

# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## Free Flusher Slated to Arrive This Summer

Nevada Company Ready to Donate \$135,000 Floor Model

By Matthew S. Bajko

If the decision was solely up to Public Restroom Company president Chad Kaufman, then the prefabricated toilet he plans to donate to the Noe Valley Town Square would already have been installed and put to use. Since it is already built, the restroom doesn't require a lengthy installation timeline.

"My install is one day," Kaufman told the *Voice* during a phone interview in late January. "I could install it in two weeks if they wanted me to."

Alas, bequeathing the \$135,000 single-stall restroom—with a sink on the outside—to the city for the small public park requires a far longer process. An agreement for the donation still needs to be approved between the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and Kaufman and his friend Vaughan Buckley, the CEO of the Volumetric Building Companies.

The construction company in Tracy, Calif., is offering to supply free of cost to the city the union labor, estimated to cost \$290,000, required to prepare the site for the roughly 10-foot-by-12-foot toilet and finish the other work needed to install it. A portion of the trellis on the left side of the town square must be removed to accommodate the commode.

"I am going to give my best effort to



**When You've Got to Go.** The shock waves that greeted San Francisco after news that a proposed restroom facility for Noe Valley's town square would cost \$1.7 million are still being felt, but a donor has stepped up to offer a better deal. Navigating the miles of city red tape should now, if not move smoothly, at least all come out in the end. *Photo by Art Bodner*

provide a restroom facility for the town square," pledged Kaufman, adding that his aim was to have it done by the end of August.

The rec and park department announced Jan. 27 it had reached an agreement with Kaufman and Buckley for the in-kind donations and expected the city agency's public oversight commission to sign off on the deal in February, followed by a vote of the Board of Supervisors. Rec and park also announced that the regulatory approval process for the toilet would now only cost the city \$300,000.

"We are thrilled to accept this generous donation, which will allow us to deliver this important project to the Noe Valley community," said city parks director Phil Ginsburg. "We work hard to be good stewards, and as a result our park system has benefitted from nearly \$200 million in private philanthropy over the past 12 years."

Rec and park spokesperson Tamara Aparton had told the *Voice* Jan. 20 that the agency had been having "regular meetings" with Kaufman and Buckley

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## The Good, The Bad and The Neighborly

Mandelman Gives State of the City at January Meeting

By Kit Cameron

On Wednesday, Jan. 18, a score of Upper Noe Neighbors turned out for the group's first meeting in 2023. The attendees got a chance to hear about Slow Sanchez rules, meet the city's Neighborhood Safety Liaison, learn the results of a neighborhood survey, and pepper their supervisor, Rafael Mandelman, with questions about everything from transit to housing to the fractious subject of unhoused San Franciscans.

The newly re-elected supervisor was greeted with warm applause as he joked that the number of rounds of votes for the president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in January exceeded that of the U.S. House of Representatives for Kevin McCarthy but finally Supervisor Aaron Peskin had been elected.

Mandelman, who chairs the county's Transportation Authority, bragged that getting Proposition L passed in November gave the city crucial money to revitalize Muni. "We are closer than we have ever been to getting trains [from outside the city] going all the way to downtown San Francisco. It will be a seven-billion-dollar job, funded mostly by the state and federal government, with San Francisco

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## Top Authors in Word Weekend Lineup

Bethany Church Hosts Events For All Ages March 3-5

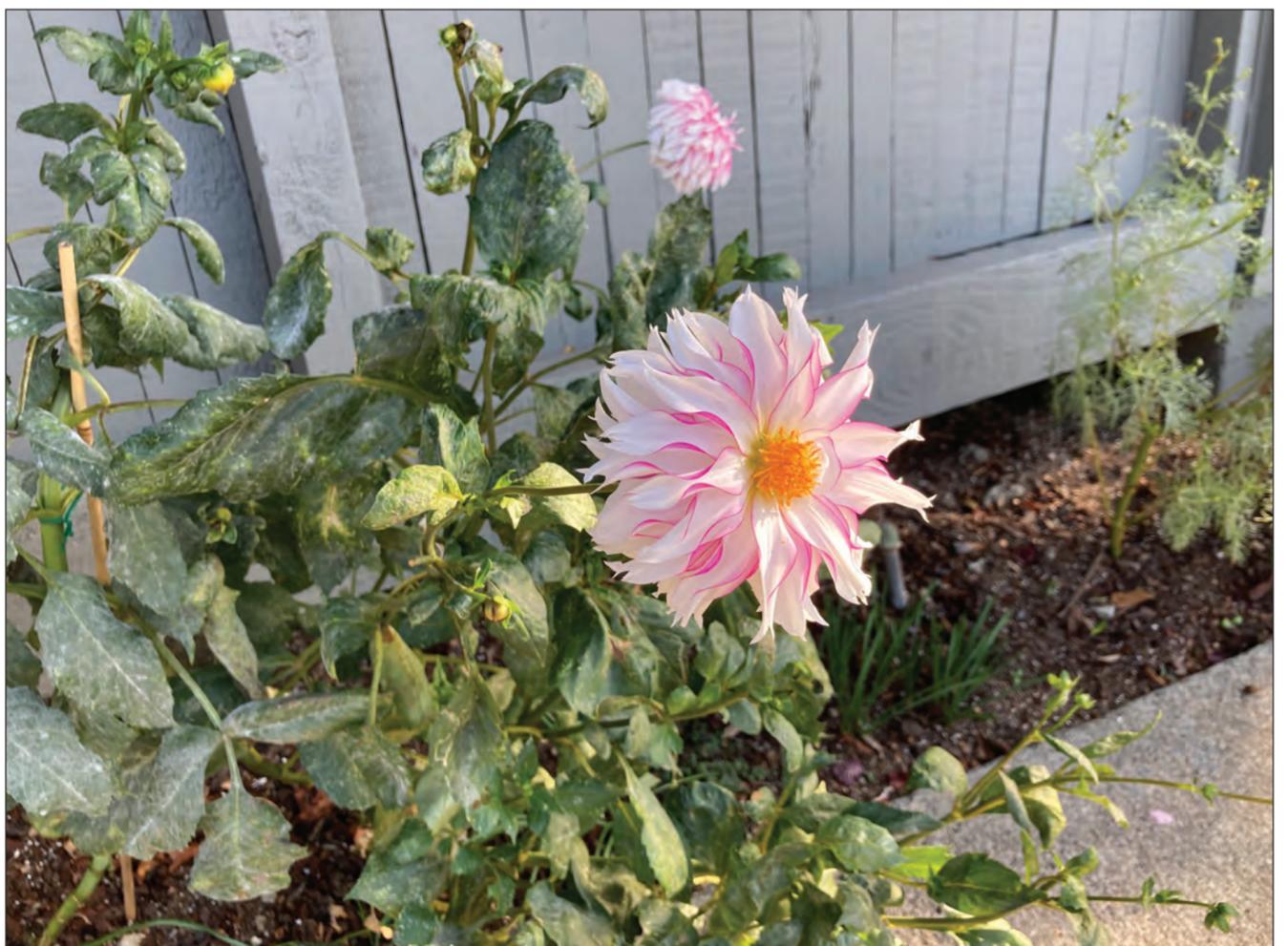
By Corrie M. Anders

Word Weekend, the long-running festival showcasing literary talent from Noe Valley and beyond, this year presents a trifecta of prominent authors, poets, and songwriters.

"Oh my God, it's going to be exciting," said local resident Maxine Einhorn, who helped plan the three-day event along with Martha Dietzel of Folio Books. "We have a really good lineup."

The festival runs March 3 to 5 at Bethany United Methodist Church, 1270 Sanchez St. All events are free. (Please note masks are required.)

Friday, March 3, will feature best-selling author Katie Hafner in conversation with Karen Joy Fowler, another novelist whose work has graced the *New York Times* top 10 lists. "We are very excited to have [them] as the headlining event," said Einhorn, a Noe



**Beauties Like This Tahoma Tempest Dahlia** are likely to beckon as the group Friends of Noe Valley searches for gardens to include in the 2023 Noe Valley Garden Tour, set for May 6. Are your plants also seeking the sun? (See "Garden" Short Take, page 13.) *Photo by Jack Tipple*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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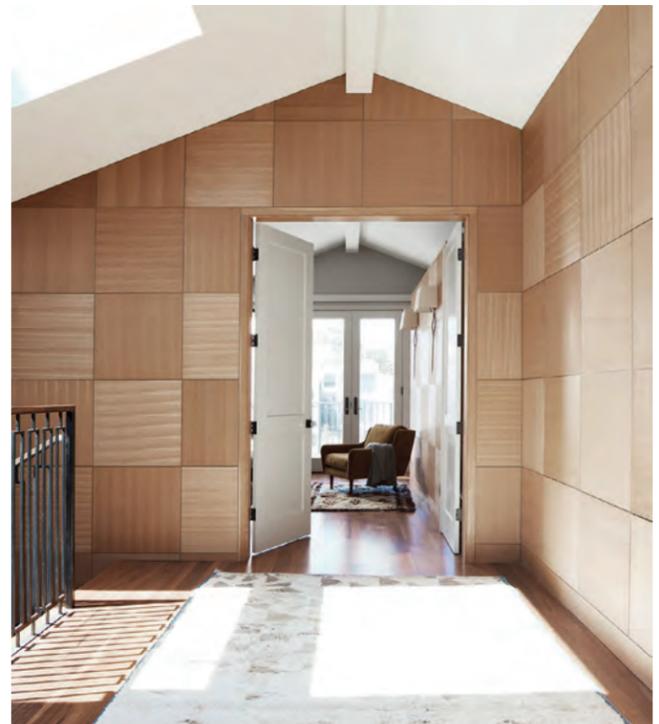
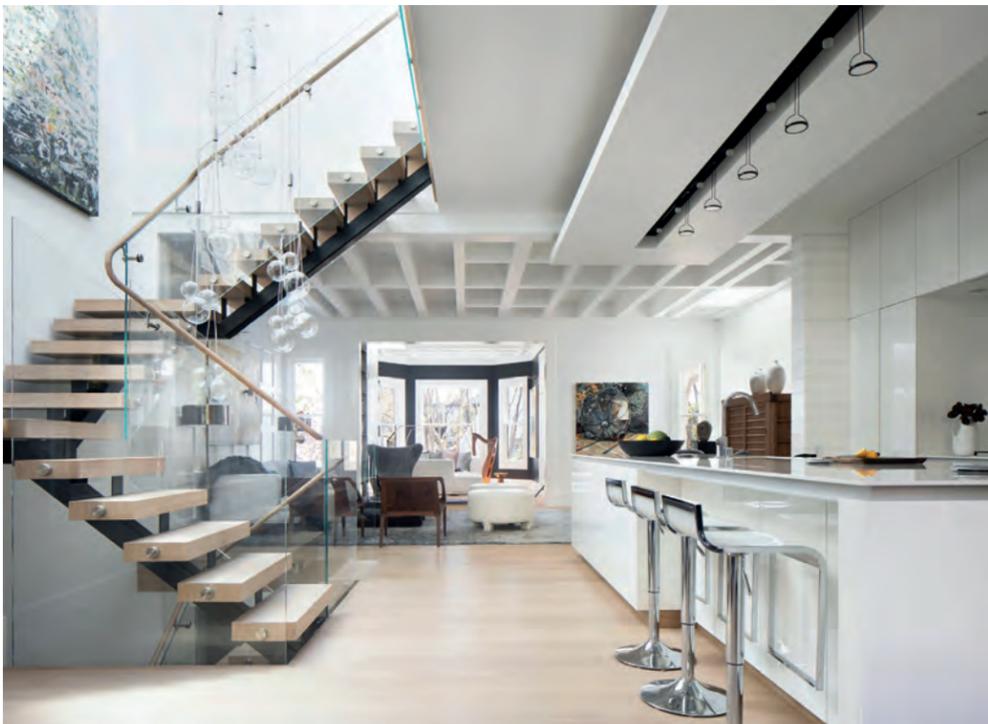
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THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN



Crime Snapshot

Good news, of sorts, for residents of Noe Valley: crime was down last year in the neighborhood.

There were 1,038 incidents in the 10 crime categories the Voice tracks monthly, according to the San Francisco Police Department's digital map of incident reports.

That was 147 fewer than in 2021, a 12.4 percent drop.

Now as then, however, incidents classified as "larceny/thefts" were a major aggravation. The data showed 26 such thefts in December, a majority of which were

items taken from cars.

Burglary was the second most reported crime during the month. Thieves broke into 17 properties, including nine residences, two stores, and six unspecified "other properties."

December also saw 10 vehicle thefts, though the streets were quiet compared

to November, when 25 cars and trucks were stolen. Of those, three had been recovered by mid-January.

