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# THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ JANUARY 2017



## Kelly's Corner

The neighborhood keeps changing, but Kelly Johnson remains a steady presence at Fillmore and Sacramento.

PORTRAIT AND PROFILE BY  
ANNE RUTH ISAACSON

AFTER A LONG WALK BACK HOME from the Hardly Strictly Blue Grass Festival, I stopped at Fillmore and Sacramento for coffee. Outside on the corner there were no free tables, but a gentleman signaled that I could join him and his friend.

That was the day I met Kelly Johnson. I found him instantly likable and engaging. Soon I would learn what many locals already knew: that he can usually be found on that corner, nursing a coffee, available for interesting conversation.

I relocated to San Francisco a decade ago,

a specialized architect working in biotechnology. But on my own time, I paint narrative portraiture — portraits that tell a story. Kelly was becoming part of my San Francisco story. So one day I went down to the corner and asked him to pose for me.

That's when I really began to know him. Kelly entertained me with stories of his childhood on the vaudeville circuit, his days of running a dance studio a few doors away, his years with the symphony — and especially his half-century of calling this corner of Fillmore Street home.

## IN VINO VERITAS NO MORE

Local wine shop  
closes after 20 years

BY CHRIS BARNETT

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, when most wine and champagne purveyors were tallying up their holiday sales receipts, Vino at 2425 California Street closed its doors forever after a 20-year run — the victim of a potential \$1,000 a month rent hike, shrinking profits and a retailing strategy that no longer works in the neighborhood.

Unpretentious, with decor fashioned mostly out of wooden shipping boxes and paper tubes, and resembling a ground level wine cellar without the chill, Vino was known for its straight talk on wines, good values and its 350-bottle inventory of mostly eclectic imports.

Actually, Vino's owner, seasoned wine retailer and wholesaler Alan Pricco, decided to pull the plug even before the property manager hit him with a \$12,000 a year rent increase. "I called him and said we're leaving," Pricco says.

Vino's customers are taking the news hard. "It's a huge loss — devastating," says Charles Bush, a longtime store patron who lives nearby. "There is no other place like it in the neighborhood where the prices and the selection are both great."

Bush, who was buying a mix of 12 imported wines, says Vino's focus on value is unrivaled in the area. "They always display the well-priced wines in the front of the store, but always have high-end wines that are not overpriced," he says. "Plus, the staff never has that annoying attitude you find in some wine stores here."

A Vino customer for 10 years, Steadman Matthew was stunned to learn the store was closing. "I come here because I know I'll always get expert help in buying the right wine," he says. "You don't get that kind of information in supermarkets or high volume wine stores."



Vino closed its doors on New Year's Eve.





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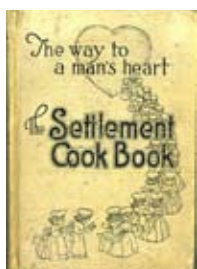
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## Free Programs at the Jewish Community Library

### Film: Little White Lie

Thursday, January 26, 7 p.m.

Filmmaker Lacey Schwartz, who grew up Jewish and white, examines issues of identity, upon learning that her biological father was a black man with whom her mother had an affair.



### Recipes for Success: The Settlement Cookbook

Sunday, January 29, 1:30 p.m.

Author Bob Kann tells the story of the 1903 cookbook, now in its 40th edition, that taught a generation of immigrants to thrive in an American kitchen.

### Levi Strauss: The Man Who Gave Blue Jeans to the World

Thursday, February 23, 7 p.m.

Historian Lynn Downey discusses the life and times of the San Francisco inventor, businessman, and philanthropist whose legacy reaches into nearly every aspect of US culture.



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## NEW NEIGHBORS



Lip Lab has popped up in the spacious corner store formerly occupied by Marc Jacobs.

## Lipstick Good Enough to Eat

JUST AS THE holiday season was shifting into high gear, another beauty shop joined the burgeoning ranks of those already flocking to upper Fillmore. Lip Lab, occupying the spacious shop at the corner of Fillmore and Sacramento recently vacated by Marc Jacobs, captures the trend of merging organic ingredients and cutting-edge technology to create small batches of made-to-order products.

Lip Lab, which has a six-month lease on the space, follows another Fillmore Street trend: popping-up to test the market before deciding whether to put down more permanent roots.

The lipstick line is part of Bite Beauty, a company founded in 2009 by Susanne Langmuir, a Toronto-based beauty entrepreneur tapping into the growing awareness that most cosmetics

are made with chemicals, some toxic, that are taken into the body, much like the food we eat. And lipstick is inevitably ingested by those attempting to enhance their pouts. Langmuir headed back into the lab with the goal of creating a lipstick good enough to eat. Her mantra: “You eat what you put on your lips, so your lipstick should be good for you.”

Lip Lab creations are also gluten free. And vegan. They cost \$150 for two tubes custom mixed from the bespoke collection, or \$55 for a single tube conjured up from standard shades.

Langmuir latched on to some sensual aspects of lipstick, too: the shade, flavor and texture preferred by the wearers. In 2011, she added lipsticks to her line of Bite

Beauty products, and they were quickly snatched up by Sephora, the cosmetics mega-retailer.

In addition to the Fillmore pop-up, there is another pop-up shop in San Jose, along with two permanent locations in Toronto and New York.

Sales associate Rhianna Smith says that while many have beelined into the shop with favorites in mind, there has been a bit of a learning curve for some locals.

Newcomers to the Lip Lab are invited to follow a tripartite formula: create your color, choose your finish, choose your flavor.

The first step — the color — might be the most difficult, as customers are beckoned to sit and ponder the hundreds of shades available or to create their own by blending one or more.

Finishes come in glossy, sheer, luminous and amuse bouche — the original formula that offers a traditional creamy feel, as well as matte, which Smith swears “doesn’t budge from the lips.”

Customers are then prompted to add a scent from the many offered: vanilla, citrus, cherry, violet, citrus mango, peony, lime, mint, coconut and wild berry.

The three ingredients are alchemized in a microwave. “We don’t put our lunches in there,” Smith assures. Then each bullet of lipstick is set in an icy mold. The final production process takes seven minutes.

Smith says Fillmore shoppers new to the product are warming to the process of slowing down to get the perfect custom shade. “It can’t be rushed,” she says.

*“You eat what you put  
on your lips, so your  
lipstick should be  
good for you.”*

## THE NEW FILLMORE

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Jane the Bakery:  
change in the air

The smell of fried chicken has been replaced by the wafting aroma of baking bread at Geary and Steiner now that **JANE THE BAKERY** is open.

Behind a cheery orange awning, the entire space has become a big open commercial bakery, with bread and pastry of all kinds. Plus coffee. It will help supply its stylish big sister up the block, **JANE ON FILLMORE**.

Still to come: a creative reuse of the big black ex-bucket of chicken in the parking lot. Yes, there's parking.

■

**IN THE JAZZ DISTRICT:** Around the corner there's more big food news. Boba tea will return again to 1522 Fillmore, next door to the **WISE SONS** bagelry. This time two friends who call themselves the **BOBA GUYS** are promising a high-quality version. Their boba — sweet creamy tapioca tea — will be made with Straus organic milk, and is more expensive than most. They already have locations in Hayes Valley, the Mission, near Union Square and in New York.

Then there's this: In the back of the boba shop will be Korean fried chicken from New York chef Deuki Hong at **SUNDAY BIRD**. He's looking for a permanent location in the neighborhood for a Korean barbecue restaurant and fermentation lab.

