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# New FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ SEPTEMBER 2007



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## Vogue Theater Gets a New Lease on Life

Foundation takes over  
historic cinema and  
vows to make it better

A NEW OWNER and operator, along with an infusion of cash and enthusiasm, have given new life to the Vogue Theater, which has been operating since 1912 near the intersection of Sacramento Street and Presidio Avenue.

The San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation bought the theatre, one of San Francisco's longest running movie houses, on August 21.

The Vogue will continue to present first-run films, but will also become a venue for special events such as private screenings and film festivals.

It is now operated by Michael Wilkinson of Peerless Entertainment, who has extensive experience operating historic theaters.

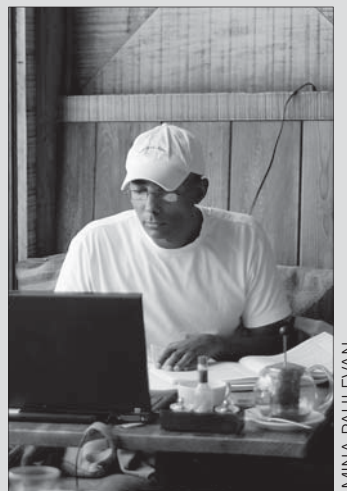
"We couldn't have asked for a better arrangement," says theatre manager Herb Kaufman, who has been at the Vogue for six years and will continue to manage the theater. Kaufman has been in theatre management for 20 years, including a stint at the Clay on Fillmore.

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## Seen and Unseen

Photograph by  
IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM

Even after she had become one of the grande dames of American photography, Imogen Cunningham liked to wander the streets of San Francisco with her black cape, her camera and her wicked wit. What one critic called her "disposition toward images of decay" led her in 1956 to take an afternoon stroll through the Western Addition. In an area being destroyed in the name of urban renewal, she photographed abandoned storefronts and buildings. Among the images she made that afternoon was "Self-Portrait on Geary Street," pictured above. It is included in "Seen and Unseen," an exhibition of Cunningham's photographs that will be shown this month at the Robert Tat Gallery at 49 Geary Street. More information: 781-1122 or [www.roberttat.com](http://www.roberttat.com).



MINA PAHLEVAN

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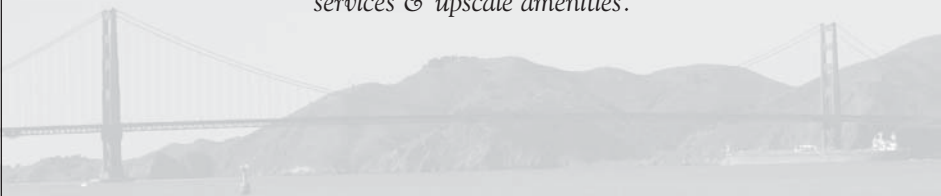


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## LOCAL FLAVOR



Freddie Powell still has the sign that held his daily sayings.

# What's the Good Word?

## A storefront philosopher is fondly recalled

**E**ARLIER THIS YEAR, the *New Fillmore* published an article that has probably drawn more response than anything else published here in recent years.

It was a letter left by departing residents for their successors listing some of their favorite things about the neighborhood. It turned out the letter had been passed along again and again for more than 20 years. And it struck a chord with others who recalled shops that had come and gone.

In one part the letter said:

"The grocery on Sutter has the friendliest two shop owners in the neighborhood. Each morning they post a 'saying of the day' and they love a good chat."

Friends saw the reference and mentioned it to Freddie Powell, who was one of the friendly owners of Weldon's Market — and the one who posted the daily sayings.

"Wow," he said after reading the story. "Somebody remembered."

Powell said his "Words for the Day" were inspired by his grandmother, who encouraged positive thinking.

"Each day I put a different saying in the window," Powell said. "The majority were positive affirmations — no politics, no race."

"It wasn't until I missed a day that I found out how important it had become to other people," he said.

So he kept it up, nearly every day, from 1978 until 1996, when they leased the market to others. He still has stacks of pink cards he posted.

"How have you been helping?"

"It's not this way all of the time."

"Be like cream."

"It's your show and you're the star."

"Talk about it with a friend."

"It's time to make some changes."

"Turkeys everywhere."

A bit of old Fillmore lives on.

## ■ AT THE MARKET



### Tomato sushi?

Yes, that's Yoshimi Oune, owner of the Maruya sushi shop on Fillmore, spotted on a Saturday morning admiring the tomatoes at the Fillmore Farmers Market. "It's true, there are no tomatoes in traditional Japanese food," she says, "but I love tomatoes — especially these heirloom tomatoes." The market continues on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Fillmore and O'Farrell. "People say go to the Ferry Building," she says, "but it's too far away. I like the Fillmore market."

## THE NEW FILLMORE

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# New Brass Vows ‘Nordstrom Service’ at Northern Station

A return to Fillmore Street gives captain a platform to build relations between officers and residents

By Don Langley

CAPTAIN Al Casciato, 57, the new commander of the Northern Station of the San Francisco Police Department on Fillmore Street, says he believes in traditional policing that encourages more face-to-face contact between officers and the public.

In his first weeks in charge, after a quick job shift on July 30 with former Captain Kevin Dillon, he has already begun redeploying forces to implement his ideas.

The Northern District includes most of the immediate neighborhood, stretching across the Fillmore, Pacific Heights, Japantown, Polk Gulch, Russian Hill and the Marina.

Casciato’s goal is to encourage officers to get to know area residents. “I want Nordstrom service to the public,” he says.

As part of his approach to policing, Casciato encourages officers to say hello to members of the public and wants the public to greet the officers in return. He acknowledges, however, that some new officers are uncomfortable about engaging with people after their strict training at the Police Academy.

But personal relationships with residents are possible, he says, because officers are usually assigned to the same station for 10 to 15 years.

Sergeants typically serve seven to 10 years before being transferred. Lieutenants stay four years; captains average only about two years.

Casciato, a 36-year veteran of the police force, says he is still in touch with people he knew when he was on the beat as a young



The main problem in Pacific Heights, says new Northern District Captain Al Casciato, is vehicle “boosting” — breaking car windows to grab goods left inside.

officer. He knows some local residents from his earlier days as a lieutenant at Northern Station.

Among the immediate changes Casciato is making is to redivide the district into sections, with a sergeant in charge of each section to supervise two patrol cars the officers on their beats. One section stretches from Steiner to Gough and from Geary to Market. Another reaches from Geary to the bay. The Polk Gulch section is bounded by Gough and Larkin, from Market to the bay.

Within those sections, beats will be reconfigured.

One beat currently goes along Fillmore all the way from Turk to Jackson — an area Casciato considers far too big. It will be di-

vided at Geary, with the southern portion also covering Japantown.