Police advise residents to go online to report incidents. In an emergency, call 911. For recurring problems, call the non-emergency line, 415-553-0123.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith

Noe Valley Incident Reports January–December 2022

Incident Type	Jan22	Feb22	Mar22	Apr22	May22	Jun22	Jul22	Aug22	Sep22	Oct22	Nov22	Dec22
Larceny/Theft	38	28	24	22	41	45	37	43	28	41	41	26
Burglary	18	9	21	25	17	28	18	20	16	25	10	17
Malicious Mischief	16	3	8	12	10	4	0	5	10	7	7	6
Motor Vehicle Theft	18	16	7	6	7	11	14	13	16	13	25	10
Assault	0	3	2	0	5	0	0	3	5	7	3	1
Robbery	0	3	1	0	0	1	3	0	1	4	1	1
Other Misc.	7	0	0	9	2	3	5	4	5	10	6	1
Fraud	8	4	3	4	2	2	5	1	0	0	4	6
Family D.Violence	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	2	0	0	1	0
Vandalism	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>70</b>

Source: Dataset titled "Map of Police Department Incident Reports: 2018 to Present" at Data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783. This dataset includes police incident reports filed by officers and by individuals through self-service online reporting for non-emergency cases. Disclaimer: The San Francisco Police Department does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or correct sequencing of the information, as the data is subject to change as modifications or updates are completed. The Noe Valley Voice collected the November and December 2022 data on Jan. 17, 2023. "Noe Valley" on the SFPD map is an area bounded by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.



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Inflation finally seems under control, interest rates are settling (I am hearing of purchase loans in the 4.75% for a 30 year fixed), and I just received multiple offers on the gorgeous Liberty Hill architect renovated home that I listed for \$3MM in January. Could it be that, as many pundits predicted, December was the bottom of this latest challenge to the economy? People have worried about the recent spate of tech layoffs, which continued into early 2023 with Microsoft and Google shedding thousands of workers. But, my understanding is that these tech companies grew so much during the pandemic (and made so much profit then, too), that these latest layoffs don't even bring most of them back to their pre-pandemic workforce numbers. NPR just reported that it takes the average tech worker three months to find another job, which isn't too bad either. So, was December the bottom? We'll need to see some more data before declaring anything definitively. But out in the field it certainly feels like the SF real estate market is getting more competitive for buyers.

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## Town Square Set to Get a Prefab Toilet

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to hammer out the terms of the agreement.

“We are actively engaging with this potential donor and we certainly haven’t abandoned the Noe Valley Town Square,” Aparton had emphasized.

### \$1.7 Million Sticker Shock

Her comment was referring to the national firestorm that had erupted last fall over the toilet. As the *Voice* was first to report in the Rumors column in its October 2022 issue, state Assemblymember Matt Haney (D–San Francisco) secured \$1.7 million in the state budget last year toward the toilet project. The community has been waiting for a permanent bathroom at the town square since it opened in late October of 2016.

During that time, most users of the park in need of a bathroom have used the restroom across the street at Martha & Brothers Coffee Company. A portable toilet also has been available for the Noe Valley Farmers Market staff and workers, who use the town square on Saturdays.

While the cost for the city to buy a toilet for the park site was initially estimated to be about \$300,000, rec and park officials had calculated that related costs for staffing, getting the project through the city’s approval process, and for construction costs would bring the full price for the public bathroom installation to \$1.7 million. The figure caught the attention of *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Heather Knight, who began inquiring about the high price tag.

Her column on the matter came out the morning that Haney had been set to hold a news conference at the town square to ballyhoo his netting the state funds. It was headlined, “S.F. is spending \$1.7 million on one public toilet: ‘What are they making it out of—gold?’”

### Toilet Even Offends Governor

Needless to say, the proverbial human waste hit the fan of social media outrage, bolstered by Knight’s framing of the issue. She expressed disbelief that “the toilet—just one loo in 150 square feet of space—is projected to cost \$1.7 million, about the same as a single-family home in this wildly overpriced city. And it won’t be ready for use until 2025.”

The public blowback led Haney to cancel his press event and Governor Gavin Newsom’s office to tell Knight it would refuse to release the full \$1.7 million amount to the city for the toilet. None of the funds has yet to be disbursed to the city.

Erin Mellon, the governor’s communications director, reiterated to the *Voice* last month what she had told the *Chronicle* last year, that “a single, small bathroom should not cost \$1.7 million. The state will hold funding until San Francisco delivers a plan to use this public money more efficiently. If they cannot, we will go back to the legislature to revoke this appropriation.”

Haney told the *Voice* he had pulled the plug on his media event Oct. 19 because it was meant “to be a celebration” for the neighborhood leaders he had also invited. He didn’t want them to be peppered with questions from reporters about the toilet cost.

“I am still very committed to getting Noe Valley a bathroom, and I agree we



Public Restroom Company president Chad Kaufman took this selfie on a visit to Noe Valley to view the town square space. He’s eager to donate his prefab toilet to the park.



The 10-foot-by-12-foot toilet that Public Restroom Company of Minden, Nev., is offering to San Francisco has a sink on the outside. Photo courtesy Chad Kaufman

should get it cheaper and faster. And I also would really call on San Francisco to take a much deeper look at how expensive it is to build things,” said Haney, who had served on the city’s Board of Supervisors until his election last spring to the state Assembly. “I hope we can get a win-win here. We can get a cheaper bathroom not only for Noe Valley but also for San Francisco to get a bathroom done quicker.”

### It’s the ‘Crazy’ Process

Noe Valley resident Todd David, who had pushed for the creation of the town square, told the *Voice* he had been approached last summer by Haney’s office regarding the still undelivered toilet for the park site. David explained how the plumbing for the project was already in place and heard nothing more until being invited to the press event by Haney.

“Matt called to say he got the funding for the bathroom, and he told me it was \$1.7 million,” recalled David. “I said, ‘Wait, is that for one bathroom?’”

David then called District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, who represents Noe Valley at City Hall, to confirm the cost and was told the amount was what the rec and park department had determined would be needed to build a bathroom from scratch in the town square.

“Then the next morning the story just blew up. The whole \$1.7 million price tag is the cost of the crazy San

Francisco process,” said David. “It is not that rec and park caused a \$1.7 million bathroom. It is the cost of the insane San Francisco process that, quite frankly, the Board of Supervisors has endorsed for years.”

No matter what the final cost is for the toilet, it is desperately needed for the town square, said David.

“The reason it is needed is pretty self-evident. Lots of young children and lots of people use the town square,” he said.

### A Savings of \$500,000

Mandelman told the *Voice* he was pleased a restroom resolution was at hand and said he hoped the new toilet would be ready for use before the end of the year.

“I think it is a really good outcome for Noe Valley and for San Francisco. I am grateful to everybody who helped

square needs this bathroom.”

Because the design for Kaufman’s prefab toilet is already permitted by the state of California, reviews by the Mayor’s Office on Disability and the city’s Department of Building Inspection are not needed. Also helping to drive down the cost is that with a ready-made toilet, the city doesn’t need to do a bidding process, pay a cost estimator, or budget for cost overruns, as it normally would for a new building.

Nevertheless, Mandelman voiced concern about the original price of the project and city projects in general. Were it not for the donated toilet and free labor, the city might have paid an extra \$491,000 in design, construction management, and regulatory and design review costs.

“The thing about this is, not any one thing makes a toilet cost \$2 million. It is a layering of a lot of well-intentioned regulations that collectively make things more expensive than they are meant to be,” said Mandelman.

He provided as one example the city’s prohibition on doing business with companies headquartered in states that have adopted anti-LGBTQ laws or weakened abortion access or voting rights. Kaufman’s company is based in Nevada, which is on the city’s banned states list for having restrictions on abortion.

### Maintenance Not Included

Therefore, the city would not be able to buy Kaufman’s toilet. However, it could choose to accept it as a gift, confirmed Aparton.

Kaufman reached out to city officials after being mentioned by Knight in her first column on the toilet’s price tag, as last year he had delivered seven pre-made toilets to Los Angeles at a similar cost to the one planned for San Francisco.

He came forward with an offer to donate the toilet he had displayed at two industry conferences in 2022. The bathroom is housed in a concrete shell with a metallic roof that can be painted in whatever color the city chooses, he told the *Voice*. It is not self-cleaning, so there will be an ongoing cost for the city to keep it clean and in working order.

Acknowledging his altruism had generated great publicity for his company, Kaufman said the media coverage more importantly had allowed him a platform on which to discuss how pre-fabricated structures could save cities and other government agencies money and time.

“I want to shed light on the benefits of modular construction,” said Kaufman, who has visited the town square several times in recent months to scope out the site.

If the deal goes through and state officials free the funds, the rec and park department will see if it can use the rest of the \$1.7 million for a public bathroom at Precita Park at the bottom of Bernal Heights.

“We would love to be able to put some of that money into our programs and other things.” Aparton said. ■

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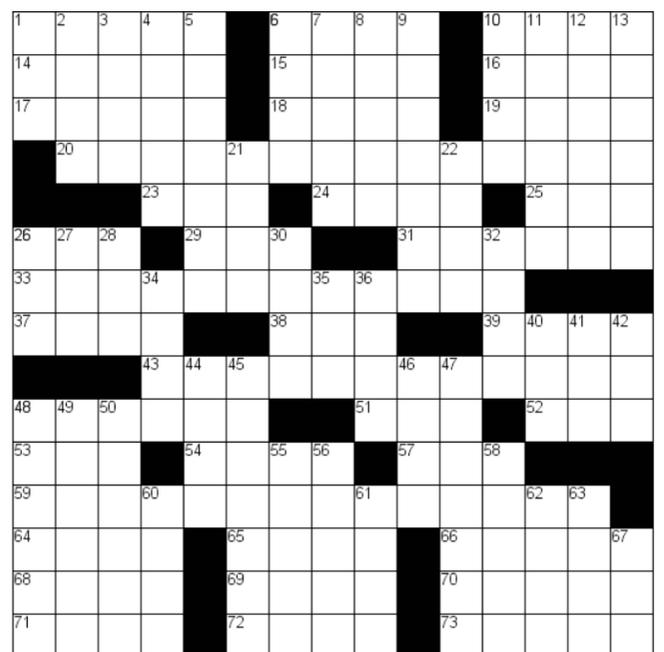
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**THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE**

*It's Political*

**ACROSS**

1. Dik Browne's "the Horrible"
6. Start of a run of 26...
10. ...and continuing from there
14. Manage to avoid
15. Close by
16. Paris papa
17. Tartan pattern
18. Little Chihuahua order
19. "\_\_\_ and Edna dine" (palindrome)
20. Hot dog you have to travel to Edinburgh to eat?
23. \_\_\_ Paulo, Brazil
24. Exam
25. Adam's partner
26. iPhone add-on
29. Tour gp.
31. Big Sur institute
33. Pursue an heir to SF sourdough riches?
37. Wacko
38. Canon camera named for a dawn goddess
39. Came back to earth
43. Line of greeting cards designed by comedian Jay?
48. Figure skater Ito
51. Like a barrel of monkeys
52. Sprained-ankle bandage
53. Pharmaceutical giant \_\_\_ Lilly
54. Prod
57. Popular brew, for short
59. The only providers of genuine English bulldogs and setters?
64. Queue
65. Swirl
66. Offed
68. Arena shouts
69. "Certainly"



70. Madonna role
71. Wrap at Saru Sushi
72. Hill slider
73. Hawaiian state birds
- correct answer to "Who's there?"
26. Injury that cost Klay Thompson almost three seasons, for short
27. Soup at Thanh Tam II
28. DC lobbying group
30. Biblical homicide victim
32. Way too uptight
34. Lower Manhattan neighborhood
35. \_\_\_ pah pah
36. Military aviators' grp.
40. \_\_\_ & Perrins (brand of Worcestershire sauce)
41. End of many a business name: Abbr.
42. Ballet dancer's digit
44. 2012 Best Picture winner set in Iran
45. Elsa in *Born Free*, for example
46. Bumpkin
47. Big California creamery started in 1919
48. Carnegie-\_\_\_ University
49. Philippine province with a repetitive name
50. Supper
55. Former *Idol* judge Paula
56. Rapper who isn't really a physician
58. Dig deeply
60. Arnaz of *I Love Lucy*
61. Checked out
62. Welcome weather forecast, nowadays
63. Web destination
67. Rapper born Nasir Jones

**Solution on Page 22**  
Find more Crosswords at [www.noevalleyvoice.com](http://www.noevalleyvoice.com)

# Neighbors Now Non-Profit; S.F. Not Making Profit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

kicking in 300 million," he said.

But he added, "Transit agencies are in a world of hurt," because the pandemic money that was provided by the federal government is drying up and ridership is still not up to what it was pre-pandemic. "Muni is facing a grim year."

