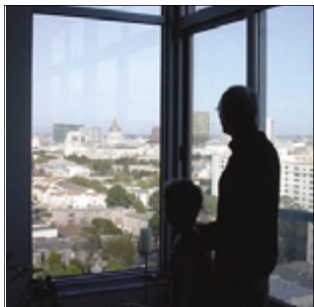


NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Hilltop remodel sparks opposition

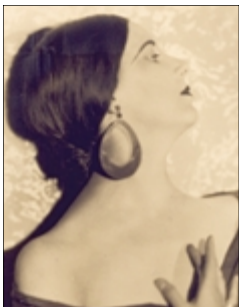
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HOME & GARDEN

A jazzy new pad in the sky

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BOOKS

My mother the showgirl

PAGE 15

New **FILLMORE**

SAN FRANCISCO ■ AUGUST 2007



ALONE
TOGETHER

COFFEE SHOPS
ARE THE NEW
CORNER OFFICE

By MALAIKA COSTELLO-DOUGHERTY

DAVID BROWN, 57, a minister, takes the bus from his home in the Castro to The Grove on Fillmore every Friday. He says his concentration mysteriously improves when he leaves his office.

“I have no idea why it works,” Brown says. “But whatever distractions there are here — the people, the noise — they don’t need my attention. I can enjoy the commotion and then get back to work.”

Up and down Fillmore Street, coffee shops are doubling as offices for people looking for both the alone time they need to work productively and the camaraderie of being with other people.

A corner office with beverages at Royal Ground, above. Top: Alone, yet not alone, at The Grove.

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Photographs by MINA PAHLEVAN / 12studios.com



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A POET'S RETORT



FRANCES TAUBER

Poets reading at Minnie's Can-Do Club on Fillmore, circa 1972.

The Can-Do Lives On

Our July feature on a beloved Fillmore joint stirred memories — including a poet's who was there

BY PHYLLIS HOLLIDAY

“MINNIE'S CAN-DO CLUB needs women!” The voice of John Ross, a pied piper of poetry in the early 1970s, rang in the small room at 17 Columbus Avenue, where our raffish poetry group met.

My first thought was of that cheapo sci-fi movie, “Mars Needs Women.” Then I gulped. “I’m one of those. Where is it?”

I took Muni, which let me off one block away from California & Fillmore. I knew this neighborhood. At that time the Goodwill was right across the street.

As I entered, it was dim. A row of working men at the bar all turned their heads and watched me politely, but with curiosity. I wore a long flowery dress, boots, and had really long hair.

Maybe I *am* on Mars, I thought.

Sunshein, the organizer, greeted me pleasantly and had me sign up on the list of poets. I looked around and saw the only other woman there was our benefactor, Minnie Baker.

I wish I could remember which poems I read. Total blank there. Nice sound of applause from other poets and even the men at the bar.

Looking at my old calendar, I see I did not go every Wednesday at first. But soon it was necessary. Almost instantly it became a rip-roaring, nonstop wonder, everything from Beat to the at first timid, then more powerful, voices of women, gays, people of all colors — from sonnets to the kind of rap people did then, extemporaneous, sometimes angry, wildly inventive, sometimes sweet, jazzy and all about love.

After a while ruth weiss took over as emcee. We formed a friendship that has lasted to this day.

Minnie offered opportunities to the

gifted and the unknown. Some may remember Sylvester, a flashy performer of disco, first black and openly, quite deliriously happily gay. After his debut at Minnie's he went on to a fame too brief, dying of AIDS among that first tragic wave of that sad plague.

About that story of John Lennon and Yoko Ono visiting Minnie's: There's a little controversy there. We all heard how Yoko had banished John to California in the company of May Pang, who looked mysteriously glum in all the photos. If Yoko did show up at Minnie's, it was under the radar of common gossip.

On occasion Minnie would put on a feast, with scrumptious food from a nearby West Indian cafe — big pots of steaming spicy island food. Goat? Maybe.

As Minnie said, it was all about the dancing. We read to jazz groups dancing, some on stage. After the readings, I remember boogying with men, women, short, tall, gay and straight, a rainbow of dancers, our bodies another kind of poetry.

Minnie let me do a solo reading once. It was probably my best ever. What an audience! I still see their faces, hear them calling out for this or that poem. We all had such a good time.

Years later, 1998 or so, riding to my swing shift job at a hotel, I heard a voice I thought at first to be a man shouting to himself.

“These women dance, oh these women dance ...”

It sounded familiar. I turned and saw one of the poets from Minnie's, Jerry Ferraz the troubadour, with his ever-present guitar. He was reciting one of my poems from Minnie's.

I almost wept. Minnie's never dies.

Phyllis Holliday was possibly the first woman poet to read at Minnie's Can-Do Club.

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14,000 sq. ft. Renovation Draws Fire

Neighbors object to 8-story glass walls above Vallejo Street

NEIGHBORS of the home at 60 Normandie Terrace have hired an attorney to oppose the owner's plans for a massive remodel.

Although the address is on a cul-de-sac off Broadway between Scott and Divisadero, its north side towers over Vallejo Street atop a high retaining wall, a location that makes it highly visible.

The owner's \$2 million remodeling plan calls for cutting through the retaining wall to build a new multi-level garage, as well as a complete interior remodel adding height on its west and south sides. The result would rise nearly eight stories above Vallejo Street.

According to Stephen Williams, the attorney representing the objecting neighbors, the Vallejo side of the renovated property "will take on the appearance of a downtown glass high-rise." Williams said the proposed changes would allow the owner "to strip every exterior element from the existing building and to clad the building in glass."

In a letter to the Planning Department, Williams argued that the proposed renovation "essentially amounts to a complete dismantling and reconstruction of the existing home . . . and an addition of approximately 6,500 square feet to the building." The present building encompasses 7,800 square feet.

Williams says the project violates numerous provisions of the city's residential design guidelines and is "hopelessly out of



A transformation is proposed at 60 Normandie Terrace, which rises above Vallejo Street.

context in its scope, scale, massing and design with all of the surrounding buildings."

The project would require a variance because the multi-story garage opening onto Vallejo Street would be closer to the property line than allowed by the building code.

The front of the building, facing Normandie Terrace, already exceeds the allowed height because of earlier remodeling done without permits, according to Williams. Neighbors objected too late to stop the project and the permit was issued retroactively.

Local Groups Come 2gether to Create a New Coalition

AN UMBRELLA organization encompassing all of the neighborhood and merchant groups in District 2 is being formed.

Although the district sprawls from Seacliff to the crooked part of Lombard Street, the local associations share mutual concerns. Their leaders believe a united front will give them more clout at City Hall.

The fledgling operation has been named 2gether. It is modeled on SF5Together, which similarly ties together the neighborhoods groups in District 5.

Unlike SF5Together, which has discussions but doesn't take positions, the consensus at a July 12 organizational meeting was that 2gether should take positions on various issues. Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier, who attended, said taking a stand would require compromise, but would show the group's strength.

The group will model its bylaws after Neighborhood Association for Presidio Planning, another umbrella group drawing representatives from multiple associations.

A poll of attendees elicited an array of topics to address.

Greg Scott, president of the Pacific Heights Residents Association, pointed to the need to improve the city's infrastructure — sewers, water and streets, as well as Muni — before increasing housing density through zoning changes.

Lynne Newhouse Segal, a director of the residents association who chaired the meeting, listed California Pacific Medical Center's massive building plans as a topic of primary concern to the group. Paul Wermer, also a director of the residents association, said the Planning Department is reviewing policies for neighborhood commercial districts, but seeking no input from the neighborhoods.