The new captain already has had some good news. Shortly after a recent rash of robberies alarmed Marina residents and spurred a heated public meeting, two suspects were arrested. There have been no Marina robberies since.

Cracking down on vice, Casciato said he recently confronted two Marina motel owners with evidence that their rooms were being used for prostitution. One owner immediately fired his manager and ended the problem. When the other owner was uncooperative, Casciato initiated a nuisance abatement proceeding to close his business.

The main problem in Pacific Heights,

he says, is vehicle “boosting” — breaking car windows to grab goods left inside. He encourages the public to report incidents to the police, not just to their insurance companies. These reports enable police to see patterns and to focus patrols on areas in which crimes are occurring.

For example, police reserves of 10 officers were called to patrol California, Chestnut and Union Streets from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. on a Friday and Saturday night in early August. Their presence likely forestalled some burglaries and boosting — crimes that Casciato says are often committed by the same people.

Northern Station is currently staffed with 144 people, 125 of them officers. Backing up the officers are teams at the station charged with undercover work, housing, gangs, homicide, drugs and prostitution.

A native San Franciscan, Northern Station’s new commander went to Sacred Heart High School and San Francisco State and did a stint in the Navy.

During the previous year, he served as night supervisory captain, the position former Northern Station commander Dillon now holds. Before that, Casciato was on a motorcycle handling traffic control — a post he says he loved. He also served at Central Station on Greenwich Street before it was merged into Northern Station. His police work has included covering major incidents, including shootings and riots, and he was a hostage negotiator for a time.

Casciato’s ties to the area include two family businesses in the Marina. His wife and daughter, both full-time real estate agents, work from the Keller Williams office at Franklin and Bush Streets.

## Planning for a Better Japantown

THE STEERING Committee for the Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan has begun a year-long process of figuring out how to preserve the community’s history and restore its culture while revitalizing business and reconnecting Japantown to its neighbors.

Public comment is being solicited from a variety of groups. The times and locations of upcoming hearings are posted online at [www.japantown.sfplanning.org](http://www.japantown.sfplanning.org). A survey about Japantown’s future is also posted on the website.

Meetings have already been held with business leaders, seniors and others, and will continue through the fall.

To help guide the project, the Planning Department is enlisting the assistance of a team of preservationists, planners and other consultants, led by the Page & Turnbull architectural firm.

There has been little consensus on building height. Some said it was important to limit heights, but others said density is needed to make the area more economically viable. Concern was expressed that the proposed 38-story tower at 1481 Post Street will set a precedent for greater heights in the neighborhood.

There have been a number of suggestions on how Japantown’s character could be preserved and enhanced. Some comments were critical of the design of the Peace Plaza and suggested the wall along Geary from Laguna to Fillmore be opened.



### Protest at Pelosi’s

Photograph by  
DICKIE SPRITZER

Dawn does not often break over House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s home on Broadway without anti-war protesters outside. Last month Pelosi denounced some of them as “nuts” and told them, “Get away from my house.” She and her staff have refused to meet with the protesters. Some nearby residents have complained about the disruption, but the protesters say most people are supportive.

Nearby on the Lyon Street steps, anti-war protesters also camped outside Senator Dianne Feinstein’s new home. On August 21, Feinstein held a meeting at the encampment of tents pitched on her front terrace. After the meeting, the group agreed to end their protest outside her home.





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### ■ CRIME WATCH

#### Robbery Post and Buchanan Streets August 1, 6:02 p.m.

Officers responding to a call about a fight in progress found two men fleeing down Laguna Street, leaving in their wake a man who was bleeding from the head. The injured man told the officers that the suspects attacked him, knocked him down and attempted to take his briefcase. When the suspects were detained, they claimed that the victim, using a pole, attacked them first. Several witnesses disagreed, insisting that the two suspects were the instigators. The two men were arrested and booked at Northern Station.

#### Robbery Sutter and Buchanan Streets July 16, 12:24 p.m.

Officers received a report of a fight. They met with a security guard who told them he had just detained a man who was attempting a robbery. The security officer had seen the suspect attempt to take a man's jacket. The man shouted at the suspect and the two men began to struggle; the security guard ran over to assist. The victim recovered his jacket and insisted that the suspect be arrested. The officers accepted the citizen's arrest and booked the suspect at Northern Station.

#### Auto Burglary Geary Boulevard and Buchanan Street July 23, 9:28 p.m.

Officers were alerted by dispatch that two individuals were breaking into a car. They arrived to find an adult and a juvenile removing items through a vehicle's broken window. One suspect attempted to flee; the other tried to hide under a van. Both were arrested. The owner of the car arrived and identified property that was in the suspects' possession. The adult suspect was booked at Northern Station and the juvenile was taken to the Youth Guidance Center.

