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In the habit for 50 years

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Sushi to go in a tiny shop

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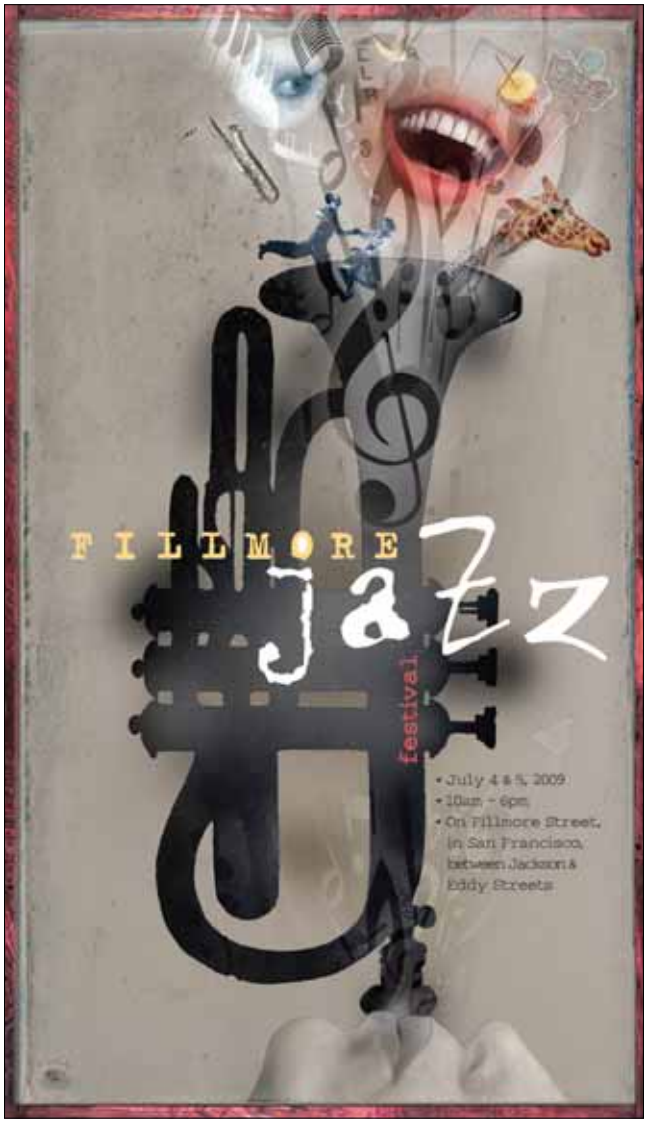
THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ JULY 2009



POSTER DESIGN © PAUL SCHULTE

Jazz on the 'Mo

Fillmore's annual street party set for July 4 and 5

For the 25th consecutive year, the Fillmore Jazz Festival brings the neighborhood's jazz heritage out onto the street on Saturday and Sunday, July 4 and 5.

The largest free jazz festival on the west coast features three stages of music both days from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The entertainment schedule includes established local favorites Kim Nalley, Marcus Shelby, Lavay Smith and Bobbie Webb, as well as a number of up-and-coming musicians performing all manner of jazz, blues and fusion.

In addition to the music, Fillmore from Jackson to Eddy Streets will be filled with arts, crafts, food and drink.

For the second year, a chef's stage at Fillmore and O'Farrell will feature cooking demonstrations by chefs and proprietors of some of the neighborhood's top restaurants.

INSIDE: JAZZ FEST 2009

Fillmore's own Bobbie Webb has seen it all and played with the greats during his long career. PAGE 7

At age 20, piano prodigy Sam Reider is making his mark on the national scene. PAGE 8

Fillmore's Church of St. John Coltrane brings its music ministry outside to the festival for the first time. PAGE 9

PAGE 7 Entertainment Schedule
PAGE 10 Chefs Stage
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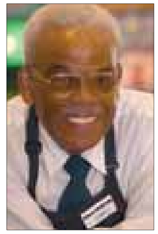
FURTHERMORE

Everybody Loves James


KATHI O'LEARY

James Moore: He's going, but he won't be forgotten.

The news that James Moore would be retiring from the express line at Mollie Stone's on June 30 after 31 years at the store prompted an unprecedented outpouring of affection from neighborhood residents.

All month long, people stopped by the store, some not to shop but just to wish him well. Many brought cards and gifts, which he stowed away on a shelf to be opened on his first official day of retirement.

"I'm gonna have a sore neck tonight," he said near the end of his final day as a long line of customers and well-wishers stopped to hug him goodbye.

All month long, he basked in the glow of his many well-wishers. He even sent out copies of the June issue of the *New Fillmore* bearing his smiling photo on the front page to his entire Christmas card list — dozens of people including cousins, friends from church and neighbors from his hometown of Stephens, Arkansas.

One copy was postmarked to his eighth grade teacher, Miss Hunt, who now lives in Los Angeles.

"I called her up and told her, 'Thanks for doing a good job,'" he said. "And she told me, 'I can still see you now, trying to hide behind some other kid in class because you didn't have your homework done. But I knew even then you weren't a bad kid.'"

It wasn't until the morning of his last day on the job that reality hit.

"It's a different story today," he said, just before his final shift started, as tears fell from his eyes. "What do you do when you can't go to work? You feel good — and you feel sad. There's something missing in your life."

Many Mollie Stone shoppers lamented that something will be missing in their lives, too — James, and his friendly greeting that made the day seem a little brighter. Many wrote to share stories and warm memories.

▪

"I was in James's line one afternoon," wrote Michael Stenburg. "Just as I got to the front, he said: 'Hold on, I'll be right back.' No problem, but after about three minutes I started to think, this isn't like James, going AWOL from his station. Finally James returned, smiling, and handed me a $20 bill, saying, 'This is yours. You dropped it the other day, so I put it in the safe.'"

▪

Wrote Marilyn Kelso:

"When James learned I was collecting the new statehood quarters, he made a special point of always saving a couple for me and presenting them when I came through the line. Just this week he surprised me with a couple of the newly minted District of Columbia quarters."

▪

Anna-Marie Booth wrote:

"I send my best wishes to James. What a delightful person! He always asked me, 'How are the boys?' Amazing that he never forgot me over almost 18 years. I hope his retirement is all that he wants it to be."

▪

Evelyn Nixon wrote:

"I just wanted to say congratulations on what you have accomplished and you will always have a place in my heart."

▪

Rebecca Abad wrote simply:

"James is a great person and I have always enjoyed his charisma and smile in the express line at Mollie Stone's."

▪

For all the accolades and urgings to stay, James says he has no second thoughts about leaving his post.

"I might be looking good, but on the inside it's a different story," he says, cupping an aching knee. "You know, you see those old people at the drugstore buying that rubbing stuff. That's me now — rub, rub, rub."

"And now that it's my last day at the store, it's going to be hard but it's going to be good, and it's…" His voice chokes and more tears flow. "You can't let time hold you back. And you have to really appreciate what you had," he says. "I really appreciate what I had. I really appreciate it."

THE NEW FILLMORE

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The neighborhood connection

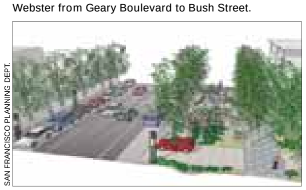
Every month, 20,000 copies are delivered to homes and businesses in the Fillmore, Pacific Heights and Japantown. We thank you for your support and encouragement and we welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Archive of recent issues: www.NewFillmore.com

Comments and letters about neighborhood issues are welcome there, too.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

The proposed Webster Street Linear Park, seen from above and at street level, would close two lanes of Webster from Geary Boulevard to Bush Street.


SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPT.

'Acknowledged,' Not Endorsed

Japantown plan's height limits, cultural sensitivity get more study

In "the most likely financially feasible scenario" in the draft plan for Japantown, new construction could rise from 75 to 250 feet along Geary Boulevard.

An ambitious three-year effort to create a plan to determine the destiny of Japantown for the next two decades will continue, the Planning Commission decided June 25.

Initially the objective was to approve the plan, which was developed after a series of community meetings and workshops. But concerns about the effects on the special character of the neighborhood and the existing merchants in Japan Center — as well as a proposed series of high-rise residential towers along Geary Boulevard — led the commission merely to "acknowledge" the plan.

"It's not endorsed, it's not adopted, it's merely acknowledged," said Rosemary Dudley, a Planning Department staffer involved in developing the plan.

"The Planning Commission acknowledges public comment that has been received regarding concerns over different aspects of the draft plan," according to a resolution adopted unanimously, including "cultural preservation, the provision of mixed-income housing, the retention of existing merchants, structural analysis on Japan Center garage, mitigation of neighborhood impacts during potential construction, proposed tower heights and the need to provide more direction for the implementing organization."

The effort began as a way to protect the character of Japantown — one of only three remaining in the United States — after a developer bought most of Japan Center and nearby commercial property in 2006. 3D Investments, a shopping mall developer based in Beverly Hills, acquired the Miyako and Kintetsu malls, the Kabuki and Tomo Hotels and the Sundance Kabuki Theaters.

After the economic downturn began last year, 3D Investments announced it would not undertake any major changes for at least two years.

But the development of a Better Neighborhood Plan continued and identified four overarching goals to secure Japantown's future as:

- the historical and cultural heart of Japanese and Japanese American community
- a thriving commercial and retail district
- home to residents and community institutions, and
- a physically attractive and vibrant environment.

But when the draft plan to achieve those goals was released earlier this year, it called for residential buildings along Geary Boulevard — including several towers ranging from 20 to 38 stories — that would require existing businesses and the Japan Center garage to shut down for an extended period during construction.

Some Japantown residents decried the plan, invoking the specter of internment during World War II that forcibly removed them from the neighborhood. Later the redevelopment of the area again removed many Japanese-American residents.

The draft plan also identified an expansive area of the neighborhood as part of its vision for Japantown, extending beyond the heart of the neighborhood clustered around Post, Buchanan and Sutter Streets all the way north to California Street. That prompted concern, especially over the plan's design guidelines, from other neighborhood organizations.

"We've got a lot of really nice Victorians around here," said Paul Wermer, a director of the Pacific Heights Residents Association. "Are we really saying we want to replace a Victorian row with Japanese designs? That makes sense in Japantown, but not on California Street."

As a way of increasing public space, the plan contemplates closing two lanes of the four-lane Webster Street between Geary and Bush and creating a "linear park" with landscaping, playgrounds and a Japanese garden.

By the time the Planning Commission held its fourth public hearing on the plan on June 25, it was clear that more work was needed. So the commission acknowledged the draft plan as "a significant milestone" and directed "further modification and study of the draft plan" and an environmental review when funding is available.

"This acknowledgment of the draft plan does not endorse any parcel-specific rezoning or parcel-specific height limit," the commission's resolution notes, discouraging developers from citing the plan to justify taller projects while the planning process continues.

"We're really at the beginning of the process, rather than at the end," said Bob Hamaguchi, executive director of the Japantown Task Force. "For sure, you're talking several years before any major changes take place."

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■ DEPARTURES

Poet, Activist, Fillmore Native Al Robles to Be Honored

On Saturday, July 25, the life of Filipino-American activist and poet Al Robles, one of the old guard Fillmore poets, who died May 2, will be celebrated at Glide Memorial Church from 1 to 5 p.m.

Robles and his nine brothers and sisters grew up in the Fillmore, and he remained active in the neighborhood for most of his life. He is commemorated with a plaque in the plaza at Fillmore and O'Farrell in the Jazz District.

AL ROBLES
February 16, 1930 - May 2, 2009

your teahouse of scrap wood
bush street san francisco
built poem by poem
still holds holy laughter

holy smoke!
the clouds part
snow glistens on the mountain-top
patches of green
a sip of koicha
water trickles down the mountain
a cup of sake

MEOW MEOW
KONNYAKU is calling
he has stopped at the bridge
bids you to follow

— ruth weiss

Alana Robles (left) at the Fillmore Street marker for her uncle Al Robles (above).

CRIME WATCH

Robbery With a Weapon
Geary Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue
May 4, 1 a.m.

Officers received a call about a robbery at an ATM. The man who had been robbed pointed out the suspect, who was still loitering nearby. As the officers approached the suspect, he broke into a run. The officers chased and quickly apprehended him. The man reporting the robbery told officers the suspect had followed him from the ATM and demanded money. When he refused, the suspect snatched the money from his hand. The assailant then threw the man to the ground and punched him. The man who was assaulted was not seriously injured. The robbery suspect was placed under arrest and booked.

Driving Under the Influence
Van Ness Avenue and California Street
May 7, 4 a.m.

Officers on patrol noticed a vehicle that was exceeding the speed limit. The officers chased the car and made contact with the driver, who exhibited signs of being under the influence of alcohol. The officers administered a field sobriety test, which the driver failed. He also failed the breath test, which indicated that he had imbibed over double the legal limit. The driver was placed under arrest.

Aggravated Assault With a Knife
Franklin and Eddy Streets
May 11, 2:45 p.m.

Several police units responded to a call about a fight involving juveniles. A woman at the scene, who had been attacked, told officers she was leaving school when several girls approached and started kicking and punching her. When she saw a knife in one suspect's hand, she ran away. Officers located the suspects nearby and detained them. The woman who had been attacked was able to identify the principal suspect who battered her, a girl who was 15 years old. The woman was treated at the hospital for a laceration to the head.

Injury Accident Involving a Vehicle and a Bicycle
Divisadero and Eddy Streets
May 26, 4:10 p.m.

Officers were called to the scene of a bicycle accident. The officers spoke to the bicyclist, who stated that he had been riding his friend's "track bike," which does not have brakes; the bike is stopped by skidding. He was skidding down the hill when the bike's bottom bracket broke. The cyclist said he attempted to lose speed by "Fred Flintstoning it" — straddling the center bar while dragging his feet on the road. The bicyclist was going fast and ran through the red light. He then turned right on Divisadero. Unable to stop, he hit the center median, catapulting over the bike and into an oncoming truck. The bicyclist was transported to San Francisco General.

Crime at a Glance

Geary Boulevard and Fillmore Street — Pickpocket Theft on MUNI bus

Scott and Eddy Streets — Counterfeiting

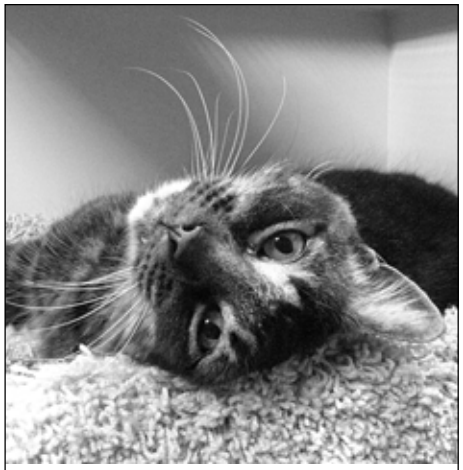
Divisadero and Eddy Streets — Shoplifting Theft

Ellis and Steiner Streets — Criminal Threats, Domestic Violence

Pierce and Eddy Streets — Malicious Mischief, Breaking Windows

Geary and Scott Streets — Street Robbery With Force

Laguna and Turk Streets — Possession of $50,000 worth of Stolen Property



Peanut

This beautiful tabby boy is a 12-year-old from a local rescue. A social silver fox, Peanut spends his days getting fawned over by volunteers, brushed out by adoring staff members, and lounging on the highest point of his cat tree waiting for his perfect family to come through the door. Are you looking for a salty and sweet kind of gentle cat? Meet Peanut today!

