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# THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ JUNE 2015



### Art out of Africa

Photograph by  
DANIEL BAHMANI

Ivory Coast native Solange Mallett has moved her gallery of African art from Paris to an aesthetically exciting new home at 1305 Fillmore Street. "We fit in the Fillmore," she says. The gallery displays art and gift items from several sub-Saharan African nations, giving meaning to the gallery's name, African Plural Art.

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## Wells Fargo Bank Heist Takes ATMs

Machines upgraded and moved inside — "a lose-lose situation"

By CHRIS BARNETT

**T**HE BIGGEST neighborhood bank heist in decades has left many customers feeling shortchanged.

Three automatic teller machines outside the Wells Fargo Bank at Fillmore and California recently vanished, depriving customers of the convenience of withdrawing cash and doing limited banking when the branch was closed. Now Wells Fargo customers or anyone with a debit card must observe banker's hours — 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday — to use the two ATM machines in the bank's lobby.

No one in the Wells Fargo hierarchy was willing to talk about the decision to remove the machines, which have been there for decades. But after repeated calls, Wells Fargo vice president for corporate communications Ruben Pulido issued a statement.

"The ATMs were older models that needed to be replaced before they no longer met our internal security requirements," the statement said. "When we replace any ATMs, we are required to bring them up to code to meet the new Americans With Disabilities Act standards."

Pulido's statement added: "We spent months trying to figure out a solution, but unfortunately we were unable to determine a viable solution. Our only choice was to remove the ATMs, place lobby units inside the store to be utilized during business hours and begin a search for an offsite ATM location nearby, which is currently underway."

The one person most inconvenienced by the yanking of the ATMs may well be Joseph Anonuevo, manager of the Fillmore branch.

"We're just as frustrated as our clients," he said. "We've explained hundreds of times that Wells Fargo is diligently looking



No more: ATMs at Fillmore and California.

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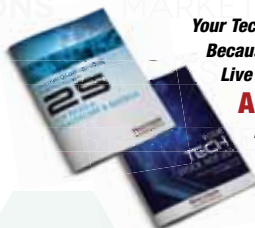
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## Salad Bar and Jive

City resists Shell's plan to add pumps and a food store

OWNERS OF THE Shell station at 2501 California Street were sent back to the drawing board by the Planning Commission on April 30 and told to come back with revised plans — ideally plans that would keep the garage they hoped to eliminate.

The owners, a company called AU Energy that owns more than 100 Shell stations, had sought permits to raze the existing station and garage and replace it with twice as many gas pumps and a Loop convenience store with a salad and sushi bar.

"Car repair is a higher amenity than grab and go items," said commissioner Dennis Richards. "I challenge you to come back with something where you have better integration with the community . . . hopefully including car repair."

The owners of the station had agreed a week earlier — after neighbors showed up at a Planning Commission hearing to oppose their plans — to scale back the hours the convenience store would operate and expand from five to eight fueling stations, rather than the 10 they originally sought. They also extended the lease on the garage, which is owned by an independent operator, through June 30.

The commissioners were clearly sympathetic to the Shell station owner's desire to renovate the station in a way that would keep it economically viable as environmental upgrades are made.

"We need gas stations," said Richards, who noted they are disappearing all over the city.

But the commissioners also had heard



The Shell station at Steiner and California.

neighborhood opposition to shuttering the garage and concerns about intensified traffic on an already-busy corner. There were doubts about the appropriateness of the expanded convenience store.

"I am concerned about further suburbanizing that corner," said commissioner Kathrin Moore. "It looks backward rather than forward."

The commission voted unanimously to continue the issue until a later meeting.

"We're directing you to try to incorporate service," said Richards. "That would be necessary and desirable and hugely compatible" with the location and the needs and desires of the neighbors.

Another hearing was scheduled for June 4. For updates, see [newfillmore.com](http://newfillmore.com).

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## Credo gets its first store — on Fillmore

Shashi Batra, founder of the new natural beauty emporium **CREDO**, was up a ladder taking a hands-on approach a couple of days before the store finally opened on June 4. But he seemed happy to climb down for a few minutes to explain why he decided to locate his first shop at 2136 Fillmore.

"Look around," he said. "In recent years five or six other beauty stores came to Fillmore — and none of those are natural. The whole category is unregulated, and much of it is harmful."

Batra and his team helped build Sephora into an international juggernaut of traditional cosmetic brands and beauty supplies. Now, "with a much more conscientious attitude," they hope to do the same for natural products.

"There's a lot of natural out there," he said, "but it's not beautiful. We decided to create a new concept."

If all goes well, there some day will be hundreds of Credo shops.

**GOING SOUTH:** Just two years ago, **JET MAIL** cheated death by relocating its shipping shop from a prime spot on Fillmore to 2184 Sutter. Now its new home is endangered. A "for sale" sign is posted out front. If the space sells, Jet Mail could be evicted and is likely to shut down.

**EVERYTHING'S DELAYED:** They're close, and had hoped to be open by now. But **SMITTEN ICE CREAM** at 2404 California won't debut until later in June, at the earliest. . . . Same story for patisserie Belinda Leong's new spot, **B. ON THE GO**, coming to the corner of California and Divisadero.

## Now No One Can Use ATMs Outside Wells Fargo

► FROM PAGE ONE

for an empty space within a block of the branch where we can install new ATMs."

Anonuevo said an external ATM machine at the busy California and Fillmore corner can generate more than 1,000 transactions a week. "It's our customer service that suffers," he said. "But we also lose fees from non-Wells Fargo customers who pay \$3 to use the machines."

