



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas

Merchants on 24th Street Add Holiday Sparkle to Noel Valley

By John Ferrannini

Denizens of Noe Valley have a grab bag of holiday events to choose from this month, with many of them being sponsored by the local merchants association as part of the second annual Noel Valley.

On Wednesday, Dec. 10, the decorations in the neighborhood’s shops and parklets will be judged by “a panel of local and art experts,” according to Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association spokesperson Dave Karraker of MX3 Fitness.

There is no need to “enter” the competition. Rather, all windows that have decorations will be considered in the judging.

“This year’s categories are most festive, most fun, and most San Francisco,” Karraker says.

Last year’s winners were the shops Perfectly Seasoned, Wink, and When Modern Was.

On Tuesday, Dec. 23, the Noe Valley Night Market will take place from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Noe Valley Town Square at 3861 24th St. It too will be holiday themed, Karraker said.

Not only will there be a tall Christmas tree, but visitors will find rows of food and gift vendors spilling



December, It’s Cold! Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The day of the tree lighting I was trapped in the house. I donned a “bad” sweater and turned up the heat. Next time the sun shone, went back to the street. Saw kids in parkas, moms dressed in tights. Castro and 24th twinkling in lights. “Is that hot chocolate?” I got to the Square. Puppies in earmuffs, songs in the air. Ribbons on packages...suddenly I knew—the Night Before Night Before Christmas was due! (See you at the Night Market Dec. 23.) —S. Photo by Jack Tipple

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



See-Through Shacks: The San Francisco Planning Department halted construction at 369 Valley St. last month, based on images like this one, taken in November.

Photo courtesy SF Department of Building Inspection

Can the Quake Cottage on Valley Street Be Saved?

Developer Faces Fines for Damaging Historic Structure

By Mathew S. Bajko

An Oakland-based housing developer is facing steep fines and public outcry for demolishing a historic earthquake shack structure in Noe Valley. It is the latest turn of events in the long-running dispute over redevelopment of the property at 369 Valley St.

Over a decade ago, then-owner John Schrader filed plans with the city to tear down the existing structure in order to build a new single-family home.

The idea prompted pushback from neighbors, who fought to preserve the small cottage, located at the back of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



Like a Rolling Stone (but completely known), music scribe Ben Fong-Torres relaxes at the Royal Cuckoo Organ Lounge on Mission Street. The bar is a hidden gem that features free live jazz, blues, and pop music seven nights a week.

Photo by Sally Smith

Ben Fong-Torres Hasn’t Left the Building

Iconic Journalist Still in Tune With San Francisco

By Jeff Kaliss

“Going out now is entirely different from what it was back in the ’70s,” says Ben Fong-Torres. “Back then, it was kind of my profession.”

Nowadays, the award-winning journalist and author prefers to spend more of his time at the home he shares with wife Dianne Sweet atop the Castro Street hill. But in November he was happy to come down to chat with the *Noe Valley Voice* over scotches at the Valley Tavern on 24th Street.

The couple moved to the neighborhood in 1985, nine years after their marriage and four years after Fong-Torres left the staff of *Rolling Stone*, the preeminent rock, cultural, and political magazine of his and succeeding generations of young, hip Americans.

Next month, Fong-Torres will celebrate his 81st birthday. Last month,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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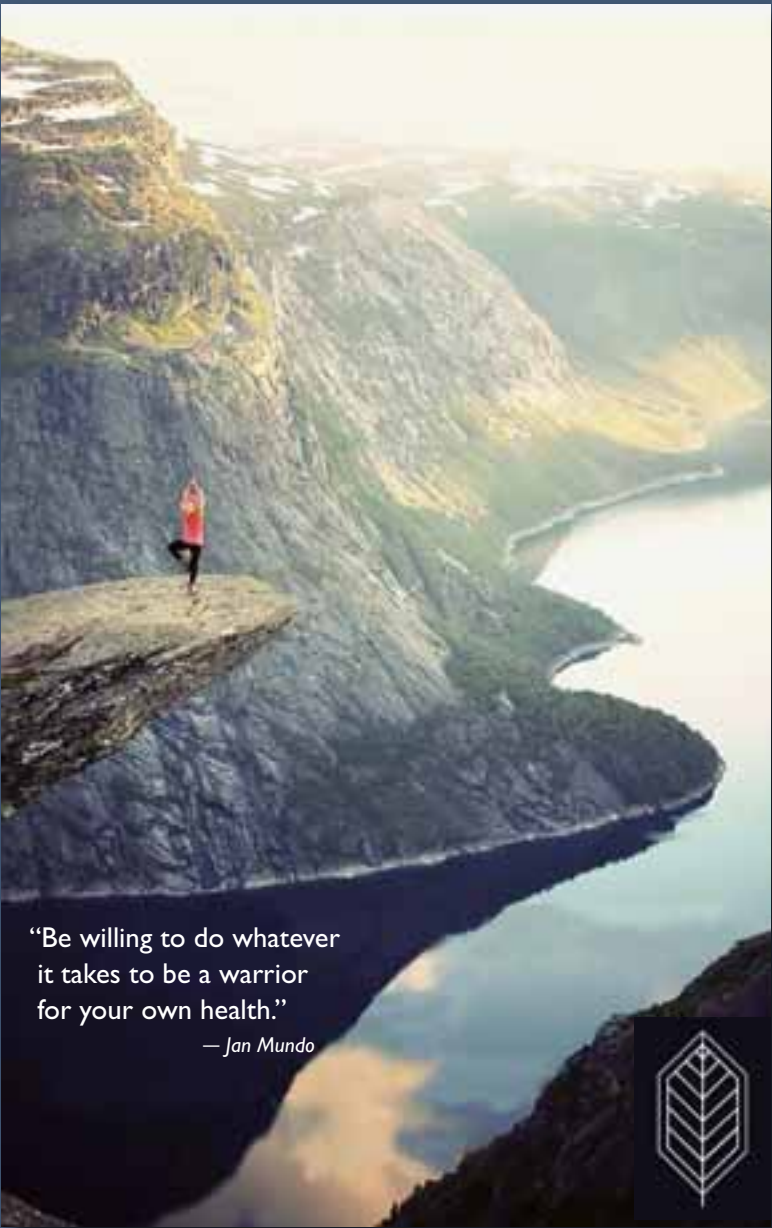
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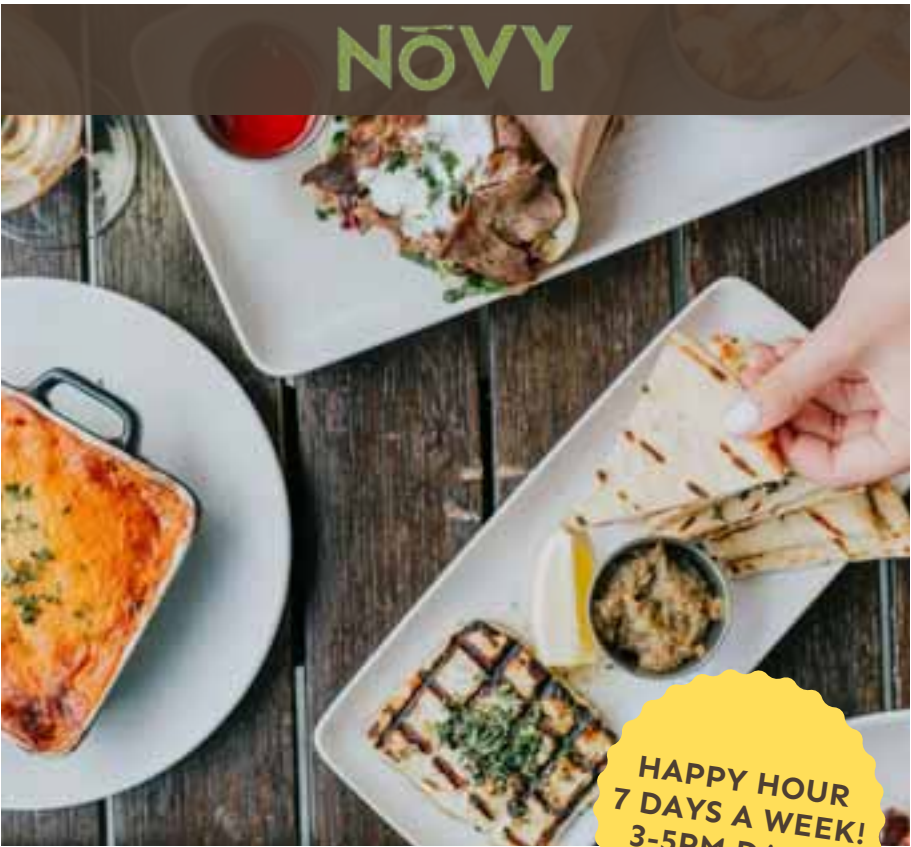


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The Quake Cottage Industry
Editor:

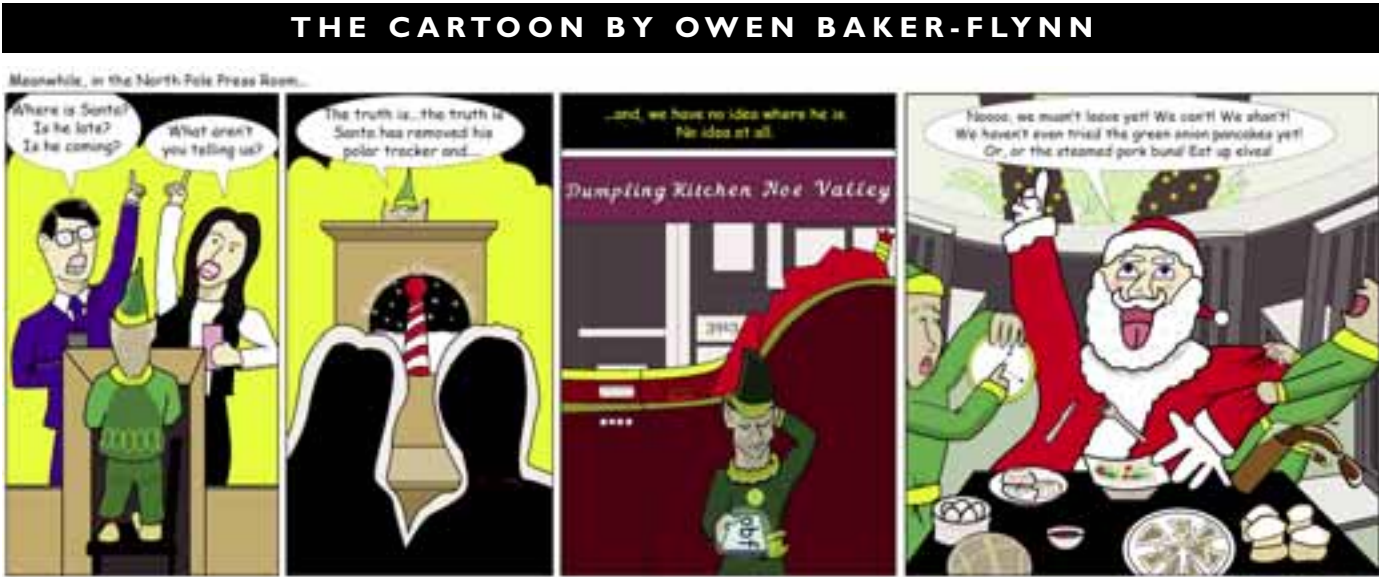
Regarding the fate of the earthquake cottage at 369 Valley St. (see Voice story, starting page 1 this issue):

Everybody, of course, is upset with the way Benjamin Steiner of Citadel Property Group has gone about implementing the plan conceived by the property’s former owner, John Schrader of Nova Designs + Builds.

But the real problem lies in the plan itself—a cockamamie plan created by a real estate speculator, vetted by incompetent San Francisco Planning Department staff, and given the unani-



This rendering of the potential design of a new home at 369 Valley St. was used to advertize its sale in October.



mous approval of the Planning Commission. Preservation folks and neighborhood folks predicted this disaster, but the powers-that-be would not listen.

Earthquake cottages can be moved. In fact, that is how they got to their current homes. But a hundred-plus-year-old structure needs tender loving care if it is to be moved, and it needs to be done by competent professional people who actually care about its historic significance. That is not the way real estate developers approach such projects. They are only in it for the money.

Further, the idea that trying to plop the Valley Street Earthquake Cottage on top of a whole new living level and put a goofy roof deck right behind it, making its origin as an earthquake cottage nearly unrecognizable, is nobody’s idea of preservation—except for real estate speculators, clueless Planning Department staff, and a deaf Planning Commission.

Schrader never offered a clear rendition of what the finished project would

look like, until he decided to sell the property. Take a look at his rendering on Zillow.com (see left) and tell me if you think people will see an earthquake cottage.

I hope that the Valley Street Earthquake Cottage can be reassembled and restored, although that will take tender loving care and professional competence, which seems to be lacking at present.