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LOCALS

'I Feel Blessed Every Day'

Sister Anne Bertain celebrates 50 years as a nun and 30 years of community service

By Maria Vickroy-Peralta
photograph by kristen stehle

Three decades ago, Sister Anne Bertain proposed that St. Dominic's Church develop a community service program to meet the needs of poor and homebound people in the neighborhood.

This month, the church will honor Sister Anne as she celebrates three milestones: her 30th anniversary as director of community service at St. Dominic's, her 50-year jubilee as a Dominican nun and her 70th birthday.

▪

Sister Anne grew up in Napa, where the example her parents set with their involvement in the church and the community nurtured her desire to pursue teaching and social work.

Young Anne Bertain first met some of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael while she was a student at St. John's Elementary School in Napa, and then again at St. Vincent Ferrer High School in Vallejo.

"I was attracted to the sisters by the way they treated one another and the students," she says. "They took a real interest in us."

After high school, urged on by a persistent inner voice, she decided to pursue a religious life with the Dominican sisters.

"Entering the convent was not part of my plan," says Sister Anne. "I thought that after three months, either I or they would know I did not belong."

▪

In 1965, Sister Anne arrived in the neighborhood to teach first grade at St. Dominic's School on Pine Street, later becoming principal. Her years at the school came to a close in 1979 when she was put in charge of the community service program she proposed at St. Dominic's — a ministry that has served thousands of people during the past 30 years and made Sister Anne a well-known figure in the neighborhood.

"Sister Anne is about lifting people up. She sees the deep down value of everyone she meets."

— FATHER XAVIER LAVAGETTO
pastor of St. Dominic's Church

"Sister Anne is about lifting people up," says Father Xavier Lavagetto, pastor of St. Dominic's. "She sees the deep down value of everyone she meets. No one has served the people who come to the parish for help more than Sister Anne."

Sister Anne also heads the Lima Center, located downstairs at St. Dominic's, where homeless people can find rest and care for a few hours in a clean, safe place. Open four days a week for up to 50 visitors, the Lima Center provides hot meals and offers showers and laundry facilities. Guests can read, watch movies and use computers.

"Having somewhere to come and discuss their concerns has been a great help to those who want to change their situation," says Sister Anne. "We're able to help them fill out the paperwork and meet the requirements for housing and medical attention. We also try to provide basic items of clothing when needed."

Each week, she and a sandwich-making crew pack 80 brown bag meals and deliver them South of Market to the Ozanam Detox Center for people struggling to overcome addiction.

"The sandwich program has proven to be a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to create a close-knit community," says Sister Anne.

Sister Anne also oversees a detention ministry at the San Francisco County Jail, a consolation ministry to support those suffering from the loss of a loved one and a spiritual ministry for people who are homebound and hospitalized.

▪

"When people are alone and fearful, Sister Anne has a way of making you have trust in yourself and in God," says volunteer Helen Ann Davis. "You know you are a better person by having her in your life."

St. Dominic's is one of the few local churches with such a high level of direct assistance, devoting more than $100,000 to its community service programs annually, with additional contributions of financial support and volunteer time. Local businesses also contribute products and services.

"We can always use more help," says Sister Anne. "Besides more volunteers, we can always use donations of canned food, new clothing — we are always in great need of men's underwear and socks — as well as financial assistance."

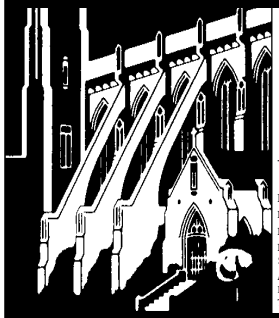
Sister Anne, who dispenses compassion with humor and common sense — combined with a firmness and directness in handling people and situations — says she sometimes considers the help she can offer as merely a Band-Aid. But she has seen that lives can be changed and, at least for a moment, despair can be eased.

"I feel blessed every day," Sister Anne says. "I have met so many beautiful people and have learned from them about life, courage and tolerance when justice seems to be missing."

▪

A CELEBRATION: St. Dominic's Church will honor Sister Anne Bertain's 30 years of community service at a reception on Sunday, July 26, after the 9:30 mass in the church's Parish Hall. Neighbors are invited.

St. Dominic's Catholic Church



MASSES
SUNDAY
5:30 pm (Saturday Vigil)
7:30, 9:30 & 11:30 am
1:30, 5:30 & 9:00 pm
WEEKDAYS
6:30 & 8:00 am & 5:30 pm
SATURDAY
7:40 am Rosary, 8:00 am Mass
PRAYERS & SACRAMENTS
The church is open for prayer all day and into the early evening.
Liturgy of the Hours (Daily)
Morning Prayer 7:15 am/Sat 8:00 am
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm
Reconciliation Sat 5:00 pm, Sun 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00 am, 5:00 pm
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Mon & Wed 8:30 am & 6 pm Tue & Fri 8:30 pm

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FILLMORE SUMMER CONCERT & FILM SERIES 2009

Kick back and enjoy summer's long daylight hours at the Fillmore Center's free film and concert series beginning June 19. Join the vibrant Fillmore community for alternating weeks of Friday concerts and Thursday flicks in the Plaza. Joining the line up are soul, salsa, blues, reggae and funk bands and a mixture of action and family films headlined with performances by local community groups.

Concerts begin at 6pm each evening. Movie nights open with performances by local artists at 7pm, followed by the film screening at 8pm. Among the showcased community talent are **The Village Project** (St. Andrew's Church choir), a Fillmore fashion show, theater and drama group **Handful Players** and children's karate demonstrations by **Larkin BuKiDo Kai Karate**.

Popcorn and refreshments will be available for purchase at the events; or stop by one of the many new restaurants and shops that are adding a buzz to the revitalized Fillmore community. The 16,000-square-foot Fillmore Center Plaza is an urban oasis in the heart of San Francisco's Fillmore District and is located at the intersection of Fillmore Street and O'Farrell Street. There's seating for 100, with plenty of premium open space to throw down a blanket and enjoy the show. The Plaza is wheelchair accessible.

For more information: 415/921-1969, or log onto www.fillmorejazzcbd.org/summerseries.html

The Fillmore Center is also home to the Fillmore Farmer's Market each Saturday from 9am until 1pm, which is accompanied by live music. The Fillmore Summer Concert and Film Series is made possible by Laramar Corporation and the Fillmore Center Apartments and a generous contribution by Bruno's restaurant, which will be donating the proceeds from concession sales to Mo' Magic, an educational, economic and social development programs of under-served youth and families in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Friday Evening Concerts

Concerts begin at 6pm and will end around 7:30pm

Bobbie Webb

Carlito Del Sol & America

Friday, June 19th
LOUIE ROMERO Y SU GRUPO MAZACOTE
(salsa)

Friday, July 3rd
BOBBIE WEBB (blues)

Friday, July 17th
VINTAGE MUSIC COLLECTIVE
(reggae/soul)

Louie Romero y Su Grupo Mazacote

Friday, July 31st
CARLITO DEL SOL & AMERICA
(salsa)

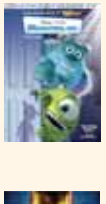
Friday, August 14th
SILA AND THE AFRO FUNK EXPERIENCE
(funk)

Vintage Music Collective

Thursday Evening Films

Community Group Performances begin at 7pm.
Films begin @ 8pm/dusk until 9:30 or 10pm (depending on the length of the film)

Thursday, June 25th
7:00pm: The Village Project (St. Andrew's Church Choir)
8:00pm: THE TRANSFORMERS (the sequel opens that weekend in theaters)



Thursday, July 2nd
7:00pm: Larkin's BuKiDo Kai Karate Demonstrations
8:00pm: DIRTY DANCING

Thursday, July 23rd
7:00pm – Fillmore Fashion Show
8:00pm: MONSTERS, INC.

