



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

On Lok Senior Center Is Back In Full Swing

30th Street Site Packs Lunch And More Than 50 Activities

By Leslie Crawford

On Lok 30th Street Senior Center, located at 225 30th St. at the southeastern corner of Noe Valley, is back in full operation post-pandemic. Although the multipurpose non-profit never fully closed during Covid—it provided Zoom classes, hybrid programs, and meals to go—it is now back to offering a full spectrum of activities to people over 60.

From its inception in 1979, when a small group of seniors asked to start a social club in a room in the 30th Street building, the center has been a hub of activity for those living in Noe Valley, the Mission, well, all over San Francisco.

In July 2024, the center brought back its popular in-person indoor dining, serving thousands of free or low-cost

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Salsa for 60 and Over: In addition to a hot lunch, seniors enjoy dancing to a fiery Latin beat at the On Lok 30th Street Senior Center near Dolores Street. Photo by Art Bodner

The Sweet Taste Of Success

Chocolate Covered Still Melting Hearts on 24th Street

By Jeff Kaliss

When I stopped in to talk with Marilyn Sitkoff and Jack Epstein last month, Marilyn was bagging up attractive collections of chocolate hearts and chocolate lips, in anticipation of the demands of Valentine's Day. And she was thinking back to that same holiday 31 years ago, when Chocolate Covered, the business she shares with her life partner Jack at 4069 24th St., came into being.

Up till then, that space had been the location of Ocean Front Walkers, the couple's previous longtime business, which featured comfy pajamas, socks, and "kids' clothes in adult sizes."

Jack and Marilyn lived (and still do) in a newly renovated house up the street, across from Barney's. "I told him he'd better get me some chocolate for Valentine's Day," recalls Marilyn.

Jack complied, but advised Marilyn,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Gyms Build Strength in Noe

Resistance Training a Booming Trend in Health and Fitness

By Matthew S. Bajko

In the last four years, strength training with free weights has shot up in popularity. According to a yearly survey done by the American College of Sports Medicine, it was the number two worldwide fitness trend in 2023, a jump from eighth place two years prior.

Those trendlines are no surprise to fitness enthusiasts in Noe Valley. Over the past decade, the neighborhood has seen an influx of businesses offering muscle-building and strength-training classes, many of which incorporate barbells, dumbbells, or other types of equipment into their workouts.

One of the first was YuBalance, which 10 years ago opened near the Church and 24th streets intersection. Last month it relocated to 4159 24th St., near Diamond Street.

More recent additions have been Iron and Mettle and MX3 Fitness, both also on the 24th Street commercial corridor.

The latest arrival is Roar, a workout studio aimed at women. There, the focus is on strength training. Roar's classes are built around having clients use weights to pump up their muscles.

For those new to working out, co-owners Michelle Kunkel and Meghan Basmajian start their clients off with 8-pound weights and have them progress to working with at least 30-pound dumbbells to maximize the results.

"With strength training, it is important that it be done consistently and at



A Growing Industry: There has been a dramatic increase in iron and mettle in Noe Valley this past year, as local residents flock to a variety of gyms offering muscle building and resistance training along 24th Street. Photo by Art Bodner

least three times a week," said Kunkel, who earned a B.S. in kinesiology at Michigan State University. "Strength training once a week just is not enough."

The two certified personal trainers and instructors first met in 2021 while working at the Barry's Bootcamp location downtown. They opened Roar Oct.

6 at 1500 Castro, at the corner of 25th Street, purposefully to provide women a space tailored to their fitness needs.

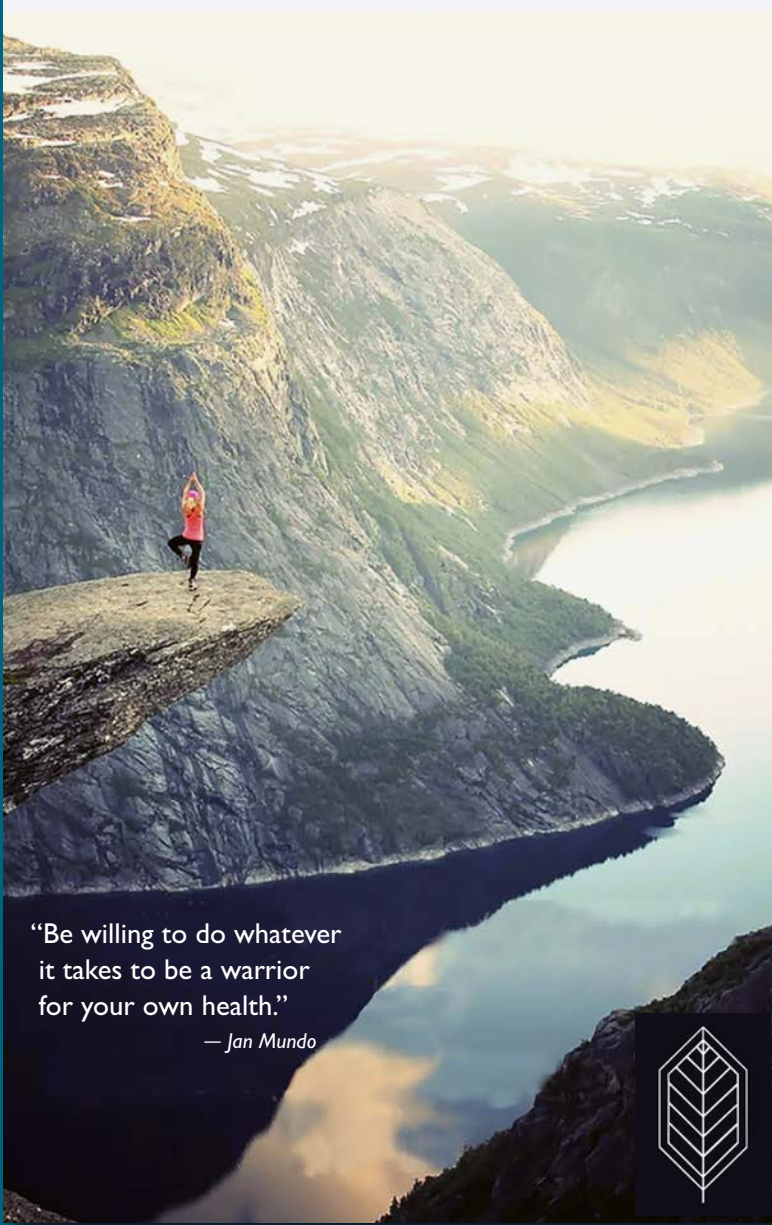
"From the teenager coming in with their mom trying to impact their personal fitness to the 72-year-old working on bone density and to ensure she can get up off the ground should she fall, we try to make it accessible to every-

body," said Basmajian.

Each day of the week, Kunkel and Basmajian center their 45-minute workouts on a different area of the body using weights the entire time. (They offer hour-long classes on Saturdays.)

Their aim is to have their clients

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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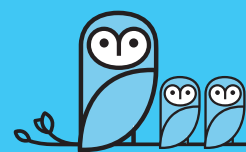
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CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Community Outreach Public Notice

Prepared by The Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
 Pursuant to Administrative Code, Section 2.81



Ethics Commission
 The San Francisco Ethics Commission is the city agency responsible for enforcing conflict-of-interest, campaign finance, and lobbying laws in San Francisco. We are committed to making San Francisco city government accountable and transparent. Ethics laws ensure that public officials make decisions in the interest of all San Franciscans and that no one can use a public position for their own personal benefit.

Be informed! You can learn about San Francisco's ethics rules by visiting our website at sfethics.org. There, you can also review public disclosures filed by City officials, political campaigns, and lobbyists. This information can help you understand who is spending money to influence city government and local elections.

See something? Say something! If you have information about a violation of conflict-of-interest, campaign finance, or lobbying laws, you can file an online complaint with the Ethics Commission by visiting our website.

San Francisco Ethics Commission
 Accountability – Transparency – Trust
sfethics.org

Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs
Resources for Immigrants in San Francisco
 The SF Immigrant Forum is an online resource for immigrants of all backgrounds and statuses in San Francisco. This site includes resources for free to low-cost immigration legal help, healthcare and public benefits information, know your rights, upcoming events, and much more!
 Get connected to the trusted resources you need: sf.gov/immigrants

Department of Technology
 The San Francisco Department of Technology provides innovative, reliable, and secure technology solutions, empowering City and County agencies to deliver exceptional, community-focused services.

To support San Franciscans in staying safe online, we've published cybersecurity resources in multiple languages on our website: <https://www.sf.gov/resource/2023/cybersecurity-tips>. These resources cover essential topics like:

- Recognizing and avoiding phishing scams.
- Protecting your personal information online.
- Tips for safe online transactions.

Cyber threats are on the rise, but together, we can build a more secure community. We encourage you to explore these resources and share them with your friends and family. Let's work together to protect ourselves and our city. Visit our website today to learn more and stay safe!
 Thank you for helping us promote cybersecurity across San Francisco.


Mayor's Office for Victims' Rights (MOVR)
 Phone: 628.652.1175
 Email: info.ovwr@sf.gov

The Mayor's Office for Victims' Rights provides confidential consults on crime victims' legal rights, warm referrals to support services, direct advocacy on behalf of survivors, and legislative/policy solutions to strengthen victim services and violence prevention.

Rent Board
IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR LANDLORDS

San Francisco landlords need a license before imposing annual and banked rent increases on tenants according to the City's rent control laws. To obtain or renew a license, property owners are required to report certain information about their residential units into the San Francisco Housing Inventory each year. Property owners can submit their Housing Inventory information to the Rent Board in a few ways, but are strongly encouraged to complete the process online at portal.sfrb.org. Once the system accepts the submission, a rent increase license will be automatically generated and readily available. Owners can also deliver a paper Housing Inventory form to 25 Van Ness Ave., Suite 320, San Francisco, CA 94102 or to rentboard.inventory@sfgov.org. Assistance is available by calling 311 or emailing rentboard.inventory@sfgov.org. Visit sf.gov/rentboard for more information.

The City and County of San Francisco encourages public outreach. Articles are translated into several languages to provide better public access. The newspaper makes every effort to translate the articles of general interest correctly. No liability is assumed by the City and County of San Francisco or the newspapers for errors and omissions.

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CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
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San Francisco Board of Supervisors Board or Commission Vacancies:
Participate on a Board or Commission!

The Assessment Appeals Board (AAB)
 The AAB resolves legal and value assessment issues between the Assessor's office and property owners. Hearings are quasi-judicial, conducted in a manner similar to a court setting, with evidence and testimony presented by the parties. The Board then evaluates the evidence and testimony and renders its decision. To be eligible for seat appointment, you must have a minimum of five years professional experience in California as either a: (1) public accountant; (2) real estate broker; (3) attorney; or (4) property appraiser accredited by a nationally recognized organization, or certified by either the Office of Real Estate Appraiser or the State Board of Equalization.

For a full list of current or upcoming Boards, Commissions and Task Forces, please visit <https://sfbos.org/vacancy-boards-commissions-task-forces>.

Want to work for the City?
 Visit the website <https://careers.sf.gov/> and find a job that's right for you!

Department Announcements

Airport
Job Seekers and Business Owners: Find New Opportunities for the New Year at SFO's 2025 Resource Fair! The fair is a one-of-a-kind event designed to connect job seekers with Airport employers and provide businesses with access to information and opportunities at SFO. Whether you are new to the job market or an experienced professional, a small or a medium-sized business, come learn about the opportunities that SFO has to offer! Date: February 13, 2025 Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Location: San Mateo County Event Center. Contact: Call/text: 650-456-7966 or email: community@flysf.com. Register at: <https://forms.office.com/g/yVwaQA7R82>.

Assessor-Recorder
 Assessor-Recorder Joaquín Torres Public Service Announcement -- Homeowners' Period for Requesting Reductions in Assessed Value Begins: If you believe your property's assessed (taxable) value is higher than the market value, you can request an Informal Assessment Review for a temporary decline in value between January 2 and March 31, 2025. This service is free of charge and is available to property owners in a single-family dwelling, residential condominiums, townhouses, live-work lofts and cooperative units. For more information: <https://www.sfassessor.org/>.

Department of Public Health
Count on WIC for Healthy Families!
 WIC is a federally funded nutrition program for women, infants, and children. You may qualify if you:

- Are pregnant, breastfeeding, or just had a baby;
- Have children under age 5; and
- Have low to medium income; and/or
- Receive Medi-Cal, CalFresh (Food Stamps), or CalWORKS (TANF) benefits; and
- Live in California

WIC Provides: Nutrition education and health information, breastfeeding support, food benefits for healthy foods (like fruits and vegetables), referrals to medical providers and community services
 Learn more at: MyFamily.wic.ca.gov or www.wicworks.ca.gov
 Enroll early! Call today to see if you qualify and to make an appointment- (628) 206-5494 or (415) 657-1724
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider

Child Support Services
 Child support matters can be complicated, stressful, and confusing. The Department of Child Support Services helps parents understand the process so they know their rights and options for making and receiving support payments. We are available to assist you in person or by phone. Virtual services are also available. Call us today at (866) 901-3212 for more information. Enroll online or schedule an appointment at sf.gov/dcss to learn how we can help you.