Wells Fargo reportedly considered the space formerly occupied by Copy.net, a few doors away at 2404 California, as a new location for its ATMs. Instead, that space will soon open as a new home of Smitten Ice Cream.

Taking over any other nearby storefront would shut down an existing business and replace it with machines.

David Tente, executive director of the ATM Industry Association in Orlando, Fla., said he "doesn't know of any manufacturer making machines specifically to meet ADA requirements — but Wells Fargo would be a big customer, so a model could be tailored to be ADA compliant." Tente said a cash-dispensing ATM ranges in cost from \$2,000 for a basic model up to \$80,000, but typically averages \$30,000.

While the machines on California Street were on an uphill grade, there apparently had been no recent complaints about accessibility. A spokeswoman for the Mayor's Office on Disability said city records showed one complaint against the bank in 2004 — not necessarily about the ATMs — but nothing since.

"We never told anyone at Wells Fargo to take the machines out and there is no enforcement action against them," said



DANIEL BAHAMONT

*"We spent months trying to figure out a solution, but unfortunately we were unable to determine a viable solution. Our only choice was to remove the ATMs."*

— RUBEN POLIDO  
Wells Fargo Bank

Rachel Gordon, a spokeswoman for the city's Department of Public Works. "It sounds like the bank is proactively trying to do the right thing — to promote accessibility. And we're trying to work in partnership with them."

Many Wells Fargo customers remain miffed and mystified.

"If the bank had taken an action that disadvantages me but helps a handicapped person, I have no problem," said Jim Spinelli, a Wells Fargo customer for 13 years who lives a block from the branch.

But he called the decision to remove the ATMs "a lose-lose situation for everyone."

Another longtime Wells Fargo Fillmore customer, Rick Scott, stopped by one recent evening to withdraw money and was shocked. "The ATMs are gone, the exterior walls plastered up," he said. "I don't want to wait until they open and stand in line."

Another customer, Vanno Owen, called it a big inconvenience. "This area has so many restaurants and bars and people are forever running out for cash," he said. "Now we have to find another bank."

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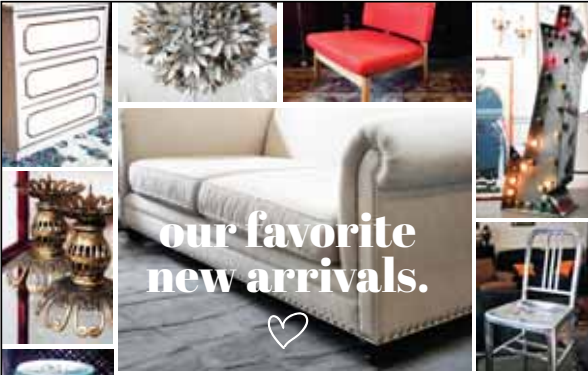
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## CRIME WATCH

### Driving While Intoxicated Jackson and Divisadero Streets April 25, 10:15 p.m.

Officers responded to a call about a traffic collision. When they arrived, they found one driver under the influence of alcohol and drugs. A search of her car produced two empty champagne bottles, a half ounce of marijuana and prescription medication with psychoactive properties. She told police she had "just one beer" about eight hours earlier. The suspect was detained and taken to Northern Station.

### Burglary Post and Pierce Streets April 27, 6 p.m.

A woman returned home to discover someone opening her garage door from the inside. She saw a man standing there with her snowshoes sticking out of his backpack. The intruder then ran off. It is believed he entered the garage by breaking the back window. The suspect was a black male from 40 to 50 years old, about 5'8" tall and weighing about 160 lbs. He was wearing a black baseball cap, a black oversized canvas jacket and blue jeans. He had a short gray beard and bad teeth. Police have no suspects at this time.

### Vandalism California and Divisadero Streets April 30, 5:51 p.m.

A woman temporarily parked her car across a driveway. When she returned, she found a man keying her car, leaving a deep scratch along the side. When she asked him why he was doing it, he replied, "Because you parked in my fucking driveway!" The man was cited for vandalism.

### Robbery With Force California Street and Presidio Avenue May 2, 3:12 p.m.

A woman had just gotten off a Muni bus when a man ran up and tugged violently on her purse. She was dragged to the ground. Finally, her assailant gave up and jumped into a getaway car driven by a second suspect. A witness took photos of the car and its occupants and gave them to the responding officers. Using the photos, Richmond Station investigators were able to arrest the two suspects in the East Bay.

### Car Theft, Narcotics Paraphernalia Divisadero Street and Pacific Avenue May 5, 11:15 p.m.

A man was able to direct police to his missing car through a tracking device on his phone. Officers found the car parked, with two people sitting inside. The suspects had attached a stolen license plate to the vehicle. Police took them into custody and searched the car; they found stolen property along with a pipe

used for smoking methamphetamine.

### Battery, Vandalism Sutter and Steiner Streets May 16, 4:08 p.m.

A diner in a restaurant went to use the restroom, but found both were occupied. He urinated on the floor instead. When the manager asked him to leave, the diner became belligerent, shouting threats. The manager recorded his behavior with a cell phone. When the diner finally left the restaurant, he knocked the phone out of the manager's hands, damaging it. Police are still investigating the matter.

### Rape Alta Plaza Park May 21, 10:30 p.m.

A woman was walking through Alta Plaza Park when a man approached her, grabbed her, then forced her to the ground and raped her. The suspect is of unknown race, from 35 to 40 years old, about 6' tall and weighing about 180 lbs. He was wearing a dark-colored hooded jacket decorated with strings of a contrasting color and blue jeans. The matter is still under investigation.