■

**I SCREAM:** At long last there's action on the northwest corner of Fillmore and Sacramento. **SALT & STRAW** from Portland is bringing artisan ice cream. Let's hope they bring back the tables and chairs in the southern sun, too. . . . And at Steiner and California, the new year began with a leveling of the **SHELL** station, which is being rebuilt with a souped-up convenience store called **LOOP MARKETPLACE**. No further word yet on the salad and sushi bars.

# Full House, Fuller Street

Hit TV show's creator buys its home on Broderick Street, bringing still more fans

FOR YEARS, residents of the 1700 block of Broderick Street, between Bush and Pine, have struggled with an overabundance of love from fans of the beloved '80s sit-com *Full House*, supposedly set at 1709 Broderick.

When a sequel, *Fuller House*, was launched last year, the opening credits still showed the Italianate Victorian at 1709, and the daily confluence of fans intensified.

Now neighbors are bracing themselves for what comes next after learning the house has been sold, for \$4 million, to Jeff Franklin, the creator and producer of *Full House* and *Fuller House*.

"The house came on the market and really, I just thought, I *have* to buy this house," Franklin told the *Hollywood Reporter*. "It's great to have the house in our *Full House* family and be able to pre-serve it for the fans."

On December 2, Franklin hosted a cast party at 1709 Broderick for the second season of *Fuller House*, which began December 9. Franklin said that after seismic retrofitting and renovation he might use the house for filming or rent it to the public, allowing fans to experience living there.

"It's a shame to let it sit empty," he said.

Franklin told the *Reporter* he paid "a ridiculous amount — like \$500" to shoot the home in 1987 when the show began.

"We didn't need to go back there until several years later, but by that point the owners, I guess, had become annoyed with fans coming by and they weren't in a cooperative mood," he said. "No one has allowed



Fans gather in front of 1709 Broderick.

us to shoot in that house since we did our very first stock shoot back in April of '87."

That may change.

"We would take advantage of the fact that I now own the house," Franklin said, "and we could go up there and shoot some new footage and maybe bring the cast up and shoot with them up there."

Franklin invited his new neighbors over on November 30, and on December 16 Franklin's PR rep met with neighbors on the block to hear their concerns. Led by Rudy Muller, the neighbors presented a proposal detailing the "impact of visitors to Full House" — double-parked cars, blocked driveways and blocked access to garages and

cars, plus noise, pollution and crime — as well as "suggestions to alleviate problems."

The neighbors asked that the owner provide special police officers on holidays and weekends, repainted red zones, video surveillance and "a single aesthetically attractive sign," among other things.

"Daily *Full House* issues create stress for many residents," said the proposal, endorsed by 16 neighbors on the block. "Please understand our concerns and act on all the above suggestions as a good neighbor."

A week later, on Christmas Eve, a large sign was posted in front of the house.

"To the fans of *Full House/Fuller House*," the sign says. "We love you! But please respect our nice neighbors and our quiet street," adding: "Be quick and courteous. Don't make anyone say, 'How rude!'" — one of the show's signature lines.

In early January, midday on a weekday, a few neighbors stood together talking on the sidewalk as a gaggle of cars double-parked and pulled into driveways while their occupants ran up the steps of the house for photos.

"I'll just be a minute..." was a common refrain.

"This is nothing," said Lisa Depaolis, who lives on the east side of the block facing 1709. "Then the horns start, and then the fingers start flipping."

"We can't make these people stop coming," said Carla Hashagen, who lives two doors north of 1709. "Now we're just trying to organize." In the process, she allowed, "We've met a lot of neighbors."

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January 2017 NEW FILLMORE 3



**Burglary, Assault  
Geary and Arguello  
November 24, 2:47 a.m.**

Officers ran a computer check on a car stopped at a red light and discovered it had been involved in a burglary and a felony assault. They followed the car as it pulled into a nearby gas station. Additional officers responded to assist and carried out a felony vehicle stop. Police identified the driver as the individual involved in the burglary. The car was towed and the suspect was booked at county jail.

**Malicious Mischief  
Fulton and Arguello  
November 28, 10:05 p.m.**

Officers received a call regarding an individual who was smashing the windows of a MUNI shelter with a hammer. The caller provided a good description of the suspect. Police arrived to find all five of the shelter’s glass windows had been smashed. The suspect had fled.

Police soon found a 14-year-old male matching the witness’s description loitering nearby. He was carrying a hammer-shaped window punch. The suspect was cited for the vandalism and released to a parent.

**Stabbing  
Sutter and Fillmore  
December 9, 9:05 p.m.**

A witness reported to police that he had discovered a woman who had been stabbed. The 56-year-old woman had been attacked with a knife; she had died before the police arrived. A 39-year-old man has been arrested in this case, which reportedly involved a family dispute, but no more details have been released. The matter is still under investigation.

**Arson, Inhabited Dwelling,  
Terrorist Threats  
Broderick and Sutter  
December 9, 10:51 p.m.**

A man came to a woman’s apartment and knocked on the window, asking her for money. When she refused to comply, he reached through her window with a lighter and set her curtains on fire. The woman extinguished the fire and called 911. The suspect threatened the woman’s life, then ran off.

When officers arrived they located the man, who was still holding the lighter. A computer check revealed an outstanding warrant for his arrest. He was booked at county jail.

**Evading a Police Officer,  
Driving Under the Influence  
3rd and Balboa  
December 10, 3:25 a.m.**

A car that did not have its lights on caught the attention of officers on patrol. While they watched, the driver failed to stop at a stop sign. The police activated their lights and siren to perform a traffic stop. The driver continued to drive slowly around the block, then abruptly stopped. The officers pulled up alongside him and attempted to give him instructions, but he suddenly sped away.

A short time later, officers learned that a vehicle matching this car’s description had been involved in a hit-and-run collision. Investigating officers tracked down the driver, who appeared to be drunk. He claimed he was injured, so the police called medics to the scene.

The suspect was transported to the hospital for treatment, where he was given a blood test that showed him to be over the legal limit for alcohol consumption. A

records check revealed he did not have a valid driver’s license. He was arrested on multiple charges.

**Battery, Mental Health Detention  
California and Park Presidio  
December 12, 3:36 p.m.**

A MUNI passenger called police about a woman who was assaulting the driver. When officers arrived, they saw a fight in progress on the bus. A woman was hitting and punching the driver. The officers ordered the woman off the bus and detained her. She continued to display erratic behavior while rambling incoherently.

As the officers investigated, a woman approached them and said the suspect had also assaulted her earlier. Both the passenger and the driver wanted to press criminal charges. The suspect was cited for two counts of misdemeanor battery and transported to the hospital for a mental health evaluation.

**Street Robbery With Force  
Geary and Baker  
December 18, 6:40 p.m.**

A man on a MUNI bus accosted and verbally challenged another passenger. When the bus stopped, the angry suspect snatched the passenger’s backpack. After a brief struggle, the thief succeeded in wrenching the backpack away from its owner, then jumped off the bus and ran. The passenger sprinted after him, caught up to the suspect in the playground of a housing complex and tackled him. He managed to recover his backpack, though he was seriously injured. The suspect fled. He is described as a black male between 16 and 20 years old, approximately 5 ft. 9 in. tall, weighing about 150 lbs., with a goatee and a shaved head. The incident is still under investigation.

**Vandalism, Resisting Police Orders  
Geary and Spruce  
December 21, 4:18 a.m.**

A witness alerted police to a man who was smashing the glass of a MUNI kiosk. He gave the dispatcher a detailed description of the suspect.

When officers arrived, they found the suspect in possession of several MUNI route maps. He dropped the maps and jumped on his skateboard while the police gave chase. Then he abandoned the skateboard and fled on foot, but eventually the officers caught him and detained him. Officers found broken glass in his clothing that matched the glass of the vandalized shelter. The maps the suspect had been holding had been taken from MUNI shelters he had previously attacked. He was booked on charges of resisting arrest and felony vandalism.