City Attorney Office
 The San Francisco City Attorney's Office is committed to protecting consumers and members of the public. We investigate and prosecute businesses that deceive or defraud consumers, as well as property owners that maintain properties in substandard conditions or violate housing laws. Members of the public who wish to report a consumer complaint should contact the Office through its hotline at (415) 554-3977 or its web portal at <https://www.sfcityattorney.org/report-a-complaint/>. Our office will review the information you provide and may seek additional information from you. Please note, however, that we are not authorized to represent you as your lawyer or provide you with legal advice. Any actions we take are on behalf of the community as a whole.

Office of Economic & Workforce Development
 Discover what's happening in downtown San Francisco with the free events calendar on SF.Funcheap.com! From live events to restaurants and shops, downtown is buzzing with opportunities to have fun. Our small businesses are at the heart of this vibrancy, shaping the San Francisco experience we all love. If you're an entrepreneur or small business owner, visit SF.gov/OSB for resources to start, grow, and sustain your business.

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OMNIVORE BOOKS ON FOOD

FEBRUARY EVENTS

SAT FEB 8	PAT TANUMIHARDJA IN CONVERSATION WITH LINDA SHIUE, MD, CHEF • MORTAR AND PESTLE: CLASSIC INDONESIAN RECIPES FOR THE MODERN KITCHEN • 3:00 P.M. FREE! 80 delicious recipes from a mother & daughter team with an intimate knowledge of Indonesian cuisine.
MON FEB 10	OFFSITE EVENT! MELISSA CLARK & EMILY WEINSTEIN IN CONVERSATION WITH MACKENZIE CHUNG FEGAN • EASY WEEKNIGHT DINNERS • 7:30 P.M. AT THE SYDNEY GOLDSTEIN THEATER • Hosted by City Arts & Lectures. \$71, buy your ticket at cityarts.net.
THURS FEB 13	JIM FRANKS IN CONVERSATION WITH SARAH OWENS • EXISTENTIAL BREAD • 6:30 P.M. FREE! Through humor, history, curiosity, and poetry, <i>Existential Bread</i> teaches there are many ways to bake a loaf, just as there are many ways to live a life.
TUES FEB 18	RACHEL HOPE CLEVES IN CONVERSATION WITH MARCIA GAGLIARDI • LUSTFUL APPETITES: AN INTIMATE HISTORY OF GOOD FOOD AND WICKED SEX • 6:30 P.M. FREE! A historian explores the long association between indulging in good food and an appetite for immoral sex.
THURS FEB 20	COINNEACH MACLEOD • THE HEBRIDEAN BAKER: THE SCOTTISH COOKBOOK • 6:30 P.M. FREE! An irresistible culinary voyage that promises recipes to inspire you in the kitchen and an immersive journey into the heart of Scotland's islands.
FRI FEB 21	JULIA TURSHEN IN CONVERSATION WITH NINA LACOUR • WHAT GOES WITH WHAT: 100 RECIPES, 20 CHARTS, ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES • 6:30 P.M. FREE! A new way to think about cooking, one that focuses on mastering the alchemy of a meal and then offers endless iterations.

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Kind Words from Happy Noe Valley Home Sellers!

"We have worked with Danielle three times now, on both the selling and buying side, and we could not recommend her and her team more highly. She is a consummate professional, extremely knowledgeable about the process and the market, easy to work with, helps with strategy (while always reminding that she doesn't have a crystal ball -- though sometimes she does seem to have a little magic...), and has a huge network of agents she knows, which helps to make interactions, and ultimately transactions, smooth and pleasant.

She really helps you to feel good about each decision you make, because ultimately these big decisions require both research/data and guts/intuition. We have had experiences with other agents that weren't as thorough or engaged, and were left feeling either like we were doing all the work and things were moving way too slowly, or like we were just being pushed/rushed into a sale. Danielle and her team are the exact opposite. They do not overcommit and they make great partners in your search (or your sale); they prove time and again that they are working for you and have your best interests, your needs and wants, at heart."

Jen G.

Curious About the Noe Valley Real Estate Market?

There are always twists and turns in SF real estate, but in broad terms the market is improving. As the city's first real estate blog, established 2002, our website and biweekly newsletter are your go-to source for information. Scan the QR to see the latest.



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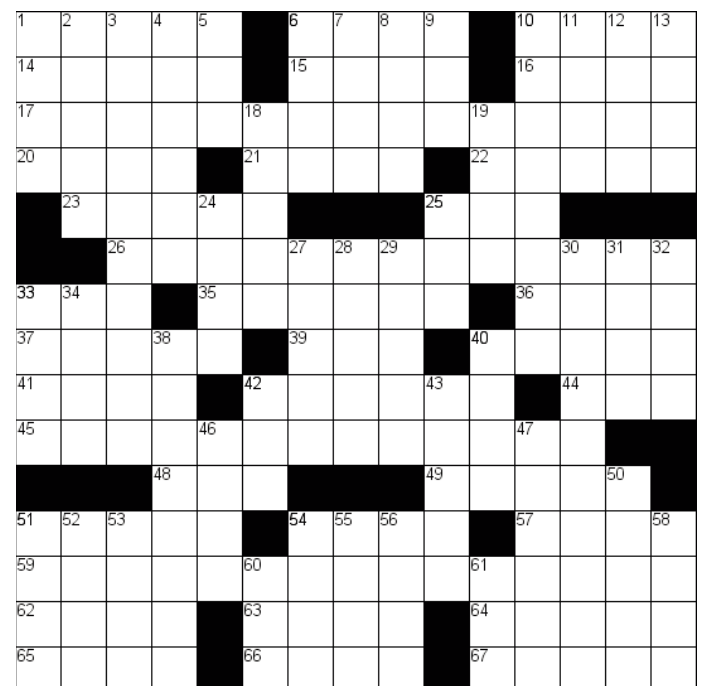
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THE CROSSWORD BY MICHAEL BLAKE

Make Your Presents Felt

ACROSS

- Disgraced rapper P. ____ (Sean Combs)
- Chloe's or XO on Church Street
- Russian river or mountain range
- On one's toes
- Late "Jeopardy!" host Trebek
- Shopper's come-on sign
- What Dr. Sekou Ford fears he'd do if he raised rates?
- Like squid spray
- Take a load off
- Miles, in the Mission
- Billy Blanks' fitness-kicking regimen
- Creator of James the spy
- Walgreens pick-up on return from a British holiday?
- 102, to Caesar
- The words to a song
- ____-Cross: two-wheeled race
- Up to the time that
- Hairy Addams family member
- Korean capital
- ____ II (Gillette razor)
- Plural pronoun of the South
- Joke around
- Request for pre-talkie DVDs at the Sally Brunn Library?
- Dastardly fellow
- "Have ____ myself clear?"
- Wild hogs
- Fifty percent
- Put into the archive
- Tardy students at Lick Middle School?
- Sicilian erupter
- Second word of a fairy tale



- Go on ____ (tear around from bar to bar)
- "Is this the party to ____ I am speaking?": Lily Tomlin
- Early software version
- ____ Truss, author of "Eats, Shoots, & Leaves"
- Add'l phone line
- What often accompanies a password
- ____ Plaza Park in Pacific Heights
- Not so much
- Slice of wry?
- The Beatles' "____ Her Standing There"
- Noe Valley author Yenne
- "And's" or "but's" alternatives
- Some jazz combos
- Ab strengthener
- Number system in which 8 is 10
- Stopped by to see
- Case for needles
- Compass Realty sign word
- Storefront word after "Great Hair" or "Super"
- Cruciverb initials
- Main product sold by 4-Down
- Door-closing sound
- Since Jan. 1: Abbr.
- Explorer Ericson and namesakes
- Cape Canaveral agency
- Kind of belt or harness
- John who uses a loo?
- Eschewed, with "off"
- Solemn promise
- Gold's is 79: Abbr.
- Optimism
- Phrase meaning "plenty" often misspelled as one word
- Horne of song
- Ninety degrees from norte
- Do a voice-over for
- Berkeley sch., to sports fans

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Solution on Page 17
Find more Crosswords at
www.noevalleyvoice.com

LETTERS 73 CENTS

Time to Take Action

Editor:
Are you hunkered down with your hands over your eyes and ears because you can't stand what the heartless "Bully in Chief" is doing? I urge you not to give up. As former Vice President Kamala Harris said, "This is not a time to throw up our hands. This is a time to roll up our sleeves."

Action-SF.com, based in Noe Valley, is a good venue for sleeve-rolling. From writing postcards to swing-state voters to demonstrating (as I did with many others in a January reproductive-rights rally downtown) to knocking on voters' doors, our members can stay active all year round.

Now is the time to support candidates in Wisconsin (decisive state Supreme Court election on April 1). Virginia and Pennsylvania will hold statewide elections Nov. 4. Action-SF is now part of BayAreaCoalition.org.

See how you can get involved by attending a monthly meeting at our Noe Valley Public Library, 451 Jersey St. The next ones are Feb. 4 and March 4, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. We are also hybrid on Zoom, which you can join by reaching out in advance to us at ActionSFTeam@gmail.com. Feel free to email us with any questions.

Kristin Anundsen
27th Street

A Need for Shoes and Blankets

Editor:
I lived on 23rd Street, where my mom grew up. She was in the first class



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE
P.O. Box 460249
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www.noevalleyvoice.com

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

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

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CRIME SNAPSHOT DATA

Noe Valley Incident Reports January 2024 – December 2024

Incident Type	Yr2023	Jan24	Feb24	Mar24	Apr24	May24	Jun24	July24	Aug24	Sep24	Oct24	Nov24	Dec24	Yr2024
Larceny/Theft	334	32	31	42	42	49	32	49	36	46	44	55	44	460
Burglary	187	19	19	16	14	13	33	39	21	16	17	19	17	243
Malicious Mischief	105	3	8	11	6	9	7	5	8	8	7	4	3	79
Motor Vehicle Theft	173	8	11	11	5	15	8	12	10	10	8	8	3	109
Assault	49	3	4	4	3	5	4	3	3	2	8	5	6	32
Robbery	22	2	1	1	0	1	1	2	3	2	0	0	3	16
Other Miscellaneous	53	3	5	5	6	20	19	7	8	6	17	14	7	117
Fraud	37	4	4	3	4	3	4	0	5	1	5	3	4	40
Family D.Violence	7	3	0	3	0	4	0	0	3	1	2	5	1	22
Vandalism	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Totals	976	78	83	96	80	119	108	119	98	92	108	113	88	1,122

Source: Dataset titled "Map of Police Department Incident Reports: 2018 to Present" at <https://data.sfgov.org/Public-Safety/Police-Department-Incident-Reports-2018-to-Present/wg3w-h783/>. This data includes police incident reports filed by officers and by individuals through self-service online reporting for non-emergency cases. Disclaimer: The San Francisco Police Department does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or correct sequencing of the information, as the data is subject to change as modifications or updates are completed. The Noe Valley Voice scraped the November and December 2024 data on Jan. 10, 2025. "Noe Valley" on the SFPD's digital map is bounded by 21st Street, San Jose Avenue/Guerrero Street, 30th Street, and Grand View Avenue/Diamond Heights Boulevard.
Noe Valley Voice, February 2025

at St. Philip's to start in kindergarten and go all the way through.

I also run the blood drives at St. Paul's on Church Street three times a year. The next one is March 2.

But I'm writing about the Martin de Porres House of Hospitality on Potrero Avenue. It's basically a soup kitchen serving free food daily.

My husband Andy and I are crew chiefs there. But we also try to put clothes on the backs of our guests. Some have next to nothing.

Right now, many of you are thinking about the people who've lost their homes to fire in Los Angeles. But later perhaps, those who are blessed with abundance might consider helping this very worthy endeavor in San Francisco.

Martin de Porres is looking for donations of clothing, shoes, and blankets to give to our unhoused guests. There is always a need, and we do have a place to store the excess.

Donations can be dropped off Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 225 Potrero. Or if you need a pickup, email info@martindepores.org. The phone is 415-552-0240. And the contact person is Jeff.

Thank you so much for any help you can give!

Jill Alcantar

Don't Forget Haystack

Editor:
We ordered pizza recently from Haystack at 24th and Sanchez streets. We were late picking up the order and I

had to tap on the door, as Haystack was closed. Who I can only assume was the new family business owner invited me in, and she was lovely!

I learned that she drives back and forth from San Francisco to Vacaville every working day! I'm not sure what that's about, but she described it as a labor of love to "keep a family business alive." Please consider this business. I love their pizza, and I so recommend the fettuccini Alfredo!

Abel G
Upper Noe Valley

Urban Angels SF Thanks You

Editor:
After 10 years in the Diamond Heights Shopping Center, Urban Angels SF is moving to a new location at 870 Market St., Suite 969, on Feb. 28. We are partnering with Air Reading and Mission Housing Development Corp.

During Urban Angels' time in Diamond Heights, thousands of residents in surrounding neighborhoods donated many tons of quality clothing, blankets, household appliances, and items for children, including car seats and strollers. Urban Angels SF volunteers shared these donations over 500,000 times during the past decade.

