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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ NOVEMBER 2016



Gloria Hollander Lyon with photos of her family. From *The Jews in America*, 1989.

A Modern Elite Cafe Takes Flight

New regime breathes new life, look into local classic

By Chris Barnett

FOR MONTHS — long past its supposed July opening — the windows were papered over, thwarting sidewalk squinters who wanted a peek at the new Elite Cafe, wondering whether the new owners would preserve all that magnificent mahogany, the private booths, the historic bar and the New Orleans influenced menu.

In early October, the paper came down and the 35-year-old eatery made its latest debut. The Elite Cafe has been reborn as a sleek, sophisticated midtown Manhattan restaurant with a revived slate of French Quarter offerings, but only faint traces of its Art Deco past.

On opening weekend, locals and newcomers sized up the decor and the culinary and cocktail artistry of new owner Andy Chun and his hand-picked team of seasoned kitchen, libational and front-of-the-house heavies.

To traditionalists, it was a shock. Gone are the rich, vintage mahogany appointments, the wooden bar and the swivel bar stools that had been there since the 1930s, the classroom chandeliers and lazy fans that threw off a mellow glow and the occasional breeze, the vintage sconces in the booths — and the weekday happy hour.

New is a high, wide and handsome bar, booth tables and window seating ledges fashioned out of smooth Carrera marble, brass-topped community tables, massive framed mirrors and a floor of throwback-to-the-1920s white hexagonal tile.

For Elite Cafe loyalists and historical purists, the biggest jolt seems to be the new paint job — charcoal and a deep blue-gray — and all-new lighting.

San Francisco architect Chris von Eckartsberg says the new owner's design goal was to preserve the "great bones and strength and character" of the space and "elevate it, make it more luxurious, dramatic and transformational."



New chef Chris Borges and owner Andy Chun

That Number on Her Arm

Gloria Lyon survived seven concentration camps. Her new book tells the story.

BY THE TIME Gloria Hollander Lyon moved to the neighborhood five years ago, many people had heard her harrowing history.

In April 1944, on the day after Passover, she and her family were seized by the Nazis from their home in the small Czechoslovakian town of Nagy Bereg, which had come under Hungarian rule. Through luck, faith and quiet cunning, the young teen survived the horrors of seven concentration

camps. Many of her relatives were killed in the Holocaust; her mother and a cousin died shortly after liberation.

Many reminders remain. She has persistent pain and lasting scars from the ravages of severe malnutrition. And there's the number tattooed on her lower left forearm: A-6374. It was her young son's curiosity about that branding that inspired the title for her newly published book, *Mommy, What's That Number on Your Arm?*

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JUDY GRIESEDECK

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FURTHERMORE



A bonsai tree as old as Japantown

When neighborhood resident David Thompson (above) read about plans for a Zen rock garden at the southern end of Cottage Row to commemorate the 110th anniversary of Japantown [“Cottage Row Zen Garden Sparks a Fight,” September], he had an idea: That might be the perfect place for his century-old bonsai tree.

The tree has been in the same family since it was brought from the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exhibition and planted in their garden by legendary gardener Makoto Hagiwara, who also created the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park. Thompson, now the guardian of the tree, has been searching for the right home for the tree’s second century. He has been connected with the Japanese landscape designers planning the Cottage Row Zen garden.

MORE ON COTTAGE ROW

TO THE EDITORS:

I want to thank the *New Fillmore* and Bridget Maley for at long last putting to rest questions raised by a small number of individuals who do not wish to see a Zen rock garden dedicated in the Cottage Row Mini Park (Sutter Street area) that would honor San Francisco’s long and exciting history and cultural heritage on the 110 year Japantown anniversary. [“How Japanese Was Cottage Row?” October.]

The information you published (U.S. Census and San Francisco Street Directory listings), overwhelmingly shows that Japanese-Americans lived on Cottage Row. As a matter of fact, several Japanese families continue to live here.

Let’s hope this project will now move forward without any further needless meetings and ridiculous assaults made by a handful of naysayers.

JEFF STABEN
NO. 1 COTTAGE ROW

Kudos to the diligent work of the *New Fillmore* and to architectural historian Bridget Maley for finding and publishing the census records of 1920 and 1930.

These records, as well as city directories from 1933 to 1940, show that almost all of the Cottage Row residents were indeed of Japanese heritage. Hopefully this latest report will finally lay to rest the specious arguments about who really lived there and when. A little bit of sunlight is always welcome.

JAN BOLAFFI

When we moved to the neighborhood in 1986, the park was of very little benefit to anyone as we were regularly serenaded by drunks and druggies who were occupying the space. It was a sorry place surrounded by chain link fencing. For much of the last 30 years, we neighbors attempted to maintain the park on our own while pleading with, begging and cajoling the park administration to try to upgrade the property. Finally, we had our hard work rewarded with a beautifully renovated park that aesthetically fits with its surroundings.

Perhaps this will help to explain our chagrin over a small group of people trying to “cash in” on our efforts now that the park is so desirable.

MARY KING

THE NEW FILLMORE




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Connecting the neighborhood

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■ STREET TALK

Boulange Fillmore may finally be reborn

It's been over a year since Pascal Rigo reclaimed the space at 2043 Fillmore he'd sold to Starbucks as part of a \$100 million deal.

Since then, even as he reopened a reinvented **BOULANGERIE** around the corner on Pine Street, the windows on the Fillmore cafe have remained papered and the French blue paint has faded. Now Rigo says he's finally ready to roll.

"It's going to be a slightly different Boulange," he says. "No open face, because they are all going to be available at Pine. But great fun sandwiches in a different type of bread and a lot of beignets, as well as soft serves. Coffee and brunch menu as well."

He promises: "We are going to start construction in a few weeks. We hope to open before the end of the year."

■ **STILL MORE FASHION & BEAUTY:** Next door, **FRYE**, the 153-year-old boot-maker, last month opened its first stand-alone store on the West Coast at 2047 Fillmore. . . . And at 2105 Fillmore, the Paris *parfumerie* **ATELIER COLOGNE** is now open. . . . Still in the works: the Japanese fashion line **45 RPM** at 1905 Fillmore.

■ **TAKING THE FIFTH:** Down the street at 1850 Fillmore, the prepster fashion palace **ASMBLY HALL** is celebrating its fifth anniversary this month. Owners Ron and Tricia Benitez are throwing a party on Saturday, November 19, from 2 to 7 p.m. to celebrate.

"So much has changed, but we're still the same Tricia and Ron from 2011 — and of course our new addition, Miss Harlow," says Ron, who's now president of the Fillmore Merchants Association.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



A new public space at Fillmore and California could eventually include a restored arch.

New Fillmore Arch Proposed

A NEW PUBLIC SPACE would be created in the heart of the neighborhood at Fillmore and California under a proposal that will get its first public airing on November 15.

The plan would incorporate the Fillmore Stoop parklet in front of Delfina restaurant on California Street and extend it eastward into a landscaped area with public seating in the parking spaces and sidewalk fronting the Preston apartments, Smitten Ice Cream and Dino & Santino's pizzeria.

The ambitious plan calls for the eventual re-creation of an arch over the Fillmore-California intersection, inspired by the metal arches on Fillmore in the early 20th

century erected after the 1906 earthquake and fire. The arches came to symbolize Fillmore Street and remained in place until 1943, when they were removed for scrap iron during World War II.

Leaders of the Fillmore Merchants Association earlier this year raised the idea of expanding the parklet, created by the neighborhood design firm Siol. Siol's team has been interviewing local residents and merchants to come up with a design strategy for future public seating, signage, lighting and landscaping.

A neighborhood party to unveil the plan will be held on Tuesday, November 15, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Dino's at 2101 Fillmore.

Tech Buses a Threat to Biz on Divis

NEARBY NEIGHBORS and businesses on the 1800 block of Divisadero Street are fighting a proposal to eliminate much of the parking on the eastern side of the block to make way for loading and unloading private shuttle buses that take tech workers to Silicon Valley.

The Municipal Transportation Authority is considering a plan to move the shuttle stop two blocks south from the currently used Muni stop on the northeast corner of Divisadero and California Streets.

The plan would remove four regular metered parking spots on the east side of Divisadero between Bush and Pine Streets. That would make room to extend the Muni zone by 66 feet to accommodate the private shuttle buses.

