 24th. chung24gallery.com

Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30: The Noe Valley Library hosts STORYTIMES on Thursdays, 10:15 am and 11 am. Tickets available at 10 am. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30: The BAR on Dolores hosts open-mike COMEDY on Thursdays. Sign up at 8 pm. 1600 Dolores. 695-1745.

Nov. 4: A KNITTING CIRCLE meets from 10 am to 12:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 4, 11, 18 & 25: Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET offers fresh produce, music, and fun, Saturdays, 8 am to 1 pm. 3861 24th. 248-1332; noevalleyfarmersmarket.com

Nov. 4, 11, 18 & 25: Join walkers for NOE WALKS on Saturdays. Meet at 24th and Sanchez at 10 am.

Nov. 4, 11, 18 & 25: “Meet the Animal Keeper” at the Randall Museum and see the live animals that are in residence. 11:30 am. 199 Museum. 554-9600; randallmuseum.org

Nov. 5: ACTION SF hosts a Zoom meeting open to all, 2:30 pm. Email actionsfteam@gmail.com.

Nov. 5: Friends Playing CHAMBER MUSIC perform a free concert of works by Rachmaninoff, Kodály, and Beethoven. 3 pm. Bethany UMC, 1270 Sanchez. bethanysf.org

Nov. 5: Baritone Simon Barrad and Ukranian pianist Kseniia Polstiankina perform UKRANIAN SONGS and pieces by Wolf and Schumann. 5-7 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. Liederlive.org

Nov. 5 & 19: Folk YOGA offers a free Vinyasa Flow class; bring your own mat and water. 11 am-noon. Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Nov. 6: A notebook-making WORKSHOP at the Noe Valley Library runs from 4 to 5 pm. 451 Jersey. Reserve: 355-5707; sfpl.org

NOVEMBER CALENDAR

Nov. 6, 7 & 13: Omnivore Books welcomes CHEF authors Jeremy Scheck (*Scheck Eats—Cooking Smarter*) Nov. 6, 6:30 pm; Erin French (*Big Heart, Little Stove*) Nov. 7, 4:30 pm; and Fuchsia Dunlop (*Invitation to a Banquet: The Story of Chinese Food*) Nov. 13, 6:30 pm. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Nov. 7, 14, 21 & 28: Bring a pen and notebook, laptop, and a WRITING project to NaNoWriMo. 4-5 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. Reserve: 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 8 & 15: The SF Planning Department offers an OPEN HOUSE, “Expanding Housing Choice,” explaining proposed changes to land use rules. 5:30-7:30 pm. Nov. 8 at SF LGBTQ Center, 1800 Market; Nov. 15 at County Fair Building, 1199 Ninth Ave. Register: sfplanning.org

Nov. 9: The Noe Valley Ministry offers a meditative LABYRINTH WALK at 6:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez. noevalleyministry.org

Nov. 9: The Resound Ensemble performs a fall 2023 CONCERT, “My Heart Be Brave.” 7:30-10:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. resoundensemble.org

Nov. 10: SFPL’s Noe Valley FILM CLUB screens *Hell or High Water*. 2 to 3:45 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 10, 11 & 12: St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church hosts performances of *Ranch Dressing*, an original MUSICAL COMEDY. Nov. 10 & 11, 7:30 pm; Nov. 12, 2 pm. 101 Gold Mine Drive. 285-9540; staidansf.org

Nov. 11: NOE MUSIC KIDS can hear the Dior Quartet from 10:30 to 11:15 am, or see Dior at an AZURE concert for children and young adults on the autism spectrum, noon to 12:45 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 648-5236; noemusic.org

Nov. 11: District 8 SUPERVISOR Rafael Mandelman offers virtual office hours appointments 10 am to 12 noon. RSVP to mandelmanstaff@sfgov.org to zoom.

Nov. 12: Assemble bag lunches for the UNHOUSED in San Francisco. Noon. Bethany UMC, 1270 Sanchez. Bethanysf.org

Nov. 12: NOE MUSIC hosts a main-stage performance by the Dior String Quartet. 4-6 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 648-5236; noemusic.org

Nov. 12: The Seducers honky-tonk BAND performs from 5 to 7 pm. Bird & Beckett, 653 Chenery. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com

Nov. 12 & 26: Yoga Flow offers a free YOGA CLASS; bring your own mat, water. 11 am-noon. Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Nov. 13: Get drop-in TECH HELP from the library staff at 451 Jersey St. 2-3 pm. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 15: The Noe Valley BOOK CLUB discusses *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict. 6:30-7:45 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 15: Upper Noe NEIGHBORS hosts a meeting featuring Ingleside Station Captain Amy Hurwitz and Supervisor Rafael Mandelman. 7-8:30 pm. Upper Noe Rec Center, 295 Day. uppernoeneighbors.com