In addition to a stiff fine, Steiner’s punishment should include dumping the current plan. Instead, leave a reassembled and restored Valley Street Earthquake Cottage where it is, and restrict any expansion to the rear of the lot, keeping it lower than the cottage.

Marc Norton
29th Street

Poetic Justice

Editor:

You published a poem of mine on the front page of your August 2025 literary issue, entitled “Friendship.”

As I’ve spent ages pursuing a higher

education in English, I am indescribably gratified that you have published my poem.

You have proven that it really was worthwhile after all, and I thank you.
Jack Mellender

Editor’s Note: Here are the first few lines of Jack Mellender’s poem, which you can find in its entirety at www.noevalleyvoice.com. (See Back Issues: August 2025.) The colorful words might inspire you (or him) to send a submission to the upcoming January literary issue of the Voice. Email it by Dec. 15 to editor@noevalleyvoice.com.

From “Friendship”

A half a century ago a San Francisco summer guy with wind-blown locks made quite a show: beneath his grin whimsic’ly wry love beads o’er Nehru jacket green, bell-bottoms tie-died particolor and sandals of a crimson sheen festooned each with a silver dollar. While panhandling at Cole and Haight he hailed a dour ex-Navy clerk, a poet, lately Yeoman’s mate, whom savings bonds had freed from work, who laid on him a little change. Their talk revealed the street guy painted, so both were art types, should arrange to share the bard’s pad—get acquainted...
—Jack Mellender

CRIME SNAPSHOT DATA

Noe Valley Incident Reports September 2024 – October 2025

Crime Category	Sep24	Oct24	Nov24	Dec24	Yr2024	Jan25	Feb25	Mar25	Apr25	May25	Jun25	Jul25	Aug25	Sep25	Oct25
Larceny/Theft	46	44	55	44	460	42	26	45	29	44	27	28	31	36	35
Burglary	16	17	19	17	243	17	16	13	11	16	6	14	18	16	11
Malicious Mischief	8	7	4	3	79	9	4	5	3	2	5	7	6	9	4
Motor Veh. Theft	10	8	8	3	109	6	5	6	3	4	7	6	4	9	5
Assault	2	8	5	6	32	2	2	2	0	5	2	2	0	4	6
Robbery	2	0	0	3	16	0	0	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	0
Other Misc	6	17	14	7	117	13	9	8	5	10	2	2	4	4	7
Fraud	1	5	3	4	40	0	3	2	3	9	7	4	1	2	11
Family D.Violence	1	2	5	1	22	0	0	4	4	3	4	1	1	1	1
Vandalism	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	92	108	113	88	1,122	89	65	88	61	95	60	65	65	82	80

Source: Dataset titled “Map of Police Department Incident Reports: 2018 to Present” at <https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783/>. This data includes police incident reports filed by officers and by individuals through self-service online reporting for non-emergency cases. **Disclaimer:** The San Francisco Police Department does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or correct sequencing of the information, as the data is subject to change as modifications or updates are completed. The *Noe Valley Voice* collected the **October 2025** data on **Nov. 9, 2025**. “Noe Valley” on the SFPD’s digital map is bordered by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.
Noe Valley Voice December 2025

CRIME
SNAPSHOT

Fraud Attempts on the Rise

The San Francisco Police Department generally investigates only a handful of scams each month in Noe Valley. Not so in October.

There were 11 reports of fraud in the neighborhood, according to the SFPD’s digital map of incident reports. That’s the most for any month this year.

The data showed that five of the incidents involved suspects using false impersonation to steal money or proper-

ty. The rest were described as ATM (3) or credit card fraud (2), or as someone gaining access to a victim’s computer.

Fraud was one of 10 types of crime that the *Voice* tracks monthly.

As usual, the largest number occurred in the “larceny-theft” category, which includes most kinds of property theft. Of 35 larceny-theft incidents, police classified 13 as shoplifting incidents, nine as smash-and-grabs from vehicles, and one as a theft of a car’s license plate. (Twelve others were listed merely as “other.”)

There were 11 reported burglaries, including five at houses or apartments, two at businesses, and four at “other” or unspecified properties.

The data also showed that six assaults were reported on the streets of

Noe Valley, and one domestic violence incident.

In total, police recorded 80 criminal incidents in October, compared to 108 incidents the same month a year ago.

The *Voice* retrieved the October data from the city’s open data portal on Nov. 9, 2025. To locate the crime dataset, go to Data.sfgov.org and click on the Public Safety link.

Note that the SFPD defines Noe Valley as the area roughly bounded by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.

If you have an emergency in San Francisco, call **9-1-1**. For recurring problems, use **3-1-1** or the SFPD non-emergency number: 415-553-0123.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

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www.noevalleyvoice.com

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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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FEB 11

SALLY MANN

PHOTOGRAPHER | ART WORK: ON THE CREATIVE LIFE

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CHEF | RESTAURATEUR | AUTHOR

MAR 4

MICHAEL POLLAN

A WORLD APPEARS: A JOURNEY INTO CONSCIOUSNESS

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APR 23

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Rhyme Without Reason

ACROSS

1. Timberlake with 10 Grammys

7. "Big Blue" computer company

10. Marijuana

13. Pack in a crate

14. "... or ____ thought"

15. Scourge

16. Make like an instructor?

18. Actor Gosling

19. The Presidio's ____ Disney Family Museum

20. Every Catholic ceremony?

22. Biter of Cleopatra

23. Popular ice cream flavor, for short

25. Polar region with a "circle"

27. "Who, me?" response

29. "False" word form

30. Except if

34. Partner of "breakfast"

35. Take the color out of the outfield?

39. "Just ____ suspected!"

41. PG&E problem

42. Tomorrow, in Tijuana

46. Necessary

50. Euphrates' counterpart

51. Cashews and almonds

53. Much ____ About Nothing

54. Allow methane to escape?

56. Female friend for François

57. Civil rights heroine ____ Parks

58. Church Street studio with hot yoga and Pilates. ... and a

double rhyme with this puzzle's ? entries

61. One side of an issue

62. Letters after business names

63. Beaver State

64. Yahoo! competitor

65. Siesta

66. Having happened lately

DOWN

1. Airplane-boarding bridge

2. Disquiet

3. Resells at a jacked-up price

4. Diplomat's forte

5. It's like "-like"

6. Japanese IT giant

7. Sir ____ Newton

8. Type of pear

9. Minor hiccup

10. Employees' check

attachments

11. Where the cereal box's nutrition info is found

12. Roman X

15. "____ yourself!": "Get ready for a shock!"

17. First American pope

21. Bride's new title

23. Choice at Angela's ice-cream parlor

24. Luau entertainment

26. Fish of the North Atlantic

28. Brynner of Westworld

31. Earth-friendly prefix

32. Mu ____ pork at Alice's

33. Certain NCO

35. Goes overboard eating, as leftovers

36. Deliver a tirade

37. "It's been ____ since I've seen you!"

38. Catch sight of

39. Quantity: Abbr.

40. Seamen

43. L x W calculations

44. Actor Cage, casually

45. Furnace waste container

47. Harm

48. Incandescent lamp inventor

49. "Almost ____ count"

51. Civil rights org.

52. Rival of UCLA

55. Hollywood's Rowlands

56. Actor Baldwin

57. Tachometer letters

59. Not vertical: Abbr.

60. Test for college Srs.

12/2025 Noe Valley Voice

Solution on Page 21

Find more Crosswords at
www.noevalleyvoice.com

Walking in a Noe Wonderland

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

out onto 24th Street.

“This is going to be the spot [to go] if you haven’t yet found what you’re going to buy for loved ones this year,” said Karraker. “It’s important to remember that 20 to 30 percent of a small business’s revenue could be generated in the November-December timeframe, so holiday shopping is unbelievably important for all our Noe Valley businesses. The goal of Noel Valley is getting people off Amazon and back into the streets to support these local businesses.”

Merchants President Kristen McCaffery agrees, saying, “We hope folks from around the Bay come to Noe Valley to experience the holidays in this very special San Francisco neighborhood.” It was even her hope that Santa would attend.

All month long, music will fill the parklets on 24th Street 2 to 5 p.m. on weekends. On Dec. 13, hear jazz from the Luke Schwartz Duo (Valley Tavern) and swing from Au Contraires (Just for Fun). Probabilities Quebequois and Alie & Me will play at Just for Fun and Vive la Tarte, respectively, on Dec. 14.

On Dec. 20, look for Olivia and Cleo (Valley Tavern) and Swing Shift (Just for Fun). The next day, it’s Barb Murphy (Vive la Tarte), and Jazz Beaus Latin faves (Just for Fun).



Puppy was one of 120 dogs who posed with Santa at a holiday photo shoot at Noe Valley Pet Company last month. We’re told Santa and his elves will visit Noe Valley again—at Lehr’s German Specialties on Dec. 13 and 20 and the Noe Valley Night Market on Dec. 23. Photo courtesy Amanda Brauning of Brauning Martinez Productions



Jane Yao of San Francisco Bay Area Street Photography captured this magical moment during the tree lighting at the Town Square on Dec. 1.

The Noe Valley Town Square will play host to Tuba Christmas from 2 to 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 14.

Stick around an hour and there will be a Chanukah Wonderland, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., featuring the famous firetruck gelt drop, live music, chocolate treats, a bouncy house, and arts and crafts. The nine-foot menorah lighting is scheduled for 5 p.m.

Meanwhile, Just for Fun has put out its big red barrel for toy donations next to the Christmas tree in the window at 3938 24th St. Store owner Michelle O’Connor says the toys will be donated on Dec. 15 to the San Francisco Fire Department for distribution to its toy program for families in need. O’Connor notes Just for Fun is providing a 20 percent discount on items purchased in the store for the toy barrel.

The fashion boutique Two Birds is hosting its own toy drive on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12 and 13, at 1309 Castro St. (It will coincide with an in-store designer promotion of Heaven Mayhem jewelry.)

Kids will have two opportunities to take photos with Santa at Lehr’s German Specialties, 1581 Church St., on Saturdays, Dec. 13 and 20, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

You will need to RSVP to <https://pp.events/bKQr9gxp> by Dec. 12 to attend the Women’s Christmas Cookie Exchange sponsored by St.

Philip Catholic Church and School at 725 Diamond St. The special event happens Tuesday, Dec. 16, from 6 to 8 p.m., at the Parish Hall.

Bethany United Methodist Church, at Sanchez and Clipper streets, is holding a Blue Christmas Service on Sunday, Dec. 21, 5 p.m., as well as a Family Christmas Eve Service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m.

On Sunday, Dec. 28, from 1 to 3 p.m., the Au Contraires quartet will be centerstage at the Town Square, playing “a little bit of Django, a few jiggers of

Fats Waller, and a dash of Lady Day.”

After the holidays are over, Noe Music suggests you relax with the calming sounds of singer/composer Sarah Elizabeth Charles and the Lullaby Project at the music series’ first Well-Being Concert on Thursday, Jan. 22, at 7:30 p.m.

News flash from the Noe Merchants’ representatives at the North Pole: Santa has agreed to visit the Noe Night Market on Dec. 23 and sit for photos from 4:30 to 7 p.m. And the first 75 children will receive stuffed toys! ■

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Sunday, December 21, 10:30 am
Guest Violinist Calvin Murasaki & Students for Singing & Strings

Christmas Eve Service

Wednesday, December 24, 5 pm
Service of Lessons and Carols,
With Noe Valley Church Choir & Local Guest Musicians

New Year's Eve Service

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

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Christmas Services:
Blue Christmas, December 21 at 2:00 pm
For those who struggle at Christmastime
Christmas Eve, December 24
Storytelling & Carols at 5:00 pm
Child care available
Christmas Day, December 25 at 9:00 am

Weekly Services:
Sundays at 8:00 am and 10:00 am
Child care available at 10:00
Wednesday Evening Prayer at 6:30 pm *
Morning Prayer
Monday, Wednesday, Friday * at 7:30 am
Contemplative Prayer
Tuesday & Thursday at 9:00 am *

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

Email office@staidansf.org for connection info.

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Labyrinth Walk
Friday, December 5 7:00pm

Blue Christmas Service
Sunday, December 21 5:00pm

Family Christmas Eve Service
Wednesday, December 24 4:00pm

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Developer Ordered To Rebuild Quake Structure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

property, which abuts the rear yard of a residence on 29th Street.

The L-shaped structure was composed of two shacks that had first been built to house survivors of the 1906 earthquake. The local pair were likely hauled to Valley Street from a refugee camp in Precita Park or Mission Park (now Mission Dolores Park). Historic preservationists have been calling for the shack structure, one of only about 50 in the city, to remain where it stands for decades.

In 2015, the San Francisco Planning Department concluded that the structure



In late November, the cottage on risers, awaiting its fate. Photo by Sally Smith

was of historical value and eligible for listing on a statewide register of historic properties in California. But Schrader did not give up. He changed course, submitting various proposals for incorporating the shack structure into a larger residential home.

