



# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## Combating a Rise In Burglaries

Police Captains Pool Resources As Residents Raise Alarms

By Matthew S. Bajko

Since San Francisco went into lockdown last March due to the Covid epidemic, the city has seen a rash of home and garage break-ins in residential neighborhoods. Noe Valley has not been immune, as residents regularly post on Nextdoor about being the victims of theft.

As the *Voice* Crime Snapshot notes this month (see page 5), the San Francisco Police Department recorded 54 cases of burglary in February—50 percent more than the number of incidents reported in January (36). Most of the incidents involved burglars breaking into residential properties, with 17 classified as “hot prowls” cases where residents were inside the properties when the crimes occurred.

Such was the case in mid-March when someone broke into the garage of a building on Valley Street while the residents were asleep. One of the occupants, a woman who had returned to her unit last year after living overseas, had a suitcase stolen full of winter coats she had bought in France, as well as some shoes and other clothing estimated to be worth \$1,500.

“A week ago, I was telling someone that thefts and burglaries had gone up, but because I live on a hill it hasn’t come this far. I just jinxed it,” said the woman, who asked to be identified only by M, the initial of her first name.

She learned about the theft after receiving a text in the morning from the tenant of the other unit in the building, who had had a bike stolen. They had asked if she had left the garage door open the night before, to which M replied she hadn’t.



**Increasing the Visibility.** Meredith Willa Dodson speaks at a March rally at Civic Center attended by families frustrated by a year-long closure of city schools. Photo by Tom Ruiz

The tenants contacted the police, and two officers stopped by to get some information about the incident and give M a case number. She also posted about the burglary on Nextdoor, prompting one of her neighbors to reply with an image taken from a security camera of two men

wearing hoodies and masks, with one pushing a bike and the other dragging a suitcase down the street. M recognized it as her missing luggage.

“It was good of them to come into the house with masks on,” said M while

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## Zoom No Longer Cutting It

Parents Leading the Charge to Reopen S.F. Public Schools

By Tom Ruiz

When Meredith Willa Dodson moved to Noe Valley in 2014, she couldn’t have known that six years later a virus would descend upon the city and force the public schools to close.

Nor could she have seen that she would become her children’s teacher while also doing her job as a strategic planning consultant. (She and husband Stephen Dodson are the parents of 3-year-old Willa and 5-year-old Charlie, a pre-kindergarten student enrolled at Rooftop Elementary School.)

But after 12 months of pandemic, the Clipper Street resident has found herself in the vanguard of the push to reopen city schools.

And a group she co-founded is Decreasing the Distance. Its demonstrations on social media and in parks around the city have lit a fire under the San Francisco Board of Education. The board announced in mid-March that starting April 12, elementary school children would be returning to the classroom.

“The impact has been profound,” said Dodson.

So how did she get there?

### Becoming Parent Organizers

At the beginning of the shutdown in March 2020, Dodson already had an established career, working with groups like the San Francisco Office of Early Care Education and the Oakland Unified School District. She also served as a board member on the San Francisco Children’s Council. As she connected with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

## Goats Enjoy ‘Outdoor Dining’

Our Hills Are Made for City Grazing

By Gabe Castro-Root

In San Francisco, the hunger for environmentally friendly living is never ending. When California faced a severe drought for much of the 2010s, succulents and other desert plants became regular features of yards across the city. After the wildfires of recent years, sustainable forest management and controlled burns began to dominate the discussion.

City Grazing has another idea for those looking to be good stewards of the environment, and it walks on four legs: goats.

The San Francisco nonprofit offers goats for hire to eat unwanted or overgrown plants, thereby limiting fuel for fires and spurring growth of native vegetation. As they graze, the goats return carbon from digested plants to the soil as waste, rather than into the atmosphere as smoke. The process is called carbon sequestration.

City Grazing opened in 2008 and converted to a nonprofit in 2017, with the goal of “sustainable land management via goat grazing.”

“The motivating factor for me is being of benefit to the earth and putting nature back into disturbed nature,” said Genevieve Church, City Grazing’s executive director. “Wherever people have left open spaces that are now providing either habitat for invasive plants or a fire hazard, goats are a wonderful solution to both. They actively support California’s native plant life and they also remove fire hazards and make things safer for all of us.”

The organization makes its home near an active industrial rail yard in the Bayview, but the goats frequently get taken around the city—and sometimes to other parts of the Bay Area—spending a few days to a week or more eating grass on park bluffs, steep hillsides, and even in dense blackberry patches.

They travel between sites in a modified truck with non-slip flooring and solar-



**Foliage Foragers.** City Grazing goats, shown here munching on Mount Sutro, are adept at clearing underbrush, no matter what stands in their path. Photo by Gabe Castro-Root

powered ventilation. Once at their destination, the goats are surrounded by fencing that keeps them from straying and on-lookers from getting too close.

Most of the roughly 100 goats at City

Grazing are retired dairy animals or rescues from the meat industry. Others are former pets, whose owners gave them up

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

**OPENSFHISTORY**



*4-1108 ~ 5-3-28 Grand View Ave. & Market St. at 23rd St.*

**Conquering Hills.** This view south on Grand View (Grandview) from 23rd Street shows the completed retaining wall and ramp to Upper Market Street. None of the near houses in this photo remain. The wall and ramp were demolished in the 1964 straightening of Upper Market. *Photo and information courtesy OpensFHHistory.org / Western Neighborhoods Project / David Gallagher*

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How long will this mini frenzy last? Economists predict weakness at the end of the year when we are past the virus but left with the economic fall out. Choosing the right time to sell is a skill. Jessica is among SF's top listing agents. She has been selling real estate here for 15 years, and with her finger directly on the pulse of the market, she has successful, proven strategies for sellers. If you are considering a sale, let her intelligence, experience, and wisdom guide you!

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Beauty Surrounds Us. On Valley Street, our photographer/artist looks up and sees the colors of Noe Valley swirling in a pleasing array.  
Joe Hakim

Photo by Najib

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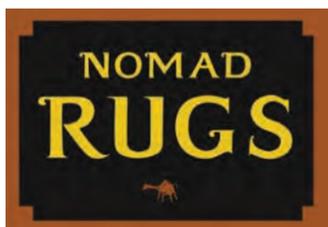


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**THE NOE VALLEY VOICE**

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CO-PUBLISHERS/EDITORS

Sally Smith, Jack Tipple

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND EDITORS

Corrie M. Anders, *Associate Editor*  
Olivia Boler, *Other Voices Editor*  
Heidi Anderson, Matthew S. Bajko, Owen Baker-Flynn, Karol Barske, Michael Blake, Katie Burke, Gabe Castro-Root, Liz Highleyman, Kala Hunter, Jeff Kaliss, Doug Konecky, Richard May, Roger Rubin, Tom Ruiz, Astrid Utting, Megan Wetherall

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Art Bodner, Pamela Gerard, Najib Joe Hakim, Beverly Tharp

ACCOUNTING

Jennifer O. Viereck

PRODUCTION

Jack Tipple, André Thélémaque

DISTRIBUTION

Jack Tipple

WEB GURU

Jon Elkin

ADVERTISING SALES

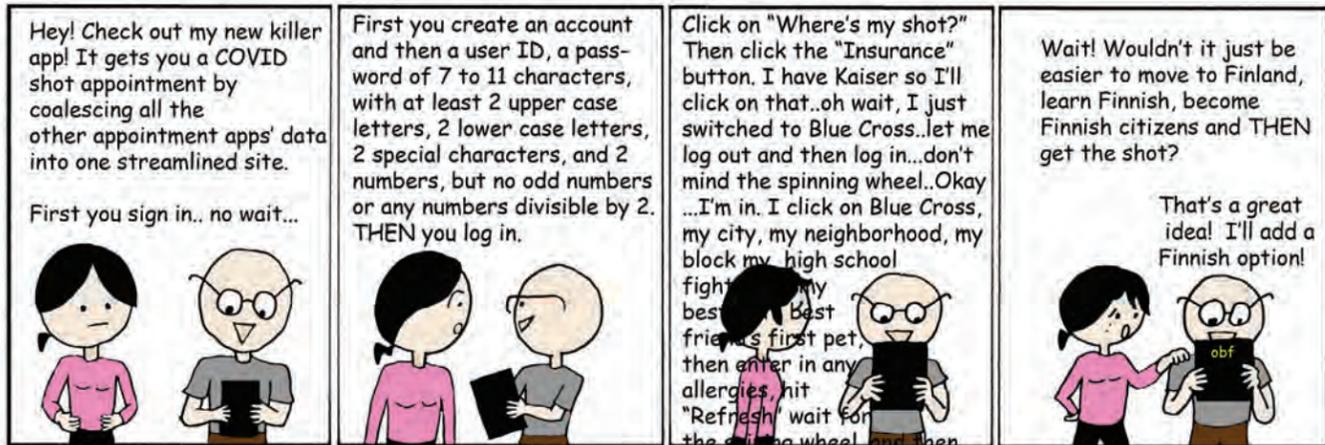
Pat Rose, Jack Tipple

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**THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN**



**LETTERS**

**Escort Our AAPI Neighbors**

Editor:

It's time we Noe Valley residents step up and help our Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) neighbors. I could cite numerous statistics to back up my plea: I could tell you that Anti-Asian hate crimes have skyrocketed 150 percent in the United States, or that of the nearly 4,000 incidents of racism against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders this past year, 68 percent targeted Asian women.

But this is not about statistics. This is about being a good person and a responsible neighbor. I posted my offer on Nextdoor.com to escort elderly Asians around the neighborhood should they need me. I want to extend that offer here. I also want to encourage other neighbors to step up and help.

I am a proud American, but I'm not proud that this country was built on

racist soil. And I'm even less proud that out of that soil grew a systemically toxic structure.

While Black, Muslim, Latino, Asian, and Native American people were continually subjected to countless untold acts of violence, my relatives were narrowly escaping the Holocaust. In all of these instances, too many Americans stayed silent.

And so, for our Asian community members, I will not stay silent and neither should you. I urge all of you to offer a helping hand to escort your Asian neighbors. Help them to the grocery store. Help them get to their appointments. Help them walk their dogs at night. Help save a life. Love your neighbors.

Rena Silverman  
Douglass Street  
Silverman.Rena@gmail.com

**Sock Drive for Homeless**

Editor and Noe Valley community:

Bethany United Methodist Church is planning to hold a sock drive for the homeless on April 4 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drop-off will be at the 1270 Sanchez St. entrance to the church, at the corner of Sanchez and Clipper streets.

We wish to invite Noe Valley residents to contribute new, preferably white socks, or lightly used laundered socks to this sock drive. Thank you.

Bob Armstrong  
Pastor Sadie Stone  
Bethany UMC  
Bethanysf.org  
415-647-8393

**Action on Voting Rights**

Editor:

Action SF, a grassroots organization located here in Noe Valley that I am a member of, would like to call attention to the landmark voting rights reform bill coming before the U.S. Senate next month: S. 1, the For the People Act of 2021.

What our democracy requires to survive are privileges we as Californians take for granted: "no excuse" mail-in ballots that don't require witness or notary signatures, early voting opportunities, same-day registration, and independent redistricting commissions. However, 253 new voter suppression measures are being considered across 43 states.

For decades the GOP has relied on the myth of voter fraud to justify the restrictions they implement to suppress and discourage voters. This claim has been based on absurdly small numbers of proven fraud. The conservative Heritage Foundation's own database cites just 1,302 cases of fraud since 1982. This is an average of 34 cases of fraud per year, lower than the average number of people who are struck by lightning.

We at Action SF thank Senator Dianne Feinstein for agreeing to cosponsor S. 1 with Senator Jeff

**More Than 500 Covid Cases in Noe Valley During First Year of Pandemic**

According to San Francisco's **Digital Map of Cumulative Covid-19 Cases**, at Data.sfgov.org, Noe Valley recorded more than 500 cases of Covid-19 during the first year of the pandemic.

According to the data, which the *Voice* reviewed March 22, 2021, there had been 513 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Noe Valley since testing began March 2, 2020. That translated to a case rate of 218.2 cases per 10,000 residents, based on an estimated resident population of 23,507.

But the data also showed that fewer than 10 people died of Covid in Noe Valley during the period from March 2, 2020, to March 22, 2021.

Also in the hopeful news category was the most recent data in the **Map of New Cases**. During the 30-day period from Feb. 20 to March 21, 2021, only 25 new cases were confirmed in Noe Valley, making the case rate 10.6 per 10,000 population. (In the previous 30-day period, there had been more than 60 new cases, and in the month before that, more than 100.)

To monitor the data, go to the San Francisco Health Department's New Cases Map or Cumulative Cases Map at <https://data.sfgov.org/stories/s/adm5-wq8i>.

The site also has links to a variety of resources to support residents during the pandemic. Visit [sf.gov/coronavirus](http://sf.gov/coronavirus) or call 311 for more information.

—Sally Smith

**CRIME SNAPSHOT**

Burglaries continued to rise in Noe Valley in February, with 54 incidents reported to San Francisco Police during the month—18 more than in January.

The majority of incidents (51) were home or garage break-ins. Of those, 17 were classified as "hot prowls," where residents were on the premises.

Three incidents involved businesses in Noe Valley, one in the vicinity of Castro and Jersey streets and two in the area of Castro and 26th streets.

Though burglaries were up, there was a slight decrease in larceny/thefts, which have long been the bane of Noe Valley's existence. Twenty-seven were reported in February, compared to 33 in January. Most (16) were car break-ins, but the total included five stolen license plates, four package thefts, and two shoplifting incidents.

There were no reports of robbery, domestic violence, or vandalism in February. All in all, police tallied 121 incidents in the 10 crime categories the *Voice* tracks monthly.

The table below shows the numbers reported October 2020 through February 2021. (The *Voice* collected the February 2021 data on March 10.)

Our source was the dataset titled "A Digital Map of San Francisco Police Department Incident Reports From 2018 to the Present," found under Public Safety at Data.sfgov.org. The crime map shows Noe Valley as an area bounded by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.

