



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Cooking and Baking With Carmelo

11-Year-Old Finds His Passion During the Pandemic

By LisaRuth Elliott

Chocolate Cream Pie with Oreo Cookie Crust.

Upside-Down Peach Cake with Blood-Orange Sorbet.

Macadamia Nut Tart with Caramel Filling, Topped with Chocolate Ganache.

Strawberry and Mango Fruit Tart (Gluten-Free).

Is your mouth watering yet? Want to know which Noe Valley bakery offers these gourmet desserts?

Unfortunately, none of the delights listed above are available for purchase. They are the pandemic baking adventures of 11-year-old Noe Valley resident Carmelo Foy-Martí, an engaging and articulate sixth-grader at San Francisco Community School in the Excelsior.

Despite the trend over the past few years where people are having their groceries delivered or ordering prepared food through apps, this is a child who is regularly in the kitchen cooking and baking. Not many of his friends like to cook, he says. He's the one in his group of friends who likes to cook the most. Carmelo was drawn to helping his parents in the kitchen even as a young boy by hearing the sounds and feeling the textures—the tactile elements of being a cook.

He says he knows a lot of people began baking sourdough bread during the pandemic, but even a year ago, when he was just 10, he was already baking something every weekend and whenever he had spare time.

Since the city has been sheltering in place, Carmelo has not only been baking, but he has enjoyed cooking dinner almost



Recipe for Success. Carmelo Foy-Martí not only knows a lot about food preparation, he's becoming skilled at presentation. Anyone for a fruit tart? *Photo courtesy Fernando Martí*

nightly for his family, helping out during the past nine months. This has meant lots of kitchen experimentation and a steady growth in confidence, enabling the young chef to take on very complex recipes.

Carmelo enjoys researching a recipe in advance, often looking at several recipes on YouTube cooking channels to see what the best tips are for making them work.

Recipes he wants to make when he has the right ingredients live on open tabs on his computer. And he also loves just “going for it”—gathering the ingredients and trying a recipe. If it doesn't work, he isn't reluctant to go back and research recipes again to see what could have gone wrong.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

School for New Immigrants Full Of Pelosi ‘Heroes’

Principal, Staff and Students All Striving to Learn From Home

By Tom Ruiz

For the roughly 100 students at Mission Education Center (MEC), most of them new immigrants from Central America and Mexico, the 2020-21 school year has been a rough row to hoe.

The pandemic concerns, the lack of a physical classroom, and the need to switch to distance learning have made catching up to their fellow SFUSD students a bigger stretch than ever before. Still, students are working hard, and MEC and its staff are striving to provide a safe harbor for the children and their families.

Noe Valleyans may have heard about MEC in the news on Sept. 2, 2020. That was the day the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, held an outdoor news conference on the campus at 1670 Noe St., to highlight the impact of the pandemic on schools and the children they served. Pelosi stressed the need for federal support and Senate action to pass the so-called Heroes Act, which offered provisions for student, teacher, and family safety. (The House passed an updated Heroes Act on Oct. 1, earmarking \$182 billion for K-12 schools. But the Senate failed to advance the measure. As the *Voice* went to press, Congress was passing a \$900 billion Covid relief bill, which contained \$82 billion for schools and colleges.)

At the September press event, Pelosi also applauded MEC Principal Carla Llewelyn-Vasquez, remarking, “Madame Principal, thank you for your hospitality here in this great school. The Mission Education Center elementary school, it's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



We Saw the Change: Decorated construction plywood on 24th Street encouraged a strategy that many in the entire country adopted. *Photo by Jack Tipple*

Noe Valley 2020

Many of Us Survived a Year of Covid Stress in a Noe Valley That Nevertheless Remains Hopeful

The first time I brought my friend Nina to visit Noe Valley (in December of last year), she was impressed. “What a cute neighborhood,” she said.

It was a mild and sunny day. The street was lively. We sat down at an outdoor table at NOVY, where she would later exclaim, “That was the best lamb I've ever tasted!”

Hunger satisfied, we put our masks back on and walked east on 24th Street past the colorfully bright shop of Basil Racuk with his handcrafted leather goods. And past the cleanly designed and spacious SkinSpirit, the medical spa that now graces what for many years was a barren section of Noe Valley's main shopping district.

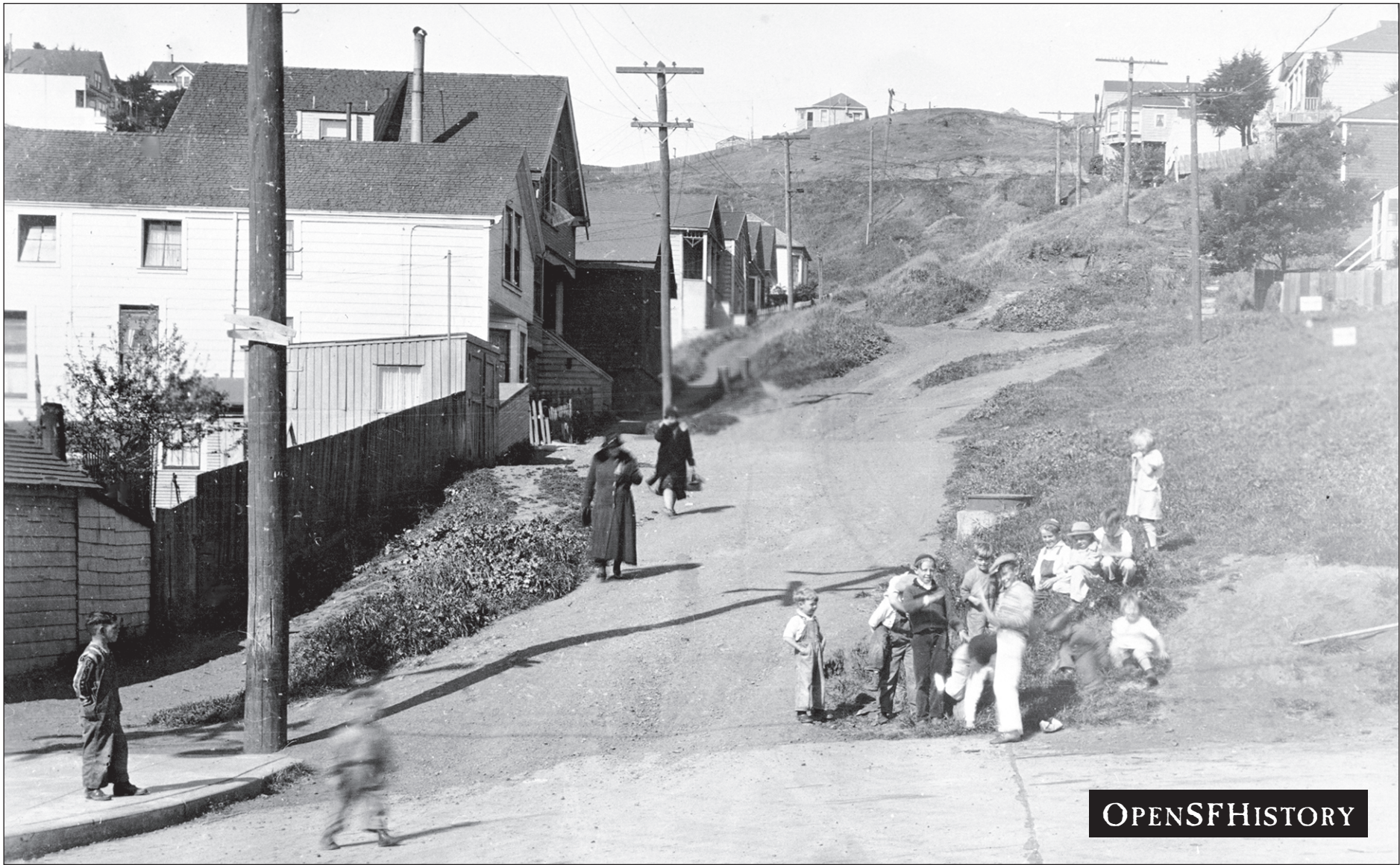
Our destination was Nomad Rugs. Nina would be moving soon and had cho-