Ultimately, Schrader secured approval to move the shack structure closer to Valley Street, raise it off the ground, and repurpose it as part of the front façade of a new home to be built on the sloped site. The plans called for the home to have four bedrooms and three bathrooms.

The neighbors objected and appealed to the San Francisco Planning Commission. But the oversight body dismissed the appeal in February of last year, allowing construction of the hybrid home to move forward.

Per the approved plans for incorporating the shack structure into the new building, “in-kind replacement of existing wood windows and cedar shingles were permitted; however, original vertical redwood siding and framing were to remain.”

At the time, 29th Street resident Marc Norton had warned that moving the shack structure would make it “unrecognizable as an earthquake cottage.”

Fabien Lannoye, a principal designer with Schrader’s firm Nova Designs + Builds, had retorted that such concerns were “simply irrational.” He argued the relocation would make the quake cottage a “more visible historical resource” for people to enjoy.

Redwood Siding Removed

Earlier this year, Schrader sold the property to Oakland-based developer Benjamin Steiner with the Citadel Property Group. Then, in November, the planning and building inspection departments began receiving com-

plaints that workers were dismantling the shack structure rather than preserving it for relocation.

The complaints resulted in a stop-work order being issued Nov. 14 by the Department of Building Inspection and a violation notice being posted for exceeding the scope of the project’s building permit. Planning and DBI staff then conducted a site visit Nov. 18, which resulted in a suspension of the permit on Nov. 19.

As noted by Acting Zoning Administrator Kelly Wong in her suspension request, city staff “observed that removal of original vertical redwood siding of the subject building had occurred, including the exterior front, rear, and side walls of the building.... Planning staff confirmed that the work undertaken exceeded the scope of the approved permit and constitutes a violation of the Planning Code.”

Photos taken last month of the historic structure by both the neighbors and city staff show it remains at the back end of the property with its roof largely intact. But its walls have been stripped down to the studs on all sides, with the windows, shutters, and front door gone. Some of the removed materials are seen lying haphazardly on the ground in piles.

“Many of us believed this outcome was not only possible but probable. Many, many developers say what they need to get their project approved and then do what they want, rolling the dice that they might get fined, factoring that cost into their lucrative business model,” San Francisco Heritage President and CEO Woody LaBounty told the *Voice*. “I am not accusing the 369 Valley Street owner of that. I am just asserting it is common and unsurprising.”



For many years, the two-shack cottage at 369 Valley St. was a picturesque reminder of citizens’ ingenuity after the 1906 earthquake. Photo courtesy DBI, San Francisco Planning

Norton agreed. “Preservation folks and neighborhood folks predicted this disaster, but the powers-that-be would not listen,” he maintained in a Nov. 22 letter to the *Voice* (published under Letters 78¢ in this issue).

Fines May Be Steep

Now, city planning officials are looking at fining Steiner \$500,000 or more in penalties for overstepping the bounds of the permitted work. They have also ordered him to rebuild the quake structure, under supervision by city staff, and to reapply for a building permit.

“The permit is now suspended, so no construction work is allowed until a new permit is obtained,” DBI spokesperson Kelley Omran told the *Voice* in mid-November. “All removed materials must be protected and stored in a storage container, and they must be sorted,

numbered, labeled, and photographed to show where each piece came from.”

Neither Steiner nor another Citadel employee, Miguel Bautista, responded to interview requests from the *Voice*.

Steiner is now being required by the city to obtain a permit to stabilize and protect the earthquake structure. He also must seek a permit documenting the unpermitted demolition and the proposed corrections.

The stabilization permit, explained Omran, “must show how the owner will keep the building safe and protect the remaining historic features, including the exposed interiors of the historic cottages.”

The other permit, she added, “must show what was removed, what will be preserved and rebuilt, and how the original project will be revised to comply with Planning and Building Codes.”

90 Days to Restore

Steiner was given 30 days to refile for his permit and 90 days to complete the required restoration of the shack structure. Within 180 days, all violations at the site must be corrected. Otherwise, he could be forced to go before the planning commission again for additional public review of the project and possibly face legal action from the city.


Once the stabilization permit has been issued, Omran said, the DBI and the planning staff will conduct another site visit to ensure the work complies with the approved permit, drawings, and plans.

LaBounty said his organization had “no issue” with the enforcement actions now being taken by the city. Rather, he faulted the planning department, planning commission, and zoning administration for their earlier approvals of the redevelopment plans, which he claimed “really compromised” the historic shack structure.


“The importance of the relief cottages are not in the redwood or the patina of the paint but in their recognizable and visible composition as earthquake cottages. Their context as movable, modular housing for refugees is lost when that form is allowed to be subsumed by large additions,” said LaBounty.

Neighbors are doubtful they will soon see the shack structure reassembled, having observed pieces of wood siding strewn about the property and shoved into recycling bins.

As Norton wrote to the *Voice*, “I hope that the Valley Street earthquake cottage can be reassembled and restored, although that will take tender loving care and professional competence, which seem to be lacking at present.” ■



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Ben Fong-Torres Still Hitting the High Notes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the San Francisco Mayor’s Office named him an SF Live “guest curator” recommending arts and entertainment destinations to boost the city’s cultural comeback.

His live-music picks for November 2025 included singer-songwriters Rachel Garlin at the Potrero Stage and Jackie Greene at the Fillmore, cover band Petty Theft at The Chapel, and veteran saxophonist Jules Broussard at the Savoy Tivoli in North Beach.

In our interview, Fong-Torres points out that his love of popular music dates back to a childhood before the advent of rock, when he’d listen to the radio in the back of his parents’ Chinese restaurant in Hayward, where he and his siblings worked all the way through high school.

“But there was almost no point in even asking about going to a party or a show or a movie,” says Fong-Torres, “until I got to the point where I was deejaying a party or a prom, because some of my classmates liked the way I talked about music. Otherwise, I never went out, never dated...until I got into college at San Francisco State and got onto the school paper, *The Gater*. I got a stipend, and I could afford to share an apartment with a couple of buddies from high school.”

The Dawn of an Era

Fong-Torres and his roommates became avid readers of *Rolling Stone* soon after its founding in 1967 by *San Francisco Chronicle* jazz critic Ralph J. Gleason and budding journalist Jann Wenner, in a loft on Brannan Street.

After he pitched the publication on coverage of a concert near his Haight-Ashbury apartment, Fong-Torres became a regular contributor and ultimately its first music editor.

“We were all kind of quasi-hippies,” he says, “and we started going to the Fillmore, the Avalon, the Longshoremen’s Hall, and wherever things were happening. We also addressed the music we were getting on FM radio, with Tom Donahue at KMPX.”

The scene then was much more than just a series of concerts. “We went out, as so many of the kids did back then, really just to be out. [Promoter] Bill Graham once said that the Fillmore was really more of a church. People were there to congregate, to see each other, to enjoy community as well as whatever happened to be on stage. And of course a lot of it was, you were stoned, which added to the pleasure of being out there.

“I continued to enjoy doing the same stuff with my roommates and friends, but now there was this additional component of taking notes: *Okay, he started with this song, and then the audience did this, and this is what the light shows looked like.* You’re just more observant, more semi-professional.”

Star Encounters, Cover Stories

A trip to Southern California in May of 1969 signaled the geographic expansion of *Rolling Stone*’s readership and the aspect of Fong-Torres’ career for which he’d be best remembered.

“They said, ‘Do you want to go down to L.A. and hang out with Joni Mitchell?’ I had no idea who she was at that stage. She had just put out her first album. But that became my first cover story.”



As a top editor and writer at *Rolling Stone* in 1973, Ben Fong-Torres has his hands full, dialing up rock celebrities around the world. He also deejays on weekends at KSAN Radio, San Francisco’s hottest music station. Photo courtesy Ben Fong-Torres

Interviews followed with Sly Stone, Bob Dylan, Linda Ronstadt, Ike and Tina Turner, Marvin Gaye, and Paul McCartney. A talk with Ray Charles won Fong-Torres a Deems Taylor Award for Magazine Writing in 1974.

Shortly after his marriage to Sweet, whom he’d known as a fellow student at San Francisco State, Fong-Torres conducted an interview at their Japantown flat with the Jackson 5.

In San Francisco to Stay

Despite his own burgeoning celebrity with readers and throughout the music industry, Fong-Torres opted to remain in the place where he’d grown up when Wenner proclaimed San Francisco “a cultural backwater” and moved *Rolling Stone* to New York City in 1977.

Fong-Torres moved on with regular contributions to the *San Francisco Chronicle* and continued as a weekly deejay on KSAN-FM, beloved for his measured baritone voice and deep, wide reservoir of musical knowledge since his first show in 1970.

After authoring *The Rolling Stone Rock ‘n’ Roll Reader* in 1974, Fong-Torres went on to write a total of 12 books sourcing his experiences in rock journalism and radio, as well as sharing his own life story.

He was portrayed in the 2000 comedy-drama *Almost Famous* by Canadian actor Terry Chen. The film won a Best Screenplay Oscar for direc-

tor Cameron Crowe, who’d written for *Rolling Stone* as a teenager. Crowe himself appears in *Like a Rolling Stone*, a 2021 documentary about Fong-Torres, now available on Netflix.

Karaoke, Why Not?

Lesser known, but not at all surprising, is the famed journalist and author’s devotion to karaoke, which he used to practice regularly at the erstwhile Yet Wah restaurant bar in the Diamond Heights Shopping Center.

He’s become a tad more cautious, now that karaoke “has moved into the live music scene,” but he’s sung at The Mint on Market Street, alongside his buddy Liam Mayclem, a fellow radio and TV personality. He’s also covered Bob Dylan tunes with the Los Train Wreck band at El Rio on Mission near Cesar Chavez.

Despite his cultural picks for SF Live, Fong-Torres finds himself less entranced by the current entertainment scene. “I’m not being kept young, but I’m kept alive somehow,” he quips.

“Business has changed the way people enjoy music. Dianne and I no longer have an interest in catching up with the latest hot artists, and we’re not that much into nostalgia. We stay home, we stream, and we entertain friends on occasion, but by and large, we don’t go out. Though we did go to Liam’s engagement party at Vita Brevis, which is an event space [on Market Street

between Fifth and Sixth streets].”

He and Sweet still frequent Noe Valley, “but even though there were a couple of bars that hosted music or comedy, there don’t seem to be any nightclubs in our neighborhood. We also hunger for more restaurants here, but it seems like Noe Valleyans are not supporting restaurants to the extent that’s necessary. Thank God for Mazook and the *Noe Valley Voice*, which lets us know what’s going on with openings and closings.”

Harmony Close to Home

Fong-Torres’ interest was perked up on a recent visit to the Royal Cuckoo Organ Lounge at 3202 Mission St., at the intersection with Valencia. It features live music every night of the week, based around the Hammond A-100 organ built in next to the bar and a turntable that plays LPs during breaks between performances.

“The proprietors [Paul Miller and Debbie Horn] are fantastic, and the atmosphere is great,” Fong-Torres testifies. “It’s like a product of the spirit of the ’60s and ’70s, a devotion to the past, but they’re also hosting today’s musicians. I’ll probably go and see Jules there some Thursday in December.” Fong-Torres sang with Broussard at the saxophonist’s 80th birthday party at the Throckmorton in Mill Valley eight years ago.

Among the other blessings Fong-Torres counts are the monthly sessions he hosts for Airbnb at Music City on Bush Street, taking visitors on “a show-and-tell about San Francisco in the ‘60s.”

He also contributes a Q&A column to the alumni magazine of his alma mater, and emcees San Francisco State’s annual Alumni Hall of Fame induction dinners.

Plus, he co-anchors the multiple Emmy Award-winning annual KTVU broadcasts of the San Francisco Chinese New Year Festival and Parade.


He’s deejaying and programming for his online station Moonalice Radio, and conducting interviews with musical celebrities and filmmakers onstage at the Commonwealth Club.