**Attempted Robbery With a Gun  
California and 11th  
December 23, 10:05 p.m.**

A man on foot passed a black vehicle parked on the corner. As he reached the intersection, a man emerged from the car’s front passenger seat and grabbed him by the shoulder. The assailant ordered the man to give him money while pretending he had a gun in his jacket. The man refused to give his attacker money and managed to break free of his grip.

He then ran from the man who had accosted him, who got into his car and fled. The suspect is described as a white male between 20 and 25 years of age, approximately 5 ft. 9 in. tall, and weighing about 150 lbs. The vehicle is a black four-door sedan. The incident is still under investigation.

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# Wine Shop Closes After 20-Year Run

► FROM PAGE ONE

Vino has been managed by Alan Pricco's son, Logan, the resident wine expert known for his knowledge and candor on wine pricing. Far more than just a check-out clerk, he is the opposite of the stereotypical wine snob whose palate claims to divine not just the aromatic flavors of pear or tobacco, but the microclimate where the vines were planted.

Logan Pricco said he was not planning a blowout inventory liquidation sale before or after the closing. He is spending January cleaning up the space, reboxing wines and distributing them to three other East Bay Vino stores owned by the Pricco family, which also owns a wine wholesaling company called Grape Expectations.

Also to be missed is Vino's chatty one-page, two-sided newsletter with its Wine for the Week offerings — seven wines for seven days at one price of \$70. That pretty much summed up Vino's marketing efforts. While most wine merchants try to sell wine by the case, the local Vino shop largely promoted often obscure individual bottles like Jordanov, a dry white wine from Macedonia for \$12.

Concedes Logan Pricco: "We haven't done the best job of marketing over the years. We've always relied mostly on word of mouth."



*Vino is no longer a good fit for the neighborhood, the owner says, because there are no longer other small food shops nearby.*

Adds his dad: "We always say we sell people, not wine."

There is currently no tenant waiting to move into Vino's space. And since the lease was up, Alan Pricco got no "key money," a ploy commercial real estate brokers have been using in recent years to allow high-rolling corporate retailers to buy out the remaining lease of area storefronts from current tenants.

In fact, Dennis Danielian, property manager of the building, says the lease for Kuraya, the Japanese antique shop next

door to Vino, is up for renewal soon and he hopes they will remain. "We would be thrilled to keep them in place," Danielian says.

But the building owner might not be opposed to one large tenant occupying the two ground floor spaces covering 3,200 square feet — as is made clear in the new For Lease sign above Vino's front window, which offers from 950 to 3,250 square feet for lease.

"Our goal is to get tenants that are financially stable and a good fit with the

neighborhood," contends Danielian.

Ironically, after nearly 20 years, Alan Pricco says he doesn't think Vino is a good fit for the neighborhood.

"Our three other stores — on College Avenue in Oakland, in Piedmont and on Fourth Street in Berkeley — are in high traffic areas where people do their daily shopping at the butcher shop, the cheese shop, the deli, the bakery, the green grocer," he says. "Our vision — and it works in the East Bay — is that these daily shoppers will duck in to our store and buy a bottle or two of wine they will enjoy that night from someone who's really knowledgeable about serious wines. Our people have 15 to 30 years of experience."

That marketing philosophy doesn't work in the Fillmore anymore, says Pricco, because there are no more small food shops in the neighborhood. People are buying mostly popular, fast-selling wines at Mollie Stone's or other major grocers without the benefit of seasoned advice. Says Pricco: "In the East Bay, our landlords are foodie people."

Alan Pricco contends he wasn't surprised by the landlord's proposed rent hike or the magnitude of it. "I'm a free market guy. My family owns some buildings, so I know if he has the opportunity to raise the rent, he'll raise it," he says. "Me? I hate tenant turnover, so I artificially keep my rents a little below market."

Meantime, son Logan Pricco has some parting advice for wine shoppers consistent with the guidance his family's shop has been serving up for two decades. "Be wary of restaurants charging markups of 25 to 40 percent over retail," he says. "And price doesn't always dictate quality."

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# Almodóvar’s Latest Comes to the Clay

By ANDREA CHASE

PEDRO ALMODÓVAR has always gifted us with trenchant, impudent, melodramatic, improbable, wickedly funny and aching poignant portraits of women in emotional extremis of one kind or another. In *Julieta*, opening at the Clay Theatre on January 6, he continues in that vein with a melancholy ode to memory, regret and the power of secrets.

The title character is played by two remarkable actresses: Adriana Ugarte as the younger Julieta, and Emma Suárez as the older but not necessarily wiser woman. It is that woman, whose year-long plan to leave Madrid for a new life in Portugal with her devoted lover, Lorenzo (Dario Grandinetti), disappears in the time it takes for a chance encounter. The past that she had so firmly put behind comes crashing back, and with it any peace she thought she had made with it.

What follows is a meditation on old pain and new wounds as Julieta writes a journal-length letter to her estranged daughter, Antia, which is as much a way for Julieta to sort out her present as it is to fill in the gaps of her own history that she never shared. Hers was a life lived passively, absorbing emotional shocks that prompt even stronger emotional responses. In that life, things unspoken have tragic repercussions that take her by surprise, and rarely for the better — from her random but fateful meeting with Antia’s fisherman father (Daniel Grao), who has a comatose wife; to the harpy of a housekeeper (Rossy de Palma) who is parsimonious with what she knows, but lethal when she shares; to the serio-comic



pathos of birthday cakes chucked into a garbage can.

Almodóvar slashes the screen with savage reds and frenetic wallpaper as visual cues as vital as the salient plot points. He juxtaposes carefully composed scenes in which emotions simmer below the surface with the secrets that are unraveling Julieta’s life. The two actresses playing the lead, with features similar enough to be believable, also find a common emotional resonance; both are passionate and confident, with just a wistful trace of being lost even at the best of times.

*Julieta* has the form of a glossy soap opera, but plays like a fable from the classical mythology that she teaches. The film is deeply moving, sometimes unnerving, but always fascinating.

## ‘The Founder’ Opens Jan. 20

LURKING IN THE SHADOWS of *The Founder*, opening at the Sundance Kabuki on January 20, is a very dark and potentially edifying study of the American Dream in all its manifestations. It is a bracing consideration of the roles that hard work, persistence and chance might — or might not — play in the pay off of that one great idea that changes everything.

Alas, this portrait of Ray Kroc (Michael Keaton), and how his multitude of failures fueled the corporate phenomenon that is McDonald’s, plays it far too safe, failing to embrace the dark complexity of a driven character and the ethical lapses that sprang from that complexity.

We meet Kroc driving across the Midwest peddling his latest idea, a machine that makes several milkshakes at one time, to drive-in restaurants that just aren’t interested. This venture is about to tank when he gets an order for six machines from a place in San Bernadino called McDonald’s. And when he calls directly to double-check the order, he is bemused to discover they will need eight, and that they needed them yesterday.

Thus is the start of the McDonald’s empire, the founding principle of which was delivering an order immediately to a customer. It’s an idea we take for granted now, but Keaton sells the sense of confusion and wonder when the burger and fries he orders is placed in front of him before he can finish counting out his change. That’s no small thing. Kroc takes one look and milkshake makers are left in the dust of his new plan: franchising the restaurant.