Our sincere thanks go out to the many fine people who helped Urban Angels SF to bring frontline aid to San Franciscans who were in need. You can still donate payable to UASF, 5228 Diamond Heights Blvd., SF, CA 94131.

Nelson Barry, Founder, UASF
NB3@UrbanAngelsSF.org

CRIME SNAPSHOT

2024 Up by 15%

According to the SFPD's digital map of incidents, crime in Noe Valley increased in 2024, with a total of 1,122 reported incidents, compared to 976 in 2023—a 15% rise.

The most significant increases, in the 10 categories the Voice tracks monthly, were in "larceny/theft" (+38%) and burglaries (+30%). In the larceny category, incidents peaked in November. (That same month, the SFPD arrested eight suspects in connection to two shoplifting incidents totalling \$27,000 in thefts from the Walgreens at 1333 Castro St.)

Miscellaneous crimes nearly doubled in 2024, suggesting a shift in reporting or classification. There was better news, however, for vehicle owners. Car thefts went down 37 percent year over year.

The Voice scraped the numbers for November and December on Jan. 10, 2025, from Data.sfgov.org (see above table). Note the portal is interactive and data is subject to change.

To report recurring incidents within the Mission Police District, contact Mission Station Captain Liza Johansen at Liza.tifee@sfgov.org. For station information, call 415-558-5400.

Contact Captain Amy Hurwitz at Amy.Hurwitz@sfgov.org or 415-404-4000 if incidents occur within Ingleside Police District, south of Cesar Chavez.

If you have an emergency in San Francisco, call 9-1-1. Or, if you are on a cell phone and it's urgent, call SFPD dispatch at 415-553-8090. If it's not, use the non-emergency 415-553-0123.

SFPD says businesses wishing to participate in the department's **Organized Retail Crime Operation** should email sfpd.retailtheft@sfgov.org.

—Corrie M. Anders, Sally Smith, with data check by Openai.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

THE CARTOON BY OWEN BAKER-FLYNN





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On Lok Center on 30th Humming With Activity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

meals. (There's a suggested \$2 donation for lunch.) It also re-launched a mind-blowing number of classes, social events, and health workshops.

"Over the past year, our senior center has delivered an impressive 7,994 hours of diverse activities," says Sandra Rivas, On Lok's director of senior programs and operations.

No one is more pleased to see the return of the center's in-person offerings than Lewis Campbell, who comes to the Latin Dance on Fridays from 2 to 4 p.m. "This is where it's at," says Campbell, one of some 70 attendees gathering on the dance floor in January.

Along with Campbell, it's hard to imagine anyone in Noe Valley having more fun on a Friday than this joyful, energized group of dancers—they know some serious moves. The music is blasting. The disco ball sends pinpoints of bright light throughout the third-floor dance space. Women decked out in shimmery tops and sparkling jewelry and men in dashing hats and dapper duds cut a rug for two hours in the large room that looks out onto a tree-lined view of Noe Valley and the city



Seniors come to On Lok 30th Street Senior Center for both the camaraderie and the tasty, nutritious food, available at two seatings, noon and 1 p.m., at 225 30th St.

Photo by Art Bodner

beyond.

Retired after serving for decades as theatrical director at SOTA (Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the

Arts), Campbell comes regularly for dances and an occasional meal.

After his wife died several years ago, Campbell learned about On Lok as a place where he could find community and make friends. "I like to dance and I like to sing."

At this point, Campbell, taking a break from dancing, spontaneously croons a melodious song that shows off his impressive theatrical chops.

From Mahjong to Meditation

While the Friday Latin Dance is one of the biggest attractions at 30th Street, it's just one of 50 activities offered at the center, including drawing and painting, Peruvian weaving, bingo, movies, mahjong, card and board games, line dancing, karaoke, and computer tutoring in the computer lab.

Seniors also take classes in Zumba, tai chi, and yoga. There is a thriving LGBTQ+ program and a wealth of workshops on how to live healthier, how to avoid a fall, or how to manage chronic conditions like diabetes.

The center offers classes in English, Spanish, and Chinese. It has a lovely garden with a meditation labyrinth and benches for rest and contemplation.

Two Seatings for Lunch

Finally, there are the food programs managed by On Lok, which was first based in Chinatown but joined hands with 30th Street Senior Center at the

Noe Valley site in 1995.

Any San Francisco senior can attend the 30th Street lunch program (two seatings, noon and 1 p.m.), do takeout, or, if needed, apply to have meals delivered to their homes.

Currently, On Lok 30th Street's nutrition programs are providing nearly 288,000 meals a year, to six senior centers and two adult day centers around the city, and to 400 homebound seniors living independently in the community. The programs are partially funded by the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services. (See sidebar for more information on the food programs.)

"On Lok has been committed to relentlessly pursuing quality of life and quality of care for older adults and their families since 1971, when our founders began building the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)," says Will Goodness about the model that the non-profit says has been imitated in 32 states.

For Campbell and thousands of others, On Lok 30th Street Senior Center is a "home away from home" where seniors can come together for friendship, meals, and, yes, samba.

"I like to be with people," said Campbell, before standing to return to the dance floor. "I enjoy living."

For more information about the senior center's programs, call 415-550-2210 or visit onlok.org/senior-center. ■

Free and Low-Cost Meals for Seniors

Yes, there is such a thing as a free lunch—"free" in San Francisco terms. Last year, On Lok 30th Street Senior Center (225 30th St., between Chenery and Dolores streets) served on-site lunches to more than 5,000 seniors ages 60 and up, for \$0 to \$2 apiece.

Offering free or low-cost meals—including restaurant-style hot lunches at the center or a two-meal-a-day package to 500 homebound seniors—has been core to On Lok's mission to improve San Francisco seniors' quality of life since the organization's founding in 1971.

For the seniors at home, the Mission Nutrition program delivers lunches and dinners Monday through Friday, holidays included. Deliveries also include frozen meals for the weekend. In addition, On Lok recently launched Medically Tailored Meals, providing clinically specific meals and nutrition counseling to Medi-Cal members.

Mission Nutrition Meal Program manager Will Goodness says besides delivering meals, "our drivers provide vital wellness checks and moments of social connection for homebound seniors."

The hand-delivered meals can make a big difference to those unable to cook or shop for groceries. "I always know that I'll have a balanced dinner and lunch, and that helps me an awful lot," says San Francisco resident Oscar. "On Lok gives me the fresh vegetables and food that my doctor wants me to eat. And if my doctor is happy, that's a good thing!"

During the pandemic, the non-profit paused its on-site lunches and prepared "to-go" meals for seniors willing to pick them up at 30th Street.

Now, for seniors who come in person to the senior center, On Lok provides communal, sit-down lunches Monday through Saturday in two shifts: the first at noon and the second at 1 p.m. Takeout is still an option, though.

While the freshly prepared meals seniors receive are important, so are the social connections, notes Goodness. "Our dining room is a place for the senior community to gather, share conversation, and have a delicious meal together."

Menus span a range of cultures, including Latin American, Asian, and standard American cuisine. Each meal includes a serving of protein, whole grain, fruit, vegetables, and dairy, and meets the needs of those maintaining a low-sodium and diabetic-friendly diet. Although they're prepared to be nutritious, On Lok meals are renowned for being delicious, too.

"One of my personal favorites is pork carnitas with salsa verde, Spanish brown rice, pinto beans, vegetable soup, a fresh orange, and milk," enthuses Goodness.

Is there a catch? None at all, says Goodness, who notes that On Lok's offerings are made possible through funding from the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services, as well as private donations.

"Meals are provided to [San Francisco] adults 60 years of age and over, regardless of income or disability status," Goodness points out. The only requirement to attend in person is to be able to navigate the center independently, he says.

Meal tickets for lunch are available on the third floor at 225 30th St. from 9 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. (Yes, there is an elevator.) The center suggests a \$2 donation for the meal, but no one is turned away.

For information, call On Lok 30th Street Senior Center at 415-550-2210. To enroll in On Lok's home-delivery or takeout programs, call 415-550-2226.

On Lok welcomes volunteers to help run the dining room. To learn more, contact On Lok's volunteer program manager at 415-550-2269.

—Leslie Crawford

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Chocolate Covered Made to Last in Noe

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We run a boutique of clothing, and we know how to investigate markets, so we could create a boutique with chocolate.” It seemed like a good idea.

Neither he nor Marilyn envisioned how good an idea it would prove to be.

Since its founding in 1994, Chocolate Covered has evolved as a successful retail operation whose inventory and customer base extend around the world.

“We normally have 1,200 to 1,500 chocolate bars in here, from a hundred different suppliers,” says Marilyn.

Jack adds, “We just brought in chocolate from Ukraine yesterday, for the first time. And we have chocolate from Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Korea, Thailand, Hungary, Denmark, Iceland, Brazil, Peru, Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia, and of course England, France, Germany, and Spain.”

The inventory expands to meet the occasion.

“Our sales in the week running up to Valentine’s Day amount to almost a month’s worth of revenue at any other time of the year,” Jack says.

Marilyn laughs, “It’s sort of a high holy chocolate holiday.”

Apart from the chocolates’ origins, there are its ingredients and flavors—including cocoa beans, nuts, fruits, spices, and sweet or unsweetened—that have established Chocolate Covered as

A Concert and Chocolate Tasting at Dandelion

Chocolate seems to be sprouting everywhere in the month of February. Benjamin Sabey—a San Francisco State professor, composer, and a board member of the Noe Valley-based **Earplay** chamber music organization—has a theory about the connection between dark chocolate and contemporary music, and he’d be happy to share both the music and the food with you at a special event on Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m.

The concert takes place at the Dandelion Chocolate Factory at 2600 16th St., where performers will be Earplay’s Terrie Baune on violin, Ellen Ruth Rose on viola, and Thalia Moore on cello. The complex flavors and inherent emotional power of Dandelion’s single-origin chocolate will be paired with the abstract but palpable anguish of Arnold Schoenberg’s String Trio, Opus 45 (1946). Following this performance, Sabey and Dandelion’s curriculum director, Stephen Durfee, will guide you through an engagement with the flavors, textures, temperatures, and evoked feelings of the factory’s chocolate offerings.

To clear the emotional and gustatory palates, the chamber trio will finish off their program with Mozart’s good-spirited *Divertimento*, premiered in Vienna in 1789. Dandelion will share a parting sweet treat.

Seating is limited, so claim your places at the events tab at <http://www.dandelionchocolate.com/>. And go to <https://www.earplay.org/> to check out Earplay’s upcoming concerts at the Noe Valley Ministry, March 24 and May 19.

(And by the way, you can buy Dandelion Chocolate at **Chocolate Covered** on 24th Street.)

—Jeff Kaliss

a must-see-and-taste destination.

“It’s not uncommon for someone to tell us, ‘I came straight from the airport,’” says Jack.

Celebrity Visitors

On a tour of the neighborhood in 2012, former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi picked up some dark chocolate and a box imprinted with the Presidio Terrace street sign. Country rock legend Emmylou Harris once declared, “Noe Valley is my favorite San Francisco neighborhood, and Chocolate Covered is the best chocolate shop in the world.”

Marilyn had at first been skeptical about whether chocolate could sell as well as clothing had. “I thought Jack was crazy,” she says. But they’d both proven themselves visionaries.

When they met in the mid-1970s, Marilyn, raised in Los Angeles, had a budding operation acquiring painter pants for a dollar apiece, dyeing them in a washing machine, and selling them at a stand on the L.A. beachfront for \$12.50.

Jack was brought up in Manhattan, dropped out of business school, and drove across the country to join his brother Louis, who got him a job in the garment industry in Southern California. Bored by the manufacture of polyester pants but bearing a good line of credit, Jack approached Marilyn at a stand she’d set up in Venice Beach, where they both were living.

“She was just a bundle of energy and had these wonderful friends who just adored her,” remembers Jack, now 71. “And you were cute,” adds Marilyn, now 79.

From the Southland to S.F.

Together they launched the original Ocean Front Walkers, named for their location in L.A. near the corner of Windham Avenue and Ocean Front Walk. They chose as their logo a profile of Bagels, Marilyn’s pet basset hound.

The couple expanded beyond pants to other articles of clothing and toured their merchandise to arts and crafts fairs up and down the West Coast. On stops in the Bay Area, friends and family urged them to dine at Little Italy, a beloved Noe Valley eatery as comfortable as their clothing line.

When they decided to relocate to San Francisco in 1983, they managed to set up Ocean Front Walkers in a combined residence and storefront at 25th and Sanchez, not far from the heart of Noe Valley.

They got involved in their new neighborhood, even organizing a 24th Street fair in the early 1980s. Eager for a presence on the commercial strip, they relocated Ocean Front Walkers to



Their walls adorned in boxes celebrating San Francisco, Chocolate Covered founders Jack Epstein and Marilyn Sitkoff can see themselves in their hearts from 30 years ago.

a variety of locations on 24th Street.

Ultimately, Jack convinced Marilyn that dipping into chocolate would guarantee their financial survival, and they launched Chocolate Covered in a basement space a block east of their clothing store, under Aquarius Records (3961 24th).