The shuttles are permitted only on major arterial streets. There are none between California and Broadway, so the shuttles must go up and over the Divisadero hill to Broadway before they can turn.

"We have heard reports of shuttles getting stuck on the steeper blocks of Divisadero, creating a safety hazard," said city staffer Alex Jonlin. So the proposal would keep the shuttles south of California.

Local residents and businesses have voiced opposition to the plan, saying it would hurt the most vital block of Divisadero north of Geary.

"You will be destroying the livelihood of our small businesses on this block," said Pine Street resident Calvin Lau.

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CRIME WATCH

Theft
California and Presidio
September 23, 1:40 a.m.

A man seated at a table in a bar started a conversation with another man who looked disheveled and appeared homeless. He decided to buy the man a drink and went to the bar to order it. When he returned the man was gone, along with his cell phone, which he had left on the table. Inside his cell phone case were his ID, credit cards and a large amount of cash. The suspect is a white male between 65 and 75 years of age, with a thin build and long, curly brown hair. The matter is still under investigation.

Robbery With a Gun
Sacramento and Scott
September 24, 11:20 p.m.

A man walking down the street was approached from behind. His attacker pulled him to the ground and he fell onto his back. He then saw a black handgun in the assailant’s hand. His attacker demanded all his property. Fearing he would be shot if he fought back, he handed over his backpack. The robber fled on foot. Officers were unable to locate the suspect. He was a black male in his 20s, approximately 6 feet tall, and very thin. The investigation is ongoing.

Robbery With Force
Pine and Broderick
September 25, 1:26 a.m.

A woman was standing on the sidewalk, smoking a cigarette, when a man walked past her. Approximately two minutes later, the man came back and pushed her hard, causing her to drop her cell phone. He then took the phone and fled, losing a red shoe as he did. The woman flagged down officers, showed them the shoe and gave them a detailed description. They quickly located a man matching the description who was also wearing one red shoe. He was booked at county jail.

Indecent Exposure
Masonic and Geary
September 30, 5:19 p.m.

A woman at home with two small children discovered a man peering into her window while performing a lewd act. The man made eye contact and waved at her. The woman called her husband, who came home and located the man nearby, still engaging in lewd acts. He called the police. Officers detained the suspect and learned he was a registered sex offender who was on parole for a serious sexual offense. He was booked on felony charges at county jail.

Fatal Stabbing
California and Pierce
October 2, 4:45 p.m.

Police responded to a report that a woman had been stabbed. They arrived to

find a woman badly wounded from a knife attack. The officers immediately located a suspect and arrested him. The woman was transported to the hospital, where she later died. She was 63 years old. Two days later, the man who was arrested was released for lack of evidence. Both the perpetrator and the motive are unknown at this time and the investigation is ongoing.

Theft From a Locked Vehicle
Presidio and California
October 12, 10:11 p.m.

An officer heard shouting coming from a nearby bus stop, where he found two men locked in a physical struggle. One man said the other had his stolen cell phone. He stated that someone had broken into his car an hour earlier and numerous items were missing, including his phone and wallet. He had then tracked his phone, which had brought him to his present location, where he saw a man holding his wallet. When officers searched the suspect, they found a ceramic spark plug on a string — a common tool for breaking into vehicles. He also had numerous items belonging to the theft victim. The suspect was booked at county jail.

Possession of an Air Gun
Jackson and Baker
October 13, 7:55 a.m.

A witness called 911 to report a man with a gun was going through a dumpster, which was causing distress to local residents. When officers located the suspect, he was holding a shirt in one hand, which he dropped as police detained him. Inside the shirt, officers found a replica air-powered handgun as well as narcotics paraphernalia. There was also an active warrant for his arrest. He was booked at county jail.

Aggravated Assault, Resisting Officers, Inflicting Mental Suffering on a Child
Clement and 5th
October 13, 4:50 p.m.

A witness called 911 to report that a man was swinging a table leg at random passersby. The table leg resembled a nail bat and appeared extremely dangerous. The man chased and threatened a group of paramedics, and hit several parked cars, causing damage. A mother with a small child got back into her car for safety and hid there during the suspect’s rampage.

When officers arrived, the man ran at them, brandishing the weapon. He ignored their repeated orders to drop the weapon, and continued to advance on them, swinging the table leg. Officers then used an extended range impact weapon to force the suspect’s compliance. He continued to struggle with the officers. No one was injured during the incident, but officers noted that the child was traumatized by it.

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A New Orleans Menu in a New York Setting

► FROM PAGE ONE

He adds: “We didn’t like the putty color scheme. The wooden bar was pretty beat up and we wanted the new hanging pendant lights that would recall the Deco period but be more contemporary.”

Clearly, Chun, a 40-year-old Dartmouth MBA who once worked for the Bain & Company management consultancy, isn’t aiming for nostalgic romantics with the new decor. He can see how the new breed of Fillmore retailers are stylish, worldly, pricey and targeting the young and the well-heeled in the neighborhood.

Chun, who owns four other bars and restaurants in San Francisco, has planted his feet in both worlds. For the food lovers, he’s hired New Orleans born chef Chris Borges, who has come up with a creative menu pairing some reimagined old standbys with new exotic sounding dishes straight out of Voodoo City.

Gastronomically, Borges hasn’t tried to turn the Elite into a fussy Antoine’s or a Fillmore version of Commander’s Palace. It’s classic Creole, but casual. Temptations abound — including the Black Drum Pontchartrain (a filet with Gulf shrimp, lump crabmeat, wild mushrooms and herbed Fregola for \$31) and Matt’s Duck Gumbo (braised duck leg, house smoked duck sausage and white rice; \$10 for a small portion, \$18 for a large one).

The chef has some holdovers and new twists on old favorites. The Meetinghouse biscuits made the cut and they are two for \$5, but now there are additional versions with fried chicken, ham hock or blackened catfish as well. Mercifully, the red beans and rice made the transition; it also comes in two sizes, for \$10 and \$18.

The deviled eggs, now dubbed Luziane, are cleverly topped with chicken salad, sunchoke, fermented celery and trout roe at \$10 for four. Manuel’s hot tamale meat pie is new and stuffed with local chorizo, tomato and alligator pear, \$13.

And finally the Elite will have a real hamburger during the week — an all-American dish that, while popular even in New Orleans, the former Elite chef stubbornly resisted. This version is made from 39-day dry-aged chuck with Vidalia onion and pimento cheese. It comes with fries for \$17. For another \$2, it can be gilded with a fried egg.

There is no steak on the menu, but carnivores can bite into a Schmitz Ranch pork porterhouse with apple BBQ, black eyed pea succotash, molasses cream and braised string beans, \$27. Of course there’s fried chicken, a half order for \$17 or a full order



Gone are the rich, vintage mahogany appointments, the wooden bar and the swivel bar stools that had been there since the 1930s. Now the wood is painted gray, and there’s all new lighting.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN STOREY



for \$32. And there’s chicken jambalaya and crawfish etouffee in two sizes — \$12 and \$21. Or try a sampler of three Creole classics, also \$21.

For my money, Andy Chun’s triumph is the bar — flat-out the best in the Fillmore today. The new Elite’s full-time bar manager, Brian Nelson, is a real pro drinkmaker who knows his way around New Orleans and seems always to be on duty, teaching his young up-and-comers the fine art of how to make a cocktail correctly, while smiling and chatting up customers, all simultaneously.

Nelson’s boss Kevin Deidrich carries the title bar director for Chun’s small but

growing empire. He’s making the Elite’s bar stand out from the crowd by adding a “caddy” to every cocktail served up or on the rocks.

True, the cocktail glasses are a tad smaller today than in the Elite’s previous incarnation, but the presentation is far more elegant. As a manhattan fancier who doesn’t much like the melting ice diluting my bourbon, I was pleased to see the up version arrive in a delicate, engraved glass with a back-up rocks glass holding the small caddy filled to the brim with the excess nectar that many bartenders who freepour often toss after they fill your glass. Do the math and you’re getting a drink and a half.

