



New FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ FEBRUARY 2007



Elite Street

Painting by
KEN AUSTER

Southern California painter Ken Auster has a thing for San Francisco. Since he had his inaugural exhibition in the neighborhood a decade ago, he has gone on to win awards and plein-air painting competitions across the country. This month he returns to San Francisco — “a city that looks like a city,” he says — and to Fillmore Street, with an exhibition of recent paintings. His work is on view at the Thomas Reynolds Gallery at 2291 Pine Street beginning Saturday, February 3, with an opening reception for the artist from 4 to 6 p.m.

More Local Condos in the Works

By DON LANGLEY

A new crop of condominiums is sprouting in the neighborhood.

Two projects are in the works on Divisadero, and another on Broadway opposite St. Brigid's Church.

Developer Ernest McNabb plans approximately 80 condominium units at 2655 Bush Street, a site now occupied by the San Francisco Community Convalescent Hospital. McNabb said the hospital will close and be demolished, probably toward the end of the year.

City tax records show the building was purchased for \$6.4 million in October 2005 by an entity called 2655 Bush LLC, which belongs to McNabb. The city's

zoning maps show most of the site has a 40-foot height limit, with a 65-foot limit for a portion at the corner of Bush and Divisadero.

McNabb is also the developer of a 34-unit condominium project at 1650 Broadway. The site is currently a parking lot opposite St. Brigid's Church.

There, McNabb and his associates plan an 8-story, 80-foot high building with one- and two-bedroom units of 1,000 to 1,600 square feet and three-bedroom units up to 2,200 square feet. The facade of stone, delineated by zinc panels, will be a handsome addition to the neighborhood, McNabb said, adding that the plans are all within the city's building code.

TO PAGE 4 ▶



'Tain't so

Don't believe everything you read — like this plaque facing Lafayette Park, for instance. A new book solves the mystery.

PAGE 13

Fillmore Hardware



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This Month

IN & OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD



SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

‘IF THEY CAME FOR ME TODAY’
Art and Literature from the Japanese American Internment
February 8, 6 p.m., San Francisco Public Library

A series of programs is being held alongside an exhibition on the Japanese American Internment Project at the Main Library, which highlights the stories of local Japanese Americans whose lives were affected by internment during World War II. Above, a photograph from February 21, 1942, shows Genzo Nakhiro, carrying a Bible, his wife watching him go, as he is led away from their bakery on Webster Street in Japantown by a police inspector and an FBI agent. More information: www.sfpl.org or 557-4277

HEART HEALTH LECTURE SERIES
Thursdays in February, 6 to 8 p.m.
California Pacific Medical Center
2333 Buchanan Street

During American Heart Month, lectures and screenings will explore ways to keep your heart healthy. Registration required at 923-3155

LIFE LINE SCREENING
February 9 by appointment
St. Dominic’s Catholic Church
2390 Bush Street

Preventive screenings for stroke, aneurysm and arterial disease. More information: 800/636-0017

LOVERS LANE STROLL
February 13, Noon
Presidio Visitor Center

Enjoy a one-mile stroll on the historic route taken by soldiers when they left the Presidio’s main post to meet their loved ones. Reservations required. More information: 561-4323



PROGRAMS FOR SENIOR ADULTS
Tuesdays at 11 a.m.
Calvary Presbyterian Church
2515 Fillmore Street

Feb. 6 “Art With Elders” exhibit and talk
Feb. 13 “Recent Changes in the Presidio”
Feb. 20 Vocal favorites by mezzo-soprano Janet Campbell and others
Feb. 27 “Stroke Prevention”

The “Art With Elders” exhibit continues in the church’s education building through the month of February. It includes more than 50 works by residents of long-term care facilities, including Grace Ho, above. More information: 346-3832

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Proposal would limit demolitions

Demolishing homes, always a contentious issue in Pacific Heights, may be curtailed by a proposed ordinance that will come before the Planning Commission on February 8.

The ordinance would prohibit demolishing residential units unless conditional use authorization is granted for the replacement building.

Demolitions are often protested by residents who don't want to see the character of their neighborhood altered. They are joined by preservationists if the building has historical value.

Developers are often able to accomplish the demolition through two practices. One is to find an expert who will certify that the building is structurally unsound. The other is to apply for a series of permits for a major remodeling, known as serial permitting, which allows developers to remove a house completely or almost completely and replace it without filing for a demolition permit.

The Planning Commission's interest is primarily directed toward conserving affordable housing. Some of the policies it is developing would allow buildings valued at \$1.2 million or more — the majority of buildings in Pacific Heights — to be demolished without hearings.

Hospital moving children's services

All pediatric services of California Pacific Medical Center are now being moved to its California Street facilities.

The vacated space at its Buchanan Street location will be absorbed by surgery, intensive care and other services already there.

A hospital spokesman characterized it as "getting back to our roots, since the California campus is the old Women and Children's hospital."

Having everything under one roof will make it easier for patients who are undergoing complex procedures or need to see a number of different physicians, the spokesman said.

The newborn intensive care unit at the new facilities will provide an expanded range of care for premature babies in their first weeks of life.

Homeless Connect gets new volunteers

All managers at California Pacific Medical Center's local complex will take part this month in the Homeless Connect project, designed by the city to provide as many services as possible at one time and place to the homeless.

The idea is to demonstrate the importance of volunteer work to everyone at the hospital, a spokesman said.

The managers will be doing a wide variety of tasks, though most of them will be of the relatively unskilled variety. Some managers who are nurses or doctors may take on medical roles.

Paula Lykins, the hospital's community relations manager, has volunteered at many previous Homeless Connect sessions. The spokesman credited her with getting others on the hospital staff involved.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



Hamlin School students complete a natural fence to protect new lavender plants.

Don't Fence Them In
Hamlin School girls take on Lafayette Park project

PHOTOGRAPHS AND STORY
BY DON LANGLEY

A DOZEN STUDENTS from the Hamlin School chose Lafayette Park for their day of community service on January 10. Their task was to construct a decorative fence at the Washington-Gough corner to protect newly planted lavender from dogs.

Park supervisor Joe Figone showed them how to strip branches pruned from sycamore trees in the park, which were then used to build the fence.

Among the onlookers was Adrian Rojo, a city gardener who usually works at nearby Alta Plaza Park, plus several volunteers of the Friends of Lafayette Park and Erin Percival, who teaches math to the middle school girls.

After preparing the branches and building the fence, the girls stayed to do some weeding.

A hundred Spanish lavender plants had been put in the ground a few days before at the regular Friends of Lafayette Park workday on the first Saturday morning of the month. Friends President Kim Barnes said the Spanish lavender would be followed with French lavender at the steps facing Clay Street. Ultimately, different varieties of lavender will be planted at entrances all around the park.

Barnes said the Friends believe it is



Hannah Raymond-Cox trims what will become a fence railing.

especially important to have the entrances look inviting. She favors lavender because it requires little maintenance and resists drought. She also anticipates a great fragrance when the plants mature.

Barnes also said the park is getting a boost from Figone, who was assigned to this area only a month ago. She noted that when the four sycamore trees in the park needed pruning, he responded immediately with gardeners in tow. Those pruned branches were used for the fence.



Quince Tickner and Chase Hommeyer tie a cross branch to the fence post.

Japantown History Walk
Coming Soon

A SELF-GUIDED history walk through Japantown is being created now and will be completed by midyear.

The walk will be a tour of a 12-block area, outlined by 17 plaques that will relate 100 years of history and detail cultural aspects of Japantown.

Each plaque will include a map to guide people to other plaques spread over a 12-block area. They will be made of a porcelain enamel and will feature photographs as well as text.

Karen Kai, one of the researchers and writers for the project, said the plaques and the information they impart must work for readers and strollers on a number of different levels. She said she is trying to build depth into the text and is writing for different levels of interest. She acknowledged there are some people who may read only a paragraph and look at the pictures, but believes that others will delve more deeply into the area's history.

Kai said some of the larger plaques are needed to cover topics such as immigration, the influence of religious groups and especially the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

To draw attention to the history walk, a sculpture is planned for the median of Webster Street at Post.