The City in Blue

To boost chocolate sales, Jack began fashioning gift boxes with cyanotype covers, a process that imprints images in Prussian blue using a chemical reaction of iron salts to ultraviolet light. He began with photographs of Noe Valley street signs, then expanded to thousands of street signs from other neighborhoods as well as landmarks, bars, coffee shops, and other favored businesses.

“Over time,” says Jack, “the boxes pushed out all the other gift items we used to sell.”

The critical mass of chocolates and boxes prompted the couple to switch their two business locations in 2006, putting Ocean Front Walkers in the basement and Chocolate Covered in its current larger space, with a storefront window Marilyn now redecorates for each holiday. When not selling chocolates, Jack worked on the boxes, with an option to customize from customers’ own photographs for a \$10 fee, with a week’s turnaround time.

For several years, Marilyn kept shop at the clothing and gift store while Jack tended the chocolate business. When the pandemic hit and Marilyn was scheduled for two cataract surgeries, “it was like a double whammy,” she reflects. They decided to discontinue Ocean Front Walkers to the regret of many longtime customers.

But as customers began to venture back, removing their masks to sample their wares, Chocolate Covered recovered and increased its allure.

The pistachio-and-chile-flavored Señor Murphy semi-sweet chocolate bar remains the most popular offering. “But whatever you may be coming in for, we have something for you,” Jack assures. He notes that the cost of bars ranges from \$6 for a milk chocolate Milk Boy to \$25 for the coveted Porcelana by Amedei Tuscany.

Whatever the pricing, the business has kept Jack and Marilyn successfully secured where they are for much longer than most of the neighborhood’s small businesses. They’ve stayed loved by locals and visitors alike for over four decades of Valentine’s Days. ■



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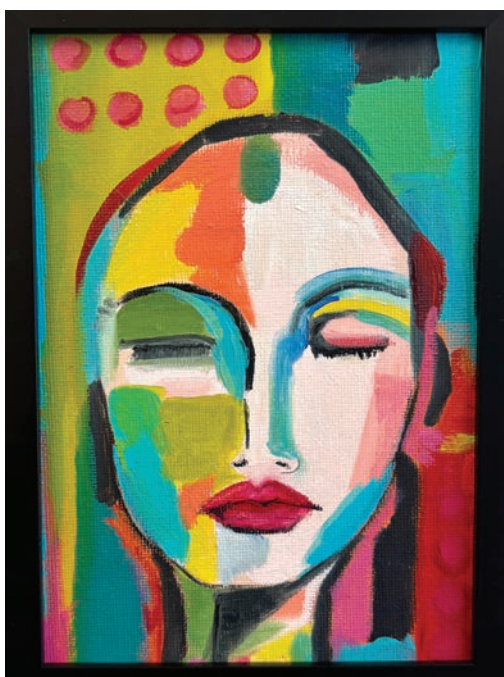
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Gyms Expanding Their Resistance Training

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

stress their muscles so they grow, and also strengthen their bones.

“You could run three times a week, but you’re not getting the same effect,” said Kunkel, who lives nearby on Dolores Street.

A growing body of research has shown how strength training benefits not only the development of strong bones and muscle mass but also assists with weight management and addressing such chronic conditions as arthritis, back pain, obesity, heart disease, depression, and diabetes. According to the Mayo Clinic, “Your body fat percentage will increase over time if you don’t do anything to replace the lean muscle you lose over time. Strength training can help you preserve and enhance your muscle mass at any age.”

For women, especially those who are perimenopausal, strength training can increase a sense of health and well-being, noted Kunkel. But younger women are also seeking out such workouts, she added, as a preventive measure to ward off such ailments as osteoporosis and joint injuries.

“Any woman who comes in here has bone density on their mind,” said Kunkel, noting that oftentimes their clients’ primary care physicians “are telling them to do strength training.”

One Way to Resist

MX3 Fitness founder Glenn Shope told the *Voice* it remains unclear what impact the popularity of weight-loss drugs like Ozempic might have on the public’s embrace of strength training, which he noted is also referred to as resistance training. One result of the appetite suppressants, he noted, is that people will see a reduction in their muscles and bone tissue, which strength training can address.

“When you restrict your calories, nothing else changes if you are not doing resistance training. You are probably losing 60 percent fat and 40 percent lean mass,” said Shope, with the mass coming from the body’s bone, muscle, or connective tissues.

“To mitigate that and make it more closely related to the ideal of losing 25 percent lean mass and 75 percent body fat,” he said, “you need resistance training, because your body will otherwise just give up muscle.”

Weights Enhance the Effect

Working out with weights, as opposed to just doing a cardio workout on a bike or a running machine at the gym, brings about better results for building up muscles, agrees Shope.

“Your body adapts to whatever stimuli you are giving it. When you make it move heavy things, your muscles will get bigger,” he said. “I think there is quite a little bit of research coming out that says strength training is more effective in the long run for fat loss.”

He and husband Dave Karraker last May opened the fourth location of their gym in Noe Valley, at 4045 24th St. Over the last few years, they have heard more of their members say they are coming to work out at the suggestion of their personal doctor, said Shope.

“I think for sure it has become part of the general understanding that resistance training grows muscle and improves your cardiovascular health.”

He described strength or resistance



Pilates teacher Jackson Grantham paces clients (l. to r.) Liz Schaffer, Jen Betti, and Susan Owen at Sanchez Street Studios.

Photo by Art Bodner

training simply as doing exercises where the person is pushing or pulling against something that is resisting that movement. For example, said Shope, a person resists gravity when lifting a dumbbell or working on a weight machine at a typical gym.

“Our goal is always exhaustion of the muscle because that is the best way to elicit muscle growth,” he said.

MX3 and Roar join other businesses in the neighborhood with a focus on strength training. Pure Barre, at 3800 24th St., offers 50-minute workouts focused on “low-impact, small movements that strengthen and tone your body.”

Iron + Mettle at 3769 24th St. is a women-focused gym that promotes strength training and lifting weights. As founder Danielle Repetti told the *Voice* last year, her “main goal is to get barbells into the hands of every woman in San Francisco.”

‘Sitting the New Smoking’

Chiropractor Henry Oyharcabal says that underlying the strength-training workout trend is an embrace of preventive medicine by the younger generation. It goes hand in hand with the popularity of organic foods and skepticism about the medical establishment and drug companies, he said.

“People are more health-conscious these days,” said Oyharcabal. “It is why we are seeing a gym on every corner of the city.”

On Feb. 10, Oyharcabal plans to open the second location of his Atlas Health Center at 3979 24th St., where the women’s clothier Ambiance had operated. First announced in 2023, Oyharcabal ran into permitting and construction issues that delayed and changed his plans.

Thus, he no longer is relocating his business from 2305 Van Ness Ave, where it has been for 32 years. That location will continue to provide chiropractic care along with massage and acupuncture services.

At the Noe Valley location there will be four chiropractors and a physical therapist. In the back will be an array of workout equipment, including wall-mounted resistance bands.

“We are not opening a gym to the public,” explained Oyharcabal, who lives in the building’s second-floor apartment.

At the rear of the 2,300-square-foot space, Oyharcabal has built two private rooms, one of which will be used at least twice a month by a doctor who focuses on pain management.

A third room, built with lead-lined walls and a 300-pound metal door, contains a digital x-ray machine that will enable a complete analysis of the spine, he said.

The center also will do testing for concussions and traumatic brain injuries.

“Our job is to keep people away from doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies,” said Oyharcabal.

He sees the growth of places promoting strength training as an outgrowth of the changing nature of work in the internet age. Most people have sedentary jobs and sit at a desk all day looking at a computer screen, and therefore do not reap the same physical benefits they might have done through manual labor, said Oyharcabal.

“Sitting is the new smoking,” he said. “That lifestyle leads to repetitive stress injuries.”

His clients often are dealing with problems resulting from the overuse of their shoulders and arms.

“How do we mitigate that? We have to do things that are active and replicate what our ancestors did when they worked in the fields all day,” said Oyharcabal, a body builder who worked as a personal trainer prior to becoming a chiropractor.

Strength training is a potential answer, he said. Options run the gamut from lifting weights or doing workouts that utilize a ballet barre to Pilates and even yoga, said Oyharcabal.

“All the studies coming out show... the more muscles a person retains, the less risk for morbidity and mortality,” he said.

Pilates a Muscle Builder

For 30 years, Sanchez Street Studios has provided Pilates classes to its clientele.

With dancers in New York City among the first to embrace the method introduced by Joseph Pilates in the 1940s, the exercise has long been associated with physical conditioning and agility. It also builds practitioners’ core strength, notes Sanchez Street Studios founder Carol LeMaitre.

LeMaitre hews to a classical type of

Pilates instruction, along with what is known as the MELT Method, which incorporates specially designed hand- and foot-treatment balls and custom-made soft rollers with the aim of improving mobility and energy.

However, Pilates classes use “a lot of springs with your legs and arms. It not only strengthens your core and legs but your full body,” LeMaitre said.

Other equipment helps users build muscle by creating resistance.

Resembling a platform bed, the Universal Reformer allows people to roll back and forth while working with long stretchy cords, providing progressive resistance and strength building.

Another apparatus is the Wunda Chair. It’s used for pushup exercises, which are more difficult to do than people assume, said LeMaitre. “You are definitely going to build muscle here,” she said.

For the last decade, the studio has annually offered up to three Pilates trips overseas for people to focus on practicing the workout technique for a full week. A trip to Mexico is coming up in March; one to Croatia is scheduled for September.

“They are fun for me and really rewarding. A lot of people come every year,” said LeMaitre.

While her clientele is around 80 percent women, the studio at 1589 Sanchez St. near 29th Street, employs two male teachers and has more male clients than most Pilates studios, said LeMaitre. More male athletes are doing Pilates, and of late more youth who play sports, like soccer, are joining their parents at classes, noted LeMaitre.

A Ripping Year

Sanchez Street Studios’ best year to date businesswise was 2024. Nearly 300 people a month now take classes there, with LeMaitre seeking to hire a seventh staff person.

“We are pretty packed all the time,” she said. “We stay busy all year.”

At MX3 Fitness, the waitlist is now at 425 people. It signifies to Shope that people are looking for gyms near their homes.

“I do think there is a growing body of evidence that says strength training is very, very important for long-term health and short-term health,” he said. ■

SHORT TAKES

All-Singing, All-Dancing SpongeBob

Once again, James Lick Middle School pulls out all the stops in its annual theater extravaganza. This year, the school is staging *The SpongeBob Musical*, on Friday, Feb. 7, and Saturday, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m., with a Sunday, Feb. 9, matinee at 2 p.m.

The all-singing, all-dancing romp through the magical world of Bikini Bottom, under the direction of Theater

Sewer Repairs Here, There and Everywhere

Merchants, residents, and drivers will be feeling a lot of pain this month, as the city digs its teeth into two major construction projects—one continuing along 24th Street and the other set to begin on four local side streets.

The work in both projects involves sewer replacement, installation of new concrete curb ramps and bus pads, and road repaving.

The 24th Street Infrastructure Project, extending along 24th from Homestead to Guerrero streets, was launched at the tail end of the pandemic and is expected to be completed by June 2025.

Henry DeRuff, legislative aide to District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, explained, “There are a few ‘hot spots’ around the city where there have been many water-main breaks due to a variety of factors,” including the age of the long-ago-laid pipes. “This is one of them, and that is why the PUC [Public Utilities Commission] is prioritizing their replacement.”

Sewer work on the block of 24th Street between Sanchez and Vicksburg streets, where the Noe Valley Town Square is, was scheduled to start in January. (Sewer repairs on the block from Castro Street to Noe Street were completed in 2023.) After that work is done, work crews will install new bus pads and curb ramps, and repair sidewalks. *No Parking* signs will restrict parking during work hours, typically Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The side streets project will replace sewers on Jersey Street between Douglass and Church streets, Elizabeth Street between Hoffman and Castro streets, Diamond Street between 23rd and 26th streets, and Douglass Street between 23rd and 25th streets.

Work had been set to start in November 2024, with the first task being “surveying and potholing,” DeRuff said. Adolfo Gonzalez Valle of the PUC noted that hours for the project would be Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. “Some night and weekend work may be required,” Gonzalez Valle advised.

The project was expected to last two years, until October 2026.

To get updates on either project, go to the PUC website, SFpublicworks.org. Residents or merchants who have concerns are welcome to contact DeRuff by email (henry.deruff@sfgov.org).

—Kit Csmerton

Arts Director Keith Carames, features 31 James Lick students, along with a young scholar from Alvarado Elementary and James Lick alum Nikola Goldman-Mockey, currently at ICA High School, as stage manager.

The plot is pretty topical. A “stable genius” threatens to erupt a volcano and destroy the homes of the citizens of Bikini Bottom. SpongeBob and his friends must come together to save their underwater world. Says Carames, “It’s about resilience, embracing our uniqueness and the power of optimism.”

Ongoing repairs to the James Lick Auditorium, for which Carames secured \$5 million in funding from SFUSD, mean that SpongeBob and friends will be floating down to BRAVA Theater, 2781 24th St., to perform the show.

Tickets are available on the BRAVA website, www.brava.org, for \$10 for youth and \$20 for adults. But no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

Students in the James Lick theater arts program routinely go on to School of the Arts or other professional training, followed by jobs in the field. You can support the good work with a tax-deductible donation to JLMS, 1220 Noe St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Be sure to write Drama Club in the memo line.