## Strain on City Budget

It is not only Muni looking at a budget shortfall. "San Francisco has a 200-million-dollar deficit this year and is facing a 500-million-dollar deficit next year," Mandelman said. "The mayor's office is trying to figure out how to make seven million dollars' worth of cuts without diminishing city services.

"The police department is already understaffed," he said. "We need to bring on new officers even as cuts to the budget are being contemplated." Also, he said, "Mental health services continue to suffer, as we are woefully short on board-and-care and locked facilities for the mentally ill."

On the housing issue, Mandelman noted a ruling by a San Francisco judge that prohibits the city from forcibly removing tents from the streets until the city provides shelter for everyone on the street. On the face of it, he said, this seems like a beneficial law but it is a bad idea. "Ultimately, we need to make laws to clarify jurisdictions, to be able to remove encampments," when they are places of harm for individuals or

vectors of crime or drug abuse.

The future, he said, is about building more housing. Mandelman is hopeful his own and State Senator Scott Wiener's initiatives to create more aggressive targets for new housing, as well as changes in zoning and height restrictions, will eventually deliver.

## Local Comings and Goings

Unsurprisingly, Noe Valley residents wanted news on two local issues: the future of the J-Church line and of the storied bathroom for the Noe Valley Town Square on 24th Street.

Yes, Mandelman said, he is committed to keeping the J-Church in the tunnel. More importantly, he wants to see J-Church trains come more often and on a regular schedule. "Right now, the schedule is dysfunctional," he said. A robust discussion with UNN president Chris Faust followed, as to whether keeping the J in the tunnel could improve reliability and frequency.

Plans to reduce costs for the town square bathroom are on track, said Mandelman, with rec and park now promising a price of under a million dollars. (See story on page 1, this issue of the Voice.)

## You've Got a Friend

Legislative aides Jackie Prager and Adam Thongsavat made themselves known to the crowd and encouraged people to contact Mandelman's office for information or help in specific situations. (Email mandelmanstaff@sfgov.org or call 415-554-6968. Or sign up for the supervisor's newsletter at SFbos.org.)

Dave Burke introduced himself as District 8's public safety liaison, a civilian employee of the police department who works closely with Mandelman's

office. "If people have a break-in or interface with the police and feel their needs are not being addressed, call me," he said, stressing that this is not the thing to do when an actual crime is in process; in that case, call 911. He gave both his email, dave.burke@sfgov.org, and phone, 415-933-9379.

The members of Upper Noe Neighbors were cheered by the recent official designation of UNN as a 501c(3) organization. As a non-profit, explained treasurer Erin Zielinski, the organization can apply for grants and expand what it does with the city and other entities.

Group vice president Tony Harris added that the new status meant members could make donations to UNN. And, he added, the membership page at uppernoeneighbors.com made it "as easy as one-two-three" to join, at \$20 a year per person or business.

## Slow Street Rules Solidified

The evening was drawing to a close when Faust reported with great satisfaction that the push by UNN and others to create guidelines for Slow Streets had resulted in a new document put out by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, as it made Sanchez Street a permanent Slow Street on Dec. 6 last year. The fact sheet can be accessed on the SFMTA website (sfmta.org) by searching "How to use slow streets."

The guidelines direct pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers to make space and be kind and considerate to one another. People are reminded that activities "need to preserve the use of the street as an active travel roadway." Finally, the Slow Streets guidelines tell us, "Don't be hostile toward other Slow Street users or make people feel unwel-

come on the street."

## Picturing Church Street

The last order of business was to quickly review answers to a neighborhood-wide survey on the character and use of Church Street. Preservation of parking spaces and J-Church stops was resoundingly popular, as were ideas for decorative lighting along storefronts and adding a stop sign at 28th Street.

There was more muted approval for proposals including new benches, kiosks, banners, or flower baskets. As one response put it, "The current 'brand' of the neighborhood is low-key, unassuming, and neighborly. Improvements to generate more traffic must preserve that brand and avoid any glitz that simply cheapens it."

With that, the first meeting of the year came to an end, chairs were put away, and neighbors dispersed into the night. ■

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



THE VOICE welcomes your letters to the editor. Send an email to [editor@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:editor@noevalleyvoice.com). Please include your name. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity. We look forward to hearing from you.

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## ART HAUS

*Noe Valley Artists*

### EXHIBITION

Elizabeth Dekker - Encaustic, oil, acrylic

Clint Frederic Wiater - Photography, encaustic, acrylic

Jeannette Haxton - Pencil, oil, acrylic

Jack Tipple - Pen and Ink



Clint Frederic Wiater



Jeannette Haxton



Elizabeth Dekker



Jack Tipple

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## REMEMBERING

Jean Amos—  
A Woman for All  
Seasons

By Stephen Reimann

Our dear friend Jean Amos died suddenly at her Noe Valley home on Oct. 28, 2022, at the age of 80. Jean had an enormously rich and diverse life. She was a talented singer and musician, a TV writer and producer, an artist, a political activist, a naturalist and gardener, a campaigner for endangered species, and a wonderful friend.

A memorial to celebrate Jean's life will be held on Sunday, Feb. 5, at 2 p.m., at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. All are invited.

Born in Los Angeles on Feb. 5, 1942, to Adelaide (Schmidt) Amos, a music teacher, and Arnet Amos, a baritone opera singer, Jean spent her early years in Hollywood. As a young girl, Jean was thrust into the world of politics when her father was blacklisted during the Joseph McCarthy purges. The family fled to Spain, then France, and later Germany. Jean's young life as a member of a family of blacklisted musicians avoiding the FBI indelibly shaped her future. She always identified herself as a red-diaper baby.

In the late 1950s, the family returned to Southern California, where Jean completed high school and attended California State University, Northridge, earning a degree in anthropology.

But already Jean had started her musical career. She was a gifted singer, performing alto, mezzo-soprano, and soprano. She formed a musical duo, Penny and Jean, and at the age of 16 made her first album with RCA Victor, *Two for the Road* (1958). She joined The Womenfolk while in college and appeared on three albums: *Never Underestimate the Power of The Womenfolk* (1964), *The Womenfolk at the Hungry I* (1965), and *Man Oh Man!* (1966). The Womenfolk enjoyed considerable success, performing across North America, in Europe, and on TV. TV appearances included a live performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Recently, the group has been rediscovered via the Internet, and Jean was amused that she had fans again.

In addition to her singing career, Jean worked in television on both sides of the camera. She was writer and co-producer for WNYE-TV from 1967 to 1970, where she wrote and produced award-winning programs like *James* for the New York City Board of Education. During this time, Jean enrolled at Hunter College, where she worked towards a master's degree in music composition.

In the early 1970s, after her first marriage ended, Jean left New York for San Francisco, where her work and personal life took new directions.

Initially, Jean was a waitress at the Trident in Sausalito. Then she worked as an editor, writer, and production manager for the monthly alternative newspaper *PRISMA*. In 1974, Jean trained and began work as a land surveyor and drafting artist for Reinfeld Engineering.

While conducting a survey in San Francisco, she struck up a conversation with a passerby, Rick Davis, a television journalist for NBC. They fell in love, married, and settled in Noe Valley, where Jean lived for the next 40 years. Jean and Rick were divorced in 1988.

In the following decades, Jean worked with a variety of Bay Area organizations: she was a program coordinator for the California Historical Society, a registrar/designer/editor for Exodus Trust, and a receptionist at the Center for Human Sexuality. All the while, she worked as a landscape gardener and taught the guitar.

## A Tireless Volunteer

But it was Jean's volunteer work that was truly exceptional. Her spirit of civic participation radiated far beyond her home on Elizabeth Street.

As a leader in the group Friends of Noe Valley, Jean advocated on behalf of local residents navigating the ins and outs of the Planning Department and was dedicated to preserving the unique Victorian character of Noe Valley. She also became a certified member of NERT, the city's emergency response team.

"Jean was a cherished friend with a big generous spirit, who helped to launch so many Friends neighborhood-serving activities, from the annual street fair to the annual fall picnic at Upper Douglass Playground, to monthly Friends meetings at the Noe Valley Library," said John Knox, a resident of Cesar Chavez Street. "She served as president for a number of years and always contributed to the optimism and fun we all shared."

Over the years, Jean's community service included a weekly shift of chopping veggies for soups served at the Martin de Porres kitchen, working with the Urban Angels to secure donated clothing, sharing the wonders of tide pools with school children as a docent at the California Academy of Sciences, and lending a hand wherever needed at the Marine Mammal Center in the Marin Headlands.

A flock of colorful North Beach birds were able to have their story told in the documentary film *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*, thanks to Jean's involvement as one of the producers. And she lent her talents as an artist to paint murals on highway support structures that were part of the urban landscape.

In her younger years, Jean could often be found at the San Francisco Board of Supervisors meetings, arguing for progressive causes. Her forceful letters to the editor were frequently printed in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (and the *Noe Valley Voice*).

Jean served as a volunteer jurist on the San Francisco County Civil Grand Jury. And in recent years, she successfully lobbied state legislatures to pass California's End of Life Act.

Jean took a stand on almost every issue, and she clearly stated her point of



Known for reinventing herself, Jean Amos was a music celebrity, a community activist, and a passionate defender of bats, otters, and manatees. Photo courtesy Stephen Reimann

view. Talking with her over a glass of wine made you focus your own thoughts and widen your perceptions. Her pre-election roundtables were the event to attend for sharpening your knowledge and preparing your voting choices.

Above all, Jean was in awe of the complexity and beauty of nature. She was a champion of the vulnerable manatee, an advocate for the ecological importance of bats, and a supporter of preserving North American river otter habitat. A camping trip with Jean was an educational delight.

## Her Splashy Street Art

Jean's embrace of both the serious and the silly was one of her most endearing qualities. A wicked sense of humor (ask her to recite a cheeky limerick), colorful and wacky clothing choices (skulls and witty political slogans), the stenciled skunks she sprayed on public ads for offensive luxury goods (*This stinks!*)—all were a part of the yin and yang of Jean. As might be expected, she was a great fan of the Banksy brand of artistic political activism.

Jean's eclectic tastes were reflected in her enthusiasm for the movies. She loved attending film festivals and was particularly fond of animation. But any genre was okay, and the quirkier the movie the better. Jean was also a regular attendee of Berkeley Rep, where she was a volunteer usher for many years. And Jean was a big supporter of the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

But it was Jean's powerful integrity and heartfelt concern for the welfare of her friends that was treasured the most.

Over the years, several of us been "interviewed" by Jean in the process of being accepted as a mate for one of Jean's close friends. Jean's good friend Deborah Robbins, who now lives in Los Angeles, describes her experience:

"I remember meeting Jean for the first time. I hadn't been with Rudy very long. I was quite smitten with him, but felt like I didn't know him that well... When I met Jean, I felt like I suddenly knew Rudy much better. Jean was clearly so smart, so direct and forthcoming, so engaged in the world, so curious about everything, and at the same time so lacking in vanity or pretense. If this was one of Rudy's closest friends, I knew he really was the wonderful guy I felt him to be."

And Deborah describes so well what spending time with Jean at her house was like: "I remember how often Jean and I would sit gabbing away at her kitchen table, talking about environmental issues and the climate crisis, politics and society, native plants and vegetable gardening, my experience as a high school teacher, the arts, and on and on."

## Friends Abound

In recent years, Jean liked to stroll around Noe Valley, where she seemed to know every dog on the street by name.

At lunchtime, you couldn't keep Jean from driving her bright orange Prius in search of a favorite restaurant or a new, offbeat alternative.

She remained as intrepid, compassionate, and generous as ever.

John recalls, "The last chicken in my 1980s flock, Eggberta, went to live in Jean's back yard, using an old coop that had migrated from my yard." Its new mother was up to the challenge.

Jean was a magnificent human being, deeply loved by a rich network of friends. We will miss her enormously.

Surviving Jean are her brother, John A. "Chico" Amos, of Shelton, Wash., and her niece and nephew-in-law, Alexandra J Ash and Allen E. Gilchrist, of Olympia, Wash.

Friends and family suggest donations in Jean Amos's memory be made to one of her favorite causes: Amnestrty International, Doctors Without Borders, Earth Island Institute, Environment California, the Marine Mammal Center, Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the River Otter Ecology Project, the Save the Manatee Club (Maitland, Fla.), or the Sonoma Wildlife Rescue. ■

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SAT  
FEB  
11

**KAITLIN LEUNG & SARAH LEUNG • THE WOKS OF LIFE: RECIPES TO KNOW AND LOVE FROM A CHINESE AMERICAN FAMILY • 3:00 P.M. FREE!** The family behind the acclaimed blog The Woks of Life shares 100 of their favorite home-cooked and restaurant-style Chinese recipes. One of the San Francisco Chronicle's Ten Best Cookbooks of 2022!

