

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

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New FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ OCTOBER 2007



"Scott Street," by neighborhood artist Veerakeat Tongpaiboon, is one of a score of paintings of Alta Plaza Park being exhibited this month at the Thomas

Reynolds Gallery at Fillmore and Pine in "Alta Plaza and Beyond." Six artists offer their interpretation of Alta Plaza and other favorite parks in the city.

Alta Plaza: Park With a View

From an Abandoned Quarry
Came a Jewel of an Urban Park

By ANNE BLOOMFIELD AND ARTHUR BLOOMFIELD

YOU COULD CALL Alta Plaza Park a great outdoor room — or more accurately, a number of rooms, because the park is different things to different people.

One room, or set of rooms, is the tennis courts, windswept at times but commanding great views. Another is the children's playground with slides and sand. Then there's the dog walkers' park near Steiner and Jackson in the early morning and up at Pierce and Jackson later. San Francisco Symphony maestro Michael Tilson Thomas has been sighted there with his partner, Joshua Robison, and their standard poodle.

TO PAGE 6 ►

Friends Fund Improvements,
But More Remains to Be Done

By DON LANGLEY

IN RECENT YEARS, Friends of Alta Plaza have raised \$1.5 million. They have resurfaced the tennis courts and created a multi-sport court. They completely replaced the children's playground with state-of-the-art equipment installed over a rubbery injury-reducing ground cover.

Now comes the hard part.

While the improvements are obvious, so is the lamentable condition of the rest of the park. Aged trees are falling or dropping branches as they near the end of their life span. Flower beds are unplanted. Weeds sprout through cracks in the stairways. Slime oozes across surrounding sidewalks.

TO PAGE 7 ►

When you go to the Polls on November 6,
the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce recommends a vote of...

NO on A, Yes on H—

NO on A—Emissions Reductions and Transit Reform
Prop A is a bit of reform and a lot of politics: it prevents parking from being built in neighborhood districts, takes away our right to vote on tax issues and planning code-parking provisions, and makes it easier for Supervisors to interfere in Muni's budget. Vote **No** on A.

YES on H—Parking Initiative

Finding a place to park in San Francisco can be difficult, time consuming and frustrating. Vote **Yes** on H for a better quality of life that includes a balanced transportation plan: transit, bikes and a place to park.

Yes on C—Public Hearings on Initiatives

Help make City Hall more transparent and accountable by requiring public hearings on measures before they are placed on the ballot. Vote **Yes** on C FOR ELECTION SUNSHINE.

Yes on I—Small Business Assistance Center

Neighborhood small businesses are the city's life blood but opening or operating a business in San Francisco is a challenge. Vote **Yes** on I to create a "one stop shop" that will help navigate the City's bureaucracy.

No on K—Street Furniture Declaration of Policy

Proposition K could kill the transit shelter, news rack and Nextbus programs, as well as cost MUNI hundreds of millions of dollars in needed revenue. **Help make our streets clean and beautiful.** Vote **No** on K.

Yes on J—Universal Wi-Fi Declaration of Policy

To be competitive in the 21st century, all San Franciscans need to have equal access to the technological benefits of the Internet. Vote **Yes** on J FOR FREE WIFI.



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THIS MONTH

Forum Focuses on Transit, Parking

TRANSPORTATION and parking issues and their impact in the city's District 2 — which includes Pacific Heights and the Marina — will be the topic of the first public forum organized by 2gether, a new umbrella organization of the district's neighborhood associations.

The event will be held on Monday, October 15, from 7 to 9 p.m. in the auditorium of the Claire Lillenthal School at 3850 Divisadero in the Marina. The entrance to the auditorium is on Beach Street. Parking is available.

Among the topics of discussion

on the agenda are Propositions A and H on the November ballot. Prop A would change the structure of the Municipal Transportation Agency; Prop H concerns neighborhood parking.

Tom Radulovich, executive director of the Livable City project, will present an overview of how the different parts of the area's transit system fit together and offer a vision for the city.

District 7 Supervisor Sean Elsbernd will speak in favor of Prop A; Howard Epstein, vice chair of the San Francisco Republican Party, will speak in opposition.

Disputed Buildings Topic of Talk

JOHAN KING, the *Chronicle's* urban design writer, will be the featured speaker October 25 at the annual meeting of the Pacific Heights Residents Association.

King will discuss some of the controversial buildings proposed for the neighborhood, including new highrises, hospital expansion and super-sized private homes. He has also been asked to address the city plan's call for greater density, especially along neighborhood commercial streets.

The meeting will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. at the historic Flood mansion — now the Schools of the Sa-

cred Heart — at 2222 Broadway.

The cost for members, including wine and hors d'oeuvres, is \$35 per person before October 19 and \$45 after that. Nonmembers pay \$10 more.

In addition to King's remarks, there will be a brief business meeting of the association. During an opening reception, information tables will be set up by local groups and authors.