The current mock-up depicts a folding fan 14 feet wide and 15 feet high. It was chosen as a symbol of Japanese culture and heritage partly because the folding fan was a Japanese invention.

The sculpture has not been approved by the San Francisco Art Commission, so its design is still tentative. Its width was dictated by a city requirement that it be at least three feet in from each edge of the 20-foot median.

Money for the project comes from Proposition 40, which designated \$1 million for cultural preservation to be divided among America's three surviving Japantowns.

The others are in San Jose and Los Angeles.

According to project designer Kaz Naganuma, the San Francisco project focuses on history because there is no local museum of Japanese history. In contrast, the project in the Los Angeles Japantown is based on art objects.

Pacific Heights Gets a Cathouse

Pet Camp, an animal boarding facility now operating in the Bayview district, plans to open a branch at 3233-37 Sacramento Street in the spring.

The branch will be exclusively for cats. Boarding dogs requires specific zoning.

The site will provide boarding for cats during the day and early evening, and will also be used for overnight stays. Virginia Donahue, one of the owners who will manage the new facility, said the average stay for a cat is a week.

The Sacramento Street location will accommodate 45 cats. Each will have its own space, with a window and a view of outside plantings. The cat condos will be individually vented to prevent the airborne transmission of diseases.

Rates for boarding will be \$25 per day. More information about the new project is available at www.petcamp.com or by calling 282-0700.

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■ CRIME WATCH

**Battery Investigation
Scott and Green Streets
January 1, 1:20 a.m.**

A building security guard observed a large group of people loitering, some of them urinating on a nearby building. The guard approached the group and chased off the majority of the loiterers, but three returned and began verbally taunting him. Fearing they were preparing for a physical attack, the guard called police.

While he was on the phone, several people in the group began throwing items at him. When one threw a bottle, the guard brought out mace and threatened to spray them if they did not stop. This had little effect, so he aimed the mace and sprayed. The officers who arrived at the scene supplied the suspects with water to wash the mace from their eyes. No one pressed charges.

**Auto Burglary
Eddy and Buchanan Streets
January 2, 3:14 p.m.**

A man discovered that someone had smashed the window of his truck and taken his laptop computer. He told police the truck had been parked in front of a construction site.

A short time later, not far from the site, three officers detained a young man carrying a laptop computer. The man who had complained of the theft positively identified the laptop as his by using passwords to open his files. The suspect was sent to the Community Assessment and Referral Center, a clearinghouse for juveniles who commit nonviolent crimes.

**Burglary
Linden and Buchanan Streets
January 6, 7:22 p.m.**

Housing security officers called the police to request assistance with a trespasser. The officers found the man inside the apartment building, and also discovered that one apartment had been burglarized. The suspect had taken a shower and was washing his clothes in the washing machine. He was arrested for burglary and booked at Northern Station.

**Robbery
Eddy and Laguna Streets
January 14, 6:33 p.m.**

A man and his son were walking past Jefferson Square Park when they were circled by a group of juveniles. The boys closed in, punching the two pedestrians and attempting to take the man's backpack. In the course of the scuffle, the son was hit on the head with a soda can. The father fought off the assailants. The son required medical treatment, so they went to the Emergency Communications Dispatch Center to summon assistance.

As police officers transported father and

son to the hospital, the father spotted three juveniles he identified as being involved in the incident. Officers ordered them to stop, but they fled into the apartments at Eddy and Laguna — and into the custody of another officer, who happened to be in the area. Because of their ages — all were 13 or younger — and because the father was unable to identify the exact role each played in the attack, the boys were released.

**Auto Burglary
Laguna and Jackson Streets
January 15, 1:30 p.m.**

Officers in plainclothes observed a man peering into cars. Because numerous auto burglaries had been reported in the area, the officers set up surveillance.

While they watched, the man smashed a car window and retrieved a black bag. As officers approached, the man fled but was quickly cornered. The man's only question for the officers was, "How long have you guys been watching me?" He was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

**Attempted Homicide
Van Ness Avenue and Bush Street
January 15, 10:53 p.m.**

Officers received a report that shots were being fired. At the scene, they found only a few scattered shell casings.

Then a witness approached them. He said he had seen a car and a van racing north on Van Ness. The car stopped at a red light. Suddenly the back door of the van flew open. Men jumped out and began shooting at the car. The driver of the car sped off, barreling the wrong way on a one-way street.

When he realized his mistake and turned around, the van came around the corner and the occupants opened fire again. The driver of the car took off in another direction. Only then did the witness realize he had been injured by gunfire. He was taken to San Francisco General.

**Burglary
Pine and Webster Streets
January 19, 11:36 a.m.**

A resident heard someone attempting to gain entry to her apartment. She then watched as the man tried other doors to residences on the street. She called the police. The man had already burglarized one residence. The witness provided police with a detailed description of the suspect.

Officers located a man who fit the description and tried to detain him, but the suspect bolted. Two officers tackled him and took him into custody. He claimed he owned the property he had with him.

The man whose apartment had been burglarized then arrived on the scene and identified the items as his. The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

More Local Condos in the Works

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Those plans are opposed by the residents of the building immediately to the west, who fear loss of light and privacy. The neighbor backing the property from Vallejo Street is also concerned about loss of light, although the buildings will be separated by open space on both lots.

The architect of both McNabb's projects, on Bush and on Broadway, is Warner Schmalz of Forum Design. Schmalz is also the architect of the condominiums nearing completion at 2525 California Street. Those units will be rented rather than sold, at least initially.

Another McNabb company, Rathnew Corp., bought St. Brigid's Church and planned to build condominiums on that site until the San Francisco Archdiocese asked the company to resell the building to an organization that agreed not to demolish the church. It was eventually sold to the

Academy of Art University.

In another neighborhood project, developers Ray Steffen and Charlie Castro are planning 12 condominium units on an L-shaped property — actually two adjoining properties — at 2829 California and 1933 Divisadero.

The existing two-story building on California Street, which most recently housed an ambulance service, will be demolished. It is now vacant.

There will be three or four commercial spaces at ground level in the buildings and open space where the two lots meet in back.

The project is at the 40-foot height limit and within all the building codes. It will require no variances, although it will require a conditional use permit because it slightly exceeds the threshold of 10,000 square feet set by a new ordinance. Current zoning would permit 14 units on the site.

Archrival Heading Back Across Bridge

Three years after opening its store selling athletic shoes and sportswear at 2426 California Street, Archrival is closing at the end of the month.

Archrival will continue its two stores in Marin County, where it has operated for 30 years. As he prepares to leave the neighborhood, founder and CEO Joel Fruchtmann tells why.

The two Archrival stores in Marin have been very successful. Why are you closing your San Francisco store?

Being the smaller store of a three-store group is part of the problem. We're not a national chain with multiple outlets, but neither are we a single owner-operated store. If I were an owner-operator of a single store, as I was 30 years ago, I could operate the San Francisco Archrival and make a living. That's a modest success, and one a younger person might build on.

So you had hoped for more than a modest success in San Francisco. What happened?

Two things, I think. First, San Francisco is a city of neighborhoods. People in Noe Valley or the Castro, say, might want to shop with us, but they face the barrier of fighting traffic and finding a parking place, or taking public transit. It's just easier for them to shop closer to home. In contrast, our Mill Valley and Greenbrae stores are in strip malls near Highway 101. Everyone in Marin travels these routes regularly and finds it easy to pull in, park and shop. In essence, all of Marin County is our market. But the same doesn't hold in San Francisco. We are largely the athletic shoe and clothing store for the neighborhood. That makes it viable for an owner-operator, but not for us.

Is that because you pay higher salaries in the city?

That's part of the second reason, which is higher costs than either of our other locations — and each of our stores in Marin does four times the volume of the San Francisco store. Rent is high. And Archrival customers expect a high level of shoe fitting expertise and a sense of fashion. Our two managers provide that. We can't offer such service using modestly paid sales help. The customers benefit, but our break-even point is the highest of all our stores.