### Burglary Attempt California and Scott Streets May 23, 4:52 p.m.

A resident was home when he heard banging and rattling at his front door. He went to investigate and opened the door to find a man standing there. The man handed the resident the exterior doorknob, which he had torn from the door, then fled. The suspect is a black male from 30 to 35 years old, 5'8" tall and thin. He was wearing blue jeans and a gray windbreaker with an orange stripe across the chest. Police are still investigating.

### Suspicious Fire Sacramento and Steiner Streets May 25, 5:40 p.m.

A fire broke out in one unit of a multi-unit building. Witnesses saw an individual who resides in the unit casually walking away from the apartment while the fire was burning inside. Witnesses called the fire department. Firefighters determined it was a suspicious fire; the matter is under investigation.

### Stolen Car Sutter and Baker Streets May 25, 8:58 p.m.

A woman let a man drive her car even though she did not know him well. They parked and smoked marijuana together. When the owner of the car got out to urinate in a corner of the parking lot, the man drove off with her car. Police are still investigating the matter.

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## Out of Africa

A new gallery shows the work of sub-Saharan artists

By JUDY GODDESS

**S**OLANGE MALLET, the owner of African Plural Art, is passionate — about African art; her newly opened gallery at 1305 Fillmore; the neighborhood; the visitors who come to look, learn and sometimes purchase; and the tribes supported by the purchases.

"You have to be passionate about what you're doing and passionate about sharing it with other people," she says. "This is what I want to do. I'm from French Africa and I want to share with people here."

Mallett was born in the Ivory Coast and grew up in Paris. Her husband's work for the World Bank necessitated frequent moves: to Madagascar, Chad, Tanzania. In Paris, where they lived before moving to the Bay Area, Mallett ran an online African art business.

"That business taught me that I wanted a shop where people could come in and I could share what I'm learning with them," she says.

Mallett explored several San Francisco neighborhoods before choosing her space in the Fillmore Center near Eddy.

"We fit in the Fillmore. I wanted to be in an African American community," she says. "People stop in to look and to talk.

The other day, a woman came in. She told me she didn't know where in Africa she was from, but she saw this art is so important. She thanked me for bringing this art to the African American community. That's why I'm here."

Remodeling the new space took 15 months. But by opening day in early April, the long narrow space had been transformed into an brightly lit gallery displaying art and gift items from several sub-Saharan African nations — the meaning behind the Plural in the gallery's title.

"I don't sell antiques. I sell tribal art — art made in the traditional way," Mallett explains. "These are used objects from tribes in different countries: the Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Mali."

To demonstrate, Mallett walks over to a statue of a tall man. "Look at the dents and scratches on this statue; you know it's been used," she says. "This is a statue of a rhythm pounder from the Senufo tribe from the north of the Ivory Coast. The Senufo rhythm pounder, called Debele by the tribe, dispensed justice, assured social cohesion and took charge of the initiation of male members of the society."

Approaching a display of colorful necklaces and other jewelry, Mallett pulls a table



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL BAHMANI

*"My goal is to help the women in Ivory Coast villages and other villages live better lives."*

— SOLANGE MALLET  
owner of African Plural Art

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African Plural Art at 1305 Fillmore gets its artwork — and its name — from a number of countries and tribes in sub-Saharan Africa.

linen from a shelf of woven baskets, bags, linens, clothing and bracelets to display the fine work. "My goal is to help the women in Ivory Coast villages and other villages live better lives," she says.

Photos on Mallett's computer cycle to show men weaving on hand-carved wooden looms; the small wooden house that serves as a factory; hundreds of tablecloths and clothes hanging on wood railings.

"The husbands weave and the women make the patterns," she says. "It takes a long time. Then they make a six-hour trip to a big city where, if they're lucky, they make

one or two sales. People in Africa live on what they receive from their work, and they can't live on one or two sales. I deliberately don't charge high prices to move inventory and bring in more pieces. If they're selling more, they can live better."

Then another shop offering catches her eye. "These baskets are made by a women's voluntary association in Madagascar," says Mallett, who raised money for their cooperative while living there. "They use the profits from their sales to help new mothers. These weavers are so talented, but they just don't have the outlets."

Mallett makes annual trips to sub-Saharan Africa to acquire new items. "I bring back what I love. Art is love, a personal love. You have to love a piece, you have to feel a connection — otherwise it's not art," she says. "This art speaks to me, and I hope others will have the same experience."

*African Plural Art is at 1305 Fillmore Street. The gallery is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday and from noon to 7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. Contact the gallery at 415-539-5873.*



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A drawing of the south portal to the Fillmore Street Tunnel at Fillmore and Sutter Streets — “as it will appear when completed” — was included in a 1912 brochure.

# A Tunnel Under Fillmore

As the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition neared, a tunnel was proposed from Sutter to Filbert

BY PEGGY ZEIGLER

AS SAN FRANCISCO celebrates the 100th anniversary of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the dome of the Palace of Fine Arts is decked out in new paint and the Ferry Building is illuminated as it was in 1915. Re-creations of the expo grounds flash in the windows of the California Historical Society announcing its exhibition of *City Rising: San Francisco and the 1915 World's Fair*.

But the neighborhood connection to the exposition — that of the Fillmore Tunnel — is yet to be told. For that we must look back more than a century, to the fall of 1911.

It was then that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hired Bion J. Arnold to make an impartial assessment of the city's transportation system. Arnold saw at once that the hills and ridges divided the city into districts. And his studies

revealed that the western third of the city was underdeveloped simply because of the excessive time it took to commute to the downtown area.

But Arnold had a plan. He firmly believed that these barriers could be removed by constructing tunnels through many of the intervening hills.