John King joined the *Chronicle* in 1992 and has been its urban design critic since 2001. He was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in criticism in 2002 and 2003.

**Shrinks Are
the Newest
Newcomers**

SAN FRANCISCO's Center for Psychoanalysis will take over the fourth floor of Newcomer High School.

Its two-year lease begins October 1; move-in will occur in mid-December after some preparation and painting. The move is temporary while the center's headquarters at 2420 Sutter Street is demolished and rebuilt.

Another portion of the building was recently leased by Metropolitan Arts and Technology High, a charter school funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The building sat vacant since Newcomer moved out last year. Some neighborhood residents, particularly a vocal group in the Pacific Heights Resident Association, expressed concern over the impact new occupants might have on parking on the already congested streets nearby.

However, the lease for the Center for Psychoanalysis includes parking spaces, so the staff of seven won't need to park on the street.

Originally a training institute and membership organization for local psychoanalysts, the center has expanded to reach Bay Area residents from Sonoma to the South Bay. It supports the continuing education and outreach efforts of more than 160 practicing analysts and more than 45 psychoanalysts in training.

The center offers programs for mental health professionals and the general public.



The sign is up and construction is proceeding at Yoshi's, the jazz club and Japanese restaurant opening next month in the Fillmore Heritage Center at Fillmore and Eddy.

**Yoshi's
Sets a Date**

Long-awaited jazz club
opens its doors Nov. 28

THERE WILL AN extra reason to celebrate Thanksgiving in the Fillmore this year: Yoshi's will open its new jazz club on the street on November 28.

Grand opening night will feature drummer Roy Haynes and Yoshi's Birds of a Feather Super Band, which includes Gary Burton, Ravi Coltrane, Nicholas Payton, Kenny Garrett and others.

The coming of Yoshi's is a big deal in every way. The 28,000-square-foot space includes a 417-seat club, with 317 seats on the main floor and 100 more on the crescent-shaped mezzanine.

The adjacent Japanese restaurant has 370 seats and a lounge.

The club is on the ground floor of the Fillmore Heritage Center at 1330 Fillmore, near Eddy. Soon to follow is another restaurant, 1300 on Fillmore, which will feature what it's billing as "soulful American food."

The building will also house the Jazz Heritage Center, opening later this year.

Other musicians already booked at Yoshi's in December include Taj Mahal, Chick Corea, the Count Basie Orchestra and Fillmore's own Frank Jackson. Tickets go on sale October 29. More information is at 655-5600 or www.yoshis.com.

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Archive of recent issues: www.NewFillmore.com

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■ CRIME WATCH

Stolen Auto Van Ness Avenue and Eddy Street August 22, 5:19 p.m.

Two officers on patrol were alerted by a third officer, who was in the process of following a stolen car. The officers joined in the chase. Eventually they forced the car to stop and arrested the driver. The car had been stolen from San Mateo County. The suspect was booked at Northern Station.

Auto Burglary Van Ness Avenue and Turk Street August 26, 12:37 p.m.

A man saw a car burglary in progress and called the police, describing the suspect to the dispatcher. When the officers arrived, they observed the suspect quickly walking away from the scene.

As the officers detained the man, he dropped the items he was carrying. The witness then approached and said, "That's him."

The owner of the car later contacted the police and told them she had inadvertently left her vehicle unlocked. She said the suspect had no business in her car, and identified the possessions that had been removed. Officers arrested the suspect and booked him at Northern Station.

Auto Burglary Franklin and Geary Streets September 11, 1:11 p.m.

An officer was passing through the neighborhood when he observed a man breaking into a car. The officer stopped and detained the man, who was armed with a butter knife and using it to gain entry into the vehicle. Two more officers responded to assist. The suspect was arrested and booked at Northern Station.

Bank Robbery Fillmore and Clay Streets September 12, 5 p.m.

A woman walked into the Fillmore branch of Bank of America and engaged an employee in conversation about what kind of identification she would need to cash a check, then left the bank. About 20 minutes later, a man entered holding a handkerchief over his face and brandishing a gun.

He pointed the gun at a teller while giving instructions to hand over money. Then he aimed the gun at two more tellers, threw a bag over the counter and demanded they fill it with cash. As the tellers filled the bag, the man warned bank customers standing in line not to move, then left the bank with the bag.

About 10 blocks away, at Post and Pierce Streets, officers caught up with the suspected bank robber, who was riding with the female decoy who had entered the bank earlier. Police arrested the two, along with the driver of the getaway car, and recovered the money and gun.

Possession of Burglary Tools Bush and Laguna Streets September 16, 4:30 p.m.

Officers with the auto boost task force observed a man looking into parked cars who seemed to be surveying the area for police cruisers. Officers followed him for many blocks. Eventually, he crawled up the fire escape of a building. When the man entered a house, the officers decided it was time to detain him.