So you're saying an owner-operator with that kind of expertise could run an athletic shoe store in the Fillmore and make a living at it?

I think someone could, and that's the good news. It didn't work for us because the rewards vs. the energy expended ratio wasn't favorable. But the neighborhood will support an owner-operator, and I hope — strongly — that one will fill the gap of Archrival's departure.

THIS JUST IN: Former Archrival manager Nell Block will take over the space at 2426 California Street in March and open Nomadic Outfitters and Studios, offering athletic training and clothing.

RETAIL REPORT



Forrest Jones, at 3274 Sacramento since 1974, has a front window filled with lamps made on the premises.

Get Those Lamps While You Can

IT'S A SECRET workshop, tucked behind a disappearing door at the back of the store. Inside are rows and rows of jars, metal caps and electrical sockets.

But this is no mad scientist's laboratory. From this hidden room come tasteful lamps that illuminate some of the finest homes in Pacific Heights — at prices far lower than those of lesser lamps.

This is the domain of French lampmaker Philippe Henry de Tessan, who estimates he has created 12,000 lamps in this space during the last two decades.

He's the owner — along with namesake Forrest Jones — of the emporium offering housewares and home accessories at 3274 Sacramento Street. It has been in business since 1974, and has become the place to go for unique lamps and a wide variety of lampshades.

"I started making lamps quite accidentally," says Henry de Tessan. A porcelain importer offered a close-out on lamps, and customers snapped them up. "That's how we got into the lamp business — totally by accident."

They were already selling Chinese artifacts — ginger jars, blue and white vases and the like — so he started experimenting by drilling holes in the bottom and converting them into lamps.

"You take a purely decorative object," he says, picking up a vase, "and turn it into something functional."

His creations have met a neighborhood need.

"What's available is very limited, and can also be very expensive," he says. "My lamps end up being half or a third of what they'd go for in department stores, and the



Co-owner Philippe Henry de Tessan is the accidental lampmaker.

selection is fairly broad. I have about 600 lamps in the store right now — we just counted."

THEY COUNTED because of the big yellow sign in the front window that announces big news: Forrest Jones will close in the spring.

The sign announcing the retirement sale went up just after the first of the year, and all day long customers enter in disbelief, some with tears in their eyes.

"I'm shocked," says one stunned customer who came to stock up on her favorite soaps. She shakes her head and says repeatedly, "I'm so shocked."

Another longtime customer brings a friend who wants a pair of lamps.

"I am heartbroken," she says. "What they have is taste."

Marty Bagg has cheerfully presided behind the cash register for the last 16 years, and she's taking quite a bit of heat for retiring.

"It's all her fault," says Henry de Tessan. Her desire to retire and travel, along with Forrest Jones's declining health, led to the decision to call it quits, probably in April.

Henry de Tessan still has a lot of ginger jars and vases he intends to turn into lamps, and it's clear the accidental lampmaker is reluctant to quit, despite the freedom to spend more time in the flat he owns in Paris near his daughter.

"Who knows — maybe I'll find another place that will want to sell my lamps," he says. "Maybe I'll find a more relaxed pace."



KEN AUSTER, *Other Side of the Tracks*, oil on canvas, 36 x 58 inches

HAND MADE ■ KEN AUSTER

RECENT CITYSCAPES AND INTERIORS

"Sometimes the brush comes between me and the canvas. So I eliminated the brush."

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2007

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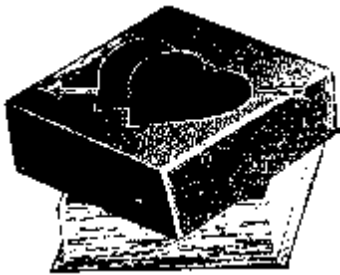
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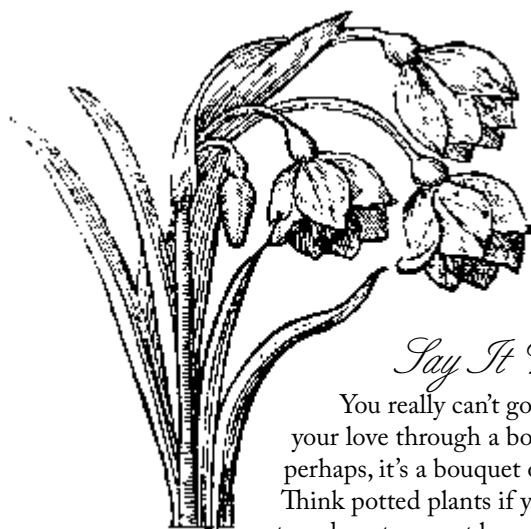
Nifty Ways to Woo Your Lover

*The neighborhood offers a ready supply of time-tested ways to say 'I love you.'
Because for Valentine's Day, words alone are not enough.*



To Your Health, Dear

Scientific studies periodically trumpet that chocolate, the darker the better, is a kind of health food with healing powers that can help nearly everything from depression to hypertension — something about flavonoids and antioxidants. Other researchers posit helpfully that cocoa is a fruit, much the way ketchup used to be a vegetable for schoolkids. And the honest among us admit it just tastes good — and feels deliciously decadent going down. Fillmore's chocolaterie, Bittersweet, stocks the stuff for lovers of all persuasions: dark chocolate for the health nuts, milk chocolate for those who just like the taste.



Say It With Flowers

You really can't go wrong by expressing your love through a bouquet — unless, perhaps, it's a bouquet of Venus Flytraps. Think potted plants if your love is the buttoned-up type; cut bouquets for everyone

else. But Valentine's Day is the busiest day of the year for the local purveyors of posies — Blooming Floral Design, Fillmore Florist, In Water and Divisadero Florist — so you may want to order ahead if you think your love will last.



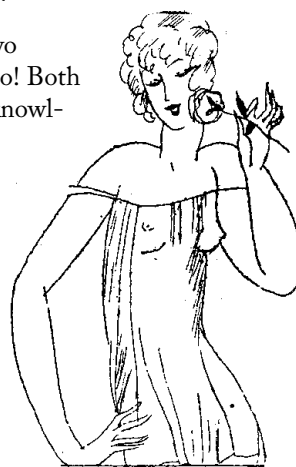
The Way to a Man's Heart — and a Woman's, Too

Dining out affords you more time to spend primping to please and planning your witty repartee. And for simple food in a romantic setting, it's hard to beat our neighborhood bistro, Florio. Luxuriate in handsome John's warm welcome. Then sidle into one of the small tables, placed so close together that you and yours will swear you're in Paris. The lights are dim there — and let's face it, nearly everyone looks a little more alluring with a little less light. Order Florio's Classic Chicken for Two, which arrives with sautéed spinach and frites. Eat the fries with your fingers, and ask for dijon mustard. Put it on your side of the table, though. Even the strongest love knows some bounds.



Candy Is Dandy, But Liquor Is Quicker

The neighborhood is home to two superb dram shops, D & M and Vino! Both are staffed by folks who are superbly knowledgeable about the red, white or bubbly elixir to suit your wallet and your lover's palate.



The Secret to Eternal Allure

If all those billboards are to be believed, underwear will keep you young and beautiful. And there's a lovely selection of lingerie for her at Toujours this Valentine season — from the plainspoken cotton camisole to the more fripporous lacy babydoll pajamas. "When looking for a gift, I go for the things that feel good to touch — like fat silk or cashmere," says one customer, known for his pitch perfect presents of lingerie. Also available at My Boudoir: pants for men that can get the sexy back, including a flowered and lace pair of boyshorts.



Going Postal With Your Love

Don't let Hallmark say it for you. Make your own Valentine and get the sentiment exactly right. Paper Source stocks everything you need — including stickers, rubber stamps, ink pens of all hues and



paper of all stripes. The staffers are quick to help with crafty suggestions if you're unsure of your own heart and mind. And mail the finished concoction with this year's great "love" stamps. They're not the usual ones featuring messy lovebirds or simpering, wimpering hearts and flowers; they sport a jaunty calorie-free Hershey's Kiss. And now that the machines have replaced some of the workers at the Geary Street Post office, you don't need to stand in a long line to buy them, either.

