

# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## City Approves Noe Valley's First Pot Store

Cannabis Shop Has Gone  
Through The Mill

*By Matthew S. Bajko*

**C**ity officials have cleared the way for the first pot store to open in Noe Valley.

Sharon Cassidy, who owns the building at 3751 24th St. between Church and Chattanooga streets, and her business partner, Alexander Solis, plan to open the business in the retail space that had housed the women's clothing store The Mill until 2018. With signage for the closed store still existing on the façade of the building, Cassidy intends to use the name The Mill for the cannabis retail store as well.

The San Francisco Planning Commission voted April 23 to grant them the conditional-use permit they needed to move forward with the pot store. The plan is for the business to be open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

There will be two security guards working when the store is open, and patrons will not be allowed to use or consume marijuana inside the store or near the premises. Only those 21 years of age or older will be allowed to shop there.

"I will be directly accountable for anything that occurs in or around the property," noted Cassidy, a real estate agent and second-generation San Franciscan, during the planning commission meeting.

Solis, whose grandmother is originally from Nicaragua, grew up nearby on 27th

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**Listening to Hazel and Violet.** These Noe Valley sisters have a message for us all. And their suggestion is apt for any time, not just while we shelter in place. For more wisdom from the girls, see Katie Burke's column *Noe Kids* on page 17.

*Photo by Art Bodner*

## Ruth Asawa Celebrated on Forever Stamps

New Book on Her Work and Life Also Published

*By Olivia Boler*

**I**n April, the legacy of Noe Valley artist Ruth Asawa (1926–2013) was extended in two ways. Chronicle Books published a new book about her work and life, *Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa*, by Marilyn Chase.

In addition, the United States Postal Service announced it would depict Asawa's famous wire sculptures, some of which hang in the de Young Museum, on its Forever stamps this year.

USPS will feature 10 of Asawa's signature abstract wire sculptures on a pane of stamps. The pane will include 20 stamps—two copies of each sculpture—and will be available for purchase on Aug. 13. Usually there is a dedication ceremony, but USPS is waiting to see what social-distancing protocols will apply in August. If they can hold the ceremony, it will take place in San Francisco.

The photos of Asawa's sculptures were taken by Dan Bradica and Laurence Cuneo. The selvage, which is the part of a pane's margin paper that often gives information about the stamps, will feature a photo of Asawa that was taken by Nat Farbman in 1954, for *Life* magazine.

Asawa lived a storied life. At the age of 16, she and her family were forced from their home in the farming community of Norwalk, in Southern California, where she was born. They were sent to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

## Noe Valley Man Recovering From Covid-19

Grateful to Have Support  
Throughout Ordeal

*By Liz Highleyman*

**N**oe Valley resident Mark Khoury is glad to be alive, after spending two weeks on a ventilator as a result of Covid-19, the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

"Statistically, I shouldn't be here now, but somehow I pulled through," Khoury, 56, told the *Noe Valley Voice*. "Every day I'm getting a little bit better. I'm thankful they kept me alive."

Khoury began developing symptoms of the disease in early March, not long after undergoing successful surgery for ocular melanoma. At first, his doctor told him to stay at home, take Tylenol, and rest as long as he was still breathing easily.

But a week later, after Khoury's temperature reached 104, his husband, Steve Baechtle, took him to the emergency room at California Pacific Medical Center on March 20. As reported in last month's *Voice*, Khoury was promptly ad-



**Together at Last:** Steve Baechtle and Mark Khoury endured three weeks of hell while Khoury (right) was in isolation at California Pacific Medical Center.

mitted and intubated, and he soon tested positive for the coronavirus.

Khoury spent two weeks in intensive care under sedation on a ventilator and remained in the hospital for another week after that. "They wanted me to stay for a few more days because I wasn't quite where they wanted me to be, but I wanted to get home so badly," he recalled.

Like Khoury, about 20 percent of people who come down with Covid-19 will develop severe respiratory disease, for reasons still not completely understood. It may be attributable to lung damage caused by the coronavirus or to a hyper-



**Biking Miles With Smiles.** Local entertainer, artist, and youth league umpire Owen Baker-Flynn is spinning his wheels to deliver more meals.

*Photo by Art Bodner*

## Performer Sidelined by Pandemic

Juggling and Umpiring on Hold During Social Distancing

*By Matthew S. Bajko*

**F**or comedic fire-juggler Owen Baker-Flynn, the show can't go on. Nor is he

able to use his umpire skills to call baseball games.

All of his performing and officiating gigs came to a halt in early March, due to the novel coronavirus outbreak. He has

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## OPENSFHISTORY



**Two Taking in the View:** In 1955 you could ramble along Portola Drive and see a still-developing Noe Valley and the city beyond from this vantage point above Grand View and 25th streets.

Photo and information courtesy OpenSFHistory.org / Western Neighborhoods Project / David Gallagher

# ON SALE

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**May Flowers.** Looking up provides the usual visual treat on 24th Street.

Photo by Jack Tipple



## A BIG THANK YOU

Thank you and congratulations to Mike, Gaby, and the chefs at Diamond Cafe for their contribution and service to our community's healthcare workers. Since the shelter-in-place started in March, Diamond Cafe has provided hundreds of meals to front line hospital workers.

If you care to help them and support their efforts to feed non-profits and other in-need people, please visit <https://gofundme.com/f/diamondcafe24> to contribute to this important cause.



Mike and the chefs are also creating family-style take out meals for purchase during the SIP. They are open everyday from 7 AM to 2 PM and are located at the corner of Diamond and 24th Streets. **Order ahead by calling (415) 655-3674.**



### Team Brannigan

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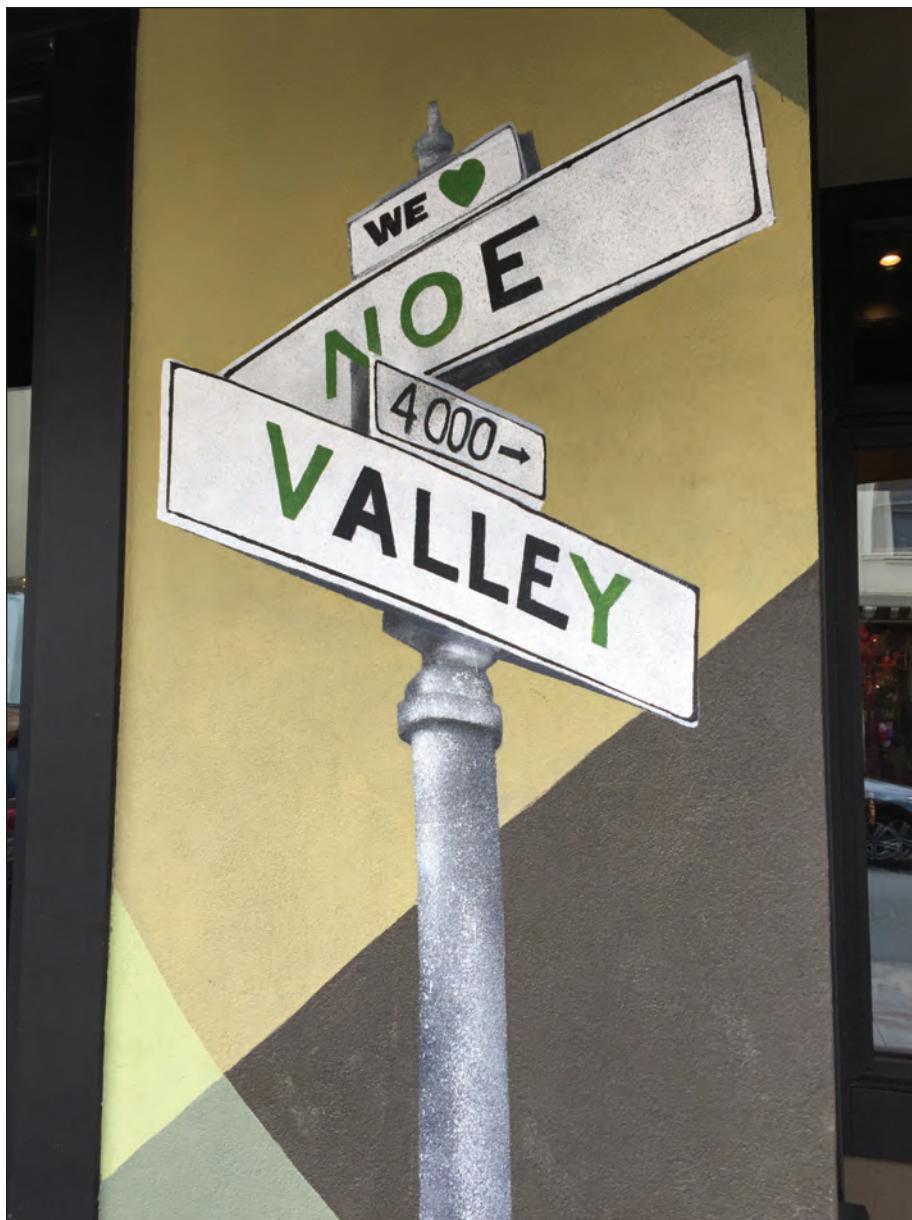
[info@teambrannigan.com](mailto:info@teambrannigan.com)

[teambrannigan.com](http://teambrannigan.com)

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COMPASS

## Valley Views



**Love Will Keep Us Together.** As this portion of the mural on the exterior of NOVY restaurant attests, this unique neighborhood is strengthened by the most powerful force on earth.

Photo by Jack Tipple

### Action SF, The National Movement in Your Neighborhood

[www.facebook.com/actionsfsolidarity](http://www.facebook.com/actionsfsolidarity),  
<http://resistrypac.org>  
 Email: actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com; Zoom virtual meeting: First Sundays, 1 to 2:30 p.m. All welcome. See ActionSFteam@gmail.com

### Al-Anon Noe Valley

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

### Castro Community on Patrol

Website: castropatrol.org  
 Next volunteer patrol training Tuesday, March 10, 7-10 p.m. Sign up via website.  
 Email: info@castropatrol.org

### Diamond Heights Community Association

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

### Dolores Heights Improvement Club

Email: info@doloresheights.org  
 Website: [www.doloresheights.org](http://www.doloresheights.org)  
 Meetings: Third Thursday of every second month. Bank of America, 18th and Castro.  
**Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)**

Contacts: Deanna Mooney, 821-4045;

Diane McCarney, 824-0303; or Sally Chew,

821-6235

Address: 560 Duncan St., SF, CA 94131

Meetings: Call for details.

### Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association

Website: <https://evna.org>

Address: P.O. Box 14137, SF, CA 94114

Meetings: See website calendar. Castro Meeting Room, 501 Castro St., 7 p.m.

### Fair Oaks Neighbors

Email: hello@fairoaksneighbors.org

Address: 200 Fair Oaks St., SF, CA 94110

Street fair is the day before Mother's Day.

### Friends of Billy Goat Hill

Contact: Lisa and Mo Ghotbi, 821-0122

Website: [www.billygoathill.net](http://www.billygoathill.net)

## MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

### Friends of Dolores Park Playground

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

### Friends of Glen Canyon Park

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

### Friends of Noe Courts Playground

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

### Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)

Contact: Todd David, 401-0625  
 Email: info@friendsofnovely.com  
 Website: friendsofnovely.com  
 Meetings: Two or three annually. Meeting Dec. 4, 7 p.m., Umpqua Bank, 3938 24th St.

### 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 (FUNDOG)

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

### Glen Park Association

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

### Juri Commoners

Contact: Dave Schweisguth, MI7-6290  
 Email: dave@schweisguth.org  
 Website: meetup.com/Juri-Commoners  
 Meetings: Most last Saturdays, 9-noon.

### Friends of Billy Goat Hill

Contact: Lisa and Mo Ghotbi, 821-0122

Website: [www.billygoathill.net](http://www.billygoathill.net)

## Pooch Contest a Win-Win!

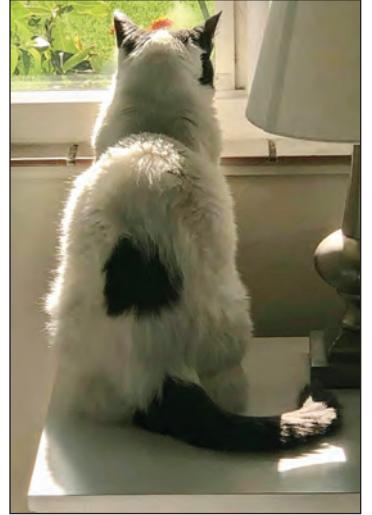
**C**ongratulations to the winners of a photo contest held on social media last month by Beverly Ulbrich, known in these parts as The Pooch Coach. The prizes were gift certificates she had purchased from two local pet supply stores, The Animal Company on Castro Street and Noe Valley Pet Company on Church.

Ulbrich wanted to do something to help businesses and pet owners during our shelter-in-place. She purchased \$100 and \$50 gift certificates from the pet stores, then asked them to pick winners in a contest hosted on her Facebook page. It was a way "to help businesses stay alive by giving them income at the same time as helping residents who may be struggling to get supplies," she said.

The contest winners, announced April 20, were Jen Sinquefield, for her photo "Kitty" (\$100, The Animal Company); and Lana Svetlana, for "Archer" (\$50, Noe Valley Pet Company).

Ulbrich also bought gift certificates to restaurants and posted pictures of her dog Musik in front of the eateries to remind viewers that Noe Valley businesses needed support. The story was featured in the KRON 4 News series "Heroes."