—Kit Cameron

Bring Your Funny Valentine

Jeffrey A. Hall, professor of communications studies at the University of Kansas, observed that, “If you meet someone whom you can laugh with, it might mean your future relationship is going to be fun and filled with good cheer.”

Accordingly, you and your sweetie might consider extending this month’s celebration of love to the *Après Valentine’s Day Soirée* presented by SF Live Arts on Saturday, Feb. 15, at the Noe Valley Ministry.

The event, produced by Larry Kasson (who began staging musical offerings at the Ministry 44 years ago this month) and billed as “a hilarious evening of comedy and music,” showcases several performers with serious cred in both of those modes of expression.

In Johnny Lonely’s *Unhappy Hour*, Johnny Lonely (whose offstage name is Brian Lohmann) will be crooning his heart-achy, whiskey-stained American standards to the absurdly upbeat keyboard accompaniment of Joshua Raoul Brody, known for his days as a member of the Residents and the Club Foot Orchestra.

Josh Kornbluth has toured his humorous monologues around the world and co-written a Mime Troupe show, but he will star in this gig for the first time as a singer-songwriter.

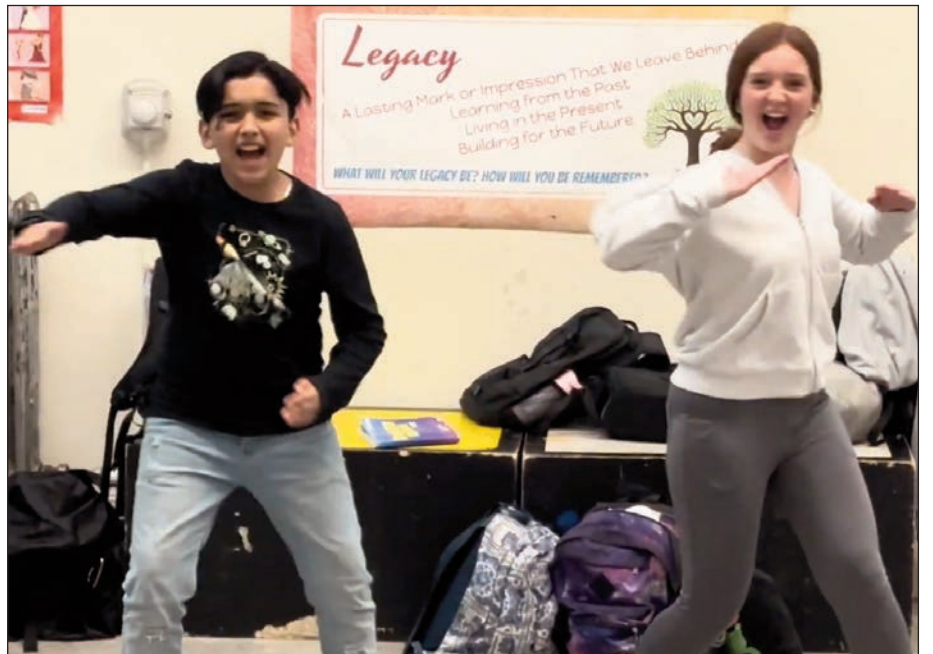
Jefferson Bergey is a chameleon, variously channeling the music of the Allman Brothers, the Talking Heads,



Jefferson Bergey is perhaps the kinkiest of four singer-songwriters performing comedy at the Feb. 15 *Après Valentine’s Day Soirée*, 8 to 10:30 p.m., at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. Photo courtesy SFLiveArts



Rehearsing last month for their shot at fame in *The SpongeBob Musical* are James Lick Middle School students (l. to r., back row) Jacob Fernandez, Cielo Fassett, Miyo Inclan, Maddie Blair, Aaliyah Prieto, Cailyn Cockburn, Ellie Hill; (middle row) Diego Malvon, Antwone Moya, KJ Carames-Flores, Santiago Espana-Trejo; and (front) Dominic Carames-Flores.



Two students with starring roles in the musical are (l. to r.) Carlos Aleman Castaneda, playing SpongeBob SquarePants, and Mabel Brennan, playing Sandy Cheeks. Photos courtesy Keith Carames

the Grateful Dead, and Frank Sinatra. He’s contributed to the live shows and podcasts of Bawdy Storytelling, and his audience appeal and surname have made him the namesake of a cheeseburger at Scopo Divino in the Upper Fillmore.

Soirée tickets are \$18 in advance and \$25 at the door of the Ministry, at 1021 Sanchez St. near 23rd. The party starts at 8 p.m. and runs till 10:30.

—Jeff Kaliss

Gardens, Please Apply

The carpet of green in our yards and on our streets after recent rains reminds us that spring is soon upon us and, just like that, it will be time for the annual Noe Valley Garden Tour, sponsored by Friends of Noe Valley.

This year’s event will take place on Saturday, May 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Friends are eager to host new gardens.

Maybe you have a spread of hardy California natives, or you are nurturing a row of heritage rose bushes. Think about sharing your beauty and bounty.

Contact garden tour organizer Linda Lockyer at her email address: linedalockyer3@gmail.com or through the FNV website: friendsofnoevalley.com. The committee will be viewing potential spots in February and March.

And, if your thumb is more brown than green, how about signing up to be a greeter on the day of the tour. You will get a free ticket for the tour and make a lot of new garden-enthusiast friends. Use the same contact info above.

—Kit Cameron

Latin Grammy Nominees Live

Noe Music emailed a special audio treat to subscribers this month: a six-minute YouTube preview of the music of Latin Grammy nominees Sam Reider and Jorge Glem, joined by bassist Munir Hossn. The three will be gracing the stage on Saturday, Feb. 8, at 10:30 a.m. and Sunday, Feb. 9, at 4 p.m., as part of the 2024–25 Noe Music season at Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.

Reider, who cut his chops right here in San Francisco learning piano from his composer father, hooked up with Glem, founder of Venezuelan ensemble C4 Trio and master of a four-stringed guitar-like instrument called the cuatro, in New York City in 2016. The two have been blazing a musical trail from Lincoln Center to SF Jazz, connecting American jazz and roots music with merengue, joropo, and other essential rhythms of Venezuela. For this concert only, they will be joined by “spectacular” Brazilian bassist and composer Munir Hossn.

Noe Music co-director Meena Bhasin describes the collaboration, titled *Brooklyn-Cumanà*, as a “joyful expression of the limitless potential of music to capture the imagination and entice the body to get up and dance!”

The hot sounds of the trio will reverberate for both the Saturday Noe Music Kids concert, at 10:30 a.m. (tickets \$15 for everyone aged 3 and older), and the Sunday Mainstage concert, 4 p.m. (tickets at the door start at \$45 with student tickets at \$15).

You can get tickets and more information at the Noe Music website, noemusic.org.

—Kit Cameron



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UPPER NOE RECREATION CENTER



Exciting Futsal League play every Sunday. Spectators welcome. Photo courtesy Chris Faust

Upper Noe Sporting Some Changes

We are thrilled to announce that Upper Noe Recreation Center is now an official Sports and Athletics Facility. Staffing will include Sports & Athletics Recreation Supervisor Jerry Valasco, Girls Sports Coordinator Rachel "Rocky" Henley, and Recreation Specialist Cindy Chu.

Additionally, Upper Noe will have a **Girls Sports Office** onsite, at 295 Day St. (at Sanchez Street). While the park does not anticipate many changes to its current offerings of activities, you can look forward to seeing more sports and leagues, specifically sports for girls. The soccer-like futsal competition is already here, on Sundays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Come watch the fast-paced games.

Meanwhile, Winter Session at the park continues through March 8. Some classes and activities are drop-in and free. Stop by or call the office at 415-970-8061 or visit www.uppernoerecreationcenter.com for more information.

Registration for the **Spring Session** citywide will begin March 1, and classes start March 24. To sign up for classes, go to sfrecpark.org/register.

If you see something that needs fixing at the park, contact San Francisco Customer Service (3-1-1), by phone, online, or on the city's phone app. Park staff rely on your 3-1-1 reports to support service requests. For issues related to Joby's Dog Run, open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., call 311 or email info@fundogsf.org.

—Chris Faust, Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

Upper Noe Winter Schedule (Jan. 7 to March 8, 2025)

Rec Center Hours, 295 Day St.: Tues. to Fri., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Mondays closed (outside activities only). Park grounds open daily, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sunday (Winter Session only)

8 a.m.–5 p.m. Futsal League (spectators welcome)

Tuesday

9–10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE
10–11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Pickleball all ages FREE
12–1 p.m. Pilates (18+)
1:30–2:30 p.m. Strength & Flexibility (18+)
2–3:30 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE
4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10)
4–6 p.m. Jr. Warriors basketball practice
6–7:30 p.m. Open Gym (18+) FREE
6–7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (18+)
6:30–7:30 p.m. Yoga Vinyasa (18+)

Wednesday

10–11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
10 a.m.–2 p.m. Open Gym (adult) FREE
12–1 p.m. Feldenkrais (18+)
1–6 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
2–5 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE
4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10)
5:30–7:30 p.m. Advanced Drop-In Volleyball (18+)
6–7 p.m. Tennis Intermediate Live Ball (18+)

Thursday

10–11:30 a.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Pickleball (18+) FREE
12–1 p.m. Pilates (18+)
1:30–2:30 p.m. Strength & Flexibility (18+)
2–5 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE
4–5 p.m. Petite Bakers (ages 3-5)
4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10)
5:30–7:30 p.m. Open Gym (18+) FREE
6–7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (18+)
6:30–7:30 p.m. Yoga Vinyasa (18+)

Friday

9–10 a.m. Zumba (outside) FREE
10 a.m.–1 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Open Gym (adult) FREE
2–3:30 p.m. Open Gym (youth) FREE
3–6 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)
4:30–5:30 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 9–10)
6–7 p.m. Tennis Beginning (ages 10-12)

Saturday

9 a.m.–5 p.m. Jr. Warriors games (spectators welcome)
9:30–10:30 a.m. Family Zumba—Play Pass \$
11 a.m.–4 p.m. A Place to Play (Free Play)



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STORE TREK

Store Trek is a regular feature of the Noe Valley Voice, introducing new shops and restaurants in the neighborhood. This month, we spotlight a business sorely needed in Downtown Noe Valley: a shoe store. The boutique is appropriately called Running Wylder.

RUNNING WYLDER

1354 Castro Street
510-255-0527

<https://runningwylder.co/>

More than just a running shoes and clothing boutique, Running Wylder is meant to foster community in Noe Valley and throughout the city, says owner Katie Douglas.

To that end, Douglas is hosting runs around town on Sundays that take off from the store (10 a.m.), and she's working on the launch of a book club. A stack of books, all but one a memoir by a runner, sits on the shop's cash wrap counter. She also has been talking with a person who is interested in doing a pop-up coffeehouse inside the store on weekends. In January, the store held a "boobs-only" Brooks sports bra fitting and Manzanita Grove wine tasting.

"I want running and the store to feel accessible to people," said Douglas. "I think running stores can be intimidating."

With a background in product design and apparel merchandising, Douglas was keen to remodel the former First Republic Bank branch at 1354 Castro St. to be an inviting space. It's now painted in an off-white hue and has light wood flooring.

Wending its way through the middle of the 500-square-foot sales floor is a large cushiony cobalt-blue ottoman.

On the left wall are two racks of running shorts, shirts, sports bras, and sweatshirts, for men and women, priced between \$60 and \$130.

Vintage unisex tees from past races, such as the 1981 San Francisco Marathon, run \$55 to \$95.

The right wall has five long shelves of running shoes, displaying such popular brands as Diadora, New Balance, Brooks, Saucony, Salsky, and Nnormal, priced from \$120 to \$237. More brands, including Altra, are expected this month.

The store also carries Birkenstocks (\$65 to \$135). Douglas likes to wear them before and after her runs. "They help my feet relax and recover."

Also available are sunglasses by Sunski (\$48-\$58) and Article (\$250), plus "merch" with the store's logo.

The store name Running Wylder is a play on words, says Douglas, referring to what she and husband Matt Birnbaum are doing when they're running after their son Dougie, now 3. Wylder is also their son's middle name.

"Running Wylder is a very family-focused store and Noe Valley is a family-focused area," says Douglas. That's one of the reasons they felt drawn to the neighborhood.

She and Birnbaum live in the Mission District and had been taking family walks around Noe Valley for several years. On their treks, they saw that 24th Street had lost its shoe stores.

While dreaming about her new enter-



Owner Katie Douglas hopes everyone, runners and non-runners alike, will feel comfortable trying on shoes and clothing at Running Wylder, which opened in October at the corner of Castro and Jersey. Photo by Art Bodner

prise, Douglas designed a mascot, Crusty, a cute character whose arms looked like a croissant. Its image is now on green tumblers (\$24) and free stickers at the store.

The croissant element, she says, came from son Dougie's craving for the pastry, though of late he is requesting bagels. "We may need to debut a bagel mascot in 2025."