Nov. 17: Frank Muschalle plays BOOGIE-WOOGIE and blues at Bird & Beckett, from 8:30 to 10:30 pm. 653 Chenery. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com

Nov. 18: A Community GARDEN WORK-DAY at James Lick’s “Field of Dreams” needs volunteers. 9 am-1 pm. 1220 Noe. 695-5675; sfusd.edu

Nov. 18: A WALKING TOUR, led by librarian Amy Lewis, visits neighborhood Victorians. 2-3:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 18: Rhythm & Motion offers a free DANCE workout, 4-5 pm. Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Nov. 19: The Left Coast Chamber Ensemble offers “ART SONG and Keyboard Music of California.” 7:30-9 pm. 1021 Sanchez. 617-5223; leftcoastensemble.org

Nov. 22: Ranger Fatima teaches the OHLONE Stave Game, and discusses indigenous plants. 3-4 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. Reservations required:

355-5707; sfpl.org

Nov. 25: SF Chamber Orchestra and Oakland’s Fairyland puppets present the “Nutcracker SWEET.” 2-2:45 pm. 1021 Sanchez. Thesfco.org

Nov. 26: The Cottontails perform a concert of “jump, jive, and wail JAZZ.” 4:30-7 pm. Bird & Beckett, 653 Chenery. 586-3733; birdbeckett.com

Nov. 27: An INK-MAKING workshop at the Noe Valley Library uses leaves and berries. 4-5 pm. 451 Jersey. email nvamgr@sfpl.org to register.

Nov. 28: The SF HISTORY Association hosts a talk by Joseph Amster and Judi Leff, “Turkey Day by the Bay.” 7 pm. Sherith Israel, 2266 California. sanfranciscohistory.org

Nov. 30: Get your glass and a map for the Noe Valley WINE WALK at the Town Square, 4 to 7 pm. An after party is 7 to 8 pm at Noe’s Nest, 1257 Guerrero. nvmpa.com

Dec. 1: The TREE LIGHTING at the Noe Valley Town Square is scheduled for 1 to 5 pm, with entertainment, edibles, and caroling. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 1: An ALL-STAR COMEDY lineup performs at The Dubliner from 8 to 9:30 pm. 3838 24th St. Dublinerbarsf.com

Dec. 2: The BALTIC Christmas Fair at Latvian Hall offers a market, food, crafts, carols, and pictures with Santa 10 am to 3 pm. 425 Hoffman. 647-9398.

Dec. 2: Neighborhood dogs are welcome to pose for SANTA PHOTOS at the Noe Valley Pet Company, 11 am to 3 pm. 1451 Church. 282-7385; noevalleypet.com

Dec. 3: Vocalist Sarah Elizabeth Charles and jazz pianist Jarrett Cherner perform at NOE MUSIC. 4-6 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 648-5236; noemusic.org

Dec. 3: MUSIC on the Hill presents a concert by the Cecilia Ensemble. 7:30 pm. St. Aidan’s Episcopal Church, 101 Goldmine. musiconthehill.org.

Email your listings for December 2023 to calendar@noevalleyvoice.com.

CHILDREN’S FICTION

Langston Hughes’ *An Earth Song: Petite Poems*, illustrated by Tequitia Andrews, includes an ode to spring. Ages 3-5.

In *A Day in the Sun*, Diana Ejaita points out how the sun warms not just us but the entire world. Ages 3-5.

A bossy pig finds a crown and learns a lesson about humility in *I’m a Princel* written by A.H. Benjamin and illustrated by Alessandro Montagnana. Ages 3-7.

Zaila Avant-garde, the first Black American student to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee (in 2021), reveals her favorites, like “resilience,” in *Words of Wonder From Z to A*, illustrated by Keisha Morris. Ages 3-7.

A mapmaker and her sidekick help bees find flowers during a hot dry summer, in *Camilla Super Helper*, by Julie Dillemath with illustrations by Laura Wood. Ages 4-8.

CHILDREN’S NONFICTION

A title in the “Fact vs. Fiction in U.S. History” series, *Sutter’s Mill and the California Gold Rush*, by Carol Kim, analyzes the 1848 event. Ages 8-11.

Ellen Labrecque’s *What Is the Story of Anne of Green Gables?* gives the scoop on author L.M. “Maud” Montgomery’s red-haired, pig-tailed fictional heroine. Ages 8-12.

Nothing Could Stop Her: The Courageous Life of Ruth Gruber, by Rona Arato, tells the story of a Jewish American journalist who reported the news from Nazi Germany. Ages 8-12.