To catch the latest news from The Coach, go to SF Dog Connect by The Pooch Coach Dog Training on Facebook or @thepoochcoach on Instagram, or write info@PoochCoach.com.



**First Place:** "Kitty" by Jen Sinquefield won a \$100 gift certificate to The Animal Company, courtesy The Pooch Coach. Sinquefield describes Kitty as "16 years old and longing to 'play' with birds."



**Top Dog:** "Archer" by Lana Svetlana was awarded second place and a \$50 gift certificate to Noe Valley Pet Company. Svetlana says Archer is a 4-year-old chihuahua-whippet mix who is "my best friend in the entire world."

### Outer Noe Valley Merchants

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

### Progress Noe Valley

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

### Resilient Noe Valley

Contact: Antoinette or Jessica  
 Email: [resilientnoealley@gmail.com](mailto:resilientnoealley@gmail.com)  
 Newsletter signup:  
<http://eepurl.com/gYuCD5>  
 Website: [www.empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley/](http://www.empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley/)

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

Contact: Noe Valley NERT Neighborhood Team co-coordinators Maxine Fasulis, [mfasulis@yahoo.com](mailto:mfasulis@yahoo.com); Carole Roberts, [carole\\_roberts@faluji.com](mailto:carole_roberts@faluji.com)  
 Website: <https://SF-fire.org>  
 Free NERT training available; see list of classes at [SF-fire.org/neighborhood-emergency-response-team-NERT/](http://SF-fire.org/neighborhood-emergency-response-team-NERT/)

### San Jose/Guerrero Coalition to Save Our Streets

Contact: Don Oshiro, 285-8188  
 Email: [contact@sanjoseguerrero.com](mailto:contact@sanjoseguerrero.com)  
 Website: [sanjoseguerrero.com](http://sanjoseguerrero.com)  
 Meetings: See website.

### Stand Up San Francisco

Contacts: Laura Shapiro, Phyllis Ball,  
 Paul Silverman  
 Email: [info@standupsf.net](mailto:info@standupsf.net)  
 Website: [standupsf.net](http://standupsf.net)  
 Meetings: At offices of members of Congress, weekly.

### Upper Noe Neighbors

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

All phone numbers are in the 415 area code.

**THE NOE VALLEY VOICE**

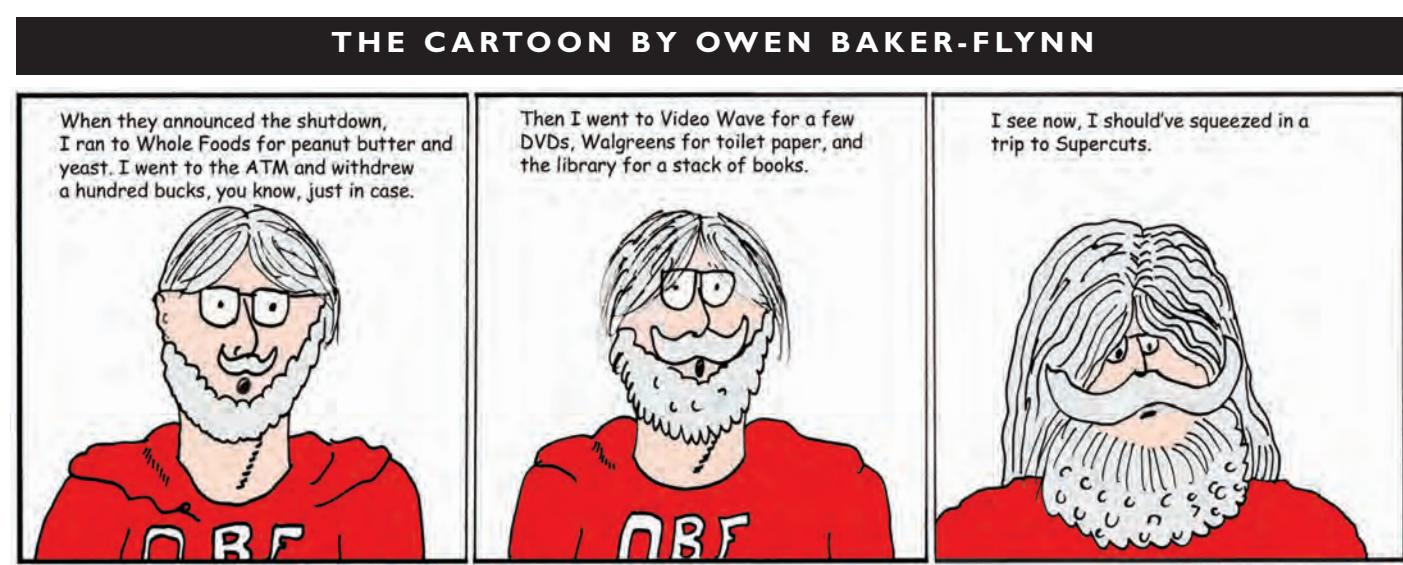
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CO-PUBLISHERS/EDITORS  
Sally Smith, Jack Tipple  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AND EDITORS  
Corrie M. Anders, Associate Editor  
Olivia Boler, Other Voices Editor  
Heidi Anderson, Matthew S. Bajko, Owen Baker-Flynn, Karol Barske, Michael Blake, Katie Burke, Janet Goben, Liz Highleyman, Jeff Kaliss, Doug Konecky, Richard May, Roger Rubin, Tom Ruiz,  
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS  
Art Bodner, Pamela Gerard, Najib Joe Hakim, Beverly Tharp  
ACCOUNTING  
Jennifer O. Viercek  
PRODUCTION  
Jack Tipple, André Thélemaque  
DISTRIBUTION  
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## LETTERS

### We Will Get Through This Together

Editor:

What we are currently experiencing with Covid-19 is unlike any other challenge we have seen in our lifetimes. It is natural to feel anxious and fearful with so much uncertainty and disruption to our day-to-day lives. In the face of these challenges, I want to share with you a message of hope and provide information about City resources that you may find useful.

We will get through this together. Over the past few weeks, I have been inspired by the incredible acts of courage, kindness, and generosity that I have witnessed in San Francisco. Neighbors are looking out for one another. People are getting groceries for those who cannot leave their homes and helping vulnerable individuals get connected to City services that are available to them. People are volunteering to make face coverings for health care workers, residents are cheering in thanks for first responders, and companies are stepping up to provide personal protective equipment and support additional Covid-19 testing.

I have been especially inspired by the gen-

erosity of San Franciscans and the contributions we have received to the Give2SF Fund. We created the fund to provide the most vulnerable San Franciscans with food security and access to housing, and provide additional support for small businesses and workers. As of April 22, we've received over \$10.5 million in donations and pledges.

If you are able, I hope you'll consider contributing to Give2SF. You can learn more and donate at [Give2SF.org](http://Give2SF.org). If you're not able to contribute financially, but are still interested in volunteering to help your fellow San Franciscans, go to [sf.gov/covid19volunteer](http://sf.gov/covid19volunteer).

Over the coming weeks and months, we need to continue to support one another, and be kind to ourselves, and focus on what really matters—our health and the health of our loved ones. I want to thank San Franciscans for complying with the City's Health Orders. It's important that we continue to stay home, maintain social distance, and cover our faces when outside for essential needs. For information about the City's response to Covid-19 and to learn more about the services available to you, please go to SF.gov or call 311.

Mayor London N. Breed

### From Noe Valley Chamber Music

Dear Friends:

The world has changed very quickly in just

a few weeks, and we hope that you and your family are safe. This unprecedented territory calls for two things. First, gratitude. We are deeply thankful for your ongoing support—none of what we do would be possible without you. And second, a request for help.

Our primary goal is to keep the music playing, but we can't do it without your support. Canceled concerts have left artists, technicians, and presenters in dire financial straits. As we look toward our next season, the logistical and financial complications of Covid-19 require us to find new ways to engage audiences and make ends meet. We are committed to honoring our financial commitments and supporting the people who, without live performances, cannot make a living. That's why we need your help.

Now more than ever, your help will shape the future of Noe Valley Chamber Music. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift at [www.nvcm.org](http://www.nvcm.org).

We look forward to the day we can gather again. Until then, we will need to be agile and we will continue to serve you and our prized Bay Area artists as best we can. We are working hard to make sure that no matter the circumstances, we keep the music playing—whether it's online, in a living room, or in the concert hall. Take care and stay safe!

Meena Bhasin and Owen Dalby, NVCM

## THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

### In Transit

#### ACROSS

1. Urges, perhaps too much

6. \_\_\_ Rima ("Arabic Comfort Food" place on Church)

10. Russian ruler

14. "Well, golly"

15. Cousin of -ette or -trix

16. Saintly glow

17. \_\_\_ Hansen of public radio

18. Macintosh predecessor

19. Colored eye part

20. Transit from Potrero Hill to Noe Valley

22. Do a film critic's job

23. "Take \_\_\_" (request to a secretary)

24. Musketeer with Porthos and Aramis

25. Filming locale

28. Way different (from)

30. "\_\_\_ Bulldog" (nickname of evolution promoter T.H. Huxley)

32. Over the speed limit

36. Pop singer Easton

37. Pamplona pals

38. Trendy bakery hybrids

40. Taste, on the Thames

41. The Waste Land poet

43. Bradley and Asner

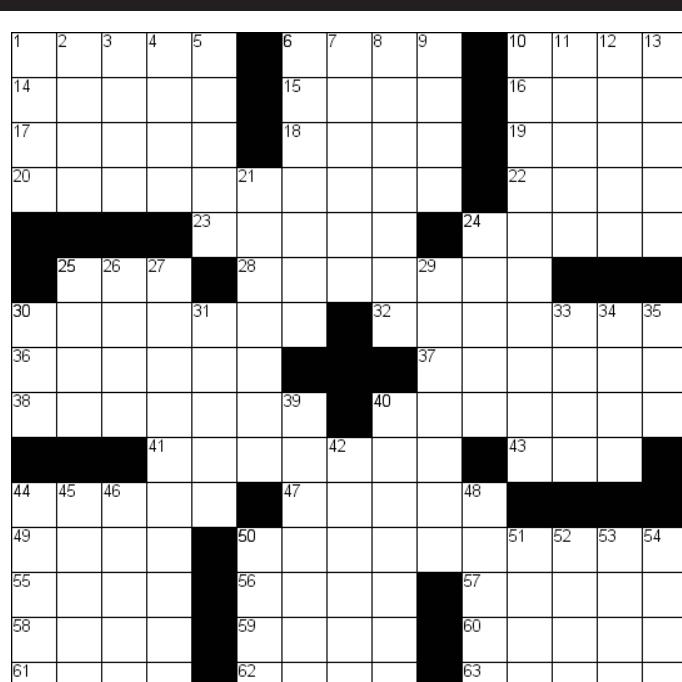
44. Fiddler patriarch

47. Ancient Peruvians

49. Name of five Norwegian kings

50. Transit downtown, when Muni Metro isn't running

55. Prefix with -drama



56. Hawaiian guitars, for short
57. Pot \_\_\_ : dinner entree
58. Org. defending the Bill of Rights
59. "Fiddling" Roman emperor
60. Sleep \_\_\_ : snoring cause
61. Recipe direction
62. Paradise
63. Needing neatening
- DOWN
1. Harding Park sport
2. The Buckeye State
3. Bio lab gelatin
4. Fender bender result
5. "So long!"
6. Personal convictions
7. Puzzle
8. "To sum up..."
9. Udder part
10. Transit from Glen Park to Noe Valley
11. *The Terminator* character Connor
12. Justice Samuel \_\_\_
13. Valentine's Day dozen
21. Spring (from)
24. Pleasant smell
25. Cowardly Lion portrayer Bert
26. Big Stuf cookie
27. Transit from the Castro to Noe Valley
29. Medicinal-shampoo ingredient
30. Brit. military honor
31. Lavatory sign
33. "Yes, there is \_\_\_!" (believer's statement)
34. \_\_\_ -chef (number two kitchen person)
35. Dungeons & Dragons co.
39. Oiled (down), as hair
40. Pay strict attention to
42. "Hey!" from someone who's hiding
44. "Doubting" apostle's name, in Spanish
45. Vote into office
46. Frankie of The Four Seasons
48. "Beat it!"
50. Father's Day month
51. Wish (for)
52. Prohibits
53. Exploits
54. Command to Fido

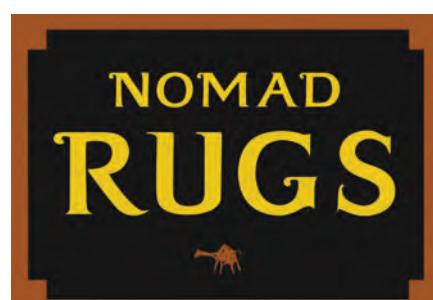
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Even in Pre-Pandemic Times many Noe Valley streets are quiet for most of the day as this photo of 27th and Church Streets illustrates.

Photo by Najib Joe Hakim

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## 'Stay Safe' the Watchword in Quiet Noe Valley

By Corrie M. Anders

The streets of Noe Valley seem pretty safe in these early days of the coronavirus quarantine.

Sure, there's been at least one street mugging, a burglary at a local bar, and an incident of storefront vandalism, resulting in a few boarded-up windows.

But San Francisco police, community, and business leaders say Noe Valley has been relatively free of crime since Mayor London Breed imposed a shelter-in-place order March 16, requiring all but "essential workers" to stay home.

