

RETAIL REPORT

Moving on down to Union Street

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Keeping the wind beneath her wings

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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ JUNE 2010



'We're Here to Help, Not Just to Arrest You'

New captain brings a new style to Northern Station

By DONNA GILLESPIE

ANN MANNIX, who recently stepped up to take charge as captain of the San Francisco Police Department's Northern Station on Fillmore Street — which covers much of the neighborhood — never dreamed of becoming a cop when she was growing up.

But through a circuitous route, after jobs as a teacher's aide and manager of a Toys R Us store, the San Francisco native joined the force in 1986 as a patrol officer at Park Station. When she took over as Northern's captain late last year, she quickly found out that the Fillmore is not like any other part of the city.

"This area has so many spontaneous events — both demonstrations and planned events. There are festivals nearly every weekend," she says, noting that the Fillmore Jazz Festival, Japantown's Cherry Blossom Festival and numerous street fairs all require a strong police presence. "Also, gang issues are more prevalent here."

Mannix says the most common crimes in the neighborhood are street robberies and auto break-ins, which frequently occur in dark areas shielded by trees. Often thieves will break the window of a locked car with a spark plug, a common burglary tool.

"Though opinion is divided on this, some say it's better not to lock your car, as long as you've got nothing in it," she says — unless it's a Toyota Camry or Honda Accord, which are prime targets for theft.

Street robbers, she warns, "will take i-anything — your iPhone, your laptop, your iPod."

Mannix is that rare breed: a fourth-generation San Franciscan. She attended George Washington High School, then went on to Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, where she graduated with a degree in retail management. After working as a dispatcher for campus security at Loyola, she held jobs in retail that just didn't satisfy her.

One insider's suggestion resonated. "My brother was a cop," Mannix says. "And he told me I should take the test."

She passed — and has never looked back.

TO PAGE 3 ►

"I know a lot of women who did have negative experiences. I didn't. I've always been one of the guys. Give me a hard time — I give it right back."

— CAPTAIN ANN MANNIX

PHOTOGRAPH BY KATHI O'LEARY

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FURTHERMORE



THE PROMISED LAND — Among the work now under way at the Sherith Israel temple at California and Webster is the restoration of the stained glass windows. In the grand western window, "Moses Presenting the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel," Moses is standing on the granite rocks at the gateway to Yosemite, with Half Dome and El Capitan in the distance, rather than in Sinai. For this modern Moses, California is the Promised Land.

How a Temple Is Like a Church

IT WAS INTERESTING to read in the May *New Fillmore* that our good neighbor and friend, Temple Sherith Israel, has begun its retrofit and exterior wall repairs ["At Long Last, Temple Retrofit Begins"]. At Calvary Presbyterian Church, located at the corner of Fillmore and Jackson since 1902, we are also about to undergo repairs. Our exterior, like Sherith Israel's, is constructed of Colusa sandstone, which has similarly deteriorated from water damage underneath its painted surface. Calvary's retrofit was completed in 2002. But during the summer months, we will be repairing a section of the exterior walls of Calvary along Jackson Street, which will require scaffolding and a protective wrapping as workers perform a sort of chemical peel of the sandstone, followed by patching and re-coating with a breathable material. The work will not disturb our neighbors or

affect activities inside the church. And Calvary will still host its annual open house with tours and organ concerts during the Fillmore Jazz Festival over the Fourth of July weekend. Another tie Calvary has with the temple is that our sanctuary has been the site for Sherith Israel's Yam Kippur services since 2005, while the use of their building has been limited as they await their retrofit. It has been an amusing sight to see passersby on Fillmore Street looking confused as people streamed out of our sanctuary wearing yarmulkes. This interfaith partnership goes back a long way. Immediately following the 1906 earthquake — which Calvary withstood with only minimal damage — our church became the temporary home for St. Luke's Episcopal, Old First Presbyterian and Temple Emanuel, along with many community groups. — JOE BEYER

THE NEW FILLMORE

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Connecting the neighborhood

Every month, 20,000 copies of the New Fillmore are delivered to homes and businesses in the Fillmore, Pacific Heights and Japantown. We thank you for your support and encouragement and welcome your ideas and suggestions.

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■ A-TWITTER

In keeping with these digital times, Northern Station Captain Ann Mannix frequently issues updates on Twitter under northernstation. Some sample tweets from recent weeks:

"that robbery guy, a male, black hoodie, gun, hit two more limes last night between 8-10pm, hayes/ masonic & geary/baker..."

Muni don't sit near the door, the bad guys are grabbing cell phones and running off the bus... make yourself less of a target!

reading readiness event — reptiles, music, reading, art... pretty cool, kids had fun

someone asked me why don't cops smile, i asked that person do you smile at cops? we don't get enough smiles, so smile and we WILL smile back

several more street robberies over the weekend, the african american male, black hoodie, with gun hit again 10 pm geary/laguna ... be aware

just made two serious warrant arrests of people panhandling on the median on van ness... never know who you're giving a buck to???

did some work on bay to breakers today, shaping up to be a fun event: don't drink too much

violent crime stats are down citywide and especially in the northern district

If your stuff gets stolen look for it on craigslist or ebay ...

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

New Captain Never Dreamed of Being a Cop

▶ FROM PAGE ONE

"I think it's something I was meant for. I like being physical," says Mannix, an avid basketball player. And she's suited in other ways as well: She has an imposing physical presence, standing nearly 6 feet tall and radiating self-confidence.