Pretend to enroll in a school for wizards by reading *The Unofficial Guide to the Magical Arts: Apprentice Academy Sorcerers*, by Hal Johnson with illustrations by Cathrin Peterslund. Ages 9-12.

DK Publishing offers 19 hands-on activities in *Space Activity Lab: Exciting Space Projects for Budding Astronomers*. Ages 9-12.

CHILDREN’S EBOOKS

A big hairy creature encourages a boy to succeed, in tying his shoelaces and other things, in *The Power of Yeti*, by Rebecca Van Slyke with illustrations by G. Brian Karas. Ages 3-7.

A child decides to combine being an artist and an activist in *The Artist*, written and illustrated by Nikkolas Smith. Ages 4-8.

Roz MacLean’s picture book *More Than Words: So Many Ways to Say What We Mean* points out the different ways we communicate. Ages 4-8.

Dot the Ladybug: Dot Day is a “My First: I Can Read!” book by Kallie George, illustrated by Fizer Coleman. Ages 4-8.

Everything Awesome About Dangerous Dinosaurs by Mike Lowery combines cartoon illustrations and photographs. Ages 6-8 years.

ADULT FICTION

The Bee Sting by Paul Murray is “a tragicomic family saga and a dazzling story about how to be good at the end of the world.”

Megan Kamalei Kakimoto’s story collection *Every Drop Is a Man’s Nightmare* features a cast of mixed native Hawaiian and Japanese women exploring truth and identity.

A biracial Korean American family searches for their missing father in the thriller *Happiness Falls* by Angie Kim.

In *Looking Glass Sound* by Catriona Ward, a writer questions his mind when he starts seeing things that can’t be real.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Noe’s Hidden Alleys by Michael Blake

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MORE BOOKS TO READ

Alphabet Scoop

On Sept. 30, the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library welcomed Madeleine Felder as its new fulltime children’s librarian. She comes to Noe Valley from the Bernal Heights branch. “Maddie is [already] doing a fantastic job. We’re so grateful to have her on our team,” said fellow librarian Mary Fobbs-Guillory, who took over as Noe Valley branch manager last spring.

In future issues, Felder will be contributing her lists of new children’s books, as children’s librarian Julianne Randolph graciously did before her. This month, Fobbs-Guillory and Adult Services librarian Amy Lewis gathered the titles for the *Voice*, from both the children’s and adult collections.

The November book lists, spread around us like a cozy blanket, have something for everyone.

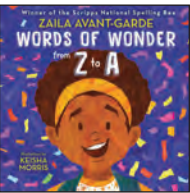
Voice bookworm Karol Barske, who wrote the book descriptions, notes she is eager to check out *Cosmic Scholar: The Life and Times of* (former Fillmore District bohemian) *Harry Smith*, and if that’s not juicy enough, she’ll read *Astor: The Rise and Fall of an American Fortune* by Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe. With the holidays approaching (and nieces and nephews sprouting), I am looking at *Words of Wonder From Z to A* by spelling bee champion Zaila Avant-garde, or the *Space Activity Lab*, with its projects for aspiring astronomers. I’d also like to read *We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*, by New York rabbi Diana Fersko. (Then *The 100 Years’ War on Palestine* by Rashid Khalidi.)

To borrow these books—or films or other media—amble over to the Noe Valley branch, at 451 Jersey St. Or reserve a title at sfpl.org. If you need to consult with Lewis, Felder, or Fobbs-Guillory, call 415-355-5707.

You might want to sign up for the Noe Valley Walking Tour on Saturday, Nov. 18, or learn how to play *Ohlone* games on Wednesday, Nov. 22 (see Library Events at right). Also be aware the children’s *Storytimes* on Thursdays have become so popular they’re now handing out *tickets (!)*, starting at 10 a.m.

Branch hours are Monday noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday noon to 8 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 1 to 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.

Note: The library will be closed on Saturday, Nov. 11, for Veterans Day, and Thursday, Nov. 23, and Friday, Nov. 24, for Thanksgiving. Have a happy one.



—Sally Smith, ed.

The political satire *Mobility* by Lydia Kiesling is from the point of view of an American teenager living in Azerbaijan with her family during the buildup to the U.S. War on Terror.

ADULT NONFICTION

In their historical biography *Astor: The Rise and Fall of an American Fortune*, Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe track the course of a man who started in the beaver-trapping business.

Ross Gay’s essays in *The Book of (More) Delights* find joy in life’s small, daily wonders.

Daughter of the Dragon: Anna May Wong’s Rendezvous With American History is Yunte Huang’s biography of the Chinese American movie star.