Keaton brings the perfect descant of despair to the glad-handing, fast-talking salesman at the start, the one who takes a swig from his hip flask when a sale isn’t made, who recites the self-help spiel from the record he carries with him on the road, wanting to believe it. There is, however, a lapse in the portrayal of a character who at the start fulminates with rage over a piece of lettuce on one of his hamburgers, to the one at the end who is ready to swap quality for profits.

Instead of mining the very rich material, the film becomes the cinematic equivalent of empty calories.



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# A Film Critic's TV for a Desert Island

By DAVID THOMSON

IN WRITING my new book, *Television: A Biography*, I revisited a lot of shows that were old favorites. Some stood the test of time; some did not. What follows is a list of 10 shows I'd like to have on a desert island — not my top 10, you must understand, just an assortment of good stuff. I hope the island has a sofa.

**ALL IN THE FAMILY** — Norman Lear's show was an inspired confrontation of liberalism and reaction couched as comedy, but steadily aiming at the issues that still haunt America. In the next few years, we will need more TV with this adroit mixture of courage and entertainment. Plus, Edith Bunker (Jean Stapleton) is the woman on TV I most admire.

**BREAKING BAD** — I have been addicted to long-form shows in recent years and for me Vince Gilligan's *Breaking Bad* is the pick of them all. It takes an ordinary failure in American life, puts him to the test and sees what he'll make of it. The show is violent, nasty and beautiful — think of those New Mexico skies. It's frightening, but it's comic, too. And Bryan Cranston and Anna Gunn made a believable glum marriage.

**FRIENDS** — I want a mainstream sit-com, and this is the one, chiefly because my wife Lucy and I watched it so many evenings at home on Washington Street with our sons Nicholas and Zachary — often with dinner on our laps. If we laughed enough, the food (and the boys) might end on the floor. I choose it for memories of family merriment.

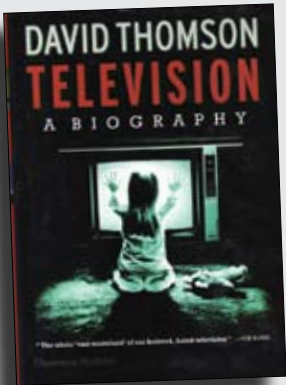
**THE GONG SHOW** — I must have one example of mindless, trash TV unworthy of a serious critic. This was a casual riot: untidy, tasteless, rowdy, insolent, mocking and very entertaining. Above all, I choose it for Chuck Barris, an offhand genius and an amiable dithering puppet of a man who realized his strings had been cut. He was on his own.

**LAUGH-IN** — Sure, it has become dated, but I loved that overlap from late '60s to early '70s and the cutting from one skit to another. So much TV comedy is settled on a single "real" set — it's as reliable and dull as the sofa we're sitting on. But *Laugh-In* was jazzy, done on a sound-stage and



KELLY JOHNSON COLLECTION

Television once was a sacred fixed altar, Thomson says, but now is one of many screens.



## The elephant in the room

Longtime neighborhood resident David Thomson — "the best writer on film in our time," in the opinion of author Michael Ondaatje and many others — has written prolifically about the movies, including his masterful *New Biographical Dictionary of Film*, now in its sixth edition. In his newest book, he turns his considerable erudition to the smaller screen.

As one point, Thomson says, he considered calling the book *The Elephant in the Room*. "The household pet of once upon a time became a strange, placid being," he writes, "not a monster that attacked us and beat its Kong chest in triumph but an impassive force that quietly commandeered so much of what we thought was our attention, our

consciousness or our intelligence. Television wasn't just an elephant in the room. It became the room, the house and the world."

capable of going anywhere. It was its own remote system, flicking rapidly through its new stars — including Goldie Hawn, laughing too much to say her lines.

**MARTY** — This is live TV drama. Forget the Oscar-winning movie with Ernest Borgnine. This was the original, done in 1953, written by the remarkable Paddy Chayefsky, and starring Rod Steiger

and Nancy Marchand as the awkward no-hope couple who gradually come together. It's decent, realistic and very touching. Remember that Chayefsky would go on to write *Network*, the best movie ever made about TV, and still coming true.

**MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS** — Silly walks, silly jokes (no cheese and a dead parrot) and a gang of sublimely silly fellows. Python got its chance on TV very casually. The BBC didn't know what it was, or what it would do. But a gang of arrogant university comics made it the most original show going so that every other sensible show began to look foolish in its light.

**OJ: MADE IN AMERICA** — From 2016, Ezra Edelman's seven and a half hour documentary taught us we didn't know everything about O.J., who was born and raised in San Francisco and a young star at nearby Galileo High School. The best documentary I know about race, Los Angeles, sport, celebrity and its madness. It does nothing to redeem Simpson, but it surely helps explain the terrible blood-letting on Bundy Drive.

**RUBICON** — This 2010 show was cancelled after one season. I may have been the only person hooked on its weird, torturous story of espionage and intrigue. But I was devoted, so I followed the performances of James Badge Dale, Jessica Collins, Lauren Hodges, Arliss Howard, Miranda Richardson and Michael Cristofer as the devious "Truxton Spangler." The reason for having it is to dream about the ways the show might have gone if enough people had watched. It's a mystery, waiting to be extended.

**THE SINGING DETECTIVE** — Dennis Potter wrote this and he is one of the finest writers television has had. It is so many things: the story of an ill man in the hospital; the memory of his childhood and sexual revelation; and a pastiche of the detective thrillers he writes. His name is Philip E. Marlow and this was when I realized that Michael Gambon was a great actor. Plus, it's not just a multi-level drama — it keeps turning into a musical. *Singing Detective* was years ahead of its time and as profound as the new *La La Land* is merely pretty.

So, what are your 10?

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# Everybody Has a Story, Including Kelly at Peet's

► FROM PAGE ONE

"It's just one of those neighborhood things," says political consultant Duane Baughman, a Washington Street resident and a Peet's regular. "You show up at the same place at the same time — and you know so many of the same people — that you trick yourself into believing you've known each other for years."

But it has been a few since they first met.

"The people I know and respect and care about most in the neighborhood were always huddled around Kelly's table," says Baughman. "You just figure, 'Hmm, that must be the place to be, and the guy to know.' And sure enough, it turned out to be true."

Since he retired as executive director of the Berkeley Symphony, Kelly has spent most of his days on the corner of Fillmore and Sacramento.

"That's when I became a street person," he laughs.

He preferred the northwest corner when the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf was open. "I knew the people," he says, "and the sun was over there." Now it's Peet's, where the locals tend to gather, especially since the venerable Royal Ground closed a block south on the Fillmore-California corner.

"I never go out in the morning feeling like I'm going to have coffee alone," Kelly says. "I meet people easily, and I seem to have this knack for connecting people — I've just always done that."

He adds: "Everybody has a story, and almost everybody's story is interesting."

Kelly Johnson grew up on a farm in the Bible Belt north of Fort Wayne, Indiana, the son of a confirmed stage mother. She pushed Kelly and his sister Connie to become child performers on the vaudeville circuit. In addition to his talents as a tap dancer and pianist, he was also an acrobat and a contortionist.

"My mother trained us like she trained her dogs," he says. "But I loved performing. We loaded up our stuff in the station wagon and we drove and drove. We worked the Chicago circuit."

In his 20s he tried to go straight. He came west to San Francisco in 1963 as an employee of International Harvester, a young corporate climber with a conservative life. But the world was exploding around him, and suddenly it was the Summer of Love.

A more spirited life called. By 1969 he had moved to the Fillmore to study dance at Marc Wilde Ballet, above what is now Athleta. He moved into a bustling third-story Victorian flat across the street. The walls were painted purple, the floors were bright green and the ceilings were sky blue as a backdrop to a sea of stars. The place was already occupied by a Great Dane, an Australian Sheepdog, eight cats, a white rat, a parrot and six people — including dancer Penelope Lagios and her 6-year-old daughter, Leda.