Another perk of the job: "It's great not to have to figure out what I'm going to wear in the morning," she says. She's now logged nearly 24 years with the SFPD. After six years at Park Station, Mannix was restless for a new challenge and applied for the police department's SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team.

San Francisco's SWAT division carries out coordinated raids along with agencies such as the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Administration. "I was the only woman to make it onto our SWAT team," Mannix says of her two-year stint there. "The camaraderie was the fun part. We were always looking for new ways to get our guys out of trouble."

Mannix's promotion to sergeant came soon after — while she was pregnant — so she was placed in the bureau responsible for issuing entertainment permits. Today, she has three children, ages 8, 13 and 14.

Mannix ascended the next rung of the ladder in 2003, when she was promoted to lieutenant. Then in 2009 she took the test for captain, ranking number seven among 50 applicants. She was named captain of Northern Station last October.

Seven of the city's police captains are female. Only one woman, Commander Sandra Tong, in charge of Homeland Security, holds a rank above captain. "It's still



"I think it's something I was meant for."

— CAPTAIN ANN MANNIX

resistance while climbing through the ranks. "I know a lot of women who did have negative experiences. I didn't," she says. "I've always been one of the guys. Give me a hard time — I give it right back."

But she concedes she has had some advantages. "I'm tall," she says. "And I'm very athletic."

At the same time, she emanates warmth and seems genuinely to care about the people in her district. Recently, for example, merchants in the Fillmore Jazz District complained that a man living in his car was harming their businesses. He was cited in March when several witnesses saw him urinate into a cup and toss the contents into the street.

Mannix decided to find out more about him. "I brought out an officer with the psych liaison to talk with him," she says. "It turned out he had many ailments. He was gravely disabled. So we brought him to the VA hospital, which is where he is right now."

Mannix is also concerned about young people "in their most violence-prone years, 18 to 26." On her own time, she works one-on-one with local youth, counseling them in ways to live productive lives. "I like hanging out with kids and taking them under my wing," she says.

Of a stretch of the street where local kids are wont to loiter late into the night, she says, "I want to clean up the 1100 block of Fillmore and give kids somewhere else to go."

And the message she wants residents of all ages to know: "We're here to help, not just to arrest you."

male-dominated," Mannix says. "In this century, there should be more women. We are 51 percent of the population. But only 16 percent of police officers are women."

She believes the disparity comes down to the difficulties women face in finding child care in a career that demands 100 percent, with no parttime schedules or job sharing. But Mannix says she encountered little

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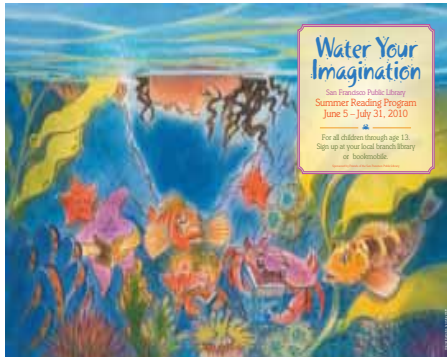


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CRIME WATCH

**Felony Warrant
 Van Ness Avenue and O'Farrell Street
 April 24, 2:09 a.m.**

Officers on patrol spotted a woman they knew to be a prostitute. The officers had prior knowledge that she was a resident of San Diego and that there was an outstanding warrant for her arrest out of Orange County. She was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

**Felony Warrant
 Eddy and Willow Streets
 April 24, 7:58 p.m.**

The Street Crimes Unit was looking for auto boosters when they spotted an individual walking down the street, methodically stopping at parked cars and surveying their interiors. Officers observed him until he began to leave the area. They then approached the suspect and asked him for his name and identification. When they ran a computer check, they learned there was a felony warrant for his arrest. The man was taken into custody.

**Robbery
 Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street
 April 26, 10:10 a.m.**

A woman went into Walgreens and took several cosmetic items from the shelves, which she stashed in her backpack. The loss prevention officer watched as she walked past several open registers. Just as the suspect was leaving the store, the officer stopped her and identified himself as store security. The woman struggled and tried to push past him. She then dashed back into the store and hid behind a counter. The security officer followed; he pleaded with the woman to return the items and leave. She jumped out and pushed him again, then produced a cell phone and called a friend. Police arrived shortly afterward and an officer took her into custody. She was charged with a "Phillips robbery," in which a thief fights with security to retain stolen property.

**Felony Violation
 O'Farrell Street and Van Ness Avenue
 May 3, 10 p.m.**

An officer spotted a man driving with extreme recklessness. He pulled the driver over. After searching the suspect, the officer found methamphetamine in the man's possession. A computer check revealed the driver had a suspended license. He was booked and taken to Northern Station.

**Fraud
 Post and Laguna Streets
 May 3, 6:58 p.m.**

Two officers were called to the site of a business where a man had attempted, multiple times, to pay with a counterfeit credit card. The man was arrested. He was

charged with burglary and fraudulent possession of a credit card.

