



# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## More Words to Read

I turned the corner from Church Street on to 23rd and stopped. Three large raccoons were ahead walking slowly west in the evening dark. The biggest one turned to look at me and they all stopped. The hair on my neck tingled. I'd never seen such large, well fed raccoons. At least I hoped they were well fed.

In a moment they ambled along ahead of me, and I too made my way slowly to Sanchez Street, where I was going to do a couple hours of work on the *Noe Valley Voice*.

If it had been daytime, I would have gone to 24th Street and picked up a large latte at Martha & Bros. and a salt bagel at Holy Bagel. Appropriately fueled, I'd use my key to open the front door of the Noe Valley Ministry and go back to the tiny office of the *Voice* in the southeast corner. I'd part the blanket that served as our door and turn on the waxer.

In the early 1980s, *Voice* production was mostly done with scissors, X-Acto knives, multi-burnishers, and a hand-held waxer used to affix type galleys to the backing-board pages. All the ads and photos were hand-cut and pasted down.

As ad sales increased, we grew to as many as 64 pages containing over a hundred ads.

We were slow to get computerized, but that enabled us to use color and soon publish on the internet.

Enabling Editor-in-Chief Sally Smith were professional reporter Corrie M. Anders, graphic artist Karol Barske, and gifted photographer Charles Kennard. Steve Steinberg sold the ads and musician Misha Yagudin picked up and distributed the print edition. Dozens more contributed, and letters to the editor poured in. None of us imagined we'd reach 50 years of publishing, but here we are.

We published 10 editions a year at that time, but found that January and August issues were well received when we solicited poetry, essays, and short fiction while the regular stories and columns and their creators took a break.

One of those columns I titled More Mouths to Feed—announcing new babies and their families. On a lark we created a mock front-page titled More Graves to Dig. But that was a one-off.

More Mouths is gone, but I cribbed a line from Firesign Theater and gave Roger Rubin (aka Mazook) his column heading: And Now for the Rumors Behind the News. That popular column continues today, except when the literary editions take over.

Also on vacation at those times are Editor and Co-Publisher Sally Smith, Calendar and More Books to Read bookworm Karol Barske, ace photographer Art Bodner, and our many other contributing writers and photographers. They'll return with the February issue.

Happy new year and happy reading. We'll see you at the Town Square.

Jack Tipple  
Editor and Co-Publisher



Colors of 24th Street in Noe Valley

Photos by Jack Tipple



## • Daniel Raskin •

### Apple Stars

November's end, children impatient  
Classroom party to cool their restless  
bodies

Apples for a pie, with finger guards they  
slice

What is there in the heart of the fruit  
Macintosh, Granny Smith, Golden Delicious  
Winesap, Gala, Fuji, Rome Beauty

Pluck seeds from their wombs  
A star reveals  
Children awe

A star to shine in Eve's eyes  
A star to show freedom's route  
A myth in night's ebony

A star so impossibly far way  
Inspires impossible dreams

Oven aromas perfume the school  
Butter and flour; apples  
Cinnamon and sugar

### Found a Poem

Inhaled a poem from newborn's scent  
Flooded my body-mind with a dopamine  
high  
Energy to know infant's way

Tasted a yeasty poem in warm from-the-  
oven bread  
Served me Proust effect with kitchen  
memories  
The more I chewed, the more I wanted  
Even better with butter and jellies.

Heard a poem in Nina's voice  
Love and faith were the themes  
With piano notes high and low  
Closed my eyes to waking dreams

Saw a poem in Ansel Adams' print  
Lofty Sierra, Yosemite's falls  
Sent me visions of endless peaks  
Adventures call

Touched a poem in my friend's hand  
Fingers entwined, walking and talking  
Sharing intimacies  
Emotional mooring.

**Daniel Raskin** is a retired preschool teacher, living on Bernal Hill. He writes with the Older Writers' Laboratory (OWLS), at the Bernal Library, and with the MERI Center at UCSF. Daniel has three grandchildren. He is also a photographer and practices expressive movement in the Tamalpa tradition.



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One of the two murals by Mona Caron gracing the Town Square.

Photo by Jack Tipple

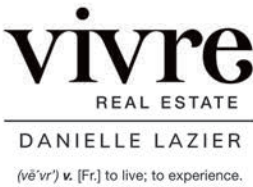


# OMNIVORE BOOKS • • • UPCOMING EVENTS

TUES JAN 20	<b>KELLY A. SPRING IN CONVERSATION WITH GABY MAEDA • SPAM: A GLOBAL HISTORY • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> A sharp, globe-trotting look at SPAM’s wartime origins and lasting cultural impact worldwide, today everywhere.
WED JAN 21	<b>MARISA CHURCHILL • SECRETS, SPELLS, AND CHOCOLATE • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> An event for our young adult readers! Magic, cooking, and ambition collide at a culinary school where secrets simmer and dreams are tested.
MON JAN 26	<b>NANCY MATSUMOTO IN CONVERSATION WITH SHAKIRAH SIMLEY • REAPING WHAT SHE SOWS • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> Women on the front lines of rebuilding local food systems - and reshaping how we eat, sustainably and joyfully.
TUES FEB 3	<b>EMMANUEL LAROCHE • A TASTE OF MADAGASCAR: CULINARY RICHES OF THE RED ISLAND • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> A rare sensory journey through Madagascar’s extraordinary ingredients, recipes, and the people preserving its rich food culture.
THURS FEB 5	<b>EVELYN ROSE CULINARY HISTORY LECTURE • WHAT MRS. FISHER KNEW, AND WHAT WE KNOW NOW • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> Local food history comes alive in a lecture rediscovering Abby Fisher’s life, legacy, and Noe Valley connection.
TUES FEB 10	<b>NICKI SIZEMORE • MIND, BODY, SPIRIT, FOOD • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> Transform cooking into an act of self-care and gratitude with a culinary expert’s recipes and advice for bringing mindfulness and intention into the kitchen.
WED FEB 11	<b>POLINA CHESNAKOVA IN CONVERSATION WITH KATE LEAHY • CHESNOK • 6:30 P.M. FREE!</b> Vibrant flavors and cherished family recipes tracing the culinary traditions of the Eastern European and Central Asian diaspora.