The suspect was able to explain his presence in the building, but could not explain why he was carrying burglary tools. The officers arrested the man and released him with a citation.

■ HOT SPOT



When not in Rome, do as the Fillmore does

The locals were ready Saturday evening, September 22, when the neighborhood's newest restaurant, SPQR, opened for dinner at 1911 Fillmore.

It's a Roman osteria from the crew behind highly lauded A-16 in the Marina.

"Nearly everybody here says they live just around the corner," marveled chef Nate Appleman on opening night.

For the past seven years the tight space was home to Chez Nous, a favorite of the foodie set. Initial reviews suggest SPQR is at least an even trade.

The name comes from Rome's motto. The look is rich, with dark wood and soft lights. There's added counter seating, an inventive menu and an adventurous wine list co-owner Shelley Lindgren offers by the bottle, carafe, glass or taste.

No reservations are taken, but dinner is served until 11 p.m. Lunch starts October 1.

RETAIL REPORT

After a Re-do, a Sleek Boutique Emerges

A REINCARNATED women's clothing boutique, Limu, has recently opened at 2237 Fillmore with a luxurious modern look and an array of unique new offerings.

Limu will also offer old favorites from a number of established designers, carrying on the tradition established by its predecessor, Jim-Elle, which occupied the space for many years.

"It was time for a fresh new look," says owner Simone Derayeh. "And I wanted to give the place my own feel and sense of aesthetics."

Derayeh bought Jim-Elle last year, and earlier this summer gutted the space and completely redesigned it with ebony floors and sleek, understated dressing rooms. Suspended glass shelving and recessed niches display the fall clothing collections in muted shades of brown, gray and green — plus plenty of things in San Francisco's color for all seasons, black.

Limu offers tried and true basics from such noted designers as Peter Cohen, Vivienne Westwood and Alberta Ferretti.

"But we now also include a number of up and coming designers we find in our travels from Shanghai to Columbia to

Japan," says Derayeh, "such as jewelry and belts by Virgins, Saints and Angels."

Shoppers are greeted warmly and offered advice and direction — as well as wine, cappuccino and espresso.

"We go for hospitality," Derayeh says.

Sterling Bank Opens on Fillmore

STERLING Bank & Trust opened its 14th San Francisco location

in September, bringing a glitzy marble and mirrored facade to the corner of Fillmore and Bush Streets.

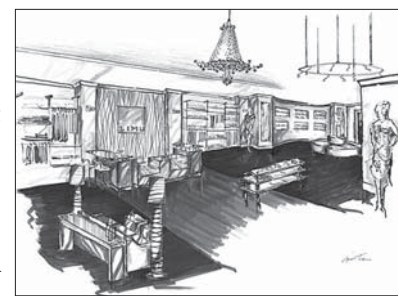
The full service bank, with an ATM on the street, offers more personalized service because of its small size, according to Stephen Adams, Sterling's regional vice president.

The Fillmore branch differs from

most other banks because it has no teller lines, only bankers at desks.

Although the space appears to be unusually small for a bank, Adams says it actually is larger than Sterling's branch at Geary and 19th Avenue.

Adams is particularly proud of the restored original ceiling, one of the highlights of an extensive remodeling of the longtime home of the Vogue nail salon.



WILLIAM T. HAN INTERIORS



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Change is on the way! Learn about plans to improve Muni service

Over the past year, the Transit Effectiveness Project (TEP) has been looking at ways to make Muni more efficient and attractive to riders.

Please attend an upcoming community meeting to learn about the TEP's key findings and ideas and help us shape the City's plans to improve Muni service. We will present the same information at each meeting. In early 2008, we will host another series of meetings to present final recommendations.

Transit Effectiveness Project Community Meetings

Excelsior District	Mission District
Saturday, October 20 10:00 am to 12:30 pm Monroe Elementary School 260 Madrid St. at Excelsior Ave. The nearest MUNI bus lines are 14, 29, 49 and 52.	Saturday, October 20 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm St. Peter's Catholic Church 1200 Florida St. at 24th St. The nearest MUNI bus lines are 9, 27 and 48.
Inner Sunset	Civic Center
Monday, October 22 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm County Fair Building (Hall of Flowers) near entrance to SF Botanical Garden 9th Ave. at Lincoln Way The nearest MUNI lines are N-Judah, 6, 43, 44, 66 and 71.	Tuesday, October 23 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm Bill Graham Civic Auditorium 99 Grove St. at Polk St. The nearest BART and MUNI station is Civic Center. The nearest MUNI bus lines are 8, 18, 21 and 46.

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Transit Effectiveness Project
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Alta Plaza Set Aside Early On to Be a Park

FROM PAGE 1

The joggers' park at Alta Plaza is around it, in it, up it — meaning, in the last case, those alpine steps at Pierce and Clay. Other sports, especially touch football, sometimes co-ed, are generally played near the Town School corner at Jackson and Scott.