In *We Need to Talk About Antisemitism*, millennial rabbi Diana Fersko explores ways to combat myths and stereotypes.

Lidia Matticchio Bastianich and her daughter, Tanya Bastianich Manuali, offer more than 100 recipes in their *Lidia’s: From Our Family Table to Yours*.

ADULT EBOOKS

Cosmic Scholar: The Life and Times of Harry Smith is John F. Szwed’s biography of the eccentric “filmmaker, folklorist, and mystic who transformed American Art.”

Two sisters growing up Black in 1950s Maine fight to protect their home in the *Promise*, a heartbreaking novel by Rachel Eliza Griffiths.

The characters in David James Duncan’s “epic comedy” novel *Sun House* embark on a search for love and meaning in Montana.

In *What the Dead Know: Learning About Life as a New York City Death Investigator*, Barbara Butcher recalls the cases she has seen during her long career.

ADULT BLU-RAY/DVDS

In the 2023 comedy *Barbie*, the iconic doll, played by Margot Robbie, questions her existence.

A young gallery assistant helps Salvador Dali (Ben Kingsley) prepare for a show in New York, in *Daliland* (2022).

LIBRARY EVENTS

Learn about *Ohlone* history, culture, and the impact of colonization at “Ohlone Then and Now,” and sample teas from Cafe Ohlone, on Wednesday, Nov. 1, from 5 to 6 p.m.

Read and sing at *Storytimes* on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m., Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30. Space is limited to 20 children. Tickets are available at the branch beginning at 10 a.m.

Hang out with other crafters at the *Knitting Circle*, Saturday, Nov. 4, from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The library has limited supplies to practice on, so bring your own yarn or needles if you’re working on a special project.

A *Notebook-Making* workshop is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 6, from 4 to 5 p.m. Space is limited, so registration is required. Call, email, or talk to staff to reserve a spot.

Bring your notebook, laptop, and any writing project and write alongside fellow writers in a relaxing atmosphere at the *NaNoWriMo* writing sessions on Tuesdays, Nov. 7, 14, 21 and 28, from 4 to 5 p.m.

The Noe Valley Film Club screens the 2016 western *Hell or High Water*, starring Chris Pine, Ben Foster, and Jeff Bridges, on Friday, Nov. 10, 2 to 3:45 p.m.

Get one-on-one *Tech Help* from the library staff, including how to download eBooks, use library eResources, set up an email account, or do other computer tasks, on Monday, Nov. 13, 2 to 3 p.m. Bring your own device, or practice using a library computer.

The Noe Valley Book Club discusses *The Only Woman in the Room* by Marie Benedict on Wednesday, Nov. 15, from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

Learn about the history of Noe Valley through a guided *Walking Tour* of neighborhood Victorians, followed by a presentation of historic photos, on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2 to 3:30 p.m. This is a repeat of the Noe Valley walking tour given in March 2023.

You can make and play the *Ohlone game Staves*, and then learn about indigenous plants, with Ranger Fatima on Wednesday, Nov. 22, 3 to 4 p.m. Space is limited; reservations are required.

A *Workshop* to make ink out of natural materials such as twigs, leaves, and berries is Monday, Nov. 27, 4 to 5 p.m. Space is limited: email nvamgr@sfpl.org or stop by the Noe Valley desk to register.

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

Four Asian American friends travel through China in search of one of their birth mothers, in *Joy Ride*, a 2023 comedy.

Oppenheimer (2023) tells the story of the American physicist who worked with the Manhattan Project to develop the atomic bomb.

In the 2022 drama *Pretty Red Dress*, a South London family faces a crisis when their son comes home from jail.



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	12-6	10-8	12-8	10-6	1-6	10-6	
Mission Branch Library 1234 Valencia St., 355-2800							
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
1-5	10-6	10-8	10-8	10-8	1-6	10-6	
Glen Park Branch Library 2825 Diamond St., 355-2858							
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
1-5	10-6	10-6	12-8	10-7	1-6	10-6	
Eureka Valley–Harvey Milk Branch Library 1 José Sarria Ct. (3555 16th St.), 355-5616							
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	
1-5	10-6	10-8	10-8	10-6	1-6	10-6	
For updates, go to sfpl.org							

DIOR QUARTET

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November 12
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Shostakovich

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Action SF

https://m.facebook.com/ActionSFactivism/
Website: http://www.action-sf.com/
Email or link: ActionSFTeam@gmail.com
Meetings: First Sundays., Virtual meeting
Nov. 5, 2:30 p.m. All welcome.