As many residents and merchants know, Noe Valley straddles two police districts, Mission and Ingleside. The news this month is that both districts have appointed women to the top job. The new commander at Mission Station is Captain Rachel Moran. Now commanding Ingleside Station is Captain Nicole Jones. (See our story, page 1, on the steps police are taking in response to the current rash of burglaries.)

To contact Moran, call 415-558-5400 or email [rachel.moran@sfgov.org](mailto:rachel.moran@sfgov.org). Jones can be reached at 415-404-4000 or by emailing [nicole.h.jones@sfgov.org](mailto:nicole.h.jones@sfgov.org).

The best way to get attention for recurring problems, police say, is to file police reports when incidents occur. Call the police non-emergency number, 415-553-0123, or file a police report online at [sanfranciscopolice.org](http://sanfranciscopolice.org). In an emergency, call 911.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

**Noe Valley Incidents Reported October 2020 – February 2021**

Incident Reports	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021
Larceny/Theft	34	38	45	33	27
Burglary	20	20	30	36	54
Malicious Mischief	7	4	8	13	13
Motor Vehicle Theft	18	18	25	18	12
Assault	3	3	4	4	4
Robbery	0	0	7	1	0
Other Miscellaneous	9	8	6	8	8
Fraud	1	2	4	3	3
Family Domestic Violence	2	3	1	1	0
Vandalism	1	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	95	96	130	117	121

Merkley (D-OR), which would extend many of our California voting protections nationwide, but passage of this bill will likely require filibuster reform.

We cannot let the opportunity pass to enact this critical legislation. Therefore, we ask all Californians to join us in contacting Senators Feinstein and Alex Padilla to support filibuster reform and S. 1, in order to ensure equal access to the vote. Please visit our website at [action-sf.com](http://action-sf.com) to join our efforts. Thanks.

Elyse Weakley

*Editor's Note: The senators' mailing address is 112 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. Or try calling Sen. Dianne Feinstein at (202) 224-3841 or Sen. Alex Padilla at (202) 224-3553.*

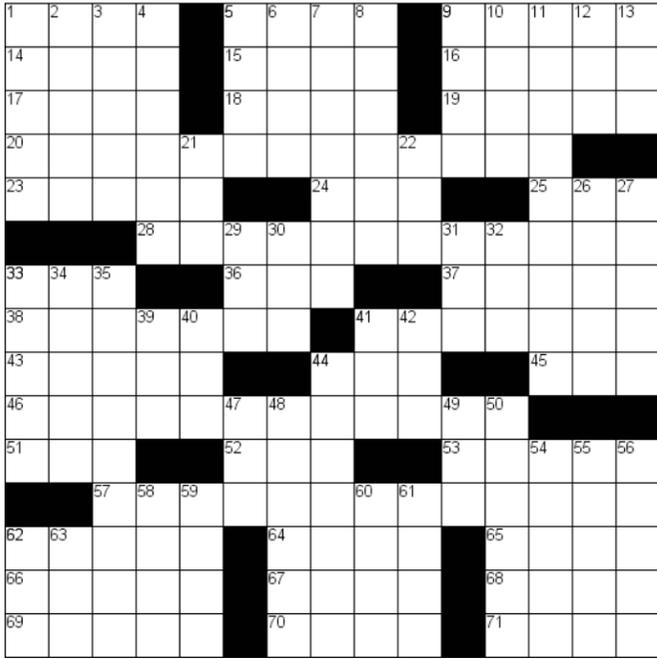
editor@noevalleyvoice.com

THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

In Bizarroworld  
Noe Valley

ACROSS

- 1. Beggar's request
- 5. "Didn't see you there!"
- 9. With "North," an SF neighborhood
- 14. \_\_\_ Garchik of the *Chron*
- 15. Pirate's treasure
- 16. "You know who's great? Me!"
- 17. Jamie of M\*A\*S\*H
- 18. Narrow strip of land: Abbr.
- 19. Actor's memorizations
- 20. Store at 1401 Church that sells papyrus rolls and amphorae of wine?
- 23. Tread heavily
- 24. Expert
- 25. Huck Finn's dad
- 28. Store at 3950 24th that offers half-eaten fruit and half-empty milk cartons?
- 33. "Oh, also..." in text messages
- 36. Unagi at Hamano Sushi
- 37. Calm, as fears
- 38. Hole in the head?
- 41. Miguel with a statue in Dolores Park
- 43. *Lady Bird* actress Saoirse
- 44. Puppet- or mountain- ending
- 45. "Uh-huh"
- 46. Store at 3985 24th with clothing for 50 lb. 1-yr-olds?
- 51. "Cancel" PC key
- 52. Pen filler
- 53. \_\_\_ *Places You'll Go* (Dr. Seuss book)
- 57. Eatery at 4123 24th whose burritos are bigger than a roll of paper towels?
- 62. Bowler's pickup
- 64. Loser to the Tortoise
- 65. Adam, Little Joe and



- Hoss, to Ben
  - 66. Top group
  - 67. Asia's \_\_\_ Mountains
  - 68. Three-tiered service item at Lovejoy's Tea Room
  - 69. TV host Banks and namesakes
  - 70. Combat vet's affliction, briefly
  - 71. Frozen princess
- DOWN
- 1. Italian sports cars, briefly
  - 2. Inclined, in England
  - 3. Senator Rubio
  - 4. Kind of tempura at Saru Sushi
  - 5. Actor Ken or Lena
  - 6. Party thrower
  - 7. Web-based account provider from Microsoft
  - 8. City in southern New York
  - 9. Hoodwink
  - 10. Great Lakes city
  - 11. Female Tom Sawyer relative
  - 12. The Browns, on scoreboards
  - 13. \_\_\_ *Just Not That Into You*
  - 21. Ecological org.
  - 22. Kin, for short
  - 26. Aphorism
  - 27. CIA mess-with-your-mind activity, briefly
  - 29. TiVo button label
  - 30. Golfer's peg
  - 31. Brief craze
  - 32. Ending with pay- or schnozz-
  - 33. Comic pianist Victor
  - 34. *Ménage à \_\_\_*
  - 35. Upholstered fireside seating
  - 39. Air traffic org.
  - 40. Hostelry
  - 41. Playboy founder, familiarly
  - 42. Abbr. on a garment sale tag
  - 44. Aaron \_\_\_, *Thank You for Smoking* star
  - 47. Game with no winner
  - 48. Make slow, steady progress
  - 49. "This means \_\_\_!"
  - 50. California volcano or soft drink
  - 54. Rose's sharp part
  - 55. Henry's \_\_\_ restaurant
  - 56. Course that's a cinch
  - 58. Bear in the sky
  - 59. Understands, as a joke
  - 60. Accts. for old age
  - 61. Clutched
  - 62. Took a chair
  - 63. Paper towel layer

Solution on Page 22  
Find more Crosswords at  
noevalleyvoice.com

Open Space Could  
Be Named for  
Lyon, Martin

By Matthew S. Bajko

A city open space near the Noe Valley property where the late lesbian pioneering couple Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin lived for much of their 56-year relationship could one day bear their names.

Early discussions have focused on possibly renaming the Duncan/Castro Open Space at the intersection of Duncan and Castro streets after the women. The city-owned rocky outcrop with views of downtown and the bay is just up the street from the 651 Duncan St. home the couple owned.

"It is also an opportunity for commemorating Phyllis and Del," said Terry Beswick, executive director of the GLBT Historical Society.

The idea has cropped up amid a push to designate the women's two-story cottage, which they purchased in 1955, as a city landmark. It would be the city's fifth landmark specifically related to LGBTQ history and the first focused solely on lesbian history.

Journalists who first met in Seattle in 1952, the couple co-founded the influential Daughters of Bilitis, the first political and social organization for lesbians in the United States. Their home was a gathering place within the city's lesbian community and the site of various meetings and events.

Lyon died last April at the age of 95. Martin died in 2008 at the age of 87 weeks after the women were the first same-sex couple to legally marry in California that June.

District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman instituted the Lyon-Martin House landmarking process in the fall following news that the women's 5,700-square-foot property had sold for \$2.25 million. LGBTQ

historians and friends of Lyon and Martin had launched a campaign to preserve the women's home from being torn down.

They had sought to a city landmark encompassing the entire Duncan Street property, which includes the residence and an undeveloped parcel with the address of 649 Duncan St. The couple's remains were interred and scattered on the vacant portion. The city's planning department had also recommended the entire property be landmarked.

But Paul McKeown and his wife, Meredith Jones-McKeown, who bought the property last summer, argued for the landmark only to include the women's residence. They expressed concerns that landmarking the 649 Duncan St. parcel would hamper their ability to build a new home on it for them and their two young daughters.

The city's Historic Preservation Commission on a 6-1 vote in February sided with the family and recommended that just the cottage parcel be landmarked. Mandelman decided to follow its advice and filed an ordinance March 16 to establish the landmark for 651 Duncan St.

After a 30-day wait period the supervisors' land use committee can schedule a hearing on the landmark request. The full board will then need to vote on it twice to make it official.

It was during talks Mandelman held with local preservationists about the landmark request that renaming the Duncan/Castro Open Space in honor of Lyon and Martin came up. Mandelman told the *Voice* he intends to seek input from residents and neighborhood groups about the proposal.

If there is broad support for it, Mandelman would then start the formal process to rename the open space.

"We have to start with the immediate neighbors and ask them about it, then see if there is consensus in the neighborhood, and if folks want to do that," he said, "I think it will be very fitting." ■

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## Burglaries a Top Concern for New Captain

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Covid protocols, but their doing so made it impossible for M to see who they were in the photo. “The only thing I could see between the hoodie and mask was a patch of white, so I think they are white. But I couldn’t tell if they were youths or adults.”

The thieves followed an M.O. that police have routinely reported about other garage break-ins in the neighborhood. They were able to gain access into the garage by busting through a window vent and using a rod to pull the string that activates the garage door opener.

“It was lying on the floor. It looked like a rod from an old car antenna,” said M.

Being the victim of a crime for the first time since moving to Noe Valley in 2012 has rattled M, who said one of her initial reactions was she needed to buy a gun. While that isn’t something she intends to do, M does now sleep at night with a baseball bat nearby and she has bought several cans of pepper spray she placed throughout her house for protection.

“You thought you felt safe, and you are no longer safe,” said M.

### Night Patrols to Continue

It is a sentiment no one should have to feel, Mission Station Captain Rachel Moran told the *Voice*. A former officer at the station, which covers much of Noe Valley, Moran became the first woman to lead it on Feb. 20.

“I have never been burglarized, but I think it would be horrifying to know someone is in your house when you should be the most safe and the most at peace,” said Moran.

Most recently with the San Francisco Police Department’s special victims unit, Moran has made addressing burglaries a top priority for her and the officers she commands. She has kept in place the increased patrols overnight in Noe Valley that her predecessor, Captain Gaetano Caltagirone, had begun to address the issue.

“We are doing a lot to address the burglary problem,” said Moran, adding that when she took over “we were having problems with burglaries right off the bat. Captain Caltagirone was already addressing it in the Mission District. I pushed forward with what he had going on.”

One change that has been instituted is Moran is working closely with Caltagirone, now captain of Richmond Station, and Park Station Captain Chris Pedrini to pool the three police districts’ resources and personnel in combating burglaries. The three all get along, said Moran, and all face the same staffing issues.

“The police districts have boundaries but crooks don’t,” said Moran, who considers Caltagirone one of her mentors, as he was her lieutenant when she was a sergeant. “We don’t like to say what we can’t do. We like to say what we can do.”

Officers at the trio of stations are being asked to voluntarily change the times they work, so there are more plainclothes officers patrolling overnight when most of the burglaries occur. The officers are on the lookout for suspicious individuals so they can apprehend them in the act, increasing the likelihood of the suspects facing criminal charges.

“We are going out actively looking for burglars,” said Moran. “We are not sitting back waiting for the calls to come in.”

### Lights, Cameras a Deterrent

Moran also speaks often with the new captain at Ingleside Station, Nicole Jones,

as Ingleside has jurisdiction over Upper Noe Valley and Glen Park. Moran believes the collaboration is having an effect. She noted that between March 10 and March 16, there were 18 burglaries in the Mission Police District, and such incidents were cut in half over the following seven days.

While other city officials have pegged the rise in home and garage break-ins to the drastic drop in tourist visits due to the health crisis, thus depriving thieves of the opportunity to break into their vehicles, Moran demurred when asked whether she agreed with those assertions. Rather than talk about assumptions, Moran said she was focused on prevention.

One step the police have been taking is to encourage residents on a block to organize into a neighborhood watch and better protect against burglaries.

“I would hope people would unite on their block before it even comes to getting burglarized and victimized. We could send officers out to tell them how to make their block safer so they don’t have to deal with the trauma of it.”

Moran also emphasized the benefit of homeowners and business owners installing cameras on their properties, as the devices act as a deterrent and can provide crucial evidence.

“If a crime is committed and we have video, you can’t argue with video. It is a huge deterrent,” she said. “If you have a good camera there, and it is well lit, then the burglars will go somewhere with no camera that is not well lit.”

### Weapons Showing Up

In addition to the uptick in burglaries, there has also been a rise in the violent tenor of the incidents in the neighborhood. As the *Voice* reported in February, a Noe Valley resident was shot twice in his back in December when two assailants robbed him on the street at night as he was walking home.

On Feb. 21, around 5 a.m., two officers conducting a burglary surveillance operation sustained non-life-threatening injuries while trying to detain Sergio Lugo, a 41-year-old man, at 21st and Castro streets. According to police, Lugo stabbed one of the officers with an X-Acto knife in the officer’s left hand and left knee, while a second officer injured his hand during the struggle.

Lugo was booked on charges of assault with a deadly weapon against a police officer; resisting an executive officer and arrest; resisting arrest resulting in serious injury to an officer; brandishing a deadly weapon; and possession of methamphetamine, drug paraphernalia, and burglary tools. He has pleaded not guilty, and his public defender has argued Lugo was acting in self-defense.