And despite his regrets about changes wrought by time, he says, “we still love Noe Valley—the climate, the people, the stores, and the eateries.” ■




Ben Fong-Torres hangs out with Paul McCartney at a break during the former Beatle’s “Wings Over America” tour in 1976. Photo courtesy Ben Fong-Torres


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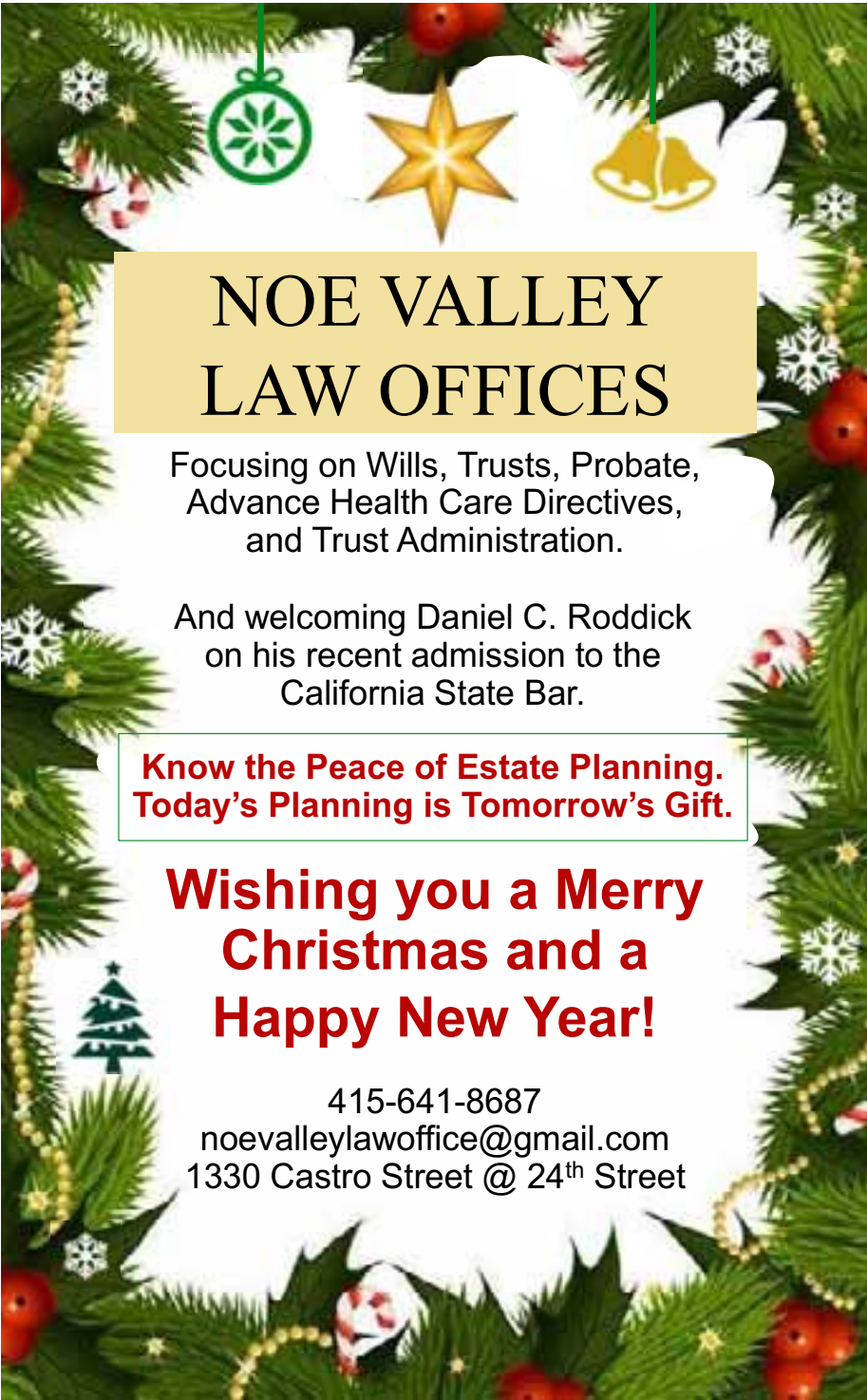
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SHORT TAKES

A Week of Chanukah Lights

Chabad Noe Valley and Gan Noe Preschool invite you to enter a Chanukah Wonderland on Sunday, Dec. 14, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., at the Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th St.

Live music by singer and guitarist Rebbe Soul, a bouncy house, Chanukah arts and crafts, hot chocolate, donuts, latkes, and a gelt drop of chocolate coins from a firetruck ladder are just some of the fun and food offered at Chabad Noe's 26th annual event.

As part of the eight-day Chanukah festival, Chabad Noe will light the menorah, a giant candelabrum, at 5 p.m. on the first night (Dec. 14) and at 5:15 p.m. on subsequent nights (Dec. 15–18). A grand finale menorah lighting will be performed at 5:15 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 21.

"As winter settles in and the nights grow longer, Chanukah reminds us that each one of us carries an inner spark—an inner flame capable of bringing warmth and brightness to the world around us," notes Rabbi Gedalia Potash of Chabad Noe Valley. "The Chanukah Wonderland helps us celebrate together the blessings we have with joy and gratitude and illuminate our surroundings with more light."

—Pat Rose

And to All a Good Night Market

As a boon to last-minute shoppers, the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association will have Santa's reindeer roll out the Noe Valley Night Market this month on Tuesday, Dec. 23, just two days before Christmas. The group also will string holiday lights along the block of 24th Street between Sanchez and Vicksburg streets, which will be closed to traffic from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.

As at past events, the Noe Valley



Wanted: New Home

My name is Hachiko, named after the famously loyal dog from Japan. I am looking for an extra special new family to love because my human mom has died after a long and extraordinary life. I am a 6-year-old German shepherd, weighing about 85 pounds, in part due to all the avocados I feast on in my back yard in San Francisco. I am healthy and up to date with my shots. I'm a big dog so I need space. All I want for Christmas is a loving home. To learn more about me, please call or text Julia Fernandez at **415-706-9947**.

Town Square will be filled with food stands—from cafes like Casa Mexicana, Novy, Haystack, Marinko's (vegan) Desserts, and What Coffee and Bakery—and there will be booths selling local arts and crafts, from pieced vintage Christmas stockings and Norse children's books to jewelry and candles with the scent of Pacific pine or ginger and nutmeg.

Merchants Association Vice President Kathryn Gianaras notes the live music and dancing will be curated by jazz, soul, and pop singer Lambert Moss, who will return as emcee. And the free event will again feature activities for kids, including a bouncy house, face painting, and balloon art. Many shops and restaurants along 24th Street will have later hours.

To find out what else is under the tree, go to noemerchants.com or contact Gianaras at kathryn@novysf.com.

—Pat Rose

Living Room Conversations

Have thoughts on the Epstein files, the diminishing role of the CDC, or the U.S. air strikes in waters off Venezuela?

Townsquare (for) Democracy is launching a new discussion series this month, called a Living Room Conversation, on Monday, Dec. 8, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Bernie's Café, 3966 24th St.

The small-group gathering—limited to 20 to 25 participants—is titled "Cracks in the MAGA Coalition: What Do They Mean, and How Can We Engage?" Participants will take part in a circle-style discussion exploring questions on how the White House is responding to recent pressure, how to talk with friends or relatives who may be rethinking their views, and how to stay grounded in shared values. A second Conversation may be scheduled if people overflow the first.

According to co-organizer Hans Kolbe, the event is part of Townsquare Democracy's efforts to pair large public forums with more intimate, community-based meetings. In October, the group held a forum called "Defend Health and Science," with a panel of experts speaking about the importance of evidence-based medicine.

Townsquare has also expanded its postcard-writing campaign to support judges and lawyers defending immigrant rights, and is seeking volunteers to help with website design.

To register for Dec. 8 or future talks, go to eventbrite.com/e/1975330223874. To volunteer, contact Kolbe at 415-730-1131 or townsquaredemocracy.com.

—Sally Smith

Get Prepared With NERT

Here's a New Year's resolution: Join our Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) and learn the disaster skills that will help you and others around you in an emergency. The next local training course will be held on six Thursday evenings, 6 to 10 p.m., Jan. 8 to Feb. 12, at St. Aidan's Church, 101 Gold Mine Drive.

NERT is a free community-based program with a neighbor-helping-neighbor approach. It includes hands-on training in earthquake preparedness and basic emergency skills, such as dealing with natural gas, water, and electrical controls, identifying hazardous materials, and applying disaster medicine that can help save lives.

"Having folks who can be self-suffi-



Children reach for the candy during the gelt drop at the 2024 Chanukah Wonderland in the Noe Valley Town Square. This year's event is on Sunday, Dec. 14, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Note: the lighting of the giant menorah is at 5 p.m.

Photo by Art Bodner

cient in an emergency, who have supplies that can sustain them for 72-plus hours after an event, allows our professional emergency responders to be free to handle the 'big' issues like fires and major building collapses," says Noe Valley NERT Coordinator Maxine Fasulis. "NERT volunteers have provided thousands of hours of assistance to the city, including during Covid, when they went door-to-door distributing informational flyers from the Health Department, providing residents with critical information, and staffed testing sites and vaccination sites."

Prospective team members can register for the training at the San Francisco Fire Department's NERT website: <https://sf-fire.org/nert/nert-calendar-meetings-trainings-events>.

—Pat Rose

Music Takes You Higher

The hills are alive with the sound of music, and the valleys are too.

First, the Music on the Hill series at St. Aidan's Church, 101 Gold Mine Drive, welcomes the neighborhood to "Ava and Friends" on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 7:30 p.m. Bay Area classical music stars Ava Soifer on piano, Michele Walther on violin, and Vicky Ehrlich on cello promise to take listeners on a musical journey to Eastern Europe in a lively concert of trios and duos by Dmitri Kabalevsky, Antonin Dvorak, and Bohuslav Martinu. Tickets are \$25 at musiconthehill.org. Contact mothmuse2@yahoo.com.

You might have to wind back time that afternoon to attend a concert at the Noe Valley Church (also Noe Valley

Ministry) at 1021 Sanchez St., on Dec. 7, at 4 p.m. The Noe Music series is offering an all-Schubert program by Inon Barnatan, who is according to the *New York Times*, "one of the most admired pianists of his generation." Along with an Impromptu in F minor and Sonata in B-flat major, Barnatan will perform a *Fantasie* in C major, with violinist and Noe Music co-Artistic Director Owen Dalby.

Grammy-nominated flutist and vocalist Nathalie Joachim and Fanm d'Ayiti (Women of Haiti) will make their Bay Area premiere at Noe Music on Saturday, Jan. 10, at two 45-minute concerts for Noe Music Kids—at 10:30 a.m. and at noon for neurodivergent kids and their families—and at 8 p.m. on the mainstage at 1021 Sanchez St.

Noe Music co-Artistic Director Meena Bhasin says Joachim and the Fanm d'Ayiti chorus are known for their powerful blend of Haitian folk traditions and contemporary chamber music. Bhasin and Dalby will complement the mix by performing with Decoda, the Carnegie Hall ensemble they co-founded before moving to San Francisco a decade ago.

Finally, on Thursday, Jan. 22, at 7:30 p.m., you can "let the music carry you inward" while lying on a yoga mat or a pillow at Noe Music's first **Well-Being Concert**. The event will feature vocalist Sarah Elizabeth Charles and singers from the Lullaby Project. To hear songs from Charles' album *Dawn* or to get tickets for this "choose-what-you-pay" evening or any Noe Music event, slide in to the noemusic.org website.

—Sally Smith



Vicky Ehrlich, Ava Soifer, and Michele Walther will play a lively concert of trios and duos from Eastern Europe on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 7:30 p.m., at St. Aidan's Church. Photo courtesy Ava Soifer



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Pursuant to Administrative Code, Section 2.81



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Department Announcements
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- If your family's income is within the WIC Guidelines.

Emergency Management
sf.gov/ReadySF - The place to find everything you need to know before, during, and after an emergency. Stay ready, so you don't have to get ready. Brought to you by the San Francisco Department of Emergency Management (DEM).

Housing Authority
The Housing Authority of the City and County of San Francisco (Authority) is actively seeking new property owners to participate in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. The program provides housing assistance to eligible individuals and families by paying a portion of their rent to private property owners.
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2. **Expanded Tenant Pool:** Property owners gain access to a broader pool of prospective tenants.
3. **Community Impact:** Partnering with the Authority supports affordable housing and the community.

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Rent Board
IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR LANDLORDS
San Francisco landlords need a license before imposing annual and banked rent increases on tenants according to the City's rent control laws. To obtain or renew a license, property owners are required to report certain information about their residential units into the San Francisco Housing Inventory each year. Property owners can submit their Housing Inventory information to the Rent Board in a few ways, but are strongly encouraged to complete the process online at portal.sfrb.org. Once the system accepts the submission, a rent increase license will be automatically generated and readily available. Owners can also deliver a paper Housing Inventory form to 25 Van Ness Ave., Suite 700, San Francisco, CA 94102 or to rentboard.inventory@sfgov.org. Assistance is available by calling 311 or emailing rentboard.inventory@sfgov.org. Visit sf.gov/rentboard for more information.

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Happy Holidays! We're grateful for our amazing clients, partners, and friends—thank you for your trust, referrals, and collaboration this past year. Special thanks to those who worked with us again or referred us to loved ones.

Wishing you a joyful holiday season, and we look forward to supporting you in the New Year!

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The Cost of Living in Noe

A Burst of Enthusiasm

By Corrie M. Anders

Home shoppers were out in force in Noe Valley in October, making it the busiest October for house sales since 2018.

Buyers grabbed the keys to 19 single-family detached homes in the neighborhood, according to data supplied to the *Voice* by Corcoran Icon Properties.

The uptick reflected Noe’s typical fall exuberance, said Christine Lopatowski, manager of Corcoran Icon’s 24th Street office.