**Felony Drug Violation
 Van Ness Avenue and Sutter Street
 May 5, 2:21 a.m.**

Officers on the alert for auto burglars noted a man who, upon seeing them, ducked between two parked cars. The officers stopped to investigate. The man told them he was buying cigarettes, pointing to a store that had been closed for hours. The officers asked him for identification. He appeared nervous as he took out a cardholder and quickly stuffed it back in his pocket, then said he had no ID on him. But the officer had spotted a California ID in the cardholder. The man produced it. Inside were several California ID cards — all with different names, but bearing the suspect's picture. Officers also found cocaine in the cardholder. The man was placed under arrest. Afterward they found several rocks of cocaine on him, as well as three cell phones and more than \$2,700 in cash. He was arrested for possession of drugs and for carrying multiple fraudulent IDs.

**Possession of Stolen Property
 Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street
 May 5, 10:08 p.m.**

Officers received a call from a pharmacist at Walgreens concerning a person who was attempting to fill a prescription with a stolen prescription pad. The suspect had accomplished this successfully at another Walgreens earlier in the day, so a photocopy of the prescription was faxed to all stores. Officers phoned the doctor who was named on the prescription. She informed them that her prescription pad had been stolen several weeks ago, and verified that she had not prescribed Oxycontin for this person, nor would she ever prescribe such a high number of pills. Officers arrested the woman and found another full prescription bottle of Oxycontin in her possession. She was also carrying a large sum of cash and was charged with possession of a controlled substance for sale and stolen property, and with forging a prescription.

**Auto Theft, Conspiracy
 Post and Steiner Streets
 May 8, 9 p.m.**

Officers responded to a call of an auto burglary in progress. The caller stated that one suspect was acting as a look-out while the other cut the plastic on a jeep to gain access to it. The man who attempted to gain entry then grabbed an item from the jeep and both men walked away. The officers, who had been given a description of the two suspects, located them not far from the scene. The witness identified the suspects, who were detained and transported to Northern Station.

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■ 'WHAT'S CUTE?'

My Boudoir blazed the trail to Union

The lingerie shop My Boudoir blazed the trail by moving from Fillmore to Union Street last November. The boutique, which opened at 2029 Fillmore in 1998, is a family operation run by mother



Geraldine Nuval-Weilbull and daughter Delliha Nuval. Inside its new tiny space at 2285 Union — which is half the size of the Fillmore location — the two have recreated the intimate setting of their former shop, even relocating the wall-sized harem mural by Teresa Moore, which adds to the exotic feel of the place.

Nuval says the space easily accommodates their small but exclusive offering of upscale lingerie that changes with the seasons. And they get good spillover foot traffic from Rose's Cafe, the popular Union Street eatery across the street. She also noted that the rents are "significantly lower" at either end of the main Union Street shopping hub, where their boutique sits.

"But I really miss Fillmore Street — there was so much going on there," she says. "And I can't believe what a big difference there is in what the clients buy. On Fillmore, shoppers liked well-made pieces in rich textures and fabrics. But here on Union Street, they're like: 'What's cute?'"

RETAIL REPORT

On Union, Twice the Space for the Same Rent

After a decade on Fillmore Street, Neja Cosmetics transforms itself down the hill

NEIGHBORS in search of Fillmore Street's famed make-up artist to the stars Nellie Muganda needn't look far. She's followed her muse — and a more favorable lease — down the hill to Union Street.

"I was always scared of coming down to Union Street because of the empty spaces and high rent," she says. But recent events converged to spur her move.

"You see why I flew the coop," she says, casting her eyes about the spacious new home of Neja Cosmetics Salon and Day Spa, her expanded and reinvented beauty business. The spot, at 2118 Union, is down a few steps from street level and is nestled between a women's clothing shop and a beauty store.

It is twice the size of her Fillmore location — yet the rent is the same. And the space needed surprisingly little work to be transformed from the wine cave it previously housed.

Still, Muganda is making it her own by adding new flooring, plants, warm wooden furniture and walls painted in rich shades of yellow, butterscotch and peach to transform her new location into the full service spa it is becoming. She is adding the finishing touches in preparation for her grand opening party on June 8.

The new spot easily holds the large array of lotions and potions that allow Muganda and her team of make-up artists to work their magic. It also boasts chairs for three hair stylists. And Muganda plans to offer spa manicures and pedicures by the end



"As an artist, I felt like I was stuffed in a duffel bag and couldn't come out."

— NELLIE MUGANDA, Neja Cosmetics

of the month — and, eventually, massages and facials in the spacious treatment rooms in the back.

All that wasn't possible at her former location at 1850 Fillmore, where the landlord limited the services she could offer to preclude competition with nearby businesses, which also rent from him. She

could offer no manicures, no pedicures, no hair cutting or coloring — only styling and cosmetics. Ultimately, it was stilling.

"As an artist, I felt like I was stuffed in a duffel bag and couldn't come out," she says.

She began looking for a new space a few months ago. "I really, really wanted to stay in the neighborhood," she says. "I invested 10 years on Fillmore Street — and it was my home."

The perfect solution seemed to present itself when the women's boutique Romi vacated the spot at 2512 Sacramento, just off Fillmore. But Muganda says that landlord's terms, too, were tough and untenable, requiring a 10-year lease, hefty rent and extensive and expensive remodeling to level the floors and make other structural improvements.

Muganda says there was another, more subtle limiting force on Fillmore: About 90 percent of her business, which is heavy on celebrities and fashion shoots, comes from outside the neighborhood. "But I wasn't getting any referrals from other businesses on the street," she says, with the exception of the Addison hair salon on Pine Street.