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# LETTERS 78 CENTS

## Stand Up for Reproductive Rights

Editor:  
I am a former educator and a 15-year Noe Valley resident who serves my community by volunteering with Noe's Action SF, the Mobilization for Reproductive Justice, and Planned Parenthood. I am urgently calling my fellow citizens to stand up against the largest, most overt demonstration of right-wing extremism in San Francisco: the annual Jan. 24, 2026, Walk for Life West Coast. This is an assembly of anti-abortion activists who march for the cessation of reproductive rights. Many of the participants are racist, anti-LGBTQ+, anti-immigration, and anti-science.


Even locally, we have anti-abortion leaders (i.e., Pro-Life San Francisco's executive director and of Survivors of the Abortion Holocaust) with direct ties to former leaders of the militant "Operation Rescue" group. These activists have harassed patients and staff and created an unsafe, tense environment at Planned Parenthood clinics and at UCSF.

This march provides shelter to far-right extremist groups, such as the Proud Boys, Identity Europa, and Goyim Defense League, a direct threat to our fellow Black, Brown, Asian, Jewish, Palestinian, LGBTQ+, immigrant, indigenous, and disabled San Francisco residents. I have yet to find any response from the march organizers renouncing the presence of these white supremacist groups.

I urge you to join us as we make it abundantly clear to these extremists that no demonstrations threatening our marginalized groups and our collective civil rights will be tolerated.

Not only do we need to show up at 12 noon on Jan. 24 at the front steps of SF's Main Library on Polk at Larkin Street to protect our rights to reproductive health care but to defend our city from the rise of "Christian Nationalism" and to protect our scientists, healthcare workers, and diverse population.

For more information, email: reprojustice.sf@gmail.com or Link Tree: https://linktr.ee/reprojusticenow  
In solidarity we stand!  
Abby Norton

  
**THE NOE VALLEY VOICE**  
P.O. Box 460249  
San Francisco, CA 94146  
www.noevalleyvoice.com

The Noe Valley Voice is an independent newspaper published in San Francisco. It is distributed free in Noe Valley and vicinity during the first two weeks of the month. Subscriptions are available at \$40 per year (\$35 for seniors) by writing to the above address.

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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## Writers, Take Note

The next issue featuring your poetry, essays, and short fiction will be published in August 2026. Your deadline is July 15, 2026.

Thank you for making this year a good one for the Noe Valley Voice.

We hope you'll help continue the tradition of raising the words in this new year.

Jack Tipple, Sally Smith  
Co-Publishers and Editors

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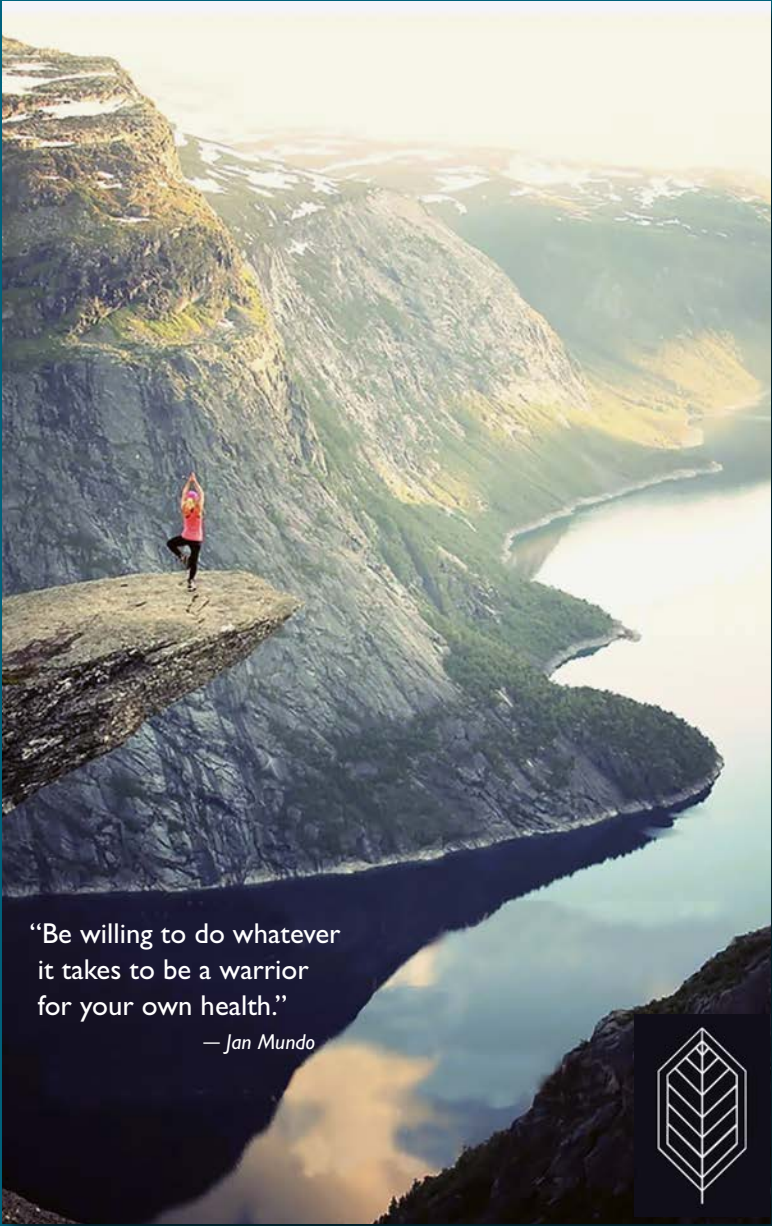
## WHO TO CALL AT CITY HALL

NVV 7/2025

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San Francisco Police in a non-emergency . . . . . 415-553-0123  
Burned-out Streetlights, streetlights@sfgwater.org (PUC) . . . . . 415-554-0730  
District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, mandelmanstaff@sfgov.org . . . . . 415-554-6968  
District 8 Community Safety Liaison (SFPD) . . . . . Dave.Burke@sfgov.org  
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Homeless Services Street Outreach Services (SOS) medical care . . . . . 415-355-2250  
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Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services sfmayor.org . . . . . 415-554-7111  
NERT Neighborhood Emergency Response Team sfidnert@sfgov.org. 415-970-2022 or 2024  
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Rent Board San Francisco phone counseling . . . . . 415-252-4600  
Sewer Problems, Overflows . . . . . 415-695-2096  
SFMTA or Muni Call 311 or email MTABoard@sfmta.com . . . . . 415-701-2311  
Tree Planting urbanforestry@sfdpw.org . . . . . 415-554-6700  
24th Street Community Benefit District (Noe Valley Association) . 415-802-4461 or 519-0093  
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# • Maxine Einhorn •

## A Mother's Love

I always knew my mother really loved me. She would look at me as if I were the Crown Jewels, an adoring look that never wavered. For a tiny Jewish woman from East London, she couldn't believe she had managed to produce two tall daughters and would show us off to all her friends with pride. At 4' 11" height was important to her - she would insist that she was tall when she was sitting down, and was only short from her hips to her knees, when she stood up.