“We had a busy September and a busy October, with lots of buyers out there looking,” she said. The activity was enhanced, however, by “some new inventory [that] hit the market right after the summer doldrums.”

Interest came from a mix of would-be homeowners, she said.



This newly built four-story home on 24th Street sold in October for \$6.2 million. Of course, at that price, it was a showpiece—with seven bedrooms, an elevator, three decks with views, and an in-law unit.

Photos by Corrie M. Anders

Noe Valley Home Sales*						
Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
Single-family homes						
October 2025	19	\$1,150,000	\$6,225,000	\$2,553,000	24	115%
September 2025	11	\$1,525,000	\$9,600,000	\$3,050,000	31	111%
October 2024	15	\$818,800	\$5,475,000	\$2,786,453	15	105%
Condominiums/TICs						
October 2025	8	\$1,000,000	\$2,850,000	\$1,769,375	14	103%
September 2025	9	\$740,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,247,500	34	109%
October 2024	7	\$1,265,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,814,286	13	112%
2- to 4-unit buildings						
October 2025	2	\$1,850,000	\$2,305,000	\$2,077,500	8	115%
September 2025	6	\$1,204,000	\$1,695,000	\$1,490,000	76	99%
October 2024	7	\$1,250,000	\$4,999,000	\$2,326,286	41	100%
5+-unit buildings						
October 2025	1	\$1,830,000	\$1,830,000	\$1,830,000	9	111%
September 2025	3	\$2,350,000	\$8,400,000	\$4,250,000	68	99%
October 2024	0	—	—	—	—	—
*This survey includes all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. Noe Valley is loosely defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The Noe Valley Voice thanks Corcoran Icon Properties, San Francisco, for providing sales data. NWV12/2025						

“It is first-time buyers coming out of the rental markets, or folks coming in for jobs from other places who are looking to purchase,” Lopatowski said. “It’s also people stepping up—folks maybe in a condo or smaller home and they need more room.”

The appetite for a piece of Noe Valley real estate sparked bidding wars that pushed the average price of a home to 15 percent above the seller’s listed price.

“People are coming in aggressively” with multiple offers, Lopatowski said.

In one notable example, Compass Real Estate agent Jeff Salgado listed a two-bedroom Edwardian on the 4000 block of 22nd Street, between Diamond and Eureka, for \$1,495,000 on Oct. 3. The home drew 19 offers and sold for \$2,533,000—more than \$1 million above its list price—in just 22 days.

“I knew that I was going to get a lot of offers,” said Salgado. “But I didn’t think 19.”

Not every listing moved so quickly. A property on the 4200 block of 24th Street, between Diamond and Douglass streets, spent more than a year on the market after debuting at \$8,179,000. Following several price reductions, it ultimately sold for \$6,225,000—nearly \$2 million below its original price.

Still, the luxury dwelling was the month’s priciest. Designed by EE Weiss Architects and built by John O’Donoghue Construction—and offering 4,912 square feet of living space on four levels—the “legal two-unit building with flexible single-family use” featured seven bedrooms, seven baths, iPad-controlled smart systems, two bio-ethanol fireplaces, Gaggenau appliances, Taj Mahal marble counters, butler’s pantry, an in-law suite, multiple decks, an outdoor kitchen, an elevator, and EV parking for two cars.

A Condo on the Hill
As for Noe’s condominium market, it was a tad less active but totally respectable in October. Eight units changed hands, roughly matching

September’s nine sales and the seven recorded in October a year ago.

The month’s top-priced condo was a house-like domicile located in the 4300 block of 23rd Street, between Douglass and Hoffman. The unit sold for \$2,850,000, a shade less than its asking price (\$2,895,000).

Built in 2001 and renovated in 2018, the home offered three bedrooms and 3.5 baths across 3,309 square feet on two levels. Features included coved ceilings, original medallions, an open parlor-living-dining layout, a modern kitchen that opens to a private deck with a hot tub, built-in speakers, air conditioning, a gas fireplace, and a one-car garage. ■



Real estate sales in Noe Valley were particularly strong in October. This two-bedroom Edwardian on 22nd Street attracted 19 offers and sold for \$1 million more than its asking price.

Happy Holidays!

Cheers to a season of joy, warmth, and holiday magic!

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Noe Valley Rents**					
Unit	No. in Sample	Range November 2025	Average November 2025	Average October 2025	Average November 2024
Studio	2	\$2,500 – \$2,595	\$2,548 / mo.	\$2,835 / mo.	\$2,218 / mo.
1-bdrm	15	\$2,300 – \$4,650	\$3,468 / mo.	\$3,950 / mo.	\$2,984 / mo.
2-bdrm	11	\$3,995 – \$5,900	\$4,802 / mo.	\$4,794 / mo.	\$4,573 / mo.
3-bdrm	6	\$5,500 – \$10,500	\$7,523 / mo.	\$6,892 / mo.	\$6,504 / mo.
4+-bdrm	2	\$8,950 – \$20,000	\$14,475 / mo.	N/A	\$7,111 / mo.
** This survey is based on a sample of 36 Noe Valley rental listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Oct. 11 to Nov. 10, 2025. In November 2024, there were 65 listings. NWV12/2025					

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STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular *Voice* feature highlighting stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month we look at an enterprise that is both home-grown and nested in a neighborhood wine shop.

RAY’S COCKTAIL EGGS

415-699-8693

<https://www.rayspickleddeggs.com/>

On a Friday night last month, Emily Reed popped into Noe Valley Wine & Spirits to pick up some liquor while running a few errands. She ran into Scott Kravitz offering free tastings of his Ray’s Cocktail Eggs, which the shop at 3821 24th St. stocks for sale.

The pickled garnishes for martinis and other cocktails are made from quail eggs, which Kravitz hard-boils and then soaks in a brine made from vinegar, red onion, vermouth, garlic, and his secret mix of spices. Over the summer, Kravitz introduced a spicy version that swaps out the red onion for habanero peppers.

“I have never had a pickled egg, and I have never eaten a quail egg,” Reed acknowledged to the *Voice*.

Having pickled a bunch of Thai chiles and red onions at home herself, Reed was game to taste-test Kravitz’s eggy concoction. She was surprised by how soft the circular cocktail accompaniments were and enjoyed the “back of the throat” kick she got from the spicier version.

“It got me teary-eyed near the end there,” said Reed, who moved to Noe Valley a few months ago after relocating from Boston for work.

She could see purchasing one of the six-ounce jars, she said, especially if hosting friends for a cocktail hour. Each jar contains 10 of Kravitz’s pickled eggs and retails for \$15.50, but they’re on sale for \$12 at Noe Valley Wine & Spirits.

“I have never had a drink with pickled eggs. It certainly would be a conversation starter if you had that in your drink,” she said.

Free Tastings

As few people have had cocktails served with pickled eggs, Kravitz has been offering free tastings at the liquor store to introduce its patrons to his



Cesar Chavez Street resident Scott Kravitz regularly visits Noe Valley Wine & Spirits to offer a taste of Ray’s Cocktail Eggs, the quail egg garnish he concocted from scratch and named after his son and co-tester Ray. Photo by Matthew S. Bajko

product since 2023. Because they need to be refrigerated, he knows his eggs can be a hard sell—not to mention overlooked by customers—since they are not stocked alongside more common cocktail garnishes like olives and pickled onions.

“I just basically bring some of the product to the store, and when people walk in, I offer them a sample. I offer them an egg,” said Kravitz, who grew up in Los Angeles and moved to San Francisco in 1995. “It is fun to watch. Nobody comes to a store looking for a pickled quail egg. Once they try it, then they get it and they understand what it is all about.”

Noe Valley Wine & Spirits owner Don Norton says Ray’s Cocktail Eggs pair perfectly with an extra-dry gin martini. They make for a unique stocking stuffer for those with cocktail aficionados on their Christmas gift-giving list.

“If you are looking to add a next-level pop to your martini, try serving it with a Ray’s Cocktail Egg,” suggested Norton.

Kravitz says quail eggs taste similar to chicken eggs but are much smaller in size—about a fifth of the weight.

Other than in cocktails, he recommends trying the eggs on salads, with charcuterie, or as a quick snack “straight from the jar.”

Peeling by Shaking

Kravitz sources the eggs from a Central Valley farm or via a distributor based in San Jose and makes them in clutches of 800 at a time at his home on Cesar Chavez Street. He bought a pot big enough to boil 200 eggs at once and a machine that shells the eggs. Yet it can result in about 8 percent of the eggs being damaged.

“When it works well, it is amazing to watch,” said Kravitz, who posted a video of the machine in action to his Instagram page at www.instagram.com/rays_cocktail_eggs/. “When it doesn’t, it destroys the egg.”

Peeling the eggs by hand usually results in less than 3% being too damaged for use, said Kravitz. Over time, he has perfected the process, so most of

the egg shells come off in one piece.

“It is definitely the part of the process that makes me question the wisdom of the whole endeavor,” he allowed. “The quail eggs have thicker membranes on the inside than chicken eggs. If you, after boiling them, put the eggs in a container and shake them, it breaks up the shell. Once you have done that, you can pull off the shell.”

Eggs the Size of Olives

A part-time bartender over the years, Kravitz had co-owned the bar Amber located on 14th Street, near the corner of Market and Church streets. The partners sold it in 2019, and it’s now the tiki-themed bar Last Rites.

His main professional focus is being a freelance animator, working with such companies as Google, Apple, and Epic Games (on its popular video game Fortnite). Living a few doors down from Omnivore Books on Food, he bought a book at the store about pickling in 2020 amid the Covid pandemic.

At first, he tried different recipes using chicken eggs. A friend one day, as a joke, gave him quail eggs to pickle.

“When I pickled the quail eggs, I noticed they were the same size as a Spanish olive,” recalled Kravitz of the

typical garnish for martinis. “I got the idea of putting an egg inside the drink instead of next to the drink.”

It took him a year of testing before he hit on the right brine mixture. He wanted eggs that didn’t overpower or spoil the flavor of the gin in a martini.

“It took about another year and a half to get all the permits and work out the branding,” said Kravitz.

He named them after his son Ray, who is now 8. As the eggs are not alcoholic themselves, they have been a popular snack that parents are buying for their kids, said Kravitz.

“I know a bunch of kids who really love them,” he said. “The mothers, I am sure, they see it as a clean shot of protein they can feed their child in the form of this highly nutritious egg.”

He is planning to host another free tasting at Noe Valley Wine & Spirits on Thursday, Dec. 11, from 5 to 7 p.m.

For dates and times of tastings in 2026, check the store’s website at www.noevalleywineandspirits.com.

To learn more about Ray’s Pickled Eggs, visit its website at www.rayspickleddeggs.com.

—Matthew S. Bajko



Ray’s Cocktail Eggs creator Scott Kravitz says his non-alcoholic pickled quail eggs are not only good in cocktails or salads but as a snack “straight from the jar.”



3980-3984 24th Street, 94114

MORE FOOD TO EAT

Radiatore alla Vodka Diavolo at Fiorella

Growing up in New York City, I like to think I know what good pasta tastes like. And the **Radiatore alla Vodka Diavolo** (\$24) at **Fiorella** (4042 24th St.) brings the heat, both metaphorically and literally.

I’m not fluent in Italian, but the “diavolo,” meaning “devil,” which signals the dish has a little kick, is fine with me, someone who usually stays on the mild side. Much like the devil on your shoulder, the one you shouldn’t listen to but inevitably do, the spicy taste beckons you back, bite after bite.

Radiatore is one of my favorite pasta shapes. It’s rare enough that you won’t often find it in grocery stores or in a standard box of Barilla, but when it’s done right, it’s chewy, architectural, and perfect at trapping sauce between its ruffled layers.

Fiorella’s radiatore nails it. A generous dollop of ricotta sits on top to soften the spice if you need a moment of respite. Occasional leaves of basil, chopped onion, and crushed tomato linger in the slow-stewed, creamy pomodoro sauce, adding depth and brightness.



Full disclosure: I’d already eaten a full dinner before meeting a friend for a late-night bite, so I arrived without an appetite. And still I devoured half the plate on the spot. I brought the rest home for Katie, who had also already eaten dinner. Despite this, it probably goes without saying, the leftovers were gone before morning.

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

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



Ping pong enthusiasts add life to Upper Noe Rec Center’s lobby. Photo by Chris Faust

Thanks for Speaking Up

Chris Faust of Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center gets the last word:

As the year comes to an end, we want to express our gratitude for the terrific staff at Upper Noe, the lovely park grounds, and the well maintained and active rec center. We also want to voice appreciation for all of you who speak up in support of maintenance and upgrades. They keep the place safe and attractive and result in improvements like the new children’s playground surface this year. Fall Session ends **Dec. 19** and Winter Session begins **Jan. 6, 2026**. While classes take a short break, drop-in activities continue.

Winter Session at Upper Noe will see expanded hours, as closing times stretch to 9 p.m. on weekdays. New activities will include Women’s Drop-in Basketball for adults 18+, Wrestling Camp, Coed Boxing, and Women’s Boxing. Note that boxing classes do not involve sparring or physical contact.