She hopes that will change on Union Street, where other merchants have been welcoming — and even cooperate to offer customers mutually beneficial goods and services, such as the Wedding Ring, which caters to marrying couples.

"But Fillmore Street is always going to be in me," she says. "After all, that was the place of my first store."

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UCSF Medical Center

The UCSF Medical Center at Mount Zion is proposing a new parking garage at 2420 Sutter Street near Divisadero that would serve patients, visitors, and the general public. Currently an empty lot, this site was the home of the San Francisco Center for Psychoanalysis (SFCP) until December 2007.

UCSF is negotiating with Urban Pacific Properties to construct the building, which would include approximately 230 parking spaces, as well as 10,000 square feet of educational space for SFCP. The building would have parking on two levels below ground and five levels above ground, with a smaller sixth level for SFCP classrooms, offices, and library.

An important part of this planning process is to gather community input on the initial building design concepts and to provide the opportunity for neighbors to ask questions and identify potential areas of concern.

Please join us at a UCSF community meeting to discuss this proposed project:

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Herbst Hall & Auditorium
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New Home Store Opens on Fillmore

'Inspirational boutique' showcases Danish contemporary line

HOME FURNISHING stores — which took a big hit during the last decade — are seeing a resurgence on Fillmore, especially in the block between Pine and Bush, home to Zinc Details, Design Within Reach, the Shade Store and newcomer Ruby Living Design.

This month the block gets something new in modern home design when BoConcept opens behind a dramatic black facade at 1928 Fillmore.

"We always had our eye on Fillmore," says Caroline Krogh-Jensen, who owns the store with her husband, Soren Krogh-Jensen.

The couple couldn't find sufficient space locally when they brought the contemporary Danish line of urban furnishings to just as the banking crisis unfolded and the economy went into free-fall.

"It was a difficult time," says Caroline Krogh-Jensen, "but so rewarding that we made it happen. Slowly but surely it got better."



A husband and wife team is bringing BoConcept — "a very clean line of Danish contemporary design" — to its first neighborhood store.

Even as the economy began to improve, though, they found the buyers they were seeking north of California Street still weren't making the trek south of Market.

"We came up with an innovative idea," says Krogh-Jensen. "We call it a BoConcept inspiration boutique." It's a neighborhood-sized setting with only a portion of the designs on display. "You get inspiration from a more limited selection," she says. But everything is nearby on a big touch screen — where their design consultants can enter measurements and drag and drop the full BoConcept line — and also at the showroom on Townsend.

The Fillmore store will offer a complimentary in-home consultation to determine a client's preferences and take

measurements, then create a design using BoConcept's own software. The smaller neighborhood store is a new approach for the company.

"We are the first one," says Krogh-Jensen. "I envision this store as one of the most innovative furniture stores in the city, if not the country."

She describes BoConcept's offerings as "a very clean line of Danish contemporary design" that fits both Victorian homes and urban lofts.

Soren Krogh-Jensen worked with BoConcept in his native Denmark. The company is well known there and throughout Europe, where it has hundreds of stores. He helped open the first BoConcept store in the U.S. 13 years ago in New Jer-

sey. That's where he met Caroline, who was then practicing law.

Eventually the company urged them to open their own store, and they brought the line to the West Coast. In addition to their SoMa store, there are showrooms in Santa Monica and San Diego.

"Our love was always with San Francisco," she says. "Every time we came here we fell in love more and more. And we thought the concept would fit best here."

She is confident they will fit well on Fillmore, too.

"It creates a corridor of furniture shops," Krogh-Jensen says. "We feel we perform better in that environment. These are all great people to be around. Yet we're very different than all of them."

Janis, Etta and a Sleek New Gallery

AS A KID, Cassandra Blackmore recalls going with her bohemian parents to the Fillmore Auditorium to see rocker Janis Joplin.

Later, as a struggling artist just arrived in Seattle, she sat listening to another Fillmore native, singer Etta James, when a photograph of Blackmore and her parents caught her eye. In a flash, inspiration struck. She removed the glass from the frame, painted a melancholy self-portrait, then shattered and reassembled the glass.

"It was broken and put back together — an allegory for my life at the time," she says.

It was also the defining moment of her artistic journey. In the ensuing 16 years, she has mastered the ability to paint in reverse on glass, turning her severe dyslexia into

an essential element of her art. Her glass paintings, shattered and reassembled like that first self-portrait, have been shown in galleries across the country and included in many prominent private and corporate collections.

Now that she's a successful artist, the Fillmore thread through her life has returned once again, with the opening of her own gallery at 1906 Fillmore Street. The impeccably designed storefront is already hung with her work. Blackmore continues to live and work in Seattle. Her Fillmore space will be open only by appointment, but she hopes to spend half of her time here. She's planning a grand opening bash on June 24.

To see her work, call 944-0057 or visit www.blackmorestudios.com.



Cassandra Blackmore's reverse paintings on glass are shattered and reassembled.

BALANCE

Yvonne Miller.

**Senior Clerk,
San Francisco Unified School District
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But these budget cuts don't just hurt workers—they hurt our schools, MUNI, health care—all of us. That's why I'm supporting a balanced approach to balancing the budget. That means not just cuts, but increasing revenue by closing corporate loopholes and asking banks, insurance companies, city visitors and downtown corporations to pay a fair share.