My sister and I were red diaper babies. We were brought up surrounded by the Selected Works of Lenin, East German 78s and a celebratory ceramic plate of the Battle of Cable Street in East London in 1936 holding pride of place on our mantelpiece. We were also part of a Commie community. My parents' friends were mostly in The Party. They were wonderful people with stories to tell of the Spanish Civil War, trade union struggles and how the Daily Worker had been proved right. Our friends were their kids and we would all go on long rambles together, on holidays to Europe, to meetings and demonstrations and to the inevitable Party jumble sales which I loved. I wouldn't have had it any other way.

But there was a price to pay. All my birthday gifts were bizarre. As a kid I didn't look forward to birthdays one bit because of the moral and ideological gift wrapping. At thirteen my mother bought me The History of the Blacksmiths' Union. I would have preferred something pretty, something trivial even if it was from the local Co-op. I remember feeling bemused. How could she imagine I would want to read such a tome? It was so loaded with the righteousness of being informed about labor history and struggle. She was serious; she was convinced something was wrong with me if I didn't appreciate these important tracts?

I don't think anyone ever read it and when I moved to the USA, I donated the book to Goodwill. Still in excellent condition, I hope it found a fitting home with a worthy Marxist. As for the 12 volumes of the Selected Works of Lenin, which I had inherited by then, it would have been sacrilege to throw these volumes out. After having tried the Marx Memorial Li-



Dora Ann Einhorn

brary in Clerkenwell, whose librarian didn't jump at this opportunity, I offered them to my nephew. He seemed really pleased. Although I think he used them to stabilize his bed at college!

This is not to say my mother wasn't well intentioned. She wanted us to be brilliant, to have the chances she never had, to be special. When I won a prize at school, we were asked to select a book of our choice for the ceremony. Most of the winners chose Jane Eyre or something like that. For me, my mother chose J'Accuse by Emile Zola, a book about the Dreyfus Affair and the injustice of antisemitism. It was out of print, so we had to wait for months. This was fine by me of course because I had no idea who Dreyfus was. But I do remember my history teacher raising his eyebrows at this selection, probably wondering who on earth made such a choice for a kid. He was kind enough never to ask and never to quiz me on Alfred Dreyfus.

My finest hour came when I was 15 or maybe 16. My mother saw an advertisement in the News Statesman for a work camp in East Germany which cost a mere 16 pounds. She thought this was just the thing for me and such a bargain. We were to spend a few days in Dresden and then go to a work camp somewhere outside Berlin. I recall 24 kids on this trip from all parts of the UK. I don't know why they chose to go, or whether we were really expected to contribute to the East German economy or to rebuild UK/German relations. Dresden was a dark and destroyed place having been flattened at the end of WW2, a city haunted by tragedy. Our group visited the Zwinger Gallery under recon-

struction and on our outing to Berlin, we were marshalled through the Brandenburg Gate by soldiers with bayonets and warned to move along quickly. I remember being frightened. Any 15 year old would be unnerved. I had never seen a bayonet in a London suburb.

As a birthday celebration it was unusual and redeemed by the fact that there were some good-looking boys on the trip from renowned public (=private=fee paying in the UK) schools who were there for a good time. Why an East German work camp for a good time, I'll never know? Since one of these handsome guys was about to go to Sandhurst to train as an officer, maybe it was a good preparation, although I don't remember much work or education being involved - which was a good thing as far as I was concerned and for all of us, as I recall.

Memories play havoc. My mother did love me, no question, and loved me the only way she knew how in terms of a worldview produced by a very different time. Growing up in Margaret Thatcher's North London constituency cemented her allegiance to a vision of another world, a fairer and more democratic world. She would send us out to canvas for the Communist Party, a fruitless task in a North London suburb, and then I would go with her to the polling station where we would face disaster. Our candidate would get nowhere and inevitably would lose the deposit they had to pay. But I did enjoy chatting away merrily at those polling stations, asking people who they were supporting and whether they would consider our candidate. They never did, but I don't recall feeling downhearted.

Ironically it was Margaret Thatcher who officiated at the prize giving ceremony at my local grammar school where I was to receive J'Accuse, the book that was no longer in print. There she was in her white gloves, smirking, offering trite words of Tory wisdom, while we shuffled on to the stage to shake her hand and to be congratulated on our achievements. We had to practice to do this correctly for days before the event; it seems I needed to walk with my stomach in and not sticking out and to hold myself upright.

There was a skill to shaking the hand of a notable. I would later tell my mother that I had shaken the hand of our MP, the honorable Margaret Thatcher - I knew she was an enemy of the people; all red diaper babies knew that. My mother would say cheerily that I should have wrung her neck instead, a comment which of course I couldn't possibly share with my school friends because prize-giving was a very serious affair.

When my mother died, I received the best and most memorable present from my father which was actually a celebration of my mother. It was and still is - I still have it safe - a beautifully engraved, leather-bound History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union awarded to my mother in 1939 as a prize in The Holborn Communist Party Daily Worker Street Sales Contest for June 1939. This is the paper that later became The Morning Star. The print in this volume is tiny and unreadable and full of important information about Menshevik Liquidators and Trotsky's August Bloc. I wonder if anyone anywhere has ever read it, let alone made sense of it, but for me it attests to a time and a life that meant so much.