Thursday, August 6th
7:00pm – Handful Players
8:00pm: AKEELAH AND THE BEE

Thursday, August 20th
7:00pm - Infin8Sync: Independent Artists Group/BYOA
8:00pm: IRONMAN

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Concerts, performances and films are subject to change.

DESIGN: WWW.KEITHPETTIGREWDESIGN.COM

FILLMORE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Fillmore's Own Bobbie Webb Has Done It All

He's played with most of the greats and is still making the scene

By Donna Domino

"I am the Fillmore," declares Bobbie "Spider" Webb, the blues saxophonist who's been a fixture on the local music scene for 45 years. "I was raised in the Fillmore; I'm still here."

Wearing tinted glasses, the blues man speaks with a drawling musical cadence and proudly lists the impressive line of headliners he's played with over the years: B.B. King, Charles Brown, Etta James, John Lee Hooker, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Percy Mayfield, T-Bone Walker, Little Milton, Clarence "Guitar" Sims, Frankie Lee, Charlie Musselwhite, Albert King, Lowell Fulsom, Bobby "Blue" Bland and Queen Ida.

He played with the Al Rapone zydeco band when it opened for the Grateful Dead at the Fillmore Auditorium and, in more recent times, has also played at Yoshi's on Fillmore.

On July 4, he'll headline the Eddy Street stage at the Fillmore Jazz Festival for the final set of the day, starting at 4 p.m. In fact, because of his wide knowledge of the Bay Area music scene, he was asked to book all of the music on the Eddy stage during the festival.

"I've played with most everybody; I've done it all," says Webb of his enduring career, although he declined to say just how long he's been around. "I don't go around talking about how old I am," he laughs.

Webb still plays all over the Bay Area, including regular gigs at Lou's Pier 47 at Fisherman's Wharf. "I do weddings, parties, nightclubs, you name it," he says. He also hosts a Tuesday morning radio program on KPOO radio, 89.5 FM.

▪

Born in Tyler, Texas, Webb was five years old when his grandmother brought him and three siblings to San Francisco.

He attended Emerson (now Cobb) Elementary School and Washington High School with lifelong friend Johnny Mathis, who lived on Post Street, while Webb grew up in public housing on Bush Street.

"Johnny was a very mellow guy, very athletic, very proper and kept to himself a lot," recalls Webb. "He was a hell of a nice guy."

He also remembers another singer who grew up to greatness in the Fillmore: Etta James. "Etta was very strict," he says of working with her. "Everything had to be right."

Webb also played with the legendary John Lee Hooker at the Monterey Blues Festival. "John was a very mellow cat," he recalled. "He had his own style of blues."

"I didn't have time for no jiving around because I had to take care of my family."

— Saxophonist BOBBIE WEBB

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

STAGE	Saturday, July 4	Sunday, July 5
California Street		
10:00 - 11:30	JazzSchool	Spaceheater
12:00 - 1:30	Wayne De La Cruz and the Big Trio	Bayonics with Big Brooklyn Red
2:00 - 3:30	Sam Reider Large Ensemble	Lloyd Gregory
4:00 - 6:00	Marcus Shelby Orchestra	Kim Nalley
Sutter Street		
10:00 - 11:30	Crystal Monee Hall	Supertaster featuring Karyn Paige
12:00 - 1:30	Farzad	Green & Silver Quintet
2:00 - 3:30	Jazztronauts	Joe Bagale
4:00 - 6:00	Spencer Day	Bautista
Eddy Street		
10:00 - 11:30	Tia Carroll & Hard Work	Spaceheater
12:00 - 1:30	Saint John Coltrane A.O.C.	Vinyl
2:00 - 3:30	Lavay Smith	Bay Area Blues Society
4:00 - 6:00	Bobbie Webb	Sila–The AfroFunk

Later, Webb toured in Germany with Hooker's son, John Lee Hooker Jr.

Webb took up the saxophone at Marina Junior High School and got his first horn when he was 14. It was a gift from the warden at San Quentin Prison, Clinton Duffy.

When Webb's grandmother, who was Duffy's housekeeper, told him her grandson wanted to play the saxophone, Duffy sent her to pick out an instrument at the Sherman Clay music store on Clay Street.

"Was I thrilled to have my own horn? Ooooweee!" says Webb.

He was playing in the advanced band at Washington High School when he learned he was to become a father. He graduated and soon got married.

"Having a baby at 17, I had a lot of responsibility, so I didn't have time for no jiving around because I had to take care of my family, and I'm still taking care of them," he says. Webb's daughter and her children live with him in his home on McAllister Street.

But the aspiring musician quickly realized he couldn't support his family with his music.

"I had kids to take care of and I wasn't about to put my life in the hands of a bunch of musicians," Webb says. "So I got me a job and played music part time."

▪

He retired recently after working 43 years with the Service Employees International Union and is also a lifelong member of the musicians union.

During the '70s, Webb played at clubs on the Broadway strip, including the El Matador, El Cid, Big Al's and the Peppermint Tree. He played with soul singer Bobby Freeman at the Condor when stripper Carol Doda was in her heyday.

"That was a trip," Webb says. "It was great!"

During his last four years on Broadway, he played six nights a week while holding down his job as a business agent for the union.

"I still went to work every morning," Webb says with satisfaction. "Still punchin' that clock."

He managed to avoid the lifestyle of booze and drugs that so many musicians fell prey to.

"Let me tell you: I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't use drugs. Never have," Webb says. "I didn't get caught up in that bag. They say birds of a feather flock together. They do not. I was with the birds but I didn't flock because I had a family, I had kids, I had a job. That was totally out of the question."

With the exception of rap, Webb relishes the entire musical spectrum, from country and western to opera.

"I've played so many different styles of music, and I appreciate what all the different musicians do," he says. "I'm a musician; I love it all."

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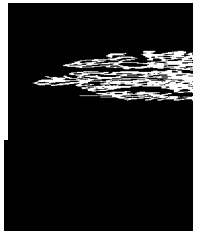

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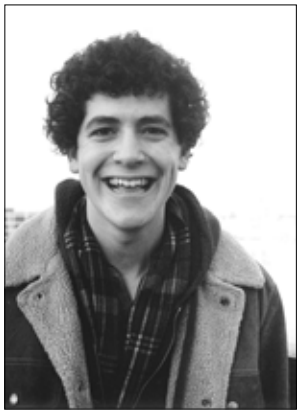
Piano Prodigy Comes Home for the Festival

Sam Reider is only 20, but he's already a serious musician

By Marsha Garland



"I want my music to be as excellent as it can be."

— Pianist SAM REIDER

Appearing this year for the first time at the Fillmore Jazz Festival is piano prodigy Sam Reider, a San Franciscan now living in New York and already making his mark — at all of age 20 — on the national jazz scene.