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Jazz, soul, blues, funk all on the June schedule

By ANTHONY TORRES

MALCOLM John "Mac" Rebennack Jr., aka **DR. JOHN**, "The Night Tripper," will be coming through Yoshi's June 4, 5 and 6 for what should be three great nights of Cajun-inflected blues, jazz and rock and roll.

A New Orleans native, he plays a unique blend of music that combines jazz with New Orleans-style rhythm and blues and voodoo religious ceremonies. Dr. John is perhaps best known for his 1973 hit, "Right Place, Wrong Time," but I always think of him in relation to the rich musical heritage exclusive to New Orleans and his associations with Professor Longhair, Art Neville, Joe Tex and Frankie Ford.

He has played with everybody — from Van Morrison, Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger to Allen Toussaint, the Meters and the Band.

Most recently, post-Hurricane Katrina, Dr. John was actively involved in fundraising concerts and efforts to keep the world's attention focused on what still needs to be done to help New Orleans come back. In 2008, he released the album *City That Care*



Lalah Hathaway, daughter of legendary soul singer Donny Hathaway, will present a series of Father's Day concerts this month.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN MANNION

Forgot, which deals with various aspects of post-Katrina New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. In 2009 it won the Grammy Award as "Best Contemporary Blues Album."

Dr. John is one of the all-time greats. Don't miss him.

Also coming to Yoshi's this month — on June 11, 12 and 13 — is the **LOWRIDER BAND**, a group whose members were originally part of the South Central Los Angeles group War. When they appeared at Yoshi's last year, they were great. The Lowriders include four of the five surviving original core members of the multi-platinum selling band: Harold Brown on trap drums, B. B. Dickerson on bass, Howard Scott on guitar and Lee Oskar on harmonica.

Having lost the legal right to use the name War in federal court in the mid-1990s, this group claims to be the rightful heirs of the sound that made their former band famous. If that funky sound still moves you on classic soul radio, this is a show you will love.

On June 18, 19 and 20, **LALAH HATHAWAY** is coming to Yoshi's. While she may not be familiar to many, she is a musical force under-recognized for far too long.

She is the daughter of Donny Hathaway, a legendary soul singer and musician who won a Grammy in 1973 for "Where Is the Love." He died far too young under mysterious circumstances, which were ultimately ruled a suicide. Lalah first started

writing music as a 10th grader and recorded her first album as a student at Berklee College of Music in 1990. She has collaborated with Mary J. Blige, the Wimers, Marcus Miller, Joe Sample and recently with Maurice White on the relaunched Stax Records label.

She is often compared to her father and characterized as continuing his vocal style. However, she has been criticized for not performing her father's songs, and has responded by stating that she doesn't feel the need to, choosing instead to create a space for herself. The space she has created is a smooth contemporary soul sound that is sure to please. Interestingly, her appearance is being billed as a celebration of Father's Day.

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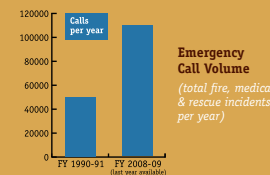
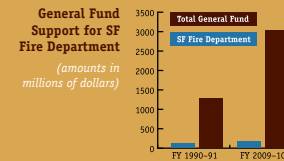
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Hotel Drisco: Luxe Local Guesthouse

Hiding in plain view atop Pacific Heights, and the soul of discretion

By CHRIS BARNETT

IF YOU'RE looking for a hideout to brainstorm the next Google, hammer out a multibillion dollar merger or tryst the night away, the Hotel Drisco on the hilltop corner at 2901 Pacific and Buchanan might fit your bill. A bastion of secrecy since its opening more than a century ago, there is scant history about the comings and goings of the owners and guests of the 43-room Pacific Heights luxury roost.

The spot's penchant for clandestine hospitality goes back to its founding in 1903. One version has it that an entrepreneur named Frank Drisco built the six-story boarding house that year to lure the steamer trunk set — global travelers who would prize the panoramic views of the bay, the city's emerging skyline and exclusive neighborhood. To capture that and name it, he called it the El Drisco. It sounded more worldly.

Another tale, which seems more credible given the clustered wealth of this



One tale says Frank Drisco was part of a group of powerful businessmen who ponied up to build a hideout for their mistresses.

gilded city at the turn of the 20th century, was passed along by a former hotel manager named Harold Ellison. In his telling, Frank Drisco was one of a group of powerful businessmen who ponied up to build a hideout for their mistresses. Each investor had a private suite and was served by

past. Dignified and courtly, he managed the late, 14-room Sherman House on Green Street before he took command of the El Drisco 10 years ago. Lespinette stayed on when San Francisco-based Joie de Vivre Hospitality took over operations in 2003. The property was renovated 1½ years ago, its third revamp in a decade.

Robert C. Pritiken, a former advertising agency chieftain who owned the 26-room Mansion Hotels — two attached Victorians on Sacramento Street — and no stranger to publicity, says he “vaguely thinks he almost bought” the El Drisco years ago.

“I was in the throes of battling the ‘bureaucrats’ over my existing hotels,” he says, whose clientele included Barbra Streisand, John F. Kennedy Jr., Liberace and countless other luminaries in the entertainment and political circles who wanted total privacy and gracious service that they couldn't get from the big hotels downtown.

Pritiken, known for performing a nightly magic show at The Mansions and playing a jagged tooth saw with a bow, didn't see a deal. The Drisco didn't have a restaurant, his hotels did.