Equipment for pickleball, ping-pong, and other activities is available. Call the Upper Noe Rec Center office, 295 Day St., at **415-970-8061**. For more information, check out the website: www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com.

You can see the 2026 Winter Catalog and registration information at https://sfrecpark.org/DocumentCenter/View/27791/Winter-Catalog_Web.

- Registration Dates** (all San Francisco park facilities)
- General Registration: Dec. 13 at 10 a.m.
 - Member Registration: Dec. 6 at 10 a.m.
 - *Priority Registration Dec. 10 at 10 a.m.—for current scholarship recipients
 - **Senior Registration Dec. 10 at 10 a.m.—for classes listed for 55 and up

Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center is your stewardship group. Get involved (email info@uppernoerecreationcenter.com). If you see something, please say something. Contact office personnel and/or San Francisco Customer Service (3-1-1) to improve conditions and keep our park healthy.

For issues related to Joby’s Dog Run, open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., call 3-1-1 or email info@fundogsf.org.

Upper Noe Winter Session (Jan. 6 to March 14, 2026)

Rec Center Hours, 295 Day St.: Tues.—Fri., 10 a.m.—9 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.—5 p.m.
Sun. & Mon., rec center closed (outside activities only)
Park Grounds: Daily, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Tuesday 9 to 10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE 10 to 11:30 a.m. A Place to Play FREE 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pickleball (all ages) 12 to 1 p.m. Pilates (18+) 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Strength & Flexibility (18+) 2 to 5 p.m. Open Basketball (ages 6-17) FREE 6 to 7 p.m. Tennis—Beginning (ages 8-10) 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Yoga Vinyasa (18+) 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. Open Basketball (18+) FREE 7 to 8 p.m. Tennis—Beginning / Intermediate (18+)	1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Strength & Flexibility (18+) 4 to 5 p.m. Petite Bakers (ages 3-5) 4:30 to 6 p.m. A Place to Play FREE 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Yoga Vinyasa (18+) 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. Open Basketball (18+) FREE
Wednesday 10 to 11:30 a.m. A Place to Play FREE 12 to 1 p.m. Feldenkrais (18+) 2 to 5 p.m. Open Basketball (ages 6-17) FREE 5 to 8:45 p.m. Women’s Basketball Drop-in (18+) 6:30 to 8 p.m. Coed Boxing (14+)	Friday 9 to 10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE 10 to 11:30 a.m. A Place to Play FREE 2 to 5 p.m. Open Basketball (ages 6-17) FREE 2 to 6 p.m. A Place to Play FREE 6 to 7 p.m. Tennis—Beginning (ages 8-10) 6:30 to 8 p.m. Women’s Boxing (ages 14+) 7 to 8 p.m. Tennis—Beginning / Intermediate (18+)
Thursday 10 to 11:30 a.m. A Place to Play FREE 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pickleball (18+) FREE 12 to 1 p.m. Pilates (18+)	Saturday 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Open Basketball (all ages) FREE 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Family Zumba—Play Pass \$5 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. A Place to Play FREE 3 to 4 p.m. Wrestling—Camp Grapple (ages 7-13)



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After the War, The Robots Open A Noodle Shop

They Also Find Community in
Annalee Newitz’s Sci-Fi Novella

By Emily Hayes

A new futuristic “cozy sci-fi” novella called *Automatic Noodle*, set on the streets of Noe Valley, was dreamed up by local author Annalee Newitz on daily “sanity walks” during the Covid-19 pandemic. The robot characters in the story may be packing artificial parts, but they feel, hope, and connect just like people.

The book is set in 2064, after a war that left San Francisco in ruins but rebuilding in a new California that has seceded from the United States.

Aided by an undocumented human named Robles, four robots emerge from the rubble, re-activate themselves, and open a shop selling Chinese-style noodles for human consumption. The noodle shop is located in a former ghost kitchen at 24th Street and Douglass.

Though the robots have more autonomy than before secession, they are still the target of anonymous “robophobic” attacks.

“The book is kind of an allegory about what it means to be people who are newly arrived in a nation, because these robots have not been able to be citizens before,” Newitz told the *Voice* in a recent interview at Noe Cafe on Sanchez Street. “They may have lived in California their whole lives, but they haven’t been citizens of California.”

Noe Valley readers will be glad to know that several beloved businesses have survived the war, including



Annalee Newitz flashes their *Automatic Noodle* T-shirt outside the Firefly restaurant parklet, where the author spent many hours cooking up their “cozy sci-fi.” Photo by Art Bodner

Martha & Bros. Coffee and Noe Valley Books. During promotions of the book in the neighborhood, local residents recognized the path the book’s roller-skating robots took to get from 24th Street to downtown San Francisco.

Best-Seller Status

On its release in August, the novella quickly hit *USA Today*’s best-selling weekly book list, and it was included in the Indie Next List of independent bookstore recommendations. It is widely available at bookstores, with signed

copies at Noe Valley Books and Green Apple Books in San Francisco. An audio version of the 176-page book, with narration by trans nonbinary actor Em Grossland, is also available.

Though the story was developed in Noe Valley, Newitz (who uses they/them pronouns) took artistic license in renaming the neighborhood “Kite Hill.” During the pandemic, Newitz’s favorite “sanity walk” involved going west on Jersey Street, taking a right on Douglass, and walking to Kite Hill in the Castro for a beautiful view of the city.

“Almost every day, I was walking past the exact corner where my robots had a restaurant,” Newitz says.

Firefly restaurant on 24th Street, which had an outdoor parklet open during the pandemic, is one of Newitz’s favorite restaurants and working spots.

“I was able to go there and feel like a normal human being. And it felt cozy—it felt like safe and homey, and that was kind of where it [the book] started.”

The phrase “cozy sci-fi” may seem like a genre. But it’s more an aesthetic. “It’s low stakes—you’re not saving the universe. You’re not defeating a giant menace.”

Instead, the style is more slice-of-life and character-focused. While the characters in *Automatic Noodle* are recovering from a nasty war and are dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder, they are not descending into chaos or violence, Newitz points out.

When times are hard—when everyone is dealing with economic uncertainty—people want stories that are reassuring, they want to feel better, Newitz maintains.

The robot characters are made with a range of different kinds of materials, including biological soft tissues, carbon alloys, stretchable polymers, light metals, and synthetic rubber. They are not human inside—they are like computers, with motherboards and microchips and solar batteries, and they have been programmed by humans. However, they do have emotions and friendships and hopes, just like people, Newitz says.

Newitz draws in part on their background and interests as a science journalist, having written for the *New York Times*, the *New Scientist*, *Slate*, *Popular Science*, and other titles. Newitz also founded the science website io9 and is past editor-in-chief of *Gizmodo*.

Newitz became really interested in soft robots, which have squishy bodies, enabling them to squeeze into small spaces. One of the robots in *Automatic Noodle*—Cayenne—has a squishy octopus-like physique.

The book also reflects Newitz’s thoughts about the collective trauma the world experienced during the pandemic—and the polarization that followed—as well as their vision of what a recovery would look like. “What it would look like is people coming together and comforting each other, rebuilding local businesses, friendships, and connections.”

Domestic Bliss

Newitz is originally from Irvine, Calif., but has been living in the Bay Area since 2000 and Noe Valley since 2008. They have a PhD in English and American Studies from UC Berkeley.

Newitz describes themselves as queer, nonbinary, and living in domestic bliss in Noe Valley—with a partner and two cats (named Ultraviolet and Infrared).

“For a kid in Irvine, or a kid like me who is a little bit different, San Francisco represented kind of a dream,” Newitz says. “So I’m glad I finally got to tell a story about San Francisco.”

All of the robots in the novella take after their creator (Newitz) and reflect San Francisco sensibilities. They are “very queer” and reflect the queer community here, Newitz says. Other aspects that reflect San Francisco are loyalty and pride in small businesses. And there are also local reflections in the robots’ approach to food service.

“They’re trying to figure out, How do we make human food even though we’re not human? How do we make Chinese food even though we’re not Chinese?” Newitz says. “How do we acknowledge the human and Chinese origins of this food, while also making it something that’s our own?”

Automatic Noodle is Newitz’s fourth sci-fi title published by Tor Books, an imprint of Macmillan. Their first, *Autonomous* (2017), won the Lambda Literary Award in Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror. Another best seller, *The Terraformers* (2023), was a finalist for the Nebula Award for Best Novel.

Among Newitz’s nonfiction credits are *Scatter, Adapt, and Remember: How Humans Will Survive a Mass Extinction* (Knopf Doubleday, 2013), *Four Lost Cities: A Secret History of the Urban Age* (WW Norton, 2021), and *Stories Are Weapons* (WW Norton, 2024).

With author Charlie Jane Anders, Newitz cohosts the Hugo Award-winning podcast *Our Opinions Are Correct*.

Rising Again

Newitz also is co-editor—with Malka Older and Karen Lord—of *We Will Rise Again*, an anthology of short stories and essays on protest, hope, and resistance, due out this month from Simon & Schuster. It’s similar to *Automatic Noodle* in that many of the essays explore how people get through difficult times and rebuild their worlds using a new blueprint, Newitz says.

A sci-fi novel called *A Wall Is Also a Road*, about a slime mold visiting from another galaxy, is set for publication in 2026 (Tor Books). And Newitz is also working on a nonfiction book for WW Norton about four ancient civilizations and how they parted.

For research, Newitz spent the summer of 2025 in Crete and Sardinia interviewing archaeologists. The author will be heading to Central Asia next year.

“It’s going to be really, really fun, but that’ll take a few years,” Newitz says. “It always takes a really long time to research.” ■

Excerpt from Automatic Noodle

By ANNALEE NEWITZ



Staybehind’s body was moving before he woke up, driven by fear and algorithms. For a few microseconds, he felt rather than knew that Command was not answering. It was a terrifying absence. He would have to face this unknown threat alone.

Everything was eerily quiet, except for rain smashing on the roof like gunfire. The local network was dead; without connecting to its data stream, he could only rely on his built-in sensors for perception. He captured visual and audio signals, then inhaled trace chemicals and particulates, trying to determine what had triggered the emergency

notification. An attack from U.S. militias on the ground? A drone strike? A hidden mine?

No. For the 5,275th time in the past 1,622 days, he reminded himself: *The war is over.*

But that status could change at any time. *Stay vigilant.*

Proprioception revealed more than snorting dust and photons could. Staybehind was standing in the middle of the kitchen, with a mop in one fist and a bucket in the other. His legs were damp. Storm runoff had oozed under the restaurant’s front entrance, nosed its way around the counter, and spread across the concrete floor of the industrial cooking area. There it had puddled up until it lapped against his feet, which triggered one of those old protocols that he hadn’t needed since the war. But how could there be so much flooding? Someone should have sandbagged the entrance and turned on the dehumidifiers long ago.

Panicked, Staybehind zoomed in on the familiar forms of his coworkers, emitting no heat in the dim light: Cayenne’s soft octopus body was in the sink next to the induction range; Sweetie stood stiffly at the counter, her pale, dusty hair cascading down the back of her human facsimile torso to brush against the seam where her waist abruptly branched into three metal legs; and Hands’ meter-tall, featureless barrel of a body rested on the floor below the prep table, their two burly actuators folded like human arms. Setting down his mop and bucket, Staybehind crossed the room to rescue Hands from the rising water, placing them gently next to Cayenne on the counter.

Staybehind tried to match the scene to his last memory, but nothing made sense. The state of the kitchen and the other bots made it obvious that far more than the usual twelve hours had passed since he’d been shut down. But without access to Command or the network, he had to rely on his internal clock. *Fuck.* It was January 8, 2064. His last recorded memory was from July 31, 2063.

Excerpt published with Annalee Newitz’s permission from *Automatic Noodle* (TorDotCom: August 2025); cover design by Eric Nyquist; automaticnoodle.website design by Mike Montiero, Mule Design

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C A L E N D A R

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29; Jan. 5, 12 & 26: Toddler STORYTIMES are Mondays, 11:15-11:45 am. Tickets are available starting at 11 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 4, 11 & 18, and Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29: Family STORYTIMES are Thursdays, 10:15 am and 11 am. Tickets are available at 10 and 10:30 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 5: CREATIVITY Explored hosts an opening party for their Holiday Art Shop, from 5 to 8 pm. 3245 16th. 863-2108; creativityexplored.org

Dec. 5: A free Interfaith LABYRINTH Walk is accompanied by meditative music. 7 pm. Bethany United Methodist Church, 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393

Dec. 5 & Jan. 2: On first Fridays, use handbells to “RING Out Danger: People of Faith Opposed to Gun Violence.” 9:30-9:45 am. 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 5 & Jan. 2: The self-guided Castro ART WALK features the work of local artists on the first Friday of the month. 5-8 pm. For a map: castroartwalk.com

Dec. 5-26 & Jan. 2-30: Noe Valley RUN CLUB meets Fridays at Noe Cafe, 1299 Sanchez. 6:45 am for 4 miles, and 7:30 am for 2.5 miles. noevalleyrunclub.square.site

Dec. 6: The free Mission CRAFT Market runs from 11 am to 5 pm, at Groundfloor workspace, 455 Valencia.