sen a couple of beautiful rugs online to check out in person. After viewing them and dozens of others, she completed her purchase.

We knew then, as we do now, that we were among the fortunate. Healthy, able to afford beautiful things, with no immediate fear of poverty, or of police.

But even in resilient Noe Valley, the signs of struggle were evident. Many storefronts were empty and had been so for months. Most people were masked and some even walked into street traffic to avoid close passage with their neighbors. The sidewalk “booths” at NOVY would close within days of our visit, as another pandemic lockdown was ordered by the city.

We had voted in November, and our national choice was certified. But the election had revealed fear and hatred dwelling large in the land of the free. In Noe Valley, not so much. Still, only hard work and hope—and neighbors helping neighbors—will sustain our sanctuary beyond this time of trouble. —Jack Tipple



The View West on Valley Street from Castro Street. The photo was taken in 1923 by Horace Chaffee for the San Francisco Department of Public Works and is now in the hands of a private collector.
Photo and information courtesy OpenSFHistory.org / Western Neighborhoods Project / David Gallagher

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Written In Stone. Of the many ways to express devotion, scratching into wet cement has got to be the best. Relatively hard to find, this canvas also may come with guardians who don't appreciate the finer sentiments. In that case, repeated celebrations with chalk will have to do.

Photo by Jack Tipple

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Farewell, Steven and Melania

Editor’s Note: The longtime owners of Chloe’s Cafe on Church Street asked the Noe Valley Voice to publish this farewell letter, sent on their last day, Dec. 1, 2020. They also noted in a second email that the restaurant’s new owners plan to remodel and reopen as soon as circumstances permit. See the new owners’ letter at right.

Dear Friends of Chloe’s:

In early 1987, my wife, Melania Kang, and I had a dream of opening a small cafe in San Francisco. After checking out various prospects, we found a tiny place for sale in Noe Valley which seemed perfect for what we were looking for: a great neighborhood, a small space in a building with character, lots of light, and reasonable rent. The business was located at 1399 Church St., and had formerly been a deli. It seemed perfect. We walked up and down Church Street, meeting locals and business owners, asking them if they’d like to have a cafe in the area. They all said “YES!” so we bought it and signed a lease with the property owner for \$475 per month. Although we’d never owned a business before, we did have experience catering movies and working together as a team. (Our last catering project was for the film *Dirty Dancing*.)

The night before we were to go down to City Hall to get our business license, we still hadn’t decided on a name for the cafe. We heard a neighbor calling their dog, which happened to be named Chloe. We both liked that name and decided to use it.

When we first opened Chloe’s, it was just the two of us that did everything: cooking, food prep, cleaning, washing dishes, shopping each day after work, bill paying, etc. We didn’t have a stove, so our initial menu consisted mainly of sandwiches, soups, salads, and baked goods.

After several months, we added one hot breakfast item to the menu: two scrambled eggs with toast and a cup of fruit for \$3.95. We used one hot plate in the back of the prep room, set on top of the ice maker, to cook the eggs in a saucepan. Primitive, yes, but it worked, and people started ordering more of this breakfast, so we got a permit from the city to install a stove. (Yes, it’s still the same stove we’ve used for 33 years!) As the business grew, we put a few tables outside and started gradually adding more staff. And the business kept growing...

As the years went by, I experienced something wonderful and unexpected: customers began turning into friends. It was truly enjoyable to go to work every day and see those smiling faces as they walked in the door. The memories of all of these people and their life stories—births, deaths, marriages, etc.—play back in my mind like a wonderful old silent movie that I will cherish forever. Indeed, Noe Valley and all of its residents will always have a special place in my heart.

But now it’s time for us to say goodbye, dear friends, as we start another chapter in our lives. This is not easy to do, because saying goodbye is never easy, especially after 33 years. We are, however, thankful the new owners plan on carrying Chloe’s forward and will be using some of our staff.

And speaking of our staff, it’s difficult to put into words the deep sense of gratitude we have for them, both past and present. Their tireless dedication, tremendous work ethic, and great customer service helped make Chloe’s the success it has become. I shall never forget them. And I must say a few words about Tj, who has been with us for almost 30 years. He has put his heart and soul into Chloe’s and has been responsible for keeping Chloe’s going in almost every aspect of the business: payroll, ordering, scheduling of staff, problem solving, cooking,

LETTERS 55¢

prepping, dish washing, and, most of all, engaging thousands of customers with his welcoming personality for almost three decades. Chloe’s would not have been the same without him. We wish him all the happiness in the world as he soon departs to Thailand to be with Peter.

I look forward to returning to Chloe’s some sunny day in the future and having a cup of coffee, and, if I’m lucky, seeing some old friends who might just happen to be there, too.