Bob David, founder of the Golden Gate Valley neighborhood group and a board member of Neighborhood Association for Presidio Planning, asked for better coordination of big events. He was seconded by Marina residents, who complained that too many noisy events are being scheduled on Marina Green.

From the three dozen people attending, Lynne Segal assembled a steering committee of Bertie Campbell Ward and Melinda LaValle from Cathedral Hill, Mark Sherman from Cow Hollow, Bob David from Golden Gate Valley and herself.

Japantown Fair Returns This Month for 34th Year

THE 2007 Nihonmachi Street Fair will take over Post and Webster streets in Japantown on the weekend of August 11 and 12.

For many visitors, the prime attraction of the fair, now in its 34th year, is the array of Asian food prepared and sold by social service agencies serving the Asian-Pacific American communities of the Bay Area. Delicacies include Thai noodles, teriyaki corn and teri burgers. For the agencies,

the fair is an important annual fund raiser.

Another major attraction is handmade crafts, all with an Asian flair, created by artisans from all over the Bay Area and from as far away as Hawaii.

Musical entertainment will run continuously from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., opening on Saturday with the West Coast Lion Dance and ending Sunday with Jorge Santana & Friends.

Among the most popular performers

will be San Francisco Taiko Dojo, the renowned drum group, which will be on stage from 3:30 to 4:15 Saturday afternoon. Pete Escovedo closes out the Saturday schedule, performing from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

The children's world section of the fair teaches Asian culture through games and arts and crafts.

Information tables for community organizations and public service groups will line Post Street.



Drummer Earl Watkins and his quartet in 1953.

Fillmore Loses a Jazz Legend

EARL WATKINS, a much-loved jazzman from the glory days of the Fillmore jazz scene — and a major supporter of efforts to revitalize the Fillmore jazz district — will be remembered August 19 at a musical celebration of his life. He died July 1.

Watkins was born in 1920 and grew up in the Fillmore. He learned to play the drums while he was in his teens and became a professional musician. During World War II, he worked in the shipyards during the day and in the clubs at night. One memorable evening, he played an impromptu jam session with Billie Holiday and musicians from the Jimmy Lunceford Band.

After the war he worked at the Story Club, the Blackhawk, the Say When and the Cotton Club, now the Great American Music Hall. In 1950 he

was the first drummer at Jimbo's Bop City, the legendary after-hours club in the Fillmore.

Even as the jazz scene cooled, Watkins was able to keep a full calendar, playing the Claremont Hotel in Oakland for seven years and, more recently, every Sunday until last September at Scott's Seafood restaurant in Oakland.

"His vivid memories of the vital jazz scene in the Fillmore were the essence of love and understanding of what made the Fillmore jazz scene great," said Peter Fitzsimmons, executive director of the new Fillmore Jazz Heritage Center, where Watkins was a founding board member.

His life will be celebrated on Sunday, August 19, from noon to 4 p.m. at Scott's at Jack London Square in Oakland. Call 575-0777 for more information.

**Burglary
Franklin and Turk Streets
June 7, 2:27 p.m.**

A homeowner called the police to report that an intruder had kicked in the back door of his residence and was taking his property. One officer met with the homeowner while the other pursued the intruder. The officer took a position in the back yard and, after a short wait, the suspect emerged from the door with a fresh load of property. When questioned, the man told the officer, “I thought this place was abandoned.” The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

**Assault With a Weapon
Franklin and Larch Streets
June 13, 7:20 a.m.**

A man had just found an empty parking place. But as he drove toward it, another car raced in and attempted to park there. Both men emerged from their cars and began a shouting match peppered with profanity. The suspect drove off, but returned a few minutes later, brandishing a gun and shouting, “This is because you said, ‘Fuck you!’ ”The suspect then fled.

**Burglary
Van Ness Avenue and Sutter Street
June 17, 6:30 a.m.**

Officers received a report of a burglary in progress. Upon arrival, they discovered a man emerging from the shattered glass door of a store. The man saw the officers and dropped some coins he had been carrying. One officer arrested the man and contacted the owner of the business. A review of the store’s video showed that the suspect they caught was the second burglar to enter the premises; 30 minutes earlier, another man had smashed the glass and stolen some cash. When he left, the suspect the

officers arrested could be seen rummaging through the store. The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

**Weapon and Drug Arrest
Van Ness Avenue and Pine Street
June 22, 11:53 p.m.**

Officers observed a man riding his bicycle on the sidewalk, which is a traffic violation. When they detained him to issue a citation, they saw he was holding an open container of alcohol. A pat-search for weapons uncovered a dagger concealed in his back pocket, which is a felony. Officers arrested the man, and during the inventory search that followed, they found crack cocaine, drug paraphernalia and stolen identification. The bicyclist was booked at County Jail.

**Burglary
Gough and Elm Streets
June 26, 3:55 a.m.**

Officers received a report that someone was trespassing at a construction site. When they arrived, they found a man walking within the fenced-off site who was carrying a burlap sack. When questioned, the man said he was the security guard’s friend. But when officers located the security guard, the suspect changed his story, telling them he had missed the last BART train to Oakland and was intending to sleep on the site — despite posted no trespassing signs. The security guard asked the officers to arrest the man for trespassing. A search revealed the man was carrying burglary tools. He was booked at Northern Station.

**Driving Under the Influence
Bush and Octavia Streets
June 27, 2:23 a.m.**

Officers had parked near an intersection

when a vehicle drove up behind their patrol car and stopped, blocking the intersection. An officer signaled the driver to move on. The driver told the officer she was waiting to park her car in the spot where the patrol car was stopped. The officer pointed out that the curb was painted red and that the parking space was not legal. The driver responded, “I live in the neighborhood. I park here all the time. You can’t tell me not to park here.”

The officer then observed that the driver was exhibiting signs of intoxication. He initiated an investigation, asking the driver for her license, registration and proof of insurance. As she handed him her license, she stated, “This is all I have to give you. I’m a lawyer. You have no right to stop me. I don’t care if you are cops. You don’t know the law like I do. I spent three years in law school. What did you do?” The officer then asked her to take a sobriety test. When she repeatedly refused to do so, she was arrested, given a blood test, and booked at County Jail.

**Burglary
Pine and Buchanan Streets
July 2, 11:38 p.m.**

Officers responded to a report of a burglary in progress. On arrival, officers found abandoned property that had been discarded in the yard. They then located a possible suspect riding his bike a block away. After meeting with the witnesses and property owners, officers determined that the man had burglarized three residences, several garages and a car. The property dropped in the yard matched the victims’ descriptions of the items that had been stolen. Several witnesses positively identified the suspect, who was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

Western Addition Patrols Blamed for Other Crimes

EFFORTS TO combat crime on the southern end of Fillmore Street in the Western Addition are being blamed for a spike in crime at the northern end of the street in Cow Hollow and the Marina.

Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier filed a formal letter of inquiry with the San Francisco Police Department July 24 asking the police to study whether legislation requiring more foot patrols in the Western Addition and elsewhere is responsible for a surge in violent crime in her district.

That same night the supervisor organized a public meeting to hear from Marina and Cow Hollow residents alarmed by a spate of armed robberies and muggings by masked assailants. About 70 residents packed the room, along with four representatives of the Police Department, including Capt. Kevin Dillon, commander of Northern Station, whose transfer was announced the next day. Dillon exchanged positions with Croce (Al) Casciato, the night supervisory captain, effective July 30.