An only child who started studying piano when he was five, Reider may have been genetically predisposed to music. His father, a composer and graphic designer, at one time earned his living playing classical piano. His grandfather was a pianist as well. Even as a toddler, Reider loved listening to his parents' Beatles albums and often turned pots and pans into a cacophonous drum set.

After early classical training, Reider switched to jazz before entering the Urban School, a high school in the Haight.

Now majoring in American Studies at Columbia University in New York, he composes and arranges music, plays regularly at clubs in Manhattan and, during school breaks, tours and plays at jazz clubs on the West Coast.

His early successes have included performances at Yoshi's, the Monterey Jazz Festival and the highly regarded North Texas Jazz Festival, where he won the outstanding soloist award. His first CD, *Without Strings*, with the Uptown Trio, was released in May.

Reider is currently exploring the use of his voice as another instrument. At the Fillmore festival, he will be experimenting with a new musical project, the Sam Reider Large Ensemble, which includes piano, voice, trumpet, trombone, two saxophones, drums, bass, guitar and violin.

Anticipating the performance of his Large Ensemble at the festival, Reider says most of the music they'll play will be original, with some jazz standards. The group performs on the California Street stage on Saturday, July 4, at 2 p.m.

Reider cites Chopin and Mendelssohn as two of his classical influences, along with Art Tatum, Duke Ellington, Herbie Hancock and Bill Evans from the world of jazz. One of his favorite jazz recordings is trumpeter Chet Baker's *Everything Happens to Me*, which he rearranged for piano when he was interviewed last year by Marian McPartland on "Piano Jazz," her public radio program.

"What I'm focusing on right now," Reider says, "is that my art and craft is as good as possible. I want my music to be as excellent as it can be."

Reider says he admires musicians who have pursued many different courses during their careers, including local bassist and composer Marcus Shelby — who appears immediately after Reider's group at this year's Fillmore Jazz Festival — and who started out as an electrical engineer.

"I'm one of those people who likes to do a lot of things at once," he says.

Reider toys with a variety of ideas — musical and not — for his future, including entering the Peace Corps, writing fiction and getting involved with environmental issues.

Even though it is known as a liberal arts college, Columbia University's music program is gaining in prestige. Reider has studied musical transcription at Columbia and received a composition commission. He also plays in a jazz combo at the university and works on a radio interview program, which gives him the opportunity to interview acclaimed New York musicians.

His Uptown Trio plays regularly in Manhattan at Havana Central, a Cuban restaurant on Union Square, and also at the Jazz Gallery, a club that features up-and-coming musicians.

And he finds time to practice. "There are practice rooms where I try to get in at least two hours a day," he says. "Sometimes I go to the nearby Manhattan School of Music and practice there."

Currently Reider is exploring gypsy, flamenco and Eastern European music. He says he loves the idea of fusing jazz with folk, and particularly admires Pete Seeger.

Just imagine what he'll do when he's 21.

A Temple of Jazz

At the Church of St. John Coltrane, the music is the message

By James DeKoven
photographs by Susie Biehler

The Ministers of Sound, who perform every Sunday at the Church of St. John Coltrane on Fillmore Street, will appear at the Fillmore Jazz Festival on the Eddy Street stage at noon on Saturday, July 4.

Without hestitation, the Rev. Wanika King-Stephens can name her favorite John Coltrane song: "What's New?" Then, true to form for any music obsessive, she provides additional knowledge: The song was originally on the album *Ballads*, released by the Impulse! label.

Jazz records and churches are not usually an easy fit. But this church, at 1286 Fillmore Street, is no ordinary house of worship. It's the Saint John Will-I-Am Coltrane African Orthodox Church, or as it's known to people around the world, the Church of John Coltrane.

Every Sunday from noon to 3 p.m., Rev. King-Stephens sits in with other members of the house band — the "Ministers of Sound" — and they perform the music of John Coltrane as a vehicle to praise God. They call it "sound praise."

At noon on Saturday, July 4, they will bring their music outside and perform on the Eddy Street stage at the Fillmore Jazz Festival.

Looking at the exterior of the church, passersby might assume they're seeing the entrance to a business or an office for the community center upstairs. Only upon stepping inside does it become clear it is in fact a holy place.

Adorning the walls are murals of Jesus, Madonna with child and John Coltrane wearing religious vestments. The smell of sweet incense fills the air. Approximately 50 chairs snugly fit into a small room. On a recent Sunday, the congregation is a mix of church members, 'Trane devotees, curious tourists and locals just wondering what it's all about.

The band sets up at the front of the room, without a stage, and with no formal introductions immediately goes into "Lonnie's Lament." There's the reverend herself on bass, Frederick Harris on electric piano, Roberto De Haven on tenor sax and Max Hoff on drums. In the far left corner, behind Hoff, is Arthur Trotter at the congas, wearing a Che Guevara T-shirt. The church founder, Archbishop Franzo King, who usually takes the tenor sax seat, couldn't make it that day.

The performance is part of a traditional Christian liturgy, comprised of prayers and confessionals that are sung to some of the jazz great's more devotional songs, including beautiful interpretations of "Spiritual," "Acknowledgement" and, fittingly, "A Love Supreme." Two hours of music is followed by an hour-long sermon.

A communal vibe and a joyous energy permeate the room. A few parishioners play tambourines against a palm or thigh. Some shout "hallelujah." Others do call and response with the choir. Faces smile, heads nod, bodies move.

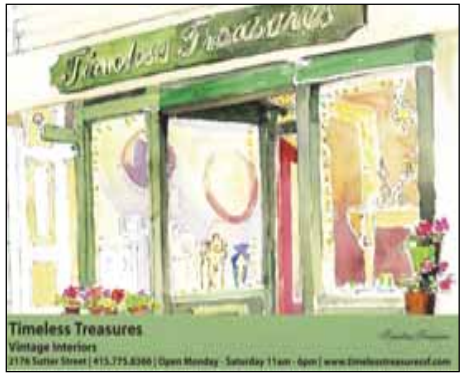
As Harris plays a cascading piano solo over the plodding hum of bass and drums, Toes Tiranoff and Megan Haungs — unofficial members of the band — take turns tap dancing on a tabletop placed on the floor.

The Ministers of Sound is not a tribute band playing note-for-note renditions. Nor is it a group of amateurs just giving it a go. These are expert musicians, spiritually dedicated to the author of the compositions, playing music not of this earth for reasons that float in the heavens.

Even before his death in 1967, 'Trane was awarded divine status by jazz aficionados. Many found his performances unworldly.

Albert Ayler, his lesser known but equally innovative contemporary, once said: "'Trane was the Father, Pharoah (Sanders) was the Son, I was the Holy Ghost." Then, Coltrane ascended from figurative to literal saint when Franzo King founded the church in 1971. After it became associated with the African Orthodox Church, he was officially canonized.

"A saint is simply someone who lives a sanctified life," is Reverend King-Stephens' retort to anyone challenging Coltrane's qualifications, given that he died a mere 42 years ago and wasn't responsible for any miracle. "He wanted to make music that would make people happy," she says.



■ 2009 POSTER

A different animal

This year's Fillmore Jazz Festival poster was designed by Paul Schulte, a Fillmore resident whose much-admired graphic design firm has produced work for numerous corporate and entertainment clients, as well as for socially conscious nonprofit groups. See examples at www.schultedesignsf.com.

"My design concept for the poster was not only to capture the musical aspect of the festival, but also the energy and spirit of what the fair is all about," Schulte says. "The horn explosion incorporates some of the marquees from Fillmore Street, along with an enigmatic juxtaposition of images like the hummingbird and the floating eye. To me, jazz is much more experimental and unconventional — a different animal than mainstream forms of music."