Tunnels quickly became the name of the game. The Board of Supervisors established a Tunnel Committee, as did San Francisco's active Civic League of Improvement Clubs. A plan for a tunnel through the Stockton hill was approved. The Golden Gate Improvement Association submitted a resolution to the Board of Supervisors favoring a tunnel, like the one planned for Stockton, under either Fillmore or Steiner Streets. Almost immediately, the Fillmore Street Improvement Association sprang into action with “plans for a great bore through the Pacific Avenue hill,” as the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced on August 9, 1911.

On January 8, 1912, James “Sunny Jim”

Rolph Jr., a tunnel supporter, was sworn in as mayor of San Francisco. He in turn hired a new city engineer, Michael M. O'Shaughnessy, who eventually served 20 years in that role. Tunnels continued to dominate the mayoral agenda.

THE WELL-ORGANIZED Fillmore Street Improvement Association, promoters of the street as a business district, had the manpower and connections to pursue the tunnel idea.

Mayor Rolph's tunnel man, Bion Arnold, recommended the Fillmore Street Tunnel as an essential transportation link to the exposition site. He agreed on a route through the hill down Fillmore, from Sutter to Filbert Streets. His final report on the tunnel noted that it would “undoubtedly facilitate bulk passenger movements to the maximum extent” and, after the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) closed, would be the “only available low-level route to Harbor View,”

known today as the Marina District.

Almost immediately after delivering its petition and receiving a blessing from Arnold, the Fillmore Street Improvement Association began campaigning hard. It employed an engineer and sent a committee to Los Angeles, which was well into a tunnel frenzy of its own. The men returned with a recommendation for a twin-bore tunnel through the Fillmore Street hill: one for rail and the other for vehicles and pedestrians.

“Proud as we are of Fillmore Street, it is today a cul-de-sac with a wall at each end,” said a supporting brochure. “No district can have anything but limited growth unless its main artery of traffic leads from somewhere to somewhere.”

Support for the Fillmore Street Tunnel rolled in from the Golden Gate Valley Improvement Club, the McAllister Street Improvement Club and the East of Fillmore Street Improvement Association.

TO PAGE 10 ►

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# And Then It All Began Falling Apart

► FROM PAGE 9

The Tunnel Committee of the Civic League of Improvement Clubs also joined the bandwagon. It pointed out that the Fillmore Street Tunnel would be "the connecting link between Harbor View, the site of PPIE of 1915, and 80 percent of San Francisco's permanent population." The League urged speed in building the tunnel as the opening date loomed.

Yet San Francisco dragged her feet.

Meanwhile, construction had begun in 1912 on the PPIE fairgrounds and the Stockton Street Tunnel. That tunnel would be only 911 feet long, but 50 feet wide, and when completed would be the widest tunnel in the United States, able to accommodate streetcars, vehicles and pedestrians.

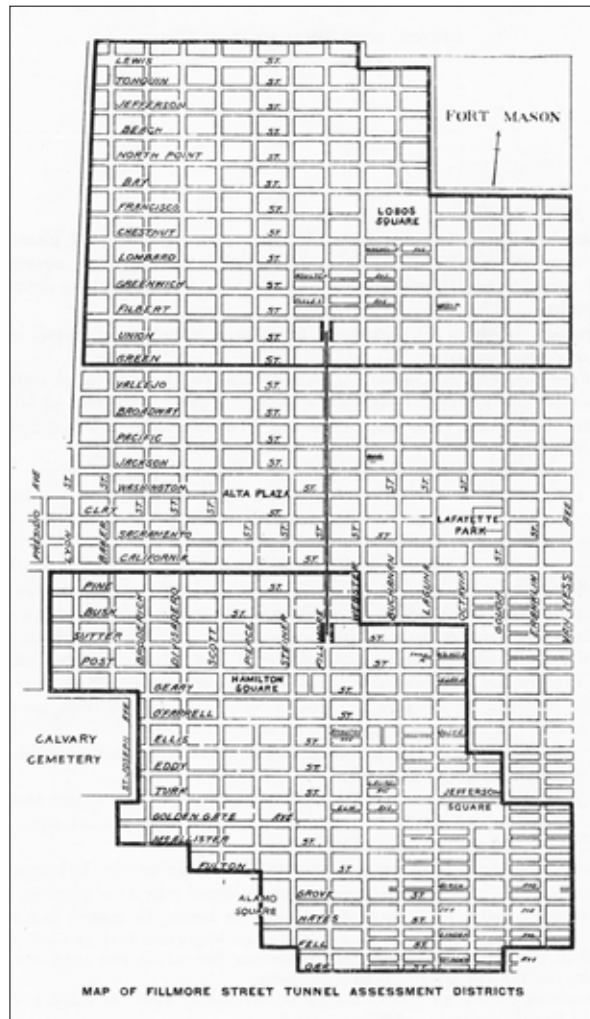
ATTENTION TURNED next to financing the proposed Fillmore Street Tunnel. The city engineer's office estimated the cost to be \$2,914,002 — or "no more than \$3 million," according to Michael O'Shaughnessy. In a letter from the Fillmore Street Improvement Association to the Tunnel Committee of the Board of Supervisors, the organization reported it had received supporting signatures from 60 property owners, representing 97 percent of those holding deeds to Fillmore Street property between Sutter and Fulton, which was characterized as "the valuable business section." Importantly, these supporters would also be the ones assessed to defray tunnel costs.

The property owners on the other side of the hill — the Harbor View side — were another matter. Herbert and Hartland Law, who owned 12 blocks, resisted at first, but came around to supporting the tunnel. However, the majority of the land in what is now the Marina Boulevard area had been purchased in the 19th century as water lots by James G. Fair, one of the so-called Silver Kings or the Irish Big Four. His two daughters, Theresa "Tessie" Oelrichs and Virginia "Birdie" Vanderbilt, inherited the property after their father's death.