Al-Anon Noe Valley

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

Castro Community on Patrol

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

Castro Merchants

Contacts: Masood Samereie, President;
Dave Karraker, 415-710-0245
Email: Dave@mx3fitness.com
Address: 584 Castro St. #333, SF, CA 94114
Meetings: Email info@CastroMerchants.com

Diamond Heights Community Association

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

Dolores Heights Improvement Club

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

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)

Contacts: Deanna Mooney, 821-4045;
Diane McCarney, 824-0303; or Lili Wu, 647-0235. Address: 560 Duncan St., SF, CA 94131. Meetings: Call for details.

Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association

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

Fair Oaks Neighbors

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

MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Friends of Billy Goat Hill

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

Friends of Dolores Park Playground

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

Friends of Glen Canyon Park

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

Friends of Noe Courts Playground

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

Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)

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

Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

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

Friends of Upper Noe Dog Owners Group (FUND OG)

Contact: David Emanuel
Email: info@fundogsf.org
Website: www.fundogsf.org

Glen Park Association

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

Juri Commoners

Contact: Dave Schweisguth, M17-6290
Email: dave@schweisguth.org
Website: meetup.com/Juri-Commoners
The group is on hiatus and seeking a new leader. Contact Dave.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

Contact: Dr. Lisa Fromer, president
Email: efromer3@gmail.com
Meetings: Quarterly. Email for details.

Noe Neighborhood Council

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

Noe Valley Association—24th Street Community Benefit District

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

Noe Valley Democratic Club

Contact: Carrie Barnes, President
E-mail: noevalleydemocrats@gmail.com
Website: www.noevalleydemocrats.org
Meetings: Monthly at the Valley Tavern, 4054 24th St., with dates publicized on website.

Noe Valley Farmers Market

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

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA)

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

Noe Valley Parent Network

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

Noe Walks

Contact: Chris Nanda
Email: christopher.n.nanda@gmail.com

Website: NoeWalks.com
Meetings: Saturdays, 10 a.m. Starts 24th and Sanchez. Ends Noe and Duncan for photo.

Progress Noe Valley

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

Resilient Noe Valley

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

San Francisco NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)

Contact: Noe Valley NERT Neighborhood Team co-coordinators Maxine Fasulis, mfasulis@yahoo.com; Carole Roberts, carole_roberts@faludi.com
Website: https://SF-fire.org/nert
Visit the website to sign up for trainings.

San Jose/Guerrero Coalition to Save Our Streets

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

Friends of Slow Sanchez

Contacts: Christopher Keene, Andrew Casteel
Email: info@SlowSanchez.com
Website: SlowSanchez.com

Upper Noe Merchants

Contact: Info@UpperNoeNeighbors.com
https://uppernoeneighbors.com/merchants/

Upper Noe Neighbors

Contact: Chris Faust
Email: Hello@UpperNoeNeighbors.com
Website: www.uppernoeneighbors.com
Meetings: Bi-monthly on third Wednesday. Confirm by email or check website.

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

editor@noevalleyvoice.com

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

ON SALE ...at The Good Life Grocery



Clover Egg Nog
32 oz. -reg 5.49
\$4.49



Farmer's Market Organic Canned Pumpkin
15 oz. -reg 3.99

2/\$6



Imagine Chicken & Vegetable Broths
32 oz. -reg 5.99
2/\$7

King Arthur All Purpose Unbleached Flour
5 lb. -reg 9.99
\$6.99



Clover Organic Butter
1lb -reg 10.49
\$8.99



Green Forest Bath Tissue
Double Ply
12 ct. -reg 16.99
\$11.99



Planet Ultra Laundry Detergent
40 oz. -reg 18.99
\$13.99



Happy Thanksgiving!!!



Straus Organic Yogurt
32oz -reg 6.59
\$5.49



Back to Nature Crackers
6-8.5oz -reg 5.29
\$4.29



Open Thanksgiving Day
7 am - 4 pm



Reserve Your Fresh Turkey And Yummy Upper Crust Pie Today!!!
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The GOOD LIFE GROCERY



and now for the

RUMORS

behind the news

The DNA of DNV

By Mazook

MEA CULPA: So sorry for the brouhaha this Rumors column may have caused in the neighborhood last month. Through a chain of email and google search assumptions, our editors inserted an item in the column stating that Carol Yenne—a neighborhood activist who, for many years, promoted Downtown Noe Valley (DNV)—had become president of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMA).

She had not! Rachel Swann is the current president, and she’s been very actively involved in the association’s events, promotion, and funding for over seven years. Few people know how many grants she’s pursued and new businesses she’s supported on 24th Street.

Most recently, she got local merchants to give lots of stuff for the kids who attended the stellar performance of the First Division Marine Brass Band in the Noe Valley Town Square in the beginning of Fleet Week (more on that below). Thanks also to all the volunteers who helped put on the show.