#### Assault Geary Boulevard and Webster Street July 26, 10:27 a.m.

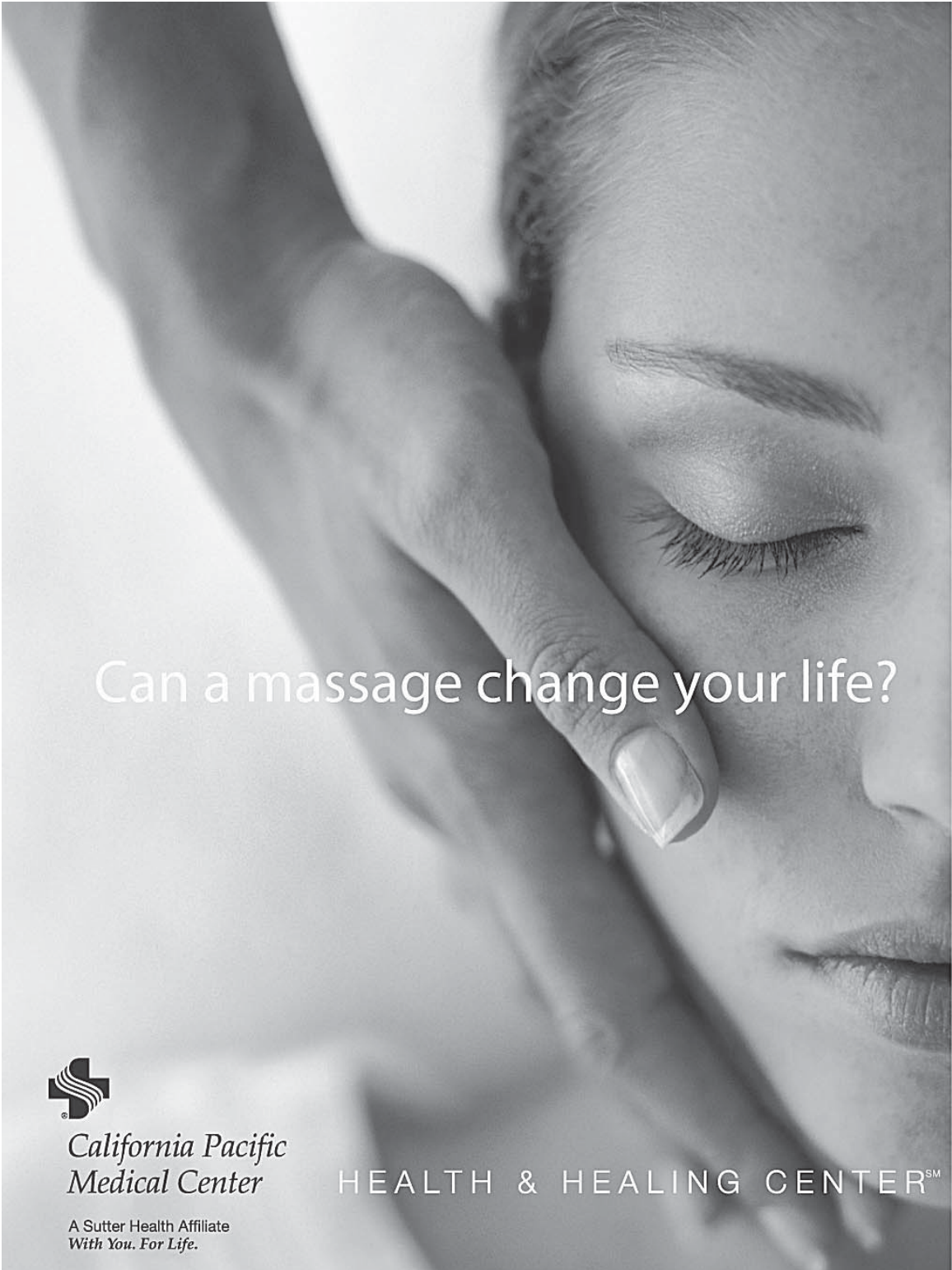
Witnesses called police to report a fight in progress. When officers arrived, the suspect was still assaulting a man. Officers separated the two, then realized that the suspect was extremely intoxicated. Several witnesses reported that he had been harassing people in the area, shouting taunts at them and throwing their property around. Officers, who arrested the suspect for assault and for threatening to kill the man he attacked, then booked him at Northern Police Station.

#### Burglary Pacific Avenue and Gough Street August 7, 10:30 p.m.

Officers arrived at a burglary in progress to find the apartment building's garage door wide open. As the officers entered the garage, a man fled and attempted to hide behind a stack of storage boxes. The officers detained the man, who was unable to explain why he was in the garage or why he was carrying a large bag filled with property from the basement of the building. Several witnesses identified the man and he was booked at Northern Station.

#### Theft Van Ness Avenue and California Street August 8, 2:22 p.m.

Officers on patrol heard a woman shout, "He's got my wallet!" while pointing to a man who was quickly walking away from her down California Street. As the officers



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approached the man, he threw a wallet onto the ground. Then he said to the police, “I didn’t take her wallet; she just dropped it here.” The woman’s identification card and property were still in the wallet. The officers then discovered that the man was a registered sex offender, was not complying with current laws and was carrying a concealed switchblade knife. The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

**Auto Burglary**  
**Post and Franklin Streets**  
**August 9, 1:45 a.m.**

Officers on patrol observed two men fighting. When the officers intervened, they learned that one person was an off-duty Oakland police officer who had caught the other man breaking into his companion’s car. The suspect had stolen a pair of sunglasses and was looking for more items to take. The suspect, who was on parole, put up a violent struggle, saying he did not want to go back to prison. The three officers were eventually able to detain him. They arrested the suspect at the request of the Oakland officer. The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

**Embezzlement**  
**Webster and Clay Streets**  
**August 13, 12:21 p.m.**

An employee at a local pharmacy realized that medicine was missing from the dispensary’s inventory. The manager checked the security tapes and noted that a certain employee had been lingering in the vicinity of the medicine at the time of the theft. When confronted, the employee confessed. The manager called the police, but by the time officers responded to investigate, the employee had fled the premises. The officers collected the evidence and sent the report to the Inspectors Bureau. The incident is under investigation.

# Symphony Resale Shop Gets a Fresh Look

**R**EPEAT PERFORMANCE, the resale shop benefitting the San Francisco Symphony that has operated on Fillmore Street for more than 30 years, will reveal a new look when it re-opens its doors on September 4.

“One of our main goals is to tell people what we’re about musically — and that’s the San Francisco Symphony,” says manager Paul Delucchi, who has been at the helm for almost a year.

Symphony recordings will be prominently displayed for sale. Delucchi adds that donations of musical instruments, CDs and albums will now be especially welcome to increase the music-related offerings in the shop.

Inside, new carpeting has been laid and the walls have been painted a soft celery hue. New track lighting brightens the entire store.

“I can’t wait for the volunteer who sorts the men’s clothes to come in here and see this,” Delucchi says, flipping on a switch in the brightly lit back work room where donations are processed and priced.

The dressing rooms, too, have a classy new look. They are lit by two ornate crystal chandeliers — donated by a longtime volunteer who recently died. “They’re perfect in here,” notes Delucchi, who is sure the benefactor would be happy with the placement.

The soft opening September 4 will kick off a month-long silent auction for special items, including a huge poster of the San Francisco Symphony’s 2002 Russian Festival long coveted by many frequent visitors. A grand opening is planned for October.



*“One day a good customer came in and offered to start a collection for a new awning to replace the shabby one. I had to tell her: ‘Be patient. It’s on its way.’”*

Manager PAUL DELUCCHI on his shop’s new awning (above)

Much diverse merchandise is now being prepared for sale in the rehabbed store.

It includes a group of 13 pairs of beaded moccasins of varying sizes and vintages, from the collection of a frequent donor’s mother.

Also among the new wares offered will be a book titled *Mother of the Bride: The Dream, the Reality, the Search for a Perfect Dress*, which gives helpful hints to make the big day better. Sent by the publisher to sometime local resident Eddie Fisher, a note calls Fisher’s attention to page 77, which points out that he wore a hat when he married Elizabeth Taylor and suggests that such wedding attire may not lead to a long and happy married life.

But what may be most warmly welcomed by many local residents is the new awning on the storefront that replaces the faded red weatherbeaten version that final-

ly came down last month.

Delucchi says that the powers that be in the symphony administration were long aware of the need for a new awning, but were limited by budget priorities.

“One day a good customer came in and offered to start a collection for a new awning to replace the shabby one,” recalls Delucchi. “I had to tell her: ‘That’s not the way nonprofits work. But be patient. It’s on its way.’”

The new understated awning, which includes the Symphony logo, will be in place when the store reopens on September 4.