We’ll share a smile....
Steven Baker

Keep Their Feet to the Fire
Editor:

Why did I not vote for a presidential candidate in November? Since you asked [in Rumors Behind the News, December 2020 *Voice*]: I cannot speak for the other 110 Noe Valleyans who voted in the November election but chose not to vote for a presidential candidate. But as for myself, the answer is quite simple. I always vote regardless of whether it’s a primary, midterm, or presidential election. Often I will spend hours going over the candidates and propositions on my absentee ballot. But in this election none of the presidential candidates, in particular those of the two major parties, came close to reflecting my values and the direction I hoped for our country. In short, leaving that section blank was my way of voting for “none of the above.”

The failures and misdeeds of President Donald Trump and his administration are well known and often spoken of in our slice of America. What is seemingly forgotten is that it was the failures of the Washington establishment for the last 30 years that made his election possible.

And from Wall Street deregulation to mass incarceration to endless military conflict to the destruction of our manufacturing sector, few politicians in Washington have been such a central part of those misdeeds as Joe Biden.

To all our neighbors who found joy and solace in Joe Biden’s election as our next president, I congratulate them. But I hope they stay vigilant and scrutinize his policies as much as many have of President Trump’s. Otherwise it was just partisanship masquerading as principle. And the next demagogue to capitalize on our sleepwalking through democracy might be even more dangerous than the petty narcissus we had to endure the last four years.

Bernie Corace
25th Street

Bye Don, Hey Joe
Editor:

Got any plans for Wednesday, Jan. 20? How about a “Bye-Don” celebration in Noe Valley Town Square?

With his electoral college victory certified on Dec. 14, and with the Supreme Court staying out of President-Elect Joe Biden’s win (over the now President Rejected), how about we meet in the square on Inauguration Day to say Bye-Don (depending on current city health orders and conditions).

So many of us have worked so hard together for four long years for this moment. Let’s celebrate together.

Bring your mask, keep your distance, and bring your own electronic device, your own chair if you like, and be there at least 30 minutes before President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris take the oath of office at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 20. Anyone got access to a Jam-

botron or equivalent? Bring it along!

Anyone have time before Jan. 8 to call Georgia voters? If so, contact me.

Charlie Spiegel
Member, ActionSF.com
415-644-4555

Hello Again, Chloe’s
Editor:

My family, consisting of my mother Anne, brother/chef Bobby, and I, are the new owners of Chloe’s Cafe on Church Street at 26th Street.

We are well aware of Chloe’s longstanding significance to the community and are excited to carry on the legacy the original owners Steven Baker and Melania Kang began (*see letter at left*). In a time of industry-wide shutdowns and uncertainty ahead, we are hoping to provide some relief that we plan to reopen Chloe’s, keeping much of the menu favorites the same. We also hope a majority of the original staff will want to come back to work, once we can safely reopen.

We are making the best of this second restaurant shutdown by taking the time to make needed health department and cosmetic updates to the space. This work should be completed in time to open for take-out in mid to late January, and shortly after for outdoor dining in February if it is allowed.

Thank you for your dedication to reporting all these years!

Sandy, Bobby, and Anne Siu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



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

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Chef Carmelo Could Have a Career in Cuisine

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

One of these baking trials was the French cookie—the macaron—which, according to him, might just be one of the hardest desserts to make. He’s still working on that one.

From Store to Table

Carmelo goes to the store with his parents to buy everything he needs on his list, but sometimes he lets the seasonal fruit he sees at the store speak to him and direct him toward a recipe, like a nice basket of strawberries to pair with man-goes for a gluten-free fruit tart to make for his mother for her birthday.

Already he is up to speed on and can explain what makes a loaf of bread fluffy and what techniques are needed to hold a gluten-free pie crust together. And he is ready to share tips, like: avoid overwork-ing the batter, which can make cake tough. Adding gluten-free flour will also help with this problem.

His favorite part of baking is seeing how his baked goods develop into the fi-nal product. He is captivated by watching how they change in the oven. He loves how they turn out at the end when every-thing comes together.

He also really likes plating food, so it looks beautiful. The combination of in-gredients, toppings, and garnishes when presenting them is important to him, and he will often mix and match recipes if one version has a more creative way to dis-play the dessert or entrée.

Since early in the shelter-in-place, Carmelo’s father, Fernando Martí, has been posting photos on his Facebook feed, showing a smiling Carmelo holding one after another delicious-looking dessert. I’m sure I was not alone in hoping I could move past the screen and smell



Carmelo Foy-Martí shows off another of his crowd-pleasers: lasagna. Photo by Fernando Martí

the wafting scents of his creations.

A Run on Pumpkin Pie

For Thanksgiving, through his dad’s social media presence, Carmelo an-nounced he would be taking orders for pumpkin pie. The enthusiasm was almost palpable, and within only a few hours he had 40 orders! He decided to cap the or-ders at 20 pies. He said it made his kitchen

“crazy,” scaling up to bake that many at once. Through this experience, he got a sense of the frenzy of restaurants. Over the course of three days, he had to find the biggest bowls and stock pots in his

kitchen in order to accommodate the two batches of fillings and crusts that were necessary, using a total of 63 eggs and 315 ounces of pumpkin.

After the Thanksgiving pie sales, Carmelo wanted to donate some of the proceeds to a good cause, which he found in Seed the Vote’s crucial Georgia runoff election work. With a political savvy be-yond his years, he says he made this do-nation because not only does he think the Senate’s continuing to lean Republican will affect his future, but he understands it will make things harder for the incom-ing president.

Not too long ago, he and his parents brought over a delivery of chocolate eclairs, so I could try them. At first he said the technique of filling the pastries was “a secret,” but very quickly Carmelo was animatedly telling me the tricks of the trade of transferring the custard inside the puffed-up hollow insides of the eclair. Later I was glad he had been so generous with the pastry cream, as I licked up the gooeyness dripping out of the light and flaky dessert.

Carmelo has his own internet presence for his baking and cooking demonstra-tions. His TikTok account, @cooking-withcarmelo21, takes the viewer through making several quick recipes that could turn out to be, in his words, “the best you’ve ever tasted!”

Carmelo’s instructions are clear and simple and make even the novice cook want to take on the challenge of roasting a whole chicken or covering eclairs in a chocolate ganache.