By the way, the NVMPA is having its elections for officers in January, so time will tell who the new president will be. I hope Swann runs for the office, and if she does, as an honorary merchant, I will vote for her.

Carol Yenne knew nothing about the gaffe in my column since she was on a 56-day trip with husband Bill, driving up and down and around Route 66. “I didn’t learn about it until I got back here at the last week of October,” she says, “and I understand how it happened.

“I have just become a delegate in the San Francisco Council of District Merchants Association, representing our neighborhood among the 35 or so neighborhoods in the city, and so I understand how there could have been misunderstanding in that chain of emails,” Yenne says.

She explains that the council has lost several of its delegates, because merchants in every neighborhood have been having a tough time surviving the social and other problems that have plagued our city.

I would suggest you read the Happy Donuts story (see page 1), which gives a good example of what has been happening.

The second gaffe in last month’s column was in the Noe Quiz question. I had asked: “What do these 15 long-gone stores in Noe Valley from 1997 have in common?”

Well nothing with 1997. I had been looking at a great *Voice* story published in 1997, about all the merchants and their addresses on 24th Street. The story, however, was doing a 20-year retrospective. In other words, all the merchants it listed were from 1977!

The answer to the quiz was that the stores all had their businesses in the 3900 block of 24th Street. (Thank you and congratulations, reader Ana V.)

I had an office in the Elvira Building at 3993 24th St. at that time (1970s),

so I should have seen the error in my quiz. Egg on my face. So it goes.



MARINE SCENE: Over 300 people showed up at the Noe Valley Town Square Oct. 3 to celebrate Fleet Week. The Marine Brass Band put on a quite a show of their talents from 6 to 7 p.m., with an encore demanded by the crowd. They stuck around afterwards and mixed with the audience, who wanted to talk and take selfies for another half hour.

In attendance were some high-ranking military brass, including U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Brad Rosen, who is the Navy’s Southwest Region Commander. He was there from beginning to end, with a big smile on his face when he saw the exuberant crowd loving every note coming from the band.

Noe Valleons Diana Homsey and Lewis Loeven are the top guns behind the nearly impossible mission of organizing San Francisco Fleet Week. As respective chief of staff and executive director, they coordinated the spectacular series of events (Oct. 2 to 10 this year) from their small office on Sanchez at 24th Street, which used to be a garage. It is now the San Francisco headquarters for the yearly event.

In other Town Square news, manager Leslie Crawford reports that on Oct. 25 (the one-year anniversary of Peter Gabel’s death), she and others launched a fundraising campaign to raise \$7,500 for a sidewalk plaque in his honor. It would be installed in the sidewalk just in front of the Noe Valley Town Square, the spot where, she says, “Peter would stand and greet people coming into the Noe Valley Farmers Market.”

You will find a table in front of the Farmers Market on Saturday mornings, where you can make a donation.

One of the market’s concessionaires, El Buen Comer (their brick-and-mortar restaurant is at 3435 Mission, and is owned by Isabel Caudillo), serves a long menu of Mexican delights for Farmers Market patrons. It is written up with a rave review in the Oct. 4 *New York Times*.

“Caudillo won a legion of fans while selling food at the Noe Valley Farmers Market,” writes the *Times*’ Eleanor Park, a cooking editor based in the Bay Area.

I am one of those fans. I finish off my shopping, and after leaving the Herr Family Farm area, I go straight over to El Buen and order up a cheese and pepper tamale or two at the bargain price of \$4 each.

Lastly, Town Square-wise, many of us are waiting for the new bathroom to be opened, which we were told last spring would happen at the end of September.

According to the latest from Daniel Montes, the SF Rec and Park communications manager, “We’re anticipating installation will take place at the end of the year. The restroom is complete and we’ve acquired the permit from SFDPI, so we’re ready to go on our side. We’re currently working with the donor, Volumetric Building Companies, who is bringing on a contractor to connect utilities and pour concrete. We’re hoping for an updated schedule in the coming weeks.”

Maybe they will finish and open the restroom by Christmas.



RESTAURANTS & RAVES: Garrett Leahy broke the story in the *San*

Francisco Standard on Oct. 10 saying the Peruvian restaurant Fresca had posted on their Instagram page that they were closing their Inner Sunset restaurant after 13 years. It closed, indeed, on Sept. 30.

They closed their restaurant in Noe Valley during the pandemic, which left everyone in the neighborhood wondering if they would ever reopen.

Well, the *Standard* went on to inform us that the Noe Valley location, at 3945 24th St., would reopen soon after a remodel. That remodel is going on now, and hopefully it will be finished and the doors opened by New Year’s.