Delucchi says the shop’s new look was accomplished mostly with the elbow grease of volunteers and the creative use of the fixtures already on hand.

“It’s really amazing what you can do with a lot of light, a little paint — oh, and in this case, a new awning,” he says.



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# The Proprietor's Perspective

Our August feature left some wondering how owners feel about patrons who stay all day. Here's one answer.

By KEN ZANKEL

THE NUMBER of customers working at The Grove has been pretty steady over the five and a half years we've been on Fillmore.

During the dot-com boom, many people worked for themselves as consultants or pursued other independent professions. As a result, they had the mobility and autonomy to work where they felt comfortable.

Following the dot-com implosion, some were still working independently and others were doing job searches and writing resumes at The Grove. When the economy improved, we had a bit of a drop in guests working out of The Grove as some of those who were formerly autonomous began working in offices.

Right now, I'd say we're about where we started when we opened on Fillmore in early 2002.

Regarding people who stay for long periods of time, much of the effect is positive. Most people, especially those who work for themselves, realize we — like they — are in business, with bills to pay and staff to support. We signed well in excess of \$1 million in checks last year, which is a lotta lattes. We can only do that with revenue.

People attract people. We are flattered and proud to be a place where people are

so comfortable. We work hard at that.

There is a very small minority that acts as if cafes like ours are taxpayer-financed public venues. That's ironic. If you asked them, "Would you like to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to make a beautiful place and hire lots of people, and the business plan is, 'Buy something or not, bring food from elsewhere, we don't care,'" they would of course consider that preposterous.

I personally will be all right either way. The people who get hurt, if there is too much of that, are the employees, since with fewer sales we need fewer staffers working fewer hours. The other people who get hurt are paying, legitimate customers with food or a beverage who want to sit down but can't because someone who ordered a Coke three hours earlier will not voluntarily make room so that others may enjoy the cafe as they do. Sometimes I think if the small minority knew that, they would behave differently.

But that is the case in most of business and life. Most people act honorably. A very few are oblivious. You can't let the exceptions get you down. Of our guests, 99.9 percent are a delight. The best part of doing what we do is meeting so many wonderful people and getting to be a small, positive part of their lives.

Ken Zankel owns The Grove on Fillmore.



Guests get comfortable in the lodge-like setting at The Grove.

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# Don't Forget Martha Brothers

A new neighbor learns that a coffee shop can be good for more than just coffee

By Christina Furtado

YOUR AUGUST article on working from area coffee shops was a great piece, yet I couldn't help but notice you didn't include Martha Brothers Coffee Co. Located just a few blocks from Fillmore Street at California and Divisadero, Martha's has been my coffee staple since I moved to the neighborhood a year ago.

Through my 24 years I'd never been a huge fan of coffee shops. It never occurred to me that a coffee shop could be used for more than coffee. A few months ago my perspective shifted, thanks to a life-changing decision and the friendly folks at Martha Brothers.

In June I took the plunge and decided to live alone, moving into a modest studio in Pacific Heights. Having lived only with roommates up to that point, I was understandably anxious. After five years of living in the city and a failed relationship, I felt I had hit my "make it or break it" point.

The reality of living on my own sunk in the first Saturday I found myself without plans for the weekend. Accustomed to weekly obligations with my ex-boyfriend, this newfound freedom was hard to swallow. Though tempted to hide out in the confines of my cozy apartment, I knew the only way to preserve my sanity was to get out of the building. That's when I got off

the couch, glanced out the window and spotted Martha Brothers just across the street.

A San Francisco staple since 1987, Martha Brothers Coffee has six locations around the city. The shop at California and Divisadero is a convenient location for those — like me — looking to avoid the hustle and bustle of Fillmore Street. On any given day runners, Financial District go-getters, churchgoers, school children, old friends and couples gather for coffee and the assortment of goodies the shop has to offer — and also to catch up amid the cafe's family atmosphere.

You won't find Italian-themed cup sizes and no translation book is required for drinks ordered at Martha's. To the shop's friendly baristas, coffee is coffee. The decor is homey, with a variety of stools, couches and coffee tables scattered around the sunny room. Low-hanging lamps ensure just enough light for early morning or late afternoon reading without disturbing the shop's laid-back atmosphere.

Martha's has managed to avoid the downfalls of its overly trendy counterparts, staying true to its modest beginnings in the mountains of Nicaragua, where Martha and her siblings grew up on their uncle's coffee plantation in Matagalpa. Surrounded by fresh roasted beans, they inevitably learned about coffee.

A move to the United States brought the family's knowledge of roasting to a new

audience. Now they are masters at both roasting and retailing.

On that lonely Saturday afternoon a few months ago, I was amazed by the diverse crowd I encountered at Martha's. As I settled into a window stool overlooking California Street with newspaper and latte in hand, I found both the staff and the patrons to be exceptionally friendly. No sooner had I sat down than I was asked to help with a crossword puzzle, talk politics and recap the events of the day. The sense of community was comforting at a time when I felt all alone.

Since that fateful day I have become a regular at Martha's. Even when I don't need a coffee fix, I find myself wandering in to people watch. Last Sunday morning I noticed a crowd dressed in fine suits and dresses. They were patrons of a nearby church. Just as the churchgoers left, the yoga practitioners and runners made their way in, stretching as they ordered their health shakes. Only halfway through the Sunday paper, I had witnessed an entire ecosystem of coffee lovers and neighbors in just a matter of minutes.

Living on my own continues to be a challenge, but I know there's at least one place I can truly call home. Martha Brothers has shown me there's more to coffee than just beans.

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# A Fillmore Pioneer Blooms in Brooklyn

Has Beans helped launch the gourmet coffee movement here before taking on New York

By MICHAEL MOLINE

**B**ROOKLYN — Standing on the sidewalk on a sweltering day in a not-quite-yet-fashionable section of Brooklyn, San Francisco exile Peggy Gandrau took inventory of the storefront businesses that have closed during the past year.

It's not evidence of decay, she said. "That's just what happens when a neighborhood changes."

The South Slope neighborhood is only steps away but seems far removed from gentrified Park Slope, with its renovated brownstone row houses and trendy restaurants, bars and boutiques.

Although not without its architectural jewels, the preferred building material for the working class houses here in the South Slope was brick and clapboard, and from the looks of things at least one aluminum siding salesman passed through. Discount shops and Mexican restaurants abound. Women who from all appearances are recent immigrants push prams and tow toddlers down 5th Avenue. A Polish meat market testifies to the area's ethnic past.

But modern apartment buildings seem to be going up on every block. A new sushi place will open soon down the street. Slender 20-somethings in sundresses — transplants from Manhattan, out of state and Park Slope — swan down the avenue.