In these winter months, if you are walking down Noe Valley streets and smell the wafting scents of a bosc pear galette or a tray of macarons, or get a whiff of the savory notes of chicken parmesan, you might just be near Carmelo’s kitchen. ■

Raspberry Soufflé

By Carmelo Foy-Martí

People are usually intimidated by soufflés, but they’re not actually that hard. I made these for my mom because they’re gluten free. The recipe was adapted from the Food Network.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter plus more for greasing
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar plus more for dusting mold
- 1 pint raspberries
- 4 eggs, separated
- 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Powdered sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Prepare 4 small ramekins by greasing them with softened butter and coating with granulated sugar.

Pour out any excess. The butter and sugar keep the soufflés from sticking to the sides and allow them to rise evenly. The sugar gives the soufflé a crunchy crust, which is a really nice contrast to the fluffy interior.

Blend 1 pint of fresh raspberries, then put them into a saucepan with 3/4 cup of granulated sugar and 1 tablespoon of butter. Mix. Then cook for 10 minutes or till the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat, then strain to remove the seeds. Whisk in 4 egg yolks one at a time.

In a separate bowl, mix 4 egg whites and 1/4 teaspoon of cream of tartar until they’re foamy and reach soft peaks. Then fold in 1/3 of the beaten egg whites into the raspberry mixture to lighten it. Then gently fold in the rest. Put the mixture into the prepared ramekins and place them on a cookie sheet. Then bake for 20 minutes.

The soufflés are done when they have puffed up and their outsides are golden. Dust them with powdered sugar and garnish with raspberries and maybe a mint leaf or two.



Dance into 2021

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School Finding a Way to Be at Home With Distance Learning

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

just about doing the Lord’s work. When you’re talking about children, the Latinx community, many of them [with] English as a second language, immigrant families, the faces of the future of our country, [you’re] giving as you said the confidence to reach their fulfillment. It’s an honor to be here. Thank you for your leadership.”

Staff Working Online

In the weeks and months since, Principal Llewelyn-Vasquez and her nine classroom teachers have continued to meet the dual challenges of using the Google Classroom and Seesaw apps to teach their students in their native language while also preparing them to learn in English.

Llewelyn-Vasquez can rely on her extensive background in bilingual education, having served as a bilingual classroom teacher, content specialist, and a program administrator in the school district’s Office of Access and Equity before taking the helm of Mission Education Center seven years ago. She is building on the successful foundation laid by predecessor, friend, and walking partner retired Principal Deborah Molof. Most of the current staff members are veteran SFUSD professionals, including fifth-grade teacher Ricardo Cortez, who attended MEC as a student and was featured in a December/January 2009 *Voice* story on MEC and retired Principal Molof.

MEC is a transitional school where students typically attend one to two years before they move on to regular SFUSD elementary and middle schools. Many of the graduating fifth-grade students choose to enroll in James Lick or Everett Middle schools. Llewelyn-Vasquez shared that most families choose to keep their students in a Spanish biliteracy or immersion program offering both Spanish and English instruction, as they progress to higher grades.

Pluses and Minuses

Pre Covid-19, MEC had not invested heavily in technological learning, Llewelyn-Vasquez said in an interview with the *Noe Valley Voice* the week before Thanksgiving. “So it threw us for a loop, with teachers not used to using tech to teach and support students. It caused a huge pivot in how they teach.”

She explained that students at MEC all received Chromebooks for their at-home learning and to enable their parents to participate in digital parent-education



Principal Carla Llewelyn-Vasquez and students from Mission Education Center pose for a photo during a comfortable pre-pandemic moment in the school playground.

Photo courtesy Carla Llewelyn-Vasquez

classes when the students were not using the devices.

Since distance learning began in March, students and their parents have been committed to a daily online check-in with their teachers. Some students, for example first-graders who are making videos, have demonstrated an increase in academic performance. Meanwhile, parents are sharpening their technology skills. Students practice oral reading in Spanish and English to the teachers and classmates on their screens.

“It threw us for a loop, with teachers not used to using tech to teach and support students. It caused a huge pivot in how they teach.”

—Carla Llewelyn-Vasquez

Faculty meetings, where teachers share ideas and strategies on how to plan and teach lessons using the new technology, occur virtually as well. The twice-monthly meetings are augmented with what Llewelyn-Vasquez calls “Share and Learn opportunities,” where teachers share their latest findings on how to use new applications and websites in their instruction.

Still, there are downsides to distance learning, Llewelyn-Vasquez points out. Teachers are concerned that the two years’ growth their students normally experience per year may have been reduced to one year or less.

Also, they miss the closeness they once had. “It is emotionally hard for the teach-

ers to deal with their students solely over a laptop without the in-person support and caring they are used to giving, and it is really hard for their students, who really want to come to school to be with their teachers and friends. I don’t know how the teachers do it. They are truly amazing,” Llewelyn-Vasquez said.

How Noe Valley Can Help

Over the past two years, MEC has become a community school, a designation that allows for neighborhood groups to help in providing physical and financial resources, academic tutoring, and emotional support to the school. A community school staff coordinator is reaching out to connect with Upper Noe Recreation Cen-

ter and other community organizations to support MEC’s students, staff, and families.

An innovative feature of MEC is its Community PTA, which takes the idea of a school-based PTA into the local community. Led by MEC’s Madrinas, including Olga Talamante, Tracy Brown, Maria Pinedo, Paula Fleisher, Lucy Bernholtz, Olga Milan-Howells, and Rosalia Valencia-Tow, the group has organized a GoFundMe page, which raises money for events, holiday gifts, and clothing and other items.

Another ongoing project is the school’s garden, which is visible to anyone walking along 30th Street on their way to or from Billy Goat Hill. MEC also hopes to establish a food pantry for the community when the school reopens, using volunteers and donations from local residents and businesses.

Reopening Date Still Elusive

Speaking of reopening, Llewelyn-Vasquez was awaiting word from SFUSD on when MEC could reopen its doors, but had received no specific date as the *Voice* went to press.

According to a Dec. 9 letter of interest submitted to the city’s health department, the reopenings were expected to occur in phases, as the district determined which schools and grades best met health and safety standards. Still, the district announced nine days later that an anticipated January start for the first phase had been delayed.

Neighborhood residents wishing to volunteer when MEC reopens can go through the San Francisco Education Fund, at sfedfund.org.