GABOR

"I just fell in love with this neighborhood," he says. "It felt like home. It was edgy, but edgy in a way I liked."

Kelly and Penelope soon married, and he raised Leda as his own child. She too would grow up to become an important dancer, then later an author and author-

ity on foraged foods. She recalls that Kelly early on issued an order of sorts: "We need to get our act together." Within a year, there were no roommates, only one cat, and the walls were painted white. "He brought in respectability," she says now.

Kelly had a bigger vision, so he renamed the ballet school the SF Dance Theater, expanded its classes, brought in more experienced teachers and provided musical accompaniment.

"Dance was just emerging here," he says. "It really took off in the '70s and '80s. That was the most exciting time of my life."

Carlos Santana had a studio across the street next to the Clay Theatre in a building long gone, and even came up once to play for a ballet class. Bill Graham, already



Fillmore's Kelly Johnson in 1970.

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From far left: Kelly Johnson and his sister Connie during their vaudeville days; playing piano and tap dancing at SF Dance Theater; dancing with his former wife Penelope Lagios.

Eventually, physical problems slowed him down and ended his piano performances. After surgery to regain the use of his left arm, the crew at the ex-Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf would come upstairs to help him out of bed, change his sheets and help with his recovery.

"I had my first spinal surgery at 14," Kelly says. "That ended my career as a contortionist. I'm paying for it still. My entire body is wracked with arthritis."

Still, he remains an engaging presence and an enabler of friends. He says it is his neighbors — "my extended family" — who make his life here possible. And he still has some creative projects in the works.

Right now he has revived work on a series of piano dance compositions he began several years ago, and is in the midst of producing 24 pieces the right length and tempo for dancers to exercise. He hopes to make them available for downloading later this year. And he just renewed his passport so he can visit his daughter, if she stays in Costa Rica.

a prominent rock and roll promoter, lived around the corner on Bush Street. The Fillmore Auditorium was going strong, and so was Winterland.

"There was always music on the street," Kelly says. "It was a festive atmosphere."

San Francisco was attracting more free spirits and flower children every day.

"A lot of colorful people came through our studio," Kelly says. "Some took gigs in nude 'love dances' in North Beach. One student showed up on the screen having sex on a trapeze in *Behind the Green Door*, the first blockbuster porn film."

But the atmosphere on Fillmore Street could be threatening after dark. Some would-be dancers were reluctant to come

for night classes. "People would call and ask, 'Is it safe to come there?'" Kelly remembers. So the SF Dance Theater moved to a larger location with three studios on Van Ness Avenue, at its peak providing a wide range of dance classes for 1,400 students, seven days a week, thriving until it closed 1982. Kelly went on to other gigs.

By 1996, after 13 years as executive director of the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, he decided he wanted to focus on the piano. Drawing on his childhood experiences, he set up a circuit of upscale retirement homes between Napa and San Jose — all eager for accomplished entertainment, with good instruments, and able to pay. He was doing as many as 130 performances a year.

"The only thing I ever knew I wanted to do with my life was to play the piano," Kelly says, sitting one recent morning at Peet's. "And that's the thing I did last."

Through all the years he held on to his flat near the corner of Fillmore and Sacramento.

"Fillmore's shops have become a destination, rather than serving the neighborhood," Kelly laments. "But the thing that holds it together is the long-time residents. We all know each other, and this is where our paths cross."

He adds: "I get pissed off about what's going on in San Francisco, but I'm still in love with it. And this corner has been important to the neighborhood for a long time."

It's the diverse group of people Kelly has collected that is even more impressive than his status as a local landmark.

"Kelly is a unifier," says Duane Baughman, "someone we feel we can all gather around in what can sometimes feel like a cold, excluding city. Our special little corner of the world is amazing because of the people we see and catch up with every day at that spot. It's Kelly and people like him who keep people coming back to the corner to share their days, their ups and downs — with no judgments — and keep this feeling like a small town."

To inquire about her limited edition signed print "Kelly on Fillmore," contact Anne Ruth Isaacson at [anneruthisaacson@gmail.com](mailto:anneruthisaacson@gmail.com).

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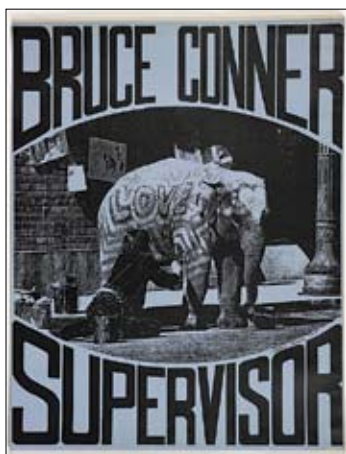
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## ‘IT’S ALL TRUE’

From the Fillmore to the stratosphere

By JEROME TARSHIS

**D**URING THE EARLY and middle ’60s, when I was thinking about moving from New York to San Francisco, one of the inducements was that Bruce Conner lived here. My avant-garde film friends thought his first film, *A Movie* (1958), was an instant classic, followed by one success after another.

The objects he made — assemblage sculptures — were being shown at major galleries in New York, London, Paris, Rome and Mexico City. He was in great collections on both sides of the Atlantic. Not bad for a 30ish artist born and brought up in Kansas.

A more complicated Bruce Conner is the subject of “It’s All True,” his fullest retrospective so far, almost worshipfully received earlier this year at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and now at SFMOMA through January 22.

In 1965, Conner wrote to his poet friend Michael McClure that he had “a feeling of death from the ‘recognition’ I have been receiving. I feel like I am being catalogued and filed away.”

Unlike New York, San Francisco offered him an art scene in which very little avant-garde work by serious artists was sold. The artists could complain they were being ignored and, at more or less the same time, feel relieved they were outside what Conner referred to as “the art bizness.”

Always striving to avoid categorization, Conner produced work in a dizzying variety of media, ranging from the films and assemblages that are his most obvious contributions to art history to photograms made by silhouetting his body against photo-sensitive paper.

“I was feeling very nebulous about my own identity, and uncertain how to cope

with that,” he later explained. “The main thing that I could understand was that I had a body that I could never get out of.”

San Francisco’s public world offered him greater opportunities to get out of himself. In 1967, he ran for the Board of Supervisors (and got 5,375 votes). One of his campaign posters was illustrated with a picture of an elephant; another showed Conner in a sailor suit at the age of 2 1/2.

In the printed voter’s guide, each candidate listed an occupation. Though some were conventional — “Incumbent” or “Attorney” — others were less so; a Trotskyist might be labeled as “Socialist Worker.” Conner listed himself as “Nothing.”

Fillmore Street had a lot to offer Bruce Conner. The building at 2322 Fillmore, called “Painterland” by Conner’s high school friend Michael McClure, who lived in the building with his wife, Joanna, was Conner’s first home in San Francisco. Over the longer term, the building offered Conner associations with artists who shared his hostility toward the art world’s idea of success. Among his several unwilling-to-be-categorized neighbors were the distinguished artists Joan Brown and Jay De Feo.

Conner and Jean Sandstedt, herself a gifted artist, married in her native Nebraska in September 1957 and set out for San Francisco. They lived with the McClures on Fillmore for a few weeks and then moved into an apartment around the corner on Jackson Street.

Down the hill was an African-American community being redeveloped out of its former existence. It offered Bruce Conner not only jazz — music of all kinds lay at the center of many of his films — but discarded fragments of a consumer society. There were unwanted bits and pieces lying in the street for the taking, or available



Bruce Conner’s *Child* stirred outrage here, but adoration in New York.