Oelrichs, who was a reigning dowager of Newport, R.I. and plagued by mental instability, held seven blocks in the Harbor View area; her sister, divorced and living in New York City, owned 22 blocks. The sisters had made separate lease arrangements with the PPIE. Oelrichs had offered her land rent-free, but with a contingency that all future taxes or assessments be paid by the exposition. Vanderbilt initially refused to lease her land at all, then relented enough to propose a lease at \$60,000 per block. The PPIE committee replied that it could only pay \$35,000 to \$40,000 per block.

California Gov. Hiram W. Johnson came to the rescue, approving an amendment to the eminent domain law that would allow the PPIE to condemn property for exposition use. Vanderbilt was made aware of this new legislation and, after consulting her lawyers, agreed to the lower price. The lease, signed on January 13, 1912, contained a clause requiring that the PPIE pay any additional costs that might arise.

So when the Fillmore Street Improvement Association sent two members to New York City in April 1912 to ask Vanderbilt to comply with the idea of paying assessments on her property for the tunnel, they were met with resistance. Despite let-



*When he received his own personal assessment to help pay for the Fillmore Street Tunnel, the leader of the pro-tunnel advocates overnight became the chief opponent.*

ters of introduction from Mayor Rolph, Archbishop Patrick Riordan, publisher William Randolph Hearst and New York Mayor William Gaynor, Vanderbilt refused to meet with the representatives. When her lawyers finally agreed to see them, the San Franciscans were told that the lease pertained; any extra costs would have to be borne by the PPIE.

THE PPIE COMMITTEE dealing with financial matters could not recommend any payment for tunnel assessment. In fact, it declared that the Fillmore Tunnel was not necessary for the PPIE — that other transportation methods were more satisfactory and less costly.

In April 1912, the leading light of the Fillmore Street Improvement Association, vice chairman Samuel Adelstein, declared: "If the tunnel is not built now under the present administration, it probably never will be constructed." He pointed out that the tunnel would principally benefit Vanderbilt's property in the future, and proposed that the PPIE pay 40 percent of the tunnel assessment, with Vanderbilt paying 60 percent. The PPIE reiterated that it would not pay any assessments at all for construction costs deemed unnecessary for the fair itself.

The Fillmore Street Improvement Association created a tunnel booklet, touting

the successful Los Angeles tunnels (four completed, one near completion, five more ordered by the city council) and pointing out the increased real estate values they produced.

On April 23, 1912, the Fillmore Tunnel resolution was adopted by the city and the Board of Public Works was ordered to furnish preliminary plans and surveys. It was to be 4,332 feet from Sutter to Filbert Streets with an easy grade of 2 percent and would accommodate street cars, vehicles and pedestrians. An assessment district was unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors. A total of 32.4 million square feet would be included in the assessment district. The PPIE voiced opposition, but was overruled.

On June 27, 1912, the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced that a 30-foot strip of land on each side of Fillmore Street between Filbert and Union and between Bush and Sutter would be purchased as part of the tunnel's total cost.

GRADUALLY, opposition to the Fillmore Street Tunnel plan began to develop from more than just the PPIE. The Divisadero Street Improvement Association urged the mayor and Board of Supervisors to exclude all land west of Pierce Street from the assessment district on the grounds that it was about to petition

for its own tunnel. A new organization, the West of Fillmore Street Improvement Association, formed to protest against the Fillmore Street Tunnel. The San Francisco Tunnel League opposed it on the grounds of excessive assessments.

On the other side of the issue, Samuel Adelstein of the Fillmore Street Improvement Association became secretary-treasurer of a new organization called the Fillmore Street Tunnel Property Owners' Association. That group published letters from pro-tunnel landowners on both sides of the Fillmore hill and as far away as the Mission, the Richmond and North Beach and urged that construction start at once.

Toward the end of 1912, a city election for charter amendments pertaining to tunnels was overwhelmingly supported by residents in the Western Addition and Harbor View districts. The Fillmore Street Improvement Association presented a resolution endorsing a bond issue for municipal railroad extensions related to the Fillmore Street Tunnel.

But by April 1913, city engineer O'Shaughnessy, a proponent of the tunnel, sounded a note of caution. If construction did not start promptly, he said, it would not be possible to complete it before the PPIE opening, scheduled for February 1915. But debates on the size of the assessment district as well as the assessment rate itself persisted.

And then it all began falling apart.

In September 1913, Adelstein became outraged when he received his own personal assessment for the Fillmore Street Tunnel based on his ownership of property on Fillmore Street between Post and Geary. His rate was 40 cents per square foot, for a total of \$2,309.50. Property on the north side of the Fillmore Hill, which Adelstein believed would benefit much more from the tunnel than that on the south side, was assessed at a rate of between 7 cents and 12 3/4 cents per square foot.

Overnight, Adelstein went from leader of the pro-tunnel advocates to chief opponent. His colleagues on the Tunnel Committee of the Fillmore Street Improvement Association tried to expel him from the organization.

ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1913, the *San Francisco Chronicle* headlined the downward course: "Fillmore Tunnel May Not Be Built." The Tunnel Committee recommended to the Board of Supervisors a resolution to the effect that there be an "indefinite postponement" of the Fillmore Tunnel project.

Within days, the full Board of Supervisors approved the resolution. Adelstein was blamed for this turnaround, although the supervisors claimed they had rejected the tunnel plan because of excessive property assessments and the likelihood the tunnel would not be finished in time for the 1915 exposition.