Douglas grew up in Michigan with parents who both ran and would drag her and her brothers to the road races they participated in during the 1990s. She took up running cross-country in high school and ran a marathon for a class at Central Michigan University.

"I loved it being part of a team and being outside," recalls Douglas.

Moving to Vancouver, Canada, to work at Lululemon, she found a group of women to go running with and did a half-mile marathon in the city.

After moving to San Francisco in 2015, Douglas continued to run and enter marathons, such as the Nike Women's Half Marathon.

Once she and Birnbaum welcomed Dougie to the fold, Douglas began thinking of making a career pivot. She had been on the design team at Old Navy tasked with concept and trend research.

Post pregnancy, Douglas had returned to running. Still, she found her body no longer fit into her running clothes.

Apparel she bought online didn't work, leading Douglas to think about opening a boutique where customers could try on clothes and shoes to ensure they were a good fit.

"You buy stuff online and then cross your fingers it lives up to the hype. Often, it doesn't," said Douglas. "I think we are coming off the online shopping bubble."

Since opening Running Wylder Oct. 26, Douglas has seen a steady rise in sales and store visitors. It helps that the shop has big, bright front windows, she says, and sits on a major traffic corridor across from a Walgreens parking lot.

"We opened our checking account here," Douglas recalls of the former occupant of the space. "Our son was

about a year old. I had told my husband at the time I thought this would make for a great running store. I don't think my husband thought I was serious."


Now, on most weekends, their little one can be found running around inside the shop. Outside are two pink tables with matching pink chairs for people to sit at. The store also has treats on hand

for customers' canine companions.




"I really think running stores should feel like community hubs for people who are runners and for non-runners alike," says Douglas.

Running Wylder is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

—Matthew S. Bajko



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What's in Your Earthquake Kit?

Sally Smith / Illustrations by Karol Barske

It's been 35 years since the 6.9 Loma Prieta Earthquake (Oct. 17, 1989) and the birth of San Francisco's **Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT)**. So, we'd better get cracking on our preparedness for the Big One. Besides taking a training, you can put together a quake kit or "go bag" to manage for a week with the power shut off. Keep the bag near the door.

Upcoming NERT trainings are **Feb. 1 to March 1** (four Saturdays, Mission YMCA), **Feb. 19 to April 2** (Wednesdays, 2310 Folsom St.), and **March 17-19** (SF State Annex I). Apply at the SF-fire.org/nert website. For information, call the SFFD at 415-970-2022 or 2024 (NERT class hotline).



Water: One gallon per person to last 3 to 5 days. (Use bleach to purify it, 2 to 4 drops per quart.)

Food for 3 to 5 days, such as canned or dried soups, beans, juice.

Cooking Supplies: A grill or camp stove, utensils, matches, can opener, foil, plastic wrap, garbage bags.



Clothing: Light and heavy layers for all, stored to stay dry. Include a pair of shoes and gloves.

Safety: Flashlight, radio, batteries, rope, knife, scissors, fire extinguisher, wrench to shut off utilities.



Supplies such as cash, house or car keys, pencil and paper, i.d. cards, insurance info, maps.

Hygiene: Waterless soap, toilet paper, shampoo, toothbrush, sanitary supplies.



Special items for children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

Shelter: Tent, sleeping bags.

Medical: First-aid kit, medications, KN95 masks, and an extra pair of glasses.



Pet Supplies, such as food, water, leash, medications, and carrier.

Checklist for the 'Go Bag'

It never hurts to have a "go bag" at home or work or in your car.

- Sturdy shoes
- Flashlight, whistle
- Glasses
- Crank or battery radio
- Food and water
- Cash (\$100 in small bills)
- Basic first-aid, medications
- Change of clothes
- Toilet paper, hand sanitizer
- Big trash bag, mylar blanket
- Copy of driver's license
- Paper, pencil, family or pet photos, important documents

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Feb. 1-22: The FARMERS MARKET has fresh produce, food, and music Saturdays, 8 am to 1 pm. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Feb. 1-22: Stroll or jog and see the sights with **NOE WALKS** on Saturdays. Meet at 24th and Sanchez 10 am.

Feb. 1-March 1: Lana Z Caplan exhibits PHOTOGRAPHS in "Oceano," at the Harvey Milk Center for the Arts. Tue.-Thurs. 3-8:30 pm; Sat. 11 am-4:30 pm. 50 Scott. 554-8742; hmcaevents@sfgov.org

Feb. 1-March 2: Longtime Noe Valley Voice contributor Beverly Tharp exhibits PHOTOGRAPHS, with Jane Ivory and David Stroud, at the Far Out Gallery, 3004 Taraval. Thurs.-Sun., noon-6 pm. faroutgallery.com

Feb. 3-March 17: On Lok and the 30th Street Senior Center offer a six-week workshop, "CHRONIC PAIN Management"; no meeting Feb. 17. 2-4 pm. Glen Park Library. 2825 Diamond. 550-6002; onlok.org

Feb. 4 and March 4: Join the ACTION-SF group, strategizing 6 to 7:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey; action-sf.com

Feb. 6, 13, 20 & 27: Family STORYTIMES are Thursdays, 10:15 am and 11 am. Space is limited to 20 kids at each. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Feb. 6, 13, 20 & 27: Mutiny Radio hosts free OPEN MIC comedy at The BAR on Dolores, Thursdays, 8 pm. 1600 Dolores.

Feb. 7: Make "BIG BILDER" forts out of cardboard, 3-4 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707

Feb. 7: Join LOLA for a pre-Valentine's Day gallery party, 5-7 pm. 1250 Sanchez.

Feb. 7 & March 7: First Friday COMEDY NIGHT at The Dubliner stars five standup comedians. 9 to 10:30 pm. 3838 24th. 826-2279; glecklerjoe@gmail.com

Feb. 7-9: James Lick Middle School performs "The SPONGEBOB MUSICAL" (youth edition) Fri. and Sat. 7 pm, Sun. 2 pm. Brava Theater, 2781 24th. sfusd.edu

Feb. 8: The Randall Museum's family VALENTINE Extravaganza features drop-in activities. 10:30 am-4 pm. 199 Museum Way. 554-9600; randallmuseum.org

Feb. 8: Master GARDENER Lisa Erdos

shows how to grow orchids. 2-3:30 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707.

Feb. 8: Pat Tanumihardja, author of *Mortar & Pestle: Classic Indonesian Recipes*, TALKS with Dr. Linda Shiue. 3 pm. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Feb. 8 & 23: City Guides offers WALKING TOURS of Noe Valley, led by Cathy and Paul Staley, which start at the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey, at 2 pm. Registration required: 375-0468 (sfcityguides.org).

Feb. 9: The Noe Valley Town Square hosts a Big Game WATCH PARTY; bring snacks, beverages, and lawn chairs. 3:30-8 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Feb. 9: Latin Grammy nominees Jorge Glem and Sam Reider perform with Munir Hossn at NOE MUSIC. 4-6 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. noemusic.org

Feb. 9: Take a meditative LABYRINTH WALK at the Noe Valley Ministry, 6:30 pm. 1021 Sanchez. noevalleyministry.org

Feb. 11: It's LEGO and Board Game Night at the Noe Valley Library. 6-7:30 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Feb. 11 & 13: Instructor Marvin Feldman launches a TAI CHI series on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 to 10:30 am. First class is free. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Feb. 14: The Noe Valley Library screens the FILM *Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance With Somebody*. 2-4:30 pm. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Feb. 14: Noe Valley Books invites you to a VALENTINE'S DAY Party, with refreshments, literary bingo, and blind-date-with-a-book challenges. 7-9 pm. 3957 24th. 590-2961; noevalleybooks.com

Feb. 14-23: The 12th annual Legacy FILM FESTIVAL on Aging screens virtually for the third year. For titles and times: 515-2708; legacyfilmfestivalonaging.org

Feb. 15: The library screens the 2016 FILM *Hidden Figures* and includes a space-themed

craft. 2-5 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Feb. 15: SF COMEDY Underground stages standup at "Noe Valley Farms" on third Saturdays. 7:45-9:30 pm. 1828 Castro. Eventbrite; bestmedicinethebay@gmail.com

Feb. 15: SF Live Arts hosts "Après VALENTINE'S DAY Soirée," an evening of comedy and music starring "Johnny Lonely," Joshua Raoul Brody, Jefferson Bergey, and Josh Kornbluth. 8 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez. sflivearts.org

Feb. 16: Volunteers for the monthly Noe Valley CLEANUP DAY meet at the Town Square to pick up supplies. 10 am to noon. 3861 24th. togetherSF.org

Feb. 16 & 23: FOLKYOGA offers free all-level classes; bring water and a mat. 11 am-noon. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Feb. 18: OMNIVORE Books on Food hosts Rachel Hope Cleves discussing *Lustful Appetites: An Intimate History of Good Food and Wicked Sex*. 6:30 pm. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Feb. 18: Bernal Heights Outdoor Cinema observes a Day of Remembrance for Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII with a free screening of the FILM *Murder in the High Desert*. 6:30 pm. Bernal Library, 500 Cortland. bhoutdoorcinema.org

Feb. 19: The Noe Valley BOOK CLUB reads *North Woods* by Daniel Mason. 6:30-7:45 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Feb. 19-April 2: NERT's six-week training in emergency preparedness happens on Wednesdays, 5:30 to 9:30 pm, at 2310 Folsom. Sign up fast. 558-3200; sf-fire.org

Feb. 20: Omnivore Books on FOOD Coinneach MacLeod introducing *Hebridean Baker: The Scottish Cookbook*. 6:30 pm. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Feb. 21: The Short Stack BOOK CLUB discusses *The Three of Us* by Ore Agbaje-

Williams. 3-4 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Feb. 21: Chef author Julia Turshen discusses *What Goes with What: 100 RECIPES, 20 Charts, Endless Possibilities* with Nina LaCour. 6:30 pm. Omnivore Books, 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

Feb. 22: UNIQUE DERIQUE plays ham-bone body music at a show at the library. 4 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. 355-5707

Feb. 23: The trio SWING SHIFT performs songs from the "great American songbook" and a mix of western swing, Latin jazz, and modern pop at Acoustic Sunday. 1-3 pm. 3861 24th. noevalleytownsquare.com

Feb. 24: The Noe Valley Library and the Museum of the African Diaspora co-sponsor WATERCOLOR-PAINTING workshop, 4 to 5 p.m. 451 Jersey. 355-5707

Feb. 25: The Noe Valley Merchants NIGHT MARKET offers local vendors, **FOOD**, and entertainment 4 to 7 pm on last Tuesdays. Noe Valley Town Square, 3861 24th. See Noemerchants.com.

Feb. 27: Come to PAJAMA STORYTIME at the Noe Valley Library. 6:30 pm; reservations required. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

March 1: Sign up for SPRING CLASSES in myriad sports and activities (starting March 24) at the Upper Noe Rec Center, 295 Day. 970-8061; sfrecpark.org/register

March 1: Kiera Wright-Ruiz, author of *My (Half) Latinx Kitchen*, appears in conversation with Kristina Cho at 3 pm at OMNIVORE BOOKS. 3885 Cesar Chavez. 282-4712; omnivorebooks.com

March 2: It's DONOR Appreciation Day at Noe Valley Books, 3957 24th. Come celebrate the saviors. Note also: You can bring in used books to the store again. 590-2961

March 3: Bring cuttings and seedlings to a PLANT SWAP at the Main Library. 2-3:15 pm. 100 Larkin. 557-4554; sfpl.org

MARCH ON: The next Voice Calendar will be for the March 2025 issue. The deadline for calendar items is Feb. 20. Events in Noe Valley receive priority. Email calendar@noevalleyvoice.com

C A L E N D A R

CHILDREN'S FICTION

Hair Like Obama's, Hands Like Lebron's, by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Savanna Durr, is a picture-book celebration of Black history. Ages 3-6. Little Ruhi plans a sari dance party in **Sari Sisters** by Anitha Rao-Robinson, illustrated by Anousha Syed. Ages 3-7. **Moana 2: The Great Voyage**, by Natasha Bouchard with illustrations by the Disney Storybook Art Team, continues the story of a brave girl in the South Pacific. Ages 6-8. In **Like a Curse**, Elle McNicoll's follow-up to *Like a Charm*, young witch Ramya takes on wicked siren Portia. Ages 8-12. In Cressida Cowell's adventure **Which Way Around the Galaxy**, a magical creature named Bug leads a group of children to a fiery ice planet. Ages 8-12.

CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

Kamala Raised Her Hand, Raakhee Mirchandani's picture book about the courage of a former U.S. vice president, has illustrations by Supriya Kelkar. Ages 4-8. In **Coming Home: A Hopi Resistance Story** (*Tutuqaykingaqw nima: hopisino pahan tutuqayiwuy ep yorhomti*) by Mavasta Honyouti (Hopi translation by Marilyn Parra), a grandfather fights to keep his traditions. Ages 4-8. **Gold Rush: The Untold Story of the First Nations Woman Who Started the Klondike Gold Rush**, is written and illustrated by Flora Delargy. Ages 7-11. Many of the game's animated characters are included in **Pokémon Visual Companion**, by Simcha Whitehill, Lawrence Neves, Katherine Fang, Cris Silvestri, and Glenn Dakin. Ages 7-11. Authors Rebecca Felix and Ruthie Van Oosbree offer patterns for tiny butterflies, fish, and potted plants in **Mini Origami to Fold With Flair**. Ages 8-12.