Even more impressive is the fact that the new Elite has a five-star well. It features costlier top shelf spirits, normally reserved for call drinks, used to make basic cocktails at a lower price. For instance, a colleague ordered a Grey Goose and soda on the rocks at the new Elite and paid \$13.50 for the privilege. A well vodka and soda would have been made with San Francisco’s own Skyy for \$2 less. Unless you’re sipping Goose neat or full-strength in a martini, save the two bucks and get a fried egg for your hamburger.

The same is true for the manhattan or any bourbon drink at the Elite. Nelson has Evan Williams black label 86-proof

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SHADES of GRAY

One of the City's Art Deco Treasures Is Diminished

IN THE SPRING, neighbors and patrons of the Elite Cafe were dismayed to hear that the 35-year-old restaurant had been sold, fearful it would fall victim to the current depressing trend in San Francisco of gutting historic interiors down to the studs.

But news that the buyer was a group headed by San Francisco restaurateur Andy Chun, who was responsible for a sensitive 2014 remodel of the historic German beer hall Schroeder's in the Financial District, reassured patrons who cherished the Elite's Art Deco interior. Chun said his plans were to keep much of the Art Deco interior intact, but with a contemporary interpretation of the decorative style popular in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Elite, like Schroeder's, is among a handful of historic restaurant interiors left in the city. While the Elite Cafe has been at 2049 Fillmore Street since 1981, its Art Deco home was originally commissioned as a restaurant for John G. Kisich, owner of the Lincoln Grill, which was then located across the street at 2052 Fillmore. Building permits indicating an estimated cost of \$5,000 were filed in September 1932 and the building, designed in what was then called the "modernistic" style, first appears in city directories in 1934 as home to the Lincoln Grill.

The one-story plus basement building was designed by architects Irvine & Ebbets. In its era, the firm was responsible for many beautifully executed apartment buildings in San Francisco. Many were

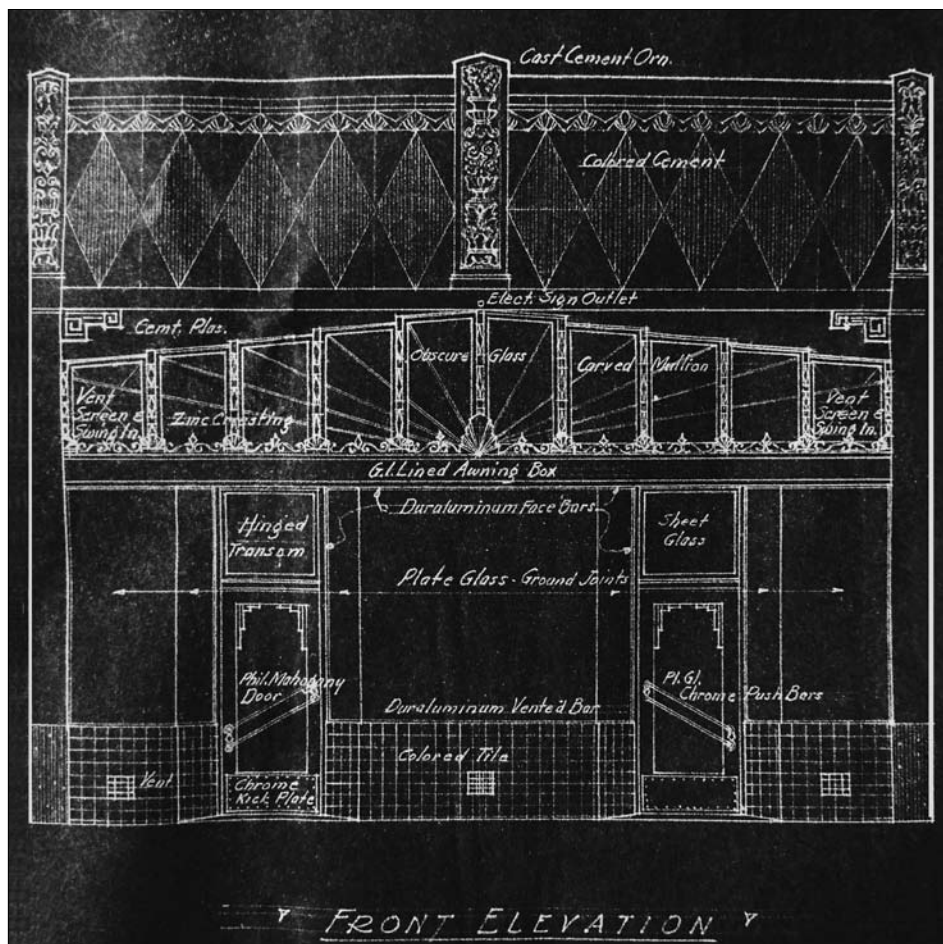
done in the Art Deco style, including a four-story apartment building at Scott and Beach Streets in the Marina, replete with fantastic details such as Egyptian figures and peacock imagery.

For the Lincoln Grill, according to the original blueprints, Irvine & Ebbets deployed touches seen in their other buildings, including the use of colorful tiles. Black and yellow tiles form a zigzag above the transom windows and a wainscoting along the facade of the restaurant. A raised zigzag cornice detailed in cement accentuates the top of the building, with a large repeated diamond pattern etched in cement below. A stepped design common in the period frames the top of the Philippine mahogany front doors and the main plate glass window.

Today these exterior details, along with a neon sign reconfigured for the Elite Cafe in the 1980s, are largely intact. But in the new remodel, the zigzag and the diamond pattern in the facade have been obscured by black paint.

Inside, the travesty of new paint continues. When patrons walked into the old Elite, they felt the warmth of the woodwork that was everywhere: the beautiful detailed bar, the semi-private booths, the chrome-detailed doors, the paneling and dividers in the front and back of the dining room.

In the remodel, designed by BCV Architects of San Francisco and New York, nearly every available wooden surface has been painted over in a color palette that



The original blueprints from 1932 show the elaborate Art Deco detailing of the facade.

Exterior details have been obscured by black paint. Inside, the travesty of new paint continues, with nearly every wooden surface painted gray.

might be called "A Couple of Shades of Gray" — a dark bluish slate (Benjamin Moore's Polo Blue) for the booths, bar and woodwork and a charcoal called Englewood Cliffs on the walls. Chris von Eckartsberg, principal architect at BCV, says that the booths, in fact, had already been painted at some point and were in

need of a complete refinishing. "The design and ownership team decided that we would be able to maintain the soul and the classic quality of the Elite Cafe while breathing new life into it by changing the color palette to a more luxurious collection of hues," he says. The moldings at the top of the high

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ceiling are highlighted in white, an echo of the redone retro-inspired white and black hexagon tile floor. The floor is probably the best improvement made, as it harkens back to the original magnesite floor specified in the original plans. The architects said they matched the floor to the threshold and to old photos of the Lincoln Grill.

Too bad such care was not taken with new light fixtures. Most of the Art Deco fixtures that had persisted or been added through many remodelings have been ripped out. The graceful, curved Art Deco glass sconces that once graced the interior of each booth have been replaced by small brass lampshade fixtures. Granted, as von Eckartsberg pointed out, the previous sconces were not original from the 1930s but reproductions in the Art Deco style added along the way. Still, the swing lampshades now in the booths would seem more appropriate as bedside reading lights at a Hampton Inn.

The bells to ring the waiter have been left intact, even in their non-working condition, but have been over-polished, as have the rails that once held the privacy curtains for the booths. A press release announcing the reopening in October explained that “marble and brass were selected for working surfaces because the added character from the patina will help the space continue to age gracefully over the coming years.” The previous fixtures seemed to have enough of their own patina, and it’s sad that many have been chunked out for the sake of new “faux” old.

The previous ceiling fixtures also were not original to the building. Still, the discarded white milk glass lights, in the skyscraper shape popular in the 1930s, had era-appropriate ceiling fans attached and were more graceful than the new cheap-

looking ceiling fixtures. A set of shorter, thimble-shaped brown speakers, alternating with longer rectangular white lamps outlined in steel, are trying to be Deco but not quite succeeding. Replacing the mahogany workstation that separated the kitchen door from the dining room is an out of place floor-to-ceiling meshlike charcoal drape.

Perhaps the saddest element of this remodel is the repainting of the gorgeous back bar, which previously seemed to glow with the reflection of the bottles and glasses in the sheen of the polished mahogany, with a row of tiny dentils trimming the top. The new bar, like the table tops in the booths, is covered in white, veined Carrera marble — a more utilitarian surface, especially for wet bar drinks, but a chilly and less comforting surface without the warmth of the wooden bar.