"I like these kinds of neighborhoods," Gandrau said. Seventh Avenue, the heart of Park Slope, "is boring," she said. "This neighborhood is much more diverse."

And ripe for change.

*She's seen it before  
— in the Fillmore*

Gandrau has seen it before. She found a similar canvas in San Francisco 30 years ago, when she helped pioneer the gourmet coffee business in the storefront at 2015

Fillmore, just north of Pine Street in what is now the home of Tango Gelato.

Now she's at it again on the other side of the country. Four years ago she opened a cozy coffee house with a few tables, chairs, French lithographs and bins of fragrant coffee on the South Slope's 5th Avenue.

Recently she expanded her empire across the street and launched a new wine bar, Vin Rouge, in a former women's clothing store.

The name of the coffee house, Has Beans, will be familiar to longtime Fillmore residents. Gandrau ran the neighborhood's first true coffee house under that name for many years.

"I guess I've always been a pioneer," Gandrau conceded, but it's not like she set out to be. Again in the South Slope, as before in the Fillmore, she spotted a business opportunity.

"It's not like me going in and changing the neighborhood," Gandrau said. "It's like, 'This neighborhood needs a coffee shop.' The rest follows."

Still, she admitted, "It makes me feel good that people tell me I've changed the neighborhood." She said people tell her, "We looked at this neighborhood and when we saw a coffee shop we said, 'We can live here.'"

Gandrau says she, her husband and a silent partner — Gary Ockey, owner of a plant store called Terrarium at Fillmore and Pine — first opened for business at 2015 Fillmore Street on November 13, 1976. They took their inspiration from the Freed Teller & Freed store, now late and lamented, which purveyed fine coffees and teas on Polk Street for many years — and still does on the Internet. They called the business J.B. Loucks, Merchant, Gandrau's husband's name.

"People forget that there used not to be coffee houses," Gandrau said over coffee and juice in her South Slope shop. "There was nothing like this. There was North Beach, but that was more like cafes."



Before its reincarnation in New York, Has Beans — one of the first Fillmore coffee shops

They ran the business on Fillmore Street for five years, until the building owner erected scaffolding during a renovation, Gandrau said, and drove away their customers. They moved around the corner to 2411 California Street, the spot now occupied by the pet boutique, George. The business also expanded into coffee roasting in a building on Howard Street.

"It's just a natural evolution," Gandrau said. "You really can't make money unless you roast your own coffee."

They opened another shop on 19th Street at Castro, modifying a bin Gandrau found in an old butcher shop to store the coffee, and an outlet in the Monadnock Building on Market Street, where the lines of coffee lovers used to run out the door. The couple launched these enterprises on their own, and decided the expanding business warranted a fresh name. During a brainstorming session their friend Jim Wilkinson, who owned an antique store on

Fillmore Street, had an inspiration.

"Has Beans was born," Gandrau said.


Like Freed Teller and Freed, Has Beans was all about fine roasted coffee, sold by the pound. It was years before an espresso machine crossed the threshold.

Pastries are fine, but to this day Gandrau won't sell soup in her coffee house, even though New Yorkers love it and it's a big earner for her competitors. She doesn't want the smell to overwhelm the aroma of the main product.

"I still want you to smell coffee when you walk in here," Gandrau said.

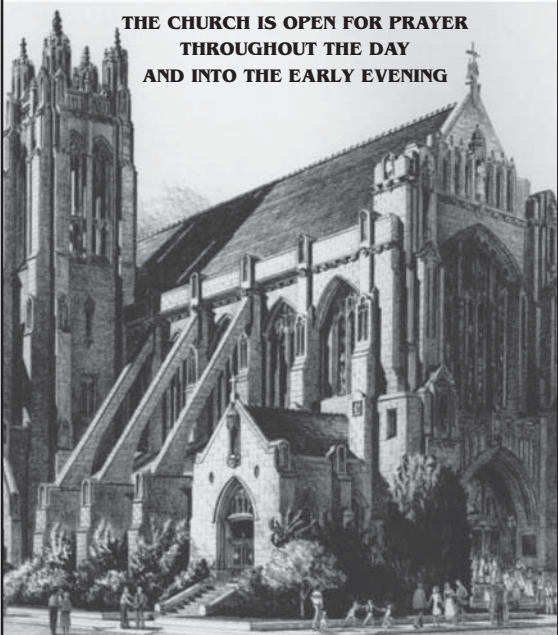
*It was mom-and-pop,  
— with some characters*

In the early days of Has Beans, the Fillmore was still largely African American. What now is The Grove was a diner, Gan-



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— stood at 2411 California Street, between Rolling Pin Donuts and the California Street Creamery, in 1990.

drau remembered. She recalled visiting the barbecue restaurant that former NBA star Nate Thurmond operated where Harry's Bar today dispenses infused vodkas. Passing the long bar in the front of the house to reach the tables in the rear, Gandrau and her sister, young ladies from Burlingame, were a little intimidated, she confessed, but "the food was great."

The area "was more family oriented, in terms of family businesses — mom-and-pop kind of stores."

Dodgy characters used to come into Has Beans to buy coffee grinders. Someone hip to the drug scene clued Gandrau in. "I guess they'd grind up marijuana with them."

One dark evening she and her sister were in the store when a guy walked in and slipped a grinder under his coat. Gandrau was prepared to let him get away with it. But her less timid sister, Karen McCrary, wasn't about to let that happen. "She goes,

'Excuse me, sir. Would you like a box for that grinder?' He kind of dropped it and ran."

Later, a burglar broke into the California Street store and ripped off an armload of copper tea kettles. Neighbors heard breaking glass and called the cops. "They caught the guy down the block with all this copper in his hands. But I don't remember it as being a big crime area."

### *Then came imitators and corporate coffee*

The 1980s brought gentrification. Gays moved in. "That always dresses up a neighborhood. It didn't get so chi-chi until the late '80s."

Then imitators started showing up.

"It started changing when all the other coffee shops started coming in," Gandrau

said. Customers began turning up their noses when informed her shop didn't offer the frothy confections on sale around the corner at Starbucks, and turning snitty if the coffee cost more than at the shop down the block. Gandrau says one competitor brazenly copied the price list at Has Beans and then offered his own brew for 15 cents less per item.

"It wasn't Starbucks moving in that bothered me," Gandrau said. A little competition was fine, "but there's like seven coffee shops. It takes all the fun out of it when there's so much competition."

Has Beans closed its doors in the neighborhood in 1994.

Gandrau does concede that Starbucks — which she doesn't consider truly gourmet — "introduced the general public to espresso and espresso drinks. My espresso business was not a big business until the mid-'80s. That's when Starbucks came in and people learned what espresso was and

cappuccino and all that. They get the credit. All of us in the gourmet business have benefited."