"I'm not seeing a ton of crime in Noe Valley," said Rachel Swann, current president of the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association.

Neither is Mission Station Captain Gaetano Caltagirone. "Crime hasn't increased or decreased," he said in an initial assessment.

Hard data on criminal activity in the neighborhood since mid-March won't be available until next month, said Jessica Closson, a 10-year Noe Valley resident and District 8's community liaison for public safety.

"When we get them, I think they will probably show that crime is down," said Closson, who in her liaison role works closely with the San Francisco Police Department.

One possible reason is that police have been more visible in the neighborhood, either walking regular beats on 24th Street or driving patrol cars and occasionally flashing their emergency lights to announce their presence to potential ne'er-do-wells.

Another is that with so many people

working from home and taking breaks to walk the dog or run around the block, thieves have had fewer chances to swipe delivery packages off front steps or break into parked vehicles.

"The fact is that a lot of opportunistic crimes [now] can't take place, because people are staying at home," said Closson.

The incidence of car break-ins, "often-times the focus of organized fencing rackets," also has slowed because there is "not a lot of tourism right now," Closson said. "So that's been taken away from criminals."

That doesn't mean Noe Valley residents should let down their guard, however.

In an April 14 daylight robbery on Church Street near 27th Street, two female teenagers robbed a woman and escaped with her wallet and smartphone. The woman suffered a scraped knee, but was not injured otherwise.

"We want folks to be very aware of their surroundings when they go out for their walks," said Closson. "Because there are fewer businesses open, there is not a safe haven out there. Don't be immersed in your phone. Don't go out late at night."

In the early days of the stay-at-home order, burglars hit The Peaks, a Castro Street bar that's been around since 1938.

"It really breaks our hearts to share that The Peaks has already been broken into [and] it is only week two of the shelter in place," owner Keli Leal posted April 4 on a newly formed GoFundMe page.

That same week, windows were shattered at nearby Hamano Sushi, causing the restaurant to close for repairs. (It has since reopened and is offering takeout 5 to 8 p.m.)

Such vandalism prompted PlumpJack Wine & Spirits and Locksmith Central, both on 24th Street, to install plywood sheets over their glass storefronts.

and it takes a while for them to filter out of your body.

"When I first came out of the hospital, I was having a hard time walking. I would stand in the kitchen to try to make breakfast and couldn't finish," Khoury continued. "Every day that's gone by, I get stronger. I'm going for longer walks. But things I used to be able to do very easily, I'm finding harder. My mind's not working the same way and I can't focus."

Khoury learned that he had been treated with several different medications in the hospital. Among them, according to Baechtle, were the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine and the antibiotic azithromycin—a regimen touted by President Donald Trump—but Khoury was taken off that combination because he was not responding.

There are currently no approved medications for Covid-19, and none have been proven to work in randomized clinical trials that compare them against a placebo. But lacking other options, desperate doctors have been trying anything they think might help their patients, especially those with severe disease.

"My doctor is trying to figure out what pulled me out of this, but we're not 100 percent sure," Khoury said. "It was sheer luck, and I guess my desire to live was stronger than my desire to go."

Khoury has been tested twice for the coronavirus, and both tests came back negative. Nonetheless, he is nervous about the stigma surrounding the disease. "The minute people find out I was hospitalized, they want to



In early April, police were making their presence known on 24th Street, whether walking the beat or stopping for a breather at a coffee shop or food outlet.

Photo by Sally Smith

"I did that because my insurance doesn't cover broken windows, and each one is \$1,000," said Locksmith Central owner Michael Young. His business is now open only for house calls.

Swann said the merchants association is working with the police department and

with Resilient Noe Valley to coordinate safety measures and communicate with local residents and businesses. Resilient Noe Valley, a group affiliated with the city's Neighborhood Empowerment Network, has launched a digital newsletter with tips and resources for dealing with Covid-19 or other emergency situations. The newsletter dispenses information on everything from how to make a face mask to which stores are open in Noe Valley to how many coronavirus cases have been recorded in the 94114 and 94131 zip codes.

Caltagirone says the main focus for police has been preventing crimes of opportunity. To that end, officers have been telling restaurants that are open for takeout or delivery to not keep cash or valuables in their business after hours.

Another priority, Caltagirone said, was "educating people about social distancing." Most Noe Valley residents are complying with restrictions, he said, but a few have ignored signs or barriers to play tennis at Noe Courts or basketball at Upper Noe Recreation Center.

"They've been warned, and they continue to do it," he said. "We don't need to be dealing with that." Police have to be free to handle more serious problems.

Also, Caltagirone said, "there have been a few businesses in Noe Valley"—which he declined to name—that have kept their doors open, even though they were not deemed "essential."

Still, in the first month of shutdown, police had yet to issue a citation in Noe Valley, Caltagirone said.

"The last thing we want to do is shut a business down. Times are hard right now," he said. "I'm very compassionate about the people in the district. I like to be able to reeducate instead of citing."

Write to us:  
editor@noealleyvoice.com  
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## Neighbor Recovers From Covid-19

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

active immune response, or to both. Doctors have recently reported that Covid-19 not only attacks the lungs, but can also lead to strokes, heart problems, and kidney failure.

Although early reports from China showed that people under 60 accounted for only a small proportion of severe illness and death, a later study of more than 4,000 early U.S. cases found that 12 percent of people who required intensive care were in the 20 to 44 age range and 36 percent were ages 45 to 64.

Because of the risk of transmission, Khoury was kept in isolation at the hospital. During that time, Baechtle was told to quarantine at home. "It was excruciating to be home and not able to visit Mark, especially when he was coming off the ventilator and coming out of sedation," he told the *Voice*.

Khoury was released on April 10 and is recovering in Forest Hills on the Russian River. By the end of the month, he was feeling well enough to describe his ordeal.

"When I came out of sedation, I felt like I was revisiting my childhood in Israel—I was asking the nurses to give me a falafel sandwich," he recalled. "But things became clearer every day. Being under sedation involves lots of drugs,

be not just six feet but at least 10 feet away. I've tested negative twice, but I totally get it—this is a very scary thing."

As far as he knows, Khoury has not been tested for antibodies to the virus. Most experts think that people who have developed antibodies will have some protection against future re-infection, but it is not yet known how long this immunity might last.

Khoury remains cautious and is not confident he's immune. "We really don't know much, and the test isn't 100 percent accurate," he said.

For his part, Baechtle never tested positive for the coronavirus, but he thinks he may have had it and recovered a few weeks before Khoury's hospitalization. The test for the virus itself becomes negative when someone recovers.

Antibody tests, which can reveal who has been infected in the past, could help get a better handle on how widely the coronavirus has spread. Efforts to expand testing in San Francisco are under way, including a recent initiative that offered both virus and antibody tests to all residents in a several-block section of the Mission District.

Khoury said he is grateful not only to the hospital staff but also to his caretakers—especially Baechtle—and to friends who dropped off food and provided support, as well as to the organizations that reached out to offer help.

"I'm finding myself appreciating a lot of things differently now," he said. "I'm not able to fully process it all yet—I just take it one step at a time."

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## First Pot Store for 24th Street

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Street and has worked as a bartender and server at various restaurants around the city.

"We have been trying to get this since March 2018," he told the oversight body during its virtual meeting.

A nearby resident voiced concerns during the meeting about the business being a draw for crime at night, since it is in a residential neighborhood that doesn't see much foot traffic after 8 p.m. The only other member of the public who called into the meeting voiced his support for seeing Noe Valley finally have its own cannabis store.

The business had overwhelming support heading into the meeting, with close to 40 letters of endorsement from residents and nearby business owners. Just three people had expressed concerns about the business, in particular about the chance it could attract young people.

The Mill is not located within a 600-foot radius of a private or public school. Thus, it was not prohibited from opening on that block of 24th Street. The nearest

schools are St. James School at 321 Fair Oaks St., which is 750 feet from the store, and Valle De Niños Preschool at 984 Dolores St., which is 770 feet from the site.

In response to people's concerns, Cassidy and Solis have designed the space to keep under-age buyers from coming into the store. There will be a security checkpoint at the main entry to prevent minors from gaining entrance.

Display cases and the sales areas will be set back from the storefront's floor area nearest the windows fronting the sidewalk so there will be limited visibility of the pot products to pedestrian onlookers.

It is unclear how soon The Mill will open to patrons. Marijuana retailers have been considered essential businesses during the coronavirus outbreak, and city officials announced April 29 that all construction projects could resume if precautions were taken to protect the safety of workers.

At this time, there are no plans to allow for use or consumption of marijuana inside the store. The planning department added a requirement that if in the future the pot store decided to establish a smoking or vaporizing room at the site, then it would need to go through a public permit review process in order to do so. ■

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## Juggler-Cartoonist-Comedian-Umpire Does Deliveries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

performed monthly at Oakland's Children's Fairyland since 1998 and at San Francisco's Pier 39 waterfront shopping and dining complex for even longer.

Routinely hired by local libraries to entertain children, Baker-Flynn has had to mothball those performances as well. It remains unclear when he will suit up again to call strikes and foul balls at high school baseball games, now that the rest of the academic year will be held remotely.

And depending on how long social-distancing rules are in effect because of the health crisis, Baker-Flynn, 63, may be unable to stand in for Santa Claus this holiday season at parties and special appearances. The jack-of-all-trades has been assisting St. Nick since first being hired to portray the jolly old soul in 1992 at the now-defunct Emporium department store.

"There is nothing on the horizon until May or June," said Baker-Flynn in early April. "I know some of my friends are doing shows online somehow. They are a little more tech-savvy than I am."

A sporadic delivery person in the past for UberEats, Baker-Flynn has turned to hopping on his bike most days to pick up and deliver takeout orders, now that he has plenty of time on his hands. He averages six to eight orders and can clock 15 to 25 miles per day on his five-year-old Breezer Greenway 21-speed bike.

"I have no idea where or why I get sent," he said. "I haven't made any pickups in Noe Valley, but I have made deliveries in Noe Valley." He said he often finds himself grabbing packaged lunches from Mixt in the Mission.

He has gotten a few \$10 tips in the past month, from people thankful he is working as a delivery person so they can remain at home. His biggest tip was close to \$40 from Twitter employees last fall, when he delivered three platters of sandwiches he had balanced on the back of his bicycle to their offices on Market Street.

"It was the biggest order I delivered," he said.

The one thing he won't pick up is pizza. "If I got going [on the bike], with the wind, those flat boxes could just fly off."

### Masked Pickups

He isn't too concerned about contracting the virus while delivering meals, as he hardly interacts with anyone at the eateries and nowadays leaves the food at people's front doors and then notifies them by phone their order is there. While riding his bike, he doesn't wear a mask but does when he goes inside restaurants to pick up the food.

"I carry hand sanitizer and use that a lot. I wear a mask when going into places. I can't wear it when riding. I exhale so hard it steams up my glasses and I can't see where I am going," said Baker-Flynn.

"I am concerned but I am not worried. It might not be smart, I don't know. If the mayor had told me to stay home, I would have stayed home, but she said people delivering food are an essential service."



Performer Owen Baker-Flynn can't work his gigs at Pier 39 or Oakland's Fairyland, so he's riding all over town for UberEats. Photo by Art Bodner

Except for when he was sidelined four months for knee surgery in 2017, Baker-Flynn has been performing for audiences practically since he first took up juggling in 1975.

"One thing led to another. I don't think I ever decided this was what I was going to do. I knew when I was very young all I wanted to do was get up and do funny things in front of people," he said.

### Fire in His Belly (Not)

Back in his native state of Rhode Island, Baker-Flynn studied theater and took up acting. He performed in a few mime shows in New York City, where he also worked as a bike messenger, before bringing his fire-juggling skills west in the 1980s. He briefly added fire-eating to his act but jettisoned the trick because he didn't care for the taste.

"It's really nasty," he recalled.

Baker-Flynn, who has drawn monthly cartoons for the *Noe Valley Voice* since 2012, released his *My Second Book of Cartoons!* last April. He and his wife, Laurie, first moved to the city in 1982 and have called Noe Valley home for 31 years, having raised their son and daughter in the neighborhood. Laurie Baker-Flynn, also a Rhode Island native, is a teacher at Alvarado Elementary School.

Despite being unable to perform his act or umpire games, Owen Baker-Flynn stressed he and his wife are doing fine.

"It is a challenge right now, but it is not like we are struggling. There are people out there who are struggling," said Baker-Flynn.

It touched him, on a recent trip to Valencia Street, to see a homeless person adhering to the new protocol. "He was 'sheltering in place' and sweeping his area."

### Cross-Country Dreams

While he would like to get back to performing in May, Baker-Flynn acknowledged it could be some time before he is again amusing audiences. With his act on hiatus, he is practicing at home to retain

his skills and working on a few new tricks for when he can remount his shows.

"Despite what [President Trump] wants, the virus is going to dictate when things reopen. Not the president, me, or anybody," he said. "I am working on some new things, but I am desperately trying to hold on to what I can do."

Both of the Baker-Flynns' children are currently in Massachusetts, prompting Owen and Laurie to consider moving back to New England at some point. Their daughter works at a bakery in Somerville, while their son is a student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

As for any future plans, Owen Baker-Flynn is preparing to ride his bike cross-country in the spring of 2022 from San Francisco to Providence, where his mom lives. He did the route in reverse in 1975, when he spent two months riding a bike from Riverside, R.I., to San Diego.

"I don't know yet if it will be solo. My daughter is threatening to come along," he quipped. "My wife is saying she will drive the support vehicle."