The bench-sitters' park is at street level at Washington and Steiner, the lovers' park on the hillside just above. And there's a "room" for connoisseurs of that sometimes hard-to-find San Francisco condition, windlessness, next to the row of cypresses along the crest of the park.

Then one must say that the park not only has rooms, but architecture. People at drawing boards designed the staircases, terraces, paths and landscaping, then men and women installed them.

Even the shape of the land is a human artifact because more than a century ago it was barren and had been used as a quarry for filling other sites. There were dangerous holes, the biggest and deepest some 150 feet by 250 feet in size — or a third of a block — in the park's center.

The land had been set aside for a park early enough to prevent such treatment. "Alta Square" was one of six public



"Steiner @ Clay" by Nicholas Coley is one of the paintings of Alta Plaza Park in a group exhibition this month at the Thomas Reynolds Gallery at Fillmore and Fine. Coley can frequently be found painting on location at Alta Plaza or Lafayette Park.

squares or plazas west of Larkin Street that the Van Ness Ordinances of 1855 reserved for park use — the others being Lafayette Park, Alamo Square, Hamilton Playground, Jefferson Square and the present Funston/Moscone Recreation Center — but for a long time City Hall did nothing to develop the site, or the others, for that matter. The eight-block-square formula for these parks was inspired in part by the notion that if a park is spacious but not too large, its visitors will be safe.

One Milo Hoadley claimed prior ownership at Alta Square and sued repeatedly to obtain it. It was only in 1888, at the Supreme Court level, that

the not very civic minded Hoadley was finally rebuffed without recourse.

Houses had been going up in the neighborhood — on Clay and Steiner in the 1870s, and Scott was built up by 1885 — and naturally there was growing agitation for development of the sad and barren area so unpleasantly visible from pretty bay windows in the area. But with Hoadley on the warpath, City Hall had remained frozen.

With 1890 came the thaw. Property owners in the area hired a designer named R. Ulrich to prepare a plan for Alta Plaza Park and he duly came up with walks, terraces, the still-treasured "cozy nooks for rest and meditation," and plantings in the defunct quarry area that had for good

reason been giving the neighbors fits. Meanwhile, a newly energized City Hall appropriated \$10,000 to develop the park and from 1890 to 1892 it was graded at last, holes filled, the still-present perimeter walls built, the Clay Street side terraced, the walks and staircases constructed, trees and grass planted.

It's been said that the great John McLaren created the plan, but I doubt it. In the 1890s McLaren was ruling over Golden Gate Park for the Parks Commission, an entirely different department. The Superintendent of Streets was charged with the work at Alta Plaza.

Whoever thought it up, the design, with its handsome stairs, formally capped walls and Beaux Arts symmetry, is excellent. The excavations were duly refilled and the four terraces create usable space out of the steepest natural slope, the Clay Street side at Pierce.

Over the years, some Alta Plaza events have made news. After the '06 earthquake people took refuge in it. In 1938 a city supervisor thought selling it could ease a budget crunch, but thankfully the city attorney uttered a polite no. Then in 1971 a car chase for the movie "What's Up, Doc?" was filmed on the Pierce Street staircase, and the damage is still visible.

Mostly, though, the park has been a neighborhood joy, good to look at, or from, and a place where people meet people of like interests. In recent years the entrances have been enhanced and protected with seasonal flower beds. And lines of Japanese plum trees have been planted on the Steiner Street side. Long may they flourish.

Excerpted from *Gables and Fables: A Portrait of San Francisco's Pacific Heights*

Friends Step In Where the City Fails to Tread

FROM PAGE 1

"Our park doesn't have a plan and hasn't had one for about 40 years," says Lauren Hall, leader of the Friends of Alta Plaza, a nonprofit formed to enable neighbors to become involved in renovating the park. "We have a lot of catch-up to do."

The Friends are now developing a horticultural master plan for the park and hope to complete it within a year. The plan will be based on three of the designs created last year in a project of the School of Landscape Architecture at UC Berkeley. The final plan will include input from Joe Figone, the new park supervisor for this area, and an assessment of what Adrian Rojo, the park's long-time gardener, can maintain.

Hall said considerations include selecting trees that have sufficiently deep roots to survive the wind and don't drop cones — or anything else.

"We have a little money," Hall says. "A lot of neighbors have said they'll give money for the horticulture. We'll start fundraising when we know what the cost will be. It could be next to nothing or millions."

First, however, the plumbing must be fixed. Water leaks out of the north and south sides of the park. A study determined city water is spilling on the north side, the result of broken pipes.

On the south side, the green film across the sidewalk is caused by seeping ground water — perhaps from a spring under the park.



A 20-person crew under the supervision of a parole agent cleared weeds from hedges in Alta Plaza on September 15 as part of the annual Coastal Cleanup Day.