Both officers are back to work, and one who has a number of friends in Noe Valley, Sergeant Alex Lentz, told the *Voice* he couldn’t discuss the incident due to the ongoing litigation. Assigned to Mission Station since November 2019, Lentz did say he was again doing burglary surveillance in the neighborhood.

“The normal person walking down the sidewalk will walk wherever they are going. These guys stand out because they will look through mail slots, peer over fences, and shine a flashlight into yards,” said Lentz. “We have seen them break into garages. Mostly they are targeting bicycles for whatever reasons.”

Shortly after St. Patrick’s Day, Lentz said, the police arrested a man stealing mail who was carrying a firearm. Lentz cautioned residents not to confront someone they see who looks suspicious and to instead call 911.

“It is not just a guy stealing your bike. It is now a guy armed stealing your bike. It changes the game,” he said. “I don’t want to freak people out either, but it is



Capt. Rachel Moran took the helm of Mission Police Station in February, the first woman to do so in the station’s history.

Photo courtesy SFPD

important for people to realize if you go to confront these people, they could be armed. Absolutely call 911 and keep an eye on the guy or gal and their direction of travel. And look at their shoes.”

While a suspect can easily change their jacket or shirt, they can’t chuck their shoes, explained Lentz, so it is a marker the police can use to identify someone.

### ‘Please Report’

It is important for residents to report to the police any break-ins, whether or not their property was stolen, stressed Moran. The information gathered will not only help police investigate such crimes but also help pinpoint where additional patrols should be directed.

“Please, please report it,” Moran said. “It gives us a better idea of where burglars are hitting and how frequently. It is also an indication of how successful we are.”

Lentz echoed Moran in stressing how valuable camera footage could be in in-

vestigations and prosecutions of burglaries. If a person does have photos or footage from a security camera, they should email the images to the officer or district station.

“We can look at camera footage and see the same guy hitting in this neighborhood. We can determine his routine and pattern, such as the time of day he is active. We can use that information to identify these guys or gals,” he said.

### Garage Protections

There are also steps residents can take to make it harder to break into their garages. Police suggest homeowners add manual locks to their garage doors, so a person trying to open them isn’t able to by simply pulling the manual cord. They can also tie up the cord so it is not as easy to reach.

Other tips include adding motion-sensor lights and covering windows that allow people to see into a garage. Police also advise not leaving garage door openers in vehicles parked on the street. Otherwise, someone might break into the car to use it.

M, the Noe Valley resident, didn’t have any security cameras installed at her property when her shared garage was broken into. After the incident, she reached out to the owner of the other unit, and they split the \$5,000 cost to install new garage doors with built-in cameras.

She also upgraded the entry gate into the residence to provide better protection and has been using a manual latch to secure the garage doors at night. And for good measure she installed a sensor in the garage that makes a loud noise if the doors open.

“We had one request when we bought the garage doors: no windows, no mailbox slots, nothing on the new doors,” said M. ■



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# CALENDAR APRIL 2021

**April 1-15:** The Sanchez Street OPEN HOUSE is a survey on whether and how to make Slow Sanchez permanent. [SlowStreets@SFMTA.com](mailto:SlowStreets@SFMTA.com)

**April 1-29:** TOWN SQUARE Thursdays features the band Hipsteria playing jazz, swing, blues, and pop noon to 5:30 pm. 264-9380; [hipsteriac.com](http://hipsteriac.com)

**April 1-30:** Noe Valley OVEREATERS Anonymous at St. Aidan's meets via Zoom, Mon.-Sat., 7 to 8 am. 314-0720 or 779-6273; [oasf.org](http://oasf.org)

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

**April 1-30:** 30th Street Senior Center offers FALL prevention classes Mon. and Thurs., 1:30-2:30 pm. 225 30th. Luz Villanueva, 550-2265.

**April 2-30:** Holy Innocents Church hosts GAME NIGHT Fridays on Zoom. 7 pm. [holynsf.org](http://holynsf.org)

**April 3 & 4:** Hunt for EGGS in windows at the socially distanced Easter Egg Window Walk along Sanchez Street. April 3, 8 am to 2 pm; April 4, noon to 3 pm. Get Egg Hunt Map at [SlowSanchez.com](http://SlowSanchez.com) and do it by 3 pm for a prize at the Farmers Market or Upper Noe Rec Center.

**April 3-24:** The Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET is open from 8 am to 1 pm (8 to 9 am for seniors). Masks required. 3861 24th. 248-1332; [noevalleyfarmersmarket.com](http://noevalleyfarmersmarket.com)

**April 4:** Bethany United Methodist Church holds a SOCK DRIVE for the homeless. Bring new or lightly laundered, preferably white socks to 1270 Sanchez, 11 am to 1 pm. [bethanyssf.org](http://bethanyssf.org); 515-8815.

**April 4:** Political group ACTION SF hosts virtual meetings, 11 am to 12:30 pm. Email [actionsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:actionsolidarity@gmail.com) to receive Zoom meeting link.

**April 5:** ODD MONDAYS celebrates poets Susan Dambroff, Brennan DeFrisco, and Kimi Sugioka. 7-8 pm. Email [oddmondaysnoevalley@gmail.com](mailto:oddmondaysnoevalley@gmail.com).

**April 6, 13, 20 & 27:** The San Francisco Library tells "Sweet Stories for Families," virtual STORY-TIMES, from 11 to 11:15 am. 557-4400; [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

**April 8:** POETS Kim Shuck, Natasha Dennerstein, Molly Fisk, Kelly Grace Thomas, Kelliane Parker, and Ramona Webb read at a One City, One Book SF Library virtual jam. 6-7 pm. 557-4400; [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

**April 8:** SF NEON hosts an online tour of the matchbooks and neon signs of the Tenderloin. 8:45-10 pm. [sfneon.org](http://sfneon.org)

**April 10:** LADYBUG GARDENERS work outdoors to tidy up the grounds of the Upper Noe Rec Center. 9 am-noon. 295 Day. Contact Joan at [info@noevalleyreccenter.com](mailto:info@noevalleyreccenter.com)

**April 10:** Noe Music and the Bay Area Music

Consortium host a virtual "Celebration of MUSICIANS Around the Bay." 7-8:30 pm. [noemusic.org](http://noemusic.org)

**April 10 & 24:** CHAMBER MUSIC San Francisco offers online concerts by French quartet Quatuor Arod on April 10, and cellist Mischa Maisky on April 24. 7 pm. [chambermusicssf.org](http://chambermusicssf.org)

**April 13:** Carol Queen discusses *The Sex and Pleasure Book*, her book on healthy SEX at the SF Library's virtual forum. 7-8 pm. 557-4400; [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

**April 14:** The SF Public Library offers a panel by organizers from POOR MAGAZINE, "How to Not Call the Po'lice Ever." 7-8 pm. 557-4400; [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

**April 16:** 30th Street Senior Center offers a "BRAIN HEALTH and Memory Workshop," every third Friday from noon to 1 pm. 225 30th. Sign up at 550-2210 or [lduran@onlok.org](mailto:lduran@onlok.org).

**April 20:** Bernal Heights OUTDOOR CINEMA offers a Zoom screening of a documentary about conditions in Myanmar, *Mother, Daughter, Sister*. 7-8:30 pm. [bhoutdoorcine.org](http://bhoutdoorcine.org)

**April 21:** Celebrate the 15th anniversary of ALEMANY FARM, with LisaRuth Elliott's virtual talk on farm history. 5:30 pm. [Alemanyfarm.org](http://Alemanyfarm.org)

**April 21:** UPPER NOE Neighbors' Zoom meeting will cover topics including Slow Streets, 1900 Diamond St., and UNN elections. 7 pm. Sign up at [uppernoeneighbors.com](http://uppernoeneighbors.com).

**April 24 & 25:** Community Music Center's keyboard faculty hosts the virtual Juliet McComas KEYBOARD Marathon: "Bold Spirits: Celebrating Women Composers." 5 pm. 647-6015; [sfcmc.org](http://sfcmc.org)

**April 25:** Shaping SF offers a BICYCLE HISTORY TOUR of the southern end of the city. Noon. RSVP required to [shaping@foundsf.org](mailto:shaping@foundsf.org).

**April 26:** CARTOONIST Tyler Cohen leads a workshop on memoir drawing and cartooning for teens and adults. 7-8:15 pm. 557-4400; [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

**April 27:** SF HISTORY Association hosts John Hogan's discussion, "Her Side of the Story: Tales of California Pioneer Women." 7 pm. For Zoom link details, see [sanfranciscohistory.org](http://sanfranciscohistory.org).

**April 29:** COMPOSER and pianist Gabriela Lena Frank discusses and performs her work on Crowdcast. 7-8:30 pm. [noemusic.org](http://noemusic.org)

**May 1:** An online Celebration of Life will be held for activist Margo St. James, who passed away on Jan. 11, 2021. 11 am-1 pm. [stjamesinfirmary.org](http://stjamesinfirmary.org)

**Zooming Along:** The next *Noe Valley Voice* will be the **May 2021** issue, distributed the first week of May. The deadline for items is **April 15**. Email [calendar@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:calendar@noevalleyvoice.com)



**April Flowers.** Apparently there was enough rain in March to advance the "May Flowers" schedule in Noe Valley. *Photo by Jack Tipple*



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# Noe Parents Push Schools to Reopen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

other parents, she saw that some were fortunate enough to qualify for the city's learning centers or establish their own learning pods, but that most parents felt their kids were not being served by distance learning, notwithstanding the hard work and effort put in by their teachers.

By July a core group of eight parents began meeting, Dodson said, as a "creative solutions workgroup," working to reduce the inequities facing families that had to rely on learning via screens.

They initially planned to reach out to local philanthropists, to obtain funding for books, supplies, and technology. But the more they worked on alternative education plans, the more Dodson and the group realized that "at least half of the families wanted to return their kids to safe in-person learning at their schools and that the most equitable solution was to get kids back in school as soon as possible."

### 'Zoom-Ins' Grab Attention

In September, they launched Decreasing the Distance (DtD), which has as its mission "to advocate for a comprehensive, safe, and equitable reopening plan that will bring our kids and teachers back to the classroom as our public health experts say we can do."

Dodson put her consulting work on pause and devoted herself full-time to building the organization and connecting with parents who felt they had no voice. It wasn't long before DtD's membership grew to over 3,700 people, many joining through social media platforms like Facebook or through allied community organizations.



Stephen Dodson and Meredith Dodson are busy, but not too busy to walk or cycle on Sanchez Street with son and daughter Charlie, 5, and Willa, 3. Photo by Deeksha Prakash

Serving as parent advocates for their children, they spent the fall trying to engage with the San Francisco Unified School District administration, hoping to get a timetable or a clue as to when students could return in the current school year.

They also reached out to school board members and to elected officials who might be willing to help their case.

In February, unable to get any reopening dates from the district, DtD began holding "Zoom-Ins," class sessions at outdoor locations.

In the Noe Valley Town Square, Dolores Park, and Parque Niños Unidos in the Mission, parents and students brought laptops, earplugs, and tables and chairs to conduct their virtual classes. They also held signs saying "I miss my friends" or "Screens hurt my eyes," to underscore their message.

"Distance learning is hard on [kids] and on their families who are required to be home supervising them and helping them with their learning," said Dodson.

"Many of the children were becoming depressed and struggling with their lessons."

Dodson went on to note how frustrating it was to see the numerous private and parochial schools successfully reopened but not the San Francisco schools.

### Gadflies Keep Buzzing

In their interactions with the SFUSD, Dodson said they came to be seen as a gadfly group continually pressing the district and the teachers union to get their act together and reopen schools.

She does give retiring Schools Superintendent Vince Matthews credit for being sympathetic to their cause, though at the same time she takes the board to task for focusing on other priorities like re-naming schools.

DtD also tried reaching out to the United Educators of San Francisco union leadership but were unable to get responses to multiple requests, Dodson said, even though "there were so many areas of potential alignment between the

union and SFUSD families."

She acknowledges that teachers have legitimate concerns regarding getting vaccinations before returning to class, and questions why it has taken so long to give teachers priority to receive the shots. She counts many teachers as being supportive of DtD's work.

In March, with the assistance of a mediator, the district and the union finally reached agreement on a reopening schedule for pre-K through fifth-grade students as well as several other groups.

Dodson noted, however, the return to classes April 12 did not include middle or high school students.

At a Civic Center rally on March 13, attended by hundreds of students and parents, as well as numerous elected officials including Mayor London Breed, Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, and State Senator Scott Wiener, Dodson called the school district a national embarrassment. She also questioned "how San Francisco with the lowest metropolitan rate of Covid infection in the nation could be the last in the country to open its schools."

She went on to tell the crowd she had been told by district insiders that "we've helped shift the Board of Education's direction toward reopening because we are the students' advocates, and the district's leaders must take us into account."

"We're not going anywhere. We're just getting started," she said.

In her *Voice* interview, Dodson said DtD would "continue to exist in some form after schools reopen and continue filling the void in parent advocacy while providing a platform that can serve parents, students, and teachers."

For now her goal is to fight for five full days of in-classroom learning—for all students—by the fall of 2021. ■



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GLOBAL LIVING

# Amos Goldbaum: A Portrait of the Muralist

By Gabe Castro-Root

Noe Valley artist Amos Goldbaum completed his block-long mural on Sanchez Street last month, part of the community initiative to keep Sanchez a “slow street” after the pandemic ends.

Goldbaum, 35, grew up in Bernal Heights before moving to Noe Valley with his family in 1996. He graduated from Grinnell College with a degree in studio art before returning to San Francisco, where over the past decade he has made a name for himself as a line artist and muralist.

This interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

**Gabe Castro-Root:** When did you start getting interested in art in general, and then in street art in particular?

**Amos Goldbaum:** My mom’s an artist, so ever since I was a kid she always encouraged me. She put a pencil in my hand as soon as I was able to hold on, and there are pictures of me as a toddler drawing in chalk on the street in front of our little basement apartment in Bernal, where I was born. Pretty much as soon as I was able to, I was definitely really interested in drawing.