The Elite, along with the Tadich Grill, Sam’s Grill and the Far East Cafe in Chinatown, are among the few remaining restaurants in San Francisco with vestiges of their original interiors, with wooden privacy booths, well-worn bars and vintage neon signs.

Chun and his design team did not rip the restaurant down to its studs, and have left the bones of the original restaurant mostly intact, if painted gray. The current design trend is to repaint any and all woodwork, instead of stripping and refurbishing it. Sadly, this deplorable trend is the easy way out for most interior designers, as it probably was for the Elite, resulting in a space now bereft of decades of warmth.

Therese Poletti is the author of Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger and the preservation director of the Art Deco Society of California.



Bar manager Brian Nelson is a pro drinkmaker who seems always to be on duty.

Triumph of the New Elite Is Its Bar

► FROM PAGE 5

in the well, which is smoother than the boring, bland, basic 80-proof Jim Beam stocked in virtually every bar today. Granted, Williams black is not craft bourbon, like Basil Hayden or Knob Creek, but it’s good value for the money and Chun and company deserve an attaboy for ponying up.

Whoever came up with the house cocktail list did it the smart way: concise, drinkable and not off-the-wall crazy. The Champagne julep sounds seductive: sparkling wine, mint and H by Hine Cognac, \$13. Cameron’s Kick sounds, ah, different: Monkey Shoulder American whiskey, Tullamore Dew Irish Whiskey, orgeat and citrus, \$12. The Tea Clipper mixes Cutty Sark Prohibition blended Scotch with apple-flavored Pommeau, maple syrup, cinnamon and allspice, \$13.

A couple of other nifty ideas are behind

the bar, including a Frozen Irish Coffee and a Frozen Hurricane made with two rums, Galliano, citrus, passion fruit and bitters, which goes for \$13.

Four tap brews and four bottled suds are the extent of the beer list. However, the new Elite has a large number of wines by the glass, mostly French and California vintages, starting at \$10 but averaging \$11 to \$14, with a couple of \$20 to \$22 reds offered. The wine list seems to be skillfully curated as well.

Asked whether he will add a happy hour like his predecessor, Andy Chun chewed on the question for more than a few seconds before a cagey answer: “I believe in listening to our customers before making those types of decisions.”

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Marching to Help Stamp Out Ageism

BY BARBARA ROSE BROOKER

MY IDEA for an Age March began with a dream. I dreamed there was an end to age discrimination and segregation — and that men and women of all races and sexual orientations marched to celebrate their ages. I led the marchers along with several other people, holding a giant red banner emblazoned with the words “Age March.” Accompanied by jazz musicians, we marched a mile as we chanted, “Celebrate your age! Don’t lie about it!”

And then I woke up. At the time, I was tired of applying for jobs, being invited for an interview, then told when I arrived that the job was already filled. It was ageism at work.

In our current anti-aging society, we’re all supposed to retire around 65 and play Bingo, not pursue new dreams. But I’ve always felt that aging well is not about Botox or looking younger. It’s about spirit, empowerment and attitude. I was tired of age rage, age segregation and the fear of aging.

I came by the fatigue honestly. In my 20s and 30s, I was divorced and a single mother of two daughters. When they were teenagers, I went back to college. I was 40 years old. Many people then suggested that it was too late for college and career, that I should get a real estate license and a new husband.

At age 50, I got an MFA in creative writing and published two novels. Since 1990, I have been teaching creative writing at San Francisco State University Extension



Barbara Rose Brooker is the organizer of the Age March.

The third Age March will be held on December 4 on Union Street.

and in private seminars, but was subtly informed I was too old to get tenure.

At 60, the only jobs I could get were freelance. I wrote a “Suddenly Sixty” column about aging and received letters from men and women describing their ageism experiences.

At 73, I wrote *The Viagra Diaries*, a novel about a 70-year-old protagonist, Anny Applebaum, who breaks the rules by forging a new career, looking for love online and having sex. Two years later, I tried to sell it.

“Seventy is a hard sell,” mainstream publishers said. “No one wants to know about aging.” So I self-published *The Viagra Diaries*. And almost immediately, men and women from all over the country sent emails and letters explaining how they identified with my 70-year-old protagonist and her struggles. HBO bought the rights to the novel for a television series. Simon & Schuster then bought the book and published it. Dreams come true.

And I came to the realization that age never really limited my life. So I began to envision that an Age March could be the beginning of a new revolution where age is not shamed or feared, but celebrated.

After a year of planning, I produced the first Age March, held in San Francisco in August 2010. More than 300 men and women of all ages, most holding signs, celebrated their age and protested age discrimination. Just as in my dream, we marched to music, with the crowd chanting: “Celebrate your age! Don’t lie about it!” I marched in the front with other committee members, holding a red “Age March” banner. The Bay Area newspapers and television stations also showed up to cover the march, helping spread the word.

The second Age March was in Los Angeles, where ageism is rampant. Many celebrities who loved the concept of the Age March were afraid to join in, fearing they would lose their industry jobs. But the hundred or so who did attend were enthusiastic and intent.

The third Age March will be held in San Francisco on Sunday, December 4, on Union Street. I’m already dreaming of the festive celebration, which is free to all. People and pets of all ages are welcome.

Participants will meet at Gough and Union Streets, then march west on Union to Fillmore Street — about five blocks. Signs with numbers on them will be provided, so everyone can wear their ages proudly. Music and entertainment will also be provided along the route. Dress casually. Wear something celebratory — a crown, a balloon, whatever you wish.

Online registration is urged so the police have a count. Register at boomerhottie.com.



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By Andrea Chase

THE NEW Italian Cinema Event has found a happy home at the Vogue Theater on Sacramento Street. Running this year from November 16 to 20, it brings together the best of contemporary Italian cinema for an intriguing and thoroughly entertaining look at how the Italians do cinematic romance, comedy, drama and documentary.

On opening night, *Another Spring*, a quixotic tale of chance encounters and love at first sight, follows Andrea (Claudio Botosso), a 50ish architect, over the course of a tumultuous year that finds him unexpectedly falling for Hikma, a client's younger sister, after years of mourning for his deceased wife. Complications ensue, of course, as Andrea must step aside romantically when Hikma's impulsive New Year's Eve act leads to an estrangement from her family with an unplanned pregnancy that also leads her to living in Andrea's house with her one-night stand.

It's funny, with bittersweet overtones and a sharp insight into the trouble we all get ourselves into both by telling the truth and by engaging in subterfuge. The film's director, Francesco Calogero, will be on hand for a Q&A afterward and to explain one of the film's theses: that bridges are an affront to nature.

Closing night includes the announcement of the festival's City of Florence Award, along with a screening of *The Legendary Guila and Other Miracles*, a smart comedy that tackles politics, crime and very bad plumbing as three incompatible guys with a dream, and no clue, try to open a rustic inn that will



Opening this month at the Clay Theatre is Otto Bell's documentary, *The Eagle Huntress*.

Italian Cinema at the Vogue

From Nov. 16 to 20, the best new films from Italy

let them live their vision of peace and prosperity.

In between are 13 more films, all of them worthy, but a few of special note. They include: *Street Opera*, which explores rap music Italian-style; *Then Who?*, a satire about the absurdities of consumerism; *If Only I Were That Warrior*, a documentary that looks at how one community near Rome deals with its Fascist history; and *Don't Be Bad*, a violent, gritty story told with lyrical cinematography about two friends struggling to hold on at the bottom of society by dealing drugs in the port town of Ostia — and what happens when one of them decides to go straight.

For more information and to buy tickets, go to newitaliancinema.org.

The Eagle Huntress is opening at the Clay Theatre on November 4. Otto Bell's rousing documentary takes us to the most sparsely populated part of Mongolia, where we meet Aisholpan, a charismatic 13-year-old nomad girl who dreams both of becoming a doctor and of following her family's tradition of training an eagle to hunt. The catch is that eagle training is an art passed on from fathers to sons, not to daughters.