Once drainage has been dealt with, irrigation problems must be solved. "If we were to re-do all the irrigation, a contractor told us it would cost \$600,000," Hall says. Until there is irrigation, she says, it's pointless to replant the flower beds at the corners and other entry points.

Another problem is that the city hasn't come through on its commitment to make the restrooms by the playground accessible to the disabled, and so they remain closed.

"The bathroom construction was supposed to be done two years ago," Hall says, "but last week the city said, 'soon.' " The Friends have asked that the restrooms at least be open on weekends.

In addition to being understaffed, the parks are underfunded, Hall says. She points to a city report that shows nearby Lafayette Park needs \$7.6 million in re-

pairs, mostly for its retaining walls and its playground. Lafayette Park, too, has irrigation issues. Alta Plaza hasn't even made it onto the list, Hall says.

The Friends held their first neighborhood workday this summer, and Hall says the group would like to schedule a regular cleanup day for neighborhood volunteers similar to the one at Lafayette Park. But that requires notice and approval by the Rec and Park Department, which must schedule a city gardener on overtime to supervise the volunteers. And Hall acknowledges the Friends have not yet found a volunteer coordinator to pull the project together.

Despite the magnitude of the problems and the obstacles to solving them, Hall remains optimistic. "We'll get it done," she says. "We're all problem solvers and we found a big problem."

Lafayette Park Gets a Poem on Its Paths

LAFAYETTE PARK is one of 10 San Francisco parks that will have site-specific art installations the weekend of October 19-21.

It's part of a citywide exhibition of outdoor art that weekend and is free to the public.

In Lafayette Park, a poem by Erica Enenberg will be spelled out in large letters by artist Mikhail Iliatov. The letters will line the paths on the western side of the park.

Enenberg says her poem explores the anticipation and fulfillment of desire. Iliatov calls his installation a "large-scale artwork" and has titled it "Linking the Park to a Story of First Love."

Treating the park as an oversized sheet of paper, Iliatov will stencil the poem on the grass along six park pathways using biodegradable materials that will disappear after the event.

Other nearby parks involved in the program are Alamo Square and the Fillmore-Turk Mini Park.

At the mini park, the artist Moses will install "6 Beats Deep." "I will construct a highly stylized sculptural coffin fitted with speakers embedded in its surface," Moses says. "The goal of this project is to creatively address the problems of violence in urban communities."

The event is the inaugural project of the Center for Outdoor Contemporary Art. More information is available at 431-9870 or www.cocanow.org.



Alta Plaza & Beyond

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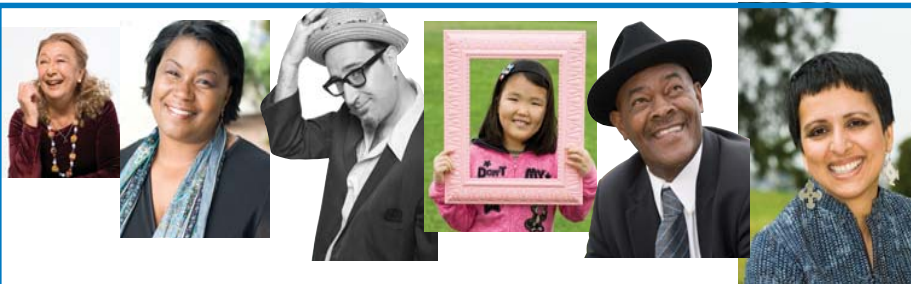
Christ Episcopal Church, on the corner of Pierce and Clay, invites you to our welcoming, inclusive community.

Sunday Holy Eucharist is at 10 am.

On **October 21 at noon**, join us for a **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS** to commemorate St. Francis of Assisi. We will gather on top of Alta Plaza Park. All furry friends are welcome—socialized or caged only, please.

On **October 28 at 4 pm**, join us for an afternoon of poetry. With Browser Books we present *Short poems East and West: The Tanka and the Limerick*. Ryoko Tadakuma, an award-winning Tanka poet in her native Japan, will read in translation and Bob Scher will read from his work. *There's a Hole in Your Sky: Limericks you can Tell to Anyone*

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RESALE SHOPS

A Skirt With a Past — and a Future

What was once Ednah's became Louise's, then mine, and now Melissa's

By BARBARA KATE REPA

WHEN RETRIEVING the dry cleaning recently, I ran into an old friend: a brightly colored skirt, freshly cleaned and snaking down the automated trolley at Perfect Cleaners on Fillmore. The unusual combination of colors, the nubby silk fabric, the jaunty scalloped waistband all were unmistakable. It had been my skirt before I donated it to the Victorian House Thrift Shop a few months earlier.

I had gotten the skirt years before from a friend, Louise Baldridge, who was in her late 80s when we met, but still spry and spirited and quick with a story — many of which involved one of her three former husbands. "I always loved the rascals," she said.