The supervisor’s letter of inquiry specifically asked whether the foot patrol legislation, passed in January, “has taken patrol officers out of the Marina and Cow Hollow neighborhoods and/or has diverted police attention from the area.” She asked for a comparison of response times within the relevant period, as well as the rate of crime.

Northern Station covers large portions of both District 2 and District 5. While crime statistics for the area are actually down, the violence of the rash of attacks is “unprecedented,” the supervisor said.

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Mass & Concert, 7:30 p.m.
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Saturday, August 25
MEDIEVAL MEAL, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, August 29
PRAYER CONCERT, 7:30 p.m.
(dessert reception to follow)
St. Dominic’s Contemporary Mass Choir



The sad story of
Dudley and the foxtail

Although foxtails can usually be pulled or cut from a dog's fur, sometimes they can cause extreme problems. One Lafayette Park neighbor, Ming Chapin, said foxtails ravaged her beloved dog, Dudley (above).

"Dudley got a foxtail in his paw," she said, "but along with it he got the gangrene bacteria. The foxtail was removed, but in less than 72 hours, the bacteria had eaten most of his paw. It felt like an ice cube and was black as night, while his arm was hot and swollen."

When Dudley's temperature shot to 107 degrees, his caretakers wrapped him in a cold towel to bring it down. He was also given massive doses of multiple antibiotics for 10 days to clear the aggressive infection.

"We even went to Carson City, Nevada, to have him treated in a hypobaric oxygen chamber," said Chapin. "But after a week, the doctor advised that he would have to take the leg to save Dudley's life."

Dudley was five and a half years old when his leg was amputated, and he lived happily for another seven years.

"He did everything he'd always done," said Chapin. "But in January '06, he developed hemangiosarcoma on his liver and heart, so I had to give him wings and let him go. My heart is still broken, but on the mend."

Foxtail Hunt Set
in Lafayette Park

SPURRED TO ACTION by the large number of dogs hurt and maimed by foxtails growing in Lafayette Park, a neighborhood group has organized a work day this month to root out the pesky grass.

Foxtails are thistle-like weeds that cling to dogs — especially those with long fur. They get in paws and ears, up noses and sometimes in mouths or eyes, usually causing considerable irritation, sometimes infection and occasionally death. They proliferate in Lafayette Park and elsewhere in the city.

Friends of Lafayette Park and others interested in helping will search out and destroy foxtails from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, August 4. Volunteers are urged to gather at the picnic tables near Washington and Laguna. Tully's will supply coffee and pastries. Friends will provide gloves and tools. Hill and Company Realtors will offer bottled water.

The group will commence its foxtail sweep near the dog play area on the southeast corner of the park. The weeding effort will also cover other parts of the park.

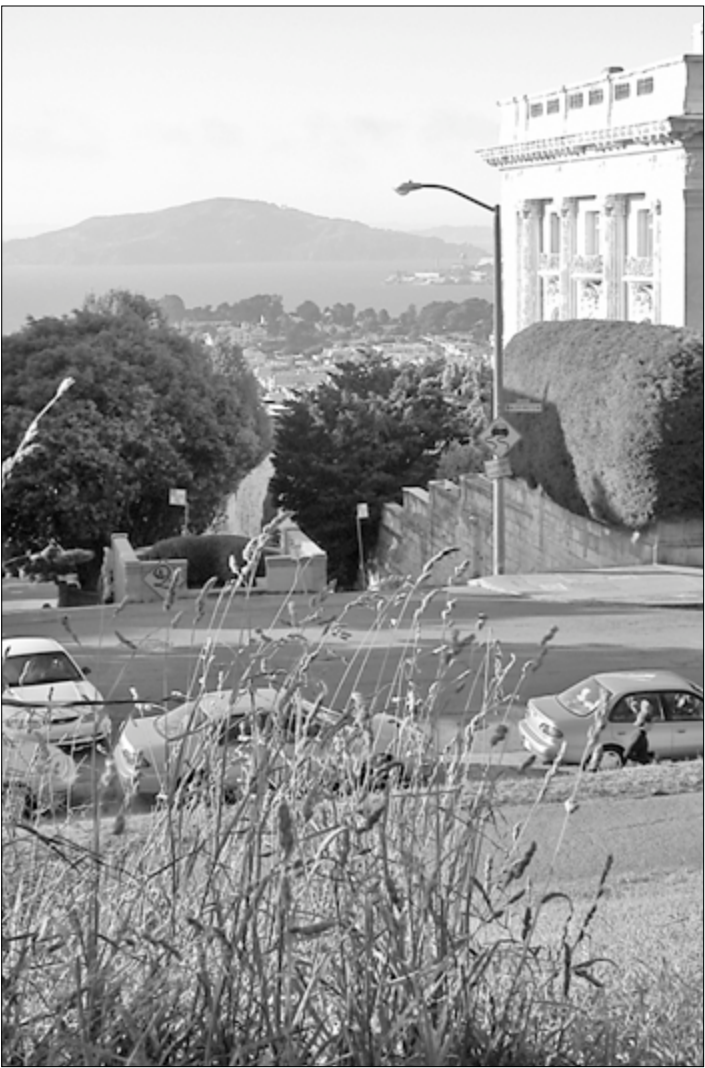
Deborah Guardian, a regular visitor to the park with her dog, said the worst area for foxtails is the walkway along Washington Street and the path above that.

"I'd say those are the most treacherous, but lately I see these buggers everywhere," Guardian said.

Most frequently, dogs are injured when they ingest a foxtail or get one in their nose or ear. Some dogs get foxtails in their paws, with the plant's burr getting under the skin, eventually becoming surrounded by scar tissue.

Tom Mason, director of veterinary services at Pets Unlimited on Fillmore Street, said the hospital gets two or three cases a week during foxtail season, which lasts from spring into fall.

Mason said the hospital treated one dog with an infection in the chest cavity that stemmed from a foxtail. Another dog had an abscess that showed up three times in three months



Pesky foxtails grow along the Lafayette Park pathways above Washington Street — but not for long. A cleanup is planned.

in various parts of its body, the last time at the elbow. The vet took an aggressive approach, opening up the dog's leg to find the problem was a foxtail that had worked its way up from the paw.

A flyer about Friends of Lafayette Park's clean-up effort inspired Ashley Hayden, an employee of Pets Unlimited, to round up a crew of other employees and volunteers to assist at Lafayette Park — and to extend the effort soon to Alta Plaza Park.

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Some of the Best of the City Is Located Nearby

IN ITS ISSUE published July 25, the weekly *Bay Guardian* offered up its own and its readers' picks for the Best of San Francisco. This year's notables included several present — and past and future — neighborhood attractions.

Best Peruvian Restaurant
Fresca, 2114 Fillmore

In a mix of fear and love, Fresca's menu was dubbed intimidating and its extensive ceviche selection labeled "particularly daunting." But there was an acknowledgment that "if it swims or slithers in the sea, it's served fresh at this tiny chain."

Best Veterinarian
Pets Unlimited, 2343 Fillmore

Care and convenience combine to make this newly rehabbed and expanded pet care facility a top pick in the city. Gushes the *Guardian*: "Preventive and emergency care is available around the clock from a staff of 14 full-time veterinarians who'll help with everything from treating splinters to setting broken bones."

Best Doctor
Michael Schrader, 2300 Sutter #301

This neighborhood doc, who has been practicing for more than a decade, is heralded for making his patients "feel the most secure" and for "putting the tired and sick at ease while they mend."