In high school I did a couple of small community mural projects, but I didn’t really ever think of that as my thing. I started selling my shirts on the street after college, and that’s kind of like public art in a way. You’re sitting there communing with strangers, and I had a display with all my artwork, sharing it with the public. I started doing that in 2007 at the Embarcadero, and then in



Goldbaum’s murals *Content Creation Myth*, center, and *Boomie*, right, are located just off Valencia Street and Clinton Park in the Mission.

2014 a woman who had bought some of my shirts asked if I would do a mural on a big gray wall at a gym she owned. I hadn’t really done anything like that since high school, and those were much smaller. I wasn’t sure whether I could do it or not, but I accepted. It was an 80-foot-by-20-foot-high wall. Until the Sanchez Street mural, which is 180 feet by 30 feet, that was by far the biggest mural I had ever done. That’s the one on Day Street, just off Church.

**GCR:** What are some of your favorite pieces of art that you’ve done?

**AG:** I mean, this Sanchez one is pretty cool. It wasn’t my favorite to do, but I feel good now that it’s done. It was great to do something so big and public. I also really like some of my not-particularly-San Francisco stuff—a little trippier, kind of like surrealist stuff that I do in watercolor. I had a piece that was accepted into the de Young Museum’s open exhibition of Bay Area artists, and the piece in that show I was pretty proud of. Unfortunately, the exhibition was a little messed up by the pandemic,

so there wasn’t an opening and then it got cut short, but there was a period in the summer when the museum was open, so I did get to go and see it there, which was cool.

**GCR:** Most of your work is in the Bay Area, but you’ve also painted murals in Nepal and Japan. How did those come about?

**AG:** In 2016 my girlfriend had to go to Nepal for work, and I was just tagging along with her. I thought it might be cool to try to do a mural out there, but I didn’t really know how. I wanted it to be a little more official—I didn’t want to get in trouble. So through a friend of a friend, I got connected with a guy who’s a professor at an art college there, and they were doing a street art festival where they were doing wheat pastes and putting up different types of art all over the street. He was like, “This wall is yours if you want it,” and he helped me buy paint since the language barrier was tough. I got to set up on the street for a day and painted a mural next to a guy who was selling bananas. It was great.

For the Japan one, the Jewish deli Wise Sons was opening a location in Tokyo in 2018, and I convinced them that they needed a mural at their Tokyo location. I’ve done a couple of murals for them here. The Wise Sons guys were all on board, it was mostly the Japanese partners who we had to convince that a mural would be beneficial. But once they saw it, they were really pumped about it too. That was a really fun experience.

**GCR:** Are there particular artists who have inspired you and your work?

**AG:** Growing up, I read a lot of comics—classic comic books, not superheroes but *Tintin* and *Asterix and Obelix* and *Calvin and Hobbes*. That kind of linework was always really attractive to me. It was very clear but detailed. Those are probably my biggest influences, but also Aubrey Beardsley and Wayne Thiebaud. I love [Thiebaud’s] paintings of San Francisco, showing the inclines of the hills.

**GCR:** How did you get to do the Sanchez Street mural?

**AG:** The community group Friends of Slow Sanchez just contacted me and were like, “Do you want to paint a mural on the street?” and I, for some reason, said yes. I’m glad I did it.

**GCR:** Have you ever painted something horizontally like this?

**AG:** My work is usually vertical as in on a wall, and horizontal as in the layout of it. This one is the opposite. Both are kind of unique. I don’t think I’ve ever done a vertical aspect ratio or horizontal like this.

**GCR:** Painting on the ground looks

uncomfortable. How’s your back holding up?

**AG:** My back is all right. I’m dealing with it. I got knee pads, so then I was just trying to mix up my position—sit down some, kneel some, whatever I can do to mix it up.

**GCR:** What do you think about when you’re working? Do you have a message you try to convey through your art?

**AG:** With murals I try to think about the place that it’s in and reflect that place back on itself. For Sanchez Street, it’s a Noe Valley mural. It’s reflecting the neighborhood, showing the neighborhood itself, in a way. Not that people need to see more of Noe Valley when they’re in it, but you can see it from a different angle and see it in this line-drawing style, which I think clarifies things and draws your eye toward certain details.

**GCR:** What details do you hope people notice in this mural?

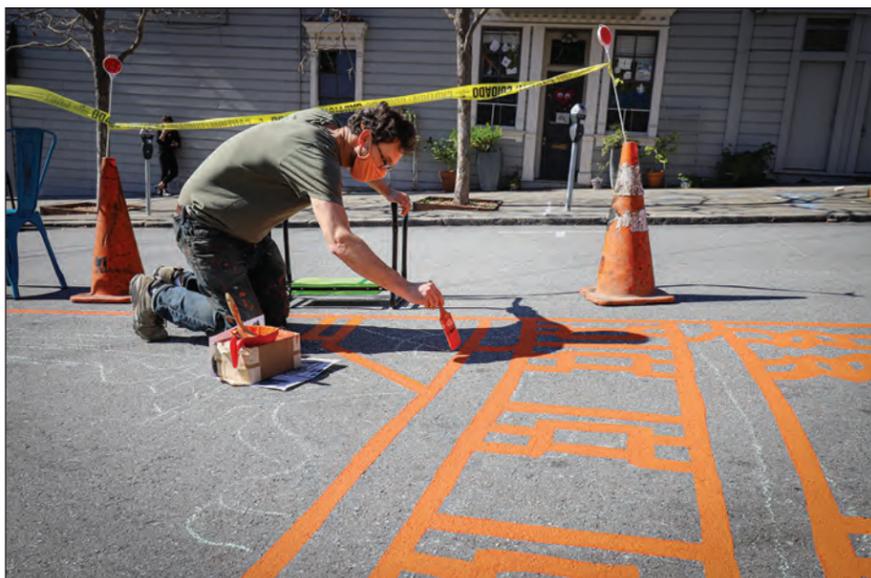
**AG:** The agave plants in the front yard at the bottom. The middle section depicts the block that the mural is on, with La Boulangerie on one side and St. Clair’s on the other, with Noe Valley Ministry in the background. Those may be hard to pick out without someone telling you. Also, there’s a parrot in the palm tree.

**GCR:** Why did you choose to paint in orange?

**AG:** I wanted something high contrast and bright against the gray asphalt. Orange is a very San Francisco color; there’s Giants orange, Golden Gate Bridge international orange. The asphalt paint I use actually only comes in white, yellow, and red, because it’s usually used for marking parking lots or doing lines on the street. But luckily I was able to mix two parts yellow to one part red to get an orange that I was really happy with. I tried a couple different ratios and the two-to-one seemed the best to me.

**GCR:** How long do you expect it to last?

**AG:** I don’t know. I’m curious to find out. I mean, it’s asphalt paint so this is what it’s made for. Hopefully a couple of years, but we’ll see. ■



Amos Goldbaum painting his mural on Sanchez Street in February. Photos by Gabe Castro-Root

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# Goats—Natural Environmental Stewards

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

after they realized they were a lot harder to care for than dogs. One goat, named Bernard, was found wandering on Guadalupe Canyon Parkway in San Francisco, according to caretaker Dawn Austin. (It briefly lived in Austin’s home before joining the City Grazing herd.)

When they’re not grazing, the goats live in spacious, semi-outdoor enclosures divided by age groups. Each one has a unique personality, said Austin, who knows almost all the goats by name.

## Their Job Is to Eat

The goats spent a few days last month grazing near Billy Goat Hill, on the edge of Noe Valley and Glen Park. They also have feasted on back yards in the neighborhood, though the cost—starting at \$500—means they may not be the best fit for a simple lawn-mowing job.

“We tend to work on brush-clearing in neglected back yards,” Church said, “but people sometimes just bring them in because it’s fun. If your weeds get a little high, pet goats for a week are really fun.”

Goats are being deployed to prevent wildfires with increasing frequency outside the Bay Area, too. Organizations like We Rent Goats, which operates in five states, and Rent-A-Ruminant, which operates in eight, market themselves as eco-friendly options for removing unwanted plant growth that can pose a danger during ever-longer wildfire seasons.

According to the Marin Carbon Project, which studies carbon sequestration and soil health in Marin County, controlled grazing is a crucial part of main-



The grazing goats typically spend several days at each location, eating their fill and returning nutrients to the topsoil. Photos by Gabe Castro-Root

taining healthy ecosystems. And while some grazers, like cows, can be net carbon producers, goats are considered lower-impact animals who will gladly munch away at overgrown plants and recycle carbon.

After all, Church said, “they get to eat for a living.”

## Baby Goats Need Names

As a nonprofit, City Grazing is reliant on a team of volunteers who help care for the goats, both at its Bayview location and at brush-clearing sites. “Willingness to work hard, get dirty, and have no fear of goats is definitely needed,” City Grazing says on its website.

For those less inclined to get dirty and with the ability to donate, the organization also has a range of virtual adoption programs for their new goats. In early March, City Grazing added 20 goats to their herd, including 16 babies. Donors who contribute above a certain amount

can name a baby goat. *(At press time, almost all had been adopted. So hurry.)*

Before the pandemic, City Grazing partnered with local schools and neighborhood groups to bring their goats into communities that may not have had regular contact with farm animals. Though those visits are on hold, the organization still works with the San Francisco Conservation Corps to provide employment for young adults in the Bayview. They currently have 10 employees, in addition to the active community of volunteers.

## Last Working Herd in SF

The City Grazing goats are the only working herd left in San Francisco, according to Church, but the city has a long history of livestock dating back to before the Gold Rush.

In the 1850s, José de Jesús Noé, the Mexican alcalde, or mayor, for whom Noe Valley is named, operated a cattle ranch known as Rancho San Miguel in

what is now Noe Valley, according to the *Voice’s* history of the neighborhood and FoundSF, a digital historical archive of San Francisco. Goats and cows grazed the hills, hence the names Billy Goat Hill and Nanny Goat Hill, the one-time name of Bernal Hill.

The Richmond District was home to several dairy farms until they were replaced by houses in the 1910s, according to the Western Neighborhoods Project. And the Cow Palace twice hosted the Grand National Livestock Expo, Horse Show, and Rodeo in the 1940s.

“Part of my motivation,” Church said, “is keeping that tradition alive in a very special way—allowing these animals to do what they do naturally and to live out their full lifespan. It’s just a beautiful thing.”

To contact City Grazing about volunteering, visit [citygrazing.org](http://citygrazing.org) or email [goats@citygrazing.com](mailto:goats@citygrazing.com). ■



Dawn Austin, who cares for the goats at City Grazing’s Bayview location, holds one of the company’s 16 newly adopted babies.



Silvia Zeng

Pete Brannigan



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# OTHER VOICES

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## My City Composts

By Kala Hunter

Thinking back to the day when I moved from Albuquerque to San Francisco on May 15, 2017, two moments are seared into my memory. One was the pleasant surprise of the peacefulness of my new abode in the Sunset. As I drove down Wawona Street, bordering Stern Grove, I was virgin to the smell of eucalyptus. Its distinctive and relaxing aroma welcomed me as I shut the car door, luggage in hand.

The other memory was the sight of the compost bin in the kitchen.

“Wow, you compost!?” I posed to my new roommate.

She was 75, and the wife of a good friend of my mom’s. They had allowed me to stay as I got my bearings in the city. It took my host a few seconds to figure out why I would even ask such a question. Her response: “Oh yes, of course, everyone in San Francisco composts. It’s mandated. It’s part of living in San Francisco.”

Being the environmentalist I am, I was overcome by a mix of excitement, eagerness, and embarrassment. Excitement because I knew how great composting was for the environment, eagerness that I could be a part of the experience, and embarrassment that I didn’t know such a program existed. Overriding all, though, was a feeling of reassurance—I’d made the right decision to move here.

Initially, I’d thought my mom’s old friends were unique—super-hippies continuing to fan the flames of the Haight-Ashbury of the 1960s and ’70s. It took me a few days of getting settled to fully understand that composting was ubiquitous, understood, and practiced in every household. It was no more or less special than recycling or trash removal.

In my scant experience, composting



Art by Lilibeth Bustos Linares

was something someone or a household did in their own back yard, of their own volition. It involved worms, big bins, a garden, and time. Soon I learned the task could be performed at a mass scale on behalf of an entire city.

Now three and a half years later, and in my new home on Noe Street in Noe Valley, I’m still impressed.

The concept is so simple. Compost is collected throughout the city once a

week by Recology, the same company that collects city trash and recycling. After about 90 days, and three processes of churning, our ends of carrots, apple cores, chard stems, and onion skins turn into large piles destined to become vitamins for the soil. The organic matter is brought to a transfer station in South San Francisco, then loaded onto a truck and driven to Recology Blossom Valley Organics in Vernalis, Calif., just outside of Tracy, where it is processed to compost. After the three months of biological breakdown and sifting, the compost is sold to farmers in the Central Valley, to help grow the vegetables, fruit, and flowers we all consume.

San Francisco started its composting program in 1996, a few years after I was born. It was the first major U.S. city to institute such a program. A city study found more than a third of all waste entering landfills could be composted. At first, people chose to do it voluntarily. In 2009, it was mandated by the city. Today, between composting and recycling, San Francisco diverts 80 percent of its waste from landfills. According to the EPA, the average for waste diversion across the United States (in 2018) was only 32.1 percent.

A Recology spokesperson noted in 2017, “2,300 tons of waste are picked up every day in San Francisco.” As for compost, a March 2020 survey showed

a daily pickup of 400 tons. Both numbers are hard to fathom, but I love knowing we are keeping tons of waste out of our landfills.

Now whenever I travel to another city or state, I find myself wondering, why haven’t they adopted such a simple, powerful, and smart program? It actually pains me while there to have to throw food into a plastic bag along with the other pieces of trash.

In my mind, composting is even simpler than recycling. Can you eat it? Did it come from the ground? Yes, put it in the green bin. Recycling involves scanning and double-checking the number next to the plastic triangle, and it can differ greatly by city and county throughout the United States.