To Principal Carla Llewelyn-Vasquez, MEC remains “a hidden Noe Valley gem which makes me very happy to come to work every day.” ■

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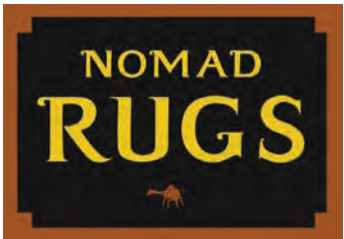
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Bacco Ristorante Now Molto Bello

Restaurant Moves to 24th Street
And Adds Pizza to Italian Classics

By Pat Rose

In early November, the popular 27-year-old restaurant Bacco Ristorante Italiano opened in its new home at 3913 24th St., formerly the site of Savor Open Kitchen, which closed last year.

Owner Shari Dominici said she was thrilled to find the space after she was forced to stop indoor dining during Covid at her original Diamond Street location.

“The Diamond Street restaurant had no patio, so I could only put two tables outside for outdoor dining,” said Dominici during a conversation in her new restaurant. She decided not to renew her lease and to look around the neighborhood for a larger space with outdoor seating.

“A customer told me about the 24th Street site, which has a large outdoor patio,” she said. “I also always wanted to offer pizza, but there was no space in the kitchen at Diamond Street for a pizza oven. This kitchen is much bigger, so we bought a pizza oven, had the cooks do an intensive training with a pizza chef for two weeks, and now we’re offering gourmet pizzas.”

A Michelin Star

Dominici started the restaurant with her husband, Paolo, and Chef Vincenzo Cucco. Paolo Dominici, originally from Rome, worked with his older brother Luigi, who owned a restaurant in Russian Hill. Cucco was the chef at the Fairmount Hotel.

“My husband had always wanted his own restaurant,” said Dominici. “He met Chef Vincenzo through mutual friends. The two became partners, found the place



Executive Chef Vincenzo Cucco and owner Shari Dominici are pleased about their expanded menu and newly remodeled restaurant, which has been equipped with an oven that can bake authentic Italian pizza. Photos by Art Bodner

at 737 Diamond St., and opened Bacco in 1993.”

The restaurant became an instant success with its authentic Italian cuisine, house-made pasta, daily risotto, and old-country wines. It drew high praise, including a coveted Michelin star, and rave reviews from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *USA Today*, *Zagat*, and other outlets. The two partners later opened a second Italian restaurant in Belmont, called Divino. Eventually, they decided to divide up management duties, with Cucco running Divino and Dominici staying in Noe Valley to manage Bacco.

Tragically, a spearfishing accident in Hawaii in 2009 claimed the life of Paolo

Dominici. Soon after, Chef Vincenzo came back to Bacco to manage the kitchen and help Shari Dominici run the restaurant. He continues to split his time between Bacco and Divino.

Dominici hired an Italian designer to help remodel the restaurant’s interior. “We worked around the vision of the beautiful nickel chandeliers that were already there.” The fireplace has been tiled in a gray and white pattern, and gray cushions and pillows line the banquettes. A dramatically large photo art installation of the *Statue of the Three Angels in the Field of Miracles, Pisa, Tuscany, Italy*, hangs in the front of the restaurant. Black and white photos of Italian street scenes hang throughout the restaurant. On the large back patio, Dominici has added garden boxes with basil, oregano, rosemary, and other herbs.

Takeout Saves the Day

In November, business was bustling, with neighborhood regulars and many new customers coming into the restaurant on 24th Street. “A lot of new customers who never knew we were on Diamond for 27 years starting coming in,” said Dominici. She added a build-out of outdoor booths in the front of the building, which were being completed just as the Dec. 6 shutdown hit.

Though business slowed, she managed to get by. “I have good-size takeout because of the new pizza, and I do small

group catering, which has really helped.”

Bacco offers a range of antipasti, from grilled calamari to burrata with eggplant, celery, capers, and olives. House-made pastas include vermicelli with homemade Tuscan baby meatballs; rigatoni with sausage, roasted peppers, peas, tomato, and cream; gnocchi with tomatoes, mozzarella, and basil; fregola with clams, mussels, scallops, and shrimp; and ravioli, spaghetti, lasagna, and risotto dishes. Mary’s Half Chicken, a braised beef short rib, and a pistachio-crusted pork chop are also available.

Margherita and vegetarian pizzas are on the menu, along with a salsiccia pizza with sausage, red bell pepper, olives, and mozzarella; a pesto pizza with olives and oyster mushrooms; and the Bacco Pizza, with mozzarella, arugula, parma prosciutto, and parmesan cheese.

Lunch May Arrive Soon

Dominici plans to offer lunch in January Thursday through Sunday, with a menu of paninis, pizza, pasta, soup, and salad, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Later she hopes to add a brunch.

Takeout hours during the Covid shutdown are 4:30 to 8 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, and 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday. For updates or other information, call 415-282-4969, or visit the website BaccoSF.com. ■



Shari Dominici stands outside Bacco’s spacious new home at 3913 24th St. Once health orders are relaxed, she hopes to offer both indoor and patio dining.



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November 2020 at Church St. near 22nd St. Photo by Jack Tipple



photo: Amanda Brauning

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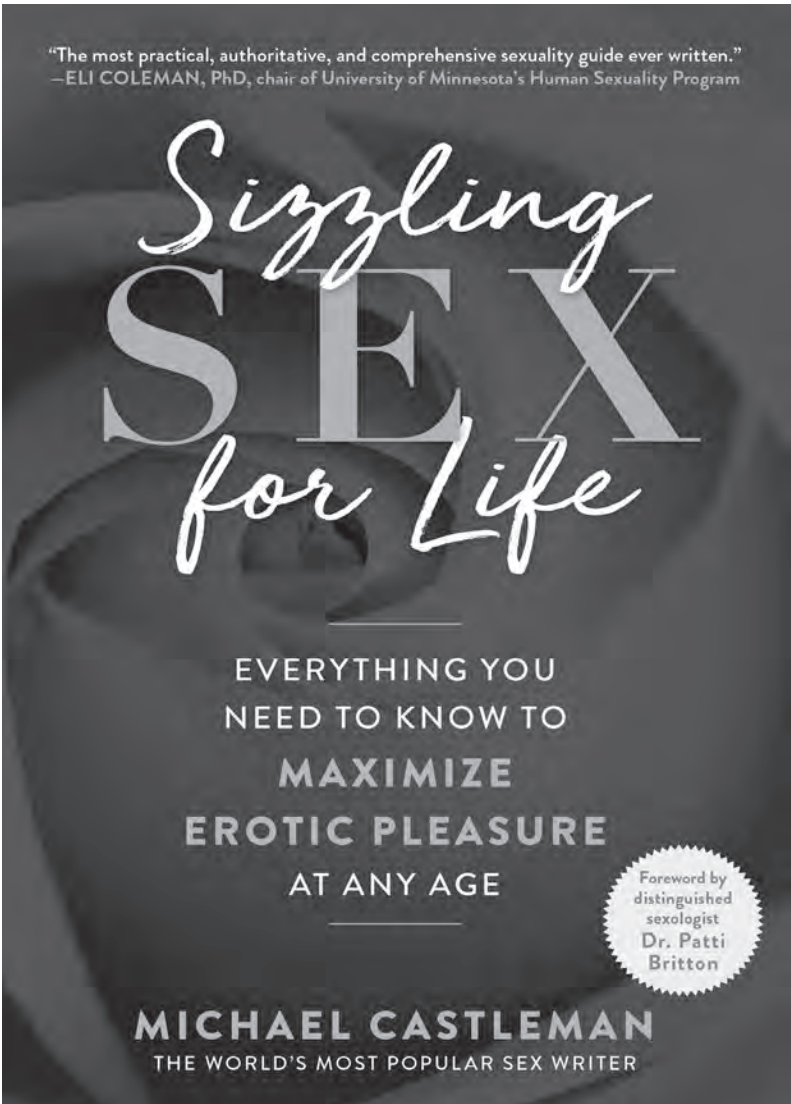
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January 2101 at Church St. near 22nd St. Photo by Jack Tipple