Bell is there when Aisholpan deftly rapels down a cliff to pluck a juvenile golden eagle from its nest, and when she bonds

with the bird who will become her partner in the hunt over some of the most forbidding terrain on earth. And he is there when she competes against hunters from all over Mongolia, all of them male, most of them skeptical about someone so young and so female.

Bell, using wit and insight, catches the intimacy that develops between Aisholpan and her eagle, as well as the unselfconscious confidence of this girl who refuses to recognize boundaries or limitations. The sight of her eagle, with a wingspan wider than she is tall, zeroing in for a landing on Aisholpan's arm as she beams into the camera with a smile of pure joy is breathtaking and beyond inspirational.

"There is a duality to her character," Bell said recently. "On the one hand, she is very tough and she likes to win — don't get me wrong, she likes to win a lot, whether it's checkers or wrestling with the boys or hunting with a golden eagle. On the flip side, she is a 13-year-old girl and she's shy. So we would spend a lot of time with cameras off, letting her show me around her world. It certainly took time. It was the second trip where we started to have a breakthrough and she forgot the cameras and she was a little less sheepish."

The filming also prompted Bell to consider deeper questions of nature and nurture. "I've also come to realize that she is just a physical person," he said. "She's not verbal, necessarily. I think that it's something to do with the tough environment out there. There's this economy of expression that comes from growing up on a windblown freezing cold steppe."

For more of my interview with the director, go to killermoviereviews.com.

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Mommy, What’s That Number on Your Arm?

► FROM PAGE ONE

For more than three decades, until 1977, Gloria Lyon had not spoken of her painful past. It was then that she came across a published pamphlet that loosened the lid on her painful memories. The title read: *A Zionist Hoax: The Holocaust Never Happened*. “I then knew I had to speak out,” she says. “I really pushed myself. I thought it would be good for humanity.”

Her early life was documented in a 1995 film, *When I Was Fourteen: A Survivor Remembers*, shown at more than 40 film festivals. Director Steven Spielberg persuaded her to record her story for a Holocaust project he founded, now part of the USC Shoah Foundation.

Pushing through her inherent shyness, she has talked to thousands of groups. Her favorites are young students, many of whom she has come to mentor.

Lyon began writing about her death camp experiences a decade ago, and about the happier life that awaited her afterward in San Francisco, where she lived and raised a family in Diamond Heights.

Help came from an unexpected source: “The best writing I’ve done was in my usual beauty shop on West Portal Avenue when sitting under the hair dryer,” she says. “Under that nice warm air, I was oblivious to all others.”

She finished the book — along with the arduous task of identifying and getting releases for the dozens of photographs that appear in it, in May 2015. It was published last month.

“I must say that writing this book has been cathartic for me because for so many years, I was walking around like a zombie, not sure what to do with all this baggage I



Gloria Hollander Lyon (then Hajnal Hollender), age 15, on June 2, 1945, one month after liberation in Sweden.

carried from the concentration camps,” she says. “I didn’t realize what a difficult burden it was to carry around with me. Maybe I was meant to remember some, so that I will never forget.”

Excerpts follow.

EVENTUALLY THERE WAS NO WAY WE COULD DENY to ourselves the slightest question about the true purpose of this hellhole. At *Kanada*, only a few feet away from us, on the other side of the high electric wire fence, was gas chamber and *Krematorium* Number Four,

the only facility in Auschwitz-Birkenau without an underground “undressing room.” When the long cattle wagons arrived at the nearby platform with their human cargo, we would soon see exhausted men, women and children resting on the immaculately kept grass inside the white picket fence. Of course, the newly arrived victims had no idea what was awaiting them. Often, the younger children were given a lollipop, presumably to lure them into a false sense of security.

Sometimes the newly arrived prisoners were given no time to wait and rest on the grass and were immediately ordered into the nonexistent “showers.” No group that I observed ever waited longer than about 30 to 45 minutes before being instructed to leave their clothes on the grass and enter the “bathhouse.” Instead of water, as we learned, it poured out a deadly poison, Zyklon B, through its showerheads, suffocating the trapped victims inside. We saw those canisters marked Zyklon B, lined up outside the ovens; as soon as they were removed, more would accumulate.

There were times when men and women objected to removing their clothes in front of each other. We heard that such agitators were singled out, led quietly to another side of the building, and shot dead with a silencer. Others apparently became suspicious and resisted entering the shower, but there was no choice; the armed soldiers forcibly led them in. The door to the gas chamber was shut tightly; an SS guard poured Zyklon B down the chute and watched the agonizing dying process going on through a small peephole. We *Kanada* workers could not see the deaths, but we heard the screams of children and adults until they slowly began to suffocate, and finally, all was quiet.

I will never forget witnessing something that happened directly across from our *Kanada* workplace, on the other side of the electric fence. Two *Sonderkommando* members came out of the gas chamber, one pushing a wheelbarrow containing a little girl of about five to seven years old. At first, the girl looked lifeless; but as she breathed in air, she began to gain consciousness, and it seemed as though she was trying to remember where she was and what had happened to her. It was the only time I ever saw anyone come out of the gas chamber alive.

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In clear view of us, the two men motioned an SS guard over, apparently to explain what had happened and to ask for directions as to what to do with the child. The guard brusquely took out a pistol and shot the girl in the back of the neck. As the girl slumped over in the wheelbarrow, the two men silently wheeled her small body to the nearby krematorium.

■
One day, while the women prisoners were working in the concentration camps braiding rope they later heard was used by the Germans for military operations, they were called into formation and made to undress on the pretext of having a medical checkup by Josef Mengele, a death camp doctor later nicknamed the Angel of Death.

I recall the line of about 800 to 1,000 inmates moving quickly. Despite her older age, [my mother] Anyu passed by Dr. Mengele without him even having her turn around. I was elated. Annuska [my sister] was next. Because of her young age, we were constantly concerned for her, but she bounced up to Dr. Mengele and looked fearlessly with her blue eyes straight into his brown ones, and the little baton indicated that she too had passed. I felt like jumping for joy.

Armed with a lot of hope, it was my turn to step up, but when Dr. Mengele indicated I should turn around, those few seconds seemed like an eternity. I knew that this was a death sentence. Without a word, he pointed his baton in the direction of those who had not passed his inspection. Anyu and Annushka were sent away from me in the opposite direction. Trembling, I looked back toward them but do not recall seeing my little sister. I saw only Anyu, naked.

■
Lyon and 30 others were then loaded onto a truck, miraculously driven by a Hungarian guard who had earlier shown them some rare kindnesses. He told them what they already knew — that he was driving them to a gas chamber — but promised to turn a blind eye if any of them wished to jump off the truck. Before closing the canvas drape over them, he cautioned them not to give him away. Lyon's 14-year-old mind did some quick calculations.

The gas chambers were a good distance away. It had taken us about an hour to march to Kanada each morning and an hour back at night. I knew that the truck would have to enter the area of the gas chambers where I might

be able to find a place to hide in the woods. I quickly began to think the situation through. If I stayed on the truck, I would die. I would perish in a gas chamber or be taken to a wall and shot. If I jumped and they found me, they would shoot me or beat me to death. In either case, my life would be snuffed out. But if I escaped from that truck, even with no clothes, there was a chance that I would survive to see my Anyu and Annuska again. I decided to jump.

As I leaped down the embankment, I remember my naked skin sticking to the ice as I tumbled down to the bottom of the ditch, where some water flowed. Then after moving for a little way in total darkness, I came to a culvert, into which I squeezed my tiny frame. And there I stayed. It was the depth of winter, and ice had formed along the edges of my hiding place, but I do not recall feeling cold or having any other sensations, except a feeling of great exuberance. Of course, I knew I was in serious danger, but I felt as though I had defeated the entire German Army.

I stayed in the culvert that night, the following day, and into the next night — approximately 24 hours without food or clothing. Finally, I decided to leave my hiding place to keep from freezing or starving to death.

In the darkness, I made my way up to the roadside. I looked around and saw a little light in the distance. It looked like a little star. I followed it, not knowing where it would lead me — to a women's or a men's barrack or straight into SS headquarters — because I had completely lost my sense of direction. But I believed that G_d must have been walking beside me, leading me to a safe place. Seeing no sentry, I entered quietly and began climbing up to the third tier of a bunk when a woman's voice stopped me. Considerably relieved that I had evidently found my way to a women's barrack, I quickly covered my mouth, indicating to the woman who had discovered my presence not to give me away. Then in a whisper, I told her my story in Hungarian.