At the same time, Gandrau's marriage was ending. Her husband headed for Paris, where he's a consultant in the coffee and tea trade. Gandrau was off to Mt. Shasta with her son and daughter, where she re-opened her shop in a rustic stone building. With new partners, the business expanded to Eureka and Chico. She sold her interest in the operation to her partners five years ago.

Gandrau said she didn't realize when she got into the coffee business that she was being a pioneer, but "we kind of always have been." In Shasta, for example, the locals had never heard of a place that sold only gourmet coffee.

"People would come in and say, 'What is this? What else are you going to do?' Nothing. It's just coffee. In the beginning, none of those people had a clue."

Living in Mt. Shasta, she found out soon enough that she missed the city, but by that time San Francisco was "so saturated in the coffee market." Her son, grown by this time, had lived in Brooklyn and told her about Park Slope, so she decided to check it out. "I got off the train and thought, 'I could live here.'" Within a year she'd opened Has Beans east.

"I love it here — except for the weather," Gandrau said on a sultry summer New York day, which followed a recent cold snap.

### *Keeping connected to the neighborhood*

Gandrau still retains ties to San Francisco. She visited the old neighborhood last November for a Has Beans 30th anniversary party at the Curbside Cafe.

"I miss my friends," she said. "I always say I'm going to retire in San Francisco. I don't know how I'm going to afford it, but I always thought that life is easier in San Francisco. Life here is hard in a lot of ways, because of transportation and the number of people and the weather. It's just more intense. I don't want to be 81 and traipsing through the snow."

And forget about roasting her own beans. Environmental regulators closed down two other roasters that operated in the neighborhood, so why take an expensive chance of meeting the same fate? Gandrau imports her beans from her former partners on the West Coast, but grouched, "It's like having a bakery shop and not baking."

She added, "It's okay. I'll make my retirement money on the wine bar — it's not going to be coffee," and laughed.

"San Francisco is still home," Gandrau, now 57, said, "but I have a couple of years left to make that decision."

# V

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## GOOD WORKS

# Celebrating Compassion Across the Generations

Born in adversity and strengthened by necessity, two local groups have forged a lasting relationship

By STEPHEN MCNEIL

IN 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, interning people of Japanese descent on the west coast. The forced deportation of 110,000 people included 5,000 from the Fillmore and Japantown.

Josephine Duveneck, the head of the Quaker group, the American Friends Service Committee, wrote at the time:

*I shall never forget the morning when I went to work at the Japanese American League building on Post Street. On all the streets in the vicinity and from the hills above, little groups of people were hurrying laden with suitcases, bags, cartons and all manner of impediments.*

*Some of the Friends had organized a canteen with hot coffee, tea, chocolate, doughnuts and sandwiches. Each individual, even the babies, had to have a number. We helped fasten on the degrading labels. We provided extra twine to tie up sagging bundles. We offered tags and letter paper and stamps, and a box of bandages for bruised knees. We had a little stove to heat baby bottles and Kleenex to wipe the tears off the faces of frightened little children.*

*At last the chartered buses arrived, and the little groups gathered themselves and their possessions to climb aboard, supervised by the soldiers. We helped get the luggage in and lifted the children onto the steps of the bus, watching as they found their seats inside, and waving goodbye when each bus was full.*

*As it moved away, we had tears streaming down our cheeks. "Wipe them away, girls," we told ourselves. "We have to go in and cheer up the next group."*

The same year, 1942, a small band of Quakers and volunteers opened the first San Francisco office of the American Friends Service Committee at the vacated Japanese YWCA at 1830 Sutter Street, a building designed by noted architect Julia Morgan. It was built with funds raised by Issei (first generation) Japanese American women. After the Friends moved in, 1830 Sutter became a beehive of activity, hosting European refugees and the occasional conscientious objector.

Volunteers had to gather, copy and send out at least 25 documents for each Japa-

**Joining together again**

On **September 27**, two of the groups that have played key roles in the mission of 1830 Sutter — the American Friends Service Committee and the Nihonmachi Little Friends — are joining together to honor some of those who have worked for compassion and justice. The event will include an auction, reception and dinner. It begins at 6 p.m. at the Miyako Hotel. For more information, call 565-0201, ext. 29.

nese American high school graduate in the camps who wanted to go on to college.

Eventually, more than 4,000 *Nisei* (second generation) students of Japanese descent were allowed to leave the camps in the West and attend colleges in the East and Midwest. They got help from the National Student Relocation Council, which was funded by the Friends.

Through the decades — from internment in the 1940s to the redress movement of the 1980s — the Friends continued to support Japanese Americans fighting for justice.

African Americans, mostly from the South, moved into the "vacated" Japantown and Fillmore areas to work in wartime industries. Friends helped them, along with other immigrant communities, including Jews and White Russians from China.

In 1975, Nihonmachi Little Friends began the bilingual child care programs that have now grown into three sites serving more than 170 children. The children of Little Friends come from Japanese, Chinese, Korean, White, African American, Latino and Southeast Asian families. Both preschool and elementary school-age programs continue to serve the Japantown and Fillmore communities.

In the 1990s, the Japanese American community rallied to save the 1830 Sutter building from sale or demolition, successfully preserving the trust created by the Issei women who had not been allowed to hold title under the laws of the time.

And today, the Friends continue their work with teenagers and young adults through its Asian Pacific American Community Program.

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Keur Sadaro villagers were surrounded by medical supplies brought to them this summer by faculty and students from Drew School and Lick-Wilmerding High School.

# Schooling Locally, Learning Globally

Drew School students return to class after a summer of experiences in Africa

By JOHN MAGEE

AGAIN THIS YEAR for the third summer, groups from Drew School — the private high school at California and Broderick Streets — pursued education beyond the classroom and journeyed to Africa to travel and live in Senegal, Kenya and Tanzania.

Initially the trips were designed to give students the opportunity to stay with a village family, learning about their daily lives and engaging in a cultural exchange. But after forging a relationship with village elders in the rural farming village of Keur Sadaro, Tanzania, and being moved by the many basic needs of the villagers, teachers from Drew decided to expand the program.

Drew School is now making — in partnership with Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco — a three-year commitment to provide assistance to Keur Sadaro villagers, especially schoolchildren.

Next summer, students will be directly responsible for helping the village meet the goals established this year by village elders and the school delegation.

For Daouda Camara, a French teacher at Drew School and a native of Senegal, these trips serve an important purpose.

“This is a life-changing experience for students,” Camara says. “The media por-



A Drew student helps locals in the green belt movement plant trees in Kenya.

trays Africa as one large disaster. These trips allow students to see and understand for themselves the incredible spirit of the African continent.”