To learn more about Baker-Flynn's performing schedule or to hire him for parties or events, visit his website at [ob-f.com](http://ob-f.com).



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**Clear Skies with a Chance of Healing.** This peaceful view from Billy Goat Hill may serve to remind us of the comfort that waits for the end of the pandemic.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

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## Post Office Honors Ruth Asawa With Forever Stamps

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

one of 10 internment camps, along with 120,000 other Japanese Americans during World War II. Asawa and her family spent some time in the stables at the Santa Anita Park racetrack before being sent to a camp in Arkansas. During her time there, she took art instruction from other internees, including cartoonists who had worked on Disney productions.

After her release, Asawa traveled to Mexico. She had planned to become a teacher, but friends advised her that, as a Japanese American, she probably wouldn't find employment so soon after the war. Instead, she attended Black Mountain College in North Carolina. One of her professors, Josef Albers, a Bauhaus master of color field and Op Art, encouraged Asawa's experimentation with wire sculpting. She said she'd been inspired by egg-carrying baskets she'd seen in Mexico and had figured out how to crotchet wire into various curving shapes.

In 1961, Asawa and her husband, architect Albert Lanier, moved to Noe Valley. Together they raised six children. The couple devoted themselves to making and promoting art, not only from their home studio on Castro Street but at the Noe Valley Library and in sites across the city.

With Sally Woodbridge, a school parent at Alvarado Elementary School, Asawa co-founded the Alvarado Arts Workshop in 1968 and later helped students plant a garden at the school.

In 2010, San Francisco's public arts



A pane of stamps depicting 10 wire sculptures by Ruth Asawa will be issued and available for purchase on Aug. 13.

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high school was renamed the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts in her honor. Asawa, with husband Albert, had been instrumental in establishing the school in the early 1980s.

"I would really like people to realize how much Black Mountain College inspired my mother and how important it was to her that artists teach children art," said her youngest son, Paul Lanier, now 60. "While attending Black Mountain College, she was profoundly inspired by the experience of collaborating with and being taught by internationally renowned working artists. It was her experience as a young woman at Black Mountain that drove her to be a fierce advocate for arts education and lead the charge to launch a public high school for the arts in San Francisco."

Asawa is known locally and in the art world for her public fountains and sculptures, many of them collaborations. *San Francisco Fountain* (1973), which is outside the Union Square Hyatt Hotel, is a bronze casting of hundreds of figures done by San Francisco school children, friends, family, and of course Asawa herself.

Paul Lanier worked with her on the sculpture titled *San Francisco Yesterday and Today* (1984) at the Parc 55 Hotel on Cyril Magnin Street.

"I know that Ruth's story can serve as a powerful inspiration, especially in these difficult times," Lanier said. "Many have seen her work in the lobby of the de Young tower, or at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, or her many fountains and public works, but they may not know her impact on and passion for arts education locally and nationally. Her body of work is now being recognized outside of California. The Pulitzer Art Foundation in St. Louis had a show re-

cently, as did the David Zwirner Gallery in London. She is also in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim, the Whitney, and the New York MOMA, among others. Plans are in the works for an exhibition in Norway and in the UK."

Lanier grew up in Noe Valley—along with siblings Aiko, Addie, Xavier, Hudson, and Adam (who passed away in 2003)—and attended Alvarado and James Lick Middle School, as did his children. He's also been an artist-in-residence at Alvarado and at Ruth Asawa School of the Arts. He and artist Nancy Thompson led the creation—by students, teachers, and community members—of the Alvarado Elementary mural that can be seen on Eureka Street. It was dedicated to Asawa in 2000.

"It's wonderful that our mother is receiving the same recognition as her two most important mentors at Black Moun-

tain College—Josef Albers and Buckminster Fuller—who were also honored with postage stamps," Lanier said.

"With her recognition and honor by the U.S. Postal Service, more people will be able to see her sculptures and perhaps be curious to learn about her amazing life story—growing up on a farm in Norwalk, being interned, raising a family, and creating an impressive body of work as an artist and activist."

*For information about the book Everything She Touched: The Life of Ruth Asawa, go to the author's website, MarilynChase.com. To purchase the biography through Folio Books, go to Folio's online store at bookshop.org/foliosf. Once ordered, the book will be shipped to the buyer's address.*



Ruth Asawa and Albert Lanier were the parents of six children. This photo shows Ruth with three little ones—Addie, Adam, and Paul—in 1961, when the family moved to Noe Valley. Courtesy Estate of Ruth Asawa



Journalist Marilyn Chase has written a new biography of Ruth Asawa, *Everything She Touched*, which draws on the late artist's archives and extensive interviews with family, friends, and colleagues.

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## Lesbian Pioneer Phyllis Lyon Dies at 95

By Liz Highleyman

**L**esbian rights pioneer Phyllis Lyon, a longtime Noe Valley resident, died peacefully at her home of natural causes on April 9, 2020. She was 95.

Lyon and her wife, Del Martin, co-founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first national lesbian organization in the United States, in 1955, the same year they moved to the neighborhood. A year later, they started *The Ladder*, the first monthly publication for lesbians, which they produced—often at their kitchen table—until 1972.

In 2004, Lyon and Martin made headlines as the first couple to legally marry in San Francisco after then-mayor Gavin Newsom directed city officials to begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

"It doesn't seem that different being married, since we've been together 51 years," Lyon told the *Noe Valley Voice* at the time. "I thought it would happen sometime, but that we wouldn't see it. We're very honored to be chosen to be the first."

Four years later, after the California Supreme Court ruled that the existing state ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional, Lyon and Martin were the first couple to be legally married in California, in a ceremony conducted by Newsom. Not long after that, Martin died at age 87 in August 2008.

"Phyllis and Del were the manifestation of love and devotion. Yet for over 50 years they were denied the right to say two extraordinary words: 'I do,'" Newsom said on Twitter after Lyon's death. "Phyllis, it was the honor of a lifetime to marry you and Del. Your courage changed the course of history."

Lyon was born on Nov. 10, 1924, in Tulsa, Okla. She graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1946 with a degree in journalism. She worked as a reporter in Fresno and Chico in the 1940s and on the editorial staff of a trade magazine in Seattle in the early 1950s, where she met Martin.

Lyon and Martin moved to San Francisco in 1953, first living in a flat on Castro Street and then moving to a house on Duncan Street, where they would reside for the rest of their lives.

Duncan Street neighbors Pauline Shulman and Diane McCarney were close friends of both Lyon and Martin. "Phyllis was open and genuine and befriended people easily," Shulman said. "She was well liked in the neighborhood, and as she got older everyone watched out for her."

Lyon worked as an assistant to Rev. Cecil Williams at Glide Memorial Church for more than 30 years. Williams credited her with encouraging him to make the church more welcoming to LGBTQ peo-



Phyllis Lyon, pictured at a 2008 memorial for wife and lifelong partner Del Martin.  
Photo by Liz Highleyman

ple. She was a co-founder and longtime director of the National Sex Forum, a sexuality education and research group, and a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality.

Lyon and Martin co-authored *Lesbian/Woman*, published in 1972, one of the first books to positively portray lesbian lives. They were the first out lesbians to join the National Organization for Women, and they were active in efforts to decriminalize homosexuality in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They helped organize the Alice B. Toklas Democratic Club, San Francisco's first gay and lesbian political group, in 1971.

Mayor George Moscone appointed Lyon to the city's Human Rights Commission in 1976. In 1989, Lyon and Martin joined Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, and they were delegates to the White House Conference on Aging in 1995.

Lyon-Martin Health Services, founded by a group of medical providers and health activists in 1979, was named in honor of the couple. Now part of HealthRIGHT 360, the service specializes in care for women and transgender people. Memorial donations in Lyon's honor can be made to the clinic, which has faced financial struggles in recent years.

"[Lyon] was a true champion of LGBTQ rights and San Francisco was incredibly lucky to have her leadership and activism," Mayor London Breed said in a statement.

"Phyllis changed countless lives for the better. [She] helped advance civil rights protections, created robust support networks for LGBTQ people, and established political and advocacy organizations that continue her work to this day. Importantly, Phyllis was a symbol of hope and courage for San Franciscans and people around the world."



Barbara Ann Bedell  
1950–2020

**K**nown to her friends as "B2," Barbara passed away, symmetrically enough, on 2/20/2020 in the ICU of UCSF Moffitt Hospital. She passed very peacefully.

Barbara was born in Santa Monica, Calif., on May 16, 1950, and graduated from Santa Monica High School. She then went to Northwestern University and became a dental hygienist. She moved to San Francisco in 1986 and worked for many years at the 24th Street dental office of Drs. Barry Kinney and Coragene Savio. Barbara and her husband, William Metzler, traveled often through Europe and Asia. They were married on a small island off the coast of southern Thailand. They retired in 2002 and moved to lovely Rio Vista, Calif.

Barbara was pre-deceased by her parents, Martha and Harry, and by her brother, Craig. She is survived by cousins Christine Jensen of Las Vegas; Ann Gertz of Avon, Conn.; Ruth Fortune of Saranac Lake, N.Y.; and Bill Duquette of Hickory, N.C.

She leaves behind a broken-hearted husband, a legion of sad friends, and an extended Metzler family who loved her dearly.

She was a delightful human who lit up the room with her smile and her laughter.

We wish to thank the wonderful staff of UCSF for their incredibly loving care.

# WE WILL BE BACK!

Though our Noe Valley businesses have been stopped or impeded during the pandemic, they're hanging in there and staying safe until they can open doors to full service again.

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Noe Valley businesses remain committed to providing their neighbors and friends with the best service possible and look forward to seeing you again (unmasked).

**WE WILL BE BACK!**

# FIREFLY RESTAURANT



Huge thanks to our neighborhood for all your support by purchasing gift cards while we hunker in place ([fireflysf.com/giftcertificate](http://fireflysf.com/giftcertificate)). We're definitely coming back as soon as possible and can't wait to cook for you again. And eventually, there will be hugs!

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# SHORT TAKES

## Help Homeless Pets Eat

Do you have unused pet food you could donate to a good cause? Noe Valley resident Paula Benton heads up Full Belly Bus, a San Francisco nonprofit that aims to help homeless people care for their pets. FBB is conducting a pet food drive, with donation sites in Noe Valley.

Unexpired containers of dry and wet pet food are welcome. Drop-off locations are Martha & Brothers Coffee at 1551 Church St. (7 a.m. to 1 p.m., seven days a week), the UPS store at 4104 24th St. (Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.), and the farmers market at the Noe Valley Town Square on Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Donors may also arrange no-contact porch pickup by texting 415-525-9528, or they can order online and have donations shipped to 4104 24th St., #937, San Francisco 94114.

The main FBB goal, Benton says, "is to help people keep their pets and make a dramatic reduction in the number of cats and dogs entering San Francisco's animal shelters."

She also is on staff at San Francisco Animal Care & Control, in the behavior and training department. Plus, she owns Paula Benton Dog Training.

For information about the full range of Full Belly Bus's good works, go to [fullbellybus.org](http://fullbellybus.org).

## Join the Club

Noe Valley Chamber Music has found a way to keep the music playing. Although the classical series has had to can-



The Noe Music Listening Club hosts a virtual evening with composer Jake Heggie on Thursday, May 7, at 7 p.m. See [nvcm.org](http://nvcm.org).

*Photo ©Ellen Appel*

cel the remainder of its 2019-2020 season at the Noe Valley Ministry in compliance with city health orders, it has transformed its popular Noe Music Listening Club.

Formerly situated in neighborhood living rooms, the club is now live-streaming every other Thursday via Zoom, and everyone is welcome to join the interactive "deep-listening experience." Each event will feature a different guest artist. "It could be anything from guided listening of their favorite recordings to a deep dive into a particular musical genre," says co-artistic director Owen Dalby. Sessions start at 7 p.m., and run for two hours.

On Thursday, May 7, American composer and Noe Valley resident Jake Heggie will star. Heggie has composed several operas, including *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Dead Man Walking*, and *Moby Dick*.

Thursday, May 21, two-time Oscar nominee and Emmy award-winning composer Nicholas Britell will be the special guest. The movie scores for *Moonlight*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*, and *Twelve Years a Slave* are among Britell's credits, and he also composed the score for the television series *Succession*.

To find out how to sign up, go to [nvcm.org](http://nvcm.org) or [noemusic.org](http://noemusic.org) and look for Noe Listening Club. Cost is a sliding scale from \$0 to \$20.

## Garden Tour No, Art Fest Maybe

The 2020 Noe Valley Garden Tour, originally scheduled for Mother's Day, May 9, has been postponed to 2021 because of Covid-19 concerns, according to Friends of Noe Valley committee chair Linda Lockyer of Noe Street. The new date is Saturday, May 8, 2021.

"We were really sad," Lockyer said, "because everybody puts a lot of time and effort into the tour."

The good news is this year's intended beneficiaries of tour proceeds—the James Lick Middle School garden and the 30th Street Senior Center garden—will still receive donations from Friends of Noe Valley.

Although there was a full complement of gardens this year, the committee will consider additional gardens starting in November and decide on the final nine or 10 early next year. If you'd like your garden to be considered for 2021, email Lockyer at [lindalockyer3@gmail.com](mailto:lindalockyer3@gmail.com).

The theme will be "Art in the Gardens," and will include art and music in the gardens.

The garden tour was the second Friends of Noe Valley event canceled this year. The first was Word Week, which had been set for March.