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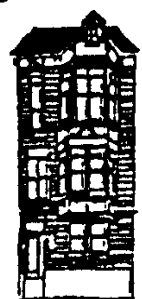
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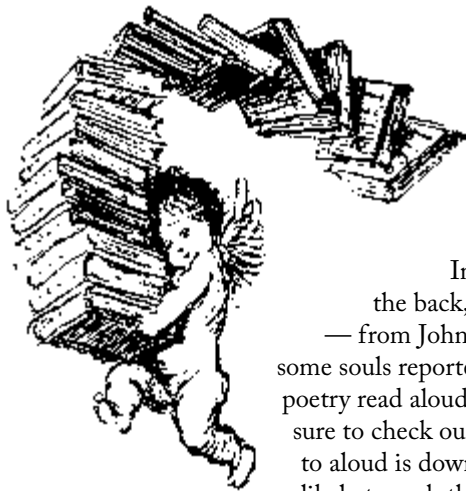
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How Do I Love Thee? Let Me Read the Ways

In Browser Books, down the right aisle, toward the back, there is an extensive section of books of poetry — from John Keats to Garrison Keillor. Be forewarned that some souls reportedly go into an immediate swoon when hearing poetry read aloud to them. But before banking on a swoon, be sure to check out your intended's feelings. For some, being read to aloud is downright annoying — and such souls will be more likely to grab the book and throw it at you.

Nothin' Says Lovin' Like Something From the Oven

Those folks at Pillsbury were right about the power of baked goods. To help the nurturing along, Mollie Stone's has stocked an array of Valentine-themed cooking and bakeware, including a set of six nested heart-shaped cookie cutters in graduated sizes to match the size of your love. The store stocks all the ingredients you'll need, too: eggs, flour, butter and those sugary sprinkles.

If the idea of shopping and beating and baking sounds a little worky to you, borrow from the ovens at the Boulangerie Bay Bread, which offers Petits Palmiers: small palm leaves made of puffed pastry that look for the life of them like little hearts. A set of several comes packaged and tied with a neat bow. One size fits all loves.



I Can't Seem to Forget You

The bottom line is that powerful good scent is powerfully attractive. You'll find scents to sample and spritz in the many beauty and cosmetic shops lining Fillmore. But you'll also find some unique limited edition fragrances in spots you might not suspect to find scents for sale, including sunhee moon, Toujours and Harput's Market.

The problem can be deciding which scent to choose. Gus Harput recently offered advice to a woman who was tempted to buy some fragrance for a man she doubted would actually use it. He encouraged her to try a few from the testers on the counter. "Go away and come back in 15 minutes; let the scent settle in," he said. "Then buy it for yourself. Give it to him and say you love it. He'll wear it."



Baubles, Bangles & Cool, Cool Beads

If you want to convey that your love is for the long haul, consider the gift of jewelry. Scientific studies conducted by gemologists have shown that jewelry actually lasts longer than the time it takes for the candy to settle on your loved one's hips and the roses to bow down in a wilt. And neighborhood shops have offerings to match your love's style, from the funky fare at Aumakua, to the handcrafted creations now on sale at the Gallery of Jewels, to the classics at Linco and Co. and the newly refurbished Eric Trabert Goldsmith. Neighborhood thrift shops also stock some gently pre-owned hidden gems.



Aumakua co-owner Jimmy Whelan's portrait and his thoughts about love hang outside the store at 2238 Fillmore — one of 29 artworks posted along the route of the 22-Fillmore bus.

Love Along the 22 Line

EVAN BISSELL had been reading Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. and thinking about the force of love.

At the same time, Bissell, a 23-year old painter, had been pondering his next art project when the idea came to combine a public art project with a spiritual quest.

He found his inspiration while riding the 22-Fillmore bus.

"The 22-Fillmore has such a great trajectory through the city, from Marina Green all the way to Dogpatch at 3rd and 20th," says Bissell, "which I thought was a great thing when talking about love."

So he started riding the Fillmore bus and stopping along the way to walk around, talk to people and look for public places he might hang his artwork. The result is a series of 29 portraits, all of people who live or work on the 22 line, combined with quotes about love. The portraits and quotes hang all along the bus route.

"It was always fun just to walk in and tell people, 'I'm doing this project about love,'" Bissell says. "People were surprisingly willing to talk about it."

Along upper Fillmore Street, Bissell found kindred spirits among the animal lovers at Pets Unlimited. Portraits of two clients now hang on the front of

Pets Unlimited, at 2343 Fillmore, along with quotes about their love for their pets.

The owner's son at the Royal Ground coffee house, at 2060 Fillmore, posed for a portrait and chose a quote about love from the Bible.

At Aumakua, the jewelry and artifacts store at 2238 Fillmore, co-owner Jimmy Whelan gave it some thought and agreed to participate.

"The upper Fillmore was one of the harder areas to find places to hang portraits," Bissell says. "There was a little more resistance, maybe because it's a more dense business district."

The neighborhood also provided the kickoff for the project when a celebration was held at Marcus Books, at 1712 Fillmore, on January 15, the holiday marking Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Many of the people pictured on the murals came, along with more than 100 others, to celebrate the debut of the love murals.

Bissell says he's not sure how long the project will continue, but expects that some murals will come down after a month, while others will remain.

"For me, the idea of doing the work of love — and taking action — was an attempt to create a source of positive love," he says. "It's been really great letting go of boundaries and fears."



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CALIFORNIA AS MUSE

An exhibition showcases the work of Arthur and Lucia Mathews, much of it created at their studio in the neighborhood

By JEROME TARSHIS

FROM THE 1890s to the early 1920s, the artists Arthur and Lucia Mathews were at the center of an artistic movement that sought to combine European tradition in art and design with the ideals of a new way of life that celebrated the natural splendors of Northern California.

Arthur Mathews was brought to California as a child and began his art education as a draftsman in his father's architecture office in Oakland. Two of his brothers became architects; brother Edgar designed a number of notable houses in Pacific Heights, including his own, at 2980 Vallejo Street.

Arthur Mathews chose a different path. During the 1880s he studied the fine arts in Paris, where he won awards and exhibited in the annual Paris Salons. He returned imbued with high aspirations for California and its art, becoming an influential teacher and later director of what is now the San Francisco Art Institute.

After the earthquake and fire of 1906, he and his wife and former student, Lucia Kleinhans Mathews, operated from a studio at 1717 California Street, just west of Van Ness. They took the disaster as an opportunity and assembled a team of artists and craftsmen who produced carved and painted furniture, frames and other art objects in what became known as the California Decorative Style.

Lucia Mathews was no mere handmaiden. She supervised the carving and painting in the studio, and created many of the shop's iconic works herself. She also maintained her own studio and circle of friends and developed her own style.

Even as a student, she had demonstrated exceptional



Youth, by Arthur Mathews, with Furniture Shop frame

"It is arguable that this painting, created during the peak of the artist's creative powers, encompasses virtually all of the individual elements of his mature style. The painting, when considered along with its elaborately carved and painted Renaissance-style tabernacle frame, a collaboration by Arthur and Lucia Mathews at the Furniture Shop, may be regarded as a virtual icon of the California Decorative Style."

— Oakland Museum curator Harvey Jones

talent. Over objections from some of the faculty, Arthur placed her in his advanced class, telling his colleagues: "That girl can draw better than you can. In fact, I don't know but what she can draw better than I can, so into the class she goes, and she stays!"

Although something of an autocrat and not universally loved, Arthur Mathews was a pre-eminent figure in the California art community. He retained his sense of affinity with architects and became a mural painter, executing commissions for many public buildings and private homes in the Bay Area.

By midcentury, Arthur and Lucia Mathews had been largely forgotten. After Arthur died in 1945, the de Young Museum declined Lucia's offer to donate their work. When the Oakland Museum began to focus on California art in the 1960s, it was able to buy an outstanding private collection of hundreds of pieces of their work for only \$50,000.