■
After Auschwitz-Birkenau, Lyon endured back-breaking work and near-starvation at six more camps — Bergen-Belsen, Braunschweig Reitschule, Hannover-Limmer, Hamburg, Beendorf and Ravensbruck — transported each time in canvas-covered trucks to uncertain destinations. Finally, the remaining weak and sickened prisoners, most unrecognizable from emaciation, were packed onto a train.

TO PAGE 14 ►



SUZIE BIEHLER

■ **READING**

Telling her story

Gloria Lyon will be reading from her new book, **MOMMY, WHAT'S THAT NUMBER ON YOUR ARM?**, at a reception on Sunday, November 20, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Rhoda Goldman Plaza, 2180 Post Street, where she now resides. The public is welcome. For more information, go to rgplaza.org.



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My energy was nearly depleted. Sounds from the outside stirred my attention. I realized we must have arrived somewhere during the night. I couldn't recall exactly how long we had been cooped up in that cattle car. German voices alerted us, and some of us lifted our heads, dazed, but not many of us. About half of us were not moving at all. Those who'd had no room to sit before were now sprawled across the corpses. Does one ever become immune to such horror?

The sound of "schnell, schnell" (hurry up) jerked me back to reality. The woman in front of me whispered, "We really will be getting macaroni and sugar." At long last, it was my turn. After a three-day fast, finally there was food in front of my eyes. Then suddenly, it occurred to me that I had no pockets in which to put the precious food.

I reached for the hem of my dress and thought I'd found the solution to my dilemma. My heart beat swiftly, and I shook uncontrollably, but I managed to lift my dress to receive my ration. My eyes were glued to the sacks of food, mesmerized. A handful of sugar and raw macaroni was dropped into my dress with the speed of lightning. I looked down, and to my horror, all I could see were holes in my dress, and the last of the macaroni spilling through them, sinking into the trampled, mushy marshland. I anxiously bent down, attempting to pick it up. Suddenly, an SS officer pounced on me and beat me mercilessly with a club. The pain penetrated my entire body. I collapsed and blacked out.

I would have died there, had not some of my fellow prisoners still been capable of compassion. Apparently, I was unconscious for a long time. When I later opened my eyes, I found myself on an entirely different train, an actual passenger train.

And now the train was moving. "We are traveling through the Danish countryside," somebody said.

"We are free," said another voice.

Much later, I discovered that a Swedish statesman, Count Folke Bernadotte, had negotiated the release of prisoners from Ravensbruck. Negotiating with Himmler himself on behalf of the Red Cross, in March and April 1945, Bernadotte persuaded him to release thousands of



Finding her mother's grave

When Gloria Lyon returned to her home village in 1991, she found her mother's grave. The last time they were together was when they were incarcerated at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in 1944. Her mother died in 1948 at the age of 53 of Holocaust-related injuries without knowing that her daughter had survived.

prisoners from Nazi concentration camps, including up to 15,000 women from Ravensbruck. Most were transferred to Sweden.

So many times, I'd heard rumors in the camps that had rarely materialized, but I yearned to dare to believe this one: a rumor that we were free.

Decades later, armed with hope and bravado, Lyon and her husband Karl — a Jew born in Buhl, in Baden Germany, who had also lost several family members in the Holocaust — returned to Auschwitz in 1991. It had been 47 years since her captivity there, and much had changed about the place and its environs. But one site was immediately familiar.

Fighting through the weeds and tangled brush, I uncovered the culvert and saw the semicircular brick layers above the drainpipe. That was where I had once hidden — emaciated, naked and shivering in the freezing darkness. I crouched down but no longer fit inside the culvert as I had that winter night so long ago.

To have actually found my hiding place was an incred-

ible experience. I felt as if I were reexperiencing that fateful night and was confused about the "success" of my attempt to save my life.

Then I walked the spine-chilling grounds of Birkenau, arriving to the formerly electrified fence, cautiously moving closer and apprehensively touching the wires. I really needed to touch it and open and close the gate, making sure the fences were rendered harmless. I felt like a disbelieving child with an uncontrollable urge to break the power of the spell cast at that evil time. I longed for the palpable proof that the electric wire fences were not going to kill anybody. I could not escape the image of the people who had committed suicide there, which I had seen every morning on the way to work. Finally, it penetrated my conscious mind. I breathed a sigh of relief when I realized that the electricity had been disconnected and that I no longer needed to be fearful for anyone.

Excerpted with permission from Mommy, What's That Number on Your Arm? © 2016 by Gloria Hollander Lyon.



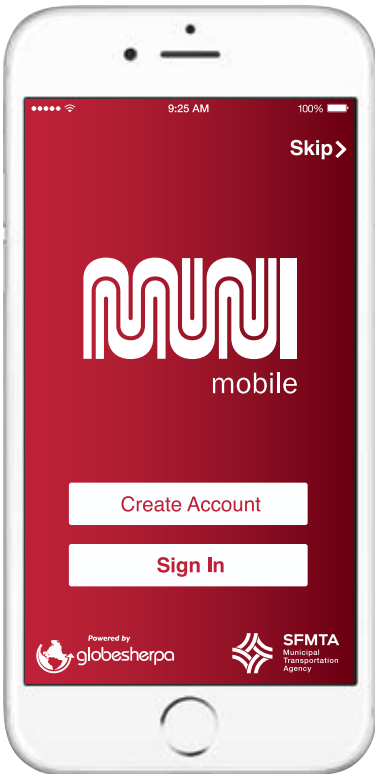
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Pacific Nights

The Lion Pub and Other Lost Gay Dens

BY MICHAEL FLANAGAN
BAY AREA REPORTER

VISITORS TO Pacific Heights could be excused these days for thinking there is little gay about it, save for the gay colors on Victorians like the Painted Ladies in Alamo Square. But this was not always the case.

From the 1970s through the middle of the last decade, there were three watering holes and one hotel with a saloon that were specifically geared toward gay patrons. The rise and fall of those establishments relates to much of San Francisco history — some familiar and some not.

The three bars in Pacific Heights were the Lion Pub (2062 Divisadero), the Alta Plaza (2301 Fillmore) and J.J.'s Piano Bar (2225 Fillmore).

In the nearby Western Addition was the Alamo Square Saloon (600 Fillmore). The saloon was housed in Hotel Casa Loma (610 Fillmore), which for a time advertised itself in the *Bay Area Reporter* as a gay hotel.

The Painted Ladies provide a clue to the history of the neighborhood. Gay historian Gerard Koskovich related that in his research he discovered “there was a gay residential enclave from the late 1950s into the mid-1990s in the Alamo Square area.” He pointed me to Will Fellows’ book, *A Passion to Preserve: Gay Men as Keepers of Culture*. In an interview in that book, Richard Reutlinger confirms Gerard’s observation:

“A lot of gay people down this way and all around Alamo Square had established the Alamo Square Neighborhood Association in the early 1960s.”

The first bar in the neighborhood was the Lion Pub. In an August 1989 *B.A.R.* article, owner Kelly Ellis said, “The Lion has gone through a lot of changes since its opening 20 years ago. We’ve gone from preppy bar to a dance bar to a hippie bar to leather and back to preppy.”

I remember it as being very preppy when I visited the bar in the ’80s. It was then the domain of that now rare commodity known as the sweater queen.

I asked Ron Williams, author of *San Francisco’s Native Sissy Son*, for his memories of the bar.

“I was in the Lion Pub on many occasions in the early ’70s and remember the owner, very horny and handsome. The bar had a rough start because of the competition that was going on in the Castro at the time. They advertised a lot. The Lion poster became a very popular icon. A few short



A stained glass window remains at the Lion Pub.

*In the ’80s,
the Lion Pub was
the domain of that now rare
commodity known as the
sweater queen.*

blocks away was another popular neighborhood bar, Club Dori on Presidio just off California Street.”

I had wondered for some time about the artist for that poster (a copy of which hangs on the wall of The Cinch). It’s credited as “Dale Hall.” After many dead-end searches, I asked Ron’s friends online if any of them knew the artist.