Best Day Spa
Kabuki Springs & Spa, 1750 Geary

This standout among the spate of spas

gets special mention for providing luxury with a low price tag. "A full day of relaxing in the baths can be had for as little as \$20," the *Guardian* notes, along with the somewhat puzzling assertion that "single-sex bathing does wonders for the skin."

Best New Restaurant
NOPA, 560 Divisadero

As its name makes clearish, this blazing hot dining establishment is located North of the Panhandle, and is owned and operated by Laurence Jossel, the original chef at former Fillmore favorite Chez Nous. *Bay Guardian* readers applaud its "consistently friendly service, innovative cocktails and lofty jaw-dropping decor" while acknowledging that the food — and its prices — are "comfort all the way."

Best Cheese Shop
Cowgirl Creamery, formerly at 2413 California, now at Ferry Building

We had it here first: the award-winning cheese selections churned, shaped and aged by Cowgirl Creamery before it uprooted and moved its city retail space to the Ferry Building. Staking the claim that those who work at the cheese shop "can make a from-age enthusiast out of anyone," the *Guardian* also lauds the free samples, gift baskets and goody bags — and the cheese: "from stinky to sweet, flaky to creamy."

Best Jazz Club
Yoshi's, opening soon at 1300 Fillmore

This jazz club and restaurant, slated to open this fall in the Fillmore Heritage Cen-

ter, will likely take cues and share accolades with its established sibling in Oakland. Readers rated its Manhattans top drawer, its sushi fresh and its jazz red hot, adding: "The sound is always excellent, there's not a bad seat in the house and the musicians are class acts all the way."

In addition to its picks for Best of the Bay in categories ranging from Best Vegan Restaurant to Best After-Hours Club, a *Guardian* staffer also reviewed the Pacific Heights neighborhood, seeming to come away more flummoxed than wowed. Noting first the well coiffed and well clad dogs walking along upper Fillmore, and taken aback by the cost of a frock in a Fillmore boutique, the reviewer concludes: "Such are the beguiling charms of this shopper's paradise, whose main drag boasts an eye-popping array of joints where disposable income can be disposed of, including boutiques devoted to single brands of make-up."

Several spots are singled out for special mentions.

Best Cocoa Overload
Bittersweet, 2123 Fillmore

Particularly appreciated is the fact that Bittersweet staffers are able and willing to steer shoppers through the thickets of chocolate vagaries, with personal advice and annotations on the shop's treats.

Best Gold Mine of Sterling Silver
Aumakua, 2238 Fillmore

Sense and sensibility are the high notes

here. The store is hailed for its "impressive selection of pretty sterling silver earrings in a variety of classic styles, all priced around \$25."

Best Spot to Feather Your You-Know-What: Nest, 2300 Fillmore

If presentation is everything, the *Guardian* has found everything in Nest, reporting: "The whole store is set up to encourage browsing, so every time you look at a shelf, you spot something you didn't see before, like a sheaf of paper masks tucked behind a stack of blank journals."

Best Four-Legged Window Shopping
Pets Unlimited, 2343 Fillmore

This place for pets was a double winner in the *Guardian's* eyes — acclaimed by readers and the reviewer alike, who was taken in by the windows that "offer the opportunity to peruse the adoptable cat and dog populations, whose photos and alluringly cute names are featured alongside tempting copy."

Best Fun in Functional
Zinc Details, 1905 Fillmore

This store is exhorted for its array of budget gifts: "Check the table by the register for address books, cocktail goldfish and 3-D cat playing cards — plus double-sided naughty 'n nice wrapping paper."

Best Zabaglione Seduction
Tango Gelato, 2015 Fillmore

This spot is singled out to "seduce you into a dessert coma," a good thing.

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6 NEW FILLMORE August 2007



Nearly overnight, a new boutique arrives

Calvin Tran, a women's clothing boutique, has transformed and streamlined the space formerly occupied by Starlet. It opened its doors in late July at 1942 Fillmore.

Tran's boutique features "clothes that are multi-functional pieces," according to Richard Lee (above), who opened the designer's third shop here. A simple wrap skirt can also be worn as a dress, a top or a poncho, depending how it's draped and tied.

Tran has had a flagship store in New York for seven years, and a second store in Chicago's Lincoln Park for about six years. Lee says he was beckoned to the Fillmore locale — "a street with verve to it" — by faithful clientele at the two other stores who urged a San Francisco location.

Ralph Lauren Replacing Smith & Hawken

SMITH & HAWKEN's store and rolling sidewalk garden at 2040 Fillmore Street closed July 29, deemed too small to fit into the company's plans for larger retail spaces that showcase its furniture and garden accessories.

The space will be taken over in late September by Rugby, the newest Ralph Lauren line, launched in 2004.

According to a Ralph Lauren spokesman, Rugby, designed for both men and women, "skews younger, but is rooted in the Ralph Lauren aesthetic."

The fall line includes polo shirts, outerwear, sport coats, dresses and accessories, some in distressed fabrics and all bearing a monogram crest or small embroidered rugby player. Described as "rebel preppy," the line is reminiscent of English prep school clothing — so much so, in fact, that several British private schools complained recently that it was copied from their uniforms and jerseys.

The Fillmore retail store space that Rugby will soon take over is about 2,700 square feet — too small to accommodate Smith & Hawken's changing business model. When the gardening store opened its fourth retail store occupying 10,000 square feet or more in the last year, that became the company standard.

"Our customers are making an investment in their outdoor rooms and gardens, so it's important for them to sit in the teak or all-weather wicker furniture collections, get a good feel for our tool lines and see first-hand how our garden structure works," said Smith & Hawken CEO Gordon Erickson.

"Fillmore Street has been a wonderful



Smith & Hawken's sidewalk display brought plants and flowers to the street. The store renewed its lease just last fall, but now will become an outpost of Ralph Lauren's new Rugby label.

neighborhood for us over the years. However, with our expansion plans and focus on the garden, unfortunately the space just isn't large enough."

The decision may have been helped by Ralph Lauren's determination to come to Fillmore Street.

"They paid an exorbitant amount of money," said one real estate insider.

Smith & Hawken had undertaken a six-figure renovation of the space when the

company signed a new lease last fall.

Talk on the street suggests that Ralph Lauren will take over both the Smith & Hawken space and the long-vacant shop next door. But an agent handling the empty space, formerly a vintage shop, said it wasn't so.

"No way — we'd want variety, not the same company," she said, adding that the family dispute that has kept the space empty for four years may be near a resolution.

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One local's guide to working the street

BY JAMES DEKOVEN

THERE are certain people you always see wandering around the neighborhood. You wonder, "Does that guy ever work?" I'm probably one of those guys. Now, it may appear I'm a slacker, but I actually *am* working. As a freelance writer (www.thecomposer.com), I can work where I choose, and I often choose one of Fillmore's many coffee shops. Here are my favorite spots — and why.

PEET'S, 2197 Fillmore: As a self-employed writer with no real friends, Peet's is my ideal satellite office. The locals and friendly staff create the warm office environment we freelancers lack: They know your name, say hello, and ask about your weekend — all without politics or hidden agendas. Really, just drop by a few times and you'll have an instant community of surrogate cube mates. Relax on the bench in front when you're beginning a project and need inspiration (if you don't get it from the almost-illegal coffee). **BONUS:** Find research materials next door at Browser Books.

ROYAL GROUND, 2060 Fillmore: Thanks to feng shui and ergonomic consultants, we're all aware of how your workspace affects productivity. If you need a no-nonsense setting for buzzing through a large workload, Royal Ground is the place to be. Enjoy an open space filled with solid tables, all amongst a mostly student clientele. **BONUS:** Do your laundry next door at Royal Wash.