CHILDREN'S EBOOKS

Neighbors pitch in to help after a disaster in **A Hat for House: One Storm, Many Helpers**, by Audrey Perrott and illustrated by Druscilla Santiago. Ages 3-7. In the picture book **All the Greatness in You**, by Tameka Fryer Brown with illustrations by Alleanna Harris, a mother describes the qualities she admires in her young son. Ages 4-8. **The One and Only Googoosh: Iran's Beloved Superstar**, by Azadeh Westergaard, tells the story of the legendary actor and singer Faegheh Atashin. Ages 4-8. Tina Cho's graphic novel in verse, **The Other Side of Tomorrow** (illustrated by Deb JJ Lee), recounts two children's escape from North Korea. Ages 8-12. When her father goes missing, a girl fights to find her way back home from the land of the lost, in **The Empty Place** by Olivia A. Cole. Ages 8-12. **TEEN FICTION** Opera-loving Maude becomes a pop music sensation in **A French Girl in New York** by Anna Adams. Ages 10-13. A witch and a non-magical girl are torn apart by the universe in **Spells to Forget Us** by Aislinn Brophy. Ages 12 and up. A trans teen leaves her small town to enter a women's college in **Lucy, Uncensored**, by Mel Hammond and Teghan Hammond. Ages 12 and up. Fifteen-year-old Bella struggles with alcohol in **The Glass Girl** by Kathleen Glasgow. Ages 14-17. In **Rest in Peaches** by Alex Brown, a teen searches for a killer after a high school mascot is unmasked. Ages 14-17.

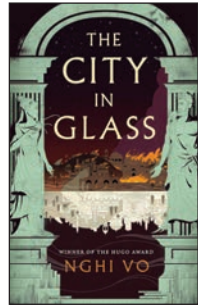
CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Make Your Presents Felt by Michael Blake

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MORE BOOKS TO READ

Books in the Brave New Year



The *Noe Valley Voice* is delighted to present the latest books at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library and to welcome new Youth Librarian Cristal Fiel to the branch on Jersey Street.

Before coming to Noe Valley, Fiel spent six years as a teacher librarian for various pre-kindergarten to eighth-grade schools in the Bay Area. Born and raised in San Francisco, she says she's been a fan of the public library system since she was a kid visiting the Bernal Heights Library.

She looks forward to connecting with neighborhood tweens and teens and adding library programs that will be appealing to them. Among the events she has planned at the Noe Library for fifth- to eighth-graders is a four-week "Mode to Code" course, covering AI, coding, and websites, on Mondays, March 3, 10, 17, and 24, from 4 to 5 p.m.

The library will also host a workshop, "Fun with Ozobots," teaching coding that can control the Ozobot smart robot, on Tuesday, March 18, from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

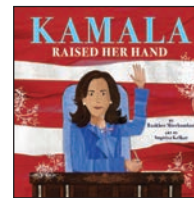
Meanwhile, take a look at Fiel's lists of Teen Fiction and eBooks on this page, along with the selection of children's and adult books and movies offered by Adult Services Librarian Amy Lewis, Children's Librarian Madeleine Felder, and Noe Valley Branch Manager Mary Fobbs-Guillory. (*Voice* bookworm Karol Barske writes the book descriptions.)

To put books or other materials on hold, call 415-355-5707 or visit the website SFPL.org or get the library's mobile app at <https://sfpl.org/services/mobile-resources/library-catalog-mobile-apps/>.

Or you might prefer to climb the marble stairs at 451 Jersey St. and peruse the books on the shelves. Remember to wave hi at the librarians.

Also remember to go elsewhere on Presidents' Day, Feb. 17. All San Francisco public libraries will be closed.

—Sally Smith, editor/co-publisher, *Noe Valley Voice*



TEEN EBOOKS

In **Midnights With You** by Clare Osongco, two teens with difficult families bond over driving lessons. Ages 12-17. The graphic novel **Greater Secrets**, by Ananth Hirsh and Tess Stone, follows Maya, gifted with the ability to see a mysterious light, on a quest to find her missing sister. Ages 12-17.

In **The Love Interest** by Helen Comerford, a girl exposes the superhero industrial complex while searching for her mom, who's been missing for 10 years. Ages 12-17.

The rom-com **Flopping in a Winter Wonderland** by Jason June is set in a year-round Christmas theme park. Ages 14-17. Best friends turned rivals expose the guy they've both been dating, in **Rani Choudhury Must Die** by Adiba Jajirdar. Ages 14-18.

ADULT FICTION

In Haruki Murakami's **The City and Its Uncertain Walls**, a man searches for his lost love in Tokyo and a small mountain town. A dying father recounts tales of his youth, in **Melville** by Rodrigo Fresan.

Our Evenings, a novel by Alan Hollinghurst, follows the odyssey of a Burmese-born boy who becomes an actor in London.

Over the course of two decades, a younger sister learns to cope with mental illness, in **Shred Sisters** by Betsy Lerner.

ADULT NONFICTION

Pulitzer Prize winner Bob Woodward explores three conflicts: Ukraine, the Middle East, and the struggle for the American presidency, in **War**.

Roman Year, a memoir by André Aciman, author of *Call Me by Your Name*, recalls his adolescent years.

Nicola Lamb includes 100 reliable recipes in **Sift: The Elements of Great Baking**. Lemurs and seahorses are among the 25 **Vanishing Treasures: A Bestiary of Extraordinary Endangered Creatures** by Katherine Rundell.

ADULT EBOOKS

In **Abortion: Our Bodies, Their Lies, and the Truths We Use to Win**, Jessica Valenti confronts the conservative assault on women's freedom.

Nghi Vo's novel **The City in Glass** unearths a fallen city that the demon Vitrine and her angel must decide whether to save.

The death of a young girl working as a maid is investigated in **Clean**, a novel by Alia Trabucco Zerán.

In **The Message**, Ta-Nehisi Coates shows how our reporting of myths distorts our realities.

ADULT DVDS/BLU-RAY

The Apprentice, a 2024 docudrama about the rise of Donald Trump, stars Sebastian Stan and Jeremy Strong.

Conclave, a 2024 conspiracy thriller about the selection of a new pope, features Ralph Fiennes and Stanley Tucci.

Goebbels and the Führer, a 2024 bio pic of the Nazi propaganda minister (played by Robert Stadlober), is directed by Joachim Lang.

High Tide is a 2024 drama about a Brazilian immigrant who near the end of his visa meets someone at a "Boy Beach" in Provincetown, Mass.

The Outrun (2024), about a woman who returns home to Scotland to recover from alcoholism, stars Saoirse Ronan.



Annotations by *Voice* bookworm Karol Barske

LIBRARY EVENTS

The **Noe Valley Knitting Circle** meets on Saturdays, Feb. 1 and March 1, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The library has supplies to practice on, but bring your own yarn and needles if you have a special project in mind.

Children and their families can paint **Valentine Hearts**, with salt and watercolors, on Saturday, Feb. 1, 3 to 4 p.m.

A **Button-Making** workshop celebrates **Black History Month**, on Monday, Feb. 3, from 4 to 5 p.m.

Storytimes are on Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m., Feb. 6, 13, 20 and 27. Space is limited; tickets available at the reference desk beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Ages 6 and older can take on the "Big Bilder" system to make cardboard forts, on Friday, Feb. 7, from 3 to 4 p.m.

Master Gardener Lisa Erdos discusses **Growing Orchids** in Bay Area climates, on Saturday, Feb. 8, from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Meet at the library for a City Guides **Walking Tour** exploring historic sites in Noe Valley, on Saturdays, Feb. 8 and 23, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Space is limited; registration required.

Teens 10 to 18 are invited to use library resources (including snacks) at a **Homework Hangout**, on Monday, Feb. 10, from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Get drop-in **Tech Help** from the library staff at the Noe Valley Library, on Monday, Feb. 10, from 2 to 3 p.m. 451 Jersey. 355-5707; sfpl.org

Family **LEGO and Board Game Night** is set for Tuesday, Feb. 11, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

All ages are invited to **Paint Watercolors** while listening to Nikki Giovanni's poetry, on Wednesday, Feb. 12, from 4 to 5 p.m. Space is limited: first come, first serve.

The Noe Library screens the 2022 biopic film **Whitney Houston: I Wanna Dance With Somebody**, on Friday, Feb. 14, from 2 to 4:30 p.m.

Celebrate African American women in STEM at a showing of the 2016 film **Hidden Figures**, followed by a space-themed craft, on Saturday, Feb. 15, from 2 to 5 p.m.

Use your own images to make personal pins in a **Button-Making** workshop, geared for ages 10 to 18, on Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 4 to 5 p.m.

The **Noe Valley Book Club** discusses **North Woods** by Daniel Mason on Wednesday, Feb. 19, from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. Copies are held at the circulation desk for checkout.

The **Short Stack Book Club** considers **The Three of Us** by Ore Agbaje-Williams on Friday, Feb. 21, from 3 to 4 p.m. Copies are available at the desk.

Hear a presentation on **Buried Ships** during the San Francisco Gold Rush on Saturday, Feb. 22, from 2 to 3 p.m.

Unique Derique plays **Hambone Body Music** at a show for kids and families Saturday, Feb. 22, from 4 to 5 p.m.

A **Watercolor-Painting** workshop, in partnership with the Museum of the African Diaspora, takes inspiration from the works of William H. Johnson, Monday, Feb. 24, 4 to 5 p.m.

Kids and their families are invited to **Pajama Storytime**, on Thursday, Feb. 27, from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Space is limited to 20 children; reservations required: 415- 355-5707.

All events take place at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Library, 451 Jersey St. For information, call 415-355-5707 or visit sfpl.org. All library programs are available for drop-in unless they say reservations are required.

BRANCH HOURS

Noe Valley/Sally Brunn Branch Library 451 Jersey St., 355-5707						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	11-6	10-8	12-8	10-6	1-6	10-6
Mission Branch Library 1234 Valencia St., 355-2800						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1-5	10-6	10-8	10-8	10-8	1-6	10-6

MORE GROUPS TO JOIN

Action SF, the National Movement in Your Neighborhood

https://m.facebook.com/ActionSFactivism/
 Website: <http://www.action-sf.com/>
 Email: ActionSFTeam@gmail.com
 Meetings: Usually First Tuesdays, Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey. Feb. 4, 6-7:30 p.m.

Al-Anon Noe Valley

Contact: 834-9940; office@al-anonsf.org
 Meetings: Wednesdays, 7:30-9 p.m., St. Philip Church, 725 Diamond St. (park on Elizabeth Street side; enter on 24th Street).
 Thursdays, 7:15-8:30 p.m. Bethany UMC, 1270 Sanchez St. (enter through Clipper Street side door and go up the stairs)

Castro Merchants

Contacts: 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

Comerford Greenway

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

Diamond Heights Community Association

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

Dolores Heights Improvement Club

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

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)

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

Eureka Valley Neighborhood Assn.

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

Fair Oaks Neighbors

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

Friends of Billy Goat Hill

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

Friends of Dolores Park Playground

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

Friends of Christopher Park

Contact: Brynna McNulty, 818-744-4230
 Email: friendsofchristopherpark@gmail.com
 Website: FriendsofChristopherPark.org

Festival Friends of Glen Canyon Park

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

Friends of Noe Courts Playground

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

Friends of Noe Valley (FNV)

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

Friends of Slow Sanchez

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

Friends of Upper Noe Recreation Center

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

Friends of Upper Noe Dog Owners Group (FUNDG)

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

Glen Park Association

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

Juri Commoners

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

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

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

Noe Neighborhood Council

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

Noe Valley Association—24th Street Community Benefit District

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

Noe Valley Democratic Club

Contact: 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.; 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: Usually last Thursdays, Doggy Style, 3927 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@yahoo.com

Noe Walks

Contact: Chris Nanda
 Email: christopher.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](https://www.facebook.com/ProgressNoeValley)
 Email: progressnoe@gmail.com
 Website: progressnoe.com
 Meetings: Check Facebook page for current meeting and event schedule.