But what's up with the giraffe?

Gussie's Chicken and Waffles Makes Its Debut

By Anne Paprocki

Just in time for the Fillmore Jazz Festival, Michelle Wilson will bring her signature Southern cuisine — including the popular chicken and waffles combo — to the Fillmore.

Her new restaurant, Gussie's Chicken and Waffles, is set to open during the week of July 6 at 1521 Eddy Street, formerly the location of Powell's Place.

But festivalgoers will get a preview of the neighborhood's new soul food restaurant when Wilson appears on the Chefs Stage to provide a cooking demonstration both days of the festival.

"I pride myself on traditional Southern cooking," Wilson says. "I know chicken and waffles is becoming popular everywhere, but mine is made the original way. I'm trying to do simple, good, traditional style Southern food."

The new restaurant will offer both cornmeal and sweet potato waffles served with chicken and maple syrup. For the uninitiated, Wilson describes the signature chicken and waffles as "a little like the meal version of kettle corn, because of that salty sweet flavor combination."

Wilson's passion for Southern cooking was inspired by her grandmother, for whom the restaurant is named.

"My grandmother used to make breakfast for dinner," says Wilson. "That was a special thing in our family. She used to do chicken with waffles and chicken with pancakes." Wilson's hands-on experience comes from running a Roscoe's Chicken and Waffles outpost in Oakland for eight years with her ex-husband and from a catering business.

CHEFS STAGE
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Saturday, July 4	
12:00 Noon	Chef Shotaro "Sho" Kamio Yoshi's
1:00 pm	Chef David Lawrence and Monetta White 1300 on Fillmore
2:00 pm	Chef Michelle Wilson Gussie's Chicken & Waffles
3:00 pm	Andy Choi, general manager & pastry chef Tiffany Psui Jubili Frozen Yogurt & Cereal
4:00 pm	Chef Laurent Guillaume & owner Michael Azoulay Chouquets
Sunday, July 5	
12:00 Noon	Gospel Brunch with David Lawrence & Monetta White 1300 on Fillmore
1:00 pm	Kan Hasegawa and Koji Kanematsu Onigilly
2:00 pm	Anjan Mitra Dosa on Fillmore
3:00 pm	Chef Michelle Wilson Gussie's Chicken & Waffles

In addition to chicken and waffles, Gussie's will serve a variety of vegetarian items, including red beans and rice, greens and vegan cornbread. The restaurant will use housemade maple syrup, which will also be sold on the premises. Wilson says she will attempt to keep Gussie's green by composting and serving fair trade, organic coffee.

She also plans to keep prices affordable. Most dishes will run from about $6 to $16, with daily specials at bargain rates.

Opening her own restaurant has been a longstanding dream for Wilson, and she says she is excited to be in the Fillmore.

"I wanted to open my place in a nice neighborhood, where people can go to enjoy a good casual meal," she says. Although she's new to the neighborhood, her boyfriend is from the Fillmore and encouraged her to locate here when she heard the former home of Powell's Place was available.

So far, she has done everything herself — from painting the walls to hiring staff — and hopes to be seen as a role model for other single parents with dreams of opening a business.

The restaurant will serve breakfast, lunch and dinner from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday to Thursday and until 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday. Beer, wine and soju cocktails will also be available.

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■ POST FROM THE YOSH | JASON OLAINE

Yoshi's Joins the Festival With a Free After-Party

Summertime, and the livin' is easy. At least so said George Gershwin. Life in the club business, and perhaps in your own businesses, hasn't been such a walk in the park, however. But for a jazz club, the show, literally, must go on.

"Staycations" are said to be on the rise this year. So we thought we might augment staycationers' frugal summer with something free. Fortunately for all of us, our neighborhood puts on one of the truly great free events of the summer — the Fillmore Jazz Festival.

▪

Now for the 25th year, Fillmore Street hosts nearly 100,000 patrons over the Independence Day weekend. This is a major event and a major accomplishment. With great music and food and beverages and arts and crafts being offered up and down the street, city folks and nearby travelers get to sample some of the best the Bay Area has to offer.

Our thought was to augment this year's festival with a free after-party on Saturday night. As the last strains of music are heard from the outdoor stages, we'll host local favorite Marcus Shelby at Yoshi's from 6:30 to 9 p.m., where his trio will anchor a throwback night of sorts.

Marcus is one of the most in-demand bandleaders in town. He's closing the festival Saturday afternoon on the California Street stage, so he'll have to hustle to get down to Yoshi's.

The program is to be a good old-fashioned jam session, the kind that Jimbo's Bop City, the classic Fillmore jazz joint, used to host. Open to the public at no charge and featuring jazz-themed drink and food specials, we hope that our neighbors will drop in to say hello.

While it's only for a night, I'm looking forward to the Shelby-led jam session. To me, it's jazz to the core. These impromptu collaborations can lead to some brilliant moments. Perhaps some new, under-recognized talent will be revealed, or the first-ever combination of certain players will lift the music to beautiful vistas.

It's improvised, to a degree, so that's certainly jazz. It goes like this: One of the onstage musicians will call a song everyone knows — or says they know — and off they go. It's a free-wheeling simultaneous conversation and, with certain players, perhaps a battle of sorts.

And while jam sessions can be cool in and of themselves, the audience plays an almost equal role in how the whole thing goes down. Whoopin' and hollerin' and encouraging fine phrasing and hard bop blowing is half the fun. I'm hoping to see more of these jam sessions.

▪

Speaking of good ideas, a reader wrote in shortly after I got here to say how much he loved the great jazz singer Paula West and wondered why she hadn't yet appeared on the bill at Yoshi's San Francisco.

Marcus Shelby will lead an old-fashioned jam session in the tradition of Jimbo's Bop City.

Now, many of you know Paula as a local legend, but she's honestly one of the finest interpreters of song and she possesses one of the great voices singing anywhere today, bar none. She continues to hold down months-long residencies in New York's famed Oak Room at the Algonquin Hotel every year, but she has yet to play a multi-night run at Yoshi's.

Thanks to the timely email and a plan I was already hatching, we'll be hosting her this month, July 16 to 19, on a double bill with rising star Renee Olstead, who is making her Bay Area debut. If you've yet to catch Paula, now's the time. She's a gem and I guarantee you'll be astounded.

▪

On that note, I encourage you to write to me at olaine@yoshis.com if you have favorite artists you think belong at Yoshi's SF. After all, we're neighbors, first and foremost, and you're also my staycation target demographic. So tell me what you want to hear.

Jason Olaine is the artistic director of Yoshi's in the Fillmore Jazz District.

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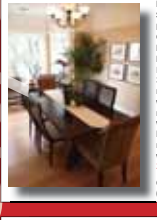

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Kats and Yoshimi Oune carry on the small sushi shop her mother started decades ago.

A Tiny Take-Out

Since 1965, Maruya has been serving up sushi on Fillmore

By Carina Woudenberg

Yoshimi Oune, owner of Maruya Sushi at 1904 Fillmore, never had any ambition to own the tiny take-out shop her mother opened in 1965. She says she just gradually took over as her mother got older and became less able to handle it on her own.

Today, with the help of her husband, Kats Oune, she's still at it, preparing the same sushi rolls her mother used to make — "the basics," she says — and greeting customers that include two or three generations of the store's faithful fans.