Dec. 6-27 & Jan. 3-31: The FARMERS MARKET has fresh produce, food, and music Saturdays, 8 am to 1 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 6-27 & Jan. 3-31: NOE WALKS over the river and around the 'hood on Saturdays. Meet at 24th and Sanchez 10 am.

Dec. 7: Noe Music's “PIANO Portraits” features Inon Barnatan performing an all-Schubert program, 4 to 6 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. noemusic.org

Dec. 7: MUSIC on the Hill hosts “Ava and

Friends,” Eastern European music by pianist Ava Soifer, violinist Michele Walther, and Vicky Ehrlich on cello. St. Aidan's. 7:30 pm. 101 Gold Mine Drive. musiconthehill.org

Dec. 7, 14, 21 & 28: Free Sunday morning YOGA FLOW offers all-level classes; bring water and a mat. 11 am-noon. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 8: The Noe Valley Ministry hosts a LABYRINTH Walk from 7 to 7:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez. noevalleyministry.org

Dec. 8: Townsquare Democracy hosts a free discussion, “Cracks in the MAGA Coalition: What Do They Mean, and How Can We Engage?” 7-8:30 pm. Bernie's Cafe. 3966 24th. Hans Kolbe, 730-1131.

Dec. 9 & Jan. 13: It's LEGO and Board Game Night at the Noe Valley Library. 6-7:30 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 12 & Jan. 9: The Noe Valley Library screens FILMS: *Carol* on Dec. 12, and *Get Out* on Jan. 9. 2-4 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Dec. 12 & 13: Two Birds holds a TOY DRIVE and a jewelry promotion drawing at the shop at 1309 Castro. All day.

Dec. 13: Kids STORYTIME at Noe Valley Books features holiday favorites. 9-10 am. 3957 24th. 590-2961; noevalleybooks.com

Dec. 13: Families are invited to the Winter CRAFT DAY at the Randall Museum. 10 am-2 pm. 199 Museum. 554-9600; randallmuseum.org

Dec. 13: Emily Luchetti's fifth annual JAM POP-UP happens from noon to 2 pm at Omnivore Books. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Dec. 13 & 20: SANTA bobsleds to Lehr's German Specialties to pose for photos, 11 am to 1 pm. 1581 Church. 341-0024; lehrssf.

Dec. 13, 14, 20 & 21: Music at 24th Street PARKLETS: Dec. 13: Luke Schwartz Duo jazz at Valley Tavern, and Au Contraires gypsy jazz at Just for Fun; Dec. 14: Alie & Me jazz at Vive la Tarte, and Probabilities Quebequois fiddle music at Just for Fun; Dec. 20: Olivia & Cleo at Valley Tavern, and Swing Shift at Just for Fun; Dec. 21: Barb Murphy at Vive la Tarte, and Jazz Beaus Latin faves, at Just for Fun. 2-5 pm.

Dec. 13 & Jan. 10 : City Guides offers a WALKING TOUR of Noe Valley, led by Cathy and Paul Staley, which starts at the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey, at 2 pm. Reserve at 375-0468; sfcityguides.org

Dec. 14: Bernal Heights' free HOLIDAY Craft Fair features 50 vendors. 11 am to 4 pm, along Cortland.

Dec. 14: The Holiday CRAFT Fair at the Harvey Milk Center runs from 11 am to 4 pm. 50 Scott. 554-8742; hmcevents.org

Dec. 14: TUBA Christmas at the Town Square features holiday favorites. 2-2:30 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 14: Chabad of Noe Valley's CHANUKAH Wonderland has music, a gelt drop, treats, and a menorah lighting at 5 pm. 3:30-5:30 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Dec. 18: The Castro WINE WALK starts at 2166 Market. 6-9 pm. castromerchants.com

Dec. 21: Volunteers for the monthly Noe Valley CLEANUP DAY meet at the Town Square to pick up supplies. 10 am to noon. 3861 24th. Refuse Refuse, SF Public Works and TogetherSF; mobilize.us

Dec. 21: Bethany United Methodist holds a BLUE Christmas Service, 5 pm. 1270 Sanchez. 647-8393; bethanysf.org

Dec. 23: The Noe Valley Merchants' NIGHT MARKET offers local vendors, food, music, and dancing, 4:30 to 8:30 pm.

3861 24th. noemerchants.com

Dec. 23: SANTA will check in at Trad Bone Broth Brothers Inn to rest up before picture-taking with kids at the Noe Valley Night Market from 4:30 to 7 pm. 3861 24th

Dec. 28: The Au Contraires perform cafe music from the 1920s and 30s. 1-3 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Jan. 8-Feb. 12: SFFD offers NERT Training on Thursdays, 6 to 10 pm. St. Aidan's Church, 101 Gold Mine. Register at 970-2024; sf-fire.org

Jan. 10: Noe MUSIC features vocalist Nathalie Joachim & Decoda, 4 to 6 pm, and a Noe Kids concert at 10:30 am. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. noemusic.org

Jan. 17-Feb. 1: Dance Brigade performs *Match Girl*, “a fractured fairy tale,” at Dance Mission Theater. Fri.-Sat., 7:30 pm, Sun., 5 pm; Sun. Feb. 1, 2 & 5 pm. 3316 24th. dancemissiontheater.org

Jan. 20: Kelly A. Spring discusses SPAM: A Global History. 6:30 pm at OMNIVORE BOOKS. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Jan. 24: Kids STORYTIME at Noe Valley Books features sisters Eunice and Sabrina Moyle reading *The Cosmic Adventures of Astrid and Stella: Blast from the Past*. 9-10 am. 3957 24th. 590-2961; noevalleybooks.com

Jan. 22: Sarah Elizabeth Charles performs at Noe Music's first WELL-BEING concert. 7:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry. 3-5 pm. 1021 Sanchez. noemusic.org

Jan. 27: The Noe Valley Library invites teens and middle-schoolers to an ANIME character drawing workshop. 10:30-11:30 am. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Holly Days: The next Voice Calendar will be for the February 2026 issue. The deadline for calendar items is Jan. 15. Events in Noe Valley receive priority. Email items to calendar@noevalleyvoice.com.

CHILDREN'S FICTION

A Palestinian girl and her grandpa work together in **Everything Grows in Jiddo's Garden**, by Jenan A. Matari, illustrated by Aya Ghanameh. Ages 3-8.

In **The Mithai Box Is Not Empty**, by Namrata Agarwal with illustrations by Parvati Pillai, Ria throws a chai party to impress relatives from India. Ages 4-8.

Two friends set up a hydroponic growing station in **I Love Blueberries**, by Shannon Anderson with illustrations by Jaclyn Sinquett. Ages 5-9.

Middle-schooler Millie lies about her first kiss in **Running Back to You** by Sarah Henning. Ages 10-13.

CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

A rescued snapping turtle beats the odds in **The True and Lucky Life of a Turtle**, by Sy Montgomery with illustrations by Matt Patterson. Ages 4-8.

Shipwreck by Deirdre Laide, with art by Carlos Vélez Aquilera, covers famous sea-going disasters, including the Titanic and Shackleton's Endurance. Ages 7-10.

Andi Diehn's **The Science of Sound: Pitch, Volume, Music, and Noise** (illustrated by Micah Rauch) includes hands-on science activities for kids. Ages 9-12.

Guinness World Records 2026 catalogs top inventions, tech innovations, and fantastic feats. Ages 9 and up.

CHILDREN'S EBOOKS

In **Lena the Chicken (But Really a Dinosaur!)**, written by Linda Bailey and illustrated by K-Fai Steele, a feisty fowl stands up to a hungry weasel. Ages 3-7.

Find the little one hiding in Alberto Lot's interactive picture book **Come On Out!** Ages 4-8.

In **Tulip's Mess** by Anden Wilder, Mess got so big he began to swallow up all of Tulip's things. Ages 4-8.

Kassandra tries to adjust to her new surroundings in a private Catholic school, in **Dive** by John David Anderson. Ages 8-12.

TEEN FICTION

In **When We Were Monsters**, by Jennifer Niven, a student admits, "None of us [walked] into the forest that night planning to commit murder." Ages 14-17.

Ariana becomes alarmed when an accident occurs at the Pelican Island wellness retreat, in **Who's All Going (to Die)?** by Lisa Springer. Ages 14-17.

A foster teen learns that she is Ojibwe—and has a family—in **Sisters in the Wind** by Angeline Boulley. Ages 14-18.

Shahriar and Oliver, living in two eras spanning 130 years, find love in a time-hopping journey in Abdi Nazemian's **Exquisite Things**. Ages 14-18.

TEEN NONFICTION

In the graphic memoir **I Wish I Didn't Have to Tell You This**, Eugene Yelchin describes his oppressive youth in the U.S.S.R. and eventual flight to freedom in the West. Ages 14 and up.

TEEN EBOOKS

Kwame Mbalia bares the backstories of *Star Wars* characters, in **The Last Order**. Ages 12-16.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Rhyme Without Reason by Michael Blake

J	U	S	T	I	N	I	B	M	P	O	T
E	N	C	A	S	E	S	O	I	B	A	N
T	E	A	C	H	C	L	A	S	S	R	Y
W	A	L	T	E	A	C	H	M	A	S	S
A	S	P	C	H	O	C	A	R	C	T	I
Y	E	S	Y	O	U	P	S	E	U	D	O
U	N	L	E	S	S	B	E	D			
B	L	E	A	C	H	G	R	A	S	S	
A	S	I	O	U	T	A	G	E			
M	A	N	A	N	A	N	E	E	D		
T	I	G	R	I	S	N	U	T	S	A	D
L	E	E	C	H	G	A	S	A	M	I	E
R	O	S	A	B	E	A	C	H	G	L	A
P	R	O	S	I	N	C	O	R	E	G	O
M	S	N		N	A	P		R	E	C	E

MORE BOOKS TO READ

Season's Readings



Behold the many exciting events the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library has in store this holiday season (*see right*). You won't want to miss the **Puzzle Swap** (Dec. 14), talks by a **San Francisco Opera** wiz (Dec. 20 & Jan. 24), and a show put on by **Lion Dancers** (Jan. 17).

After all that activity, though, you might want to borrow a book or two, especially since *The Atlantic* just named the "65 Essential Children's Books" and you were deprived of a few classics. (How have I not read *Blueberries for Sal* or *Hippos Go Berserk!*?)

What's more, the Noe Valley librarians—including Adult Services Librarian Amy Lewis, Children's Librarian Madeleine Felder, Youth Librarian Cristal Fiel, and Branch Manager Mary Fobbs-Guillory—have provided their lists of new arrivals at the branch (*see this page*), and we probably should read about the Constitution or the (new) Big One.

To put items on hold, you can go to the circulation desk at 451 Jersey St., visit SFPL.org online, or get the mobile app at <https://sfpl.org/services/mobile-resources/library-catalog-mobile-apps/> for your phone.

Tech help? It's Dec. 8 or Jan. 12. Or call Lewis, Felder, or Fobbs-Guillory at 415-355-5707. Please note all city libraries will be closed on Dec. 25, Christmas Day, Jan. 1,

2026, New Year's Day, and on Jan. 19, to celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.

Have a relaxing holiday. And remember what Jhumpa Lahiri (*Interpreter of Maladies*) said: "That's the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet."



In **The Big One**, authors Michael T. Osterholm and Mark Olshaker discuss how we must prepare for future deadly pandemics.

Rob Dunn examines how humans can coexist with other species in **The Call of the Honeyguide: What Science Tells Us About How to Live Well with the Rest of Life**.

Jill Lepore traces the origins of our country's founding document in **We the People: A History of the U.S. Constitution**.

ADULT EBOOKS

Caleb Gayle tells the true story of Edward McCabe in **Black Moses: A Saga of Ambition and the Fight for a Black State**.

In **Good and Evil and Other Stories**, Samantha Schwebelin explores ways people react to unsettling situations.

Arundhati Roy describes her early life in India in the memoir **Mother Mary Comes to Me**.

A former slave scours the deserts of Mexico to find his recently emancipated sister in **Amity: A Novel** by Nathan Harris.

ADULT DVD/BLU-RAY

Austin Butler and Griffin Dunne star in

LIBRARY EVENTS

All events take place at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library, 451 Jersey St., and are drop-in unless otherwise noted. Be aware events are first come, first served. For information, visit sfpl.org or call the branch at 415-355-5707.

Toddler Storytimes, for ages 16 months through 2 years, are on Mondays at 11:15-11:45 a.m., Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29, and Jan. 5, 12 & 26. Space is limited; tickets available at the door, beginning at 11 a.m.