Mayor Rolph cut the ribbon on the Stockton Tunnel on December 29, 1914. Within hours, the new tunnel was hailed as a success. Six weeks later, the Stockton Tunnel began carrying many of the more than 18 million visitors to the PPIE. The railway built along Van Ness Avenue took fairgoers from Market Street to Harbor View. The privately owned Fillmore Street and Union Street streetcar lines brought patrons to the gates of the exposition.

Like the Stockton Tunnel, the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was declared a triumph. At its end, after all buildings except the Palace of Fine Arts were razed as planned, development began in Harbor View, renamed the Marina.

And the Fillmore Street Tunnel slipped into history — and oblivion.

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# Digby's Castle

Arts & Crafts metalsmith created a compound on Vallejo Street

By BRIDGET MALEY

SOME BUILDINGS stop you in your tracks. That's what happened to me the first time I walked by 1729 Vallejo, between Franklin and Gough Streets. Often referred to as Digby's Castle, the complex of buildings evokes something out of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Built into the hill, with a stone retaining wall forming a barrier to the private space beyond, it is a collection of small buildings, some constructed of a deep terra cotta-colored hollow clay tile. Set in a garden, the buildings dot the landscape, creating interlocking courtyards. While the buildings are small in scale, they still convey the feeling of a medieval fortress or castle.

They were once the home and studio of Digby Brooks, a little known art-metal craftsman who worked in San Francisco from around 1910 through the 1930s. The site he developed had earlier belonged to his parents, William and Alice Brooks. A land agent for the Spring Valley Water Co., William Brooks apparently amassed quite a fortune before his death in 1916. Digby Brooks held a "real job" for only a brief period, serving as a salesman for the Machine Oil Co.

Living off his inheritance, Brooks created his metalwork at his home and studio on Vallejo Street. Few of his works have come to light over the years; it appears most of his projects were used in designing his own home. However, the Wolfsonian Museum in Miami has in its collection a

remarkable copper piece he created: a hammered and patinated copper tray with delicately pierced handles in the shape of butterflies.

Brooks married a musician, Suzanne Nicholine Pasmore, on February 9, 1917. Pasmore was an accomplished pianist who had studied in Berlin and performed as the Pasmore Trio with two of her sisters. They toured Europe and the United States, their exploits frequently mentioned in the *Pacific Coast Musical Review*. She was also an accompanist for legendary improvisational dancer Isadora Duncan, who taught dance classes in her family's home.

In 1921, Digby Brooks partnered with architect Henry Higby Gutterson to create his whimsical fortress home

and studio. Gutterson, a Minnesotan, studied at the University of California, Berkeley, then traveled to France to attend the Ecole des Beaux Arts architectural program from 1906 to 1909. He was a talented architect, designing many important Bay Area commissions — and he worked with the Olmstead Brothers and John Galen Howard on the layout and design of San Francisco's St. Francis Wood neighborhood. He later designed many houses there.

Digby Brooks's Vallejo Street folly was featured in a July 1922 article titled "A Studio Home of Thirteenth Century Design," in *The Building Review*. The writer was particularly fixated on the fact that the buildings were



SHAWN WATSON



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FROM "BAY AREA COPPER"



The complex of buildings on Vallejo Street near Franklin (far left). The doorway to the turret features copperwork by Digby Brooks (center left). His hammered copper chandeliers (near left) with oak tree cutouts hung in his castle.

only one year old, but had the charm and grace of years gone by.

"A real 'castle' of course is never new, and while this one is less than a year old, the illusion of age is created by the 'atmospheric setting,'" she wrote. "It was simply a case of utilizing as a setting an old-time garden, with extremely pleasing effect. Therefore it does not look like a new house, but one that was built when the trees were young and growing."

Brooks must have demolished the house his parents owned on the site to build his castle. According to census records, Brooks was divorced by 1940. His Vallejo Street home and studio was worth \$10,000. He was listed as a self-employed designer, with two lodgers, both sales-

men, renting rooms from him on the site. When he died on December 22, 1947, Brooks was living at 226 Waller Street.

Over time, the large lot facing Vallejo Street — originally 1717 Vallejo — has been subdivided and more buildings added. Now there are three separate lots, each with two structures. City records indicate that the lot containing Digby's Castle has been further subdivided into two condominiums: 1729 and 1731 Vallejo. The unit at the rear, 1731 Vallejo, last sold in 2002 for \$1.1 million.

At the site, the stone retaining wall, two sets of stairs and the garages flanking the east and west ends form a unifying element along the street. The garden is especially

attractive when it is in bloom, and there are still mature trees on the site.

Brooks worked closely with Gutterson to design and place some of the interior fixtures, as well as most of the architectural ornament and hardware found throughout the house, inside and out, including the remarkable metalwork. A recent exhibition and accompanying publication, *Bay Area Copper*, shed some light on the significance of Brooks's unique design work in metal, placing him in context with other metalsmiths of the Arts & Crafts era, including Dirk van Erp and Harry St. John Dixon, brother of western artist Maynard Dixon.

Digby's Castle is a one-of-a-kind urban complex — and worth a look on your next outing near Vallejo Street.