STARBUCKS, 2222 Fillmore: Just because you're self-employed doesn't mean you don't deserve a comfortable seat. And why plunk down a few grand for an Aeron when you can head over to Starbucks? They have comfy chairs perfect for hunkering down with your laptop. Use the semi-enclosed area by the front door for casual meetings. Good CD selection, too. **BONUS:** Have lunch next door at La Mediterranee.

THE GROVE, 2016 Fillmore: Some people need quiet to work. Me, I need activity. The Grove has a constant stream of diverse clientele, chatter and great tunes (supplied by Ken Zankel, the owner and a fellow music junkie). Also nice: The



"I can work where I choose, and I often choose one of Fillmore's many coffee shops."

JAMES DEKOVEN, at Peet's

sturdy wood tables for spreading out your papers, plenty of electric outlets, super clean bathrooms, lots of natural light, tons of breakfast and lunch options. **BONUS:** The Grove attracts a large professional contingent. Combine that with its ski lodge intimacy and you have a natural breeding ground for networking and meeting potential clients.

COFFEE BEAN, 2201 Fillmore: The hardest thing about working solo is doing actual work. There's always an excuse to procrastinate. So while you're rationalizing your lazy work ethic, try one of the Coffee Bean's tasty blended drinks. They're especially helpful for injecting some much-needed flavor into the more

mundane aspects of a project. Take a sip, review your notes, repeat as needed. **BONUS:** For even more incentive, there's champagne across the street at D&M.

TULLY'S, 2455 Fillmore: Friends of the self-employed have an odd belief: Since you make your own hours, you can always play hooky when they take the day off. Avoid these people and head up to Tully's. Being at the top of Fillmore, you're less likely to run across them. Small but never crowded, Tully's offers a tranquil space to form and refine your thoughts. **BONUS:** Alta Plaza Park is a block away. Work on your tan and make your friends even more jealous of your lifestyle. You know they are.

In These C

► FROM PAGE 1

David Brown says he encounters a different group of people every Friday at The Grove.

On one recent Friday it is quiet, with some patrons studying the financial markets while others read academic textbooks. These could-be office workers blend with groups having lunch and friends confiding in each other over lattes.

On another Friday afternoon, the party has already started for a group of young professionals launching an early happy hour outside in the sunshine. Inside, some of the patrons have set up makeshift workspaces — complete with laptops, phones, paper-work — and some with beer or wine, not a combination that usually works at the office. There are people sprinkled throughout the large lodgelike space who seem lost in their laptops, completely focused on work.

Brown says The Grove is his coffee shop of choice because of the mix of people, and also because the waitstaff never gives him the feeling he's not wanted, even though he perches there for hours at a time. And he likes the location of the power outlets, which are convenient for his laptop.

Brown prefers the table in the middle of The Grove, which he hails as best for people watching. When it comes open, he jumps up from his corner spot and stakes his claim by plugging his laptop into the center post.

He has some advice for others who by choice or necessity make coffee shops their offices: "Don't be afraid to engage in conversation with the people around you. Conversation is part of the general expectation when working in a coffee shop." He also says it's good form for those who make coffee shops their offices for an afternoon to order food as well as drink — which is more likely to keep the welcome mat from wearing thin.

Brown doesn't worry much about leaving his laptop unattended if he needs to step away, although sometimes he'll ask someone nearby to watch it. "I guess I'm living on the edge," he jokes.

Just down the street, Royal Ground Coffee is much quieter than The Grove, with a less fashionable crowd and slow rock music piped into the room. It's not the type of place you can strike up a conversation with a neighbor; the atmosphere is more concentrated and still. One man looks sad as he reads piles of letters. The silence is interrupted when someone answers a cell phone, but no one gives the talker The Look.



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Corner Offices, the Coffee's Always On



Photographs by MIINA PAHLEVAN

"Whatever distractions there are here — the people, the noise — they don't need my attention. I can work."

DAVID BROWN (right) at The Grove

Indeed, the rules of etiquette are changing to adapt to the ubiquitous cell phone. Now, talking on a cell in a coffee shop is not automatically considered rude — especially for those setting up mobile offices. Some patrons still go outside to talk, while others don't interrupt their conversation even as they order coffee.

Starbucks opens to the street, with wide doors and big windows that make it a little more like a local fixture than just another Starbucks.

Alice Goldstein, 38, is camped out there on a recent afternoon and is multitasking: searching for a job, selling concert tickets online and researching bikes. Goldstein works in sales and says she needs to be around people and feeds off the energy of the street. This afternoon she's come to the Starbucks on Fillmore for the reliable wireless access, which is available for a fee.

Goldstein says she often goes to the

Grove but finds the wireless connection there spotty. A resident of the Richmond District, Goldstein chooses coffee shops in various neighborhoods based on her mood. She says she likes the professional feeling of Fillmore's cafes.

"I like the hustle and bustle of 30-some-things out and about," she says. "It helps me not feel isolated when I'm unemployed. I see a lot of professionals my age in engineering, marketing, sales — and they're also all working. I almost feel like I'm back at the office with my team."

Vanessa London, 28, a dermatology resident at California Pacific Medical Center up the hill, comes to the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf to get a break from the hospital. She says she studied in coffee shops in college and now comes to the Coffee Bean whenever she gets a chance. London says coffee shops allow her to relax and also to see the sun — neither

of which happens much at the hospital. Looking over her organizer, cell phone and residency paperwork, London, who lives in Chinatown, laughs that the Coffee Bean has become her office away from the office.

She's got company at other tables. A man in a business suit examines his notes. A woman writes in a composition book. They form part of a more serious-looking crowd than those gathered at most of the other shops.

For many, a wireless connection determines whether a coffee shop can be used as an office. Peet's doesn't provide wireless access. The crowd that gathers there is more typical of the traditional coffee shop: a young man engrossed in a novel, an older man in a button-down shirt finishing his coffee and the newspaper, an artsy looking man and woman discussing the mechanics of the Bay Bridge. One patron manages

to catch a wireless connection while sitting outside, but no one has set up a mobile workstation.

Further up the street at Tully's, people stop in just for the wireless access. An older, more sophisticated looking group there was having a loud discussion one recent morning about the medical problems of a mutual friend.

But the surrounding hubbub didn't seem to bother Janet Hur, 25, who set up shop at a table with her computer. She's working at Tully's because she's "homeless" — newly graduated from medical school and looking for an apartment in Pacific Heights, which would be convenient for her residency.

One Tully's customer checks both his Blackberry and his computer. He explains he lost Internet access at home and came to the coffee shop to send a quick email message. But he says he doesn't usually work at coffee shops. They're too noisy.



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Rubbing Shoulders—and Being Ethnic—in San Francisco

BY CARLO MIDDIONE

I CAME TO San Francisco to get away from being “ethnic” and guess what — it did the opposite. It allowed me to know who I am and realize I am rubbing shoulders with others who are equally ethnic. We definitely are cross-pollinating each other with all that friction, most of it good.

Where else on a whim can you decide what type of cuisine you want to cook and within minutes find every component. I am essentially a European cook, but I love thinking about making other kinds of dishes, just because I can. Having traveled a good deal, I find the scale of the Bay Area perfect for finding all the riches you need tucked away here and there. Even in large metropolitan areas — maybe Manhattan is an exception — it is hard to find the depth of goods and the diversity we relish here.