Retiring senior curator Harvey Jones has devoted more than 30 years to restoring the high reputations of the Mathewses in a series of books and exhibitions. His final tribute, "California as Muse: The Art of Arthur and Lucia Mathews," is on view at the Oakland Museum through March 25. It brings together almost 150 objects from public and private collections.

In the beautifully designed catalog of the exhibition, Jones says the limited national stature of the Mathewses "is largely owing to their living in San Francisco and their devotion to the California theme in most of their artworks."

He quotes Arthur Mathews as saying he would rather live and work in San Francisco than wear medals in Paris. "He knew," Jones writes, "because he had tried both. He had not stayed in San Francisco because he could not get away, but because he wanted to stay."

As both artist and thinker, Arthur Mathews transplanted a French academic sensibility to California. Today his work tends to look at once masterly and outmoded. It is Lucia Mathews' unpretentious studies of children, flowers and landscape that carry their original freshness into the 21st century.

Jerome Tarshis is an art critic who first wrote about Arthur and Lucia Mathews in 1985 for House & Garden.



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Mathews Murals Still Hang Nearby



WELL-TO-DO Pacific Heights must have given Arthur and Lucia Mathews more than a few commissions, but when houses were later renovated or torn down, many objects were lost or sold, and the full record is unknown.

Still in place in the neighborhood is *Health and the Arts*, a group of three murals executed in 1912 for the former Stanford medical library, now the Health Sciences Library of California Pacific Medical Center, at Sacramento and Webster.

The first shows what Europeans would consider primitive medicine: a Native American healer holds out his hand over a woman patient. The second mural refers to classical Greece, depicting the god Apollo together with the nine muses representing the arts, plus Hygeia, the goddess of health.

Set in an imagined Italian Renaissance city, the third mural depicts a proto-modern healer defending a woman falsely accused of witchcraft. Stopping well short of the 20th century, it suggests the turning point when early scientific medicine rejected superstition.

The centerpiece of the exhibition now on view at the Oakland Museum also comes from the neighborhood. It is the very first mural Arthur Mathews painted, in 1896, for the library of the Horace Hill mansion, on Lafayette Park at the northwest corner of Sacramento and Laguna, where the 2200 Sacramento tower now stands. A frieze three feet high and 108 feet long, it is clearly indebted to the style of Puvis de Chavannes, whose work Mathews admired in Paris.

Titled *The Arts of Peace*, the mural depicts an idealized classical landscape, with mostly female figures representing agriculture, commerce, music and dance, presumably endorsing the California dream of an Arcadia in which getting and spending co-existed naturally with a love of the arts.

Some other Mathews murals remain in their original locations. Among them are the mural in the entry to the Mechanics Institute on Post Street, a pair of murals flanking the stage of the Curran Theater and a series of 12 panels tracing the history of California in the rotunda of the State Capitol in Sacramento.



The top of *Poppy Box*, a wooden box carved and painted by Lucia Mathews.

Poppies Were Her Passion

In the poppyfield, more than flowers blossomed

By STEPHANIE MCCOY



IT IS HARD now to imagine the fields of golden California poppies that once covered the hills and filled the valleys in the San Francisco Bay area — or the impact they had on local and visiting artists.

When *Eschscholtzia Californica* was first adopted as the state flower in 1890, it was an obvious choice. Poppies were so much a part of the consciousness of the state that an entire room was devoted to the golden blossom at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. As a design motif, they showed up on china, textiles, stationery goods and playing cards, even in songs and poems about the state.

It is possible young Lucia Kleinhans found her love of the golden flower on the campus of Mills College in Oakland, where she studied, or in Golden Gate Park, which was sprinkled with the golden buds, and only a few blocks from her family's home on Fell Street.

It seems more likely it was across the bay in Belvedere, where she spent time in the early 1890s sketching the open fields of flowers, plants and trees with one of her instructors from the California School of Design.

They were not concentrating entirely on their artwork. The instructor was Arthur Mathews, who would become her husband and her artistic partner.

Arthur and Lucia had studios in the same building in San Francisco. Just

a ferry boat ride away was Belvedere, filled with acres and acres of the golden cups.

In the 1893 spring exhibition at the school, Lucia entered two watercolors entitled *Morning Belvedere* and simply *Belvedere*. Arthur submitted an oil painting he called *A Bit of Belvedere*.

At the school's 1894 spring exhibition, Arthur submitted an oil painting titled *In the Poppyfield*. It portrayed a beautiful young woman resembling Lucia standing sideways in the foreground, with a golden field of poppies surrounding her.

That summer they were married.

Following the devastation of the 1906 earthquake, the two began Philopolis Press and the Furniture Shop. The flame flower, as some called it, emerged on the pages of the publications issued by the press and served as a recurring motif for many of the decorative objects produced by the shop.

No writing by Lucia Mathews remains that offers any clues about why she used the poppy so often in her work. What does exist is the legacy of the work she left behind: a box covered in a blaze of stylized vibrant poppies, some of her delicate frames, smaller wooden objects she made for friends, exhibition announcements and the printing plates used at Philopolis Press — all decorated with the golden flower.

Stephanie McCoy is the author of Brilliance in the Shadows, a biography of Lucia Kleinhans Mathews.

At 1717 California, Art Met Craft

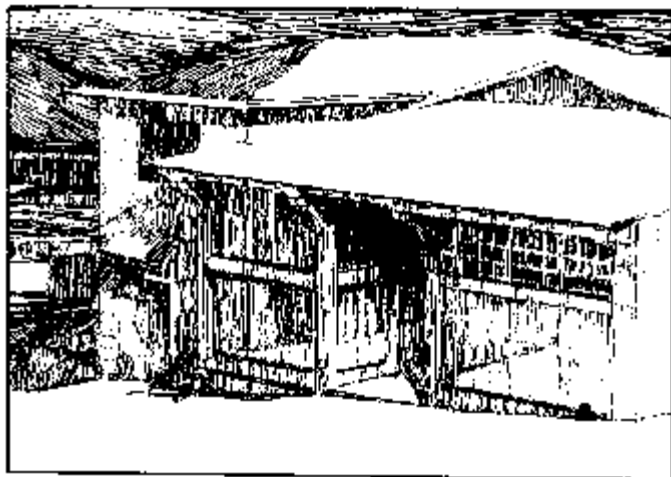
AFTER THE earthquake and fire of 1906, Arthur and Lucia Mathews made the neighborhood their artistic home.

Arthur's studio at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art on Nob Hill went up in smoke, along with his job as director of the school since 1890.

Art collector John Zeile Jr. came to the rescue. He had lost his family home at 1717 California Street, between Van Ness and Franklin, when it was dynamited as part of the firebreak. (The site is now a part of the Whole Foods complex.)

Zeile teamed up with Arthur and Lucia Mathews and in its place built a handsome building designed by Arthur in the Arts and Crafts style. It included a painting studio for Arthur and a showroom and workshop called simply Furniture Shop. It also housed a magazine, *Philopolis*, devoted to Arthur's high-minded plans for rebuilding San Francisco, together with Philopolis Press, which published limited edition books.

At a time when the Mathewses needed a new livelihood, many wealthy San Franciscans suddenly found themselves in want



The Furniture Shop at 1717 California Street.

of new or renovated homes. The Furniture Shop brought Arthur and Lucia into an artistic collaboration, aided by John Zeile's capital and contacts, that supplied the community with unusually well-made furniture and decorative objects.

In 1916, the city having been substantially rebuilt, *Philopolis* ceased publication. Around 1920 — the records are vague — the Furniture Shop closed. Although the Mathewses continued to be active as artists and as designers for the home, the high point of their influence had passed. Newer decorative styles, informed by ever more modern movements and simplified form, superseded their gentler classical vision.

— Jerome Tarshis

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UPDO

When romance goes to your head

THERE'S A GLOW and a calmness about Nellie Muganda — even when she's running late, as she was recently, just coming from making up actor Edward Norton before his appearance at a movie screening in town.

Muganda has been in demand to deliver finishing touches for nearly 23 years. She started out doing hair and make-up for models in advertising and fashion, and through the years developed a roster of diverse glitterati including Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello, Dizzy Gillespie, Paul McCartney and the neighborhood's own, maestro Michael Tilson Thomas.