**Maxine Einhorn** is a credentialed teacher and has worked as a tenured lecturer and department director in colleges in London, UK, for over twenty years. She has a B.A. in History from the University of Sussex and an M.A. in Film and TV Studies from the University of London, and has taught film studies, communications and media literacy. She has worked as an outreach coordinator at KQED Public Media for 12 years and as researcher on independent film productions in London and San Francisco. Currently she is a senior programmer for the Mostly British Film Festival which runs here at the Vogue Theater each year and runs a film series called Matinée at the Fromm Institute of Lifelong learning based at USF.





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Email [editor@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:editor@noevalleyvoice.com)

Thank you.



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of Noe Valley, San Francisco



• Chana Jacobs •

Lost Necklace

I lifted my fingers to my neck, a habitual gesture. But the necklace was not there. Heat climbed up my spine and into my head as I pulled the car to the side of the road. Frantically, I tried again. Still, no necklace.

I was taking a road trip with my mom, exploring Boston over the Fourth of July. In the evenings at the hotel, I usually practiced some rudimentary yoga to get the kinks out of my body after a long drive. I would spread a towel on the hotel rug to stretch and typically, the necklace caught on my chin in downward dog. Now, at the side of the road, I saw myself remove the necklace and lay it on the towel.

My dad died earlier that spring. He got sick the fall before, unrelenting pain in his stomach. “Get your affairs in order,” the doctor said. “Pancreatic cancer.” I took a leave of absence from my job and family, moved down to help him and my mother. My often rocky relationship with my dad healed and I held his hand when he slipped away.

Before he died he bought us all a necklace. Me, my mom, and my two nieces. “For the girls in the family,” he said as he presented us with this final gift. Each necklace was unique. Mine featured a small diamond pendant hanging from a delicate silver chain. I wore it religiously.

My mom was used to me pulling

off the road. This was before the ubiquity of GPS systems on our phones. We had reserved a car with a clunky GPS device and I also studied a paper map. I didn’t trust the device - especially when it told me to get off the highway, while I remembered the map showing the highway going right to our destination. I would pull over, unfurl my map on the hood of the car and

try to figure out where the device was taking us.

We had left the hotel that morning and found our way out of the snarl of Boston traffic. We were headed for the coast when I pulled over because the necklace was not around my neck. “What’s wrong this time?” my mom asked. “Do you need the map?”

A map for mourning would have been helpful. There are so many twists and turns on the road to healing. I called the hotel and explained the situation. No one had found the necklace. I called back later that night, and the next day. For the rest of the trip and the months that followed, the necklace haunted my neck like a phantom limb. My fingers reached for it, questioning. But the answer was always the same. The necklace was gone.



Image by Elizabeth Dekker

**Chana Jacobs** has lived in Noe Valley for many years. In her retirement, she has been studying the craft of writing short fiction and memoir

 1754 25TH AVE REPRESENTED BUYER	 6 ROANOKE ST REPRESENTED BUYER	 2543 16TH AVE REPRESENTED BUYER	 1153.55 FLORIDA ST REPRESENTED BUYER	 690 ARKANSAS ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 471 CLIPPER ST REPRESENTED SELLER
 234-36 VALLEY ST REPRESENTED BUYER	 20 ROSSMOOR DR REPRESENTED SELLER	 310 COLON AVE REPRESENTED SELLER	 3583 SACRAMENTO ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 1866 32ND AVE REPRESENTED BUYER	 330 VERNON ST REPRESENTED BUYER
 751-53 8TH AVE REPRESENTED BUYER	 1117 SANCHEZ ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 351 HIGHLAND AVE REPRESENTED BUYER	 214 MINERVA ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 730 FLORIDA ST #25 REPRESENTED BUYER	 70 LAIDLEY ST REPRESENTED SELLER
 74 LAIDLEY ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 1421 17TH AVE REPRESENTED SELLER	 72-74 PARK ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 1543 MCALLISTER ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 235 WALLER ST REPRESENTED SELLER	 675-677 IVY ST REPRESENTED SELLER



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DECEMBER, 1977  
VOLUME I, NO 8

FREE

NOE  
The Valley Voice

SEASON'S GREETINGS

From Supe to Nuts

By Alan Bell  
and Sarah Smith

If misery loves company, the biggest party should be held in District 5, where 16 hopefuls were defeated in the Nov. 8 district supervisorial race.

Clearing the top with 5,922 votes (30.5 percent of the popular vote), Harvey Milk, Castro Street camera store owner, successfully climaxed his long and involved campaign to win a local seat on the Board.

Milk, among the first constituent-elected San Francisco supervisors in decades, took District 5 by a landslide (actually, more like a cave-in), vanquishing 16 diverse opponents. Following the rapid voter tally, Milk returned triumphal to his many friends and followers, even providing his own motorcade.

The other candidates were not so expansive. Even sliced so thin, loser-pie can leave a bitter aftertaste. The VOICE in its ongoing coverage of neighborhood politics, asked several of the unsuccessful candidates about their views on the election. Although some were unavailable for comment, we did speak with most of the major candidates. Reactions varied widely although opinions were almost unanimous on some points.

Concerning election procedure, the most consistently voiced opinion was that there should be a run-off election between the two top contenders. It was also mentioned, however, that a district race of 17 candidates was an improbable occurrence.

Proper campaign spending estimates varied considerably, from a \$5,000 ceiling advocated by Eric Graham to an "each by his/her own resources" approach favored by Bob St. Clair and Terence Hallinan. Available campaign money, and the lack thereof, was cited as one of the most hindering obstacles to many of the candidates.

Graham, who spent a modest \$1,000 on his cam-

paign (\$500 on posters alone), felt that more publicity money might have significantly enhanced his chances, while St. Clair expressed the view that the more grandiose campaign spending of candidates like Rick Stokes did little to charm the voters in their direction.

St. Clair cited candidate visibility as a crucial requirement in this kind of grassroots politicking.

"I won in all precincts that I walked. In those that others walked, we were second or third. If I had had enough time, I would have walked every precinct," commented St. Clair, lamenting his late entry into the race.

Ron Green also relied heavily on a door-to-door handshake and chat campaign, but it proved less effective for him. (He placed seventh, with 3.4 percent of the vote.)

"I expected to do better than I did. Apparently, there was a minimum amount of money you needed. I was just trying to get my one piece of literature under everybody's door," he said.