There is also good news that Fiorella, known for their chewy pizza, will open its fourth San Francisco location at 4042 24th, where Patxi’s used to be before it closed almost two years ago.

And you should get in line now for a new vegan ice cream store, coming to the space next to Martha’s Coffee, at 3862 24th St.

Lastly, the fate of the parklet in front of Mr. Digby’s at 1199 Church is up in the air. On Oct. 26, restaurant co-owner/manager Mike McCaffery sent a text/email to a dozen city and community leaders. It began: “I received a 10-day construction notice for sewer upgrades in front of my business on 10/20. This notice entails upgrades to sewer main pipes. When I called the SFPUC communications department, no one seemed to have any information about this project whatsoever.... Work has already started on the street.

“They [the SFPUC on Oct. 26] informed me that details not concerning the sewer upgrade, including installing a ‘Bus Pad,’ and repaving portions of the street were needed, and that my parklet needs to be moved or taken down.

“This is unacceptable,” McCaffery continued. “The section of 24th Street between Noe and Castro received over a year’s notice of roadwork in the area. PG&E worked with local businesses, including our sister restaurant NOVY, and rescheduled portions of the work in order to better serve the merchants. NOVY was able to work with Shared Spaces on a site plan and timeline that worked with the impending roadwork. I have received none of this time or courtesy. Also, when the public notice was made over a year ago, the Noe Valley Merchants looked to see if there were any other impending street-work projects in our area and found nothing. This project seemingly came out of nowhere, based on the lack of notice and preparation by the people I have spoken to.”

The bottom line is, McCaffery wrote, “We have spent upwards of \$75,000 on our parklet’s initial construction and requested/required changes to date.... The cost to ‘temporarily’ take down the parklet and rebuild it will be \$60,000. This is an exorbitant amount of money.”

Finally, he stated, “We are not willing to remove or alter our parklet, in any capacity. If we were required to do so, it would mean that we will have to permanently close our business. This would equate to the loss of 35 jobs and an empty business.”

Hopefully, this crisis will be over by the time you read this, and we won’t have to lose this very popular eatery!



MAHJONG AT MAMAHUHU:

Mahjong, a tile-based game for four players developed in 19th-century China, has spread throughout the world since the early 20th century. And now it has spread to Noe Valley, that is, to Mamahuhu at 3991 24th St.

“Mahjong Monday begins on Monday, Nov. 6, 2023. Mahjong Monday will take place every Monday, at Mamahuhu from 6 to 9 p.m.,” says Mamahuhu’s Ella Stearns. “During this time, we will be offering rotating food and drink specials and we will have four Mahjong sets available: three Chinese style, one American style. Players are encouraged to bring their own sets to show off their tiles!”

She says, “This is how it works: Upon arrival at Mamahuhu, head to the front counter and ask for a Mahjong set. We recommend bringing some pals so you can start a game ASAP, but it’s also a great chance to meet new people! Players will then mark their name down for one of the four sets on a sign-up sheet. Once there are four players, a game can begin. Once players have finished playing, they will erase their name from the sign-up sheet. We’re going to test this out to see if it’s necessary, if not, we’ll just let people organize on their own. There will also be a wait list section on the signup sheet; if there is a wait list, we recommend players limit their play time to 30 minutes, allowing others to swap in.”

Stearns emphasizes, “Mahjong Mondays are run by the players. You decide how you want to play, how long you want to play, etc. We do not guarantee that there will be any Mahjong experts/instructors available to teach new players, though we often have experienced players join in who are happy to help. If you’re completely new to the game, we recommend brushing up on Mahjong basics online or joining one of our Lucky Duck Mahjong events.”



KUDOS GO OUT to the nail salon The Upper Hand at 3936 24th St. The San Francisco Environment Department (SFE) recognized the nail spa as the first San Francisco Green Business Certified Healthy Nail Salon in the state of California. “The Green Business state certification is a prestigious award honoring businesses that meet high standards of environmental performance. The Healthy Nail Salons program, administered by the San Francisco Environment Department, supports San Francisco’s nail salon workers and customers to reduce their exposure to toxic chemicals and improve indoor air quality,” states the SFE.

Congrats to Noe Valley’s Tom McGrath, who with his partner James Silla (who lives in Novato) won his fourth national handball title in the Super Masters Doubles competition on Oct. 1. This was held in Fountain Valley, California, at Caballeros Sports Village.

And many thanks to Downtown Noe Valley’s Xela Imports, Basil Racuk, Art Haus SF, Olive This Olive That, Perfectly Seasoned, Small Frys, Just for Fun, and Stephen Moore Homes, who organized and held a Noe Valley Sidewalk Sale on Saturday, Oct. 7. We do need to sell more sidewalks. *Joke*. Seriously we need more of those sidewalk sales!