She now tries to limit her travels mostly to Los Angeles, often jetting down twice a week. "Traveling is just too tough and trying these days; you have to check everything," Muganda says, noting that the natural look for which she's known can require quite a store of brushes and potions.

When not burnishing the Hollywood stars, Muganda can be found closer to home, at Neja Cosmetics, the shop at 1850



"I never use a comb — only my fingers," says Nellie Muganda, creating her trademark updo.

Fillmore Street that she's had for the last seven years. She expanded into the adjacent space a couple years ago, with private treatment rooms for facials, massages, waxing, manicures and pedicures.

But her true love is hair. "I was always intrigued by hair — ever since I can remember," she says. "I did all my friends' hair in junior high."

Her trademark hairstyle is the updo, the upsweep favored by women from Aunt Bea to Angelina.

"When I'm creating an updo, I'm creating a look for a particular outfit or setting. If it's a garden party, for example, I can make the hair elegant without making

it look like a poofy 'do," she says.

For inspiration, Muganda appreciates when a client brings in the clothes she plans to wear for a special occasion. "Hair is like an accessory," she says. "It should go with what you're wearing. Even if you don't wear much make-up, you look finished if you have a great hairdo."

Muganda says that shoulder length hair is perfect for fashioning into an updo — although she's happy to help those short on tresses by pinning in extensions for length. "That gives me something to work with."

She begins work by spraying clean, dry hair with a heat protector, then uses a curling iron to bring out the natural waves.

While the hair is still warm from the iron, she pins it into curls, following any natural wave pattern. She then takes down the curls — and begins the engineering feat of pinning the hair into place, again being mindful of the direction the hair follows naturally.

For those trying to create an updo at home, she cautions that it's essential to make sure the pins don't show — that they're secured under the hair. But there's nothing magic about the requisite equipment. "Even good old Walgreen's has nice pins," she says.

Other essential equipment is a pair of hands. "I never use a comb — only my fingers," she says. "I find a comb messes up the texture."

While Muganda weaves her creations for Valentine's Day and many weddings and special events throughout the year, she is especially in demand for the opening night gala of the opera. "I do 8 or 10 heads that day, just move from one to the other," she says.

■ QUIZ

Pursuer? Or distancer?

Are you and your partner stuck in a "pursuer-distancer" relationship? Take this self-assessment survey to find out.

- Does one of you long for more alone time, while the other craves more time together?
- As a couple, are you stuck in a holding pattern without being able to either commit or end the relationship?
- Does one of you consistently feel that the other is too demanding and needy, or that one gives more than your fair share to the relationship?
- Does either have trouble committing to just one person, or have a history of feeling let down in relationships?
- During sex, does either of you often fantasize about other people and have an urge to get away, or feel that you can't get close enough?

THE LOVE DISCONNECTION

A neighborhood therapist takes aim at a common cause of breakups

BY BEN ELFANT-REA

It's nearly Valentine's Day — time to feel grateful or despondent about your relationship, depending on your circumstances.

It's also a good time to take a deeper look at whether you are stuck in one of the most common dysfunctional dynamics and contemplate how to change it.

Consider whether the following scenario, described by many neighborhood couples I treat, sounds familiar:

During the first few months of your relationship, things were going well. The flowers were flying, the words sweet, the breathing heavy. Then something changed. He — and usually it is a he — started seeming aloof. He starts working longer hours and spending more time with friends.

You begin to feel frustrated and needy. Yet the more you pursue him, the further away he moves. This causes you to feel even more abandoned.

Before you know it, both of you are engaged in the "pursuer-distancer" dynamic: one partner feels emotionally abandoned, the other feels emotionally suffocated. The more the pursuer tries to get close, the more the distancer moves away.

Research shows it is the most common reason relationships end.


The pursuer-distancer dynamic can be one of the hardest issues to treat. The pursuer commonly drags the distancer to therapy and proceeds to talk a mile a minute, while the distancer sits mute on the couch. Any attempts to engage him cause him to pull away more. He might even feel ganged up on, which is sure to scuttle any chance of successful treatment.

But for many such couples, there is hope. The key is often to get pursuers to reconnect and spend time with the people who love them and shift the focus from the partner to work, kids, family or friends. Similarly, I encourage distancers to consider that it might not be the partner who is solely responsible for feelings of suffocation.

Another key is to find a way to engage the distancer. Invariably, distancers have had relationships they felt required them to give much more emotionally than they received. This feeling was so imprinted that, even in their adult relationships, they feel too much intimacy will ultimately stomp out their individual identities. The pursuer must understand and empathize with this experience so that the couple can learn that the distancing behavior is not actually about the quality of the relationship.

With help and effort, couples experiencing the pursuer-distancer dynamic can learn to find satisfying intimacy in committed relationships.

Ben Elfant-Rea is a clinical social worker in private practice at Pierce and Sutter. He can be reached at 255-3294 or benrea@earthlink.net. His website is www.searchforself.com.



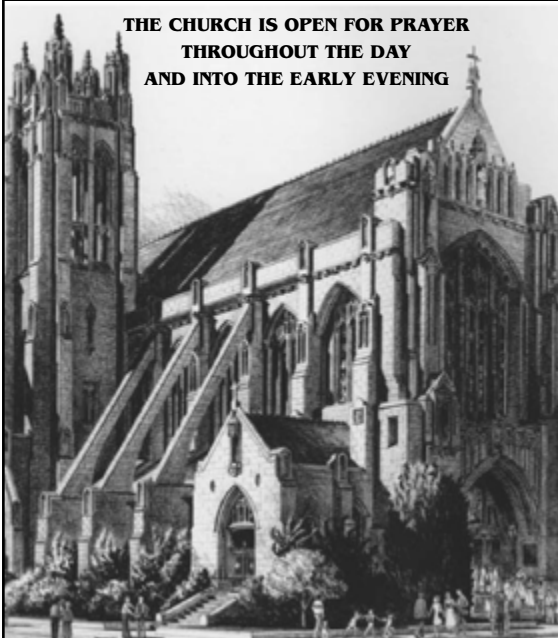
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2 more restaurants open in the Presidio

Two new restaurants have opened in the Presidio in the past month.

The **Presidio Social Club**, which bills itself as providing “all the comforts of a club without the dues,” is located at 563 Ruger Street, just inside the Lombard Gate.

Keeping with the clubby theme, it's a retro space with a massive bar located inside an old barracks building offering classic American comfort food. It's open for lunch and dinner, serving from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Reservations are available at www.presidiosocialclub.com or by calling 885-1888.

Pres a Vi is inside the Letterman Digital Arts Center on the eastern side of the park. Offering what it calls “global food and wine,” it is a sister restaurant to Va de Vi in Walnut Creek. Kelly Delgala is executive chef at both locations.

Servings are “tastes” and small plates intended for sharing. In addition to glasses and bottles, wines are available in three-ounce tastings and in flights.

The restaurant is open from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday to Wednesday and until 10 p.m. Thursday to Saturday. The bar remains open another hour. More information is available at www.presavi.com or by calling 409-3000.

A third new restaurant in the Presidio, La Terrasse — co-owned by Fillmore restaurateur Antoine Alliaume — opened at the end of last year.

Chouquets Imports a New Chef from Paris

HE THOUGHT he'd found his new chef last spring, but the customers declared a different verdict: “not French enough.”

So Michael Azoulay, the owner of Chouquets at Fillmore and Washington, was pleased when a friend introduced him to Laurent Guillaume, a visiting chef on the rise in Paris who wanted to come to San Francisco.

They clicked and a deal was struck. Guillaume returned to Paris to prepare the necessary paperwork for a visa and get ready to move.

That's when the war on terror intervened. Another person named Laurent Guillaume — a common French name — was on the U.S. government's watch list of suspected terrorists.

Six months passed, and still no visa.

Finally, just before the end of the year, a staffer at the American embassy in Paris called and delivered the green light for the move.

“It was the best Christmas gift I could have gotten,” says Azoulay.

By January 25 — the second anniversary of the opening of Chouquets — the new chef was here and a new menu was posted.