Rita George discussed the difficulty a woman encounters in maintaining a financially viable campaign.

"It's much harder for a woman to raise money," she said, arguing that women candidates are still treated differently than men.

"At the second filing of campaign spending, I had raised the second highest amount of money, but my name

Continued on Page 3

Meanwhile, In Other News

Thumbs Up  
On Downzoning

After years of planning and map drawing, the City's Planning Commission has finally unveiled proposals that are designed to enhance the quality of life in Noe Valley and the rest of the City.

The long awaited proposals were undraped Nov. 29 before a crowd so large that the Commission was forced to

move its meeting to a larger room.

Under the plan, the 24th Street commercial area, from Chattanooga to Diamond Streets, would be downzoned. The proposal would restrict commercial establishments to the ground level, although some non-residential uses, such as medical offices and childcare facilities, would be permitted on the upper levels only after a special permit

was sought from the Commission.

The proposal also would require any firm constructing a commercial facility to include a usable and accessible rear yard for upper level residents.

The proposals are not final. They still face public hearings by the Commission, which will then send its recommendations to the Board of Super-

Continued on Page 10

Joy to The Valley,



Our Tree Has Come!

Bring your ornaments, candy canes, pine cones and definitely bring your kids to help decorate Noe Valley's first community Christmas Tree Saturday, Dec. 17.

Santa Claus himself has promised to preside over the festivities, which will begin at 2 p.m. at the corner of 24th and Noe Streets.

The Douglas Fir from Jim and Ed's Rainbow Garden Nursery will adorn the vacant lot, soon to be the home of Olympic Savings and Loan, for two weeks.

Noe Valley's first Community Decorating Day is sponsored by the VOICE and coordinated through the joint efforts of the Noe Valley Merchants Association, the Business and Professional Association of Noe Valley, Friends of Noe Valley and the Noe Valley Ministry.

These groups are donating their time and resources, but money is still needed for lights, utility costs and a fence around the tree. Contribution boxes will be placed in 24th Street shops.



• Christy Wise •

• Carol Casey •

Lavender backdrop

Purple lavender stalks  
exist as vehicles  
for bumble bees  
we catch  
put in jars.

We don't notice graceful  
delicate blooms on thin reeds  
slightly burdened by  
bees' weight.

We see the bees.

Stalks straighten  
after a bee hovers  
to nearby shoot.

Our focus:  
capture many bees  
in tomato sauce jars.

Metal tops punched  
by ice picks  
provide air holes.

A few lavender twigs  
placed inside jars  
recreate habitat  
we disrupted.

No thought  
of anything  
but chase  
capture.

Douglas Fir Dawn

Douglas fir fog  
droplets on soft earth.  
Grapefruit-scent emanates  
from crusty bark.

Blue-green branches  
shelter me.

Dark dawn recedes  
early heat  
peeks through canopy.  
Glorious morning of damp forest.  
Quiet drama.

I inhale understory  
sparkling with yellow violets,  
Redwood sorrel,  
anchored by lady ferns.

Entranced,  
I believe this wonder  
exists for my joy.

I forget.  
I am the interloper.

Bath bombs

For Mother's Day  
my daughter gave me  
bath bombs  
each with its own dissoluble  
capsule containing  
a wish.

What could be better than that?  
my husband asked  
as I paddled  
in foamy lavender bathwater  
played with tiny bubbles  
cascading through my fingers.

Amidst bubbles  
I found a rolled scroll  
half the size of my pinky  
already free of its capsule.

A quote by Coco Chanel:  
"Beauty begins the moment  
you decide to be yourself."

I would like to watch you

I would like to watch you  
listen to a complete sentence  
of mine  
without interruption  
or walking from the room.

I would like to watch you  
look me in my eyes  
when I speak.

I would like to watch you  
say good evening with a kiss  
a smile  
when you come into the house  
from a day downtown  
not hurry to front hall table  
to check mail.

Even more,  
I would like to walk  
with you  
breathe deep  
talk about what troubles you

what draws you  
into yourself  
away from me.

**Christy Wise** is author of *Tangible Terrain*, a poetry chapbook (Finishing Line Press, 2024), and co-author of *A Mouthful of Rivets: Women at Work in World War II* (Jossey-Bass, 1994).

Christmas Day 1986

On this cold and cloudy holiday  
I've made you an apple pie.  
It cools on the counter and all the  
air is cinnamon.  
The wood-fired cottage is warm  
and dry—  
it took a pound of butter to make  
that perfect crust.

I watch through the windows you  
made last summer  
for your dark blue van to alight on  
the drive.

I am waiting to come alive.

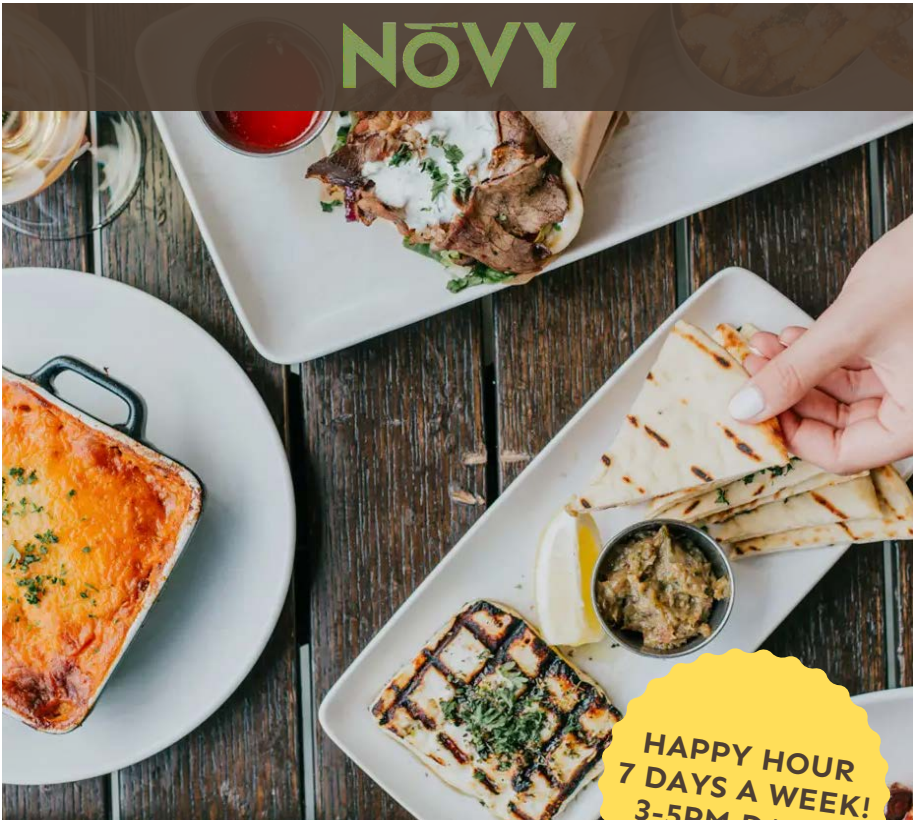
Careless deaths, promises broken,  
why do I trust you will come back  
now?