Dean of Faculty Jacques Cusin agrees. “At Drew, we strive to teach our students to be global citizens and look beyond their own personal borders to better understand the world,” Cusin says. “Especially in the face of increasing animosity between na-

tions, these trips help our young students learn that we are all interconnected.”

On the opposite side of the African continent, a separate group from Drew School journeyed to Kenya and Tanzania.

For six weeks this summer, Drew science teachers Kathryn Tate and John Magee led a trip to East Africa. Five adults — including Head of School Sam Cuddeback


— and 15 students visited Kenya to learn about the green belt movement, a grassroots environmental campaign founded in 1977 by Dr. Wangari Maathai, a visionary Kenyan who received the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize for her work.

The green belt movement’s main focus is empowering individuals in Kenya, primarily women, to plant trees as a way of improving many aspects of their lives — from providing firewood for cooking to preserving natural water supplies. The trip included five-day stays in homes in a small subsistence farming village with little electricity and no plumbing.

Teachers said their “very urban students” got their hands dirty collecting seeds and planting trees, while experiencing the determination and pride the group brings to improving the environment.

The second portion of the trip, spent in Tanzania, immersed students in the more urban African culture around the city of Arusha. It ended with a five-day safari to experience African wildlife.

Drew School leaders say they will continue these exchanges because they offer an irreplaceable opportunity for students to learn about the larger world, to make a difference in the lives of others and to gain new perspective on how they live their lives back home in San Francisco.



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2937 Webster St	3	2	1		03-Aug	1,095,000	1,130,000
1751 Vallejo St	2	2	1		17-Jul	975,000	1,152,000
1701 Broadway #1	3	2	1	1825	09-Aug	1,298,000	1,275,000
2200 Pacific Ave #11D	2	2	1		13-Jul	1,350,000	1,350,000
2766 Union St	3	2	1		27-Jul	1,450,000	1,425,000
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Record sale prices reported on three homes

Has the recent mortgage crisis impacted San Francisco — and, more specifically, our neighborhood? The short answer is that it’s too early to tell. While I’m aware of some disturbing incidences where preapproved funding was pulled at the last minute, those stories have dissipated since the Federal Reserve Bank lowered its discount rate. Right now, the San Francisco housing market is in its typical summer slowdown. But with Labor Day around the corner, things should shortly be back in full swing. In September, we’ll have a better understanding of how the credit crisis will affect our year-end market.

Some record-setting transactions have occurred in Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights in recent weeks:

the views are spectacular from its next-to-the-top floor location. Offered at \$6.75 million, the property went into contract soon after it was listed and should close in early September.

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

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12 NEW FILLMORE September 2007



# Battle Brews Over Hilltop Remodeling

Architect says plans comply with city codes

**N**OTICE OF A building permit application for a dramatic remodeling of 60 Normandie Terrace is expected to go out to neighbors late this month, officially touching off what is shaping up to be a classic battle over what should and should not be built in Pacific Heights.

The architects and the Planning Department are now conferring about the final version of the design, which will be the basis of the notification, known as a 311 notice, to be sent to neighbors inviting their comments.

Opponents have already joined together to hire an attorney to fight the project. Although the address is on the Normandie Terrace cul de sac, the home has a major presence on Vallejo Street as well.

Architect Lewis W. Butler, of Butler Armsden Architects on California Street, says his design complies with the city's planning and building codes, with only one exception. The project would require a variance only because the garage opening onto Vallejo Street would be closer to the property line than the building code allows.

Butler said the neighbors seem most concerned about three other aspects of the project: the size of the house, its modern design and maintaining the integrity of the high retaining wall that descends from the house down to Vallejo Street.

Butler says the retaining wall is actually in good shape, but was built in 1909 with no steel reinforcement — and no house on top. He says his plans will reinforce and upgrade the retaining wall. Butler said excavating behind the wall for a garage will have no effect on the strength of the wall because of the engineering.

Neighbors object to putting a garage door through the wall, he said, because it would eliminate an existing parking place. A two-car garage through the retaining wall will replace one of two garages that now exist at the Normandie Terrace level.

The renovated house will have more than 14,000 square feet, but Butler said most of the space to be added will not be visible because it will be behind the retaining wall.

Contrary to the neighbors' petition opposing the project, which described it as an



An architectural rendering shows how the floor-to-ceiling glass walls in a remodeled home on Normandie Terrace would rise above Vallejo Street.

eight-story building, Butler said the renovated home will have three stories above the retaining wall and three more stories behind the retaining wall.

Above the garage on Vallejo Street and behind the retaining wall will be laundry, storage and guest rooms. Another level up will be the kitchen, dining room and a terrace. Three bay windows will extend through the retaining wall, overlooking Vallejo Street and the bay.

At the Normandie Terrace level, the size and shape of the existing house will be little changed, Butler says. He acknowledges the addition on the south side — another aspect to which neighbors object — will reduce the space between 60 Normandie and its neighbor, but only to the width that exists between other houses on the cul de sac.

The modern design, sheathed with floor-to-ceiling glass on the north and east sides, would replace walls punctured by an irregular pattern of windows of varying sizes. The floors will be articulated by

simple bands of stone. There will actually be one less floor — three instead of four — above Normandie Terrace, Butler said, but the height will be the same. He said the existing ceilings are low, so one floor will be removed.

Objecting neighbors say the modern design is out of character with nearby homes and that it violates neighborhood design guidelines.

Butler responds that the neighborhood guidelines don't stipulate style. He points out that while 60 Normandie was built in 1939, along with others on the cul de sac, the facade is the result of a 1998 remodel, with nothing historic about it.

His current plan for the front facade calls for eliminating a two-car garage door and using less stone than an earlier concept neighbors might have seen. A one-car garage door will remain.

Extending a column of stone down the house and onto the retaining wall will give a unity to the project, Butler said.

# Art Gallery Vows to Make Itself Legal

**L**ANDMARK STATUS will be sought for the home at 1969 California Street, the first step in what the owner hopes will bring his business located there — the Anthony Meier Fine Arts gallery — into compliance with the law.

Meier's attorney, Brett Gladstone, said he believes the operation is already legal because it involves less than 25 percent of the 10,000 square foot home. The "gray area," he said, is whether the planning code allows the presence of an employee.

So Meier will take extra steps, his lawyer says, to remove any doubt he is operating legally. Gladstone found an obscure section of the city code that allows commercial use of a residential building that is a city landmark.

If his home is designated as a landmark, Meier could apply for a commercial permit after 180 days. However, the code requires that the special commercial use be "essential to the feasibility of retaining and preserving the landmark."

A similar situation existed for years a block and a half away at the corner of California and Franklin Streets, where the Edward Coleman House, a San Francisco landmark, was occupied by a law firm. It is now once again a single-family home.

The 1969 California building was designed by noted architect Willis Polk and built in 1915. Especially notable is its half portal created when the original owner's sister decided not to build a home next door that would have completed the arch.