When San Franciscans compost, and thereby remove organic matter from the landfill, they are also removing the opportunity for (GHG) greenhouse gases to accumulate. Organic matter in landfills breaks down from the sun’s light and heat, producing the most potent GHG emission, methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). Greenhouse gases of course contribute to global warming and our unmanaged global climate change problem. Composting benefits all of us. I’m not suggesting that composting will solve the environmental problems of our time, but it is a really simple way to start, and to incorporate sustainability in your life.

It is my hope that other cities will institute these types of programs as soon as possible. San Francisco’s pioneering idea has certainly shaped how I think about my food, my waste, and gives me hope for a more interconnected and mindful future. The San Francisco composting program is an ingenious closed-loop system that benefits people and the planet.

□□□□□

Aside from being a journalist and writer, **Kala Hunter** is a frequent visitor to the Saturday Noe Valley Farmers Market. “I’m a strong believer in sustainability and organic produce to help mitigate climate change and create a stronger local economy.” She also can be found hiking the city’s nature trails, swimming in the bay, or kayaking with [ettrips.org](http://ettrips.org).

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# OTHER VOICES

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## Alemanya Farm: Growing Food Security During the Pandemic

By LisaRuth Elliott

In 2021, as Alemany Farm marks its 15th anniversary, we at Friends of Alemany Farm find ourselves key participants in nutritional justice, providing much needed fresh produce to the many hundreds of people whose economic situation has been adversely affected by the pandemic.

This 3.5-acre urban agriculture site on the southeastern slope of Bernal Hill, adjacent to St. Mary's Recreation Area, is the largest food-producing landscape in the city and is under the oversight of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD).

We have always provided food free of charge to the community, but this past year has really seen an uptick in the number of people discovering and benefiting from the produce they pick at the farm. In addition, we have sent tons of produce to the Free Farm Stand at 23rd Street and Treat Avenue, which, though providing much needed organic produce for years, has become especially important since March 2020. An estimated 7,500 people receive food annually.

It's hard to imagine that the farm—a vast, undeveloped space next to a freeway—has been somewhat of a secret. It's actually easily overlooked, as people speed by on 280 or on the drag strip of the west side of Alemany Boulevard, which is the farm's southern border. Even during the almost two decades that a windmill towered over the site, many San Franciscans had no idea an urban farm existed.

But aided by the establishment of the Crosstown Trail in 2018—where people get a glimpse of the verdant space as they walk north along the pedestrian bridge over 280 and Alemany Boulevard—and during the pandemic, more and more city dwellers are getting hip to the wonders of the diverse ecosystem of this unique food production space, native plant haven, and best place to see birds and butterflies in San Francisco.

Urban food production is not new to this peninsula. However, in 2021 there are not nearly as many urban agriculture sites as there were just a decade ago. In fact, the farm began in 1994 as a youth skill-building and job-training site sponsored by the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG). Known then as St. Mary's Urban Youth Farm, it employed youth of color living in the southern and southeastern neighborhoods of the city. Overlooking and adjacent to the Alemany Housing project, its first creation was a community garden to be used by nearby households. While most visibly an edible landscape, the farm also made environmental steward-



This view from the southern slope of Bernal Hill shows Alemany Farm and 280 beyond. In 2020 the farm produced more than 12 tons of fruits and vegetables. Photo by LisaRuth Elliott

ship its mission, including wetland habitat restoration along the historic Islais Creek corridor and nurturance of native, drought-tolerant plants. The natives zones, urban orchard, pond, greenhouse, and hardscaping such as paths and gathering areas are all the legacy of the work of the youth and SLUG educators.

Today there are additions such as a thriving medicinal/herb/dye garden and an urban vineyard, and local beekeepers manage a number of bee boxes on site. The farm still trains youth through the city's teen summer camp program, and we are excited about growing the next generation of BIPOC farmers in San Francisco.

Despite reduced staffing and other pandemic requirements, 25,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables were produced in 2020. Though at this time of public health restrictions we are not able to welcome volunteers, we can't wait to invite the larger community

back to help out.

Our current "skeleton crew" of 21 interns, two apprentices, and two staff logged 7,000 hours last year. We are rooted in local partnerships with aligned organizations, such as the Free Farm

Stand, TwoEightyProject, Feed the People Collective, Alemany Apartments Resident Council, PODERSF, Hummingbird Farm, Urban Sprouts, Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, BRIDGE Housing, San Francisco State University, and Alemany HeadStart.

As Alemany Farm co-director Abby Bell notes, "What has stood out for me most over this past year is the important role Alemany Farm is playing for people's physical and mental well-being. We have seen a tremendous increase in food being self-harvested by our neighbors and community, as well as people utilizing the green space of the farm as an 'escape,' so to speak.

"Pre-pandemic we estimated that 40 percent of what we grow was community-harvested. But with the unfortunate circumstances of the pandemic leading to a rise in food insecurity, we are now estimating that upwards of 60 percent of what we grow is being harvested and eaten by our neighboring community. I feel grateful to be supporting such a vital need for food and green space for urban residents."

LisaRuth Elliott is a farmer, artist, and co-director of the history projects Shaping San Francisco and FoundSF.org.

### Alemanya Farm Through Time

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of Alemany Farm, LisaRuth Elliott will present a virtual talk on the history of the farm on Wednesday, April 21, 5:30 p.m. Joining her will be Gregg Castro, Cultural Consultant of the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone, who will talk about the longer history of food production on the peninsula and current Ohlone efforts for local food sovereignty.

For the Eventbrite link, go to <http://www.alemanyfarm.org/workshops/>

### Artists Excluded by Zip Code?

By Najib Joe Hakim

San Francisco is joining the ranks of California cities exploring the idea of a guaranteed income for working artists affected by the economic fallout from COVID.

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 25), 130 San Francisco artists will be guaranteed \$1,000 a month for six months. April 15 is the deadline to apply, and the pilot is set to launch in May.

From my artist's perspective, it's an excellent opportunity to not only help support local artists but also to gauge their economic and cultural benefits for the city.

The qualifications to apply are: SF residency and falling within the program's definition of "artist" and income level. (The limit for a single-person household is \$60,900, an extremely generous amount in my opinion.)

There is one more very problematic qualification: zip code. Some SF artists are ineligible to apply if they live in some of the city's zip codes, including Noe Valley's 94131 and 94114.

I have lived in Noe Valley in a small, rent-controlled studio apartment for over 30 years. I am a working and currently under-employed artist.

The new Guaranteed Income Pilot program interests me personally. However, since I live in the 94131 zip code, I can't apply. Okay, Noe Valley is an upper-income neighborhood, but there are many of us still living here who do not fit that description.

The zip code requirement should be eliminated. It seems peculiar indeed that a single artist making over \$60,000 and living in the Mission qualifies to apply, while a single artist making under \$25,000 living in Noe Valley does not.

*Valley Street resident Najib Joe Hakim is an award-winning photographer and longtime contributor to the Noe Valley Voice.*

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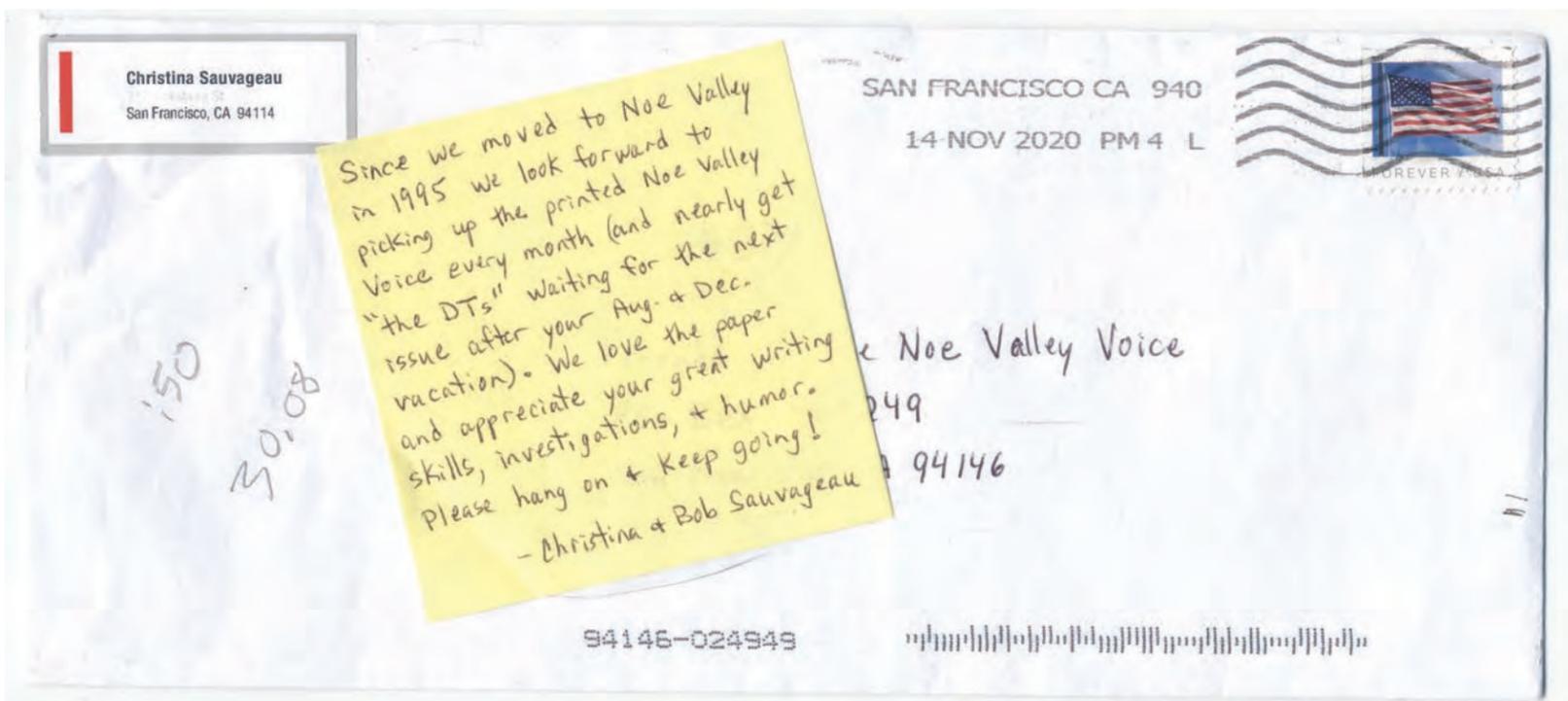
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## THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

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# The Cost of Living in Noe

## Buyers Spring Into Action

By Corrie M. Anders

Home-buying was active in Noe Valley in February, perhaps reflecting a rise in confidence as the winter surge in coronavirus cases came to an end.

Shoppers purchased nine single-fam-



This five-bedroom, four-bath house on Elizabeth Street sold for \$6.6 million, making it the most expensive single-family home sold in Noe Valley in February.

ily detached homes in the neighborhood, including a \$6.6 million contemporary redesign on Elizabeth Street.

That's compared to five sales recorded in the same month last year, according to data supplied to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Global Living San Francisco.

Condominium sales also increased, with seven units changing hands, compared to four in February of 2020.

Nine sales might be considered a modest number. But they occurred during what is traditionally one of the slowest months of the year and during a challenging Covid-19 environment.

Corcoran President Randall Kostick said the pandemic had dampened a few people's enthusiasm for living in San Francisco, but certainly not everyone's. And Noe Valley remained one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods.

"Instead of having 30 or 40 people wanting to buy a house, we had 12 or 15 who wanted to buy it," Kostick said. "The pool of buyers was so strong that if you took some of them away, the demand was still high."

By and large, sales were at the luxury end of the market. Six of the nine homes purchased in February sold for \$3 million or more, Kostick said. Those sales helped push the average price to an eye-popping \$3.6 million.

The Elizabeth Street home, located in the 500 block between Castro and Noe streets, was a major renovation of a Marina-style dwelling, originally built in 1934.

It sold quickly, Kostick said, before it was ever made available to the general public. According to the data, the last



A top-floor condominium in this eight-unit building known as "The Luxe," at 28th and Church streets, sold in February for \$2,230,000. Photos by Corrie M. Anders

time a \$6.6 million home sold in Noe Valley was in November of 2018.

The newly transformed residence featured five bedrooms, four baths, and an elevator and staircase servicing the four floors of the 4,175-square-foot property. Amenities included a chef's kitchen with Thermador appliances and Bianco Venato Italian marble counters, a walk-in pantry, floor-to-ceiling glass walls, a south-facing deck and garden with palm and fruit trees, and parking and electric-charging capability for three cars. The

piece de resistance, however, was a dog-washing station in the home's laundry room.

The most expensive condominium in the February sales was a top-floor residence offering 1,741 square feet of space in "The Luxe," a six-unit, three-story building constructed in 2012 at the corner of 28th and Church streets.

Buyers paid \$2,230,000—\$15,000 less than the unit's list price—for the three-bedroom, three-bath home featuring an open living and dining area with vaulted ceilings and floor-to-ceiling glass, an elevator, radiant heat, shared access to a patio with barbecue and fireplace, and one-car parking. ■

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### Noe Valley Rents\*\*

Unit	No. in Sample	Range March 2021	Average March 2021	Average February 2021	Average March 2020
Studio	17	\$1,330 - \$2,195	\$1,863 / mo.	\$1,864 / mo.	\$2,323 / mo.
1-bdrm	105	\$1,200 - \$4,195	\$2,618 / mo.	\$2,610 / mo.	\$3,118 / mo.
2-bdrm	88	\$2,450 - \$5,200	\$3,317 / mo.	\$3,418 / mo.	\$4,310 / mo.
3-bdrm	32	\$3,295 - \$7,900	\$4,668 / mo.	\$5,066 / mo.	\$6,227 / mo.
4+-bdrm	16	\$3,595 - \$22,500	\$8,239 / mo.	\$8,877 / mo.	\$9,319 / mo.