But here you are! Soon we walk to  
the iced-over river.  
Dog greets dog in frosty grass.  
And tonight, under flannel sheets'  
warm cover,  
we shrug at mere mortality, one  
again until our last.

Crossing Clipper Street  
In Noe

Saturday morning. I stand at the  
corner.  
To my right, a little girl,  
maybe she's three. To her right  
a man, I'm thinking her father,  
who holds her hand. Her  
head reaches below my hip,  
above my knee, and when I look  
down, she looks up at me,  
raising her left hand for me to  
take.  
We three hand holders cross  
Clipper Street.  
On the other side, I must let go,  
continuing on my speedy, solitary  
way.  
All day, though, I am warmed,  
recalling the touch and trust of a  
child  
who helped me cross the street  
today.

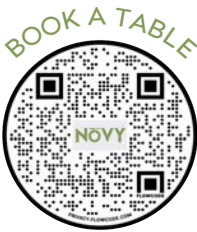
**Carol Casey** poetry has been featured in the *Noe Valley Voice*, *Raquet Journal*, *Community Living Campaign*, *Elder Litquake* and *OWL* (Older Writers Lab) anthologies; and featured in Deborah Slater Dance Theater's *In The Presence of Absence*. She is also a member of Cosmic Elders and Drama With Friends theater ensembles, and Dance Generators inter-age workshop.



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• E.Turner •

Splash and Giggle

On some mornings, I would try to sneak out of the apartment as quietly as possible, trying not to let the heavy metal door clang at the bottom of the staircase. It was impossible to prevent it from making a sound but every time I went for a morning swim I still tried. I'd call an uber to take Riley and I across town to the beach. While we waited, Riley would be so energized, so awake, so loud, I started feeling embarrassed, as I wondered if her voice was going to wake up my entire neighborhood. There hadn't been any traffic on the street on the weekend, especially at that early hour, so her voice boomed off of our neighbors' homes like it was being blasted from a loudspeaker. She was unaware of how much her voice carried, and I always feared our touchy, entitled neighbors might yell from their windows and complain.

Depending on the water temperature, or my mood, sometimes our swims would last as little as ten minutes, sometimes as much as thirty. Afterwards we walked to the playground nearby. There, we'd take turns using the public bathroom and changing out of our suits. We traversed three blocks to a cafe, where we'd sit outside on large benches. Riley would be bundled in her fleece-lined swim parka. I'd be zipped up all the way in my partner's puffy coat, with the hood completely over my head. I must have looked ridiculous, since the coat fit someone who was eight inches taller and sixty pounds heavier. But I didn't care. I needed it to recover. We had no sauna, we had no steam-filled locker room, and we had no hot showers. We were roughing it out there in the raw elements. But I came to prefer it that way. It made me feel like even more of a



maverick. Positioned in the direct sun like lizards, our faces fully lathered with reef-safe SPF 50 out of a metal tin so we didn't contribute to the single-use plastic crisis, we'd thaw out from our plunge. I'd order hot coffee, sometimes a plain croissant or a fruit salad, and Riley would always order a pint of warmed up spaghetti. I never judged her for ordering dinner at ten o'clock in the morning. The cafe's owner, who had taken cooking classes by Lorenza di Medici, was strongly influenced by Italian cuisine. Her recipes were authentic and her tomato sauce homemade.

Riley and I would sit there and have long, wandering conversations as we ate. We talked about the books we were reading, recent New Yorker articles that had been published, our past relationships, all the unfairness in our institutions, and exchange gossip about all the people we both knew. Sometimes, as if Riley were Mary Poppins, she'd pull an astonishing item out of her bag. A container of mini muffins from a bakery, or a dozen

chocolate chip cookies she'd made with ghee, or three large books. I never knew how she fit all of these things into her bag in addition to a foldable bowl, towels, two thermoses, a change of clothes, a pair of sandals, a water bottle, electrolyte mix, a pair of socks, leave-in conditioner, and an assortment of combs.

After the cafe, sometimes we'd walk along California Street. We ducked into bookstores or bought

groceries. The day felt rich, endless, indulgent. By the time we'd part ways, I was fully fed, relaxed, and recovered. It would be mid afternoon, and I'd surrender my body to the couch, where I might catch a nap.

"You've been gone for five hours, and you only swam for ten minutes?" my partner would ask when I got home.

"What did you do, just splash and giggle?" he asked one time. And so the term was coined. We all need rituals when the seasons change, and the splash and giggle became an important part of the week in the winter.

**E. Turner** has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for twenty years. Her writing has appeared in *Swimming World* and *The San Franciscan*.

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• Grace D’Anca •

Best Of Our Love

Early on there was the 1970  
Toyota Corona I painted purple  
but you still drove it.  
Then you had to teach me  
how to drive the mist green  
Fiat 124 wagon, a stick  
with twin cams that made those  
fart sounds you liked so much.

We kept the radio on KRE  
creative radio the dj would say  
so sexy. We were despondent  
when it went Gospel.  
We had the best times in that car  
city driving with Leon  
the spotted hound schlepped  
in the back.

Mostly I remember  
evenings just turning gray  
to black, pausing at the corner  
store on Church. You getting a  
Bud in an aluminum can  
me, a chocolate chip cookie  
from the wide mouth jar  
at the register for a quarter.

I don’t know if we  
would have connected  
had we met at a dance.  
You had such clunky moves  
you liked Creedence Clearwater  
me jazz and soul  
barefoot.