WED  
FEB  
15

**JEFF CIOLETTI • IMBIBING FOR INTROVERTS: A GUIDE TO SOCIAL DRINKING FOR THE ANTI-SOCIAL • 6:30 P.M. FREE!** Cioletti helps solo drinkers pull up a seat at every genre of drinking establishment - with cocktail recommendations for when you venture out and recipes to partake without leaving the house.

SAT  
FEB  
25

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SUN  
FEB  
26

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*Photo by Jack Tipple*

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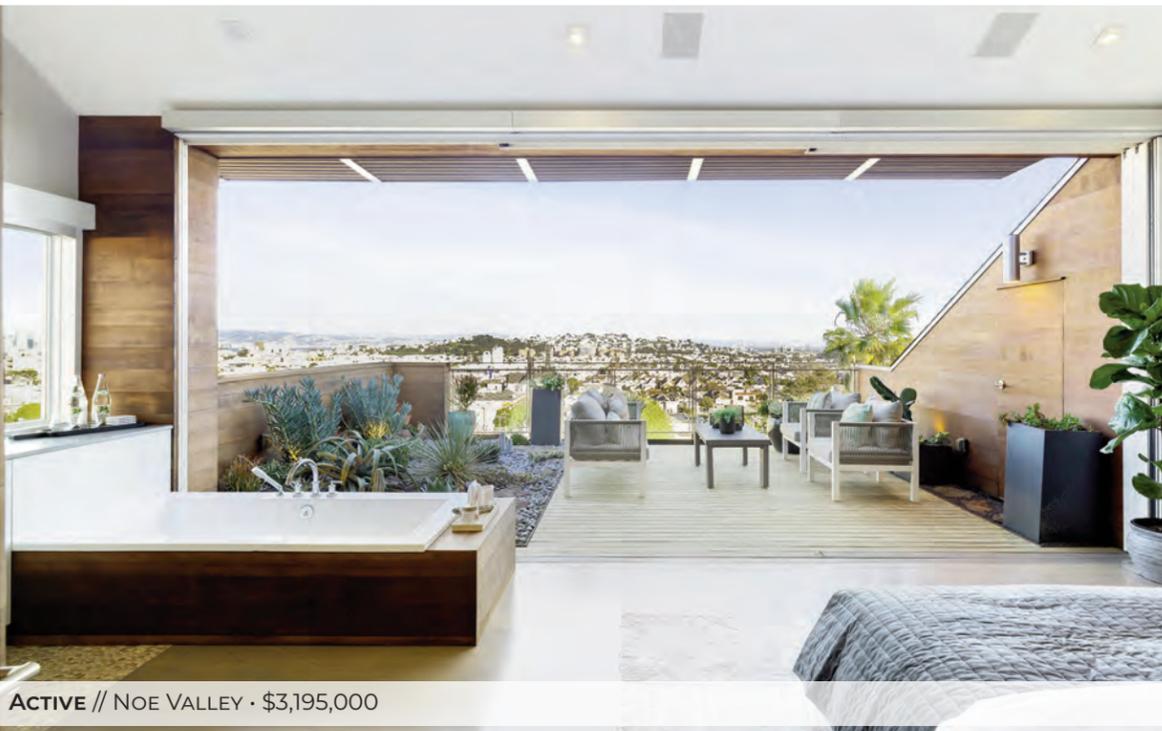
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# SHORT TAKES

## How Does Your Garden Grow? Show Friends

The Friends of Noe Valley Annual Garden Tour, back for just the second year since its Covid-induced hiatus, is set for Saturday, May 6, and organizers are keen to sign up some new talent.

Got a garden you want to show off? Let the Friends know. Amateurs and professionals alike are invited to nominate their garden, using the contact form found on [friendsofnoevalley.com](http://friendsofnoevalley.com).

Linda Lockyer, Friends of Noe Valley events chair, said the committee is looking to find eight or nine gardens within walking distance in Noe Valley for the tour, which runs 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Organizers also would like to preview potential gardens in February or March. “We are also looking for artists who are interested in showing their work in selected gardens,” Lockyer said. “As always, we have a need for garden greeters as well.”

Those interested in being a garden greeter can contact Lockyer at [lindalockyer3@gmail.com](mailto:lindalockyer3@gmail.com).

Proceeds from event tickets will be donated to a neighborhood garden project. Past beneficiaries have included the James Lick School Garden, the Alvarado School garden project, the Noe Valley Town Square, and the On Lok 30th Street Senior Center garden.

Know a worthy cause? Send your ideas to Lockyer or Peggy Cling at [mpcling@gmail.com](mailto:mpcling@gmail.com). Stay tuned for information on ticket sales next month.

—Suzanne Herel

## Music Series Brings Back the Blues to Noe Valley

After being away for more than a decade, the Noe Valley Music Series, now known as SF Live Arts at Cyprian’s, will return to its original venue at the Noe Valley Ministry next month with a blues concert on Friday, March 3, at 8 p.m.

“It’s great to be back,” said Larry Kasson, who founded the series in 1981. “We’ve had so many great shows there [at 1021 Sanchez St.]”

The event will feature Oregon slide guitarist and singer David Jacobs-Strain, playing country blues alongside harmonica virtuoso Bob Beach. The duo have appeared at Hardly Strictly Bluegrass in San Francisco and at festivals around the country.

A jazz flute player himself, Kasson was among hundreds of musicians who performed at the Noe Valley concert space in the 1980s and ’90s—from vocalist Bobby McFerrin, then a neighborhood resident, to Joan Baez, to the late Gil Scott-Heron.

In 2011, the series relocated to St. Cyprian’s Episcopal Church in the Western Addition as the Ministry underwent a major renovation.

For now, the March event is the only one set for the Ministry, though Kasson said he would bring back acts periodically.

“We hope to do three or four a year at the Noe Valley Ministry. We’ll see where it goes,” he said, adding that the music series will also continue at St. Cyprian’s (2097 Turk St).

Tickets for the Ministry performance cost \$20 in advance and can be purchased at <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/5710283> or for \$25 at the door. Masks are required.

—Corrie M. Anders

## Word Weekend a Hot Ticket

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Street resident who will co-moderate with Dietzel. “They are just fascinating. They riff off each other,” said Einhorn, adding that the two authors are “pretty used to discussing literature” together. The event kicks off at 7 p.m.

Hafner, who lives on Douglass Street, is getting lots of attention for her 2022 novel *The Boys*, a family drama set during the pandemic. A technology and health journalist, Hafner also commands a big audience for her non-fiction works, including the deeply honest memoir *Mother Daughter Me* (2013). When not writing, she is the host and co-producer of the podcast *Lost Women of Science*.

Fowler, a resident of Santa Cruz, is the author of seven novels and three short-story collections, including the award-winning *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2014) and *The Jane Austen Book Club* (2004). Her latest work, *Booth*, is a historical novel about the life and circumstances of Lincoln assassin John Wilkes Booth.

On Saturday, March 4, at 4 p.m., the festival will welcome East Bay writer Ying Chang Compestine, the author of 25 books, for both adults and children. In her novel *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party*, she drew on her experiences growing up in China during the Cultural Revolution. Her newest book, *Morning Sun in Wuhan*, is about a 13-year-old girl who finds a way to deal with her isolation during the early weeks of the Covid epidemic.

Besides talking about her work, Compestine, also an authority on Asian cuisine, will offer a bonus for budding



Katie Hafner, author of the best-selling *The Boys*, is set to appear March 3 at Word Weekend at Bethany Church on Sanchez.

chefs. “She will print out children’s recipes from her books and give them out,” said Einhorn.

The festival’s final event, on Sunday, March 5, at 5 p.m., is called “Ages: Poetry and Song Across Generations.” Led by neighborhood poet and performer Susan Dambroff and Gil Guillermo, a singer-songwriter known for staging the music at the Noe Valley Farmers Market, the event will offer poetry and music by several performers, including two father/daughter and mother/son duos.

The Word Week literary festival was founded in 2007 by the group Friends of Noe Valley. The pandemic prompted organizers to make it a virtual event in 2021 and to shorten it last year from a week to a weekend.

Folio Books is partnering with Friends to provide books and help arrange author visits. For more information, go to [foliosf.com/wordweekend](http://foliosf.com/wordweekend) or visit the store at 3957 24th St. ■



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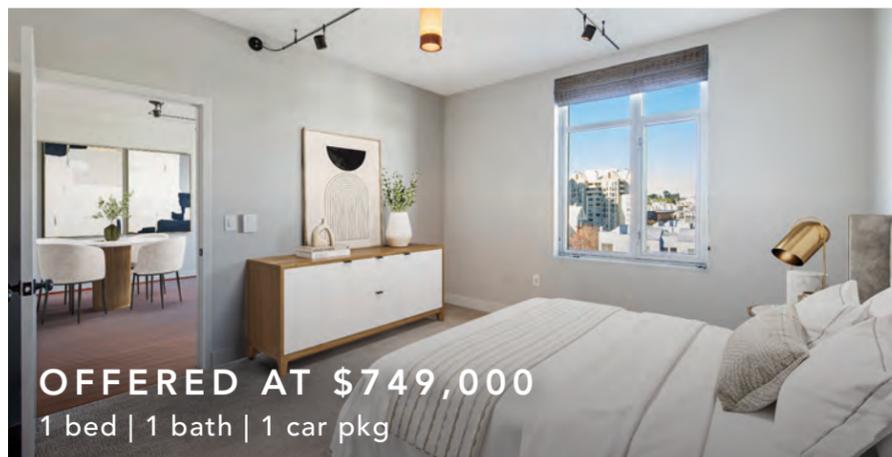
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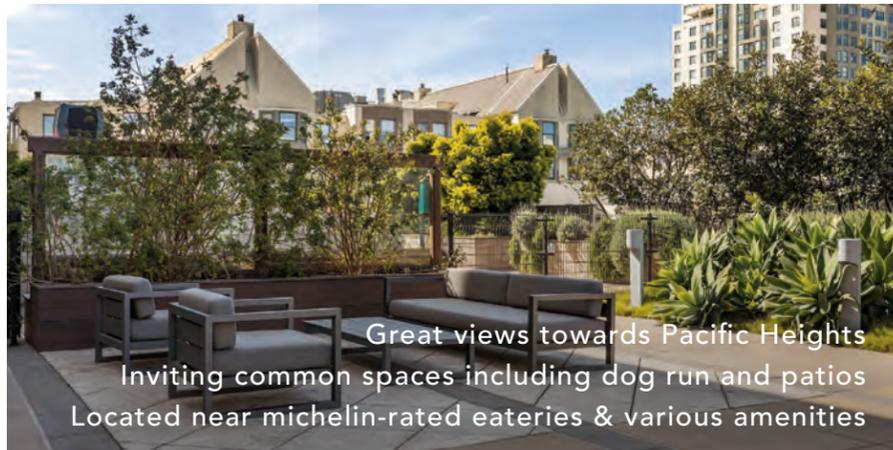
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IMAGE: SONPHOTO.COM

# The Cost of Living in Noe

Market Slower, Prices Lower

By Corrie M. Anders

After hovering around \$3 million for most of 2022 and peaking at \$4.2 million in May, the average price buyers paid for a “single-family” home in Noe Valley tumbled to \$2.5 million during the last two months of the year.

Also, the number of sales declined year over year. According to data provided to the *Noe Valley Voice* by Corcoran Icon Properties of San Francisco, buyers purchased two fewer houses in November and December than they had the same two months of 2021, and 18 fewer condominiums.

The slowdown owed to high mort-



This four-bedroom home on Valley Street, which sold in November for \$4.2 million, has views from every level, including a glass-enclosed front patio.

gage interest rates, a shaky stock market, and job layoffs in the tech industry.

Both shoppers and sellers took a rest during the holidays, said Randall Kostick, CEO of Corcoran Icon. (Kostick previously was president of Corcoran Global Living San Francisco.) “Buyers have been a little hesitant,” he said. “They are worried over the economy, and higher interest rates are something of a barrier.”

Kostick noted that home loan rates at the end of last year were as high as 6.5 percent. “That makes a big difference in monthly payments.”

Kostick said many would-be sellers, anxious they might fail to get the price they desired, opted to delay listing their properties until spring, when market conditions should improve.

The sales that did occur were mostly mid-sized, moderately priced homes, he noted, and not the modern high-tech mansions commanding \$6 to \$7 million in Noe Valley’s glory days.

Kostick surmised developers anticipated a slowing market a couple of years ago and decided it was “risky” to build more luxury properties.

Ironically, with fewer homes of all types on the market, buyers in November and December typically paid more than the asking price to get their desired residence.