IMAGES: SFMOMA

### The irony of success

The story of one of his assemblages, *Child* (1959), points up the ironies of Bruce Conner’s early success. It was a black wax effigy of a child, tied to a battered high chair with nylon stockings. In Conner’s mind, the effigy originally stood for Caryl Chessman, who was awaiting execution. The message expanded to a general outcry against violence perpetrated by individuals or governments, and against the repression of any childlike affirmation of life.

Exhibited at the de Young Museum, *Child* got national publicity. Local moralists found it outrageous: “He must hate children!” Up in the stratosphere, no problem: Conner sold the piece to Philip Johnson, the ultra-Establishment architect and collector, who later gave it to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The Philip Johnson narrative was part of the truth. Conner’s revulsion against the consumer society and the art world was another part of the truth. The SFMOMA exhibition memorializes an artist whose talents — not least a talent for self-promotion — walked hand in hand with an outstanding ability to summon up discomfort. San Francisco helped take the edge off.

— JEROME TARSHIS

at low prices in the neighborhood’s thrift shops.

Fillmore Street also offered him exhibition spaces. He had his first one-person show in San Francisco at the East-West Gallery, at 3106 Fillmore, and significant later shows around the corner at the Spatsa Gallery, at 2192 Filbert, and at the Batman Gallery, at 2222 Fillmore.

One of his sadder art-world misunderstandings arose from his affection for the neighborhood. He and a number of other Northern California artists were included in “The Art of Assemblage” in 1961, at the Museum of Modern Art, one of the great exhibitions of its time. In 1960 its curator, William Seitz, came out to San Francisco to have a look at a promising new art scene.

Conner took Seitz to artists’ studios, but also to black neighborhoods and especially to a second-hand shop on McAllister Street whose owner also made assemblage sculptures. He hoped Seitz would fall in with his heartfelt assertion that collage and assemblage had their origin in folk art, and not least in black folk art.

The resulting catalogue essay made no mention of McAllister Street; it pointed to Picasso and Braque as precursors of the young artists represented in the show. Conner was incandescently angry.

He was eager to tell the world that, successful as he was, admired in New York before he was 30, sophisticated as his art seemed to be, his work had artistic roots in the Harlem of the West.

As the title of the retrospective tells us: It was all true.





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By BRIDGET MALEY

THE WONDERFULLY designed corner house at 1900 Pierce Street was built in 1887 for John I. Sabin, an early investor and proponent of the telephone, under the direction of architect William F. Smith.

Both architect and client appear to have shared a fascination with telephones. In 1877, Sabin founded the American District Telegraph Co., the first telephone company on the west coast. Later he became the president of the Pacific States Telephone



John I. Sabin

Co. and acquired the nickname the “Telephone King.” In 1901, architect Smith filed for a patent for a “message transmitting and recording mechanism for telephone systems.” This device was capable of passing a message from one switching station to another and recording it on paper tape at the receiving end.

Smith was an inventor and architect who practiced in California from about 1877 to at least 1910. He had migrated west from Boston sometime after 1873. Little is known about Smith’s training and life before his arrival in California.

An article in a March 1877 edition of the *Mariposa Gazette* about musical



The house has sinuous brackets, an elaborate roof and unusual fern relief in gables galore.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHAYNE WATSON

# A Home for the Telephone King

Both client and architect of this corner house shared a fascination with telephones

instruments and organs noted that “these organs are from plans prepared by William F. Smith, architect, late of Boston.” City directories place Smith in San Francisco by 1880, with an office at 318 Pine Street. The 1910 U.S. Census identified William F. Smith as an “architect of houses,” 65 years old, a Massachusetts native born in 1855,

divorced and living at the Hotel Holland on Ellis Street in San Francisco.

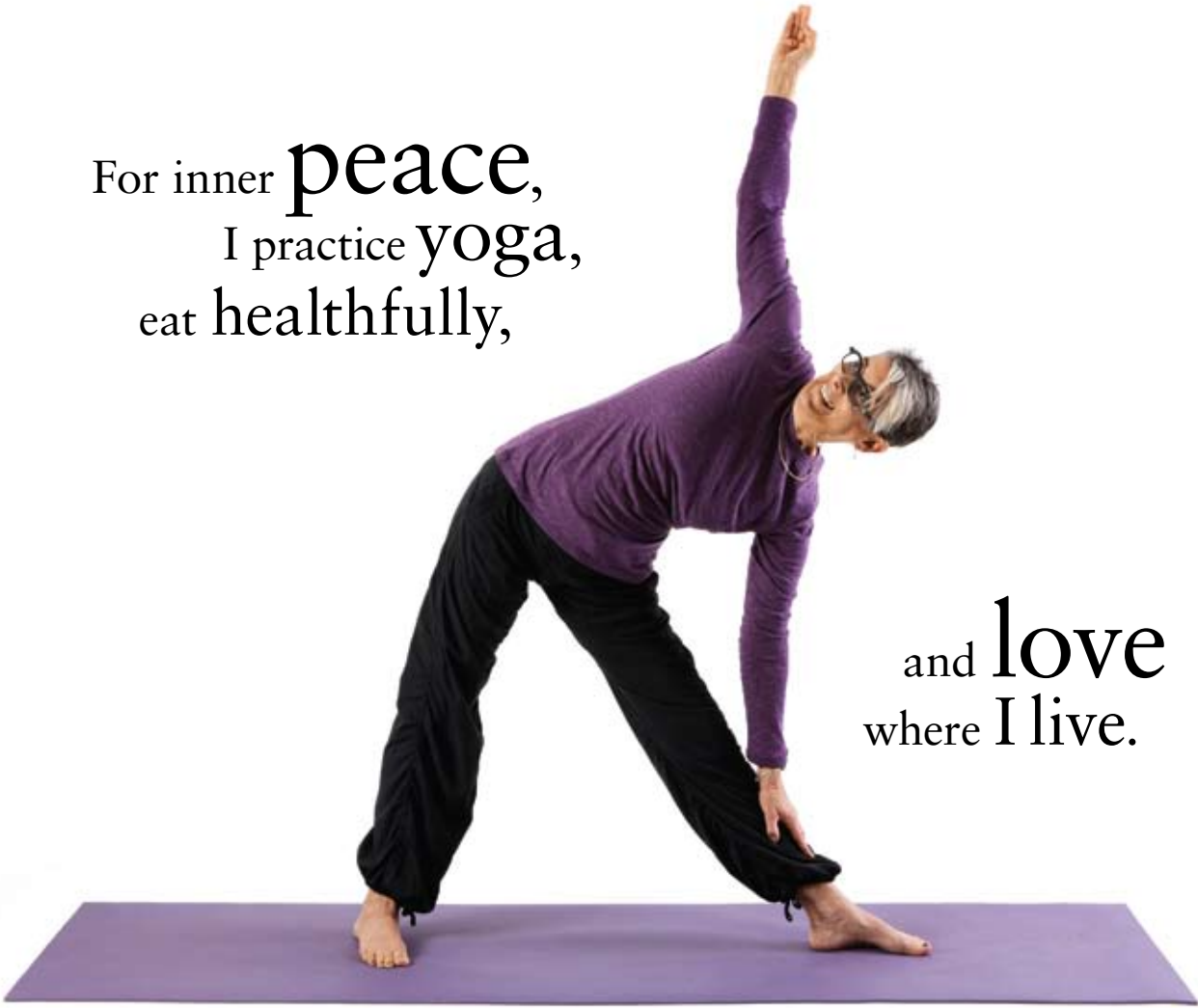
Smith’s additional neighborhood projects include a Stick Style house for Dr. O.V. Thayer on Washington Street near Alta Plaza Park (1881); a Queen Anne house at 2000 Gough facing Lafayette Park for Webster and Beulah Hobbs Jones

(1885); and the four houses from 2505 to 2511 Pacific Avenue, between Steiner and Pierce (1889), built for James Stewart, who leased them as rental housing. Several of the houses in this grouping have details similar to 1900 Pierce, including brackets and decorative gable ends.