Longtime San Francisco resident Tom Libby responded, “It’s Richard Roesener, who was the chief scientific illustrator for the Field Museum in Chicago, before moving to San Francisco to pursue his own artistic career. He was a dear friend, and extremely talented.” Libby and Roesener had known each other both in Chicago and in San Francisco, where Roesener moved in 1977, the same year that an entire series of Lion Pub ads appeared in the *B.A.R.* They continued through 1979.

A mystery remains as to why Roesener used the pseudonym Dale Hall, but it may have simply been to distinguish his commercial art from his scientific and professional art. A native of Kokomo, Indiana, who moved to Chicago in 1969, Roesener had articles on his erotic art in both *Blueboy* and *In Touch for Men* magazines and had a one-person show in New York as far back as 1975. He was a lead twirler for the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band and Twirling Corps for several years before his death from AIDS on July 23, 1985.

Alta Plaza Bar joined the neighborhood in 1977. In an August 1990 *B.A.R.* article, then manager Manuel Lago said, “We started a bar and restaurant for friends and it just took off and got popular.” The bar opened a second level in the ’80s.

Alamo Square Saloon and Casa Loma Hotel opened in 1980. J.J.’s Piano Bar was the last addition to the neighborhood, opening in 1987. In an article from 1990, there are hints of the future of the neighborhood. The *B.A.R.* reported that on Thursdays and Fridays there was a larger percentage of straight visitors. The same article reported that it drew a large number of show people as well — especially from *Beach Blanket Babylon* and *Les Misérables*, which was playing in town at the time.

The decline of the gayborhood in Pacific Heights and environs was remarkably swift. Alamo Square Saloon closed in 1991. Hotel Casa Loma changed hands (the current owners were unaware when I contacted them that it had ever been a gay hotel). Alta Plaza had become distant enough from the community that when it changed hands in May 1999 there wasn’t even an article about it in the gay press. It was the *San Francisco Chronicle* that reported that it was becoming a noodle bar.

The last of the bars to go was the Lion Pub. It continued to have listings in Damron’s guides until 2005. The Lion Pub continued until September of this year, but the clientele changed.

And the story of Richard Roesener may give us a clue to the demise of this section of gay San Francisco. Many men who went to these bars died, and those left either stopped going or moved away.

We should remember these bars and their time, for as Ron Williams told me, “Neighborhood bars like the Lion Pub and Club Dori were important, since many gay men lived in this part of the city and didn’t always have to go to the Castro, Polk or South of Market during week nights.”

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By Lucy Gray

YOU VISIT the exhibition. The first picture you come to, you see the woman's mouth open and she's waiting — maybe waiting to hear what you have to say, that cigarette poised between her fingers. It's Billie Holiday, looking radiant, in *Awaiting Arraignment*. Created by Monica Lundy out of 22 karat gold, white gold, coffee and ashes, Holiday shines, her eyes saying: "I've been caught, but not for long." She's the opposite of someone who lived in the Fillmore and got displaced; she just came to sing for a night or two and got incarcerated.

Next to Holiday there's a picture of three people at a booth at Jack's, the first bar in the Western Addition built for an African American clientele. There's a beautiful woman with sass, looking right at you, toasting you, with her money spilled out on the table, daring you to disrespect her and her fox fur. The men on either side of her are more like ghosts with protective fury in their eyes.

Feeling for these people is beginning to grab you by the throat and ask you what you've done to make it happen, or what you can do to make up for it now.

You feel the rage beneath the liquid porcelain and mixed media that Lundy used to make the life-sized figures of Japanese men — an entire baseball team who came here from Hiroshima to play in the 1920s. The players have their hats off, all standing in a polite line, listening to the national anthem. Theirs? Ours? They would have been middle-aged



Monica Lundy's *Jack's Tavern* captures the first bar in the Fillmore for African Americans.

Stories of the Fillmore

New exhibition traces a history of displacement

when we dropped the bomb on them.

Then there's a pretty young woman, smiling charmingly as she holds her baby in *Tagged for Internment*. It's 1942, and she's being incarcerated, too, in her Sunday best — for the crime of being Japanese American.

If you can hold your temper or your tears, keep walking and you're wondering if you smell something rancid. It's seeping through the pigment and drawing that Rodney Ewing used for his mysterious picture of two black men: one smiling, the other looking into the distance, both sporting military caps, their floating heads

placed on the tops of white boards splashed with antique red pigment and yellow and more black — perhaps old blood and bile and ashes.

Feel the fury when you look at the Japanese children playing where they have been sequestered from the rest of American society, blamed for something they clearly did not do. They were here in San Francisco, in our neighborhood, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

You can't believe, knowing what you know when you see these beautiful pictures, that this is you, forever racist, unmoved by

the plight of your neighbors and that you will go on letting the Fillmore be trampled by developers, by greed.

The pictures in this exhibition represent a time when Americans, fearful of losing their jobs to new arrivals from Japan, made laws banning them from immigrating. When the Japanese people were taken from their homes during World War II, the African Americans who were coming west to work in the shipyards moved into the vacant houses. This was the one neighborhood where they were allowed to rent. The houses were mostly owned by whites who'd built them before the 1906 earthquake. The Western Addition, built on bedrock and untouched by fire, was largely undamaged.

During and after the war, the owners began moving to the suburbs and renting their houses. They must have been lousy landlords because in the 1950s and '60s, the Fillmore was considered a slum and houses began to be bulldozed. Areas were cleared for redevelopment and thousands of people were displaced. But decades passed before anything was built.

So here you are at an election season with a ballot full of measures about housing. You're being given another chance. Before you vote, you're glad you've come to this exhibition, so maybe history doesn't have to repeat itself.

"Untethered — Stories of the Fillmore District," featuring artists Monica Lundy and Rodney Ewing, is on exhibit at Nancy Toomey Fine Arts, 1275 Minnesota Street, through November 19. For more information, go to nancytoomeyfineart.com.

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REAL ESTATE

By Bud Johns

THE RECENT NEWS of a possible Zen rock garden on Cottage Row brought back memories of the late Sutter Marin, the Beat era artist and poet who was a garden lover and the only Cottage Row resident I've known.

My wife and I live with one of Marin's paintings, *Sister, Dear Sister, There's a Rabbit in Your Garden*. After years of hearing little about him, we learned recently of "The Beat Went On: Late Works by Sutter Marin," a new exhibition featuring his work and others of his milieu this month at Santa Rosa's Calabi Gallery, with a ruth weiss poetry reading and jazz accompaniment.

Marin, who had a B.A. in fine arts from San Francisco State, studied and then was an instructor at the San Francisco Art Institute. His collaborations with weiss, a German-born poet, included his 1961 solo show at the San Francisco Museum of Art (now SFMOMA) followed in 1964 by a one-person show at the de Young Museum. He won the Legion of Honor's 1959 Phelan Award for painting, was in the Oakland Museum's 1964 annual and had his work selected three times for Sacramento's Crocker Museum annual.

My friendship with Sutter began in 1973 when I purchased a house on Sacramento Street. The living room needed to be painted and my late wife, the artist Judith Clancy, knowing Sutter did such jobs while cobbling together a living, suggested we hire him. He and another artist did a fine job, although Sutter objected to my salvaging a badly overgrown back yard myself



Sutter Marin's *Sister, Dear Sister, There's a Rabbit in Your Garden*, painted on Cottage Row.

An Artist on Cottage Row

Beat painter and poet Sutter Marin surfaces again

rather than having him do the garden-ing. He relented when I told him I'd like to see some of his paintings, which led to the purchase of *Sister, Dear Sister*. One day I came home and Judith said Sutter had stopped by to visit, then stomped off when she commented that the rabbit looked like a snail.

A few weeks later Sutter rang the door-bell. "You were right," he told her. "All my rabbits look like snails." He had visited others who purchased his paintings of gardens with rabbits and viewed those in his studio, then came to apologize.

Typical Sutter.

I never considered myself a patron, but

seem to have become one unintentionally. Looking back, I found a 1978 print of Sutter's drawing of an angel from an edition of 100 by Andrew Hoyem, himself a poet who began his career as a fine printer publishing Beat Generation writers. Sutter signed it to us with thanks "for being such fine artists, patrons, friends and fellow angels," concluding "with best wishes for a great today" from "A busted angel, Sutter."