Single-family home buyers on aver-



A guest cottage and a renovated interior featuring skylights and a gourmet kitchen were keys to the December sale of this home on Douglass Street for \$3,350,000.

Photos by Corrie M. Anders

## Noe Valley Rents\*\*

Unit	No. in Sample	Range January 2023	Average January 2023	Average November 2022	Average January 2022
Studio	8	\$1,900 – \$2,650	\$2,246 / mo.	\$2,329 / mo.	\$1,937 / mo.
1-bdrm	59	\$1,900 – \$6,000	\$3,100 / mo.	\$2,982 / mo.	\$2,750 / mo.
2-bdrm	49	\$3,000 – \$5,500	\$4,174 / mo.	\$4,175 / mo.	\$3,717 / mo.
3-bdrm	19	\$3,600 – \$8,275	\$5,667 / mo.	\$6,558 / mo.	\$5,861 / mo.
4+-bdrm	7	\$4,500 – \$14,995	\$8,476 / mo.	\$9,718 / mo.	\$8,730 / mo.

\*\* This survey is based on a sample of 142 Noe Valley rental listings appearing on Craigslist.org from Dec. 20, 2022, to Jan. 12, 2023. In January 2022, there were 120 listings. NVV 2/2023

## 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>						
December 2022	9	\$1,625,000	\$3,350,000	\$2,492,778	40	107%
November 2022	9	\$1,800,000	\$4,200,000	\$2,502,222	22	106%
December 2021	9	\$1,875,000	\$4,200,000	\$2,749,111	17	110%
November 2021	11	\$1,700,000	\$6,300,000	\$3,489,545	19	109%
<b>Condominiums/TIC</b>						
December 2022	1	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000	56	97%
November 2022	7	\$760,000	\$1,950,000	\$1,470,429	21	103%
December 2021	11	\$1,050,000	\$2,510,000	\$1,673,636	28	110%
November 2021	15	\$429,405	\$2,395,000	\$1,414,294	29	111%
<b>2- to 4-unit buildings</b>						
December 2022	4	\$1,130,000	\$2,150,000	\$1,582,500	105	85%
November 2022	2	\$1,620,000	\$1,675,000	\$1,647,500	53	98%
December 2021	4	\$1,900,000	\$3,200,000	\$2,506,250	24	109%
November 2021	3	\$1,650,000	\$2,275,000	\$1,947,667	35	104%
<b>5+-unit buildings</b>						
December 2022	0	—	—	—	—	—
November 2022	0	—	—	—	—	—
December 2021	0	—	—	—	—	—
November 2021	0	—	—	—	—	—

\*This survey includes all Noe Valley home sales completed during the month. Noe Valley is loosely defined as the area bordered by Grand View, 22nd, Guerrero, and 30th streets. The *Noe Valley Voice* thanks Corcoran Icon Properties, San Francisco, for providing sales data. NVV 2/2023

age paid 6 percent above the seller’s asking price in November and 7 percent in December. Still, that was less than the 9 and 10 percent extra, respectively, that buyers shelled out in 2021.

### Top Sellers

A 6.3 percent overbid in November landed a four-bedroom, four-bath house with 3,327 square feet of living space, located in the 400 block of Valley Street, between Castro and Noe streets.

Listed at \$3,950,000, the home was on the market for only eight days before a customer plunked down \$4.2 million, making it the most expensive sale during the month. For their money, they got a 122-year-old home that had been remodeled to feature open living/dining, high-end Wolf appliances, and Carrara marble countertops; plus a bedroom suite with a glass-enclosed walk-in shower and bath.

The property also boasted radiant and solar heating, scenic views, and a front patio above a three-car garage.

It was a different story for the costliest house in December, in the 600 block of Douglass Street, between 23rd and Alvarado streets. With a list price of \$3,795,000, the property was on the market for 69 days before a buyer offered \$3,350,000 (88 percent of asking).

Still, once escrow closed, the new owner could lounge in a five-bedroom, five-bath home with 3,127 square feet

of living space, including a free-standing guest cottage in the rear.

As on Valley Street, the 1908 Edwardian on Douglass had undergone a renovation and now sported an open floor plan, skylights, a chef’s kitchen with dual Electrolux Icon ovens and a Viking Island cooktop, two patios, one-car parking, and views of Noe Valley and the bay beyond.

### Condominiums Gone, Girl

November’s most expensive condominium was a three-bedroom, three-bath unit in the 200 block of Hoffman Avenue, between 23rd and Elizabeth streets. The tab was \$1,950,000—\$48,000 beneath the sticker price.

Part of a two-unit building constructed in 1999, the residence offered 2,065 square feet of living space, a modern kitchen with central island, a patio leading to a yard for the owner’s exclusive use, panoramic views, and parking for one car.

December’s only condo sale was part of a three-unit building in the first block of Elizabeth Street between Guerrero Street and San Jose Avenue (closer to Valencia Street than Noe Valley). It had three bedrooms and two baths within 1,426 square feet of living space, and was complemented by a chef’s kitchen, fireplace, yard, and one-car parking. The sale price, \$1.4 million, was 3 percent less than the owner’s asking price. ■

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Recap of Part I: Cashless Frodough left the donut shop with a full belly and a mission. In exchange for the donut he received, he had to take another to the top of Twin Peaks. Grand Al warned Frodough that the journey would be daunting and that donuts had a mysterious power over men. Part I is available online in the January 2023 issue of the Noe Valley Voice.

**T**wenty-fourth Street was swarming with activity. The past few weeks were marred by a once-in-a-generation storm, and the townsfolk were happy to be outside again in the sun. Frodough, no longer hungry, walked casually down the corridor in a cheerful mood. He loved to walk the street on a sunny day, looking into the shops and greeting the passersby. He was well-known in the Valley. He approached the town square, and since it was Saturday, it was filled with people attending the Farmers' Market.

Loud voices rang out, "Vote YES on Z, and NO on E!" Another voice, "Vote NO on Z and YES on E." "Recall them all!" came another.

Frodough skirted by the politics but was approached again.

"Reusable bags, sir?" a lady asked.

Frodough replied, "No, I won't be shopping today. I haven't any money."

"What about a bag for that donut around your neck?"

A strange sense of anger and possession came over him. He didn't like the lady talking about his donut. He collected himself and replied, "No thanks, the floss is holding it just fine."

He walked away and sat at a small table to soak in the sun. His journey to the top of Twin Peaks would be a long one and he needed to rest when he could.

Then an old gray and wrinkly beagle slowly began walking toward him. It coughed, "Koll-um, Koll-um."

Frodough loved dogs and reached down to pet it. The donut around his neck dangled in the dog's face. The animal lunged at the treat, mouth wide open. Frodough recoiled and the dog's bite came up empty.

"My Precious!" the owner yelled while grabbing the dog by the collar and clipping a leash. "He can be pretty sneaky sometimes. Sorry about that."

Frodough clutched his donut, shaken by how close he had come to losing it. "Is that a beagle?"

"Yes," the owner said with a smile. "Smeagle the Beagle."

A close call. Frodough decided that he shouldn't dilly-dally any longer and needed to be more careful. He headed out again.

**I**t was near midday now. The sun had crested over the southern buildings along the street, illuminating the northern ones. Beautiful bay windows shone brightly with all the glory of the Victorian Age.

Frodough crossed the street to walk in that sun. However, his progress was shortly halted. A

# OTHER VOICES

fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction • the noe valley voice



Photo by Jack Tipple

## The Lord of the Dough

### Part II: The Twin Donuts

By Elliot Carlson

horde of strollers blocked the way. He tried to cross the street back to the shady side but was blocked there too, by a double-parked grocery truck unloading its wares.

"You seem to be stuck," a man said from the bench nearby. Two others sat next to him.

"Who are you?" the second asked.

"And where are you headed?" the third chimed in.

"I am Frodough Bagless, and up to Twin Peaks is where I head. Who may you be?"

"We are the Elders of Bernie's Bench," they replied together. "We know of a way around, but you will need to answer a riddle to proceed."

**"We are the Elders of Bernie's Bench," they replied together. "We know of a way around, but you will need to answer a riddle to proceed."**

Frodough accepted the challenge with a nod. In unison, the three Elders asked, "What has no beginning, end, or middle?"

Frodough thought and thought. What could it be? A minute passed, and he began to doubt himself. He held his head down in shame. Then a smile broke across his face.

"A donut!" he said confidently.

"Correct!" The Elders laughed, then proceeded to lead Frodough through the coffee shop and into the backyard. There was a secret

gate that took them into the neighboring building and back out to the street past the strollers.

"Good luck on your journey!" the Elders said as they waved goodbye.

**T**he street got steeper. Frodough, having been inside much of the past week due to the rain, felt his legs were weaker than usual. The donut felt heavy around his neck. Doubt entered his mind:

*This is silly. What's to stop me from eating this donut right now? I am already hungry and it's my favorite type, chocolate with sprinkles. I've carried it this far, it's mine!*

He looked up toward Twin Peaks. Sutron's tower stared back at him. A mirage appeared. In the crux of the ironwork lay a large donut. It was the twin of his, and the eye of the donut stared down upon him. Fire and flames surrounded it. The street went quiet. His heart began thumping and his peripheries blurred. A burning desire filled his soul, telling him to eat the donut now. He closed his eyes, trying to hide from the tower's evil glare, but it was still there, burning brightly in his mind. It consumed him.

"Sir...sir," a woman shook him on his shoulder. "Are ye okay?"

Frodough snapped out of it and came back to his surroundings. He tightly clutched the donut.

"Why doncha come in and have a nice glass of wa'er?" she asked with a pleasant Irish accent. They were in front of the Valley Tavern, one of Frodough's favorite spots to

grab a beer and watch the old game of ball and foot.

Frodough accepted the offer and sat at the bar, still shaken by his vision. He remembered Grand Al's warning about "the one pastry to rule them all!"

Samantha, the bartender, poured him a glass of water, then left to attend to other patrons. From a nearby booth, Frodough heard snippets of conversation.

"Dude! Three hundred shares of Bitcoin... It's part of the blockchain duh...an AI-generated NFT...Elon Musk said so..." An overwhelming sense of sleepiness came over Frodough. They continued, "A data center full of GPUs...mining cryptocurrency...disrupting the global economy...Zuckerberg's hydrofoil," the tech bros rattled on.

The talk was putting Frodough to sleep. "TikTok and the creator's economy...an eight-hour workweek...my shuttle was five minutes late...Joe Rogan's latest podcast."

A familiar voice pierced his imminent slumber. "Airpods. May they bring quiet to you in the loudest of places, when all other peace is lost."

Frodough remembered the item Grand Al had given him. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the headphones. Right before the sleep took him, he managed to place one in each ear.

? *Wake me up before you go-go, Don't leave me hanging on like a yo-yo ?*

The '80s classic from Wham! shook Frodough out of his slumber. He was wide awake now.

**S**amantha had returned from serving some drinks. "Hey, what's with that donut hanging around your neck?"

Frodough took out the headphones and replied, "I am taking it up to Twin Peaks for a friend."

"I get off work in 15 minutes. I could drive it up there in no time. It would be no burden at all."

"NO!" Frodough snapped. "It's my precious...umm...my burden, I mean my burden." The possessive feeling consumed him again. He grabbed his things and abruptly exited.

He continued up the street. The weather was changing. Wisps of fog came and went overhead, blocking the sun for moments at a time. The donut felt especially heavy around his neck, yet he proceeded.

When he reached the grasses of Noe Courts, a cry rang out. "SMEAGLE...come back here!"

Frodough turned around and saw the old dog rushing directly at him. He ran.

*To be continued...*

**Elliot Carlson** is a fiber optic network engineer at Meta who was inspired to write this story after reading *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy last year. He is a frequent visitor to *Happy Donuts*, which lies perilously close to his home on 24th Street.

The Noe Valley Voice invites you to submit fiction, creative nonfiction, or poetry for possible publication in Other Voices. Email editor@noevalleyvoice.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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UPPER NOE RECREATION CENTER



A bit of blustery weather cannot dampen the spirit of the Friday morning Zumba crowd.  
 Photo by Chris Faust

Drop In or Outside for Zumba

Winter Session is heating up but you can still register. Despite inclement weather, or perhaps because of it, Upper Noe Recreation Center has been extremely busy this winter, especially on Saturdays when 300 to 400 people come inside to participate in Zumba, A Place to Play, and Jr. Warriors.

Facilities coordinator Cheryl Woltjen and staff say there is room for more. Note that one popular activity, Open Gym, is not currently available on Saturdays due to Jr. Warriors' games but will return in March.

Outside, folks are braving the elements for a full line-up of tennis classes and for morning Zumba with Moire. While these Tuesday and Friday Zumba sessions are now a regular Rec & Park class, drop-ins are welcome. Just stop by and join in.