However, the group has tentative plans to hold a Noe Valley Art Festival this fall. Lockyer projects 35 artists in all genres exhibiting *plein air* in the Town Square. The Voice will provide details as plans develop.



The 30th Street Senior Center garden is one of two recipients this year of grants from Friends of Noe Valley. The other is the garden at James Lick Middle School.

*Photo by Lisa Erdos*

## Cocktails à Go-Go

Tired of just wine or beer for your evening drink? Want to impress your Zoom cocktail hour friends without breaking the bank on a full liquor cabinet—not to mention a fast online course on bartending? Never fear.

Noe Valley Wine & Spirits at 3821 24th St. offers a selection of mixed drinks in pop-top cans and bottles, including old-fashioned, margueritas, negronis, Moscow mules, greyhounds, highballs, and spritzers. Owner Don Norton reports, "There is a demand." Place your orders online at [noevalleywineandspirits.com](http://noevalleywineandspirits.com). No walk-in orders or delivery. The store will email you when your drinks are ready for pickup.

Noe Valley restaurants with full bars report only wine and beer to go, with one definite and one possible exception. Owner Jose Calvo-Perez of Fresca at 3945 24th St. agrees with Norton that people are asking. He'll decide by May 1. If so, he'll focus on margueritas and three versions of Fresca's signature pisco sours. Check the website, [frescasf.com](http://frescasf.com), or call 415-695-0549.

The Liberties at 22nd and Guerrero, in the far northeast corner of Noe Valley, is the definite exception. It confirmed that since it is a restaurant with a full bar, Alcohol and Beverage Control (ABC) allows it to serve to-go cocktails with to-go food. Check [TheLiberties.com](http://TheLiberties.com) for open hours and ordering details.

## Live and on YouTube

All three Noe Valley bookstores remain temporarily closed during our shelter in place, but Charlie's Corner, the children's bookstore, continues to offer live story times over its YouTube channel, at 12 noon and 3 p.m. each day. Plus, you can access its archived storytime videos anytime at [charliescorner.com](http://charliescorner.com).

Bird & Beckett in next-door Glen Park is also streaming its book events and music concerts over its YouTube channel. Watch poetry readings Mondays, May 4, May 18, and June 1, from 7 to 9 p.m. Featured readers will be followed by a virtual open mic Sunday, May 17, from 2 to 3 p.m. Greg Harmon reads from his children's book *The Tar Pits Cantos*, in which animals from the Ice Age tell their stories

## Meals for Seniors

On Lok 30th Street Senior Center has adapted its popular meal program to meet high demand and to ensure the area's seniors stay connected and safe during this time of social distancing.

Normally, the center's kitchen at 225 30th St. prepares 400 hot midday meals daily to serve in its first-floor dining room and five other dining rooms around the city. Now the dining room is closed, and meals are available only on a take-out basis.

Monday through Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., kitchen staff are at the door ready to hand out a packaged lunch to anyone who walks up. Prior registration is not required. A sign asks a \$2 donation for seniors and \$6 for non-seniors, but no one is denied service. Cash donations go into a large donation box on the table to avoid changing hands.

The food is cooked, packaged, and frozen the day before. Visitors receive just one meal at a time. A typical lunch, which comes in a paper bag, has an entrée of turkey meatballs with noodles and mixed vegetables, a half-pint of fat-free milk, fruit juice, and a banana. The menu rotates daily.

In addition, the center is continuing its meal-delivery program for homebound seniors.

To find out more about either home-delivered meals or the take-out lunch program, call the center at 415-550-2226.

—Christopher Faust

in 13 poems inspired by the La Brea Tar Pits. Leslie Simon, a professor in Women's Studies at City College, reads from her work Sunday, May 24, 2 to 3:30 p.m. The Jazz in the Bookshop series will live-stream the band every Friday "after work," from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

You can also still buy books locally, too. Go to [Bookshop.org/shop/foliosf](http://Bookshop.org/shop/foliosf) to buy books, and our full-range independent bookstore, Folio Books, will receive a percentage of sales. Order books from Omnivore Books on Food online at [omnivorebooks.com](http://omnivorebooks.com) for pickup or shipping.

## In Times of Stress

No one needs to tell you that stay-at-home is stressful. Between home-schooling the kids, working at home, and handling the anxieties of the Covid-19 pandemic, it's heavy.

Resilient Noe Valley can help you learn how to handle the stress and prepare for future situations during personal-preparedness classes online on Wednesday, May 6, and Wednesday, May 13, from 10 to 11 a.m.

You can attend one or both, but registration is required at [empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley](http://empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley). Video conferencing is by Zoom. If you don't already have Zoom on your laptop, tablet, or phone, download it for free at [zoom.us/freesignup](http://zoom.us/freesignup).

The classes are also free to Noe Valley residents, merchants, and people working at businesses in our neighborhood.

Resilient Noe Valley is our neighborhood volunteer group, established in 2018, to protect the health and well-being of neighborhood residents before, during, and after disasters and other stressful times. Find out more at the registration site for these events. You can also sign up for the group's readable and informative newsletter.

This month's Short Takes were written by Richard May.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**THE VOICE** welcomes your letters to the editor. Write Noe Valley Letters, P.O. Box 460249, San Francisco, CA 94146. Or email [editor@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:editor@noevalleyvoice.com). Please include your name and contact information. (Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication.) Be aware that letters may be edited for brevity or clarity. We look forward to hearing from you.

# The Cost of Living in Noe

## Before the Storm

By Corrie M. Anders

Welcoming in the first month of spring, residential shoppers in March purchased eight single-family detached homes in Noe Valley, including two that cost more than \$4.5 million.

Seven new condominium owners also moved into the neighborhood, according to data provided to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Global Living San Francisco.

The March figures likely do not reflect concerns about Covid-19 in San Francisco, because the home sales were initiated in February, before Mayor London Breed took actions to help curb the spread of the virus.

Any impact from the shelter-in-place order, which went into effect March 16, will show up in April's real estate data,



This elegant Italianate in the 3800 block of 23rd Street sold in March for \$4,950,000.

and that won't be available until mid-May.

During the semi-quarantine, real estate agents have been classified as "essential workers." However, they must comply with strict rules when showing homes for sale. "It's like feeling your way around in the dark," said Corcoran President Randall Kostick. "We are all trying to figure out what's going to happen, and no one really knows."

What is known is that the March sales reflected an eagerness to buy in Noe Valley, long appreciated for its mix of Victorians and sleek contemporary buildings.

Though buyers bought four fewer single-family houses than they had in March a year ago, they were quicker to pull the trigger and paid higher prices this go-round.

On average, buyers ponied up 15 percent more than what sellers wanted. And offers typically came in less than two weeks after a property hit the market, compared to a three-week lag in 2019.

The two most expensive homes sold in March were luxury renovations with expansive views of the city.

A buyer paid \$4,950,000—6 percent below the seller's asking price (\$5.25 million)—for a three-bedroom, 3.5-bath home in the 3800 block of 23rd Street



A three-bedroom penthouse in this building in the 500 block of 27th Street fetched \$2.3 million in March. Photos by Jack Tipple

## Noe Valley Home Sales\*

Total Sales	No.	Low Price (\$)	High Price (\$)	Average Price (\$)	Avg. Days on Market	Sale Price as % of List Price
<b>Single-family homes</b>						
March 2020	8	\$1,876,544	\$4,950,000	\$3,242,818	13	115%
February 2020	5	\$1,400,000	\$4,398,000	\$2,879,600	14	112%
March 2019	12	\$1,410,000	\$4,988,000	\$2,329,917	22	109%
<b>Condominiums/TICs</b>						
March 2020	7	\$780,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,564,286	23	112%
February 2020	4	\$1,050,000	\$2,070,000	\$1,506,750	9	109%
March 2019	7	\$670,000	\$1,760,000	\$1,177,857	24	110%
<b>2- to 4-unit buildings</b>						
March 2020	4	\$1,900,000	\$7,538,938	\$3,447,235	52	101%
February 2020	4	\$1,050,000	\$2,070,000	\$1,506,750	9	109%
March 2019	0	—	—	—	—	—
<b>5+ unit buildings</b>						
March 2020	0	—	—	—	—	—
February 2020	0	—	—	—	—	—
March 2019	0	—	—	—	—	—

\*Survey includes all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. Noe Valley for purposes of this survey is loosely defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The Voice thanks Corcoran Global Living San Francisco for providing sales data. NVV5/2020

between Sanchez and Vicksburg streets. With attention paid to its 1900 Italianate façade, the property had been enlarged to 3,432 square feet and remodeled to feature a gourmet kitchen/family room leading to a landscaped patio garden, a master suite with balcony, two decks, a top-floor "pent room" with wet bar, solar panels, and a two-car garage.

The asking price of \$4.5 million captured the next priciest home, located on a cul de sac in the 500 block of Valley Street between Castro and Diamond streets. Sitting on a double lot, the home, built in 1910, was renovated in 2015 to house five bedrooms and three bathrooms on three

levels. Amenities in the Japanese-style residence included a wood-burning fireplace, an ultra-modern kitchen, a yard with a private deck and fire pit, a media room, balconies with city views, and two-car parking.

The top-selling condominium, found on the 500 block of 27th Street, carried a final sales price of \$2,300,000—\$50,000 below its asking price.

Located on a bluff above Noe Street in a complex built in 1986, the penthouse condo featured three bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 2,300 square feet of living space, an updated kitchen, two outdoor viewing spaces, and parking for one car. ■



Claudia Siegel



Your Noe Valley Expert

Claudia Siegel is more than just a Realtor®, she's your Noe Valley neighborhood expert. She's lived in San Francisco for 30+ years as a parent, dog owner, and green-certified professional, and she truly cares about this neighborhood. Her keen perspective on our unique real estate market is as sharp as ever.

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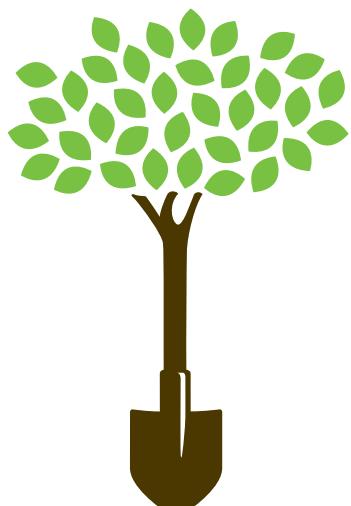
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## A New Sisterhood for Violet and Hazel Matthew

**V**iolet and Hazel Matthew, sisters who live on Whitney Street, feel lucky to have each other.

"I don't have to do all the chores on my own because my big sister does work too," 9-year-old Hazel says.

Ten-year-old Violet thinks she's the fortunate one. "Being the bigger sister is better because I'm kind of in the middle between my parents and Hazel," she says. "I kind of understand what's going on in the world, and I always have to explain it in kid language to Hazel."

"It's kind of a thing," Hazel agrees.

Both girls attend Synergy School on Valencia Street, Violet in fourth grade and Hazel in third.

Mom and Dad are Allison Muir and Jack Matthew. Muir is a fiction writer with her own interior design business, and Matthew is an Apple software engineer and a musician.

The family has two dogs: Zelda, a long-haired chihuahua almost 16, and Moxie, a 1-year-old pomeranian.

The dogs don't feel quite as connected as Violet and Hazel.

"Moxie nips at Zelda," Hazel reports.

"All Moxie wants to do is play, and it bothers Zelda," Violet says.

Hazel's love for animals led her to become a vegetarian. "I was a



Hazel and Violet miss their friends at school but are adapting to life at home, where they have art, music, and two dogs to entertain them.

Photo by Art Bodner

pescatarian, but I don't really like fish anyways," she says. She loves risotto, which their Mom and Dad both make.

Hazel wants to become a veterinarian, but not on the emergency side. "I'd like to do checkups," she says.

Violet likes to eat salads, "especially Caesar salad," she says. "My favorite food is mac and cheese, straight from the box, with extra cheese powder."

She wants to be a waitress when she grows up. "I just like how you can talk to people," she says. "I don't know. It just feels right."

Violet is a social being, after all. She is a member of her school's Eco Team, Girls Club, Art Club, and Book Club. Members of Eco Team "talk about the world, the ecosystem," she says, and how to care for the earth.

Of Girls Club, Violet says, "It's kind

of like a time where you get to support equality for girls and stuff. You also get to talk how you want."

Hazel says one of the best parts of school is "sharing," where students bring something from home to show to their classmates. Last year, Hazel brought one of her dogs.

Hazel also likes art. "I like drawing the most," she says. "I like this picture of this dog I made. It was a terrier. Once I get back to school, I'll color it."

Both girls discussed being at home during San Francisco's shelter-in-place order, which began in March.

"I miss all my teachers," Violet says. "Now I have to see them virtually, but I like just seeing their faces in person."

Hazel says, "I miss my friends the most."

Violet concurs. "I don't like that the coronavirus keeps you inside and you

can't go to school," she says. "School has always been a part of me."

Asked what she has learned from the coronavirus, Hazel answers, "That germs can evolve into different things, and they can be dangerous [or] harmless, but I think it's in between for me because I'm a kid. There's still a chance I could get it, so I want to be extra safe."

Violet says, "Once you are worried about coronavirus and you don't know what's going around the world, you're squished together with your family, then you can get to know them better."

She says she and Hazel have a lot in common, something Violet did not realize before this sequestered time.

The girls are in a band with their friend Presley. Violet plays drums and guitar and sings, and Hazel plays keyboard. The girls practice with a teacher in their dad's music studio.