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3636 Clay St	6	4	0	8,125	76	4/30/2015	9,500,000	9,000,000
2342 Washington St	5	7	2		6	4/28/2015	10,950,000	11,500,000
2939 Vallejo St	5	6	2		13	4/30/2015	11,500,000	12,000,000
2701 Broadway	7	7	2	16,400	100	5/15/2015	39,000,000	31,000,000

### Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts

2831 Webster St #31	1	1		605	21	5/1/2015	699,000	690,000
2010 Broderick St #2	1	1	1		55	5/12/2015	689,000	730,000
2171 Sacramento St #A	1	1	1		27	4/29/2015	689,000	830,000
1817 California St #2A	2	1	1	814	19	4/28/2015	779,000	868,000
3193 California St	2	1	1		21	4/16/2015	895,000	918,000
3055 California St #A	2	2	1	966	43	4/27/2015	949,000	925,000
1916 Pine St #1	1	1	0	1,180	12	4/30/2015	849,000	975,000
1648 Union St #A	1	1	1	806	8	4/23/2015	850,000	1,060,000
3140 Clay St #3	1	1	1	900	16	5/15/2015	899,000	1,105,000
1895 Pacific Ave #505	1	1	1	1,115	12	5/8/2015	879,000	1,211,000
1856 Franklin St #5	3	2	2	1,253	13	5/12/2015	999,000	1,525,000
2075 Sutter St #529	2	2	1	1,120	14	5/1/2015	895,000	1,305,000
1501 Greenwich St #207	2	2	1	1,064	12	5/7/2015	1,249,000	1,366,000
2119 Scott St	2	2	1	1,396	18	4/29/2015	1,799,000	1,829,000
2721 Union St	2	2	1	1,518	32	4/28/2015	2,488,000	2,000,000
2536 Franklin St	3	2	1	2,177	59	4/28/2015	2,050,000	2,075,000
3555 Jackson St #13	2	0		1,581	18	5/4/2015	1,795,000	2,300,000
1896 Pacific Ave #204	3	3	1	2,767	1	4/30/2015	2,739,000	2,739,000
1911 Vallejo St	3	3	2		50	4/24/2015	3,295,000	2,988,888
3065 Washington St #33	4	2	1	2,100	13	4/28/2015	1,998,000	3,210,000
102 Walnut St	4	3	1	3,617	13	5/1/2015	3,675,000	3,800,000
2000 Washington St #1	3	3	3	4,438	82	4/17/2015	7,750,000	7,500,000
2500 Steiner St #5	2	2	1	3,500	68	5/13/2015	9,950,000	9,250,000



### Buyer confidence now driving high-end sales

A trio of recent big-ticket Pacific Heights home sales indicates that buyer confidence has fully returned to the high end of San Francisco's real estate market.

The most notable single-family home transaction is **2701 BROADWAY** (above center), which sold in mid-May for \$31 million. The stately 16,000-square-foot mansion is located across from the most coveted strip of homes in San Francisco known as the Gold Coast — the north side of Broadway from Divisadero to Lyon. The recently renovated seven-bedroom property boasts commanding views of the bay and city skyline from its deck, plus its own indoor basketball court.

Two other eight-digit home sales in the neighborhood occurred in late April: **2342 WASHINGTON STREET** went for \$11.5 million and **2939 VALLEJO STREET** for \$12 million. Both sold in less than two weeks, with the Washington Street home selling in just six days. Both also went for about \$500,000 more than the original listing price.

From January 1 to May 15 of this year, there have been five single-family home sales of \$10 million or more on the multiple listing service in San Francisco, compared with two during the same time last year.

— Data and commentary provided by PATRICK BARBER, president of Pacific Union. Contact him at patrick.barber@pacunion.com or call 415-345-3001.

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## She's One of the Boys No More

Now who will we ask how to cook a pot roast?

The neighborhood's reigning maven of meat — Mollie Stone's butcher Lorain Arruabarrena — retired June 1.

For more than three decades, she served up meat and fish and advice on what to do with it, the lone female behind the counter in an almost entirely male industry.

Butchering was in her blood. Her grandfather was a butcher who raised rabbits in Sonoma. She grew up around animals, and spent her time off hunting deer at an otherwise all-male camp up in Lake County she joined in 1956.

"I've loved to hunt and fish since I was four years old," she said. "I was always a tomboy. Barbie and Ken didn't have a chance with me."

In a profile a few years ago, she acknowledged being a mother figure and mentor to some of the younger men cutting chops at Mollie Stone's, at 2435 California Street. It helped that she knew how to cook.

"I'm a piece of the furniture at this place," she said at the time. "I don't know if I'm a recliner yet."

Now she knows.

She got sick last fall, but battled her way back to work. She didn't have the energy to walk across the street to Dino's for her usual Coke and slice of pepperoni, so she'd take her breaks upstairs in the lunchroom.



Butcher Lorain Arruabarrena behind the meat and fish counter at Mollie Stone's.

"It didn't feel right," she said.

She used up her sick leave and vacation time, then filed for retirement in February. She's been out of the store since April 7, when the doctors decided major surgery was required.

"They cut me from my rib cage down to my bikini line, and down both legs," she said. "I was scared shitless. But the lady surgeon who did it was very good."

And it turned out the father of one of her caregivers had been her first boss when she was a young butcher at Petrini's.

"Now I'm okay," she said the night of her retirement as she celebrated with her brother and son. "I cooked a roast beef."

If her health continues to improve, she hopes to start working again part time at the store in the fall.

## He Created a Community

He was there from the beginning.

When the Fillmore Farmers Market was created in 2003 in the parking lot that later became home to Yoshi's and the Fillmore Jazz Heritage Center, Tom Nichol was there, helping the farmers set up their stands and encouraging the neighbors to get to know the people who grew their food.

In 2005, when the market moved to O'Farrell Street, he was there, by then with a sense he was helping make something important happen.

"It may not be the biggest or busiest market," he said, "but it's the best."

Nearly every Saturday morning for a dozen years, usually in a yellow cap or shirt, Tom Nichol was at the Fillmore market, which he managed for the Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association.

"I'm employed by PCFMA, but I really work for the farmers," he said. "My purpose at the market is to educate consumers about buying fresh and local — and to create community."