A lanky, wiry fellow who was usually wearing blue jeans and clodhopper work shoes, Sutter was a familiar figure on Fillmore — especially from Bush Street, up past Gus Kotzbeck's frame shop and gal- lery to the southwest corner of Fillmore

and California, where a friend's studio was on the second floor above a donut shop. Whenever I saw him clomping along, my first thought was of Ichabod Crane.

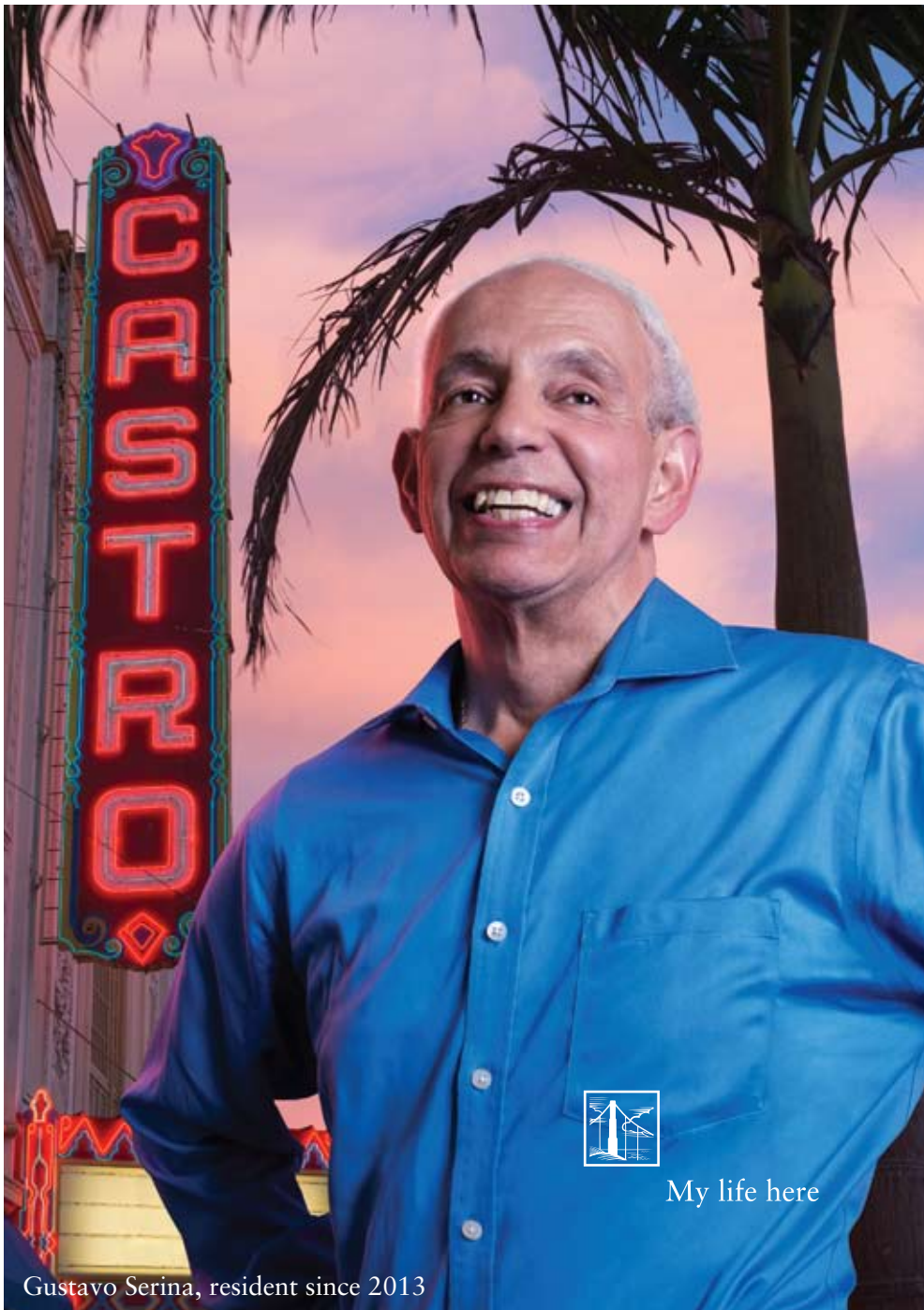
Twice I remember encountering Sutter and asking how things were going. He said he had some new paintings he thought I'd like. I didn't especially like them, but sensed that he was broke, so I asked if he had some older paintings I could see. Each time I really liked one, exuberant and affordable: *Birth of the Blues* (the only blue is a small patch in the middle of a field of earth colors) and *Little Egypt*. Both are now in the Oakland Museum collection.

Another time Sutter called and said he thought I should see the work of a friend who was returning to Portland after visit- ing here. I fell in love with a small oil — a clove of garlic in a clamshell — which my wife and I still have. The price was \$45, just enough for gas for his return drive. Art and gas both cost less in those days.

Sutter's poems were usually self-pub- lished, poorly printed or even handwritten. But *The Door Opens and Out Comes In* was nicely designed and printed. Many of its 113 short whimsical poems have illustra- tions by Sutter, who aptly described the book in his inscription of my copy: "View- ers of insanity trying to go straight."

Sutter died in 1985 at age 59, withering away of a disease that was just becoming diagnosed: AIDS.

"The Beat Went On: Late Works by Sutter Marin" will be exhibited through November 26 at the Calabi Gallery in Santa Rosa. For more information, go to calabigallery.com.



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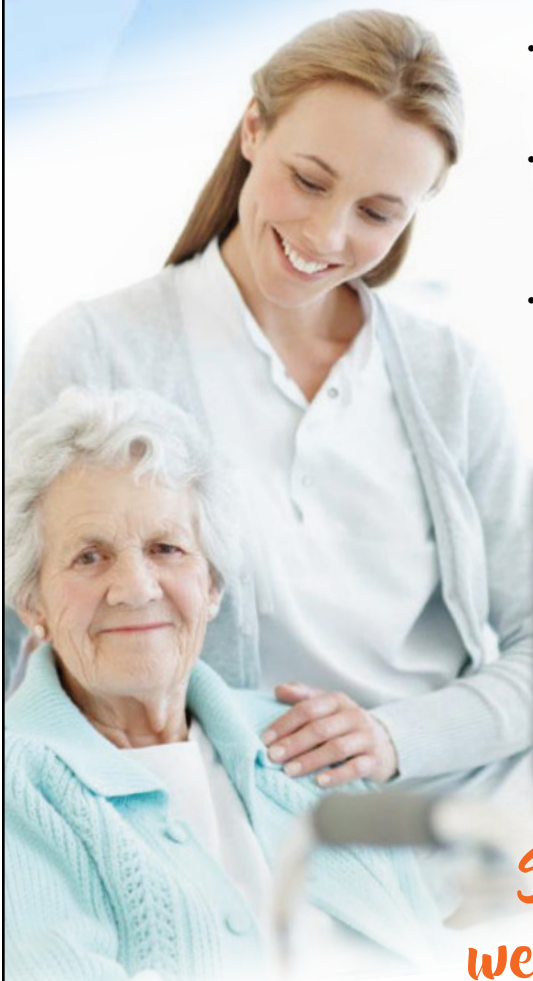
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Most expensive home sold this year: 2250 Vallejo.

Baroque mansion finds a deep-pocketed buyer

After a price cut and quite some time on the market, a classic yet state-of-the-art mansion in Pacific Heights recently found a buyer in the largest single-family home sale in San Francisco in almost a year and a half.

On October 14, the 7-bedroom, 9,100-square-foot home at 2250 Vallejo sold for \$21.8 million, making it the largest single-family home sale in the city this year and the first public sale for more than \$20 million since May 2015. The home was originally placed on the market last fall for \$28 million and received a price cut this summer to \$25 million.

The home took nearly a year to sell due to a combination of factors: normalizing market conditions at the very high end, uncertainty surrounding the upcoming presidential election and an inherently limited buyer pool. Despite not receiving the home's full list price, the seller did very well, netting nearly \$2,400 per square foot.

The buyer may have been attracted by the condition of the 1902 home, which was extensively renovated over the past five years. In addition to breathtaking views, the grand mansion also sits in a prime location, within walking distance to the Fillmore Street business district and just a few blocks from the Union Street corridor.

— 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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