But we loved the Emotions’  
Best of My Love, our song for ever.  
You’d snap your fingers  
and we’d ooh wah ooohh  
waahhh  
along with those glorious girls.

We always said  
we’d play it at our funerals.  
You didn’t want it after all  
but it’s still on my list.

Editor’s Note: The difference in ti-  
tles is intentional – the poem title  
is *Best of Our Love*, the Emotions’s  
song title is *Best of My Love*.



Joey and Dorothy

Uncle Joey met Dorothy at the  
pickle company  
where she answered phones  
and he drove dills around town.  
My first memory of Joey  
was him swirling me in the air  
when he lived with us then.  
I don’t remember

where he slept before he and my  
dad finished off the attic and  
painted  
the whirly plaster walls sherbet or-  
ange.  
The room always smelled  
of Heat liniment Joey used for his  
war injury.  
I used to love to look at his purple  
heart.  
My dad

was too old and too short to go  
overseas.  
He blew the reveille bugle  
in the south instead. It was still  
in the house along with the piano  
no one played, and an old gun  
everyone was afraid of  
on top of the attic rafters.

Mom and dad were happy  
when Joey married Dorothy  
and moved to her folks’ house ac-  
ross the river.  
There was no love lost, they said.  
Still

Joey and Dorothy would bring a  
hoard  
of gifts on my birthday, little pack-  
ages  
wrapped in different papers  
in a large cardboard box.  
I pretended, but hardly ever  
liked those presents  
She does it for herself  
my mom said.  
Decades

later I learned Dorothy died  
from Lou Gehrig’s Disease.  
Rare in women. Joey died  
falling off his bike at age 85.  
Cleaning his house  
I found dozens of matching rings  
made of unremarkable gems  
in his kitchen drawer, cushioned  
in satin inside blue and black boxes  
never worn.  
I don’t remember  
Dorothy

ever wearing a ring  
other than her wedding band.  
She was always clad  
in the turquoise wool skirt,  
and flimsy pink sweater  
I was devastated to see  
hanging in shreds  
from a hook  
in her closet.  
And

there was a bayonet  
and thousands of dollars  
in small bills  
under the dining room table.

Knocking At My Door

No one is knocking at my door  
papers piled but no need to fetch  
them  
everyday or the mail either  
we can look on the phone  
for news we need.

Someone is blowing  
smoke through the keyhole  
masquerading as a knock  
leaving boxes  
in front of the door as if  
a ghost lives here  
with her head in the oven.  
They make a run for it not  
knowing  
I have to wrestle the heavy boxes

by myself with chapped hands.

Wishing  
someone could knock on my door  
or ring the cranky bell  
my grandson  
bolting through the house splash-  
ing smiles  
looking for surprises  
and grandpa.

Someone is knocking  
my gracious neighbor warning  
I’ll get a ticket  
on the ancient Toyota  
petrifying in the same oil drenched  
spot  
where someone squats these  
nights  
leaving greasy glasses  
and edgy memories.  
I fight empathy and call the junk  
man.

There is knocking  
at my door. It’s tomorrow  
the day after doing what’s in front  
of me  
the day after medicines, the day  
after  
making art, the day after dancing  
in the kitchen  
the day after facetime with my be-  
loveds.  
It’s what comes next.  
Knocking.

**Grace D’Anca’s** poetry has  
been featured in *The Noe Valley  
Voice*, *Raquet Journal*, *forum*,  
*Community Living Campaign*,  
*Elder Litquake*, and *OWL*  
(Older Writers Lab) anthol-  
ogies. Her writing has been  
featured in Deborah Slater  
Dance Theater’s *In The Pres-  
ence of Absence*, and RAW-  
dance’s *STEP/STORY/SONG*. She  
is also a member of Cosmic  
Elders, Drama With Friends,  
and Aquatic Park Players the-  
ater ensembles, and Dance  
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• Daniel C. Murphy •

Lovelorn to Love Born

An Ocean Beach sestina

Jack Todd was the City’s loneliest cop.  
He held no sympathy for law-breakers  
As he patrolled the waves at Ocean Beach  
Looking to put an end to any trouble.  
When one Friday night, he saw a dog  
Standing knee-deep in San Francisco sand.

Why was the dog all alone in the sand?  
It was a puzzle for this worried cop.  
With caution, he approached the dog.  
As Jack walked the edge of the breakers  
He thought to himself, “That dog’s in trouble!  
No surprise. Always trouble at the Beach.”

No collar, no tag. A lone dog at the Beach:  
Just a forlorn pup waiting in the sand.  
And now Jack saw even more trouble. . .  
A dead man caught the eye of the cop.  
The body face-down near the breakers.  
Jack could sense the fear of the worried dog.  
He was the dead man’s friend, that sweet dog.

Body and dog left alone on the Beach?  
What had gone down near these lonely breakers?  
Whose footprints were those in the sand?  
The Doxie dog looked up at the cop.  
With his sad eyes, he said “Mister, I’m in trouble.”

“Yes,” thought Jack. “Maybe, we’re both in trouble.  
If I report the body, I’ll lose the dog.”  
Jack was a single man, a lonely cop.  
The year: Nineteen-fifty. His beat: Ocean Beach.  
At Playland, across from the open sand  
A pay phone stood, away from the breakers.

Jack had romanced many a heart-breaker.  
This dog was his chance to end that trouble.  
His new friend was barking from the sand.  
Jack would phone his chief, but omit the dog.  
Tell him only of the body on the Beach.  
A dog would be good for a lonely cop.

Jack carried his new dog across the sand  
To the cop car parked at the Beach.  
No more trouble. Just the sound of breakers.

**Daniel Murphy** Dan Murphy has been a long-time contributor to *The Noe Valley Voice*. He was raised in Noe Valley, and now lives in a Victorian on Church Street with his daughter Georgia, and his grandson Daniel. He tells us that all his family, four children and three grandchildren, have been a great comfort to him after the sadness of the passing of his wife, Lloyd, in June. They had been married for 67 years. Daniel reminds us that a sestina is a fixed verse form of six stanzas. The six words ending the lines of the initial stanza are repeated in successive stanzas, and envoi, according to a fixed pattern.