Louise was also a social hub, frequently throwing dinners for motley combinations of friends. In her later years, when shopping and chopping became too much, Louise would call to announce, "I'm having a dinner party for six this Friday — and it's at your house. Don't worry. I'll bring a lemon meringue pie for dessert."

Louise loved to spend afternoons picking her way through the Fillmore resale shops. The Victorian House was one of her favorites. She had an uncanny talent for walking directly to the best find in the place, then cajoling a reduced price.

And she loved to dress up. Until the final months of her life, which ended when she was 92, Louise primped and dressed every day with the classic care: manicured coif and nails, stockings and matching bag and shoes. She didn't own a pair of pants. "Ladies don't wear trousers," she said.

Simplicity was the start

IN ADDITION to tales of her skirt-chasing husbands, some of Louise's other stories involved antics with her dear friend Ednah Root, an artist and heiress to the Simplicity Pattern fortune, who endowed the American Art Study Center at the de Young Museum.

"Ednah was a warm person — very lively and generous," recalls Ann Karlstrom, director of publications and graphic design at the de Young. "She was a



"I fell in love with that skirt the minute I saw it," says Melissa Barber, its newest owner. "It cost \$50 — kind of pricey for a thrift shop find."

huge dog lover and had two or three. She even allowed them to hop up on the table and eat the hors d'oeuvres. And when she died in 1987, she paid for a caretaker to attend to them until they died, too."

Karlstrom also remembers Root's bearing and panache. "She was not tall, but she stood right up as if she were. She

was blond until the very end. And she had a tinge of an accent of some type that made her seem somehow aristocratic," says Karlstrom. "Most of all, she liked to dress in a flamboyant way, with an air of eccentricity."

Lee Miller, who was associate curator of American decorative arts, to which Root

made a bequest, also recalls her style.

"Ednah was a very pretty woman — and she had the most gorgeous blue eyes you ever saw," says Miller. "She was an attractive dresser, always incredibly well groomed."

By bent or by birthright, Root amassed a huge wardrobe. At her death, she willed much of it to Louise, who went down to Ednah's house in Palm Springs to retrieve it — although the furs had mysteriously gone missing. But Louise did bring back many items, including that full-length skirt made of raw silk in vibrant shades of pink and green.

'Someone should wear this'

I LOVE DRESSING, too. So when Louise started slowing in her final years, she began to gift me with items of clothing — including many of the pieces she had inherited from Ednah Root.

"Someone should be wearing this now," she said one day, handing me the skirt. Louise recalled that Ednah bought the fabric on one of her many buying trips to China, then had the skirt designed and sewn in San Francisco.

In addition to possessing the Simplicity fortune, Ednah was said to be endowed in still other ways I am not. Her friends described her as "pigeon-breasted" and curvaceous. I swam in the skirt.

I took it to be altered by a family friend, a protégé of designer James Galanos who had created fashions for the likes of Princess Grace and Joan Crawford decades ago, prompting him to change his name from Henry to Henri. Henri turned 93 this year and lived in Milwaukee, where he became the toast of a senior complex of mostly female residents. He sewed beautifully until the day he died in August. "I have to sew. I can't just sit here," he said only weeks before his death. "And I have tons of alteration work to do. The ladies here all complain they're getting shorter."

Henri shortened and narrowed the skirt that had come from Ednah to Louise to me, and he added his own distinctive twist: a fitted waistband with a scalloped top and fabric-covered button closing.

I wore it several years ago to a dinner

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Skirt With a Past Finds Its Future

► FROM PAGE 9

Louise hosted — this one not at our house but at the Ritz — and she fished into her alligator purse and retrieved a picture of Ednah Root. “Ednah would be happy to see you wearing that skirt,” she said, kissing the little gold frame that held the picture and putting it on the table so Ednah could be with us as we ate.

After Louise died, there were far fewer fancy fests to attend, so I decided I should pass along the skirt to someone who would honor it with the wearings it deserved. I donated it last year to the Victorian House on Fillmore Street. It was the kind of find Louise would have loved.

Now, another good home

MELISSA BARBER, a neighborhood resident and an aficionado of vintage clothing, spied the skirt while on one of her forages through Fillmore's resale shops.

“All of my special pieces are vintage,” Barber says. “I love the idea of clothing that has a history, that is truly recycled — and I hate seeing 10 of the same thing hanging on a rack in the store, all overpriced. Vintage is special.”

“I fell in love with that skirt the minute



A fashionable Ednah Root was embraced by art critic Alfred Frankenstein at the de Young Museum in 1976. One of her silk skirts is still being embraced by others.

I saw it. It is so unique. The fabric is beautiful and I was taken with the scallops on the waistband,” Barber said recently. “It cost \$50 — kind of pricey for a thrift shop find. But you know what? It was worth it.”

She first wore it to a dinner party in Tiburon, with a simple tucked white blouse and metallic flats.

“It was a beautiful dinner — many courses — and by the end of the night the waistband was so tight it was killing me,” recalls Barber, who is tall and thin.