The process of gaining recognition as a landmark, followed by the six-month waiting period and the sure-to-follow arguments about the necessity of the commercial operation, suggest the issue will not be resolved quickly.

The situation came to light after a neighbor complained to the Pacific Heights Residents Association, which asked the Planning Department to require the gallery to apply for a conditional use permit — which the association said it would oppose.

The Planning Department promptly issued a notice of violation of the city code.

Gladstone initially said he would file for the conditional use permit. But the Planning Department notified all concerned parties that there is no provision in the code that would allow a conditional use permit for a residential building.

Gladstone's further research led to the strategy of pursuing landmark designation as a way of allowing the gallery to operate legally in the residential building.

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Private Donors Save Historic Vogue as a Single Screen Theater

► FROM PAGE 1

“First the new owners approached me with the question: ‘Do you mind if we get rid of all the commercials?’ That would actually take care of about half the complaints I get. They also said they wanted to shake up the candy offerings, bringing back traditional things like Red Vines, Milk Duds and Junior Mints. And I thought: ‘Hey, there go the other half of my complaints,’” says Kaufman.

Because of the sale and the way it was structured — through private contributions — Kaufman also predicts there will be more VIPs coming into the theatre.

“Do I want the folks from Dolby coming in here to check out my sound system? You bet,” he says.

A series of upgrades is planned for the Vogue in the coming months, including making final repairs to the exterior canopy and improving the sound, which now functions best when the theatre is full, signaling that more soundproofing is needed.

Kaufman says some repairs have already been made to the Vogue during his tenure.

“When I first took it over, it was a disaster,” he says. “There were leaks in the ceiling and heating that didn’t work.”

He laments the scaffolding that has been up for the last year, annoying nearby merchants and sending the message to passersby that the theatre was closed. The scaffolding was necessary because city regulators mandated that the canopy on the theatre be restored to look exactly as it has historically looked. Kaufman says that bit of renovation should be completed within the next few months.

Alfonso Felder, president of the San



Patrons could take a streetcar to the front door of the Vogue Theater in 1948.

Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation, an organization dedicated to protecting single-screen neighborhood theaters, said the purchase was possible because of generous contributions from friends and neighbors of the Vogue who contributed to the Vogue Theatre Capital Campaign. He said additional contributions are being solicited to help complete improvements to the Vogue. Go to “theatre info” at [www.voguesf.com](http://www.voguesf.com) for more information.

Single-screen theaters are an endangered species, in San Francisco and elsewhere. Dozens of neighborhood theaters have shut down during the last 20 years. Besides the Vogue, the only other single-screen venues remaining in the city are the

Clay, on Fillmore Street, the Bridge and the Castro.

Kaufman cites the consolidation of companies that own movie theatres and the rapid growth of movie multiplexes. “The basic successful business model is now a multiplex offering 16 or 20 movies,” he says.

Still, Kaufman says he personally prefers small, single venues such as the Vogue that allow management to offer special services to patrons, such as more conversations about films and their histories.

“Especially during the daytime, we get a lot of people in here who want to talk film — and unlike a multiplex, we can do that,” he says.

“And if theatre-goers come in five minutes late, we can tell them, ‘All you missed is the part where the engine on the bus blew up.’” That’s another service that multiplex operators are hard-pressed to provide.

Kaufman says Vogue employees will even hand-deliver popcorn to patrons in their seats if there’s a waiting line and showtime is tight.

Prompted by insistent mothers in the neighborhood, the Vogue also offers a baby-mommy matinee on Tuesday mornings at which babies are allowed to cry if they must. The theatre is half-lit so that mothers can keep an eye on their kids and the sound is at half-level to accommodate those who opt for sleeping over crying.

The Vogue opened as the Elite Theatre in 1910 and was briefly known as the Rex before becoming the Vogue in 1939. It has been the city’s most popular venue for Woody Allen films. And it had a 70-week run of “The Gods Must Be Crazy” during 1984 and ’85.

The San Francisco Neighborhood Theater Foundation is a nonprofit organization of volunteers established in 2002. Since 2003, the foundation has also presented a popular outdoor film series in Dolores Park, Washington Square Park and Union Square.

Kaufman says he hopes the Vogue will now offer more independent and art films, as well as documentaries, adding that “smart comedies, romances and foreign films without subtitles — like those from England or Canada,” work best at the Vogue.

“This is a date spot,” he says. “There are four or five of the best restaurants in town nearby. You go there, then take in a film. It doesn’t get better than that.”





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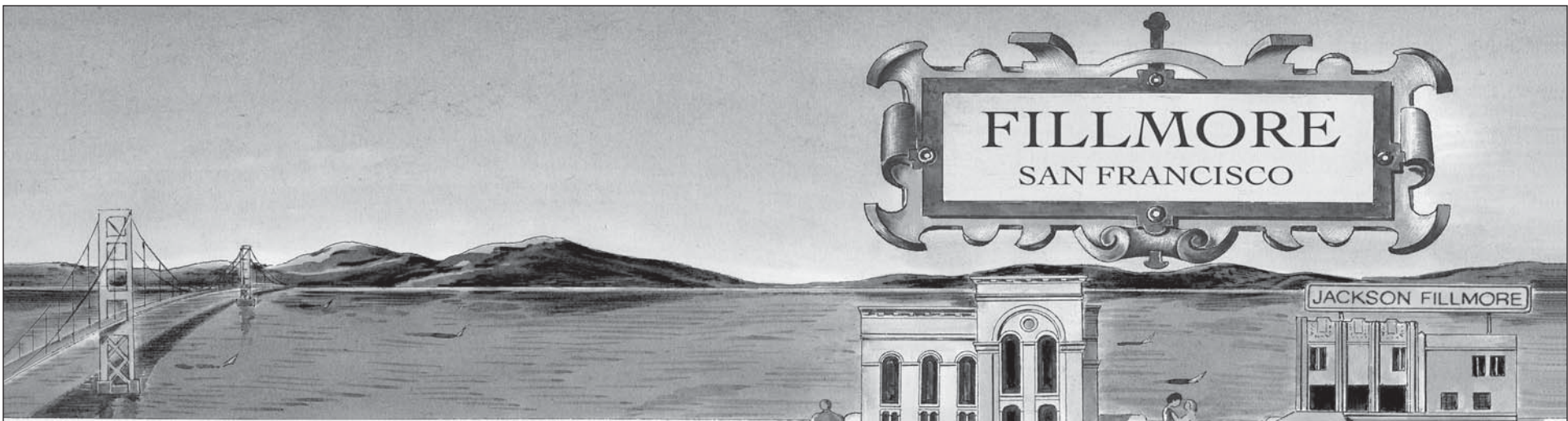
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