“It's very much his menu,” says Azoulay. “For dinner, we changed everything. It's still a work in progress, and we're going to keep changing the menu, working with the seasons and offering daily specials.”

Among the appetizers on the new winter menu are pepper and juniper salmon with a white wine emulsion, crispy rolls of baramundi with ginger and coriander, pastille of duck with almonds, Dungeness crab sal-



After a long wait, Laurent Guillaume is in the kitchen at Chouquets.

ad with Serrano ham and pan-seared four-spice foie gras. Some of the main course selections are Hawaiian ono with sesame, mahi-mahi with baby squid, “crying tiger” sliced beef with Chinese truffles and portabello mushroom sauce and a seven-hour braised shoulder of lamb.

“Obviously it's French,” Azoulay says of the new menu. “But Laurent has traveled in Asia and India and there are eclectic influences on his food.”

Azoulay is doing most of the talking

while his new chef works on his English — and, more immediately, his Spanish, the language of the kitchen.

“I'm trying to introduce him to the regulars,” says Azoulay, who hosted a welcome party for his new chef on the restaurant's second anniversary.

“We're targeting the people who live within a 5 or 10 block radius,” says Azoulay. “Chouquets represents very well what the neighborhood is all about — chic, elegant, but not too fancy.”



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Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Date	Asking \$	Sale \$
2721 Bush St	2	1.5	0	1304	Jan 5	999,999	999,999
2503 Clay St	3	3.5	3	2819	Jan 12	2,375,000	2,200,000
2940 Jackson St	4	2.5	1	2943	Jan 19	2,695,000	2,647,500
2714 Pacific Ave	4	4.5	2	3725	Jan 16	4,995,000	4,995,000
2525 Webster St	7	6.5	5	7800	Jan 4	6,650,000	6,630,000

Condo / Coop / TIC / Lofts	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Date	Asking \$	Sale \$
2415 Van Ness Ave #401	0	1	0	567	Dec 27	389,000	389,000
1817 California St	1	1	1	540	Dec 30	489,000	480,000
3234 Washington St #3	2	2	1	1200	Jan 19	599,000	629,000
3234 Washington St #4	2	2	1	1200	Jan 19	589,000	629,000
112 Arguello St #4	2	1	1		Jan 11	659,000	645,000
1970 Sutter St #113	1	2	1	1041	Jan 17	725,000	725,000
1800 Washington St #216	2	2	1	1108	Jan 10	729,000	735,000
2200 Pacific Ave #9E	1	1.5	1	1323	Jan 17	779,500	759,000
1409 1/2 Lyon St	3	1.5	1	1540	Dec 28	829,000	804,000
2200 Pacific Ave #6E	1	1.5	1	1323	Jan 4	785,000	805,000
1942 Bush St	3	2	1	1747	Dec 29	949,000	925,000
2015 Buchanan St	3	2	1	1222	Jan 22	949,000	1,055,000
1770 Pacific Ave #403	2	2	1	1500	Dec 27	1,091,000	1,065,000
1825 Gough St #51	2	2	1		Dec 29	1,295,000	1,200,000
3439 Sacramento St #201	3	2	2	2053	Jan 23	1,775,000	1,920,000

More and more, it's a buyer's market

One of the more evident changes to take place since the beginning of the year is the strengthening buyer's market.

During January, 80 percent of the single family homes sales closed below their asking prices. And two-thirds of the condos sold in the neighborhood sold for over asking. This is in contrast to December, when half of all condos sold for over the asking prices and nearly half of single family homes sold over asking.

The number of neighborhood closings declined somewhat, while housing inventory rose. Market activity normally slows in January, with people waiting for warmer weather before putting their homes on the market.

What does all this mean? Housing prices in the neighborhood are beginning to show declines similar to those in other parts of the city for several months. All this must be weighed carefully, however, as a single month does not a market trend make. The coming months, particularly April and May, will be much more telling about where the market is headed. It is likely prices will show continued moderation in the coming months as the market continues to regain its balance.

Further price moderation seems reasonable and healthy. The momentum of the past several years pushed prices too high too fast. They cannot be maintained in a healthy market.

My advice to potential buyers: Don't miss this rare opportunity to select from a large inventory of great homes. Interest rates are still at historic lows and sellers are willing to negotiate as they haven't for nearly a decade. If you are looking for a bargain, look at homes that have been on the market for more than 30 days.

If you are a seller, careful pricing is more important than ever. There is a greater risk in overpricing than underpricing your property, since below market pricing attracts more buyers and overbids. An unrealistic asking price is a sure-fire way to reduce your home's value. Pay careful attention to market activity during the first couple of weeks of the listing period. If buyers don't express immediate interest, your asking price is probably too high.

— Data and commentary provided by KEN BOERI, a real estate broker with Pacific Union. Contact him at ken.boeri@pacunion.com.

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The Case of the Relatively Harmless Dr. Charlatan

The creator of Sherlock Holmes didn't live at 2151 Sacramento, but he once visited its eccentric owner

By ANNE BLOOMFIELD
AND ARTHUR BLOOMFIELD

DON'T BELIEVE everything you read in brass. The plaque outside the attractively garlanded and balustraded 2151 Sacramento proclaims, "This house, built in 1881, was once occupied by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle."

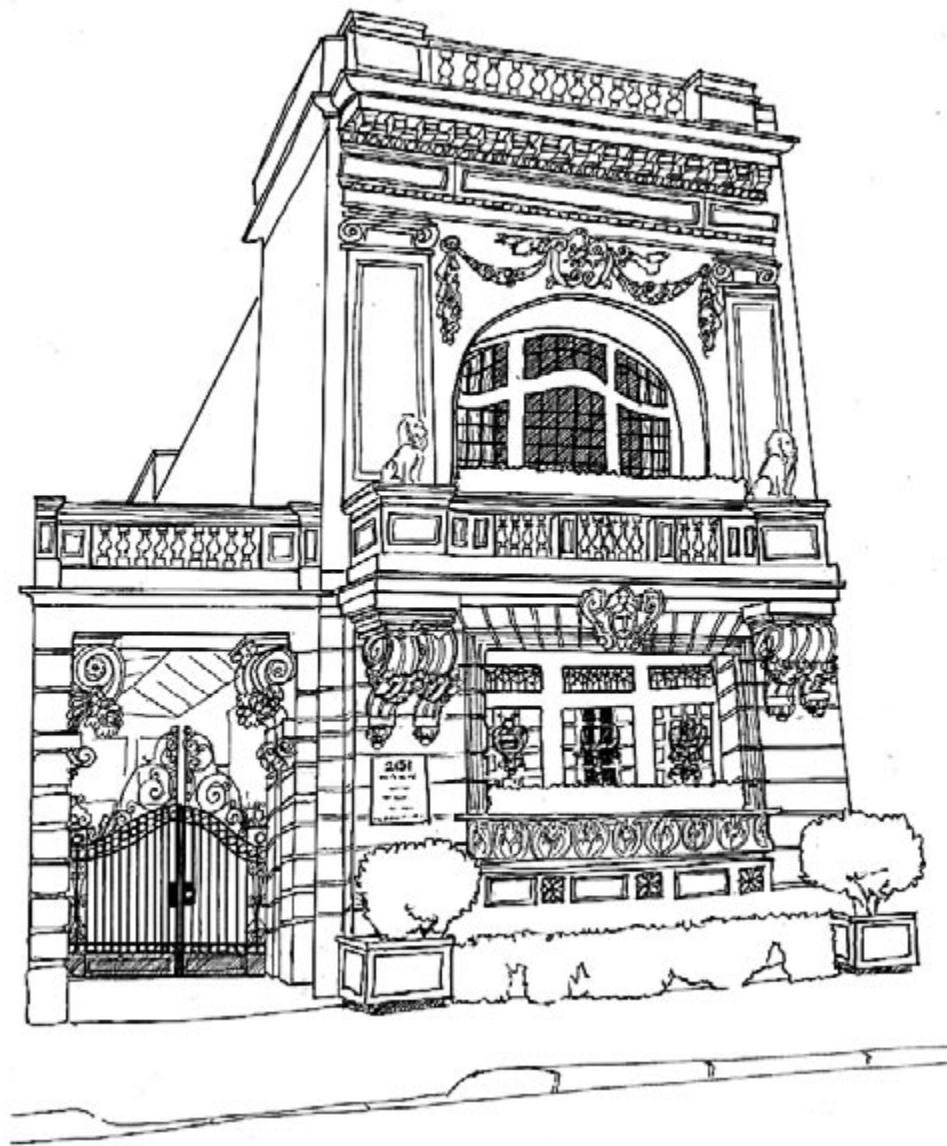
But 'tain't so. The creator of Sherlock Holmes lived in Britain all his life and came to the United States only on lecture tours — and besides, the house was not built until 1921. But the person for whom it was designed might have been a character out of Doyle, or H. G. Wells. His name was Dr. Albert Abrams and he was a notorious physician-charlatan, a relatively harmless Jekyll and Hyde, you might say.