Violet and Hazel look forward to visiting Upper Noe Rec Center, Russo Music, and Patxi's Pizza when they can get back out in the world.

Hazel adds, "I can't wait to go outside and run more."

Katie Burke is a writer and family law attorney, who lives where Noe Valley meets the Mission. Her Noe Kids column features interviews with Noe Valley kids ages 4 to 12. In April 2020, Burke published a collection of profiles of San Francisco kids, titled *Urban Playground* (SparkPress). Know a great Noe Valley kid? Email katie@noevalleyvoice.com.

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**May 1-3: CREATIVITY**  
EXPLORED hosts an online silent auction, "Life Changes Art." Bidding starts May 1 at 3 pm, and ends May 3 at 9 pm. 863-2108; preview the artwork at [creativityexplored.org](http://creativityexplored.org).

**May 1-3:** The San Francisco Public LIBRARY offers story times and career coaching online. The Noe Valley Library hopes to resume programs, classes, and events Monday, June 1, 2020. See [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org).

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

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

**May 1-31:** Charlie's Corner hosts a Zoom talk by authors Bob Shea and Adam Rex, noon to 1 pm, on May 1, then continues with virtual STORY TIMES daily on YouTube, noon and 3 pm. For info: [charliescorner.com](http://charliescorner.com).

**May 1-31:** The Randall Museum's BUG MONTH includes activities, contests, and demonstrations, and a new theme each week on its Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube sites. 554-9600; [randallmuseum.org](http://randallmuseum.org).

**May 1-Jan. 19, 2021:** John Martini leads a virtual tour of Sutro's Glass Palace at SF HISTORICAL SOCIETY website, [sfhistory.org](http://sfhistory.org).

## • MAY, 2020 •

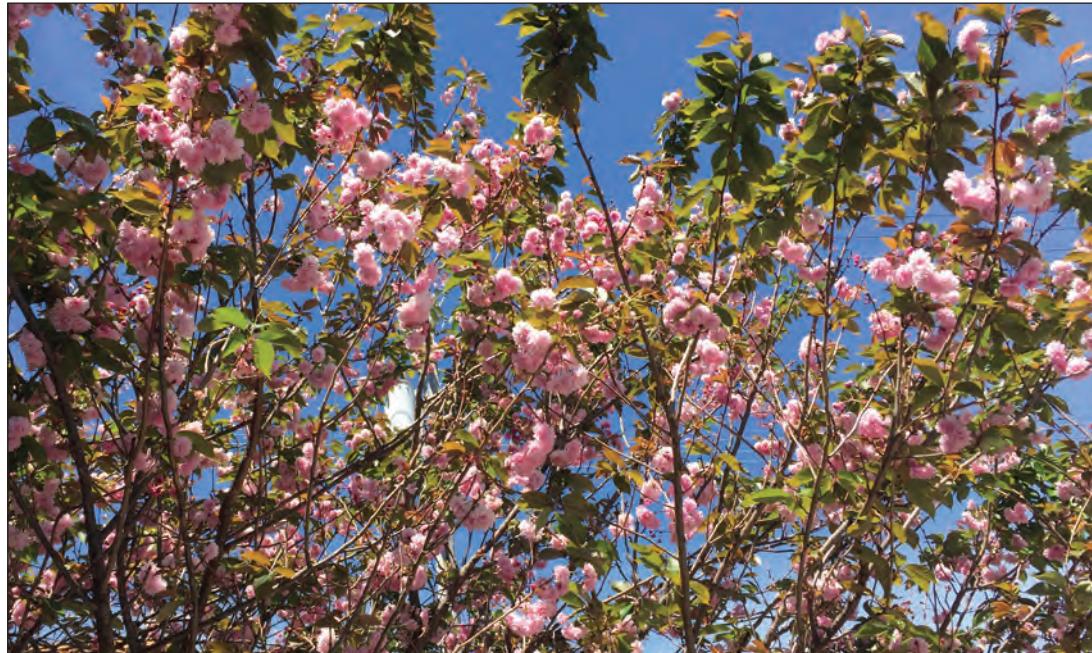


Photo by Jack Tipple

**May 2 & 7:** Drop off your kits for the homeless, at Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez, 10 to 11:30 am, on May 2, and at Holy Innocents, 455 Fair Oaks, 5:30 to 6:30 pm, on May 7. See items checklist at [empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley](http://empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley).

**May 2-30:** Masks and social-distancing are required at the Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET, open Saturdays 8 am to 1 pm (8 to 9 am for seniors). 3861 24th. 248-1332; [noevalueyfarmersmarket.com](http://noevalueyfarmersmarket.com).

**May 3:** Political group ACTION SF hosts a virtual meeting, from 1 to 2:30 pm. Email [actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:actionsfsolidarity@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom meeting link.

**May 4 & 18; June 1:** Bird & Beckett bookstore hosts POETRY READINGS followed by a virtual open mic on YouTube. 7-9 pm. Live jazz streamed Friday, Saturday and Sunday. 586-3733; [birdbeckett.com](http://birdbeckett.com).

**May 6 & 13:** RESILIENT Noe Valley offers community resilience trainings via Zoom to deal with shelter-in-place stress. 10-11 am. To sign up: [empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley](http://empowersf.org/resilient-noe-valley).

**May 6-27:** The Castro FARMERS MARKET is open every Wednesday, 2:30 to 7 pm, with the first hour reserved for seniors. Noe at Market. [pcfma.com](http://pcfma.com).

**May 6-27:** Holy Innocents Episcopal Church holds a VIRTUAL POTLUCK Wednesdays on Zoom. 7 pm. For sign-up info: 824-5142; [holyinsf.org](http://holyinsf.org).

**May 7:** Noe Valley Chamber Music's NOE MUSIC Listeners Club offers a concert by Jake Heggie. 7 pm. Sign up for Zoom access at [nvcn.org/nmlc](http://nvcn.org/nmlc).

**May 16:** The Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project hosts a virtual HISTORY WALK, "A Trestle Ran Through It: Early Days in Glen Park Village." For log-in info, [GlenParkHistory@gmail.com](mailto:GlenParkHistory@gmail.com).

**May 17 & 24:** BIRD & Beckett YouTube channel features Greg

Harmon reading from his children's book *The Tar Pit* Cantos 2 to 3:30 pm (May 17). Leslie Simon reads May 24. 586-3733; [birdbeckett.com](http://birdbeckett.com).

**May 21:** Noe Music Listeners Club offers a CONCERT on Zoom by composer Nick Britell. 7 pm. To sign up: [nvcn.org/nmlc](http://nvcn.org/nmlc).

**May 29:** Bill Buford discusses *Dirt: Adventures in Lyon as a Chef-in-Training, Father, and Sleuth Looking for the Secret of French Cooking*. 6:30 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885A Cesar Chavez. Confirm at 282-4712; [omnivorebooks.com](http://omnivorebooks.com).

**May 31:** LIEDER Alive hopes to host a performance by soprano Heidi Moss Erickson, pianist Ronny Michael Greenberg, violinist Dawn Harms, and cellist Emil Miland at Noe Valley Ministry. 5 pm. 1021 Sanchez. [liederalive.org](http://liederalive.org).

**June 1:** The Left Coast CHAMBER ENSEMBLE streams a concert, "Sheltering Music," on YouTube. 7:30 pm. 617-5223; [leftcoastensemble.org](http://leftcoastensemble.org).

**June 1-7:** Community Music Center's FIELD DAY 2020, free musical performances to benefit scholarships, will be streamed on Facebook and YouTube. 647-6015; [sfcmc.org](http://sfcmc.org).

### June Tune

The next *Noe Valley Voice* Calendar will appear in the **June 2020** issue. The deadline for items is May 15. Write [calendar@noealleyvoice.com](mailto:calendar@noealleyvoice.com) Noe events receive priority.

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*Kristin Anundsen, Noe Valley Resident*

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Questions? Email [editor@noealleyvoice.com](mailto:editor@noealleyvoice.com)

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

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# STORE TREK

*Store Trek is a regular feature of the Voice, introducing new stores and businesses in Noe Valley. This month, we profile a designer who specializes in hand-crafted leather bags and clothing that is both chic and comfortable.*

## BASIL RACUK

3980 24th St. at Noe

415-852-8550

<https://basilracuk.com/>

Despite having opened his jewel box of a store only a week before Thanksgiving, luxury craft leather goods designer Basil Racuk had the best holiday shopping season he'd ever had.

"It was insane. I did double my best Christmas," said Racuk, who opened his first brick-and-mortar location seven years ago in the Mission District. "It was amazing."

Popping into his 300-square-foot shop on 24th Street eager to snap up his bags, clothing, and accessories were not only local residents with their visiting parents and grandparents but also tourists staying in nearby Airbnbs.

"There are other demographics here I didn't expect," he said of the patrons in Noe Valley.

Then came March and the coronavirus outbreak. Like other non-essential businesses in the city, the eponymously named Basil Racuk was forced to shutter its doors.

"The week that shelter-in-place went into effect, I had a lift from people who came in understanding what was going to happen," he said. "In the ensuing weeks, I haven't had any business at all because I am closed essentially."

People can still call him to create custom pieces for them, as Racuk can work remotely and drop off leather samples for them to peruse. And through his website, fans of Racuk's leather bags—his spring 2020 collection features an ivory deerskin mini-tote (\$230), a red horse Palermo clutch (\$275), and a kiwi horsehair Metro bag (\$625)—or his clothing and accessories can order purchases for delivery.



Basil Racuk in his shuttered store, which has been temporarily converted to a showroom and workspace.

*Photo by Pamela Gerard*

In April, he started selling washable cotton jersey masks (\$18) in white or black. But Racuk, 54, admits he isn't savvy about promoting his brand online via social media.

"I really am an old-time retailer. In that way, I am in jeopardy," he said. "I am an unknown brand and my things are expensive. If you don't know the brand quality, me, or the store, there is very little likelihood you are going to feel compelled to buy with me."

Nevertheless, with fashion that "straddles comfort with modernity," he stands a good chance of capturing the neighborhood's sensibilities. Among his stylish casual pieces are a long-sleeved funnel-neck sweatshirt (\$145), a "Muscle T" long dress (\$195), and a hooded sweatshirt dress in white fleece (\$175).

The child of parents who immigrated to the U.S. from Argentina, Racuk grew up in the East Bay and then moved to Florida as a teenager. It was there he re-connected with his Latino heritage.

"When we moved to Miami, I really got to know a piece of myself I didn't have visibility to. My grandparents are from Ukraine, so I look like that. I don't look Latino," said Racuk, who now lives with his husband, Graham Gallivan, on San Francisco's Cathedral Hill.

He graduated in 1990 from the Fash-

ion Institute of Technology in New York City, and later was hired as a designer for Banana Republic, first in New York and then in San Francisco.

During a trip to Greece, he had an epiphany: it was time to launch his own designer brand. In 2007, he began working on his creations from a loft in Oakland. "It was more for me to exercise my creativity and my craft. I'd lost my sense of craft after being a corporate designer for decades," said Racuk, whose experience also included work for Gap Inc.'s Old Navy brand.

He credits a former boyfriend who was a PR whiz with helping his line take off. "He got me a ton of press. All of a sudden I had a business, even though I continued to work" in the corporate world.

In 2013, Racuk began selling his line out of a shared store space on 18th Street

between Valencia and Mission streets. And he moved production of his garments and bags from Oakland to a large workspace and storage facility in San Francisco's Chinatown.

After five successful years, he noticed a slip in business and decided the time was right to relocate his store. He rented a space in the Marina for six months, but the neighborhood wasn't a good fit for his brand.

On a shopping run to the Whole Foods on 24th Street, Racuk noticed a "for lease" sign in the window of the store adjacent to Just for Fun. Though small, it was the perfect size to fit his needs.

Now he not only uses the 24th Street space as a showroom but also as a workspace, as he was able to move a machine for his leather work and a small cutting table into a passageway in the back (which he also shares with four enormous water heaters).

"I am able to get around and make things work," said Racuk. Still, he has been spending more time in his Chinatown workshop due to the shelter-in-place orders. "I have been able to work on really new concepts."

It has been the silver lining, he said, of the health crisis.

"When I am up and running, I am working on things I know are crowd pleasers. I don't have as much space to get experimental," said Racuk.

He envisions the line he is now creating as a gift to his customers when they are able to leave their homes again.

"Here are these fun things I did when we were not together," said Racuk.

Soon, he hopes, the store will return to its usual hours: Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and by appointment on Monday and Tuesday.