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Finding Peace in The Waves

By Stella Mullin

OTHER VOICES
fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction • the noe valley voice

Back in February, waking up at 6:30 a.m. was a given. That was when I needed to be awake if I wanted to have enough time in the morning to get ready for school. And because I'm a teenager, I absolutely hated it. No one, at least no one I know, voluntarily drags themselves out of bed while half asleep and is happy about it. But now, in these far from "normal" times, waking up that early is a blessing for me.

At the start of the quarantine, I spent

my days sleeping in, sitting around the house in sweatpants, and just doing nothing and not being productive in the slightest. After a few weeks, I was bored out of my mind.

I've known how to surf since I was around 8 or 9, but I never actually did it on a daily basis—a few days in the summer at the most. So this past year, I made it my goal to surf as much as possible, and I quickly realized that goal would be extremely easy to fulfill.

I faced the rough and freezing waters of northern California and turned the windy and cold beaches that I used to hate years ago into beaches I can't wait to surf. Some of my friends became interested, and the majority of my sophomore year was spent in the water, laughing and catching waves with my friends, right up until mid-March.

During the pandemic months, surfing has brought peace to my life, and also some structure to my daily routine. I am now waking up as if I was going to

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

school. Even just surfing for an hour makes me feel like I've accomplished something in my day.

Sure, surfing is way more fun with friends, but it brings a whole different meaning to the word peace when you're out there alone. Surfing is a very individual sport, and you're usually sitting 5 to 10 feet away from the next guy in the lineup, so really it's just you and your thoughts. Going early in the morning is my preference, where not many people are out, compared to the insanely crowded beach and millions of surfers paddling out around noon.


In the morning, the water is calm, and it's quiet. Not the type of quiet where you can hear a pin drop, but quiet in that the only noises surrounding you are the seagulls passing by, the waves crashing on the beach, and the swishing of the water from your legs moving around. And this quiet lets me just think. Sometimes just sitting out in the water, thinking, is the best way to clear your mind of all the noise in the world. Especially right now. ■


Since last spring, Stella Mullin, 16, has been attending high school from her home in Noe Valley. Besides sharing her reflections on surfing, she has written opinion pieces for her school newspaper on the importance of wearing masks and the awkwardness of Zoom breakout rooms.



Photo by Jack Tipple

You can learn a lot from a chicken.





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TEEN TALK

Outdoor Adventures and Mood Boosters

By Astrid Utting

A new year, bright future, fresh start? Well, not exactly. Much to my disappointment, Covid-19 did not magically vanish at midnight on Dec. 31. And it's going to be well into 2021 before we can gather with friends.

But we can follow our New Year's resolutions, right? And one of mine is to do more exploring of Noe Valley and other beautiful neighborhoods in the city. Walking around in the fresh air—whether alone or with someone else (no closer than 6 feet, of course)—is a fun way to de-stress. Turns out, I'm not the only one who thinks so.

I asked friends and acquaintances, and many Noe Valley teens are using the outdoors as a way to relax during the pandemic. Here are some of our ideas on how to enjoy the neighborhood as a mood booster, and get in some exercise at the same time. Before you head out the door, remember to grab a mask!

A great way to take a break from your screen—and work up a sweat—is to hike

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- Martha & Bros. Coffee** 1551 Church St.
- Noe Valley Pet Company** 1451 Church St.
- Church Produce** 1798 Church St.
- Destination Bakery** 598 Chenery St.
- Cheese Boutique** 660 Chenery St.
- Glen Canyon Park** Elk and Chenery
- Harry Street Steps** Starts near Noe and Laidley
- Lehr's German Specialties** 1581 Church St.
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- Happy Donuts** 3801 24th St.
- Holy Bagel** 3872 24th St.
- Noe Valley Town Square** 3861 24th St.
- Bi-Rite Creamery** 3692 18th St.



up Billy Goat Hill. At the top, you can have a mini, Instagram-worthy photo shoot in front of the gorgeous view of Noe Valley and Bernal Heights.

On the way there, consider stopping at Noe Cafe (which opened during the pandemic) for a pastry, or at Martha's for a hot drink to go.

Keep an eye out for the tiny free libraries scattered throughout Noe Valley. You can find a new book to cozy up with or even clear space in your house by dropping off old books.

Support a local business! Thirteen-year-old Sasha Utting (full disclosure, my sister) and Imogen Eastwood like to walk their dogs, Ronnie and Rip, to Noe Valley Pet Company for a new toy or treat. They also love the recently reopened and family-run Church Produce store, which carries great produce, but more importantly Tcho Chocolate!

High school sophomore Taevin Sullivan recommends bringing food from Destination Bakery and the Cheese Boutique to Glen Canyon Park (not technically Noe Valley, but very close) for a picnic. She says Destination Bakery's cranberry scone is "amazing" and she loves the tuna melt from the Cheese Boutique. Take your novel or a sketchbook.