TO PAGE 13 ►

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# Complex, But Not Too Busy

By ANNE BLOOMFIELD

A YEAR AFTER the Queen Anne house at Pierce and Pine was built — we’re talking 1887 — it was photographed for a newspaper series titled “Artistic Homes of California.” Except for minor details, the picture might have been taken today: It shows the same sinuous brackets at the entry and in bay windows, the same unusual fern relief in gables galore, the same elaborate roof with wavy dormer, and so on.

The house lost a tall brick chimney along the way (probably in ’06), a rear porch, square upper sash panes on the parlor’s bay windows facing Pine Street, stained glass in an adjacent window and a few entry details. But what would you expect in a century and more? Meanwhile it’s managed to acquire a flagpole, fire escapes, basement window bars and the wrought iron fence on Pine.

Aesthetics here, security there: A house walks somewhat in step with changing times.

Now with that photograph from 1887 came a quaint description of the interior, a sort of architectural laundry list. “The main hall is nearly square, finished in redwood, with wax polish. The hall fireplace cuts off the further right-hand corner. The chimney-piece, supported on Corinthian columns, is very effective. The staircase rises from the left. The dado is paneled, with a circle in each square. The side walls are

terra cotta, and the ceiling is marked off by deep mouldings. The staircase makes one turn and then is walled in.”

The 1887 picture and text reveal changes at the entryway. Originally there were double front doors with little squares of leaded glass, and on either side of the marble steps the porch had a long bench sheltered not only by the gabled door hood,

but also a pair of L-plan balustrades.

This inglenook effect, and the curious brackets, adventures-in-roofing and unpainted redwood interior relate 1900 Pierce to turn-of-the-century Craftsman houses by Julia Morgan, Bernard Maybeck and lesser architects. Basically a Queen Anne, but designed on the cutting edge of style for 1887, it draws these new elements

to its bosom with flair and a good feeling for continuity. 1900 is complex, but not too busy for its own good.

*This article originally appeared in November 1986 during the New Fillmore’s inaugural year and is included in Gables and Fables: A Portrait of San Francisco’s Pacific Heights by Anne and Arthur Bloomfield.*



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► TELEPHONE KING | FROM PAGE 11

Smith had a short-lived partnership with architect Eugene Freeman, who was the designer of the famous Dunsmuir House in Oakland. With Freeman, Smith designed San Francisco's Ellinwood Mansion at Divisadero and Pacific in 1893.

Farther afield, he designed the Hawthorns, the lovely summer home of Judge Allen, in Portola Valley. Smith also designed the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop, Hawaii's first banker, the museum was built as a memorial to Bishop's wife, Princess Bernice Pauahi, the last of the royal Kamehameha line. It is unclear how Smith secured this exotic commission, but the building is distinctly Richardsonian Romanesque after the noted 19th century Boston architect, Henry Hobson Richardson. Smith surely would have known Richardson's work from his early years in Boston.

While Smith achieved many accomplishments, being a good husband does not appear to be one of them. In 1902, a number of gossip newspaper articles detailed the end of Smith's marriage to Maud A. Smith. A *Chronicle* headline screamed: "Says her Husband has a Bad Temper: Architect W. F. Smith's Wife Asks a Divorce for Cruelty." At about this time, Smith's work seems to have trailed off and there are fewer references to his commissions.

By the early 1890s, John Sabin had sold the Pierce Street house Smith designed for him and moved to a large house at California and Divisadero designed by John C. Pelton. In 1901, Sabin accepted a posi-



SHAYNE WATSON

*Except for minor details, 1900 Pierce looks the same today as when it was built in 1887.*

tion with the Chicago Bell Telephone Co., but his time in Chicago was short. Sabin returned to San Francisco and died in October 1902 at the age of 55.

For a brief time at the turn of the century, 1900 Pierce was occupied by Hannah Liebes. In 1891, Mrs. Liebes had famously left her fur trader husband, Herman Liebes, and their Van Ness Avenue mansion

and secretly decamped to the Palace Hotel with her daughters. They then moved to 1900 Pierce.

By 1905, Adam Andrew, president of the Shasta Water Co. and a member of the state Railroad Commission, had purchased the house. Andrew married Ethel Middleton in 1909 after the death of his first wife.

The Andrews lived in the Pierce Street house into the 1940s.

In the 1950s, the house became the headquarters of the Visiting Nurses Association. In 1973, it housed the San Francisco Residential Job Corps, and by 1975 it was the Multi-Culture Institute. In more recent years, the house has been returned to residential use.

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NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Days	Date	Asking	Sale
3941 Sacramento St	4	2	2	1,780	110	12/7/2016	2,495,000	2,025,000
2810 Laguna St	2	2	1	1,708	20	12/2/2016	1,995,000	2,250,000
2319 Washington St	4	3	2	3,000	8	12/6/2016	3,895,000	3,905,000
1917 Vallejo St	6	4	2	3,917	33	11/18/2016	5,750,000	5,400,000
2500 Green St	6	5	4	5,455	70	11/23/2016	7,500,000	7,300,000
2476 Broadway	6	7	5	9,578	168	12/2/2016	22,000,000	18,100,000

Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts

2544 Washington St	0	1	0	n/a	14	12/9/2016	519,000	516,000
2999 California St #34	1	1	0	n/a	69	12/9/2016	588,000	605,000
1817 California St #3M	1	1	1	n/a	40	11/30/2016	689,000	649,000
1450 Post St #916	2	2	1	1,094	43	12/5/2016	728,000	703,000
2887 Bush St #4	1	1	1	608	35	12/9/2016	785,000	768,000
2029 Pierce St #201	1	1	1	620	19	12/9/2016	699,000	813,000
1855 Sacramento St #5	1	1	1	1,164	45	11/18/2016	899,000	900,000
2295 Vallejo St #308	1	1	1	n/a	19	12/13/2016	880,000	930,000
112 Arguello Blvd #6	2	1	1	820	26	11/18/2016	879,000	939,000
2655 Bush St #225	2	2	1	899	102	11/16/2016	1,139,000	1,025,000
1650 Broadway #105	1	1	1	819	1	11/25/2016	1,095,000	1,095,000
1650 Broadway #406	1	2	1	887	166	12/9/2016	1,225,000	1,160,000
2400 Webster St #6	2	1	1	1,350	39	12/7/2016	1,295,000	1,287,000
2655 Bush St #414	2	2	1	971	50	11/16/2016	1,335,560	1,335,560
1650 Broadway #405	1	1	1	816	1	11/25/2016	1,350,000	1,350,000
2851 Clay St	2	2	1	1,405	10	11/18/2016	1,700,000	1,495,000
2990 Clay St #3	2	2	1	n/a	59	11/17/2016	1,595,000	1,550,000
2400 Steiner St #2	1	1	1	1,268	9	11/28/2016	1,425,000	1,560,000
2144 Broderick St	2	2	1	1,654	6	12/7/2016	1,625,000	1,700,000
1943 Lyon St	3	2	1	1,705	12	11/23/2016	1,550,000	1,900,000
2326 California St	4	3	2	1,925	32	12/2/2016	1,995,000	2,000,000
3328 Washington St	3	2	1	2,183	25	12/2/2016	2,049,000	2,049,000
3439 Sacramento St #402	3	2	2	1,933	40	12/5/2016	2,498,000	2,245,750
2003 Broadway	4	3	1	2,960	53	12/15/2016	2,450,000	2,300,000
2459 Buchanan St	3	2	2	n/a	152	12/7/2016	2,595,000	2,395,000
2001 Sacramento St #7	3	3	1	1,985	10	11/18/2016	1,995,000	2,400,000
2326 Union St	3	1	2	2,320	146	11/17/2016	2,495,000	2,495,000
2717 Union St	2	1	1	1,510	12	11/18/2016	1,995,000	2,500,000
1650 Broadway #501	3	2	1	1,394	33	12/12/2016	2,550,000	2,550,000
1960 Vallejo St #2	3	3	1	2,286	62	11/30/2016	2,800,000	2,850,000



Big modernized home nets a big price

A large Pacific Heights mansion commanded the second highest price paid for a single-family home in San Francisco sold in 2016, again demonstrating the appeal of modern, renovated properties.