I especially love the exchange of greetings, food talk and friendliness of the vendors. When buying meat, fish or fowl, I love to go to the young butchers and ask them, “How do you cook yours?” They don’t have the panache of the older butchers, or the opinions, but it is fun — and every once in a while enlightening.

I am the 13th child born to Sicilian immigrants. My father came from Italy to America in 1915 as an adult schooled in the conventions of peasant village life in Campobello di Licata. My mother came here five years later. Even as peasants



“The Italians in North Beach drew me back into things I thought I wanted to move away from.”

in the truest sense of the word, they were both highly accomplished cooks, my father distinguished by his classic European apprenticeship training to be a chef. And so he was. I learned to cook as *his* apprentice. I had no choice; that decision was made for me early on. My mother was the daughter of the owner of a trattoria in Termini Imerese. My nonna, Serafina LaPaglia, cooked, served tables and crocheted tablecloths that today would make her an artist.

When I came to San Francisco in the middle 1950s, I was enchanted by the views, the hills, of course the cable cars, and the formality of folks on the street, usually sporting hats — real ones. But the sight, smell and taste of the Italians in

North Beach and the Chinese in the next blocks drew me back into all the things I thought I wanted to move away from at home with the family.

The live crabs on the wharf, the bread in the ovens on Grant Avenue, the incredible array of fresh fish in dozens of varieties bought from the scowling Chinese who did not understand one word of my fairly fluent Italian. But waving hands and exchanging paltry dollars made it all happen. I bought, for very little, all the things I loved to eat and loved to cook.

San Francisco still has a preponderance of fresh and diverse food compared to much of this country. Imagine having a hard time selecting which of a dozen


fresh herbs to use with that live crab yet to be cooked; the 30 or 40 types of bread made by dedicated bakers, one slightly better than the other; the fruits from small orchards in the East Bay; greens from Peninsula farmers; wine in such abundance and diversity as to be embarrassing. Imagine that.

I find inspiration from the foods of other cuisines, but I am not a tinkerer. I am the slavish monogamous spouse to food I grew to know as sound, historically important, authentic, utterly delicious and completely suitable for today’s taste. How nice to be able to cook in the style of a hundred years ago and still please the crowds. Sure, I may put vegetables on the same plate as the meat now, but each element that goes on is a stand-alone dish entirely correct in itself. This is my contribution to novelty.

My ethnic identity is reinforced almost daily. With the ingredients I know and love come other treats from the land of my progenitors: citrus-kissed olive oil, powerful tomato extract, Veneto cheese coated in hay and flowers, pistachio-studded mortadella — and of course chestnut honey to drizzle over perfect Gorgonzola dolce.

I can get all these here, and I am not only glad, but also proud.

Carlo Middione is the chef and owner of Vivande Porta Via at 2125 Fillmore. This article is adapted from his new blog at www.vivande.com.



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Barrels Give Whisky Color, Flavor

By MARK J. MITCHELL

YEARS AGO, when you could still carry liquids on airplanes, John Grant came to visit us at D&M Liquors on Fillmore Street. Grant is a member of the family that owns the Glenfarclas distillery alongside the Spey River in the Scottish Highlands.

After looking over our whisky selection and making some complimentary noises, he pulled a small glass bottle from inside his coat. In his rich Scottish burr he informed us that the clear liquid inside had just come off the stills yesterday, and we should try it, because it was very high proof naked whisky — and, “When it’s illegal, it’s always sweeter.”

So taste it we did, and it was like drinking fire.

All whisky is clear when it comes off the still. It looks like rubbing alcohol, and tastes a bit like it as well. The color comes from the wood in which the whisky is aged. Like most alcoholic liquids, whisky is aged in oak, because oak breathes well. There are various kinds of oak, both new and used.

The Macallan distillery, for example, is famous for aging its whisky in casks that once held sherry. They are so devoted to this practice that they have purchased a solera in Spain to assure a steady supply of barrels. This goes back to a historical accident. Once upon a time, sherry was shipped to Bristol, England, in casks. Once there it was bottled, and it made no economic sense to ship the empty barrels back to Spain. A canny Scottish distiller offered pennies on the pound for the empty casks and discovered that whisky liked this particular kind of oak quite a bit.

Now, most sherry is bottled in Spain, and the barrels have become expensive. However, another happy accident has come along. For some reason —

I believe some corrupt congressman were involved — barrels that are used to age bourbon whiskey in the U.S. may be used only once. That’s the law. In these times of international conglomerates, many Scotch whisky distilleries are owned by the same parent companies that own bourbon distilleries here. So bourbon barrels are now being disassembled, shipped to Scotland and used to age whisky. Scotch whisky seems to like the blander bourbon wood as well, but it doesn’t get as interesting.

A fashion has come along in the whisky trade: to age whiskey in bourbon barrels for 10 or 12 years and then to “finish” it in a more exotic wood. I have recently tasted Scotches that ended their aging in barrels that held Demerrara Rum, Madeira wine, Tokay from Hungary and Calvados from Normandy. Each of these woods adds a different dimension to the flavor profile of a whisky. Not all work as well as you might think. A very smoky whisky with a sweet Port finish is just plain odd, for example. Still, this has led to a lot of variation in the world of Scotch whisky, and variation is a good thing.

The pioneers of odd cooperage were the 10 men of Tain, who make Glenmorangie whiskies in the Northern Highlands. You can find variations of this whisky that have been inside Burgundy casks, Port pipes, Sauternes barrels — and even a spectacular version that finished its aging in a cask from the legendary Bordeaux producer, Chateau Margaux. If you are looking to explore the effects of different barrels, Glenmorangie is a good place to start.

Don’t be afraid to experiment. But be warned: What was once done because it was a bargain has now become pricey. The Glenmorangie Margaux Cask Finish, for example, sells for \$550 a bottle.

Mark J. Mitchell is the manager of D&M Fine Wines and Liquors at Fillmore and Sacramento.

MINA PAHLEVAN



Gentlemen prefer peaches

It’s high season at the Fillmore Farmers Market, with heirloom tomatoes and other summertime fruits and vegetables hitting their peak this month. “Blueberries are really good this year,” says market manager Tom Nichols, and should continue through the end of August. “The ones on the market now are mountain-grown at Rainbow Garden, just above Placerville,” Nichols says. The market — complete with live jazz and fresh flowers — is held every Saturday morning on the Fillmore Center plaza at Fillmore and O’Farrell.

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I AM LEAVING Peet’s after a near nine year run, nearly eight of those on Fillmore. While my run is nothing compared to Phil at Fillmore Hardware, or Fred at Browser Books, it’s been a great ride for me. I leave with cherished memories and few regrets.

There are many great cafes in the neighborhood. I take great pride that many people find their way to Peet’s for quality and a place special to the neighborhood. Peetniks and our customers have been part of a successful partnership to break down barriers and be a part of a community. We wanted to honor being part of this vibrant neighborhood by creating exchanges and events that were done as a quirky surprise, whether it was the appearance of the holiday bear, Halloween decorations or — at our best — recognizing people as individuals. I have confidence the new manager, Jonathan Gray, will continue to build on this partnership.

Peet’s is a great Bay Area company that always has found its way to delivering an excellent product while celebrating its employees. At the Fillmore store, Josef Nelson will be reaching his 10 year mark in December. Congratulations to Jo and to our customers and friends in the community.

Thank you and farewell. I’ll miss seeing you.