“I’m a comfort person — well, fashion

first, but comfort, too,” she says. “I took the skirt to Perfect Cleaners and said to Wai Chan, the proprietor, ‘You have to save this skirt. No matter what.’”

Chan did some skillful maneuvering, shortening the skirt and using fabric trimmed from the hem to fashion a placket to ease the waist a bit.

“I’m going to wear this skirt for a long time,” says Barber. “But when I do give it up, I’ll make sure it goes to another good home — and that the new owner knows its history.”

Goodwill’s Move Celebrated Oct. 6

GOODWILL will throw a grand opening bash at its new store at Fillmore and Post — diagonally across the street from its old locale — on Saturday, October 6.

The opening celebration will include hourly raffles of gift certificates and movie tickets to the neighboring Sundance Kabuki Theater.

In addition to shelves and racks stocked with new donations of clothing, housewares and small appliances, store manager Lonnie Tuck says there will also be new clothing purchased as overstock from Macy’s and other department stores.

The new store is only 71 square feet larger, but the shopping floor is considerably bigger in the new space, Tuck says.

A pilot program at the Fillmore store will help five trainees gain work experience in retail sales to prepare them to work in other stores. Working alongside the store’s nine staff members, the trainees will learn about handling inventory, working cash registers and counters, customer service and shipping.

Rachel Grossman, chief of organizational advancement, said Goodwill gets 23 million pounds of donations each year in San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin counties and prevents 75 percent of it from going into landfill. Clothing too worn to be offered for sale, for example, is baled and sold for rags.

To make it easier for people to make donations at the new store, there will be a person specifically assigned to help donors at a door on the Post Street side of the building.

Get Fit? Where Do I Begin?

Six tips from a local pro

NEIGHBORHOOD personal trainer David McGuire says he hears one desperate lament from new clients more often than any other: “I’m so out of shape, I don’t know where to begin.”

McGuire — a certified personal trainer at Pacific Heights Health Club who also leads outdoor fitness classes (www.dmcguirefitness.com) — offers six simple tips for getting off the couch and onto a healthy fitness regime.

TIP 1: Start gradually.

Build slowly and reward yourself often with healthy choices such as a great piece of fish or steak from Mollie Stone’s. Or consider getting a massage from one of the local practitioners.

Our bodies and minds are systems of equilibrium. That is where they function best. Changes in behavior — such as starting an exercise program — must be gradual to stick and become a regular habit. That goes for changes such as eating healthier, being more active, or even just trying to think more positively about yourself and your body.

BODY & SOUL



Fitness trainer David McGuire demonstrates the proper form for abwork in the sand.

TIP 2: Love your body.

Seriously. Walk down Fillmore Street carrying yourself as tall as possible, with your shoulders back, stomach in, head held high. The way you think about yourself is important when it comes to exercising and living a healthier lifestyle.

Your inner dialogue with yourself about your body image makes an enormous impact on your drive and ability to become and remain active. You really do have to visualize yourself as a healthy and strong person, regardless of a few soft spots or a jelly roll or two. You have an amazing body that can move in millions of amazing ways.

I encourage clients to look beyond their own physical imperfections and instead concentrate on the less tangible benefits

of regular exercise: the ability to handle stress better, limit mood swings and sleep better. Your entire system functions more efficiently if you exercise.

TIP 3: Be selfish.

Schedule time with yourself — time just for you and your body. And make it non-negotiable. Plan it into your overscheduled day and look forward to getting your body moving.

It’s common to put exercise at the bottom of the list and never get to it. Then at the end of the day we beat ourselves up because, once again, we haven’t worked out. Bad move. Keeping a positive attitude and committing to a consistent program are the keys to building exercise into your life.

TIP 4: Let go of the past.

A client of mine has a wonderful saying: “Five minutes to get over it.” Skipped a workout? Ate or drank too much of the wrong things? Didn’t work out at the intensity you had planned? Big deal. You’re human. Get over it and don’t carry it around with you for more than five minutes.

Obsessing about what happened yesterday will only give the behavior you regret a longer life and prevent you from achieving a positive and aggressive workout today. Look at what threw you off track, learn from it — and approach today with a fresh start.

TIP 5: Do what you enjoy.

Find an activity that interests and excites you — climbing the stairs at Alta Plaza Park, power walking up Fillmore from Union Street, taking a yoga class at one of the neighborhood studios or health clubs. We all know exercise is hard work, but there should be a part of you that looks forward to it.

Need more suggestions? Hire a personal trainer. He or she can show you that the list of possibilities is endless.

TIP 6: Be proud of yourself.

Don’t underestimate this point. It’s important to look at your physical accomplishments and use them as a way to enhance and build a positive attitude and self-image. This is the cement that will keep you on the exercise path.

Realize how amazing you are and hold that thought tightly in your mind each time you start exercising and feeling your heart rate climb.