THAT’S 30, folks. See you in December. Ciao for now.



GET AHEAD OF FALL AND ASK US ABOUT OUR LIST
OF RESIDENCES THAT ARE COMING SOON!



2300 Leavenworth St | Russian Hill
4 BED | 2 BATH | CALL FOR PRICING

Situated in a historic, private, gated enclave in Russian Hill, this beautifully updated and stunning 4-bedroom and 2-bathroom single-family home is a perfect city oasis! Featuring timeless architecture, stunning natural light and a rooftop terrace equipped with wet bar with outstanding views - this three-level home is exquisite! The entry-level offers a spacious flex space for a media room, office or guest space, with a full bath and gym. Up one level is the main living floor with an open kitchen, dining, living, and office with South, West, and Northern views. The top floor has three bedrooms, and full bath, and direct access to the rooftop terrace with incomparable views of Alcatraz, Coit Tower, the Bay Bridge, the skyline of the financial district, and the world-renowned flowering crooked street. Custom built-ins and decorative moldings are enjoyed throughout. One-car garage parking, and so much more await the next owner(s) of this fabulous home. Situated in highly sought-after Russian Hill, this immaculate residence is moments from the excellent amenities of Hyde Street, North Beach, the Polk Street corridor, and Fay Park. Don't miss the opportunity to acquire this coveted home in one of SF's most prestigious and exclusive locations. Do not miss this opulent residence!



3428 22nd St | Noe Valley

3 BED | 2 BATH | \$1,495,000

Welcome to this historic townhome by Henry Bestor. Sophistication and luxury combined to create this urban, entertainer's dream - a visual masterpiece that was rebuilt from the ground up and finished in 2022. Framed by 3 bedrooms, 2 designer bathrooms and impeccable finishes, the custom design throughout really shines. From the wide plank European White Oak flooring to the handsome custom walnut cabinetry, no expense was spared during the renovation. The fully equipped kitchen features Thermador throughout, with custom dining built-in's for guests, and plenty of space for all your dinner parties. Eleven foot ceilings, vintage details and multiple skylights allow for incredible light and accentuate the flow. This luxe residence also allows for indoor outdoor living and dining al fresco with two shared decks. 2 car parking, room for a gym, yoga attic and so much more! A+ location within moments of shopping, cafes, parks, MUNI, FWY and all that the Noe and Valencia corridor has to offer!

780 Haight Street | Hayes Valley

3 BED | 2 BATH | OFFERED AT \$2,899,000

This (soon to be condo) residence is the one! It's luxurious on the inside and the outside boasts a rare, lush DEEDED yard! Elegance and modern opulence combine to bring you a masterful mix of luxury finishes, incredible light and gorgeous indoor/outdoor harmony. The residence features a newly renovated designer kitchen that flows to multiple, spacious living and lounging areas. Three generous bedrooms w/custom closets, two zen marble baths, soaring ceilings, custom window shades and beautiful wide plank floors make this a sophisticated place to call home. The kitchen boasts Italian Porcelain stone slab counters and backsplashes, Miele appliances and custom cabinetry. The generous living areas feature custom windows and a huge skylight. The amenity rich backyard is a must see! In residence laundry and 2 car parking complete this amazing offering. Duboce Park, boutique shops, artisanal coffee, incredible restaurants, nightlife and craft cocktails are all just moments from your front door! Transit and the bike path are less than a block away!



150 Ellert Street | Bernal Heights

2 BED | 1 BATH | OFFERED AT \$999,000

Nestled on coveted, tree lined Ellert Street in the heart of Bernal (#1 Neighborhood Nationwide '14) you will find this lovely 1880's Spaghetti Factory flat. The residence has been newly converted to a condo and is masterful mix of vintage & modern. This home has two bedrooms and a remodeled bath. The remodeled kitchen features stainless appliances, newer cabinets, countertops and more! The home features gorgeous detailing, new/refinished hardwood floors and is light and bright throughout! Enjoy an exclusive use South Eastern facing sunny deck - perfect for morning coffee, weekend entertaining or BBQs. This sweet location is in the heart of Bernal - with boutique shops, restaurants, artisanal coffee shops, craft cocktail bars, cafes and everything bustling Cortland Street has to offer - just one block away. This A+ location is minutes to MUNI and tech shuttles, has easy FWY access and is a short stroll to BART, Noe Valley & the Mission. In-residence laundry and a bonus office nook completes this perfect city oasis! Have it all in the ❤️ of it all!



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