In early December, a six-bedroom, seven-bathroom home at 2476 Broadway sold for \$18.1 million after having been listed nearly six months earlier. The property boasts a long list of luxury amenities, including an elevator, a spacious wine cellar, a gym, a game room and a roof deck for taking in prime views of the bay (above). At more than 9,500 square feet, it was also the second largest home sale by size in the city in 2016, fetching almost \$1,900 per square foot.

The only larger home sold in the city this year was 3800 Washington Street, a 20,000-square-foot French Chateau replica in Presidio Heights known as Le Petit Trianon. Despite being more than twice the size of the home on Broadway, that property sold for about \$15.8 million when it finally found a buyer in July.

One big difference between these two expansive and expensive homes was the condition they were in when offered for sale. While the Presidio Heights mansion had fallen into a major state of disrepair, 2476 Broadway had undergone a complete renovation.

— 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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By SARAH SUTRO

I HAVE BEEN renting out my Victorian house near Fillmore in the summer for several years now. I often rent to the San Francisco Opera, which brings in singing stars and their families for five or six weeks. More recently, I have rented with Airbnb.

I went to a hearing in the fall at City Hall to encourage the supervisors not to curtail home sharing. For hours, people who rent only a room or their entire primary residence short-term presented their cases.

I felt like I was listening to mom and pop operations doing their best to make their finances work. Their entrepreneurship spoke volumes about how inventive and flexible people can be. But it broke my heart to hear some of the stories. One woman was trying to make it in this city as an artist while raising her children, and home sharing allowed her to do both. Another woman cried, worried she would lose this vital source of income. For some, home sharing was a safety net when they were out of work.

More than a few people described how delightful it is to host visitors to San Francisco and how it has enriched their lives. I like to identify with the adventurous families who have come from all over the world to rent a family home and experience another culture.

I like to picture these guests from China, France, Australia and beyond following



Imagine the difference between staying on the wharf or in a home in the neighborhood.

## Sharing the Neighborhood

The joys of trading places with visitors from abroad

my routine in the morning: Peet's coffee, a walk to Walgreens, window shopping at Fillmore's boutiques, lunch at Jane, and on occasion dinner at one of my favorites, SPQR or the Elite Cafe.

I like that the visitors take their children up to Alta Plaza Park, where I raised my three children. I tell them about the Sundance Kabuki's eight screens and our very own Clay Theater, just around the corner. They seem to discover Smitten on their own.

Often the kids don't speak English, but I love the look of wonder and excitement on their faces — to be at my house, to be in my city, and to feel a little bit of what it is to be American.

I wish I had studied economics. I can only think that this home sharing benefits everybody. The city must love the 15 percent tax paid into the general fund. As for my part, home sharing affords me the privilege of hiring local contractors to do much-needed repairs. I give extra work to

house cleaners and treat myself to some travel. Meanwhile my guests are spreading yen, euros, pesos and pounds up and down Fillmore Street.

San Francisco is unique, with an intelligent, innovative, often liberal population. This is why so many tourists come visit, hoping to immerse themselves in the unique California experience. Some prefer hotels, but others prefer a family home for many reasons — and getting to know a neighborhood such as the Fillmore is among them. I suspect that no matter where people stay, just experiencing San Francisco brings droves of other tourists, new and returning. Imagine the difference between staying in a motel room on Fisherman's Wharf and a Victorian flat in our neighborhood.

Thank God I'm 70. *Did I just say that?* I love the flexibility of my life and the possibilities that home sharing provides. For the past decade, I have taught watercolor classes on cruises for up to six weeks at a stretch. Last year I was on a cruise to China, getting to visit Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. As it happens, a family from China was then staying at my house. I was thinking about the balance of debt. Were they buying new clothes on Fillmore while I was having two wool jackets made in Shanghai? Were they loving the view from Alta Plaza or the top of the Fillmore hill while I was taking in the view from the Great Wall?

Home sharing helps me feel connected to the world.

## These Are Just Some of the Homes Sold by Hill & Co. Agents in 2016...



**Russian Hill**  
Sold by Annie Williams  
Listed at \$8,900,000



**Cow Hollow**  
Sold by Annie Williams  
Listed at \$7,500,000



**Nob Hill**  
Sold by Joan Gordon & David Cohen  
Listed at \$7,200,000



**Mission Dolores**  
Sold by John Woodruff & Marcus Miller  
Listed at \$6,490,000



**Presidio Heights**  
Sold by Joan Gordon & David Cohen  
Listed at \$5,800,000



**Pacific Heights**  
Sold by Marilyn Hayes  
Listed at \$4,995,000



**Lake Street**  
Sold by Stephanie Ahlberg  
Listed at \$4,750,000



**Pacific Heights**  
Sold by Donna Cooper  
Listed at \$4,700,000

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All of us at Hill & Co. Real Estate want to wish you

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2425 California 415-885-3313  
**Mureta's Antiques**  
2418 Fillmore 415-922-5652  
**Narumi Japanese Antiques**  
1902 Fillmore 415-346-8629  
**Walter Adams Framing**  
2019B Fillmore 415-922-6811

#### CLOTHING & SHOES

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1850 Fillmore 415-567-5953  
**Athleta**  
2226 Fillmore 415-345-8501  
**Brooklyn Circus**  
1521 Fillmore 415-359-1999  
**Cielo**  
2225 Fillmore 415-776-0641  
**Cotelac**  
1930 Fillmore 415-351-0200  
**Curve**  
2360 Fillmore 415-885-4200  
**De Novo**  
2413 California 415-563-5937  
**Eileen Fisher**  
2216 Fillmore 415-346-2133  
**Elizabeth Charles**  
2056 Fillmore 415-440-2100  
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1913 Fillmore 415-409-6197  
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2416 Fillmore 415-872-9690  
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2047 Fillmore 415-346-3793  
**Heidi Says**  
2426 Fillmore 415-749-0655  
**Intermix**  
2223 Fillmore 415-931-2203  
**James Perse**  
2028 Fillmore 415-885 0300  
**Jarbo**  
2408 Fillmore 877-457-2464  
**Jigsaw**  
2121 Fillmore 415-931-5520  
**Joie**  
2116 Fillmore 415-400-0367  
**The Kooples**  
2241 Fillmore 415-440-4210  
**Lexe**  
2291 Pine 415-923-8908  
**Lilith**  
2029 Fillmore 415-913-7600  
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1903 Fillmore 415-589-7288  
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2035 Fillmore 415-931-5620  
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2300 Fillmore 415-292-6199  
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2226 Bush 415-359-9790  
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2295 Bush 415-345-8111  
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