“They were snooty and selling guest rooms. We were fun and funky and selling ghost rooms,” he says. “My property was, without question, haunted — a fact verified by some of the great demonologists of the world.” Pritiken, who waged war with City Attorney Louise Renne when he grafted his two Victorians without a permit, lost and sold them.

With the Sherman House and Pritiken's Mansions gone, the Hotel Drisco has no real competition in Pacific Heights

ornately costumed Chinese maids. That might explain why the facade is less than architecturally inspired. Drisco and his cohorts didn't want to attract attention.

Today's general manager Gerard Lespinette merely chuckles when asked about specifics of the Drisco's colorful, controversial



The facade is nondescript, distinguished only by the American and California flags. Inside, it's old world elegance.

for what is essentially a five-star bed and breakfast.

The facade is nondescript, distinguished only by the American and California flags. Inside, it's old world elegance and high-tech wizardry.

The small mahogany front desk resembles

a butler's station in an English country house. Opposite is a small but airy sitting room. The two massive libraries built by Little Rock, Arkansas, lawyer Ector Johnson, when he bought the hotel in 1944 are gone, but there's a DVD library with 150 free titles. And other furnishings and

amenities in the 48 rooms and suites rival and sometimes beat the pricey downtown hotels.

For example, high-speed Internet access is free in guestrooms. Voice mail is personalized. No charge for the safe, the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times* or the *Chronicle* delivered on request. There's a nightly wine reception at which guest vintners sometimes pour their favorites.

A breakfast served in the downstairs dining room is also on the house. Nice touches: The OJ is freshly squeezed, the croissants are light and buttery and the pastries are French.

Some other surprises, good and bad, include free passes to the Presidio YMCA for those who want more of a workout than the 24-hour fitness room can offer with its treadmill, Stairmaster, stationary bike and free weights. The business center, open limited hours, has a computer, but it comes at a price: \$6 for the first 20 minutes and \$10 for each half hour, keyboarding or online.

And the hotel has no parking valet, no garage, not even reserved spaces on the street. Drisco guests, like every other San Franciscan without a garage, have to scramble for street parking — and they must move their cars every two hours or risk a \$50 ticket. But concierge Marti Medina says the staff will pitch in and move cars when needed. And a Town Car is available weekday mornings to take business travelers to Union Square and the Financial District.

Rates range from \$169 to \$259 for a king-bedded room and from \$519 to \$609 for a two-bedroom suite, depending on the time of the week and year.

■ FAVORITE SPOTS

Breakfast on Fillmore through the years

At a May 5 memorial, longtime local resident Bill Shields (below) was eulogized as a kind, devoted and traditional soul by his son Will Shields: “He was the definition of a creature of habit. He liked root beer floats for dessert; Heaven forbid he was having lamb and there was no mint jelly, and his favorite meal to eat out was breakfast.”

“He started out going to LEE'S COFFEE SHOP on California. I don't know what he liked better: the food or the husband and wife owners who yelled at each other in Chinese across the restaurant. When they moved, it was the ROLLING PIN donut shop on the corner of California and Fillmore, where



he knew everyone and felt so comfortable. Then it was the CHESTNUT CAFE at Pine and Fillmore, one of the last strongholds on Fillmore before it became the five-star neighborhood. He loved the slow pace there and the personal interactions. Now it's the Grove, with laptops mandatory and free Wi-Fi. I think he went in there once, and that was enough.

“We live in a fast-paced world and Bill would be the first one to admit that he was passed up. But thank God for the LUCKY PENNY at Geary and Masonic. In his last year or so, he didn't get out much, but boy would he ever get excited about the morning special there, and that's exactly what he always ordered. He tried a breakfast place with my brother Jason on Haight Street once; my dad was not one to complain, but he told me he never wanted to go back. Basically if ‘pigs in a blanket’ weren't on the menu, he didn't want any part of it.”

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Sailing Solo

Jeanne Lacy loves sailing and living independently — and plans to keep doing both

By FRAN MORELAND JOHNS

CONTEMPLATING moving from her Cow Hollow home, Jeanne Lacy checked out retirement communities of all sorts — from medium range to posh — but couldn't find a fit. Some apartments seemed great, but she was unsure about group dining, or turned off by long narrow hallways, or vexed by one thing or another that didn't seem to work.

"I kept hoping I'd see one place that felt just right," she says, "and it didn't happen."

Then a friend brought Mary Moore Gaines, Rector Emeritus of St. James Episcopal Church and an activist in a variety of community causes, to a meeting of a small group to which Lacy belonged. Gaines talked about San Francisco Village, a community-based membership organization being developed as an alternative to retirement community living.

"I said, 'That's for me,'" Lacy recalls. "That was several years ago, when Gaines and a small group were launching plans for an aging-in-place organization patterned after the pioneering Beacon Hill Village in Boston. There was one other in California at the time, Avenidas in Palo Alto. If they could build such a support community in San Francisco, the group members reasoned, much of the city's rapidly growing

aging population could continue to live independently — exactly Jeanne Lacy's goal.

San Francisco Village would offer services in health and wellness, daily living, social and volunteer activities. For Lacy, the arrangement beckoned.

"They were talking about a *community*," she says. "When you reach the point where you can't get around as easily, being part of a community — people you know and trust who will keep in touch, will be able to look in on you and make sure you're okay — this will help those of us who want to stay in our own homes."