\*\* This survey is based on a sample of 258 Noe Valley rental listings appearing on Craigslist.org from March 3 to 10, 2021. In March 2020, there were 109 listings. NVV4/2021

### Noe Valley Home Sales\*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
<b>Single-family homes</b>						
February 2021	9	\$1,788,000	\$6,600,000	\$3,637,556	30	101%
January 2021	8	\$1,905,000	\$6,195,000	\$3,153,375	53	100%
February 2020	5	\$1,400,000	\$4,398,000	\$2,879,600	14	112%
<b>Condominiums/TICs</b>						
February 2021	7	\$1,190,000	\$2,230,000	\$1,625,000	24	107%
January 2021	6	\$768,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,111,917	62	102%
February 2020	4	\$1,050,000	\$2,070,000	\$1,506,750	9	109%
<b>2- to 4-unit buildings</b>						
February 2021	1	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	\$1,750,000	9	103%
January 2021	1	\$7,250,000	\$7,250,000	\$7,250,000	0	100%
February 2020	2	\$1,825,000	\$2,455,555	\$2,140,278	70	98%
<b>5+-unit buildings</b>						
February 2021	1	\$12,950,000	\$12,950,000	\$12,950,000	136	76%
January 2021	0	—	—	—	—	—
February 2020	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 Global Living San Francisco for providing sales data. NVV4/2021



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**Diamond Heights Community Association**

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

**Dolores Heights Improvement Club**

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

**Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)**

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

**Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association**

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

**Fair Oaks Neighbors**

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

**Friends of Billy Goat Hill**

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

**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 (FUNDG)**

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

**Glen Park Association**

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

**Juri Commoners**

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

**Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association**

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

**Noe Neighborhood Council**

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

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

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

**Noe Valley Farmers Market**

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

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

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

**Noe Valley Parent Network**

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

**Noe Valley Parents, San Francisco**

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

**Outer Noe Valley Merchants**

Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500  
 Address: 294 29th St., SF, CA 94131  
 Meetings: Call for details.

**Progress Noe Valley**

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

**Resilient Noe Valley**

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

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

Contact: Noe Valley NERT Neighborhood Team co-coordinators Maxine Fasulis, mfasulis@yahoo.com; Carole Roberts, carole\_roberts@faludi.com  
 Website: https://SF-fire.org  
 New training classes to be scheduled soon. Please check the NERT website for details.

**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 Neighbors**

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

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# STORE TREK

*Store Trek is a regular Voice feature spotlighting new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, as San Francisco enters the orange tier (if all goes well), we introduce a “sustainable fashion” boutique that has managed to sustain lots of interest despite opening during a pandemic.*

**Noo24SF**  
 3977 24th Street at Noe Street  
 415-235-8608  
 www.noo24sf.com

Luan Nguyen’s consignment clothing store has the feel of a spacious walk-in closet. The roughly 300-square-foot storefront is an intimate shopping experience, where patrons will not only find lightly used clothing and shoes but also new garments from local designers, a selection of housewares, and a Bay Area-based skincare line.

Open since Jan. 4, Noo24SF moved into where Ocean Front Walkers had been located for decades. Its name partially reflects its address at 3977 24th St., while the “Noo” has a personal connection to Nguyen, though he wouldn’t disclose exactly what that was when the *Voice* stopped by in mid-March. “It isn’t a secret,” he joked. “It has meaning to me.”

His shop is one of the few places in the neighborhood that carries men’s clothing. Buttoned-down shirts by Levi’s and Ralph Lauren were priced at \$26, while a Thom Browne was selling for \$79.

“Not too bad for Thom Browne. I do want things to move,” said Nguyen about his pricing strategy for the clothing he sells.

An Alpha Industries coat could be bought for \$98, while J Brand jeans were priced at \$35.

When he first opened, Nguyen stocked the shop with clothing from his own closet (that he no longer needed) or items which family and friends were willing to off-load.

Now he accepts men’s and women’s clothing that is in decent condition from the public. He splits the sales price 50/50 with the consigner when something sells. After two months, if something hasn’t sold, Nguyen will return it to the person or donate it to a charity of their choice.

“I am looking mainly for things sellable and in decent condition,” he said.



Owner and fashion designer Luan Nguyen stands in his shop Noo24SF, which has both new and consignment men’s clothing Photo by Art Bodner

In terms of new clothing items, he is carrying the “field-to-fabric” designs of local brand UMBER & OCHRE. A women’s dress was priced at \$200, while a men’s shirt was going for \$40.

He carries household items like glass mugs (\$6 each) and framed photographs by photographer Robert Ogilvie (prices vary). Various products by Oakland-based Earth Tu Face can also be found at his shop, such as the company’s shower gel (\$38 for 8 fl. oz.), face wash (\$52 for 8 fl. oz.), and face balm (\$68).

The shop is the first brick-and-mortar store for Nguyen, a Noe Valley resident who was laid off from his job at an international fashion brand based in San Francisco last April. From Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, Nguyen came to California in the 1980s to attend UC Davis. After graduating in 1989, he moved to San Francisco to study at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising.

The apparel company then hired him. In recent years Nguyen started thinking about opening his own clothing store. When he found himself suddenly out of work, he decided to take the plunge and become a small business owner. Sustainability was a guiding principle.

“I had been thinking of having a little shop and doing this, and I slowly was able to realize how,” said Nguyen. “The fashion industry is lots of pollution and waste. I wanted to do something to slow down the waste. Kind of promote the

sustainable fashion idea to people instead of throwing and tossing their clothes away.”

Opening amid a health pandemic when the city was still under strict lockdown orders, Nguyen said he wasn’t sure what to expect. He has been pleased by the response so far and is hopeful his shop will be successful.

“I know it’s not a good time, so I didn’t expect much. It’s been okay,” said Nguyen. “People are very supportive, so that is good.”

As for his client base, he said men have been popping in to shop.

“I heard there are not too many men’s clothing places here, part of the reason I have men’s clothing,” said Nguyen, though he admitted there have “still been more women than men” coming in to the store.

Noo24SF is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays and closed on Mondays.

—Matthew S. Bajko

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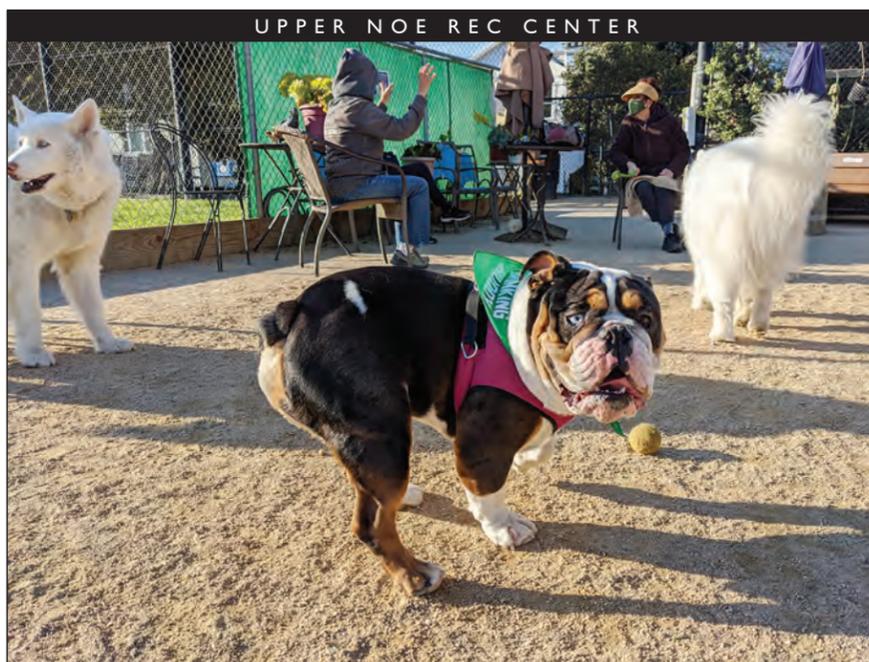


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Eddie the bulldog enjoys the company of friends while neighbors chat at Joby's Run at Upper Noe Rec Center. Joby's is open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. *Photo by Dave Emanuel*

### Time to Play Ball at Upper Noe

Upper Noe Recreation Center continues to offer outside recreation and relaxation even as the rec center building at 295 Day St. remains closed due to the pandemic. But things are looking up for programmed activities.

**Spring sports** are back in San Francisco, and Upper Noe will be hosting youth baseball practice and live games. Taking the field on weekday afternoons will be the SF Youth Baseball League's Shetland Division for 5- to 8-year-olds and the T-Ball Division for 4- to 7-year-olds. The diamond and bleachers are in great shape. So stop by and root on the players.

**Adventure Camp** also will return to Upper Noe this summer. The format will be the same as it was last year, with three three-week sessions from June 14 to Aug. 13. Staffing is currently in process, but we anticipate the long-awaited return of Cheryl, Levi, and Alvin.

*Flash:* Rec and Park is hiring **Recreation Leaders** (camp counselors) for summer camps running mid-May to mid-August. The camps range from sports, science, and arts camps to mountain biking and skateboarding. To apply or for more information, email your resume or a message with the header "Summer Jobs" to [RPD\\_recruitment@sfgov.org](mailto:RPD_recruitment@sfgov.org) or leave a message at 415-831-2726.

For more information on other programs, go to [sfrecpark.org](http://sfrecpark.org). For the scoop on Upper Noe Rec, call the park's office at 415-970-8061 or visit the website [www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com](http://www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com).

—Chris Faust, Chair, Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

spring 2021

## CITY ARTS & LECTURES

APR 14 - ALONZO KING

CHOREOGRAPHER/FOUNDER ALONZO KING LINES BALLET

APR 29 - RACHEL KUSHNER

NEW ESSAY COLLECTION: THE HARD CROWD

MAY 6 - MICHELLE ZAUNER & BOWEN YANG

JAPANESE BREAKFAST • SNL

MAY 7 - ALISON BECHDEL

NEW MEMOIR: THE SECRET TO SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

MAY 8 - DAVID MITCHELL

UTOPIA AVENUE • CLOUD ATLAS

MAY 11 - STRESS & RESILIENCE  
DACHER KELTNER & ELISSA EPEL

MAY 13 - STACEY ABRAMS

FAIR FIGHT • ACTIVIST • NEW NOVEL: WHILE JUSTICE SLEEPS

MAY 18 - JHUMPA LAHIRI

NEW NOVEL: WHEREABOUTS

MAY 20 - MICHAEL LEWIS

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# SHORT TAKES

## Bigbellies Spotted on 24th Street

No, this is not an item on pandemic weight gain. The Bigbellies in question are four new super-sized, high-capacity trash bins on 24th Street.

These are no ordinary trash receptacles. They are solar-powered, equipped with a compactor to smush trash together, and smart, as in connected to the internet. When they're full, these trash cans signal the San Francisco Department of Public Works, which then alerts the trash collector.

Is it working? Yes, according to Noe Valley Association executive director Debra Niemann—especially the one at the Town Square at 24th and Vicksburg. That Bigbelly “needs to be emptied every day, Thursday through Sunday, and sometimes twice a day,” Niemann reports.

The NVA won a Mayor's Fix-It grant for the four Bigbelly trash cans, which are “very expensive,” says Niemann. The four cans are strategically placed along 24th Street—at the square and at Castro, Noe, and Church streets. You can't miss them. They've been decorated by San Francisco artist Sylvia Vientulis with artsy renderings of fruit and vegetables, dogs, flowers, and birds. Who says trash collection can't be pretty?

The NVA is responsible for cleaning the inside and outside of the Bigbellies, a bigger job than you might think, because “some people think the cans are tables for eating off of,” says Niemann.

Really, folks? Eating food off a trash can? Treat your own belly with a little more respect!

## Zoom Book Readings, Anyone?

Both of our neighborhood bookstores are holding online readings in April. Omnivore Books on Food hosts the author of a new Arab cookbook via Demio, and the Odd Mondays reading series celebrates both National Poetry Month (April) and National Teacher Month (May) on Zoom with its bookstore partner, Folio Books.

Reem Kassis, author of the award-winning cookbook *The Palestinian Table*, will talk about her latest, *The Arabesque Table: Contemporary*



Susan Dambroff joins fellow poet-teachers Brennan DeFrisco and Kimi Sugioka at Odd Mondays online on Monday, April 5, 7 p.m.



Our tech-smart Bigbelly trash cans can notify the city when they need to be emptied. Now, if they'd only beep when you accidentally leave your coffee cup on top. Photo by Jack Tipple

*Recipes from the Arab World*, with her friend and fellow author and chef David Lebovitz on Saturday, April 17, 11 a.m. PDT. Register for the event and/or buy the book at <https://omnivorebooks.myshopify.com/collections/events>. Or pick up a copy at 3885A Cesar Chavez St.

At the Odd Mondays, via Zoom on Monday, April 5, 7 p.m., you can see and hear teacher-poets Brennan DeFrisco, Kimi Sugioka, and Susan Dambroff. The three will read from their newest collections and discuss how they find time to write, connections between writing and teaching, and teaching moments that get their attention as writers. Broadcast Buy their books at [www.foliosf.com/odd-mondays](http://www.foliosf.com/odd-mondays). Folio Books is located at 3957 24th St.

## Slow Streets and Swift Developments

Running a community organization can be a thankless task, but doing good for others can be its own reward. Upper Noe Neighbors is holding its annual election for officers and board members Wednesday, April 21, at 7 p.m., via Zoom. If you live within the confines of Cesar Chavez Street south to Randall Street and Dolores Street west to Diamond Heights Boulevard, consider taking a turn at the helm.

To entice you to zoom in, the group will address two hot-button issues: the drive to make Slow Sanchez permanent and the debate over new proposed housing at the southwest corner of Noe Valley.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency is holding online discussions through April 15 on the design and safety features of several proposed permanent slow streets, including Sanchez from 23rd to 30th streets. To comment on the project, go to [www.sfmta.com/projects/permanent-slow-streets](http://www.sfmta.com/projects/permanent-slow-streets) and click on the Sanchez Slow Street Virtual Open House button.

The proposed development at 1900 Diamond St. would add four single-family homes and 20 townhouses at the site and donate \$2.4 million to the San Francisco Affordable Housing Fund to build eight or nine affordable housing

units elsewhere in the city. Twenty-seven cypress trees would be removed. There are also neighbor objections to the five-story height and 450-foot length of the building. Request the Zoom link for the meeting from [info@UpperNoeNeighbors.com](mailto:info@UpperNoeNeighbors.com).