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| 2467 Vallejo St | 4 | 3 | 1 | 3729 | 20-Jun | 3,950,000 | 3,610,000 |
| 101 Maple St | 3 | 3.5 | 2 | 3229 | 18-Jun | 3,995,000 | 3,820,000 |
| 2502 Broadway | 5 | 5.5 | 2 | | 21-Jun | 6,300,000 | NA |
| 3512 Clay St | 9 | 4.5 | | | 03-Jul | 6,750,000 | 6,750,000 |
| 3130 Pacific Ave | 5 | 5.75 | 3 | 8249 | 12-Jul | 12,495,000 | 14,000,000 |
| 3800 Washington St | 8 | 7 | 7 | 17,895 | 10-Jul | 19,500,000 | NA |

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|-------------------------|---|-----|---|------|--------|-----------|-----------|
| 1895 Pacific Ave #104 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 512 | 27-Jun | 399,000 | 419,000 |
| 3720 Sacramento St #4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 08-Jun | 449,000 | 475,000 |
| 1624-1626 Vallejo St #2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 805 | 15-Jun | 549,000 | 578,360 |
| 2921 Washington St #1 | 1 | 1 | | 1070 | 20-Jun | 699,000 | 725,000 |
| 2040 Franklin St #508 | 1 | 1.5 | 1 | 1040 | 15-Jun | 729,000 | 729,000 |
| 2230 Pacific Ave #202 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 730 | 27-Jun | 725,000 | 731,000 |
| 2194 Pacific Ave | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 20-Jun | 875,000 | 910,000 |
| 1701 Jackson St #603 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1109 | 07-Jun | 918,000 | 915,000 |
| 3140 Clay St #5 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1062 | 27-Jun | 929,000 | 960,000 |
| 1865 Clay St #2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1633 | 29-Jun | 1,075,000 | 1,075,000 |
| 3110 California St #3A | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 06-Jul | 1,072,000 | 1,075,000 |
| 2421 Buchanan St #B | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1738 | 03-Jul | 1,095,000 | 1,150,000 |
| 2145 Franklin St #5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1810 | 27-Jun | 1,225,000 | 1,275,000 |
| 1998 Broadway #905 | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | | 06-Jul | 1,195,000 | 1,310,000 |
| 3316 California St #3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1779 | 22-Jun | 1,425,000 | 1,425,000 |
| 3178 Washington St | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 21-Jun | 1,375,000 | 1,475,000 |
| 2243-A Green St | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1546 | 19-Jun | 1,395,000 | 1,560,000 |
| 2200 Pacific Ave #10A | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1856 | 29-Jun | 1,495,000 | 1,605,000 |
| 2837 Washington St | 3 | 3 | | 2350 | 12-Jul | 1,765,000 | 2,200,000 |
| 2861 Washington St | 3 | 3.5 | 1 | 2796 | 11-Jun | 2,195,000 | 2,400,000 |
| 2190 Broadway St #3E | 3 | 3.5 | 1 | 3200 | 15-Jun | 3,195,000 | 3,295,000 |
| 1800 Gough St Penthouse | 4 | 4.5 | 2 | | 29-Jun | 4,495,000 | 4,000,000 |

— Data provided by JOHN FITZGERALD, co-owner of Byzantium Brokerage and an agent at Pacific Union. Contact him at jfitzgerald@pacunion.com or 345-3034.



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New Owners Settling Into Jazz Heritage Center Condos

A few weeks ago, Chuck and Lorna Smith became the first residents to move into the building

WHEN Chuck and Lorna Smith moved to San Francisco in 1998, they landed a great apartment with a terrific view on the 10th floor of the high-rise apartment building on Van Ness Avenue.

After they discovered Fillmore Street, they found they always gravitated here.

“We adopted it as our favorite street,” says Chuck.

As the dot-com boom reached its peak, the couple was told their rent would double. So they decided to buy a condo — and looked for one near Fillmore.

“We sacrificed the view to be in the neighborhood,” Chuck says of the one-bedroom unit they bought on Sutter Street less than a block from Fillmore Street.

As they got to know their neighbors, they met a couple down the hall who were jazz fans. They hung out together when the Fillmore Jazz Festival rolled around, and went together to concerts — including some at Yoshi’s, the heralded Oakland jazz club.

“Then we started hearing that Yoshi’s was coming to Fillmore,” Lorna says, and that the building would include a dozen floors of condominiums. “We thought, ‘This is a way we can have a view again and still stay on Fillmore.’”

They signed up on the developer’s website for updates on the Fillmore Heritage Center, the long-awaited project now nearing completion at Fillmore and Eddy. When the first offering was announced, they and their jazz



“To have the view and brand new construction — and jazz at Yoshi’s. We love it.”

fan neighbors went to the open house, donning hard hats to climb the stairs all the way up to the top floor.

“To have the view and brand new construction — and jazz at Yoshi’s downstairs,” Chuck says. “We loved it.”

A few weeks ago they became the first tenants of the building when they moved

into their one-bedroom unit on the top floor, looking south — on their wedding anniversary.

“The first week we had the whole building to ourselves,” says Chuck. “We never had to wait for the elevator.”

Gradually the neighbors began to arrive, and the Smiths estimate that about

a quarter of the 80 units in the building are now occupied. The developer says two-thirds of the condos are already sold, at prices ranging from \$500,000 to over \$1 million. Of the 80 units, 12 were priced below market rate.

“To see all the diversity — this building is going to be a real melting pot,” says Chuck. He sees the inclusion of a number of units sold below market rate as a way to build a new and diverse community.

“I want to be a champion of it,” he says.

They profess no concern about safety, despite the recent surge of crime nearby in the Western Addition.

“We were down here all the time anyway,” says Lorna. “We work out at Club One, and we shop at Safeway. We were so accustomed to coming to the gym that we felt safe coming down here.”

“It’s not a concern for us,” says Chuck, “although we’re aware, of course.”

They remember first coming to this block when the Fillmore Farmers Market started a few years ago — on the empty lot that now holds their building.

“I think the cachet from Yoshi’s is going to rub off on everything else,” says Chuck. “It’s actually already exceeded my expectations.” Two new restaurants are soon to open on the ground floor, new art and furniture is still being added in the public areas and a 10,000 square foot roof garden is just beginning to grow. And then there’s the jazz club, opening this fall.

“It’s a story that’s still unfolding,” he says.

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Neighbors Say Art Gallery in Historic Home Violates Law

Complaint sparked by commercial use in a residential area

THE CITY'S Planning Department has issued a Notice of Alleged Violation to the Anthony Meier Fine Arts gallery, operating in Meier's home at 1969 California Street.

The notice followed a complaint by the Pacific Heights Residents Association that the commercial use should not be allowed because the area is zoned residential.

Meier's attorney, Brett Gladstone, was to meet last week with the Planning Department. He said he would file for a formal permit for commercial use to ensure that the gallery complies with the city's requirements.

Gladstone said, however, that he did not believe the current operation was illegal.

Up to 25 percent of a home can be used for some businesses in some circumstances under city ordinances, Gladstone said, and in the case of Meier's 1914 Willis Polk mansion, the art occupies two living rooms, or less than 20 percent of the total space.

Some professionals, such as antique dealers, can use antiques in their homes and also have them for sale, Gladstone said. He believes the same applies to Meier's art, some of which Meier owns, some of which is on consignment. About 90 percent of Meier's art, Gladstone said, is in warehouses in Switzerland, New York and Boston and is sold over the Internet from a basement office occupied part-time by two people.

Without some commercial usage, Gladstone said, it is difficult to maintain large and expensive homes, and he said that is why many have been converted to bed and breakfast operations or other businesses.