He established a Saturday morning institution in the neighborhood.

"There is such an incredible sense of community there, with both the farmers and the shoppers," Nichol said. "The shoppers treat the farmers like good friends or neighbors, making this a fun place for them to shop and for me to work."

Some of the fun has been missing this year. What's missing is Tom Nichol.

He got the word the day before Christmas Eve. His services were no longer



Fillmore Farmers Market manager Tom Nichol (center) was remembered at a tribute on May 23.

needed. His market would go on, but without him.

It seemed for a while that he might work directly with some of the farmers. But his spirits sagged. His dog died. And then he got sick. He died on May 7 at age 63.

"The Fillmore market is the best thing Tommy Nichol ever did," said Cecil Patrick, a fellow former farmers market manager who lured his childhood friend from Florida in 1994 to become a part of the urban farmers market movement.

"Tommy always treated everyone with dignity and complete respect," Patrick said. "He knew the neighborhood. He knew how important this market was to the neighborhood. It was a fit. He orchestrated this incredible gathering spot every Saturday."

The gathering always included jazz. So on Saturday morning, May 23, the regulars in the Larry Douglas Alltet led a musical tribute to Tom Nichol.

He will be missed.



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**India Palace**  
1740 Fillmore 415-567-7789

**Izakaya Hashibiro Kou**  
1560 Fillmore 415-441-9294

**Jackson Fillmore Trattoria**  
2506 Fillmore 415-346-5288

**La Boulange**  
2043 Fillmore 415-928-1300

**La Mediterranee**  
2210 Fillmore 415-921-2956

**Mehfil Indian Cuisine**  
2301 Fillmore 415-614-1010

**OTD**  
2232 Bush 415-923-9575

**Pa'ina**  
1865 Post 415-829-2642

**Palmer's Tavern**  
2298 Fillmore 415-732-7777

**Pride of the Mediterranean**  
1761 Fillmore 415-567-1150

**The Progress**  
1525 Fillmore 415-673-1294

**Roam Burgers**  
1923 Fillmore 415-440-7626

**Roostertail**  
1963 Sutter 415-776-6783

**SPQR**  
1911 Fillmore 415-771-7779

**State Bird Provisions**  
1529 Fillmore 415-795-1272

**Sweet Lime**  
2100 Sutter 415-674-7515

**Sweet Maple**  
2101 Sutter 415-855-9169

**Tacobar**  
2401 California 415-674-7745

**Ten-ichi**  
2235 Fillmore 415-346-3477

**Thai Stick**  
2001 Fillmore 415-885-6100

**Troya**  
2125 Fillmore 415-563-1000

**Via Veneto**  
2244 Fillmore 415-346-9211

**Woodhouse Fish Co.**  
1914 Fillmore 415-437-2722

**Yoshi's Japanese Restaurant**  
1330 Fillmore 415-655-5600

## PIZZA

**Bruno's**  
1375 Fillmore 415-563-6300

**Delfina Pizzeria**  
2406 California 415-440-1189

**Dino's Pizza**  
2101 Fillmore 415-922-4700

**Extreme Pizza**  
1730 Fillmore 415-929-9900

**Pizza Inferno**  
1800 Fillmore 415-775-1800

## BAKERY & DESSERTS

**Boulangerie Bay Bread**  
2325 Pine 415-440-0356

**Bumzy's Chocolate Chip Cookies**  
1460 Fillmore 415-346-3222

**Fillmore Bakeshop**  
1890 Fillmore 415-923-0711

**Fraiche Yogurt**  
1910 Fillmore 415-674-6876

**Jane**  
2123 Fillmore 415-931-5263

**Miyako Old-Fashioned Ice Cream**  
1470 Fillmore 415-931-5260

**Noah's New York Bagels**  
2213 Pine 415-441-5396

**Sift Cupcake & Dessert Bar**  
2411 California 415-580-3030

**Smitten Ice Cream**  
2404 California 415-872-9414

**Yoppi Yogurt**  
2208 Fillmore 415-345-0018



## COFFEE & TEA

**Cafe Murano**  
1777 Steiner 415-771-0888

**Fillmore Street Cafe**  
1301 Fillmore 415-749-0987

**Peet's Coffee & Tea**  
2197 Fillmore 415-563-9930

**The Social Study**  
1795 Geary 415-292-7417

**Song Tea & Ceramics**  
2120 Sutter 415-885-2118

**Starbucks Coffee**  
2222 Fillmore 415-673-3171

**1501 Fillmore**  
415-441-7969

## WINE & SPIRITS

**Ales Unlimited**  
2398 Webster 415-346-6849

**D&M Wine and Liquor**  
2200 Fillmore 415-346-1325

**Vino**  
2425 California 415-674-8466

**Wine Jar**  
1870 Fillmore 415-931-2924

## MARKETS

**Friends**  
1758 Fillmore 415-346-3226

**Gino's Grocery**  
2500 Fillmore 415-775-1908

**Mayflower Market**  
2498 Fillmore 415-346-1700

**Mollie Stone's**  
2435 California 415-567-4902

**Pacific Food Mart**  
2199 Sutter 415-614-2385

**Spice Ace**  
1821 Steiner 415-885-3038

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Boom Boom Room**  
1601 Fillmore 415-673-8000

**Clay Theater**  
2261 Fillmore 415-561-9921

**The Fillmore Auditorium**  
1805 Geary 415-346-1600

**Origin Nightclub**  
1538 Fillmore 415-825-0338

**Sheba Piano Lounge**  
1419 Fillmore 415-440-7414

**Sundance Kabuki Theaters**  
1881 Post 415-346-3243



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