Family Storytimes are Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m., Dec. 4, 11 & 18, and Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29. Space is limited; tickets available beginning at 10 a.m.

The Noe Valley **Knitting Circle**, for those who knit, crochet, or macrame, meets on Saturdays, Dec. 6 and Jan. 3, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

An **Origami** workshop runs from 2 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Learn basic techniques of **Sashiko Mending** at a workshop on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Registration required: 415-355-5707.

Drop-In Tech Help is available on Mondays, Dec. 8 and Jan. 12, 2 to 3 p.m.

The family **LEGO** and **Board Game Night** happens Tuesdays, Dec. 9 and Jan. 13, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

The Noe Library **Film Club** screens the 2015 drama *Carol*, set in 1950s New York, on Friday, Dec. 12, at 2 p.m.

Ages 2 to 8 can "**Design and Build Things That Go**," at a workshop on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Meet at the library for a **City Guides Walking Tour**, "Noe Valley: A Village Within the City," on Saturdays, Dec. 13 and Jan. 10, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Space is limited; registration required: sfcityguides.org/tour/noe-valley

The library hosts a **Puzzle Swap** for all ages and abilities, on Sunday, Dec. 14, from 2 to 3 p.m.

The Noe Valley **Short Stack Book Club** discusses *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey, on Friday, Dec. 19, and *Giovanni's Room* by James Baldwin on Friday, Jan. 16, from 3 to 4 p.m. Copies are held at the circulation desk for checkout.

Cole Thomason-Redus from the **SF Opera** discusses his favorite scenes from various productions, on Saturday, Dec. 20, and "Black Voices in American Opera," on Saturday, Jan. 24, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Families can bring sleepy young readers to **Pajama Storytime**, on Tuesday, Dec. 30, from 6:30 to 7 p.m.

The Noe Library screens the 2017 film *Get Out*, Jordan Peele's directorial debut, on Friday, Jan. 9, from 2 to 3:45 p.m.

The Jing Mo Athletic Association performs **Lion Dancing**, on Saturday, Jan. 17, from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.

Teens and middle schoolers are invited to a rescheduled workshop, **Anime Character Drawing**, on Tuesday, Jan. 27, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

the dark comedy **Caught Stealing** (2025), directed by Darren Aronofsky.

Day of a Lion (2025), featuring actors Bianca Foscht and Dilara Foscht, is a Canadian drama about a conflict between two sisters.

Relay (2024), a conspiracy thriller directed by David Mackenzie, stars Riz Ahmed and Lily James.

The French drama **Souleymane's Story** (2024), made by Boris Lojkine, stars Abou Sangare and Alpha Oumar Sow.

—Annotations by Voice bookworm Karol Barske

BRANCH HOURS

Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library 451 Jersey St., 415-355-5707						
Sun 1-5	Mon 11-6	Tues 10-8	Wed 12-8	Thurs 10-6	Fri 1-6	Sat 10-6



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Action SF, the National Movement in Your Neighborhood

https://m.facebook.com/ActionSFactivism/
Website: http://www.action-sf.com/
Email: ActionSFTeam@gmail.com
Meetings: Third Tues., Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey, 6-7:30 p.m. *No meeting in December.*

Al-Anon Noe Valley

Contact: 834-9940; office@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).
Thursdays, 7:15-8:30 p.m. Bethany UMC, 1270 Sanchez St. (enter through Clipper Street side door and go up the stairs)

Castro Merchants

Contacts: Terry Asten Bennett, President;
Address: 584 Castro St. #333, SF, CA 94114
Email: info@CastroMerchants.com

Comerford Greenway

Contact: Howard Fallon
Email: ComerfordGreenway@gmail.com
Website: www.sanfranciscoparksalliance.org/partners/comerford-greenway/
Monthly workdays in Comerford Alley.

Diamond Heights Community Association

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

Dolores Heights Improvement Club

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

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)

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

Eureka Valley Neighborhood Assn.

Contact: Board@evna.org
Address: P.O. Box 14137, SF, CA 94114
Meetings: See website Events. Castro Meeting Room, 501 Castro St., 7 p.m.

MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

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 Christopher Park

Contact: Brynna McNulty, 818-744-4230
Email: friendsofchristopherpark@gmail.com
Website: FriendsOfChristopherPark.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: noecourts@gmail.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 Slow Sanchez

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

Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

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

Friends of Upper Noe Dog Owners Group (FUND OG)

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

Glen Park Association

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

Juri Commoners

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

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

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

Noe Neighborhood Council

Contact: Ozzie Rohm or Matt McCabe
Email: info@noeneighborhoodcouncil.com
Website: noeneighborhoodcouncil.com
Meetings: Quarterly at Sally Brunn Library, 451 Jersey St.

Noe Valley Association—24th Street Community Benefit District

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

Noe Valley Democratic Club

Contact: Sam Maslin, President
E-mail: noevalleydemocrats@gmail.com
Website: www.noevalleydemocrats.org
Meetings: Monthly at Valley Tavern or Tacolicious, dates publicized on website.

Noe Valley Farmers Market

Open Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 1 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: Kristen McCaffery, President, Kristen@novysf@gmail.com, 829-8383; or Kathryn Gianaras, Vice President, Kathryn@novysf@gmail.com
Meetings: 9 a.m. Call to confirm location.
Website: https://noemerchants.com
www.NoValleyMerchants.com

Noe Valley Parent Network

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

Noe Walks

Contact: Chris Nanda
Email: christopher.n.nanda@gmail.com
Website: NoeWalks.com
Meetings: Saturdays, 10 a.m. Starts 24th and Sanchez. Ends Noe and Duncan for photo.

Progress Noe Valley

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

San Francisco NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)

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

Upper Noe Merchants

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

Upper Noe Neighbors

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

THE NOE VALLEY VOICE
editor@noevalleyvoice.com

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



NOE VALLEY

NIGHT MARKET

Live music, local food and retail, artists and more

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Santa
Bounce House
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(All Free!)

Love, NOE VALLEY

and now for the
RUMORS
behind the news

A Robot Has Come

By Mazook

KLAATU BARADA NIKTO: Sea Breeze Cleaners, a business located in Noe Valley for the past 40 years (currently at 1420 Castro), is reaching into the next 40 years.

Since October, Sea Breeze owners Justin Yip and Kay Astorga have been hosting a robot—in the window of their self-serve laundromat next door.

The robot, efficiently and possibly cheerfully, is folding and stacking T-shirts, in about two minutes per shirt.

Its name is “Isaac.”

Isaac, who is 5 feet 5 inches tall and resembles a praying mantis, is a prototype being tested by a San Francisco start-up called Weave Robotics.

However, you can’t just bring your laundry to Sea Breeze to have the robot fold it. That’s because Weave is partnering with Tumble, an on-demand wash-and-fold laundry service. Right now, you need to be a client of Tumble to have a chance at getting your T-shirt folded by Isaac.

Isaac is on the job at Sea Breeze from 9 a.m. to about 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. (The laundromat is open an hour later, but the robot needs time to cool down in the evenings.)

In charge of managing Isaac and the robot’s folding operations is Weave’s Phillip Charrette.

Charrette says passersby stop all day long to stare in the window, and many come in, smile, and take pictures. Some ask him whether they can hire Isaac.

“People are amazed at how this all works,” says Charrette, who lives in SOMA. “Noe Valley is a great neighborhood with a lot of very interesting people that I’ve met. I love working here.”

Let’s hope Isaac does.



THE GRATEFUL ALIVE: Eleven local groups created a very happy Friendsgiving in the Noe Valley Town Square on the afternoon of Sunday, Nov. 23. It was attended by over 200 people.

Deserving many kudos for this event are the Noe Valley Town Square folks, Noe Valley Farmers Market, Friends of Noe Valley, Civic Joy, Dolores Park Archives, Noe Valley Ministry, Slow Sanchez, On Lok on 30th Street, Mobile Pet Care, Noe Valley Farmers Market Music Series producer Gil Guillermo, and Mat Lee, aka “The Balloon Man,” who gave out free balloon animals and balloon sabers to everyone.

The people who were hosting wore T-shirts expressing the theme of the day: “Tell me something about yourself.” A chalk circle was drawn, where people could meet and tell other people about themselves. There was a snack table with hot cider, which tasted great, and pumpkin pies. Many sat down at a table in front and were provided with greeting cards and an envelope to write messages to people they knew, which were stamped and mailed by Town Square boss-lady Leslie Crawford.

There was a Town Square event survey that queried, “How did you like the event? By completing this one-minute survey, you’re insuring we get funded for future events.”

And in the back of the Square, there was a tree with small note-shaped leaves, for people to use to write what

they were grateful for. The tree branches had well over a hundred leaves (by my estimate) by the end of the day.

Here are some of my favorites:

“My first San Francisco landlord.”

“Thankful for being alive.”

“My good friends.”

“Friends, Family, Community.”

“For this wonderful community.”

“The one and only Leslie.”

“My brother Miles.”

“Thankful for the sun on a cold day.”

“The Farmers Market.”

Personally, I was and am thankful for all of you who read the *Noe Valley Voice* (I reckon about 5,000 of you), and for its publishers, Sally Smith and Jack Tipple, and for all the advertisers who have supported this paper since its first issue in 1977, and especially for those of you who are reading this column right now. I love y’all.



MUSIC OF THE NIGHT: The Nov. 25th Noe Valley Night Market in the Square was well attended. It was a cold, intermittently rainy night, but that did not deter about 1,500 neighbor-hoodies and 20 vendors from showing up and having a blast.

On the stage at the back of the market, the music was provided by singer Elise Nova, jazzman Air, and local Noe Valleon Mark Westfall, a singer/songwriter who lives on Jersey Street. The next Night Market is Dec. 23.

On the first of December, I made it to the Noe Valley Holiday Tree Lighting. This was a fun annual event with live music, hot cocoa, and an LED acrobatic show. It ran from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Noe Valley Town Square.

The LED show was performed by Lights Acrobatic, led by Bridget Harrison, who then joined the face-painting stall, where she and Aileen Lawlor painted the faces of more than a hundred children and quite a few grownups, too. There was a long line of kids and parents, with many different colors in the paint troughs to choose from. There was also a lot of smiling by all.

Six members of the University High School choir sang, a bell-tinging group played chimes, and the Loose Interpretations (The Loosies) sang Christmas carols, joined by their huge audience.

It was a joyful and enlightening experience.



NEWS AND MYSTERIES: First of all, did you vote on Nov. 4th? The San Francisco Department of Elections reports that Noe Valley voted overwhelmingly in favor of California Proposition 50, which was the only issue to vote on. Of Noe Valley’s 19,800-plus registered voters, 67 percent cast ballots. The measure passed, with 92.48 percent saying Yes and 7.2 percent No.

Kudos go out to Noe Valley writer Cara Black. The *New York Times* made note that Black’s latest book, *Huguette*, was one of 15 novels out in December worth mention. And I presume a read.

Wrote the *Times*, “Black’s 24th book is, as usual, a crime novel set in Paris—but, unusually, it’s a stand-alone: a chance to introduce Huguette Faure, a pregnant teenager scrambling to rebuild her life after World War II. That rocky road puts her in touch with a protective police officer, an ambitious film director, and a mysterious correspondent: ‘Consider this what I owe you,’ he writes. ‘Signed, “The Grasshopper.””

It still is a mystery exactly when the new restaurant, Kawanoya, serving Japanese cuisine, will open its doors at 1689 Church St. The construction has been taking a year to complete. People



A new worker at Sea Breeze Laundromat has been catching the eye of pedestrians on Castro Street. Isaac is his name, and he’s actually employed by Weave Robotics. *Photos by Sally Smith*



have been walking by and seeing it all lit up and beautifully decorated. Nevertheless, the door has been locked and the sign on the door says “Closed.”

It has been a mystery since I first made inquiries over a year ago. You might remember that Clay Oven Indian Cuisine closed abruptly over two years ago, and the building had “For Sale” signs in the front window. At least a year ago, the sign came down indicating it was sold, and months later the remodeling job started. I must have asked the workers every few months what was going to be there, and I finally learned it would be a restaurant. Every time I took my afternoon walk on Church Street, I would look for a progress report.

At November’s end, I was again knocking on the door, when several people walking by asked me if it was open!

After knocking a few times, I finally

met the owner of the restaurant at the front door, and he stepped out onto the sidewalk. Henry Chan is his name and he confirmed that he and his family had purchased the building and that it was a “family business.”

Chan says they are now preparing a full menu for Kawanoya, including sushi, and they will open the doors to the public “sometime in January.”

Ah, mission accomplished and mystery solved.



THAT IS 30 FOR 2025: Have happy holidays. See you all in February 2026. I am off in December, and will track down more Rumors in January for the February issue. Ciao.

“I’m sorry, Dave. I’m afraid I can’t let you do that.” ■



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As the year comes to a close, we’d like to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to all of our clients, neighbors, and friends. Your trust and support have made 2025 another successful year for the Droubi Team.

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

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