"I've been a member of San Francisco Village since it started in January 2009," she says. "The community hasn't fully materialized, but we're coming along."

Jeanne and her husband, Lyman, moved to San Francisco from Sacramento in 1980. They settled into an apartment in a four-unit building his family had built, then took it apart and rebuilt it. They'd lived in San Francisco for a year after they married, but raised their three daughters in Sacramento. Lacy says San Francisco felt like home. She has now lived in three of the four units in the building, and plans to stay put.

San Francisco Bay had been a weekend home away from home almost from the beginning of the Lacy family.



"Lyman had a friend who had a sailboat, and he got the bug, so we bought a boat," she recalls. "But I was worried about three little girls and a golden retriever." Early on, her doubts faded. "The more I learned about sailing, the more I thought 'This is pretty neat,'" she says. "I joined a group of women who sailed, and my confidence built pretty quickly."

The family spent every available weekend on the bay while the girls were growing up, and after the move to San Francisco, it became every available moment.

Lyman died in May 2001 following a

series of strokes that left him increasingly disabled and added "caregiver" to Jeanne's list of roles. "I was glad that his brain was never affected," she says. His mobility decidedly waned, but she would tug him in and out of cars and wheelchairs and they kept on the go.

"People would say, 'Oh, you're so good to him,' and I'd say, 'Wrong. I'm doing this for me.' I had to stay active," Lacy says, adding that after her husband died, "It took me quite a while to become a whole and individual person."

Though she sees San Francisco Village

'Caregiving' author appears June 15

Still an adventurous sailor at the age of 83, Jeanne Lacy (left) is a longtime member of "the Seagals," a group of about 20 women, some of whom learned to sail with their husbands, who now enjoy the camaraderie and relaxation of their weekly Wednesday sails together. "Men yell, which makes it hard to learn," says Lacy. "But women are patient and are just as good at sea."

Lacy and her love of sailing — and her involvement in San Francisco Village — are featured in a new book, *PASSAGES IN CAREGIVING*, by noted author Gail Sheehy. SF Village will host Sheehy, in conversation with Journalist Belva Davis, on June 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center at 3200 California Street. For more information about the event, visit www.sfvillage.org or call 387-1375.

In her book, Sheehy profiles Lacy, including her bout with a rare streptococcus infection, which spurred her to join San Francisco Village as a way of maintaining a healthy and helpful connection to others in the community.

Sheehy writes: "Sailing her 36-foot sloop on the bay was the one pleasure she allowed herself, weekly, during the 10-year stretch as the sole caregiver for her husband through a series of his strokes. Her beautiful face is crinkled like the water on a gusty day. 'When my husband died, I just kept on sailing,' she says, bringing her fist down on the steering wheel. 'I won't ever give it up.'"

"Jeanne is tall and regal, with a slight bend. 'I used to be very erect,' she tells me. 'I rode horses and played tennis for years, and those are hard on your spine. Mine has been compressing.' The only other sign of aging she noticed in her seventies was a pleasant surprise. When her hair turned white, her eyes turned blue. They are riveting."

as a work in progress — the organization has just hired Christabel Cheung as its first fulltime executive director — Lacy lists a variety of benefits it has already delivered: the "art of living" series hosted by Eva Auchincloss, a talk on brain fitness with SharpBrains CEO Alvaro Fernandez and a group on personal and community security hosted by Judy and Don Langley. Lacy hosted a series on finance, which was more sparsely attended than she had hoped, but part of the group's learning curve.

"One of the things the Village is doing — which I'm helping with — is calling

members once a month to find out what they are liking or not liking," she says.

The calls also serve as a way to check in on individual members. And that is what most appeals to Lacy. Her three daughters now live in Oregon, the California Sierra and Houston. She lives alone, and wants to keep living independently.

"When the time comes that I might need someone keeping check on me," she says, "I think the Village will be able to fill that need."

For more information about San Francisco Village, visit www.sfvillage.org.

■ FIRST PERSON

A Sunday Evening of Pampering

As a busy banking executive with a challenging travel schedule, it has taken me more than six months of living in the neighborhood to start really exploring and savoring the uniqueness and richness native San Franciscans and transplants rave about — including my aunt, who moved here from our hometown of Brooklyn more than 20 years ago, and urged me to move out from the Financial District.

After finally settling into a routine, a top priority was to find a nail spa meeting all of my requirements: ultra cleanliness, manicures and pedicures that lasted and flexible hours to meet the demands of my erratic schedule.

In truth, I was first attracted to LE CREME, at 1971 Sutter, just east of Fillmore, because I thought it was related to a spa with that name I used to frequent near Jackson Square. However, after treating myself to a couple of indulgent Sunday evenings of pampering there, I realized that only the name and decor were similar.

Last March, Le Creme was purchased by a new owner, Hen Nguyen, and although the shop looks familiar, Nguyen has enhanced it with a French antique motif — including an all-white interior, with charming rustic accents and lush, comfy sofas that conjure visions of blossoming flowers in the French countryside. "I want customers to feel as if they are getting a nail spa treatment at home," she says.

I was instantly impressed by the fact that each manicure and pedicure begins with nail instruments contained in a self-sealing sterilization pouch. Also, since frequenting Le Creme, I have not experienced any chipped nails; the technique of adding three coats of polish seems to give my manicures and pedicures added longevity.

A devotee of holistic medicine, I also appreciate that Le Creme uses natural oils such as lavender and eucalyptus, and no artificial nail enhancers.