The gallery, Gladstone said, has four receptions each year, with valet parking provided. There are perhaps a dozen other parties at the gallery each year, Gladstone said, that are fundraisers for a variety of interests of Meier and his wife, including a film group, a hospice, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and a day school attended by his children. But Gladstone said none of those events is associated with the gallery.



The half portal at 1969 California

Just up California Street on the south side there's the strange case of 1969 California, an English Tudor Gothic house whose grand portal ends surrealistically with its second half — seemingly for a companion house that was torn down or never built — missing. The fact is, the other house was never built. The extant 1969 California was put up in 1914 by Willis Polk for Constance Tobin, one of the heiresses of the de Young clan, owners of the Chronicle. A mirror image was planned for her sister Helen Cameron, but George and Helen Cameron decided to settle on the Peninsula.

— ARTHUR BLOOMFIELD in Gables & Fables: A Portrait of San Francisco's Pacific Heights

He said there are only two or three visitors to the gallery each week — some art students and some potential buyers.

The residents association's complaint says the operation of an art gallery "is clearly not a residential use" and urged that the owners be notified that they must ap-

ply for a conditional use permit to continue to operate. Greg Scott, president of the association, said his group will oppose the application for a conditional use permit.

"Neighbors are entitled to quiet enjoyment of their homes without the illegal intrusion of commercial activity," Scott said.

Victorian Will Triple Its Size, But Keep Facade

AFTER A long struggle, controversy over the remodeling of the Victorian cottage at 2564 Sutter Street has finally been resolved with a written settlement agreement between owner-developer Peter McCluskey and attorney Stephen Williams, who represented objecting neighbors.

McCluskey has agreed not to add a garage to the building, which would have required the front garden be removed. He will not add a fourth floor to the building, and he agreed to maintain the facade and to complete the project according to the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation of Historic Resources.

Williams has notified the San Francisco Planning Department that he has withdrawn his objections. He is now satisfied that the building will retain its historic significance, even though the remodeling will triple the size of the building.

The house is listed in *Here Today*, the 1968 book adopted by the city as an official survey of historically significant buildings. Part of its significance is that it was designed by a well-known architect and has been inhabited by a number of historically important people. However, it has now been vacant for six years and is in need of considerable restoration, including a new foundation and new plumbing and wiring.

Williams said the settlement was reached after several months of meetings between him and the developer, whom he characterized as "reasonable." Previously, disagreement over the cottage had reached all the way to the Board of Supervisors.



The Victorian cottage at 2564 Sutter Street will be remodeled in accordance with historic preservation guidelines.



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My Mother, the Vaudeville Dancer

BY DON LANGLEY

How I Learned the Story of Her Showgirl Past

MY MOTHER’S entry into show business, and the way it happened, was part of our family lore. But she rarely talked about that period of her early life, and my siblings and I knew few details of her life as a dancer.

It turns out, however, that show business life, the people and the sights she saw, were all documented in long letters she wrote often to her mother and father and many others. Her mother kept them all, including the letters to other family members. Years after her death I got the letters from my aunt Carol, to whom they had fallen. I was amazed at the first-person look at the period they offered.

I thought the wealth of information and the insights they provided about the period deserved a wider audience. Aside from the portrait of an era, the letters presented a coming-of-age story. For years I struggled with the question of how to present it.

Eventually I decided to piece together the information as if it were a novel, in the first person. Taking it out of letter form lost some of the fun, such as the various ways she signed off, but the first-person approach allowed the rest of the changing moods and attitudes to come through. That was essential to the coming-of-age story. I titled the book *Vaudeville Days* to capture the driving force of the story and the spirit of the times.

The richness of the source material, however, still wasn’t enough. People today probably know Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, perhaps Ethel Barrymore, the matriarch of the family of actors. Others, equally significant in their day, are now forgotten. I spent hours researching sports stars, transatlantic pilots, actors, musicians and entertainers of all sorts.

The book is a very personal perspective, but it presents a window into an historic era — and highlights the miracle that my own mother experienced it all.

ORDER ONLINE: *Vaudeville Days* is available at www.lulu/DonLangley.



■ EXCERPT

‘I threw myself into the dance’

The news came as a bombshell: I was going to have the solo in the Oriental scene. I began working every day. I had to do crab crawls in a circle and oh boy that meant work. We worked on it for three and a half hours steadily one morning. Finally, my arms refused to hold me up in a back bend.

On Saturday morning I worked with Mrs. Wright on the Oriental and decided it was going to be all right. She was changing the dance somewhat because she said she could do more with me in the way of expression. I wanted it to be perfect before the girls arrived because they were going to be jealous anyway. I had no idea how I was going to make the costume changes. I was praying I wouldn’t have to sacrifice my hair.

Tuesday night Mrs. Wright told me to throw myself into the dance. I did. I threw myself backward so hard for the circle crab crawls that I slipped on the apron and sank down onto my elbows. Wouldn’t you know there had to be several people in the audience I knew? One night my pants in the Oriental, those little tight old trunks, split to the crotch and I had to run off.

— from *Vaudeville Days* by Katherine Beals (pictured above in 1928 in her featured role dancing the Oriental)

From the Neighborhood to the Broadway Stage

WHILE THE REST of the country was celebrating the Roaring Twenties, my mother seemed destined for a quiet life in San Francisco. But it didn’t turn out that way. Instead, she danced her way into show business, toured the country with a vaudeville dance troupe and witnessed some of the great celebrities and events of the era.

A new book, *Vaudeville Days*, tells her story. She had graduated from Girls High School at Scott and Geary Streets in 1925, shortly before her 18th birthday — sufficiently involved in school to be class historian, but not enough to want to go to college.

Instead, along with her sister Carol, she attended classes at the Peters Wright School of Creative Dance, located for many years in the distinctive building that still stands at the southeast corner of Sacramento and Pierce Streets.

She took a job selling handkerchiefs at O’Connor Moffat, the big department store at Stockton and O’Farrell that later became Macy’s. All the while she lived with the family in a flat at 233 Presidio Avenue.

Then, in March 1927, the touring half of the Peters Wright operation, a vaudeville dance troupe, came to Oakland. They needed replacements, and my mother, Kathryn Beals, filled in. She would learn a dance in the wings, go out on stage and perform, then learn another.

After two weeks the troupe was ready to go back on the road and they asked Kathryn to come along. Her father was away working at a mine in Arizona; her mother let her make the decision. Off she went.

She adapted quickly to the pressures of two-a-day, three-a-day and four-a-day performances, hotel life and backstage crises. In St. Louis, the troupe performed at a benefit alongside Al Jolson. In New York, they played the Palace Theater on Broadway, then the top showplace of the nation.

During the summer — business was slow for vaudeville in non-air-conditioned theaters — she watched Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig in Yankee Stadium. She cheered Charles Lindbergh’s triumphant parade up Broadway. She went to countless plays and musicals, including the opening night of “Funny Face,” starring Fred Astaire.

“The world was my oyster,” she said, “and I had an opener in each hand.”

And when it was all over a year and a half later, she came home in August 1928, a few days before her 21st birthday, and within a few months met and married my father in the Swedenborgian Church, a block from home.

Ironically, her younger sister Carol remained involved with dance much longer. Carol progressed to become a teacher at the Peters Wright School and eventually opened the Carol Beals School of Dance. In the 1940s she moved to Washington and Broderick Streets and taught in the dining room until classes outgrew the space and she rented a studio in the Richmond District.

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