• Helen Dannenberg •

I Am Old

water to wash dishes  
wash me  
water my plants  
water neighbor Paul's garden  
rivers - not in my life  
always city pavement  
it's what I know  
the ocean is far away  
two or three buses  
movie theaters  
far away  
The Balboa Theater to see the movie Fairyland  
but I cried  
the hero single gay father died  
of AIDS when his daughter was a  
college sophomore  
me a dancer - the AIDS epidemic  
my heart hurts  
I visited a young manager at  
the Acme cafe  
“Oh no” he said “I’m not going to die”  
he did  
I could cry now  
I chose a movie with friends  
maybe the river flowing from us three  
two of us with 83rd birthdays  
October 25, November 7 – eighty-three years old  
flow towards that  
tributaries, streams, life flows until it doesn’t  
I saw a newly remodeled house  
earth only in pots  
no earth in the earth  
a place for a car  
my heart hurts  
glad that I am old  
here I feel the tree bark’s rough welcoming  
shield me tree, you do every morning  
but if the matriarch here goes  
I am afraid  
the young have no connection to you dear tree  
they will pave you over  
sky and raucous birds a keep vigilant watch

**Helen Dannenberg** was raised in Brooklyn, NY and attended Public school and the School of Performing Arts for dance. In SF all modern dancers choreographed so - Choreography Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, touring support, California Arts Council. Back to NYC to perform. Good reviews from the New York Times. Finances necessitated a full-time job. Now retired she takes classes in writing, visual art, theater, and improvisation with SF Parks and Rec City College of SF, OWL (Older Writers’ Lab), Castro Senior Center, ElderLitquake, and the Community Living Campaign. She performs with Cosmic Elders. and would like to publish a small book.



**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, MI7-6290  
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.NoeValleyMerchants.com

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

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

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

**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.

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• Susan Broxon •

Solitude and Scattered Senses

My annual trip to San Francisco, sometimes taken twice a year, did not occur until December this time. With no plans to meet up with friends or family, the experience felt both freeing and unsettling.

Amid the holiday bustle, I wandered alone to Noe Valley, always a cherished destination during my visits, each step steeped with memories. At the Square, the biting cold led to a retreat to Martha & Bros. coffee store. Cradling a cup of hot chocolate, I savored the rich aroma as warmth spread through my numb hands.

I felt the spirit of my twin nephews, Aidan and Finn, knowing they probably visited the coffee shop with my brother-in-law, Tom, just a month earlier. They had traveled to San Francisco from Maine and Vermont for a Celebration of Life honoring Tom's sister-in-law, Linda, a long-time resident who sadly passed away last summer. Her husband, Dan, still calls Noe Valley home.

Then, my thoughts drifted to long-ago Halloweens at my sister Janet's place in Noe Valley, where she lived from 1985 to 2003. I resided in the city briefly from 1984 to 1985 and again from 1990 to 2000, before moving to the East Bay for several years. Ironically, that was when visits to the neighborhood to see my nephews became more frequent.

Although Linda was also an aunt to Finn and Aidan, and close to members of my family, I didn't know her as well. However, I vividly recall her and her daughter, Nora, arriving at my sister's door. Nora, in her adorable dog costume and with her sweet expression, made an unforgettable impression, especially as we had just run out of candy. Later, in 2001 and 2002, my nephews donned costumes and happily trick-or-treated around the community in their double stroller until they and their parents moved to Maine in 2003.

Eventually, the breeze from the open door at Martha's sent shivers down my spine, causing me to move on. I departed 24th Street, passed through Dolores Park, walked up Market Street, and weaved into the Tenderloin. Ellis Street lay silent under a hazy sun, a shocking divergence from the disturbing chaos I had witnessed in October 2023. The emptiness hung thick with no trash, no people, no noticeable odors, just an eerie stillness that stirred mixed feelings of relief and concern. Where had everyone gone?

Further up the way, laughter echoed from a lively group, their bright faces standing in stark contrast to the somber stares in October 2023.

I kept going, ending up at the Ferry Building, where I boarded a boat to Treasure Island for the first time. As I went to buy my ticket, the attendant told me, "The credit card machine is down, so you ride for free today."

Despite the wind gusts, I climbed to the ship's deck, becoming exhilarated by the vessel's wild sway as it cut through the churning waters. I gripped my seat, trying to steady myself against the motion.

Across the bay, the weathered buildings and rugged shoreline revealed forgotten stories, starkly different from the newly revamped park I had read about. Gazing out at the skyline, thoughts of my dear friend Victor filled my mind. We bid him farewell at his memorial dinner in August 2024. On that trip, a portion of his ashes was scattered into this bay, a heartfelt goodbye to a special friend.

Since I could no longer share my journey with Victor, I texted his sister, Maria, who lives in Georgia. She understood his silence better than anyone else, and our text communication flowed easily. We shared our sentiments about the encouraging changes and the question marks in the beloved city where Victor lived for more than forty years.

As the boat whipped through the bumpy waters on the way back to town, I clutched my seat once again, riding the waves of nostalgia.

During the rest of my stay, I remained near my hotel in North Beach by the Wharf. The streets buzzed with activity, yet an inexplicable shadow loomed over them. The Wharf, usually vibrant, appeared strangely quiet. I had not been in San Francisco during the holiday season since 2006, and I missed its festive energy. While Union Square might have offered a

brighter vibe, I opted for a more serene path. The calm around me hinted at a broader shift, even considering the city's positive transformations.

In fact, while exiting the boat, I overheard fellow passengers grumbling about rising costs. One voice stood out, calling the man in charge "crazy," prompting the captain to intervene, urging, "Please don't say his name."

Back in my hotel room, I turned on the heater, sinking into a chair by the floor-to-ceiling window, mesmerized by the twinkling lights and the iconic silhouette of Coit Tower. In that comforting warmth, a sense of wonder rekindled within me, chasing away the day's chill and the worries of the world.

**Susan Broxon's** debut piece *Farewell for Now*, appeared in the November, 2003 edition of *The Noe Valley Voice*. Recent revisits to the community inspired *Sunshine and Strawberry Schmaltz*, *Sunday Sunday*, *Savoring the Sentiment*, *Bittersweet Street Sensation*, and *Sweet Sailing Mr. Santos*. She currently lives in Newport Beach.



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