I never feel rushed at Le Creme. The staff always spends sufficient time with me, ensuring that I am satisfied with the service. Also, after years of being forced to stick my fingers and toes under machines that are supposed to dry a manicure and pedicure, it is a nice treat to have someone actually fan my manicure and pedicure dry while I linger with a hot cup of tea or glass of refreshing lemon or cucumber water.

Le Creme is open until 7 p.m. on Sundays and offers other spa services such as waxing and threading — a technique using thread to remove hair that is not for the squeamish, I'm told. That means one-stop shopping and a guarantee that I can get into a Zen mood with a good amount of pampering before facing another jam-packed work week.

One of these Sundays I may even be brave enough to try threading.

— LISA R. MITCHELL

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3878 Jackson St	5	3.5	2		4/27/10	3,875,000	3,841,000
2775 Union St	4	4.5	2	4138	4/23/10	4,175,000	4,080,000
2350 Broadway	6	5.5	2		4/26/10	7,800,000	7,800,000

Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lots

1450 Post St #511	1	1	1	740	4/30/10	319,000	305,000
2281 Sutter St	3	1	1		5/11/10	350,000	330,000
2999 California St #46	1	1	0	600	4/16/10	370,000	355,000
2345 Jackson St #1	1	1	0	515	4/20/10	495,000	475,000
1521 Sutter St #503	1	1.5	1	757	5/11/10	630,000	607,500
2632 Fillmore St #2	1	1	1		5/4/10	595,000	610,000
1950 Gough St #102	1	1	0	900	5/4/10	699,000	615,000
560 Presidio Ave #5	1	1	1		5/4/10	675,000	675,000
29 Orben Pl	1	1	0		5/12/10	735,000	702,500
1895 Pacific Ave #305	1	1.5	1	1115	5/3/10	795,000	785,000
1880 Steiner St #101	2	2.5	1	1332	5/14/10	799,000	823,775
256 Presidio Ave #5	2	1	1		4/30/10	829,000	825,000
2237 Sutter St	3	2	1	2000	5/14/10	859,000	840,000
2200 Sacramento St #407	2	2	1	950	4/29/10	899,000	908,000
2047 Vallejo St	2	2	1	1324	5/4/10	999,950	915,000
1940 Sacramento St #6	2	1	1	700	5/5/10	949,000	960,000
2112 Pine St #B	2	2	1	1600	4/28/10	999,950	985,000
3480 Clay St	2	2	1	1638	5/11/10	1,100,000	1,100,000
3227 Steiner St	3	2	1	1760	5/3/10	1,195,000	1,175,000
2013 Pine St	3	2	1	2038	4/22/10	1,095,000	1,195,000
2715 Pine St	3	2	1		4/27/10	1,195,000	1,200,000
2201 Sacramento St #302	2	2	1	1550	5/7/10	1,250,000	1,225,000
3228 Clay St	3	2	1		4/30/10	1,395,000	1,400,000
2447 Jackson St	2	2	1	2200	5/12/10	1,495,000	1,465,000
3485 Washington St	4	2	0	2289	5/12/10	1,950,000	1,950,000
1901 Jackson St #2	6	5.5	6	5700	5/13/10	3,399,000	2,850,000

Sales up 20% this month

THE SPRING MARKET continues to thrive, with 38 closings during the past month — up 20 percent from the previous month. More properties are receiving early interest and going into contract quickly, in a few cases before they have been exposed to the broader market. One example is 2165 California, a 4,500 square foot house well priced at \$3.49 million that went into contract just four days after being listed. In the case of 3176 Washington, the home was in contract with a preemptive offer before the first broker tour or open house. Buyers who know what they want are not hesitating to step forward.

At the other end of the spectrum are several properties that have been on the market for a while and have now closed. The condo at 2047 Vallejo was originally listed in January at \$1.2 million. It recently closed at \$915,000 after 88 days on the market — more than 20 percent under the original asking price. A more extreme example is 2319 Washington. Originally listed in June 2009 at \$3 million, it finally closed at \$2.49 million after 269 days on the market. As inventory increases and the market becomes more active, value-driven buyers may finally be deciding that now is a good time to move into the market.

NEW LISTINGS: There has been a steady increase in new listings over the past couple of weeks, several especially notable. At 3573 Washington is a 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath 1940s home on a nice block of Presidio Heights well priced at \$3.5 million. If you're looking for a little country in the city, 2377 Filbert might be for you. It's a charming 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath shingled cottage that has been tastefully remodeled. Priced at \$2.4 million, it should get considerable attention.

— Data and commentary provided by JOHN FITZGERALD, a partner in the Byzantium Brokerage and an agent at Pacific Union. Contact him at jfitzgerald@pacunion.com or call 345-3034.

Meet Zephyr Pacific Heights' Top Producing Agents.



FRONT ROW: Mollie Poe (#1 Companywide Top Producer), Declan Hickey, Debbie Dells (Pacific Heights Top Producer), Steve Dells, Vicki Valandra, Darryl Honda. **MIDDLE ROW:** Wes Freas, Matthew Borland (Pacific Heights Managing Broker/Partner), Else Townsend, Susanna Townsend. **BACK ROW:** Tim Gullicksen, Anna Spathis, Julie Reber, Dennis Stavropoulos, Stephanie Johnson, Jane Mermelstein.



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