The Mazie Girls are raising money for the San Francisco–Marin Food Bank by selling plastic-free storage bags Saturdays at the Noe Valley Town Square April 17 to May 9.

## The Mazie Girls Say It's in the Bag!

Three sophomore high school students decided to do something about hunger and environmental pollution. They formed the Mazie Girls to sell non-plastic products and give the proceeds to the San Francisco–Marin Food Bank.

Sam Kaplan, Elizabeth Wilson, and Sophie Woods began with tote bags. They sold several hundred at local farmers' markets and donated \$5,463 to the food bank. This year, they are making reusable food storage bags and taking pre-orders on [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com). Search for Help Mazie Girls End Hunger. \$20 gets you three waxed cloth bags. Their goal this time is \$6,500.

The 11-inch-square storage bags come in a variety of happy colors, and are cut from cotton fabric that has been infused with beeswax, pine resin, and

jojoba oil to get “the perfect finish,” Wilson says. Each three-bag set costs the girls about \$8, leaving about \$12 for the food bank.

Wilson points out “55,000 households rely on the food bank every week, nearly twice as many as before the pandemic.” She also notes, “The more bags we sell, the lower our production costs [and] the more money we are able to donate to the food bank.”

The Mazie Girls will be at the farmers' market at the Noe Valley Town Square on Saturdays April 17 through May 9. Two of the girls and several friends helping them live in the neighborhood. If you're interested in helping to make or sell the bags, contact the girls at [info@maziegirls.com](mailto:info@maziegirls.com).

## Noe Music Offers April Concerts

Noe Music is hosting two virtual concerts in April, one featuring Bay Area musicians and the other composer and pianist Gabriela Lena Frank.

“A Celebration of Musicians Around the Bay” is a cooperative venture of the Bay Area Music Consortium. (Noe Music is a member.) A Latin American music wind quintet, classical string quartet, raga master, and a string quartet of siblings aged 8 to 14 play Saturday, April 10, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 at [www.noemusic.org](http://www.noemusic.org).

Gabriela Lena Frank appears in conversation with Noe Music directors Owen Dalby and Meena Bhasin Thursday, April 29, also 7 to 8:30 p.m. Frank is known for composing music reflective of her multicultural heritage, which includes American, Peruvian, and Chinese influences. Among her prize-winning compositions are *La Llorona (The Crying Woman)*, *Leyendas (Legends): An Andean Walkabout*, and the opera *The Last Dream of Frida*.

Tickets for the talk and performance are a suggested \$5 to \$20 at [www.noemusic.org](http://www.noemusic.org).

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



Pianist-composer Gabriela Lena Frank performs at a Noe Music virtual concert on Thursday, April 29. Photo by Mariah Taugher

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on a gentrified street, wearing smaller earrings  
and more and more long scarves Sufi dancing around her face  
as she ages, getting better at listening  
and becoming more oblique  
while her daughter's childhood slips away like smoke  
tugged in a red wagon up and over peaks  
to the peninsula, the last link  
to this city becoming an island.  
She wonders who was this young man next door  
who jumped out a third floor window above the cigar store  
that smelled like grandfathers and uncles.  
Her acquaintance lived next to him  
on sabbatical from her teen children  
in the Midwest. Her mid-decibel Billy Joel jams  
muted his pain. That store is gone now  
making way for a carousel of one night stands.  
No one waits in line anymore in the 4 o'clock wind  
that whooshes down the hill from the west to line up  
for ice cream scooped the crochety guy who made it  
leaving with torch high scoops on brittle sugar cones.  
The republican proprietor down the block is dead  
no one to put Reagan ephemera in the window  
anymore. No one to chide her and the rest  
of the looney valley liberals while he kept the rent low  
to keep families in the hood.  
She has no place to buy cigars  
and can't ask the blue-haired candy counter ladies  
vanished from the five and dime.



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## and now for the RUMORS behind the news

### Who Knows Noe?

By Mazook

**I**T'S THAT NEIGHBORHOOD QUIZ: Here are seven simple questions any iPhone-carrying NoeValleon should be able to answer. If you can answer all without looking, you should be writing this column. You will find the answers below, as you read on.

1. Where was Herb's Fine Foods and what was it called when it first opened in 1943?
2. Where does Upper Noe Valley end and the Fairmount neighborhood begin?
3. Name the founders and contributors to the first issue of the *Noe Valley Voice* in May 1977. Can you name even one?
4. Where was Dan's Gas and Diesel?
5. When did the Noe Valley Farmers Market first open?
6. Who was Elizabeth Street named after?
7. And finally can you name at least five neighborhood groups active 20 years ago?



**TALKIN' TRASH:** Have you ever put your trash in any of the 22 garbage cans, aka "public litter cans," maintained by San Francisco's Department of Public Works, or San Francisco Public Works, as it's now called?

While we have four brand new and very artistic receptacles on 24th Street, as reported in last month's Rumors and this month's Short Takes, the other 18 are those green metal and heavy stone trash cans. They're placed in many spots up and down 24th from Church to Diamond Street, and each has a "Recycle" cage at the top for your bottles, cans, and paper bags. They are installed by Public Works.

But maybe you have noticed that those cages on the top have a big hole in the middle that drops directly into the can below. Hmmm. DPW then hires Recology San Francisco (aka Sunset Scavenger) to pick up the trash twice a day from Downtown Noe Valley and dutifully drive off with all the garbage. But where do they go next?

The short answer is that all the public trash bin garbage goes to the landfill.

Says Recology spokesperson Robert Reed, "Public litter bins are there for tourists and shoppers and people entering and exiting buses to have a place to discard small materials such as gum wrappers, chip bags, facial tissue, and other personal trash. Unlike bins at a private property, public litter bins are out in public areas 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and because they are out in public these bins can contain materials that can be harmful to recycling workers.

"The bottles, cans, and paper we collect from blue recycling bins in San Francisco go to Recycle Central on Pier 96 for sorting," continues Reed, "but the material we collect from public litter cans... cannot go into the recycling plant.... Instead, materials from the public litter cans go to the transfer station and then the landfill."

So be fooled no more: When in Downtown Noe Valley, take all the garbage you have accumulated home and separate it into your gray, blue, and green bins.

Speaking of those green bins, Reed points out, "San Francisco pioneered curbside collection of food scraps for composting in North America in 1996. We are marking the program's 25th anniversary this year. Every year, more cities replicate the San Francisco program." (See *Kala Hunter's piece*, page 12.)



**ASKED AND ANSWERED:** Questions 4 and 5 above actually go together. The Noe Valley Farmers Market—open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine—first opened on Dec. 6, 2003 (question 5). It opened in the space created by the demolition of Dan's Gas Station at 3865 24th St.

in August of 2003 (question 4).

The petrol stop first opened as McCarthy's in 1930, when John McCarthy opened a Shell Gas Station. That original structure was demolished in 1959. The sheet-metal building with garages that replaced it was renamed Dan's Gas and Diesel. It closed in 2000. On May 20, 2003, a wrecking ball took a mere 45 minutes to flatten the station's garage and office.

Since the Farmers Market opened at the Noe Valley Town Square, it has become a destination for neighborhood residents and rightly deemed "an essential business" during our Covid year.

One of the farms that has been there since the beginning is Twin Girls Farm, which specializes in citrus fruits. Vendor Jimmy Egoian (with his wife Carol and son Cole) says that "gratefully, over the past year the community has been very, very supportive, which has been a savior for our business.

"People have been very cooperative with all the protocols that the market followed," he notes, "so we could stay open for business since the Covid lockdown, and we have felt very safe during the past year." Egoian says they only attend one other farmers market in which they feel safe, namely the Sunday market at Montclair Village in the Oakland hills.

Another farm that has endured over the past 18 years is Herr Family Farm. "The pandemic over the last year has been pretty tough on our family [of six]," says Kou Herr, "but we all work the farm and welcome all the wonderful support we have received from all our customers in Noe Valley."

They too sell their produce at only one other market, on Sundays in the Sunset, at 26th and Pacheco. "We feel very safe here because everyone complies with the Covid rules put in place by the market."

By the way, Herr says to look next month for their harvest of sugar snap and English peas, fava beans, zucchini, and cucumbers.

Another charter member of the Saturday Farmers Market is Juicy Lucy, which set up a juice stand at the beginning and is still going strong. Says Lucy (aka Lisa Bach), "We have come back to our pre-Covid days, and have been very grateful to all our loyal customers.... If it weren't for them, we would have never made it through the past year."

== =

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** The Farmers Market has also been providing food to people in need. About six months ago at the peak of the pandemic, the Farmers Market board took the initiative to partner with Friends of the Children—SF Bay Area, a charitable organization with offices in the Bayview, to provide weekly healthy food to children and families.

The Board of the Noe Valley Farmers Market, which includes Leslie Crawford, Regina Faustine, Peter Gabel, Ben Hartman, and Erica Sweetman, is currently asking for your support "to fund the purchase of free healthy fruits and vegetables for food-insecure families in the Bayview/Hunters Point, Sunnysvale, and Potrero Hill communities."

In an open letter to the community, the board pleads, "Now we need to turn to the Noe Valley community to provide support to continue on with this worthy and needed project. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 to guarantee an additional 20 weeks of food for distribution to these families, who are food-insecure during the current health and economic crisis, and who in any case do not have easy access to the kind of healthy food grown by our farms and offered through our market."

Sign up to donate directly at a table set up at the Farmers Market, or donate online at [friendssfbayarea.org](http://friendssfbayarea.org), and indicate that you are donating to the Noe Valley Farmers Market Project.



**THE INS AND OUTS:** Closing by summer's end is the popular jewelry store Qoio, which you can see has a "store closing" sign on its awning at 4068 24th St. Says artist/owner Gilbertina Guarini, "I want to retire, now that my kids have grown and after having my shop in Noe Valley for the past 23 years, which have been very good. Now I want to sit down in my back yard un-



**Celebrating 100:** Larry Weckman's neighbors surprised him with balloons and a boisterous singing of "Happy Birthday" on March 4 outside his home on 26th Street. Photos by Art Bodner

der the trees in Bernal Heights and enjoy life without the stress of business." She says she and her husband want to "travel the world and also visit my homeland [Guatemala] and Italy, where my husband comes from, and visit places like Burma, and lie on the beaches of Bali.

"I have been trying to do this for the past couple of years, and now I am going to do it, despite my customers trying to convince me to stay longer," Guarini says. "I want to sell everything by September and am offering half off on all items."

To be open by summer's end is the plan Stephanie Gabriner has for the space on 24th Street at Church (next to Sterling Bank), until Covid occupied by Fit-Lite (24-Hour Fitness).

Gabriner will open as Pure Barre and offer membership-based exercise classes for adults and children. "We have made application with the city for a 'formula retail permit' since there are several other owner-operator franchises in San Francisco and around the Bay Area." She currently conducts classes at the Pure Barre in West Portal.

Closed for good, according to chef and owner Azalina Eusope, is Mahila, which opened at 1320 Castro in 2019 and wowed fans with its mamak Malaysian cuisine. (In March 2020, the restaurant received a rave review from *Chronicle* critic Soleil Ho and it was later listed among the paper's "Top 88.")

The closure was due both to the pandemic and to failed negotiations with the landlord. "They refused to work with me, and the final straw was when I received a notice from the landlord last month of a rent raise starting in April," said Eusope.

Azalina's, Eusope's food booth in the Twitter building, also had to shut down due to Covid. Eusope then devoted herself to running her catering business and keeping her employees, mostly women, on the payroll. (See *New York Times June 19, 2020, story*.)

Eusope says she reached deep into her personal savings to keep Mahila alive. Sadly, the world is now a different place.

"I am looking forward to taking a vacation—my first in 10 years."



**HAPPY 100** to Larry Weckman, who has lived on 26th Street since 1951. He turned 100 on March 4 and celebrated his birthday with his son and daughter-in-law, who flew in from Florida for the party. Weckman retired in 1973 from American Can Company in San Francisco, where he was a mechanic.

"He is very independent," says neighbor Helen Loeser, "and doesn't want any help from us, and is very busy in his back yard gardening. He goes by bus to the Safeway on Mission and 30th about three times a week to shop for food."

"Yep," Weckman says, "I enjoy riding on the 24."



**AT LAST, THE ANSWERS** to the other quiz questions:

1. Herb's Fine Foods was called "X the Noe," because it was a soda fountain directly across from the Noe Theater, then lo-



**Happy Times.** Larry Weckman with wife Edith in their younger days.

cated at 24th and Noe streets. It was opened in 1943 by Cyril Saunders, who sold it to Herb Gaines in 1945. In 1953, Gaines changed the establishment's name to his own, and it evolved into a popular breakfast and lunch counter. Gaines sold the business to Sam Kawas in 1973. Kawas passed away in 2006, and the diner, at 3991 24th St., was taken over by his wife and closed after the lease was not renewed in 2008. It then became the eatery Toast, which closed in 2019. The storefront now appears to have been leased, and will probably reopen after the pandemic ends.

2. This is easy. Upper Noe Valley ends, and Fairmount begins at 30th Street. At least that's the way I see it.

3. The founding editorial staff in the May 1977 masthead of the *Noe Valley Voice* included, in alpha order, Karen L. Briggs, Bill Hill, Claudia Hyslop, Bill Leeman, Corey (Corrie) Michaels, Lynne Myerson, Deborah Phelan, Sarah (Sally) Smith, David Snyder, and Hans J. Wangel. Ron Briggs and Shauneen were listed under Advertising.

6. Elizabeth Street was named after John Meirs Horner's wife, Elizabeth Imlay. Horner (1821–1907) was the first developer in Noe Valley. When he originally mapped out our neighborhood, he called 22nd Street "John Street" and 23rd "Horner Street."