Promote park maintenance with 311. Are you concerned about the deteriorating playground surface? Do you want see faster fixes to equipment? The most effective way to improve park conditions is to contact 311 either by phone, web or the super-easy-to-use phone app. Even if a problem is brought to the attention of park personnel, they rely on your 311 reports to support service requests.

For more information, visit [www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com](http://www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com) or call the office at 415-970-8061. The rec center is at 295 Day St., at Sanchez Street.

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

Upper Noe Jan. 3 to March 9, 2023 Schedule

Rec Center Hours: Tues.–Fri., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sun. & Mon. closed; outside activities only.

Park Grounds: Daily, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

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**A Place to Play** (formerly Auditorium Free Play)  
 10 to 11:30 a.m. weekdays  
 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday  
 Hours subject to change.

**Tuesday**  
 9 to 10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE  
 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pickleball (all ages) FREE  
 Noon to 1 p.m. Pilates (all levels)  
 2 to 5 p.m. Open Gym (youth)  
 4 to 6 p.m. Jr. Warriors League  
 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis (8-10 yrs)  
 6 to 7 p.m. Tennis (18+)  
 6 to 7:30 p.m. Open Gym (adult)  
 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Yoga Hatha

**Wednesday**  
 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Open Gym (adult)  
 12 to 1 p.m. Feldenkrais (18+)  
 2 to 5 p.m. Open Gym (youth)  
 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis (9-12 yrs)  
 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Drop-In Adult Volleyball (advanced players only)  
 6 to 7 p.m. Tennis (18+)

**Thursday**  
 10 to 11 a.m. Petite Bakers (3-5 yrs)  
 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Pickleball (all ages) FREE

12 to 1 p.m. Pilates (all levels)  
 2 to 5 p.m. Open Gym (youth)  
 4 to 5 p.m. Karate- Little Kickers (6-8 yrs)  
 5 to 6 p.m. Karate Kids (9-12 yrs)  
 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Open Gym (adult)  
 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Adult Boot Camp

**Friday**  
 9 to 10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE  
 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Open Gym (adult)  
 2 to 3:30 p.m. Open Gym (youth)  
 4 to 5 p.m. League Volleyball (8-10 yrs)  
 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tennis (8-10 yrs)  
 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Shaolin Kung Fu (13-17 yrs)  
 5 to 6 p.m. League Volleyball (11-14 yrs)  
 6 to 7:30 p.m. Girls Play Sports (14-18 yrs) Instructional Volleyball

**Saturday**  
 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Jr. Warriors League  
 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Family Zumba FREE  
 (no Open Gym)

# STORE TREK

## PERFECTLY SEASONED

4017 24th St. at Noe Street

415-795-3635

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

Home cooks in need of a special spice can now turn to Phuong Mai for assistance. The co-owner and manager of Perfectly Seasoned at 4017 24th St. says he will work the phones with his suppliers and vendors to find the ingredient you are after.

He already is carrying more obscure spices and spice blends than he initially stocked at his shop on opening day, Dec. 17. One such item is Grains of Paradise (\$9.69 for 1.8 oz. or \$13.79 for 2.6 oz.), a pepper that has notes of coriander and nutmeg, said Mai.

“People are grinding it up like regular pepper,” he explained.

The shop also carries Long Pepper, which Mai says has a muskier aroma and flavor than traditional black peppercorns. (A one-ounce jar is \$5.99.)

One of his most popular items is of his own creation, Egg Seasoning (\$5.89 for 1.1 oz.; \$8.49 for 1.8 oz.). Mai combines smoked paprika, Parmesan, whey, buttermilk solids, sodium phosphate, salt, onion powder, sesame seed, chervil, poppy seed, salt, and black pepper to make it.

“It is similar to a pork seasoning or a steak seasoning,” explained Mai.

“People can put it on eggs, potatoes, popcorn—anything they can dream of.”

His partner and fiancé, Matthew Green, had encouraged him to stock it.

“I asked him if I should do an egg seasoning. Matthew said, ‘Sure, people will go for it,’” said Mai.

Other unique spices are Gumbo Filé Powder, made from sassafras and used to thicken sauces (\$5.09/\$7.29), and Gochugaru, a mild, sweet Korean pepper used in kimchi (\$5.59/\$7.99).

The standard herbs and spices are also represented, along with teas and extracts, recipe cards, and an assortment of spice racks.

Mai makes all the spice blends on site. For summer, he’ll roll out different grilling spice blends and meat rubs.

“I also take suggestions on things we don’t carry,” he said. “If it sells well, we will keep it. If not, at least we made a customer happy.”

The idea for opening a spice shop was sparked during a trip last April to Des Moines, Iowa. Mai and Green had popped into a spice store there and purchased items to take home.

“We were showing our friends all the



Phuong Mai and Matthew Green (right) offer an abundance of spice choices at their new shop, Perfectly Seasoned.

Photo by Art Bodner

great things we had gotten from this other shop during a birthday party we hosted for Matthew. The next day, Matthew said, ‘If you want to open a spice shop, you can,’” said Mai.

Mai had worked in publishing until 2019, then took a job as a baker at the Devil’s Teeth Baking Company in the Outer Richmond. Also, he had spent time as a waiter at a family-owned pho restaurant in Fremont.

Owning a spice shop fed his personal culinary pursuits. “I am a big home cook. I love cooking up things at home,” said Mai.

His research last year into the spice trade turned into a business plan. It also revealed that there were few options in the Bay Area when it came to stores dedicated to selling spices directly to consumers. Spice Ace, hailed as San Francisco’s best spice shop, had shuttered in early 2019.

“There is the Spice & Tea Exchange at Fisherman’s Wharf. But what resident in San Francisco goes all the way down there to shop?” said Mai.

While the couple live in the city’s Excelsior district, they chose Noe Valley for their new enterprise because it had better access to public transit and was more conveniently located. They began looking for a storefront to lease last May.

“We knew there would be good foot traffic here,” said Mai, who grew up in

San Jose. “Saturdays, we do see a big uptick in traffic from people down the street, if not from the farmers’ market, then from shoppers at Whole Foods.”

After signing the lease for the retail space where Eye Q Optometry used to be, Mai and Green gave the storefront a complete makeover. Gone are the walls that had formed consultation rooms. Visitors now step into a light-filled showroom with a new wood floor. (Eye Q, meanwhile, moved to its own bigger

and brighter space at 4193 24th St.)

Mai said he and Green felt lucky to have been able to open during the holiday shopping season.

“We received such a nice, warm welcome from everyone in the neighborhood,” said Mai. “They would tell us they are happy we are here.”

The store is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

—Matthew S. Bajko

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**Feb. 1-March 11:** Chung 24 Gallery displays "A History of Photography," featuring work by Christy McDonald, Colleen Mullins, Jenny Sampson, and Nicole White. Wed.-Sat., 1-6 pm, or by appointment. 4071 24th. chung24gallery.com

**Feb. 1-March 12:** Noe Valley resident Nancy Reese shows PAINTINGS at Gallery Sanchez. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. Email reeseartsf@gmail.com for an appointment.

**Feb. 1-March 25:** CREATIVITY EXPLORED hosts "Relove," a group exhibit of art made from recycled materials. 3245 16th. Tues.-Fri., 10 am-5 pm, or by appointment: 642-1000; creativityexplored.org

**Feb. 2-12:** The 25th SF INDIE Film Festival at the Roxie Theater (3117 16th) and online features local filmmakers. For a schedule: sfindie.com

**Feb. 2, 9, 16 & 23:** Judy Goldhaft leads a free TAI CHI class on Thursdays, 9 am. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. Text 415-689-0710i to reserve a spot.

**Feb. 2, 9, 16 & 23:** The Noe Valley Library offers children's STORYTIMES on Thursdays, 10:15 and 11 am. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 3-March 29:** "All Sunsets," photography by ROBERT OGILVIE, is on display at Lola Gallery, 1250 Sanchez. Reception Feb. 3, 5-7 pm. 642-4875

**Feb. 4:** Learn to knit at the Noe Valley KNITTING Circle. 10 am-12:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 4, 11, 18 & 25:** Noe Valley FARMERS MARKET is open Saturdays, 8 am to 1 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. 248-1332; noevalleyfarmersmarket.com

**Feb. 4, 11, 18 & 25:** Join NOE WALKS on Saturdays, starting at 10 am at 24th and Sanchez.

**Feb. 5:** ACTION SF hosts virtual monthly meetings, open to all, at 1 pm. Email actionsolidarity@gmail.com for the link.

**Feb. 5:** Celebrate the life of Noe Valley activist JEAN AMOS on her birthday. 2 pm.

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. Janet Lohr; 846-4078, or clayriver@earthlink.net

**Feb. 5:** A private home is the location for Music on the Hill's all-Schubert benefit CONCERT performed by baritone Sergey Khalikulov, cellist Vicky Ehrlich, and duo pianists Joan Nagano and Ava Soifer, 7 pm. Ruth Asawa SOTA String Quartet performs pre-concert. Donation \$55. 820-1429; mothmuse2@yahoo.com; musiconthehill.org

**Feb. 5 & 26:** ACOUSTIC SUNDAY at the Noe Valley Town Square features El Guajiro on Feb. 5, and Jimbo Trout on Feb. 26. 1-3 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

**Feb. 7:** The Noe Valley Library offers drop-in TECH HELP. 11 am-noon. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 7:** The SF Historical Society co-hosts a discussion, "WAR CRIMES: From the 1945 San Francisco U.N. Conference to Today." 5-6:30 pm. Browning Courthouse, 95 7th Street. Reserve a spot at sfhistory.org

**Feb. 8, 11, 15, 25 & 26:** Cookbook AUTHORS discuss their books: Betsy Freeman, with Melissa Goleb (*The One & Done Cookbook*) Feb. 8, 6:30 pm; Kaitlin and Sarah Leung (*The Woks of Life*) Feb. 11, 3 pm; Jeff Cioletti (*Imbibing for Introverts*) Feb. 15, 6:30 pm; J.K. Dineen (*High Spirits: The Legacy Bars of San Francisco*) Feb. 25, 3 pm; and Karan Gokani in conversation with Sana Javeri Kadri, Feb. 26, 3 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712.

**Feb. 9-16:** The Mostly BRITISH Film Festival includes 25 new and classic movies, parties, and a tribute to the 40th anniversary of *The Thorn Birds* on Feb. 11. Vogue Theatre, 3290 Sacramento. mostlybritish.org

**Feb. 11:** The Noe Valley Library celebrates the LUNAR NEW YEAR (Year of the Rabbit) with a performance by the Jing Mo Athletic Association. 2:15 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 12:** The World Literature BOOK CLUB is reading *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. 2-3 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 12:** The Noe Valley BOOK CLUB discusses *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy. 6:30-7:45 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 12 & March 5:** The Town Square offers a free YOGA session; bring your own mat. 11 am to noon. 3861 24th; www.yoga-gardensf.com

**Feb. 13:** ODD MONDAYS hosts readings from "The Writings of PETER GABEL," from 7 to 8 pm, with pianist Wayne Goodman playing Gabel's favorite classical pieces, 6:30 to 7 pm. Bethany UMC, 1270 Sanchez. facebook.com/OddMondays

**Feb. 16:** Kung Pao KOSHER COMEDY's "Lockdown Comedy" features Jason Stuart, Kate Willett, Myq Kaplan, Arline Geduldig, and Lisa Geduldig. Streamed via Zoom, 7 pm. koshercomedy.com

**Feb. 18:** Rhythm & Motion offers a free DANCE workout class, 4-5 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

**Feb. 19:** LEGO Free Play at the Noe Valley Library welcomes children of all ages. 2-3 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 23:** Christopher Preston discusses *Tenacious Beasts: Wildlife Recovers that Change How We Think About Animals*. 12:30 pm. Folio Books, 3957 24th. 821-3477.