—Matthew S. Bajko



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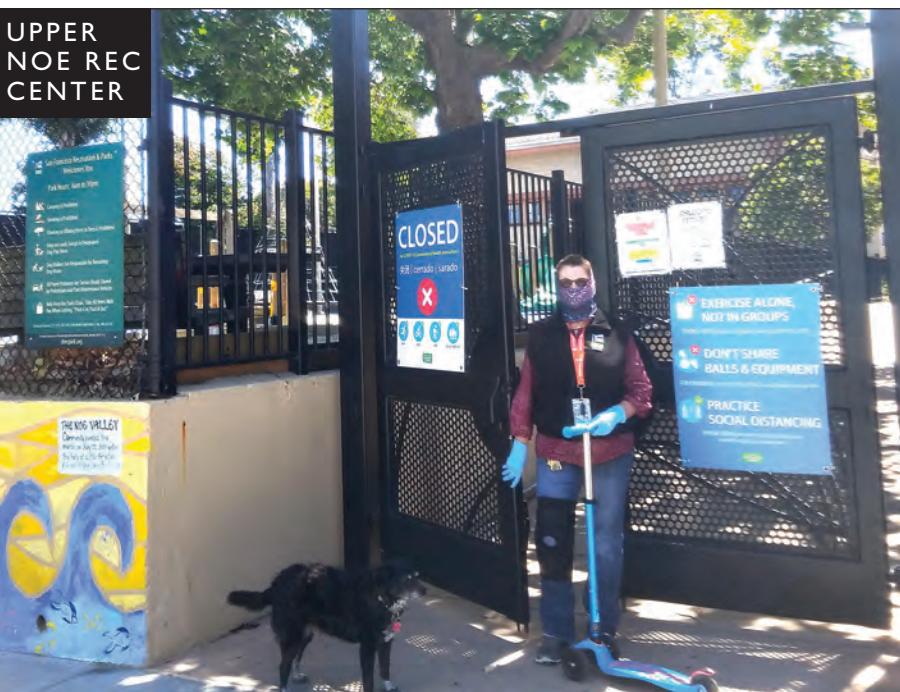
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UPPER  
NOE REC  
CENTER



Upper Noe Facilities Coordinator Cheryl Woltjen, in full safety gear, accepts a scooter donation at the gate. Only staff and day-care children are allowed inside. Photo by Chris Faust

### Rec Center Now in Service to Children of Workers

**U**pper Noe Recreation Center closed its doors to the public on March 13. The playground and park shut down on March 23 and the dog park on April 1. However, important activities are continuing within.

Facilities Coordinator Cheryl Woltjen and three of her staff spend Monday through Friday providing day care for children of healthcare and other emergency services workers. "We are lucky to be able to work in our home facility," says Woltjen. "Lots of park workers, librarians, and other disaster service workers were moved around the city."

The staff assists the pre-K to seventh graders as they interact with their teachers on iPads via Zoom distance-learning made possible by recently installed fast 5G internet. Woltjen reports that lunches provided by ChefAbles are nutritious, homemade, and delicious. "We have no problems with isolation, except that some folks are still calling police when we take the kids outdoors after lunch." However, new distractions would be appreciated, such as new children's puzzles (never opened, please) or some gently used scooters. Call the park office at 415-970-8061 and leave them at the gate, at 295 Day St.

Rec and Park cancelled Spring Session and issued refunds. Summer Day Camp registration is on hold and Summer Session is in jeopardy. The entire park is locked down at least through June 2. Yet flowers are blooming and gardeners remain at work, so a walk around the perimeter is quite pleasant.

Park advocates have updated their name to Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center (FUNReC). This has been on the drawing board for some time. The park has officially been Upper Noe Recreation Center since opening in 1957. However, during planning for the major renovation early in this century, neighbors opted for Friends of the Noe Valley Recreation Center as an organization name that was less accurate but more inclusive to inspire wider support. That reasoning has become less relevant. The current change seeks to dispel any confusion about the park name and the group's association. Everything else stays the same except the logo and URL, [www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com](http://www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com). There is no danger of losing connecting links with other community organizations, though, since the old URL forwards to the new one. Find out more about classes and events at [www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com](http://www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com), visit the rec center office, or call 415-970-8061.

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



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*Thank you from our families and our staff for remembering us during this difficult time.*

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# and now for the RUMORS behind the news

## MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

By Mazook

**W**HAT WAS THAT MASKED MAN? The brave new world of Noe Valley is filled with emptiness as I stroll down our local streets. Everyone is wearing a mask, so I can't even recognize people whom I thought I knew.

The line of masked people forms in the parking lot of Noe Valley Whole Foods, its patient bandits standing six feet apart. Then it snakes down 24th Street, sometimes all the way to Sanchez. Meanwhile, workers inside scramble to keep the shelves filled, with what we need for our daily sustenance.

The spaced-out line to get into Saturday's Farmers Market at the Town Square goes the other way: around the corner of 24th and Sanchez and down to Jersey Street.

My barber is closed, as my hair grows into hippie style, since all hair cutters and salons are closed. Manicurists are staying at home.

Almost all stores have papered their windows. A few have even boarded them up. Our restaurants are trying to survive by inviting patrons to phone or email their orders, which they can then pick up at the front door or have delivered.

The only place you can find a Mother's Day gift is at Walgreens, since our boutiques are closed. The only place you can get a cocktail is in your own home, with few exceptions (*See Short Takes.*)

We can visit some of our banks, but our Wells Fargo branch has closed temporarily. With face masks obligatory these days, it feels strange to walk into a bank and not see everyone as a bank robber.

Though Martha's and Bernie's have been open for takeout (during limited hours), we saw the baristas at Philz and Starbucks bow out for a while in March. At the end of April, they too were reopening for service through their front doors.

Meanwhile, Happy Donuts continues to pour coffee and, thankfully, has stayed open, so we can still get the best glazed donuts in San Francisco.



**CORNERING THE MARKET:** Noe Valley's mom-and-pop grocery stores are emerging as our go-to to-go destinations. Need flour, butter, milk, eggs, sugar, a banana? No problem.

Shufat Market, at 3807 24th St. near Church, is open and usually doesn't have a line. "We are about the same in sales as we were before the stay-home orders began," says Tina Omar of Shufat. "But we are discovering a whole new clientele coming into the store, and it seems everyone is baking. We sell out of things like yeast, baking powder, and baking soda."

Omar says the store is also getting more orders for home delivery. "We have to go to the wholesale markets at 5 a.m. to restock and usually find long lines there waiting to buy goods, and you hope that they aren't sold out by the time you get to the head of the line."

Shufat, named after the Palestine village of Shufat, is one of the oldest mom-and-pops in the neighborhood. It goes back to the early 1970s.

Another longstanding corner grocery is Chuck's Sun Valley Dairy, at Church and 28th streets. According to owner Shawki "Chuck" Rafidi, who bought the former dairy store in 1979, there has been an upswing in sales since March.

"We are seeing a lot of new customers

since the lockdown," says Rafidi. "They come in looking for rice, beans, flour, and eggs, and of course, beverages, and...toilet paper."

At Angel's Market, at the corner of Castro and 26th, sales are down, says manager John Saca. Before the shelter-in-place, "we had a lot of customers who were construction workers around the neighborhood," he said. "But when work stopped, we lost a lot [of sales] at our deli counter."

Janell Pekkain, owner of Olive This Olive That on Vicksburg near 24th, says she's had "an increase in business" since the lockdown, in both pickups and mail deliveries.

"We are selling a lot of our 'kitchen blend' olive oil for cooking, and filling orders from new customers," she says, "and selling a lot of pasta." For Mother's Day, she's got gift baskets.

Happy Donuts, on the other hand, has been a little slow, maybe because it has reduced hours to 19 daily. It's now closed from midnight to 5 a.m. for sanitization. "Our business is down by over 50 percent," says manager Ratha Vann. "But our regulars are coming in for donuts, coffee, and sandwiches every day."

Vann says the most popular item is the apple fritter.



**TO MARKET, TO MARKET:** Noe Valley's Saturday Farmers Market is going through some "challenging times," says market manager Elizabeth Crane. But it's very much up to the challenge.

The lines start early, Crane says, at 8 a.m. (to 1 p.m.). "We allow 20 people at a time into the market and meter the people coming in and going out. We have had to eliminate all the 'prepared food' vendors, spread all the other vendors out over the square to allow for social-distancing, create a protocol where shoppers must wear masks covering their mouth and nose, and [we tell them] don't touch the produce. We provide plastic gloves, sanitizers, and a hand-washing station."

Even with all the rules, she says, "we must be doing right, because the Health Department inspects the market and tells us 'great job' and that we are meeting and exceeding city standards and guidelines."

Crane says what she misses the most is the social interaction of the market, and like me, the wonderful live music and the kids in the mini-playground. "I just want to send a giant 'thank you' to the community for being so wonderful and supportive of the vendors, who have really worked with us to continue through these times."

Twin Girls Farms vendor Jimmy Egoian, who was one of the first farmers to participate in Noe's Saturday morning market, says his overall sales have "gone down dramatically. But I am coming home with empty boxes."

He says he has pre-bagged fruits for grab-and-go, or customers can put on gloves and pick out the fruit and bag it.

He also says he feels "very safe working at this market because of the protocols put in place, unlike some of the other markets



**We Walk the Line:** Noe Valley residents are getting used to standing in green "footprints" as they wait patiently to shop at Whole Foods.

Photo by Sally Smith



**You Could Hear** a pin drop on 24th Street in early April, but homemade signs were telling of local preoccupations.

Photo by Pamela Gerard

where we participate and where I don't feel so safe."

"Everybody has been amazing," says Egoian, "and we are so thankful for the support and goodwill we have received from this community."



**GOOD NEIGHBORS:** Face masks became mandatory in April. We have to wear them while waiting in line or shopping in a store (not while exercising).

Crane has been making fabric face masks at home and giving them out for free (while they last) to patrons of the Farmers Market. "I have plenty of fabric and a sewing machine," she says modestly.

Kudos go out as well to Noe Valley dentist Nisha Krishnaiah, who in mid-March created a cardboard cutout of a tree on her office front window (Aesthetic Dentistry, 4162 24th St.) on which she hung face masks for people to take. Free! "I have put out these high-filter masks as they become available to me, which is about two dozen cartons every three weeks," she says, "and hang about six at a time, since sometimes the wind will blow them off the poster board and down 24th Street."

She says her office is open for patients with emergency problems. "We have also been able to thoroughly clean the office for the safety and peace of mind of our patients who come in."



**OVEN MITTS, ANYONE?** People are going head over heels and paws for cookbooks and pet supplies, say the shop owners at the corner of Church and Cesar Chavez streets. Celia Sack (and Paula Harris) sent an email in early April saying their Omnivore Books on Food and Noe Valley Pet Company stores were doing surprisingly well. Sack says, "We are open daily 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and thriving—and paying our employees at both shops their full salaries. It seems the entire city is using their down time to adopt dogs and cats, from puppies and kittens to seniors emptying out shelters and taking time to train them while home. It's wonderful to see, and while we are only open for curbside pickup, we enthusiastically take orders and dispense advice from the front door."

Sack also was featured in an April 15 SFEater story in which she divulged her favorite cookbooks for shelter-in-place. Among her choices: *Cool Beans* by Joe Yonan, Priya Krishna's *Indian(ish)*, *Small Victories* by Julia Turshen, Andrea Nguyen's *Vietnamese Food Any Day*, and Alice Waters' *The Art of Simple Food*.

In her email Sack added, "We've both been so moved by the loyalty of our neighbors and customers, and are so happy to have something to do all day besides sitting around reading *People* magazine."



**FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS:** Parishioners are still ringing the big bronze bell in the St. Philip's Church belfry tower at noon on weekdays, 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. They are sounds of solidarity during our long sequestration. Besides Bell Captain David

Castellanos and Bill Yenne and grandson Cash Yenne Bolos (mentioned last month), the bell ringers are Todd Siemers, Andrew DeGrandi, Jane Perry, Arturo Pena, Mary Staunton, Mary Sullivan, Oscar Sullivan, and Daniel Roddick, all members of the St. Philip's Belfry Society.



**LIFE AS WE KNOW IT.** Seen in front of Walgreens midday March 19: A woman wearing an SFMTA vest running out of the drugstore with two giant packs of toilet paper in her arms. She jumped on a bus that was sitting in the middle of the street and shouted to its passengers, "Thank you, I'm sorry. I just really needed toilet paper!" It was the bus driver.

Barbara Solomon, from "Central Noe Valley," wrote on Nextdoor: "Desperately seeking jigsaw puzzles (500 pieces and up preferred). I have one to share and have loaned several to friends which will come back soon. If you are up for loaning, please let me know." Hope she got help.

If she didn't, she should consider taking the live tree tour created (and described on Nextdoor April 28) by horticulturalist Richard Turner of Upper Noe.

Turner told walkers to start the tour "at the magnificent tall eucalyptus on Noe near the top of the Duncan steps. "Each tree is labeled with common and scientific names and country of origin, all written in white chalk on the sidewalk. Purple numbers run from 1 to 44," he wrote.

"The tree walk leads north on Noe to Clipper, west to Castro, north to 25th, east to Noe, north one block on Noe to Jersey. Cross the street and head back south on Noe to Clipper, east to Sanchez, south to 27th, and west to Noe. Tree #44 is on 27th, just before Noe, and a block from the beginning of the tour. You should see white arrows on the pavement whenever you need to make a turn."

Turner noted: "The trees you can see from #s 2 and 3 are coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*). They may not be the tallest in the neighborhood, but they certainly are the most massive."



**IN UPPER, UPPER NOE:** Socketsite.com reported April 4 that plans were being floated for a large market-rate development on Diamond Street, near where it runs into Diamond Heights Boulevard. "As drafted by Solomon Cordwell Buenz (SCB) for the Emerald Fund, the development would rise up to 40 feet in height, with four (4) four-bedroom single-family homes averaging around 3,400 square feet apiece bookending the development, and twenty (20) three-bedroom townhomes averaging closer to 1,950 square feet between, and a total of 29 off-street parking spaces, with two parking spaces for each of the single-family homes."

Not sure when this project would get a go-ahead.

Speaking of developments, Mark Zuckerberg may be expanding. At least that was the speculation of a recent post on Nextdoor by Greg Sarkowski of Central Noe Valley: "Curious: Coincidence that both buildings adjacent to Fort Zuck (3456 21st) are now wrapped with tarp and displaying construction signs, or did Zuck snap up the neighboring properties like he did at his home in Palo Alto?"