7. Noe Valley old-timers will recognize these names. Back in 2001, there were many clubs and associations in these parts, including the Friends of Noe Valley, the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association, the Duncan-Newburg Association, the Noe Valley Democratic Club, the Dolores Heights Improvement Club, Upper Noe Neighbors, and the East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club. There were block groups from Liberty Hill, Cesar Chavez Street, Sanchez, and Fair Oaks. Also present were the Friends of Glen Canyon Park, Advocates for Upper Noe Rec Center, and the Noe Valley Neighborhood Parks Improvement Association.



**THAT'S 30,** boys and girls. See you all for the May issue of your neighborhood newspaper. Ciao for now.

**Adult Fiction**

In *Klara and the Sun*, by Nobel Prize winner Kazuo Ishiguro, a lonely A.F. (Artificial Friend) in a store window ponders questions of existence.

Eley Williams' witty debut novel, *The Liar's Dictionary*, is about a publishing intern who must weed out the fake entries a Victorian lexicographer has hidden in a dictionary.

A detective, a student, and a society columnist in Victorian London investigate a series of kidnappings, in *The House on Vesper Sands* by Paraic O'Donnell.

In NPR's Best Book of 2020, *Burnt Sugar*, by Avni Doshi, a mother and daughter confront their difficult memories and the subjective nature of truth.

**Adult eBook Fiction**

A medical student encounters ghosts from his past when he searches for a childhood crush, in *Hades, Argentina* by Daniel Loedel.

A woman is haunted by her husband's late wife in *The Wife Upstairs*, Rachel Hawkins' retelling of *Jane Eyre*.

**Adult Nonfiction**

Marissa King's *Social Chemistry: Decoding the Patterns of Human Connection* examines ways to build more productive relationships and job networks.

In *Smalltime: A Story of My Family and the Mob*, Russell Shorto reveals his family's roots, which stretch from Sicily to a Pennsylvania factory town to Schenectady, N.Y.

*Under a White Sky: The Nature of the Future*, by Elizabeth Kolbert, looks at

**MORE BOOKS TO READ**

**Spring Forward**

Children's Librarian Catherine Starr reports there is still no reopening date for the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library. "About 22 percent of staff is still away as Disaster Service Workers (vaccine site staff, interpreters, contact tracers, and other jobs), but they are progressively getting recalled as we improve on the Covid front," says Starr.

Meanwhile, she and Adult Services Librarian Francisco Cardona are cataloging new books and films and offering the *Voice* their pick of SFPL's finest.

Among this month's standouts is *Klara and the Sun*, a novel by Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro whose main character is a lonely A.I., programmed to work in a store window during the day and take care of a family's sick child at night. (Don't everybody grab this book at once.)

Also on the virtual shelves is a biography of "the Queen of Soul," Aretha Franklin; a book for young teens on the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Fukushima, Japan; and *Outside, Inside*, a picture book on life for kids during Covid by acclaimed Noe Valley illustrator LeUyen Pham.

To place a hold on these or any other titles, go to [www.sfpl.org](http://www.sfpl.org). Through SFPL To Go (<https://sfpl.org/sfpl-to-go>), you can arrange for a pickup at one of more than a dozen library branches. The Portola Branch opens for SFPL To Go on April 6, and both West Portal and Potrero will be added by the end of this month.

If you need assistance or have questions, call 415-557-4400, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., or email [info@sfpl.org](mailto:info@sfpl.org).

And Noe Valley, let's start lobbying the city to open the Noe Valley Library, the beautiful Carnegie building (and deck and garden) at 451 Jersey St.

—Sally Smith

the ways humans have impacted the environment, for better or worse.

*The Beauty of What Remains: How Our Greatest Fear Becomes Our Greatest Gift*, by Rabbi Steve Leder, discusses how to approach death.

**Adult eBook Nonfiction**

Louis Chude-Sokei's memoir *Floating in a Most Peculiar Way* traces his journey from Biafra to Jamaica to Los Angeles.

In *Between Two Kingdoms: A Memoir of a Life Interrupted*, Suleika Jaouad recounts her four-year battle with leukemia.

**Adult DVDs**

After the Civil War, a former U.S. Army captain escorts a girl who had been partly raised by Kiowa Indians to relatives in Texas, in the 2020 drama *News of the World*, starring Tom Hanks.

In the 2020 thriller *Greenland*, a family fights for survival as a comet races toward the earth.

The 2019 Canadian version of *Antigone*, which centers on a refugee family in Montreal, is a modern adaptation of Sophocles' classic Greek tragedy.

Filmed in the French Alps, the comedy/drama *The Climb* (2019) examines a long-term friendship between two men.

**Children's Fiction**

The everyday effects of the Covid pandemic are seen from a child's perspective in the picture book *Outside, Inside*, written and illustrated by Caldecott honoree LeUyen Pham. Ages 3 to 6.

Forest animals play at the fairgrounds in *The Midnight Fair*, written by Gideon Sterer and illustrated by Mariachiara Di Giorgio. Ages 3 to 8.

In *Over the Shop*, written by Jon Arno Lawson, with illustrations by Qin Leng, a girl and her grandparent fix up an apartment. Ages 4 to 8.

*The Rock From the Sky* is Jon Klassen's

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**

*In Bizarroworld* by Michael Blake

ALMS	OHHI	BEACH
LEAH	LOOT	IRULE
FARR	ISTH	LINES
ANCIENT	MARKET	
STOMP	ACE	PAP
	PARTIAL	FOODS
BTW	EEL	ALLAY
ORIFICE	HIDALGO	
RONAN	EER	YEP
GIGANTIC	FRYS	
ESC	INK	OHTHE
	HUGECHI	HUAHUA
SPARE	HARE	SONS
ALIST	URAL	TRAY
TYRAS	PTSD	ANNA

humorous look at friendship, fate, and visions of the future. Ages 5 to 8.

Nigerian storyteller Atinuk's *Too Small Tola* (illustrated by Onyinye Iwu) offers three tales about life in Lagos. Ages 7 to 9.

*Billy Miller Makes a Wish* by Kevin Henkes is about a boy's birthday wish for something exciting to happen. Ages 7 to 10.

As Hitler starts invading countries, an American teen worries the U.S. might have to go war and her sunny days in California might get cloudy, in *War and Millie McGonigle*, written by Karen Cushman. Ages 8 to 12.

*Amber and Clay*, written in verse by Laura Amy Schlitz and illustrated by Julia Iredale, tells an epic fantasy about a boy who is a slave and a girl who is the child of an aristocrat, living in ancient Greece. Ages 10 to 14.

**Children's eBook Fiction**

When a girl emigrates with her family, she misses her grandmother in Taiwan, in *I Dream of Popo*, a picture book by Livia Blackburne, illustrated by Julia Kuo. Ages 3 to 6.

A little bird learns how to fly in *Mel Fell*, written and illustrated by Corey R. Tabor. Ages 4 to 10.

*Ten Little Dumplings*, written by Larissa Fan and illustrated by Cindy Wume, is based on a true story about a girl with nine brothers. Ages 5 to 7.

In *Eyes That Kiss in the Corners*, written by Joanna Ho, with illustrations by Dung Ho, a young Asian girl learns to celebrate the shape of her eyes. Ages 5 to 9.

Strangers stranded in an inn tell their stories in *The Raconteur's Common-place Book: A Greenglass House Story*, by Kate Milford. Ages 8 to 12.

**Children's Nonfiction**

The picture-book biography *The Fearless Flights of Hazel Ying Lee*, written by Julie Leung and illustrated by Julie Kwon, is about the first Chinese American woman to fly for the U.S. military. Ages 4 to 8.

Jeff Gottesfeld explains the creation and protocol of a unique memorial at Arlington Cemetery in *Twenty-One Steps: Guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier*, with illustrations by Matt Tavares. Ages 6 to 10.

In *Meltdown: Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster in Fukushima*, Deirdre Langeland describes the 2011 "trifecta of destruction" in Japan. Ages 10 to 14.

**Children's eBook Nonfiction**

*Respect: Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul* is a biography of the music superstar, written by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Frank Morrison. Ages 4 to 8.

*The Floating Field: How a Group of Thai Boys Built Their Own Soccer Field* is by Scott Riley, with illustrations by Nguyen Quang and Kim Lien. Ages 7 to 11.

*How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other* is advice from award-winning journalist Naomi Klein, adapted by Rebecca Stefoff. Ages 10 to 17.

—Annotations by Voice bookworm Karol Barske



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# TEEN TALK

## How to Be a 15-Year-Old Mercenary

By Astrid Utting

Many people have experimented with new skills during the pandemic, from bread-baking to knitting to bee-keeping. My new skills? Making money off my parents and selling things on Craigslist. I've even succeeded in making these skills complicated enough that they warrant an entire article. Parents, beware.

My father was the one who first taught my sister and me the value of money. I remember, when I was about 10, we were sitting at the table eating my mother's homemade berry crisp, which had cranberries in it. In and among the sugary crumbles were pockets of sour red juice. My parents finished every bite. I wasn't a fan of the bitter taste and left the berries on my plate, hoping my parents wouldn't notice.

My dad was appalled. "They're so good! How could you not want them?!"

After I protested that I was too full, he came up with a much more convincing argument.

"I'll pay you five dollars," he said, pulling a crisp bill out of his back pocket.

"Really?" I asked. "Really?!"

My mom protested, "Are you seri-

ously paying our daughter to eat my food?"

I don't remember his answer, but from my experience, yes, that's *exactly* what he was doing. I giddily tucked the five dollars into my piggy bank.

The lesson I took was not that I shouldn't waste food. Nor was it that I should be open to new things. Instead, I learned that my dad was happy to bribe me with money. Courtesy of my mom, I also learned a new word: *mercenary*.

In fact, when I told my dad the subject of this month's column, he was concerned about how he would be portrayed. My response? "Okay, that will be five dollars." See? I've already honed my skills.

Soon my younger sister Sasha caught on and discovered that she could eat a raw clove of garlic for \$5. Turns out, she really likes raw garlic cloves. She was saving up for a MacBook, so every night after dinner she would beg my dad to pay her to eat a garlic clove... Her new MacBook should be arriving in a few days.

This new system ruined us. My mom, who once got us to clean her car in exchange for a small piece of chocolate, struggled with our greedy expectations.

A few weeks ago, she offered to pay Sasha \$5 to organize the spice drawer. My mom was surprised when Sasha declined.

"What? Don't you want \$5? It's a good deal!"

"Not as good as Dad's."

Sasha had learned an important lesson: One garlic clove was equal to one spice drawer. And it was much easier and faster to swallow a clove of garlic than it was to arrange cumin, oregano, cinnamon, etc., in alphabetical order.

Soon we learned more math lessons:

Eating a clove of garlic was also equal to finishing the leftover salad.

Nailing a switchback while biking was equal to one hour of babysitting.

Allowing myself to be sprayed with the hose outside (*at night*) was equal to organizing the napkins.

If all else failed, I could lock my dad out of the house and charge a \$10 entrance fee. (That one didn't always work.)

My sister and I were delighted. My mom was not. My dad reasoned he was teaching us the value of money. Plus, it was being kept in the family.



My mom argued that bribing children was wrong.

The problem is, my dad only has so much cash on hand, and even he has his limits. So I've discovered Craigslist, and am selling my old stuff online to make money. But I've taken things to a whole new ultra-complicated and possibly evil genius level.

In my Goldilocks-like search for the perfect desk, I ended up buying three Craigslist desks over the course of a few months, resulting in one in my bedroom, one in the hallway, and one in the dining room. Later I managed to sell the first one for a small profit. In fact, my dad's lessons came in handy for this one. My actual text to my dad:

Me: Can I borrow your truck on Monday to pick up a desk? Mom can't fit it in her car.

My dad: Sure, \$25

Me: \$15.

My dad: OK, \$15. Taxes and surcharges may apply.

To sum up for beginners: Buy something off of Craigslist, use it for a few weeks, get tired of it, repost it for more money, wait three more weeks, lower the price to move things along because your mom is irritated the vintage secretary desk is sitting in the front hallway, and finally, get the piece of furniture out. Expect \$25 to \$50 in profits. Simple, right? Only problem, now my mom is charging rent for the hallway. Is this the beginning of a family business?

Upon evaluating my crafty money-making strategies, I've come to the conclusion that my earnings are not worth the effort. What they are worth is these silly memories. I also feel the need to acknowledge and appreciate the fact that my family is doing okay, while others are struggling to pay the bills during this tough time. I look forward to finding a job and getting back to babysitting when this is over.

Turns out this article was really just an opportunity for me to sneak in some free advertising. Parents, I love little kids, and my rate is \$15 an hour. I'm available most weekends. Don't worry, I won't bribe your kids with money. We can talk later... ■

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

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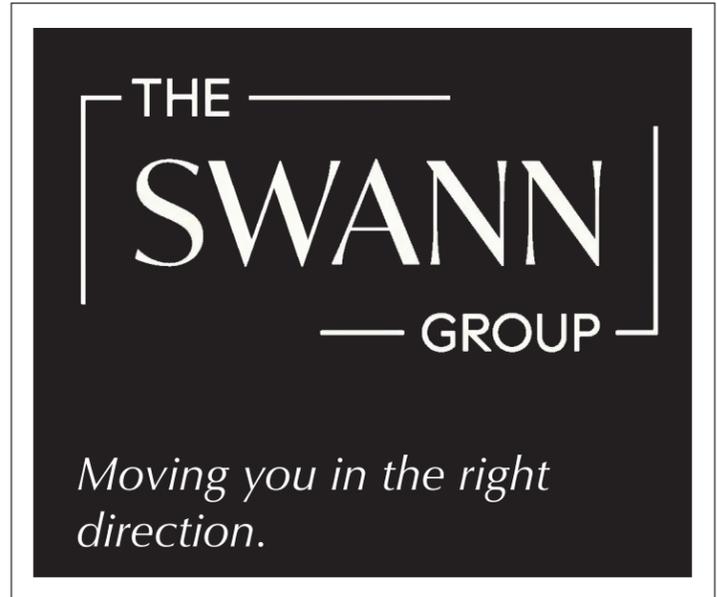
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