**Feb. 23:** POET LAUREATE Kim Shuck reads from her new book of essays *Noodle, Rant, Tangent*. 6-7:15 pm. Main Library, 100 Larkin. 557-4400; sfpl.org

**Feb. 23:** Readings by the 13 Black poets featured in POETRY anthology *Black Fire This Time* run from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Museum of the African Diaspora, 685 Mission. moadsf.org

**Feb. 25 & 26:** NOE MUSIC KIDS hosts Sam Reid and the Human Hands on Feb. 25, 10:30-11:30 am, and a performance on Feb. 26, 4-5:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. noemusic.org

**Feb. 26:** Local COOKBOOK author Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff gives a demonstration at the Noe Valley Library. 2-3 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

**Feb. 28:** The SF HISTORY Association hosts Doug Chan discussing "Streetscape and Memory: Strolling Through Old Chinatown." 7 pm. Sherith Israel, 2266 California. sanfranciscohistory.org

**March 3:** BLUES guitarist and singer David Jacobs-Strain and harmonica player Bob Beach perform at 8 pm. SF Live Arts (formerly Noe Valley Music Series) at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. 454-5238; brownpapertickets.com/event/5710283

**March 3-5:** WORD WEEKEND 2023 features writers Karen Joy Fowler and Katie Hafner (March 3, 7 pm), children's author Ying Chang Compestine (March 4, 4 pm), and Susan Dambroff and Gil Guillermo in "Ages: Poetry and Song Across Generations" (March 5, 5 pm). Bethany United Methodist Church, 1270 Sanchez. foliosf.com/wordweekend

**March 4:** Vocal ensemble CLERESTORY performs "Phoenix Rising" at 7:30 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. clerestory.org

**March 5:** SFPL hosts a WALKING TOUR of Noe Valley. 2-3:30 pm. Meet at the Noe Valley Library. 2-3 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

### On the March

The next *Noe Valley Voice* will be the **March 2023** issue, distributed the first week of March. The deadline for calendar items is **Feb. 15**. Please email [calendar@noevalleyvoice.com](mailto:calendar@noevalleyvoice.com) or write *Calendar, Noe Valley Voice*, P.O. Box 460249, San Francisco, CA 94146. Events in Noe Valley receive priority. Thank you.

## and now for the RUMORS behind the news

### A Fresh New Year

By Mazook

**T**HE STATE OF THE VALLEY: The winter solstice is long gone, and the holidays and shopping daze of 2022 has passed. The monsoon that dumped rain on San Francisco during most of January seems to have abated, fingers crossed.

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, just like prosperity. The vernal equinox is on the horizon, ready to welcome spring to Noe Valley.

There is even great front-page news in the *Voice* this month: the Noe Valley Town Square will have a public toilet by the autumnal equinox (Sept. 22). It's all good!

Downtown Noe Valley (DNV) seems to be bustling with activity. *For Lease* signs have disappeared, for the most part, from our main drag. Lots of once empty spaces have either opened with new occupants or are under construction.

Employees at local businesses seem grateful for the neighborhood's support during the three long years of the pandemic, and most report they had a happy holiday.



**TWENTY-FOURTH STREET BEAT:** So I asked several merchants in Downtown Noe Valley (DNV): "How was business for you this holiday season?"

"We had a really good year and the holidays were exceptional," said a smiling Michelle O'Connor, proprietor of Just for Fun at 3982 24th St. "A lot of families came into the store, many grandparents visiting their children and grandchildren who live in Noe Valley this year, and we saw a lot of customers come from other neighborhoods in San Francisco," she said.

O'Connor said the most popular toys this season were Legos—collectible sets or accessories. "Fortunately this year there were no supply-chain issues. We had a good supply of inventory, and we sold out of Christmas ornaments."

Down the street at Xela Imports, "Business has been good and, yes, we were very busy the past few months for the holiday season," said shop owner Alessandro Bifulco. "I was very pleased that people got out [to shop]. The pandemic had kept them indoors for almost three years."

Xela (3925 24th) sells an eclectic variety of accessories and jewelry, and has been in DNV since 1984.

Owner Teresa Fitzgerald of Moonshot Studios (4066 24th), the scent and candle store where you can create an aroma to suit your olfactory receptors, reports: "We had a great holiday season hosting over 40 events in our private special event room, with many office parties, birthday celebrations, bridal showers, and company team-building get-togethers." She said there is a 30-guest limit for the events.

"It took some time for us to build up the business since we opened in September of 2021 during the pandemic, but things are going pretty good now," she said. "We are getting a lot more walk-in traffic now from Noe Valley families, and people are finding us on Google and coming from all around the Bay Area, mostly from the East Bay."

Folio Books had "one of the best holiday seasons we have ever had," said Alissa Hugel, who co-owns the store with Martha Dietzel and Katerina

Argyres. "I think it is because during the pandemic, one key activity people could do at home was read books, and it sparked much more interest in book reading." She said they were seeing many more people looking for books they had heard about, they said, in their book clubs.

She also said Folio has great selections of books, put together by book buyer Argyres, and the displays in the store and the window dressings were all created by Dietzel. "It's a great environment to work in," said Hugel.

By the way, she said the most popular book in the nonfiction realm was *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us*, by Pulitzer Prize-winning science journalist Ed Yong. And on the fiction shelves, it's *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, a book about two video game designers, by novelist Gabrielle Zevin.

Store employee Isaiah Scandrette chimed in with two more best-sellers: *Sea of Tranquility*, Emily St. John Mandel's novel about plague and time travel to a colony on the moon; and *Klara and the Sun*, by Kazuo Ishiguro, about an emotional-support robot who's waiting in a store window for a child to pick her and take her home.

Small Frys, which has been outfitting the babies and kids of San Francisco with clothing and accessories since 1984, according to manager Azia Yenne, had a "great Christmas, but we did not make up for the other months in the year." She said she is "grateful that our neighbors are shopping locally, but we need more shoppers in Noe Valley who come from other parts of the city, and conventions to bring more visitors from out of town."

Meanwhile, Small Frys won a gold medal for being picked the Best of the Best kids clothing store in Marin/San Francisco by readers of *Bay Area Parent* magazine's November issue.

Animal Company's Ellen French, who operates the pet store with her husband Rick French, said business was "status quo" during the holidays. However, "we are grateful for all of our customers who have been so loyal, and the many people coming to us from Nevada, Oregon, and Southern California."

French said, "The big issue for us was getting products from the chain of supply, which has been very difficult." The birds sounded cheerful, though.



"COME PLAY WITH US" is the motto of KMH Toys, a new business that opened on Christmas Day at 4207 24th St., just above Diamond Street. The store specializes in Lego bricks, accessories, and books (e.g., *Lego Engineer* and *Lego Architecture*), as well as wooden blocks.

"We've had good reception in the neighborhood; a lot of people looking in our front window and coming in to our play space to say hello to us," said manager Nick Heidt. He says that all ages are welcome to sit at their play table, read about architecture in their library, and sit down and create models with their wide variety of building blocks.

Heidt, along with owner Chiare Hwang, plans to create free special events and workshops. "We are old-school and believe that people need to do something analog, rather than looking into their digital devices and cell phones

and engaging in playing games and spending so much time on social media..."

Soon to open in DNV is SF Fire Credit Union, in the space next to St. Clair's at the corner of Sanchez and 24th Street. Their "shout-out" these days, which they posted on the front window, is "We are not a bank." Perhaps this is a response to people's growing dissatisfaction with service cutbacks at banks in the neighborhood.

One popular bank in Noe Valley, First Republic, is moving their local branch from the corner of Castro and Jersey streets to a much larger space next to Whole Foods, at 3936-38 24th St., the spot formerly occupied by Umpqua Bank. They're expecting to get their conditional use permit from the San Francisco Planning Department at a hearing Feb. 2.

And a big thank-you goes out to Bank of the West for contributing funds to the SCORES "Field of Dreams" initiative, which turned a large asphalt playground into a green soccer field at James Lick Middle School last fall. The nonprofit America SCORES Bay Area, in partnership with various corporate donors, is hosting youth soccer events around the Bay Area in anticipation of the World Cup coming here in 2025.



**FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD:** The much anticipated Mamahuhu, a Chinese-American restaurant, opened its doors at the end of last month at 3991 24th, near the corner of Noe (next to Starbucks). "We started looking for a space in Noe Valley in 2020 and signed a lease here in December of 2021 and finally got all the permits signed off and finally have opened," says co-owner Ben Moore.

"Mamahuhu" is Chinese slang for "so-so, casual, and just ordinary." Literally translated, "ma" means horse and "hu" means tiger, so the idiom mamahuhu translates to "horse horse tiger tiger."

That space last housed Toast, which closed in 2019, and prior to that was the home of Herb's Fine Foods, going back to 1948.

Mamahuhu is the second restaurant in San Francisco for owners Moore, Anmao Sun (a Noe Valleon), and Michelin star chef Brandon Jew. (The other is at 517 Clement St. in the Inner Richmond.) It seats 22 inside and 20 more in the front parklet, which is still being completed. It is open seven days a week, from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. However, Moore "prefers people order ahead of time and pick up their orders to go."

Moore says their most popular dishes are Sweet and Sour Chicken (or cauliflower), which is crispy rice-battered chicken, with pineapple, honey, and hawthorn (\$17), and the Sweet and Spicy Chicken Sandwich, a crispy rice-battered chicken thigh with shredded cabbage and huhu sauce, on their house-made pineapple bun for \$10.

For dessert you might want to try Yin Yang Parfait, which is black sesame banana cake and coconut tapioca with organic shite sesame cream, all for only six bucks. Soon they will serve Boba soft-serve ice cream.

Note that Brandon Jew won last year's James Beard Foundation Award for Best Chef in California, for the restaurant Mister Jiu's (located at 28 Waverly Place

in Chinatown). It should also be noted that one of the Beard Foundation's restaurant and chef award nominees for this year's best new restaurant is Noe Valley's Birch & Rye Russian restaurant on Castro near 24th.

There's a rumor that another restaurant should be opening in a couple of months at the space lost to the pandemic, Bistro SF at 1305 Castro. It is being opened by a group calling themselves Memento.

And speaking of parklets, congrats go out to the Noe Valley Tavern. After more than 1,100 locals signed a petition in support of their elaborate parklet, City Hall, after initially denying their application due to a yellow loading zone in front of the bar, granted their parklet and moved said yellow zone down the street to in front of what used to be Patxi's Pizza.

Lastly, to the shock of many, the local health-food-to-go shop Urban Remedy, purveying organic food and juices, closed its Noe Valley store suddenly last month. The sign posted on the window at 3870 24th is directing customers to Whole Foods on Market Street or Mollie Stone's on 18th Street in Eureka Valley. Perhaps the sparse customer base and \$7,000 a



**Peter Gabel**  
Jan. 28, 1947 to Oct. 25, 2022

month rent had something to do with the closure.

**IT WAS A SOMBER GOODBYE** last month to Noe Valley friend, philosopher, and activist Peter Gabel, who passed away Oct. 25. His memorial on Jan. 22, at the First Unitarian Church, gathered more than 500 mourners and almost another 200 who watched the ceremony remotely on YouTube.

Peter Joseph Gabel was born Jan. 28, 1947, in Hollywood. His mother, Arlene Francis, was an actress, and his father, Martin Gabel, was an actor, director, and producer.

Wrote Sam Whiting in the *San Francisco Chronicle's* obituary: "Gabel's first neighborhood action was to help organize a protest against a plan by Noe Valley Ministry to rent its steeple out as a cell phone tower. Every Sunday during church, they walked a picket line, singing lyrics written by Gabel, and applied to popular resistance songs. 'Let My Steeple Go' was a favorite. Eventually, the plan was dropped and the relationship with the church repaired."

Among other achievements, Gabel was a prime mover in creating the Noe Valley Town Square. He saved the space long occupied by Dan's Gas and Diesel (which was demolished and a parking lot created, ironically, by the Noe Valley Ministry), and helped start the Noe Valley Farmers Market there in 2003.

At the memorial, tears came to my eyes when I saw a video of pictures of him and his family projected on a large screen. The whole ceremony can be seen on YouTube. Go to "Peter Gabel Memorial Service" at [youtube.com/watch?v=53RiX3pD35o&t=1s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=53RiX3pD35o&t=1s)



**THAT'S ALL FOR NOW**, friends and neighbors. See you all next month when we celebrate the Ides of March and the vernal equinox. Ciao for now. ■



**CHILDREN'S FICTION**

Four animal friends look for shapes in *Little Hearts: Finding Hearts in Nature*, by Charles Ghigna, with illustrations by Jacqueline East. Ages 3-6.

*Just. Like. You.*, by Meredith Steiner and Avneet Sandhu, shows the diversity of students in a classroom. Ages 3-7.

In the picture book *If You Cry Like a Fountain*, Noemi Vola points out many uses for tears. Ages 3-7.

Forest animals are caught in a blizzard in *So Much Snow*, by Kristen Schroeder and Sarah Jacoby. Ages 3-7.

The vignettes in *Thirteen Stories About Ayana* by Amy Schwartz tell what happens in the life of a toddler. Ages 4-8.

In *Black Gold*, by Laura Obuobi and London Ladd, the Universe gets help from the Sun and Moon to create a Black child. Ages 4-8.

Two kids learn about the ups and downs of friendship in *Walter Had a Best Friend* by Deborah Underwood and Sergio Ruzzier. Ages 4-8.

Three girls fall into a fairytale world in *Mihi Ever After*, by Tae Keller and Geraldine Rodriguez. Ages 8-12.