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THE ARTS

Musicians, Artists Unite to Benefit Pets Unlimited

GORGE Daugherty, a resident of the neighborhood and a frequent guest conductor with the San Francisco Symphony and other orchestras around the world, had a love in addition to music: his golden retriever, Toby.

Their bond grew even stronger as Daugherty nurtured Toby through a long illness. He found care for him at Pets Unlimited on Fillmore Street, where Toby was a frequent patient until death came last Thanksgiving.

"I was moved and impressed by — and grateful to — the doctors and staff who so often went far beyond the call of duty in their commitment to Toby's care and quality of life," Daugherty says, "and to their commitment to the thousands of other animals they rescue and treat every year."

Now Daugherty has come up with a tribute to Toby that will benefit Pets Unlimited. On Sunday afternoon, October 14, at the Herbst Theater, he will be the maestro for Animals in the Arts, an art exhibition, auction and concert that will celebrate Pets Unlimited's 60th birthday.

It will be a star-studded affair. Daugherty and his friend the novelist Amy Tan — also a longtime client of Pets Unlimited — will headline a performance by the 20-member Baroque Chamber Orchestra, assembled especially for this occasion and consisting of musicians from the symphony, the opera orchestra and the ballet orchestra, among others.

The centerpiece of the concert will be Camille Saint-Saëns' joyful *Carnival of the Animals*, conducted by Daugherty and narrated by Tan. The concert will also feature work by Mozart, Puccini and Rossini, including Rossini's *Duetto buffo di due gatti*, the "Cat Duet."

Daugherty and all of the performers and musicians participating in the concert are donating their time and talent to raise funds for Pets Unlimited.

The event will also include the visual arts. Before the performance and at intermission, a dozen artists and photographers will exhibit their work, with a portion of the proceeds going to Pets Unlimited.

Pets Unlimited was founded in the neighborhood in 1947 by a group of citizens concerned about the welfare of stray animals in San Francisco. Over the years the scope of its programs and services has grown, and it is now a 24-hour emergency facility. Since its beginnings 60 years ago, Pets Unlimited has been instrumental in saving the lives of more than 250,000 animals.

"Animals and the Arts" on Sunday afternoon, October 14, is a benefit for Pets Unlimited and a tribute to conductor George Daugherty's dog, Toby, who died last Thanksgiving. The "poster dog" for the celebration is Willy, above, Daugherty's one-year-old pup. An art exhibition and sale will begin at 1 p.m. in the Green Room at the Herbst Theater. Admission is free. A concert featuring the Baroque Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Daugherty and narrated by novelist Amy Tan, begins at 3 p.m. in Herbst Theater. Tickets range from \$50 to \$500 and are available at City Box Office. More information is available from Pets Unlimited at 563-6700 or www.petsunlimited.org.



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An expanded choir and orchestra at St. Dominic's Church will present a new interpretation of the Requiem Mass on November 2. Below, music director Simon Berry instructs.

St. Dominic's Plans Premiere

New score of the Requiem Mass commissioned

MUSICIANS at St. Dominic's Church are busy preparing this month for the world premiere of a new composition of the Requiem Mass, which they will present on Friday, November 2, at 7:30 p.m.

Simon Berry, the director of music and liturgy at St. Dominic's who commissioned the new score, will conduct the church choir of 30 members, along with 20 members of San Francisco Choral Artists and a 30-piece orchestra.

"St. Dominic's has the responsibility for commissioning new works of sacred art, which will be held in trust for the current and future generations," Berry says.

"The work was commissioned as I was casting around for a plan for our annual Requiem Mass back in 2004," Berry says. "I realized that Catholic churches in the Bay Area were not commissioning new music."

Berry notes that many great works of liturgical music "were possible only because of the foresight of clergy and musicians. In the 21st century, we should continue this lead and provide something for the future."

"Not all commissioned works become well known," he acknowledges. "Some even are not easy to perform a second time." But he's confident the new composition will endure. "It is set to become a well-known part of the choral repertoire," he says.

Berry commissioned the work from the noted New York composer William Hawley.

"I chose William Hawley after studying the work of many contemporary American composers," Berry says. "His style has developed into a new sound that is rewarding



to perform and hear. It supports the words and has a strong, almost muscular sound at times."

The musicians will record a CD that will be available alongside two other CDs the choir has already recorded. Clips of the earlier recordings can be heard on the church's website at www.stdominics.org.

The concert will be preceded by an open workshop for choral singers on the new music, which will be held on Saturday, October 20, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. An entry fee of \$20 will provide a copy of the score for all participants.

Admission to the performance on November 2 is free.

The concert is part of the Arts at St. Dominic's series, founded in 1994. The series opens the doors of the Gothic edifice, with its flying buttresses and soaring stained glass windows, to the general public for performances and other events.

Berry says St. Dominic's has "exceptional acoustics" and calls it "a treasure of Bay Area performance venues."



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