San Francisco NERT (Neighborhood Emergency Response Team)

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

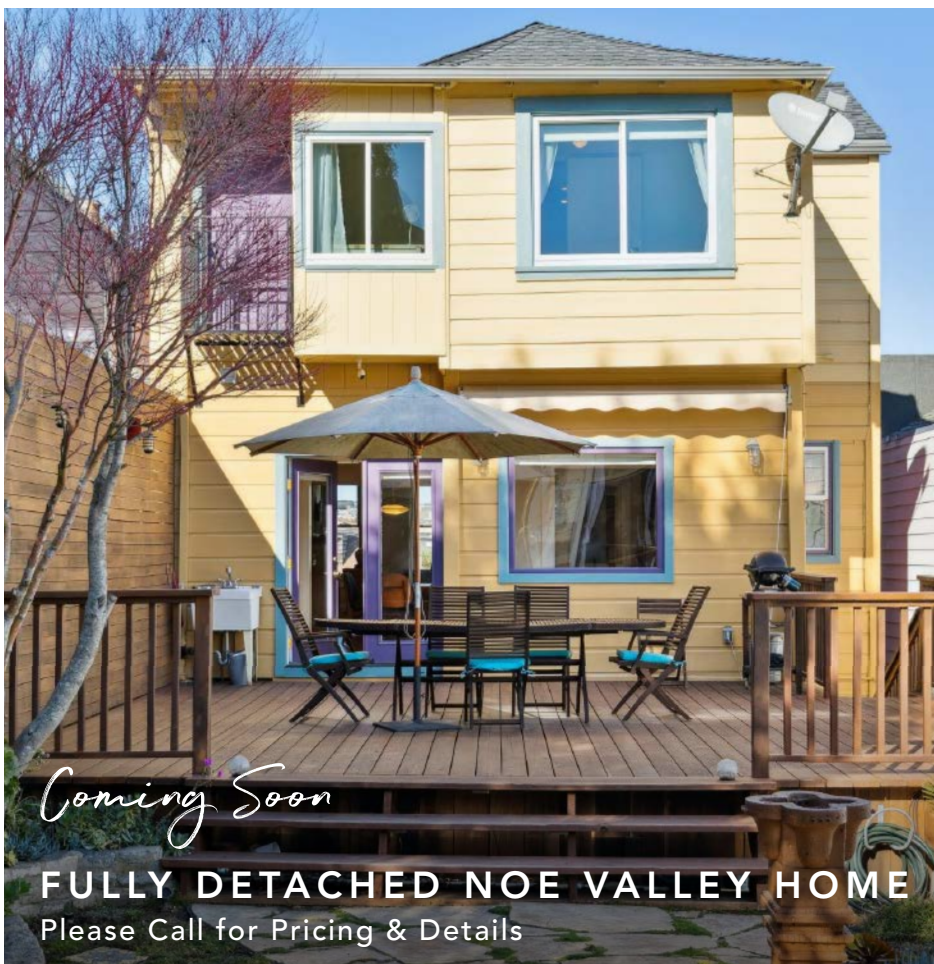
Upper Noe Merchants

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

Upper Noe Neighbors

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

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



corcoran

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We offer a combined 40+ years of experience representing Buyers and Sellers. We have successfully navigated every kind of market in Noe Valley and beyond, and would be delighted to share our expertise with you!

and now for the RUMORS behind the news

Get Back

By Mazook

I HAD A GREAT VACATION: I really enjoyed reading the January issue of the *Voice*. The first thing I noticed, on page 1, was a wonderful photo of Elizabeth Dekker, the artist and Art Haus gallery owner, wearing a classic American denim jacket made by Noe Valley clothes designer Basil Racuk.

I also saw that co-publisher Jack Tipple had put in a small photo of Sutro Tower in the bottom right corner. It looked like it was taken from almost the same angle as the miniature, hand-drawn Sutro Tower that appears in the *Voice* logo at the top of the page. Then, turning to the column at left, I saw the bold headline “Noe Valley 2025.” My eyes scrolled down, and there it was, a question asking, “¿Dónde Está Mazook?”

Well, I am back!

Like most of the *Voice* reporters, I do not appear in January and August, since we, along with editor and co-publisher Sally Smith, go on vacation. We put down our notepads.

But Noe Valley keeps on making news.



DRIVING US CRAZY: Parking in December was challenging, to say the least. And January was no better, as work crews fixed the pipes under 24th Street on the blocks from Noe to Fair Oaks Street.

Lots of all-day and all-night No Parking signs were posted up and down the street. After repairing the sewers, workers were creating new yellow accessible crosswalks at every corner.

Detour signs popped up everywhere, blocking 24th and sending us from Sanchez to Jersey and Elizabeth streets, only to find more detours. Geez!

Motorists will be seeing the ominous red signs for a while (see Short Takes on page 15 for construction details). Some signs warned No Parking Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Note the parklet in front of Just for Fun on 24th near Noe has been removed to make way for repaving, as has the one in front of Mamahuhu across the street (3991 24th). This freed up two parking spaces, for the time being.

Repaving our main drag will consume at least the rest of February. (To read about the two construction projects in Downtown Noe Valley, go to this month's Short Takes on page 13.)

But starting in March, the real parking problem will be the state's Daylighting Law (AB425), passed in 2023. The statute prohibits parking within 20 feet of the vehicle approach of any crosswalk—red marked or unmarked.

The law is to protect pedestrians. If you are a driver approaching an intersection, a parked car or truck on the right corner could block your view of someone stepping off the sidewalk and into the crosswalk. So now no one can park within 20 feet of the corner.

The new law went into effect Jan. 1, 2025. At first, the SFMTA gave violators warning tickets. But they'll start tagging cars with a \$40 ticket starting March 1.

The key phrase to remember as you search for a parking place is don't park within “20 feet of the vehicle approach” of a crosswalk, about the length of your basic sedan. Quite simply, if you are in a lane going up or down the street, as you near an intersection, you can't park on your right side approaching the intersec-

tion. Got it? Hooray!

Inevitably, there will be two kinds of drivers in California: those who get it and those who don't.



WINDOW DRESSING: It was a great Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwanzaa season in Downtown Noe Valley. The big event was the contest sponsored by the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association for those merchants who created special displays in their windows for the holidays.

The judges for the Dec. 17 awarding of prizes were a dozen San Francisco luminaries, including Mayor London Breed, District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman, former supervisor and our State Senator Scott Wiener, television news personalities Reggie Aqui and Lyanne Melendez from ABC Channel 7, and a host of neighborhood personalities.

The winners and runners-up in each of three categories were:

—Most Elaborate, judged for their festive nature, artistic flair, and wow factor: **When Modern Was** (4001 24th); Terrasol (1307 Castro).

—Most San Francisco, judged for their nod to the city's unique personality: **Perfectly Seasoned** (4017 24th); Running Wylder (1354 Castro).

—Funniest, judged for making you smile: **Wink SF** (4005 24th); Logopedia (4156 24th).

Congrats to all of the participating merchants.

Meanwhile, check out the Valentine's Day display at When Modern Was. Owner Dona Taylor has created another winner at 24th and Noe. The visual delight was designed by Simon Pearce of the Terrasol gift shop (1307 Castro).



POLICE AND CITY BRASS: Last month, on Jan. 13, there was a Town Hall at the Noe Valley Ministry on Sanchez Street, attended by our two police captains (Amy Hurwitz from Ingleside and Liza Johansen from Mission SFPD) and Sam Dodge, director of Street Response, which coordinates services for people without homes or in distress on the streets of San Francisco. Also, SF District Attorney Brooke Jenkins was there.

The meeting's moderator was Rafael Mandelman, and the topics were the SFPD's response to retail and residential crime in the city. Ingleside covers Noe Valley south of Cesar Chavez, and Mission Station has Noe Valley to the north in its jurisdiction.

Jenkins explained that in prosecutions these days at the Hall of Justice, the judge is compelled by state law to release those defendants pending trial, with generally no bail. She was happy, though, that the penalties for drug and theft crimes were increased by the passage of Prop. 36 in the November election. Statewide, it passed with 68 percent approval (Noe Valley yes votes were 57 percent). Jenkins said she had already used the new rules to file felony charges on repeat offenders, but they might turn into diversions. “When we [San Franciscans] get on juries, we're the same liberals,” and people will be diverted into programs if possible.

Ingleside Capt. Hurwitz said some gangs involved in retail theft were part of national fencing operations. When the SFPD busts someone and uncovers a pile of pharmaceuticals, “We're getting stuff from Missouri,” she said. But due to undercover officers checking on local businesses, “crime is dropping,” she said. “Sometimes it's hard for them to find someone stealing.” Hurwitz also told the audience, “You're doing a fantastic job,” alerting police, and encouraged everyone to keep reporting problems.

Johansen agreed and pleaded with people to email her with any issue:



Rafael Mandelman relaxes after a Jan. 13 town hall on public safety. Though he faces big challenges, he is hopeful about what's ahead. His peers just elected him president of the Board of Supervisors, in a unanimous vote. He is the first prez from District 8 and the first LGBTQ+ person to serve as board president in 20 years. Photo by Sally Smith

SFPDMissionStation@sfgov.org. Both captains stressed the need for more officers, but they told those assembled to show urgency when they called 9-1-1. Don't hesitate to “say you're afraid!” if you've seen a theft or had a break-in.

The officers divulged the number for cell phone users to call SF Police Dispatch: 415-553-8090. Finally, they asked people to join the force. “It's actually a great job,” a way to help people, they said.

Hurwitz is hoping to increase pedestrian safety (and slow traffic) by allowing one of her officers to dress up like a chicken on occasion and walk across the street (in the crosswalk, of course).

At the beginning of the meeting, Rafael Mandelman informed the 150 or so attendees of some breaking news. He had been elected president of the SF Board of Supervisors. FYI, it was the first time a board president had come from our District 8. Congrats to you, Rafael!



SNAPPING UP CHOKES: The Noe Valley Town Square Farmers Market was quite busy in January. I asked the three original vendors (from more than 20 years ago) from our wonderful market what we should be looking forward to this month.

Ravyn Bewley of Tomatero Organic Farm says the new harvest will bring great sweet sprouts, and Brussels sprouts, broccolini, and winter squash. She added, “Keep your eyes out for more artichokes, which are being harvested.” They sold all too fast when they put them out the second Saturday in January. I got four artichokes, took them home and boiled them, and they were great. I wish I had doubled my order and hope more boxes of these super large “chokes” arrive in February.

Twin Girls Farm, according to Jimmy Egoian, “will be offering Marcotte, Clementine, and Mandarin oranges and some great Cara Cara navel oranges, and my favorite Moro blood oranges.” He also said the Oro Blanco grapefruit “are sweet, acidic, and super juicy this year.”

And finally, Herr Family Farm, according to Kua Herr, is “having very good harvests since the beginning of 2025.” He says my favorite farm-fresh green garlic is great this year, as are the red and white onions and shallots. “We are also having great luck with our purple vegetables, including Napa cabbage, purple haze carrots, and deep purple cauliflower.”



FUN, SQUARED: In other Town Square news, about a hundred people showed up on Sunday, Jan. 26, for Noe Valley Bingo and Game Day. Yes, Noe Valley bingo was back, with fabulous prizes from Easy-Breezy, Banan, Martha & Bros.,

and Noe Valley Books. Plus, they put out board games, including chess, checkers, Jenga, corn hole toss, Scrabble, and Connect 4.

Of course, I went to play bingo. That was total fun! (Fun especially because I won.) My prize was a gift card from Banan, the frozen treat store at 3862 24th St.

Upcoming in the Town Square, don't miss the Super Bowl party on Sunday, Feb. 9, when the Kansas City Chiefs play the Philadelphia Eagles. It was set to be shown on a Jumbotron TV screen. And don't forget to bring your lawn chairs.

According to Town Square manager Leslie Crawford, pizza from Haystack, along with other food items, was to be available for purchase, plus wine and beer. Haystack was designing a Super Bowl menu for the event.



SHORT SHRIFTS: Iron & Mettle, a women's strength training gym, located at 3769 24th St., has outgrown its large space and now has rented more space up the street at 3920 24th St. See our story on joining the resistance (training), page 1.

I was happy to see that the Noe Valley branch of the Bank of America has once again remodeled its interior with new offices for the staff. It will please customers that the bank has added a window for a second teller to assist you in your deposits and withdrawals.



UDACHI, ANYA! Chef Anya El-Wattar shut down her famed Russian-themed restaurant in Noe Valley last March, but she's staying in the spotlight. The former owner of Birch & Rye on Castro Street is one of 15 international contestants vying on Season 22 of Top Chef for a \$250,000 prize. The show airs March 13 on Bravo.

El-Wattar opened her upscale eatery in February 2022, the same month Russia invaded Ukraine. The restaurant was hugely popular at first, but El-Wattar said it became “unsustainable” the second year to keep prices affordable while working with “labor-intensive techniques and using premium ingredients.”



KUDOS GO OUT to Sam Gabel, who was featured in a Jan. 17 story on SFGate by reporter Nico Madrigal-Yankowski. Gabel is the Noe Valley-born rapper who goes by the moniker “Professa Gabel.” He is the son of the late activist Peter Gabel and Gabel's life-long partner, Lisa Jaicks.

Writes Madrigal-Yankowski, “Now 29, [Sam Gabel] started rapping when he was around 12 years old, about the same time he started going to Martha & Bros. Coffee Company on 24th Street every single day of [his] life.”

The story continues: “He recently sought the dining room of North Beach's iconic Original Joe's for what would become the unlikely set of his latest music video. Staying on brand, Gabel filmed ‘Wine Tasting,’ the debut single from his upcoming album.” Sam has released 10 albums so far in his short career.

I often see Sam Gabel at Martha's ordering his usual strawberry frappé and going outside and sitting with his mom. I always think of his dad, wishing I could tell him “everything is great with your family.” The song produced at Original Joe's was produced by rapper-producer Adeyemi and features fellow rapper Ian Kelly. The album will be released on March 11.



AND THE BEAT GOES ON. Happy Valentine's Day to you and yours. Ciao for now. ■



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