High school senior Fionnuala Eastwood feels being limited to walking in Noe Valley has helped her appreciate its hidden secrets, like the Harry Street stairs. "I find the little parks and passageways so exciting," said Fionnuala. "It's like a treasure hunt!" She also enjoys doing homework outdoors, going on long walks, and even biking!

Slow streets like Sanchez are a perfect way to get in a calm, scenic stroll. There's



The yellow brick roads of Noe Valley may lead to trees, novels, or coffee laced with cream.

a little free pantry near Duncan, where you can donate food or household items. If you walk a block down to Church Street, you can pop by Lehr's German Specialties for chocolate, gummies, and unique packaged sweets. They have the best German chocolate sprinkles, which you can melt on a piece of toast (or eat out of the box!).

Twenty-fourth Street is also a great place for teens from all neighborhoods to hang out. Starbucks is always a favorite, but we like to support local businesses too, such as Noe Valley Bakery (cake by the slice alert!), Happy Donuts (donuts, need I say more?), or Holy Bagel for the perfect "everything" bagel.

Head up a few blocks to Noe Courts, a great space to socially distance, enjoy a



snack, or even have a study session. The Noe Valley Town Square is also a quiet place to eat your food or watch the world go by.

While walking up and down the hills, look for purple or white chalk writing on the pavement near certain trees. Thanks to San Francisco tree experts Mike Sullivan, Jason Dewees, and Richard Turner, I've learned the names of some special trees growing on our sidewalks. You can find North and South Noe Valley tree tours on their website, sftrees.com.

With travel out of the picture this year, take a walking trip to another neighborhood and play tourist for a few hours. Try a visit to Glen Park or an exciting (and convenient) exploration of the Dolores Heights/Mission area. After you've picked your favorite Victorians or murals, make a beeline to Bi-Rite for ice cream.

It's been a tough year, so we have to get creative and find even more ways to enjoy beautiful Noe Valley. Fellow walkers, let's start 2021 off right and remember to stay safe! ■



Walkers who reached the crest of Sanchez Hill on late afternoons in December were rewarded with clouds streaked pink. Photos by Astrid Utting

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 hopes to report on what local teens are thinking and talking about. If you have ideas for her, write editor@noevalleyvoice.com.

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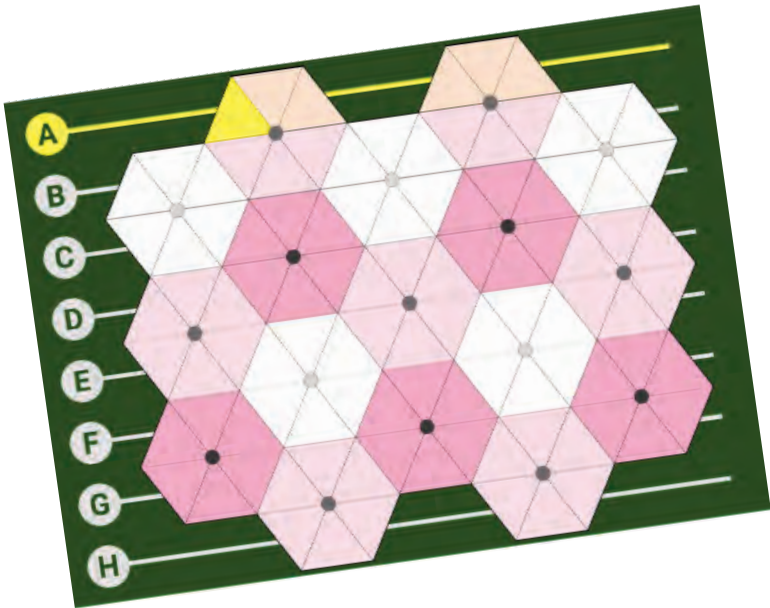
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Valerie Miner Writes About Reunion, Repair And Forgiveness

By Olivia Boler

Noe Street resident Valerie Miner is celebrating the publication of her 15th book, *Bread and Salt*, a collection of short stories. Whitepoint Press published the book in September, and it’s available through independent bookstores, including Folio Books on 24th Street.

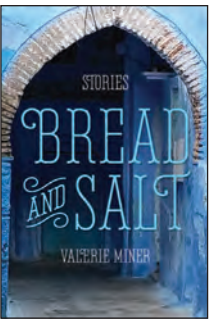
Bread and Salt is Miner’s fourth book of short stories, and she’s been published in esteemed literary journals, including *Ploughshares*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Gettysburg Review*, and *Salmagundi*. She’s also won awards and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Heinz Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation. Her works have been finalists for the Lambda Literary Award and the PEN USA Creative Nonfiction Award.

“The working title of [this] book was ‘Salvage,’” Miner says in explaining the collection’s theme. “I used the metaphor of ‘salvage’ to consider the reclamation of the natural environment, human relationships, material objects. The stories are about forgiveness, reunion, rescue, repair, return, and restoration, as characters explore how family and friendship are enriched by differences in nationality, race, class, and gender.”

A review on LibraryThing.com, a community website for readers, describes the book as a “masterfully written collection of stories. The locations, from California to Tunisia, make

A Taste of Bread and Salt

Following is an excerpt from one of the stories in *Bread and Salt*, “Il Piccolo Tesoro” (Whitepoint Press, September 2020). Author Valerie Miner says, “I’ve always been interested in how people from vastly different backgrounds get along in close proximity, in this case in a small Italian villa or pension. [The story] is about hospitality, and I thought it was an appropriate way to open the book.” The story was first published in *Ploughshares*, Winter, 2017–18. To meet Miner on Zoom, attend the Dec. 7 Odd Mondays event on Monday, Dec. 7, from 7 to 8 p.m.



Il Piccolo Tesoro

I’m stepping into an espresso bar, fragrant with strong coffee and sweet cornetti, when my attention is drawn uphill by a weathered pink and green sign offering a vacancy at Il Piccolo Tesoro. The small treasure. I’m not greedy. The adjective appeals as much as the noun promises.

I chose this Ligurian village in the sensible way, by spreading a map of Italy across my kitchen table in Toronto, closing my eyes and sticking a pushpin into destiny.

Stanza in affitto: one of the phrases I know by heart.

At the door of the rambling house, I knock assertively.

“Good morning.” A big man, all bearded and Scots, ushers me into the elegant marble vestibule. I peek around his shoulder at the parlor, posh with Turkish rugs, brocade armchairs and hand-painted shades atop filigreed floor lamps. The large picture window offers a grand view of the Mediterranean.