▪

The small space makes it impossible to dine in at Maruya, but that hasn't prevented the shop from gaining a loyal following. The sushi has received dozens of starry reviews from sushi aficionados. And when Yoshimi had a brain aneurysm, forcing her to close for a while a few years back, many customers kept pleading for it to reopen.

In addition to the shop's basics — a variety of fish and vegetable rolls, miso soup, edamame and seaweed salad — Maruya offers unusual rolls not typically found in other sushi restaurants.

One is saba sushi — a marinated mackerel roll that is one of the most popular selections. Other customer favorites include tamago maki, which is sushi wrapped in a thin layer of cooked egg, instead of seaweed, and chicken sushi, made with ground, cooked and marinated chicken and wrapped in the traditional sushi style.

Yoshimi's mother, Chiyoko Matsuno, was born in the United States but moved with her family to Wakayama, Japan, when she was still a baby. When she came back to the United States as an adult, her English wasn't very good.

"That's the reason she opened the shop," Yoshimi says. "She couldn't work anywhere else."

Yoshimi was born in Stockton, but moved to Japan with her family after World War II.

In the United States, Yoshimi worked several part-time restaurant and retail jobs. After she married, she says she would have been happy to stay at home. However, her mother was then running two sushi shops and convinced her daughter to take over one for her.

Later her mother suffered from both a stroke and Alzheimer's disease. Yoshimi found herself doing more and more of the work until she took over the Fillmore shop entirely about 20 years ago. When Yoshimi's father passed away, they closed the other store.

Yoshimi says she likes to cook, but still has mixed feelings about running her own place.

"There's nobody bossing you around — that's the good part," she says. "But you also get some kind of headache figuring stuff out for yourself."

▪

Before Yoshimi's mother passed away, she spent a lot of time in the Fillmore shop. "She came and sat here all day — just to keep her eye on me, I guess," Yoshimi says.

Back then, Yoshimi said she often didn't feel like making the saba sushi, so when customers would ask for it, she would say they were sold out. Her mother soon caught on and coaxed her daughter into making the roll that has become the shop's signature.

Now her husband Kats helps her out in the shop. And they say they have witnessed many changes on Fillmore Street over the years.

"It used to be quiet. Now there are all these boutique shops," Yoshimi says. "You didn't used to have too much trouble looking for parking. It all got fancied, I guess."

The Ounes, who are both in their early 70s and have no children to take over the shop, say it will most likely close when they retire.

But they hadn't really thought about getting older or retiring — until they read a Yelp.com review in which a critic complained that the shop's service was slow due to the owners' ages.

"A friend of ours brought the review in and read it and we kept laughing," Kats says.

"So we kept reading it and laughed and laughed and laughed," Yoshimi added.

The specialty: saba sushi

A lot of preparation goes into making Maruya's saba sushi, its signature roll, which is one of the most unusual and distinctive tastes on the street.

First the mackerel is salted and set aside for three to four days before the salt is rinsed off.

Then the fish is marinated in sweet vinegar for another three to four days before it is placed in a wooden box with a layer of rice and seaweed and pressed into perfectly square pieces.

Kats Oune says the taste is similar to pickled herring, but to tame the strong pickled taste, Yoshimi places lemon slices on each piece — an addition to her mother's traditional recipe.

An order of nine pieces costs $8.50.

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Providing Sustenance for Seniors at Home

By Cathy Murphy

Walk down Fillmore Street and you see people in a wide range of ethnicities and personal styles. And the age mix of the neighbors is a special gift, with generations spanning from newborns to seniors.

Many of the seniors gamely navigate the curbs, intersections and crowded sidewalks. They have lived here long enough to be intimately familiar with the shortest or flattest route and the history of the buildings along the way. Many of them live alone and do their own shopping and cooking. But at some point they begin to find those tasks more than they can handle. Then they stay home and "make do" — sometimes with frozen dinners, sometimes a can of soup — and, too often, nothing at all.

That's when the people in the purple vans can help. The vans sporting the Meals on Wheels logo were acquired after Ashley McCumber became the group's executive director two years ago. He quickly decided to modernize the delivery fleet and sought funding from the city, local corporations and foundations.

Sources for home-delivered meals for seniors

In addition to the purple vans from Meals on Wheels (above), there are others who provide meals to homebound neighborhood seniors. While recent funding cuts have halved the number of groups that deliver low-cost or free meals, several still operate. Eligibility requirements, frequency of delivery and the length of waiting lists vary, so it's best to call for specific information.

Those offering meal programs include:

- Kimochi Japanese American Senior Services, 931-2287
- On Lok Senior Services, 647-6332
- San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services, 355-6700, ext. 5
- Self-Help for the Elderly, 677-7600

The mission of Meals on Wheels is to provide homebound seniors in San Francisco with nutritious meals, daily human contact, support services, such as nutrition counseling, and home safety items, such as grab bars and smoke detectors.

Like so many San Francisco institutions, Meals on Wheels began as a grass roots movement, with members of the community looking out for their elderly neighbors. The group began preparing meals in neighborhood kitchens and delivering them throughout the city. Their volunteer efforts took root, and Meals on Wheels of San Francisco was founded in 1970. Last year, the program served 200 clients in the neighborhood and 2,200 clients citywide.

Currently the program delivers two meals to each client every day, suited to four types of need: regular, low sodium, diabetic and softened. To be eligible to receive meals, clients must be at least 60 years old, live in San Francisco and have a chronic disability preventing them from shopping for food or preparing meals. While there is a suggested contribution of $35 a week, no one is denied service because of the inability to pay.

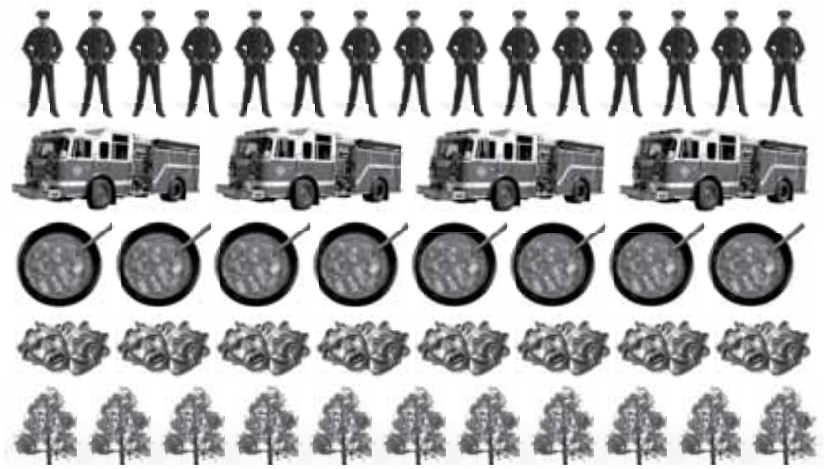
Meals on Wheels administrators estimate that it costs about $3,650 per year to provide one senior with meals — approximately the same cost as a one-day stay in a hospital.

Donations are welcome, and those interested in helping directly can volunteer as "second seat" drivers and ride along to visit and assist with meal deliveries.

One local volunteer is Nicole Labrow, who moved to the neighborhood from Los Angeles in 2007. Because she enjoys a close relationship with her grandparents, she looked for a volunteer opportunity that would help fill the void created by living far away from them. Meals on Wheels staffers interviewed and screened Labrow, then matched her with a senior woman who lives alone. Labrow says she has become friends with her client and spends about five hours a month visiting, running errands and shopping for her.

To apply for meals or to volunteer, contact Meals on Wheels of San Francisco at 920-1111 or visit www.mowsf.org.

Cathy Murphy owns and operates Home Instead Senior Care in San Francisco. For more information, call 441-6490 or visit www.homeinstead.com.