In Reimena Yee's graphic novel *My Aunt Is a Monster*, a blind girl finds adventure when she goes to live with her reclusive aunt. Ages 8-12.

Inspired by Filipino folklore, *Marikit and the Ocean of Stars* by Caris Avendaño Cruz tells the tale of a 10-year-old girl who saves her family from a shadow god. Ages 8-12.

After his older brother's death, a boy finds friendship with "a motley group of kids," in *Sardines* by Sashi Kaufman. Ages 8-12.

In *Holler of the Fireflies* by David Barclay Moore, a Brooklyn boy spends a summer in an Appalachian STEM camp. Ages 10-13.

**CHILDREN'S NONFICTION**

*Polar Bear*, by Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann, follows a year in the life of a mother bear and her cubs. Ages 4-8.

Julia Kuo explains bioluminescence in *Luminous: Living Things That Light Up the Night*. Ages 4-8.

Find out about the toothed whale of the far north in *Narwhal: The Arctic Unicorn*, by zoologist Justin Anderson and illustrator Jo Weaver. Ages 5-7.

Kate Messner and Margaret E. Powell celebrate African American fashion designer Ann Lowe in *Only the Best*, illustrated by Erin Robinson. Ages 5-8.

*Bessie the Motorcycle Queen*, by Charles R. Smith Jr., with illustrations by Charlot Kristensen, tells the tale of a Black motorcyclist who raced across the country in 1929. Ages 6-8.

Annette Whipple's *Meow! The Truth About Cats* explains the often mysterious behavior of feline pets. Ages 7-10.

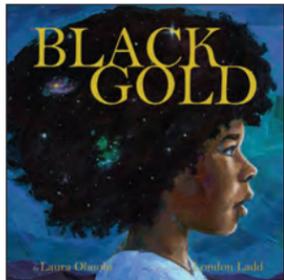
The exceptional life of Black cartoonist Jackie Ormes is the focus of Traci N. Todd *Holding Her Own*, illustrated by

**MORE BOOKS TO READ**

**A Deluge of Books**

Read in the new year with books populating the shelves or loaded to your mobile device at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library. At left and below is a list of new arrivals for January and February, provided to the *Voice* by Adult Services Librarians Amy Lewis and Julieanne Randolph. (*Voice* bookworm Karol Barske wrote the descriptions.)

You can browse at our beautiful Carnegie library or put your books on hold at [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org) and pick them up when ready. Noe Valley branch hours are Monday noon to 6 p.m., Tuesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday noon to 8 p.m., Thursday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday 1 to 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.



If you need help in finding materials, call the branch at 415-355-5707 or email [info@sfpl.org](mailto:info@sfpl.org). Or visit your local librarians at 451 Jersey St., between Castro and Diamond streets. Masks are still recommended but not required.

P.S. Check out the February events listed in the box at right. And Happy Year of the Rabbit.

Shannon Wright. Ages 7-10.

Tameka Fryer Brown's biography of the first Black woman elected to Congress, *Not Done Yet: Shirley Chisholm's Fight for Change*, is illustrated by Nina Crews. Ages 8-10.

*We Are Here: 30 Inspiring Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Who Have Shaped the United States* is a Smithsonian anthology by Naomi Hirahara and illustrator Illi Fernandez. Ages 8-12.

In *The Universe in You: A Microscopic Journey*, Jason Chin takes you deep inside the human body, past skin to cells, molecules, and atoms. Ages 8-12.

Gregor Craigie's *Why Humans Build Up: The Rise of Towers, Temples, and Skyscrapers* is illustrated by Kathleen Fu. Ages 9-12.

**CHILDREN'S EBOOKS**

In the picture book *Peep!* by Meg McLaren, a stay-at-home dog ventures out to find her best friend. Ages 2-5.

*I'm a Volcano!* by Bridget Heos, illustrated by Mike Ciccotello, reveals who and what makes lava. Ages 3-7.

A 6-year-old Black boy from Detroit visits his grandparents in Virginia in *Nothing Special* by Desiree Cooper, with illustrations by Bec Sloane. Ages 4-7.

Learn the traditions of the Chinese lunar holiday in *A Sweet New Year for Ren*, written by Michelle Sterling and illustrated by Dung Ho. Ages 4-8.

*Puffin* by Martin Jenkins, illustrated by Jenni Desmond, describes the life and habits of the bird. Ages 5-7.

*PAWS: Mindy Makes Some Space*, by Nathan Fairbairn and Michele Assarasakorn, is about best friends who have a dog-walking business. Ages 8-12.

*Who Is Ketanji Brown Jackson?* is a biography of the new Supreme Court justice by Shelia P. Moses, illustrated by Dede Putra. Ages 8-12.

A Dominican girl who hates the hair salon comes to appreciate her curls, in *Frizzy* by Claribel A. Ortega, with illustrations by Rose Bousamra. Ages 8-12.

*Roar Like a Lion: How Animals Can Help You Be Your Best Self* by Carlie Sorosiak, illustrated by Katie Walker, tells what humans can learn from animals' behavior. Ages 8-12.

**ADULT FICTION**

Three parallel narratives describe the life of a woman who marries a gangster during Malaysia's 1969 race riots, in *The Age of Goodbyes* by Li Zi Shu.

A detective tries to solve a murder in an Alaskan town where everyone lives in

one high-rise building, in *City Under One Roof* by Iris Yamashita.

Two prostitutes during the Gold Rush in 1851 Monterey strive to find a killer in *A Dangerous Business* by Jane Smiley.

Kosoko Jackson's *A Dash of Salt and Pepper* is about a romantic relationship between two men working in a small-town Maine restaurant.

When her legal license is suspended due to a complaint about public indecency, a woman searches to find her accuser, in *Ms. Demeanor* by Elinor Lipman.

*Roses, in the Mouth of a Lion* by Bushra Rehman is a coming-of-age story about two girls in a Muslim-American community in 1980s New York.

Cormac McCarthy's *Stella Maris* is a novel told from the transcripts of a schizophrenic woman's psychiatric sessions.

In the fantasy *Tread of Angels* by Rebecca Roanhorse, conflict erupts between the Virtues and the Fallen when they come to the Colorado mountains to mine a powerful new element, Divinity.

**ADULT NONFICTION**

Heather Radke traces the cultural history of the human backside, in *Butts: A Backstory*.

In *A Coastline Is an Immeasurable Thing: A Memoir Across Three Continents*, Mary-Alice Daniel describes her life in Nigeria, England, and America.

*Con/Artist: The Life and Crimes of the World's Greatest Art Forger* is Tony Tetro's explanation of how he got away with copying works by Rembrandt, Picasso, and Chagall.

*The Forever Witness: How DNA and Genealogy Solved a Cold-Case Double Murder*, by Edward Humes, shows the power of DNA fingerprinting.

In *The Philosophy of Modern Song*, Bob Dylan analyzes songs by composers from Stephen Foster to Elvis Costello.

Author Jessica Grose examines the pressures parents face, in *Screaming on the Inside: The Unsustainability of American Motherhood*.

In *Weightless: Making Space for My Resilient Body and Soul*, Evette Dion offers insights into cultural expectations regarding size, race, and gender.

*The Woks of Life: Recipes to Know and Love from a Chinese American Family* is a cookbook by Bill, Judy, Sarah, and Kaitlin Leung.

Presidential historian Douglas Brinkley's *Silent Spring Revolution: John F. Kennedy, Rachel Carson, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and the Great Environmental Awakening* chronicles the rise of environmental activism.

**LIBRARY EVENTS**

The Noe Valley Library hosts **Family Storytimes** on Thursdays, Feb. 2, 9, 16, and 23, at 10:15 a.m. and again at 11 a.m. Come early; space is limited.

The **Noe Valley Knitting Circle** meets on Saturday, Feb. 4, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Bring your own yarn and needles or hooks if you're working on a special project.

Get **Drop-In Tech Help** from library staff in downloading ebooks, using electronic resources, or just doing basic computer tasks. Bring your own device or use a library computer. Tuesday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m. to noon.

The Noe Valley Library rings in the **Lunar New Year** of the Rabbit with festivities presented by Jing Mo Athletic Association, on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 2:15 p.m.

The **World Literature Book Club** meets Sunday, Feb. 12, from 2 to 3 p.m., to discuss *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. Copies of the book are held at the circulation desk.

The **Noe Valley Book Club** explores *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy on Wednesday, Feb. 15, 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

The Noe Valley Library hosts **LEGO Free Play** for children and their families on Sunday, Feb. 19, 2 to 3 p.m.

Local **cookbook author** Shanta Nimbark Sacharoff discusses food prep and how to make two kinds of chutney on Sunday, Feb. 26, 2 to 3 p.m.

All events take place at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library, 451 Jersey St.; 415-355-5707; [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org).

**ADULT EBOOKS**

In *The Cloisters*, a debut mystery by Katy Hays, a new assistant curator discovers a 15th-century deck of tarot cards and a sinister plot within New York's gothic museum.

*Desert Star*, the fifth book in Michael Connelly's Renée Ballard series, teams the L.A. detective with Harry Bosch to track down a killer.

Black girls go missing in a predominantly white Pennsylvania town, in *Jackal* by Erin E. Adams.

An epidemic strikes the inhabitants of a fictional island in the eastern Mediterranean, in *Nights of Plague* by Orhan Pamuk.

In *Cinema Speculation*, filmmaker Quentin Tarantino writes about films from the 1970s.

Matthew Delmont describes war from a Black perspective, in *Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad*.

Jennifer Homans' biography *Mr. B.: George Balanchine's 20th Century* follows the choreographer's life in dance from Russia to America.

*The Pirate's Wife: The Remarkable True Story of Sarah Kidd*, by Daphne Geanakopulos, is about the New York socialite who married Captain Kidd.



Annotations by *Voice* bookworm Karol Barske

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION**

*It's All Political* by Michael Blake

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

# MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

**Action SF**

https://m.facebook.com/ActionSFactivism/  
 Website: http://www.action-sf.com/  
 Email: ActionSFsolidarity@gmail.com  
 Meetings: Usually first Sundays, 12:30-2 p.m.  
 Virtual meeting. All welcome.

**Al-Anon Noe Valley**

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

**Castro Community on Patrol**

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

**Castro Merchants**

Contacts: Masood Samereie, President;  
 Dave Karraker, 415-710-0245  
 Email: Dave@mx3fitness.com  
 Address: 584 Castro St. #333, SF, CA 94114  
 Meetings: Email info@CastroMerchants.com

**Diamond Heights Community Association**

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

**Dolores Heights Improvement Club**

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

**Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)**

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

**Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association**

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

**Fair Oaks Neighbors**

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

**Friends of Billy Goat Hill**

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

**Friends of Dolores Park Playground**

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

**Friends of Glen Canyon Park**

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

**Friends of Noe Courts Playground**

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

**Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)**

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

**Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center**

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

**Friends of Upper Noe Dog Owners Group (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, M17-6290  
 Email: dave@schweisguth.org  
 Website: meetup.com/Juri-Commoners  
 The group is on hiatus and seeking a new leader. Contact Dave.

**Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association**

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

**Noe Neighborhood Council**

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

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

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

**Noe Valley Democratic Club**

Contact: Carrie Barnes, President  
 E-mail: noevalleydemocrats@gmail.com  
 Website: www.noevalleydemocrats.org  
 Meetings: Monthly at the Valley Tavern, 4054 24th St., with dates publicized on website.

**Noe Valley Farmers Market**

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

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

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

**Noe Valley Parent Network**

An e-mail resource network for parents

Contact: Mina Kenvin  
 Email: minaken@gmail.com  
 noevalleyparentssubscribe@yahoogroups.com

**Noe Walks**

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

**Progress Noe Valley**

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

**Resilient Noe Valley**

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

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

Contact: Noe Valley NERT Neighborhood Team co-coordinators Maxine Fasulis, mfasulis@yahoo.com; Carole Roberts, carole\_roberts@faludi.com  
 Website: https://SF-fire.org  
 Visit the SF NERT website for more information.

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

Contact: Don Oshiro, 285-8188  
 Email: contact@sanjoseguerrero.com  
 Website: sanjoseguerrero.com  
 Meetings: See website.

**Friends of Slow Sanchez**

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

**Upper Noe Merchants**

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

**Upper Noe Neighbors**

Contact: Chris Faust, President  
 Email: Info@UpperNoeNeighbors.com  
 Mail: 235 30th St., SF CA 94131  
 Meetings: Bi-monthly on third Wednesday. Confirm Zoom link by email.

**THE NOE VALLEY VOICE**  
 editor@noevalleyvoice.com  
 All phone numbers are in the 415 area code, unless otherwise noted.

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LAKE DISTRICT



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