I extend my hand, “Adrienne Moreau. I’ve come about the room.”

“Malcolm Gordon.” His grip is firm. “One moment, please.” He gestures to the parlor. “Make yourself at home.”

I cross the parquet floor, walking through Malcolm’s argument with a Bulgarian tenor, who is leaving behind a trail of unpaid bills. The foyer is blocked by huge boxes and leather suitcases. For a penniless opera star—I don’t even pretend not to eavesdrop—the Bulgarian is well-kitted out. I strain to catch the rest of the spirited exchange, but their accents rival each other in density.

Seated in a purple velvet wing chair by the window, I peer through palm fronds at sun glinting on the waves. The garden is so lush that I can almost smell the roses, mimosa, wisteria and the resin from the stately old pines. I’d gone through months of doubting my decision—leaving Canada, my job, my friends, abandoning everything—to pursue a dream. To live life for as long as I have. Right now I’m absolutely sure that I’d move into Il Piccolo Tesoro even if I need to wash dishes to pay rent.

* * *

Each day during my first months at Il Piccolo Tesoro, the sunny Mediterranean weather reminds me that I am far from Toronto. Blissfully far. I’ve never been happier than in my pretty room at the villa with the sea view. A few miles over the French border, this would be a pension. Back home it would be a boarding house.

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you want to travel to far-away places, but it’s the relationships, of all kinds, that fuel these tales. Often it’s the chance meetings of strangers that make for the most interesting encounters.”

Miner says she finds inspiration for her stories via other writers and readers “on the streets where we all live, as they sift through the collective treasure of our lives.”

As she drafts her stories, she shares them with about 20 trusted readers. “I’m interested less in answers but more in questions that provoke readers and me to consider how we engage with the world. Thus, the endings [of stories] are often open, and I leave it to readers to carry the characters forward.”

Besides being a writer, Miner is an English and gender studies professor and an artist in residence at Stanford University. The pandemic has forced her, like many others, to get used to distance teaching, but Stanford is providing training and support.

“I was terrified of virtual teaching at first,” she says. “Now I can’t believe I’m used to having students in the same class who are Zooming in from Singapore, Honolulu, various parts of California, Chicago, and D.C. I’m holding a tutorial for two students—one in Brooklyn and one in Santa Rosa. I’m eager to return in person to the classroom, but I applaud the flexibility and ingenuity of my students in this new classroom format.”

Miner will be reading and discussing *Bread and Salt* on Tuesday, Feb. 9, at the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University. The free Zoom event will run from 4:15 to 5:45 p.m.

For more information and other scheduled events, visit Valerie Miner’s website at www.valerieminer.com. ■



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Action SF, the National Movement in Your Neighborhood

www.facebook.com/actionsfsolidarity,
http://www.action-sf.com/
Email: actionSFsolidarity@gmail.com
Meeting: Jan. 10, 1-2:30 p.m. All are welcome. To receive virtual meeting link, email ActionSFTeam@gmail.com

Al-Anon Noe Valley

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

Castro Community on Patrol

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

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

MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Friends of Dolores Park Playground

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

Friends of Glen Canyon Park

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

Friends of Noe Courts Playground

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

Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)

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

Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

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

Friends of Upper Noe Dog Owners Group (FUND OG)

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 Schweiguth, MI7-6290
Email: dave@schweiguth.org
Website: meetup.com/Juri-Commoners
Meetings: Most last Saturdays, 9-noon.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

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

Merchants of Upper Market & Castro

Contact: 835-8720
Email: info@castromerchants.com
Address: 584 Castro St. #333, SF, CA 94114
Meetings: Call for details.

Noe Neighborhood Council

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

Noe Valley Association-24th Street Community Benefit District

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

Noe Valley Farmers Market

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

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association (NVMPA)

Contact: Rachel Swann, 225-7743
Meetings: Last Thursdays, Old Republic, 4045A 24th St., 9 a.m. Call to confirm.
Website: www.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 or Jessica
Email: resilientnoevalley@gmail.com
Newsletter signup: http://eepurl.com/gYuCD5
Website: www.resilientnoevalley.com

San Francisco NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)

Contact: Noe Valley NERT Neighborhood Team co-coordinators Maxine Fasulis, mfasulis@yahoo.com; Carole Roberts, carole_roberts@faludi.com
Website: https://SF-fire.org
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.

Stand Up San Francisco

Contacts: Laura Shapiro, Phyllis Ball, Paul Silverman
Email: info@standupsf.net
Website: standupsf.net
Meetings: At offices of members of Congress, weekly.

Upper Noe Neighbors

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

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE
editor@noevalleyvoice.com

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

Your Support is Vital

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Help the *Voice* Continue to Serve our Community



“... the *Voice* is the best neighborhood newspaper in the city, if not the state, if not the country.”

Kristin Anundsen, Noe Valley Resident

For over 40 years, the *Noe Valley Voice* has told the stories of many of the people, merchants, and animals who make this neighborhood one of the most sought after places in San Francisco to live, work, and shop. During that time, the *Voice* has become known as the best community resource of its kind.

Local businesses, institutions, and individuals who have purchased advertising space help us pay production costs and most of our contributing writers, artists, and photographers. We offer our heartfelt thanks to them.

But the past decade has seen a steady decline in our revenue, mostly due to competition from internet advertising options. And now the effects of Covid19 have added to our burden. It's becoming more difficult to produce the paper.

If you appreciate what we do and are able to help financially, please send a contribution check or money order (payable to the Noe Valley Voice) to:

Friends of the Noe Valley Voice, PO Box 460249, San Francisco, CA 94146

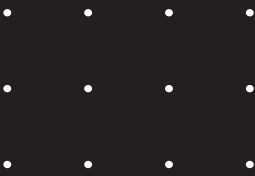
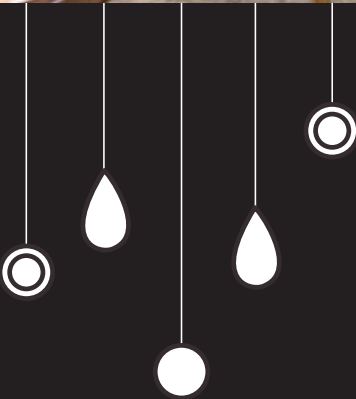
Questions? Email editor@noevalleyvoice.com

Thank you! Jack Tipple and Sally Smith, Editors and Co-Publishers

We're Forever Grateful

A Warm Thank You & Happy New Year to our Community and Clients

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