He'd begun as a conventional and highly respected doctor. Born in San Francisco in 1863, he earned his medical degree at the prestigious University of Heidelberg in Germany. Then back home he opened a downtown office specializing in diseases of the chest and saw patients at Mt. Zion and the French Hospital out on Geary.

He experimented with x-rays, he published, he was known as a brilliant diagnostician. And sometime in the 1890s he joined the faculty of Cooper Medical College at Sacramento and Webster as professor of pathology. Cooper had been founded in 1882 by Dr. Levy C. Lane and went on to become Stanford Medical School.

After living for a while on the somewhat commercial 2400 block of Fillmore, Abrams established a more luxurious home and office at the southwest corner of California and Van Ness, along a pre-1906 mansion row. Then after being burned out in '06 he moved to the Fairmont Hotel when it was ready for guests.

By 1908 the plot thickens. Abrams was no longer associated with the medical school, which was experiencing many changes at the time: Dr. Lane had died, and because state law didn't permit leaving one's whole estate to charity, he'd left part of his to Cooper's



Albert Abrams began as a respected doctor at Cooper Medical College at Sacramento and Webster. Then he crossed over into spondylotherapy.

DRAWING BY KIT HASKELL

president, Dr. Charles Ellinwood, who inappropriately treated the bequest as his personal property rather than for medical school use. Other faculty took Ellinwood to court and lost, but they got a new president and eventually allied themselves with Stanford.

Somewhere in all this mess, Abrams dropped out. It may have been bitterness over the business at Sacramento and Webster that caused him to cross the border into charlatanism. Or perhaps

he suffered a midlife crisis of large proportions.

In any event, about 1909 he published a book on "spondylotherapy," this mouthful describing a more or less chiropractic system. The book was very popular and went through several editions. And then came his involvement with "splanchnic neurasthenia," which sounds like something out of Zippy the Pinhead. Interviewed about S.N. in 1915, Abrams impressed a reporter with his domineering

presence, his rapid speech, his aura of knowing everything about you.

Next, in 1918, Abrams startled the world — yes, the publicity reached wide — with a couple of machines he'd invented to take advantage of the characteristic electrical vibrations he claimed every disease gave out. The "dynamizer" was for diagnosis through vibrations, and the "oscilloclast" for healing. These comic-strip apparati were sealed boxes with lots of wires — and, one presumes, they emitted no rabbits.

Abrams would also heal you with vibrations produced by special drugs or salves in exotic colors.

The heyday of all this healing and such was 1918 to 1924, with 3,000 disciples throughout the U.S. and Europe adopting ERA, "Electronic Reactions of Abrams." Customers paid \$250 down and \$50 a month to lease each machine. But *Scientific American* wasn't buying ERA and spent a year investigating it. The verdict: worthless. But by that time Dr. Abrams had died, and without his key to the machinery, so to speak, ERA collapsed.

While all those payments for rented machines were roaring in, he bought the lot at 2151 Sacramento Street and had a young architect named Mel Schwartz design a lovely clinic with a dwelling unit, costing a not insubstantial \$45,000. A late Beaux Arts gem, the building rewards careful examination of its lavish decoration. The interior must have been amazing, displaying as it did the good doctor's tapestries, huge brass Buddha, Chinese ebony dragon chairs — the works.

Dr. Abrams only lived to enjoy all this for a couple of years, but he left his siblings \$2 million. I leave it to you to decide if this was hard-earned cash.

POSTSCRIPT: Conan Doyle did set foot in 2151 Sacramento once, probably on June 5, 1923. He came to town to give four lectures on spiritualism and stayed at the Cliff Hotel. Perhaps he had tea with Dr. Abrams, whose inventions quite impressed the romantic Doyle.

Excerpted from Gables & Fables: A Portrait of San Francisco's Pacific Heights, to be published in May by Heyday Books.



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They Helped Her, Now She Helps Them

A volunteer gives back to Kimochi's programs

LIKE MANY FAMILIES, the Ishisakis did their best to care for their mother at home, until the effects of Alzheimer's required more attention than they could provide.

Then Mary Ishisaki learned of Kimochi, an organization based in Japantown, and the culturally sensitive philosophy of care it provided. It was the perfect place for the Ishisakis' Obachan (the Japanese term for grandmother).

"They cared for the whole person — physical, social and cultural," says Ishisaki. "At Kimochi Home, Obachan was a block from her old church. They sang Japanese songs she recalled from her childhood and the food was Japanese-style. Kimochi fueled her memories and her imagination."

That was 16 years ago.

Her mother-in-law stayed at Kimochi Home for her final two years, but Ishisaki's commitment to the organization has continued. The day she and her husband sold their business, she went to Kimochi Home and announced, "I'm retired now. What can I do to help?"

She served meals at Kimochi Home, which provides residential and respite care,



"I've always felt there's a better purpose in life than just working and making money to make yourself comfortable," says Mary Ishisaki. "You can make somebody else comfortable."

did administrative work and participated with the seniors in their exercise programs. Although she spoke almost no Japanese, she was able to convey her enjoyment of the seniors and her concern for their care.

Kimochi's roots go back 35 years when a few *Sansei* (third generation Japanese Americans) began helping the *Issei* (first generation) by filling out Social Security forms and providing nighttime escort services in Japantown.

The younger generation's commitment to the *Issei* inspired the formation of Kimochi, which has grown into a nationally recognized senior service organization that today provides care and support for more than 3,000 seniors and their fami-

lies throughout the Bay Area, regardless of ethnicity.

"It's Heinz 57 — Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, blacks and whites," Ishisaki laughs. "I can now say thank you in so many different dialects of Chinese. And then they're willing to use their little bit of English, too."

Ishisaki is one of the many volunteers who help Kimochi fulfill its mission.

"This organization thrives on the work of its volunteer network," says Sandy Mori, development director of Kimochi and one of its founding members. "The *Sansei* and now fourth and fifth generation Japanese Americans are involved in the organization — to retain their cultural ties and to express that feeling, or 'kimochi,' for the

seniors who are their parents and grandparents.

"Mary is not Japanese, but her love and 'kimochi' for her Japanese mother-in-law brought her to us and she stands out for her devotion, her energy and her critical eye when things could be made better."

Five years ago, Ishisaki joined the organization's board of directors. She has coordinated the raffle for Kimochi's fundraising events for the last four years and raised thousands of dollars — while still devoting each Monday and Tuesday to the volunteer work she started 15 years earlier.

"I am forever grateful to Kimochi for what they brought to Obachan's life," Ishisaki says. "In turn, Kimochi has become a big part of my life."

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Vallejo Street between Lyon and Baker, 1911

Photograph by
WILLARD WORDEN

Through March 3, the Society of California Pioneers Museum is presenting "The Big Picture: Panoramic Views of California," including this photograph looking north toward San Francisco bay in 1911. The filling of the Marina area began two years later and was completed for the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in 1915. The lagoon on the left was reconfigured as part of the Palace of Fine Arts. The house in the left foreground was built by architect Edgar Mathews in 1907-08 for his family. More information is available at www.californiapioneers.org or by calling 957-1849.

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