Lastly, I must update an item in last month's Rumors. The Valley Tavern's effort to serve beer and cocktails along with food orders picked up from the bar's front window was shut down near the end of April by "order of the Mayor's office," according to Tavern owner Vince Hogan. And he's not happy.

While the service was available, Hogan says, the most sought-after cocktail was "the margarita."



**THAT'S ALL, YOU ALL:** Be safe, be well. Exercise. Ciao for now. ■

**Children's Fiction**

❖ **Do I Have to Wear a Coat? A Journey Through the Seasons**, written and illustrated by Rachel Isadora, describes the changes in the weather throughout the year. Ages 2 to 5.

❖ Author and illustrator Antoinette Portis poses riddles about nature in **A New Green Day**. Ages 3 to 7.

❖ A dandelion flower becomes a real lion in **Dandelion's Dream**, written and illustrated by Yoko Tanaka. Ages 4 to 8.

❖ An Asian girl living in a small town in 1880s America is determined to see her dreams come true, in **Prairie Lotus**, written by Linda Sue Park. Ages 8 to 12.

❖ In Pam Muñoz Ryan's fantasy **Mañanaland**, a boy searches to uncover secrets to what the future holds. Ages 8 to 12.

❖ High school girls unite to demand better access to feminine hygiene products, in **Go with the Flow** by Lily Williams and Karen Schneemann. Ages 9 to 14.

❖ A young girl is determined to save her branch library in **A Girl, a Raccoon, and the Midnight Moon**, written by Karen Romano Young and illustrated by Jessixa Bagley. Ages 10 to 12.

**Children's Nonfiction**

❖ The life of the hopping amphibian is detailed in **Being Frog**, written, illustrated, and photographed by April Pulley Sayre. Ages 3 to 6.

❖ In **The Power of Her Pen: The Story of Groundbreaking Journalist Ethel L. Payne**, author Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrator John Parra describe "The First Lady of the Black Press." Ages 7 to 10.

❖ Shocking facts abound in **Insect Superpowers: 18 Real Bugs That Smash, Zap, Hypnotize, Sting, and Devour!** written by Kate Messner, with illustrations by Jillian Nickell. Ages 8 to 12.

❖ Young People's Poet Laureate Naomi Shihab Nye spotlights things that get thrown away, in **Cast Away: Poems for Our Time**. Ages 8 to 12.

**Children's eBooks**

❖ Adoptive families are celebrated in **Just Like a Mama**, written by Alice Faye Duncan and illustrated by Charnelle Pinkney Barlow. Ages 3 to 6.

❖ The life cycle of the bird is described in the nonfiction **Whoo-Ku Haiku: A Great Horned Owl Story**, written by Maria Gianferrari and illustrated by Jonathan Voss. Ages 3 to 8.

❖ **Everyone's Awake**, Colin Meloy's rhymed picture book (illustrated by Shawn Harris) brings fun to the goodnight routine. Ages 4 to 7.

❖ A former planet travels around the solar system in **Pluto Gets the**



Voice Editor Sally Smith struggles to keep up with the pace of change. (No, in fact, this typist is helping to prevent the spread of influenza during the 1918 pandemic.) Photo courtesy National Archives

## MORE BOOKS TO READ

### The Library Tells 'Sweet Stories'

"We hope our beloved community is sheltering safely. Though still uncertain when this will be, we cannot wait to re-open our doors and to greet you 'live,' and to once again provide in-person library services to you!" That was the message in late April from Branch Manager Denise Sanderson, Children's Librarian Catherine Starr, "and all of our staff" at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library on Jersey Street.

While they await our reunion, the librarians are busy managing local Food Pantries, which means preparing, packaging, and delivering meals to residents in need. They also are working to enlarge the library's online offerings, including home-based STEM programs for children and tweens, and storytimes for kids of all ages.

As part of the effort, the San Francisco Public Library has launched a new virtual storytime on its IGTV channel. You can find the tales on Instagram at @sfpubliclibrary on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2 p.m., and Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Select stories also will be shared on the library's YouTube channel titled "Sweet Stories with SFPL." Say the producers, "We're also proud to offer storytimes in Spanish. We hope this new series brings some joy to the little ones in your life."

In the meantime, the Noe Valley librarians encourage you to enjoy their book and film recommendations for May (starting at left) and to maximize use of their website, www.sfpl.org. There you will find ways to read ebooks, listen to audiobooks, watch films, take classes, and more.

Though they may be physical-distancing, staff are answering the phone at 557-4400 Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. So if you have questions or need assistance with your library card, give them a call.

**Call**, written by Adam Rex and illustrated by Laurie Keller. Ages 6 to 8.

❖ The life cycle of a hardworking insect is shown in **Honeybee: The Busy Life of Apis Mellifera**, written by Candace Fleming, with illustrations by Eric Rohmann. Ages 6 to 9.

❖ In Shelley Pearsall's novel **Things Seen From Above**, a sixth-grade girl learns a new way of looking at things. Ages 8 to 12.

❖ **The Next President: The Unexpected**

**Beginnings and Unwritten Future of America's Presidents**, written by Kate Messner and illustrated by Adam Rex, surveys the past and future of the office. Ages 8 to 12.

❖ **Wayside School: Beneath the Cloud of Doom** is the fourth book in a series written by Louis Sachar and illustrated by Tim Heitz. Ages 9 to 11.

### Adult Fiction

❖ In Maryla Szymczkowa's **Mrs. Mohr Goes Missing**, a mystery set in 1890s Cracow, a bored socialite solves a crime.

❖ A case worker must determine whether six magical children will bring about the end of the world, in **The House in the Cerulean Sea**, a fantasy by TJ Klune; also available as an ebook.

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

*In Transit* by Michael Blake



❖ **Mortal Music** is book seven in Ann Parker's Silver Rush mysteries set in the 1880s.

❖ **The Mountains Sing** by Nguyen Phan Que Mai tells the story of the Tran family and its survival through generations of war in Vietnam.

### Adult Nonfiction

❖ Author Gary Westfahl examines the heyday of sci-fi literature in **The Rise and Fall of American Science Fiction From the 1920s to the 1960s**.

❖ **Thinking Inside the Box: Adventures With Crosswords and the Puzzling People Who Can't Live Without Them**, by Adrienne Raphael, explores the word game that was invented in 1913 to fill a newspaper's empty column space.

❖ Massage therapist Bob Doto's **The Power of Stretching: Simple Practices to Promote Wellbeing** includes workouts for every part of the body.

❖ In **Recollections of My Nonexistence**, a memoir by Rebecca Solnit, the writer describes her growth as a feminist in 1980s San Francisco.

### eBooks

❖ A condemned priestess becomes an assassin in **The Unspoken Name**, the first book in A.K. Larkwood's Serpent Gates fantasy series.

❖ In **Pride of Eden** by Taylor Brown, a racehorse jockey turned wildlife rescuer searches for the prized lion that escaped from a sanctuary.

❖ Anne Glenconner's memoir, **Lady in Waiting: My Extraordinary Life in the Shadow of the Crown**, recounts the author's service to the late Princess Margaret.

❖ **Don't Hate, Meditate! Five Easy Practices to Get You Through the Hard Sh\*t (and into the Good)**, by Deepak Chopra protégé Megan Monahan, offers a guide to effective living.

❖ In **Broken Glass: Mies van der Rohe, Edith Farnsworth, and the Fight Over a Modernist Masterpiece**, Alex Beam describes the controversy surrounding design of the Farnsworth House, built in 1951 in Plano, Ill.

**Available on Kanopy Streaming (on www.sfpl.org; access with library card)**

❖ In the 2019 film **Midsommar**, an American couple become trapped in a nightmare while on a visit to a festival in Sweden.

❖ Oliver Stone directed the 1991 biographical drama **The Doors**, starring Val Kilmer as lead singer Jim Morrison.

❖ Charlie Chaplin as "The Tramp" struggles to live in America's new industrial society in the 1936 film **Modern Times**.

❖ **The Great Courses**, produced by The Teaching Company, are college-level videos that cover myriad subjects.

Annotations by Noe Valley Voice bookworm Karol Barske

### BRANCH HOURS\*

Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library\*

451 Jersey St., 355-5707

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	12-6	10-9	1-9	10-6	1-6	10-6

Mission Branch Library\*

300 Bartlett St., 355-2800

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	1-6	10-9	10-9	10-9	1-6	10-6

Glen Park Branch Library\*

2825 Diamond St., 355-2858

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	10-6	10-6	12-8	12-7	1-6	1-6

Eureka Valley-Harvey Milk Branch Library\*

1 José Sarria Ct. (3555 16th St.), 355-5616

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
12-6	10-9	12-9	10-6	1-6	1-6	12-6

\*Note: Due to the coronavirus outbreak, all San Francisco libraries have been temporarily closed to the general public. For updates, go to [www.sfpl.org](http://www.sfpl.org).

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**V**ictoria is sewing masks for the whole family. Mine features a tight-woven checked material with bright green shoelaces for straps. "Mi amor," she says, "aquí está tu mascarilla." She does not speak English.

I met her several years ago when I was teaching English as a second language. She is perhaps the worst student I have ever had—constantly interrupting class, refusing to do homework, complaining. I fell in love with her in about 15 seconds.

She loves to sew, and cook, and paint, and dance, and create; hence, she is in her glory during this time of hunkering down. She made me a new set of pajamas, and pillow cases for the girls, and bedroom curtains. Masks to protect us against the killer plague? Hah, that's nothing. (She cranks out six of them.)

I don't believe in God but I still pray every day that, if someone is to get the virus, it shall be me and not her, oh, please, dear God, if perchance You do exist: You understand, right, Bro? Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for thou, my beautiful wife, art with me.

So we are stuck at home here in San Diego. We compete in the kitchen: her *arroz con pollo* and orange cake vs. my pizza (kickass, if I say so myself) and brownies. We work the kitchen together, cooking and laughing and drinking IPAs and consuming the occasional amusing cannabis edible and dancing to my YouTube playlist while our daughters chat with *amigas* back in Ecuador via WhatsApp and our granddaughter plays on the floor, organizing the Tupperware and baking utensils.

Tomorrow my wife turns 52. She is absurdly healthy, unlike me: I'm 68, worn down, carrying lymphoma in my spleen and probably liver and marrow; my white cell and platelet counts are in the toilet. Immune system? I don't need no stinking immune system.

Today Victoria woke up with a cough, but it passed. She has no fever. I watch her like a hawk. Coronavirus can mess with me, but if it even so much as looks at my wife, well, hold my beer.

♦ ♦ ♦

There is this force to be reckoned with, this... this *mortality*. It lingers in the background of each of us. Yeah, you

# OTHER VOICES

fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction • the noe valley voice

## Love in the Time of Coronavirus

By Bill Yard



Illustration by Ayla O'Brien

know what I'm talkin' about.

Lately I often dream of Noe Valley, where I lived in my youth, in the '70s and '80s. When I was immortal, like many of you still are.

The dreams are complex, and frustrating, and not at all satisfying. I am searching for something I had thought at the time I had, but in fact never grasped. I can still smell the streets, standing in line at Bud's Ice Cream, standing on the scale at the

Meat Market café, walking in the rain back to my apartment on Jersey or Church or Elizabeth.

The rain washed the truth from me, and I in my naivete inhaled deeply.

We are all cast out from a common womb into a puzzle of doubt, but hey it's okay: we see each other on 24th Street or in the bar or on the J-Church, and we smile and nod, and we pretend that everything is all right.

Let us now praise Mother Nature for

this, her Coronavirus, yet another of her magnificent achievements, as great as Yosemite, or a sunset, or the Black Plague. Mother Nature is badass, *¿verdad?*

♦ ♦ ♦

Victoria has a bit of a headache and her feet hurt. I rub them and wonder, do they hurt as much as they did seven years ago, when her ex-husband got drunk and punched a cop (not a good idea in Ecuador), and she had had enough, but she had no money? So she took a bus to the Amazon and cut hair in an oil camp. She slept in a concrete hut with no water or electricity but with plenty of tarantulas. On payday she walked to the Western Union office and sent her paycheck back to her eldest daughter in Quito, so the four girls could eat.

And here I am, anxious about some quasi-life form, *¿Cuál es tu nombre?* Coronavirus! *¡Mucho gusto!* Some little globular creation, Mother Nature deciding to go bowling, like the Dude and Walter and Donny. Mother Nature rolling strikes, as per usual.

♦ ♦ ♦

Please, do not—please, never!—pass up the opportunity to feel and give love. Victoria and I dance to "Desposito." *¡No importante!* Just dance!

Bill Yard has written on and off for the Noe Valley Voice since the '70s. He has worked as a glazier, a union laborer, a salesman, a medical editor, an accounting clerk, a personnel consultant, a nonprofit coordinator, "and a lover of all things true and beautiful." While in Noe Valley, he lived on Cesar Chavez (twice), Church, Elizabeth, Dolores, Jersey, Castro, and 24th Street. "Don't get me started on Bernal Heights, the Richmond, or the Tenderloin," he jokes. These days, he splits time between San Diego and Quito, Ecuador.

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

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**Masked and Ready.** Keenan DeCock and Felix Millionis are among the cool kids of Noe Valley who know how to gear up for exercise in the neighborhood. They just have to work on the distancing thing while posing.  
Photo by Beverly Tharp



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