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NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Date	Asking $	Sale $
1974 Filbert St	3	2	2	1440	27-May	1,195,000	1,020,000
2586 Clay St	2	2	2		11-Jun	1,945,000	1,850,000
2608 Sacramento St	4	3.5	3		20-May	2,395,000	2,500,000
2324 Divisadero St	4	4.5	1	3500	4-Jun	2,700,000	2,550,000
2265 California St	4	4	2		5-Jun	2,875,000	2,775,000
2165 Jackson St	6	6	2	6637	19-May	3,195,000	3,195,000
2680 Jackson St	4	3.5	2	3139	12-Jun	3,495,000	3,550,000
37 Presidio Ave	7	5.5	2		5-Jun	5,395,000	Not Disclosed
3222 Jackson St	6	7	2		5-Jun	6,995,000	Not Disclosed
Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts							
1701 Jackson St #707	1	1	1	743	20-Jun	610,000	605,000
2299 Sacramento St #1	1	1	1	844	2-Jun	599,000	610,000
2701 Van Ness Ave #604	1	1	2	894	6/12	639,000	615,000
2698 Bush St	2	1	1	1074	2-Jun	649,000	635,000
322 Presidio Ave #3	2	2	1	1296	22-May	699,000	660,000
2060 Sutter St #409	2	2	1		20-May	685,000	670,000
2728 Gough St #2	1	1	1		12-Jun	739,000	710,000
1885 Jackson St #101	2	2	1	1048	19-May	739,000	725,000
2075 Sutter St #207	2	2	1	1104	4-Jun	699,000	728,000
1450 Post St #1015	1	2	1	1782	29-May	799,000	799,000
3172 Sacramento St	2	2.5	1	301	12-Jun	990,000	1,025,000
2001 Sacramento St #6	3	2	1	1912	1-Jun	1,150,000	1,118,000
3317 Jackson St	3	2	1	2080	28-May	1,495,000	1,355,000
1636 Filbert St #A	3	2.5	1		5-Jun	1,495,000	Not Disclosed
1636 Filbert St #B	3	2.5	1	1906	5-Jun	1,749,000	Not Disclosed
2220 Sacramento St	5	5.5	2		29-May	3,950,000	Not Disclosed

This year vs. last year: down 10%

All things considered, the housing market in our neighborhood has fared pretty well during this difficult time. At the beginning of the year, there were many uncertainties about the economy. Now that we have reached the halfway point, we can take this opportunity to make some assessments and comparisons to the same time last year and the first of this year.

Not surprisingly, housing prices in the neighborhood have fallen — an average of 10 percent from a year ago — but since the beginning of the year there has been a 4 percent increase. The big difference is in the number of transactions, with the current market showing a 47 percent decrease from last year. But the number of transactions has more than doubled, compared with the beginning of this year.

Another important statistic to help understand the ent state of the market is the months supply of inventory. Last year at this time, we were looking at a 2.3 month supply — a strong seller's market. By early 2009, there was a nine month supply — a strong buyer's market. Currently, there is a 4.2 month supply, which is a more balanced market that still offers buyers a good amount of inventory to choose from. This is not the case with other areas in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, which, in some cases, still have over a year of inventory.

The current market appears to be most active at the lower end, below $900,000. Until quite recently, there were very favorable interest rates — in some cases below 5 percent — for conforming loans under $417,000 and conforming jumbo loans under $729,750. That helped fuel the lower end of the market. With the recent upward trend in interest rates, it will be interesting to see whether this segment of the market slows down.

NEW LISTINGS: Two single family homes have come onto the market priced under $2 million. The first, at 2846 Baker, is a 3-bedroom, 3-bath home with expansion potential listed at $1.849 million. The other, at 2826 Octavia, is a 4-bedroom, 3-bath home with a legal studio. It's only a few steps away from Union Street and is listed at $1.85 million. In addition, there are still condos available in the new development at 1521 Sutter (left), where two-thirds of the units are now sold. Unit 306 — a 2-bedroom, 2-bath south-facing unit — was just relisted at $678,000, a 21 percent reduction from its previous listing price.

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

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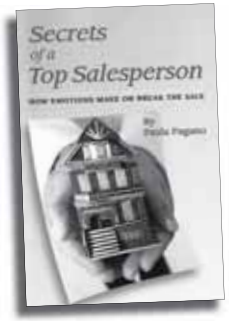

An inside story

Proving herself good at telling tales as well as selling real estate, Hill & Co. agent Paula Pagano has written a new book exploring how emotions can make or break a sale. Writing candidly about her own experiences, she outlines the eight essential virtues and the eight potential vices of a top salesperson. Learn more about the book at www.secretsofatopsalesperson.com.

Don't Be Afraid to Say You're Sorry

At times clients disappoint you and you may say things you regret

By Paula Pagano

Frank woods is one of my most favorite clients. He decided his current house is too small for him, his new fiancee, Linda, and her five-year-old son.

Frank is bright, witty and charming, with a high profile job in the insurance business. He also has plenty of money and such an easygoing personality that it is a real joy to work with him. We have become good friends and even see each other socially. He is a great source of referrals. He sings my praises and lauds my merits to his influential circle of friends.

In the span of a few months, I find him a magnificent (and very expensive) home in Pacific Heights. To make sure we win the bid (it's a seller's market), we get our inspections and disclosures done before the offer date. As I am driving to Yosemite to celebrate my birthday, I get a call on my cell phone. I'm in high spirits, thinking our non-contingent over-asking offer is a sure thing. It is Darlene, the listing agent, on the phone.

"Frank just called and withdrew his offer."

I gasp, searching for what to say. "He did what? What reason did he give?

"No reason. You better call him and straighten this out. I am meeting with my sellers in an hour. You still have time."

I call him immediately. Although Frank is an astute businessman with a prestigious job, he is nervous. I feel exasperated. I expected much more of him. All the time we spent looking was for nothing. He's about to miss out on a great house. He tells me he could not sleep at all the night before. Instead of recognizing his buyer's remorse, I get irritated.

"We've done our inspections. The house is in perfect condition and in your most favorite neighborhood. It is such an opportunity," I plead.

"I just can't go through with it," he says.

"But this is your dream house."

"I'm not ready," is his answer.

I start to get forceful. I tell him how embarrassing it is for me to withdraw an offer already in place. I remind him how prestigious an address it is. I know I shouldn't be thinking of my feelings, but I let him know how embarrassed I am letting down a top-selling agent in my own office.

As a professional, I should be detached, but I cannot contain my disappointment. I feel the anger collecting at the bottom of my throat. Instead of throwing the phone, I do something worse. I attack him where he is most vulnerable.

"Did Linda put you up to this?" I can almost hear the venom in my voice.

There is silence at the other end of the phone. I have made a huge miscalculation. My bitter words hang like drawn daggers in the air. Cruel words which I cannot take back. He does not answer, but rushes a goodbye. I wonder if it will be goodbye for good. Will I ever be able to amend the hurt I just caused to my friend and client?

When I return from my vacation, Frank avoids all my phone calls. A few months later I notice his home listed with someone else and wonder where on Millionaire Row he lives now. I still write and call him occasionally, but never hear back.

Excerpted from Secrets of a Top Salesperson, *© 2009 by Paula Pagano.*

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This sophisticated 2BD/2BA condo with stunning views of Russian Hill, Nob Hill and the Financial District, was just completely rebuilt down to the studs by Richard Beard AIA, principal at BAR Architects.
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Pacific Heights:
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Marina:
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2416 Fillmore 749-1144

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