

THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ APRIL 2017



DICKIE SPRITZER

NOBODY DOESN'T LIKE SARALEE

A neighborhood cat with a pink heart around her neck proclaiming her name was Saralee became a local celebrity a few years ago. She lived her early life mostly under the house and on the streets, and became a mother many times over while she was still merely a kitten herself. As her babies found homes, she grew up and became related to many people in the neighborhood. When another orphaned kitten adopted local author Thomas McNamee, he set about doing research. The result is his latest book, *The Inner Life of Cats*.

Women's Clinic Facing Budget Cuts

'Freakout stage' as clients fear loss of medical care

FEDERAL THREATS to cut funding for health care — particularly family planning services for women — have already hit a target close to home.

The Women's Community Clinic, at 1833 Fillmore Street, recently lost a \$250,000 federal grant it had depended on for years and is now facing the biggest budget shortfall in its 18-year history.

At the same time, the financial squeeze has increased the demand for services.

"Women are streaming into the clinic for birth control and other types of care because they genuinely fear they soon won't be able to get it," said Tara Medve, development and communications director of the clinic. "People are in the freakout stage. There's been a huge rise in fear and anxiety."

The clinic is scrambling to find alternative funding sources and has launched an intensive fundraising campaign that runs through the middle of the month.

"We are doing everything we can to reassure and support our clients during this scary and uncertain time," said Carlina Hansen, the clinic's executive director.



The clinic at 1833 Fillmore.

The Fillmore clinic provides primary medical care and mental health care to low-income women and girls 12 and older. It currently serves about 5,000 clients each year, 90 percent of whom earn \$25,000 or less. In addition to providing medical services, the clinic also runs a number of community health programs.

The administration's proposed targets — cuts to the Affordable Care Act, Medi-Cal and especially to Title X — pose additional threats to the clinic's ability to function. If an initiative to eliminate Title X funds takes effect, the clinic stands to lose an additional \$150,000 from its operating budget, Hansen said.

The Women's Community Clinic has launched an emergency campaign to raise \$250,000 from individuals, foundations and corporate sponsors by April 14. For more information, visit the website at womenscommunityclinic.org.



Classical gems by Haydn and Bach, evocative romantic favorites, plus a trio of works commissioned for Black Cedar, all with distinct instrumentation on flute, cello, and guitar.

Sunday April 9th - 7:30 p.m.
SF Swedenborgian Church 2107 Lyon Street San Francisco
Tickets \$20 at BrownPaperTickets or at the door. More info at sfswedenborgian.org/concerts



David Johnson’s photograph of the Melrose Record Shop in 1947 — or is it?

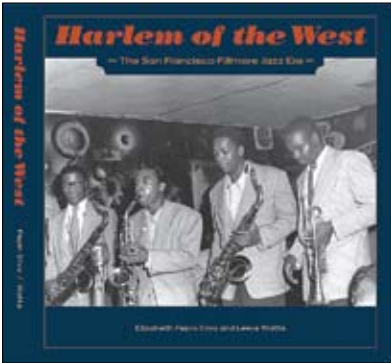
‘Harlem of the West’ Is Back

Fillmore’s jazz era celebrated in a second edition

AFTER BEING out of print for more than seven years, a new and expanded second edition of *Harlem of the West* — along with a companion website and exhibition — will be unveiled at the end of the month.

The photo and history book celebrating Fillmore’s jazz era in the 1940s and ’50s was originally published by Chronicle Books in 2006 and heralded as a milestone that captured a pivotal moment in neighborhood history. It has been out of print since 2010, despite continuing demand. Eventually authors Elizabeth Pepin Silva and Lewis Watts decided to launch the Harlem of the West Project to update and expand the book. They added newly discovered photographs and memorabilia, as well as additional interviews with those who lived and played in the Fillmore during its glory days.

The new book has a larger format and contains nearly 100 more pages and 200



The new edition has 100 more pages.

rare images, many of them previously unpublished. It includes new first-hand accounts from musicians, nightclub patrons and former residents of the Fillmore when it was the city’s premier black neighborhood.

Among the new discoveries: A wide-

ly published photograph of the Melrose Record Shop at 1226 Fillmore — where author Maya Angelou worked as a youngster when she was known as Marguerite Johnson — was instead a photograph of Rhythm Records at 1980 Sutter, also owned by David Rosenbaum, next door to the Homestead Ravioli Factory at 1970 Sutter and just down the block from Jack’s Tavern.

Harlem of the West: The San Francisco Fillmore Jazz Era will be released on April 29 at a celebration from 3 to 7 p.m. at the African American Art & Culture Complex at 762 Fulton. An exhibition continues there through June 1 — and at harlemofthewestsf.com.

THE NEW FILLMORE

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Connecting the neighborhood

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



newfillmore.com | for updates and archives



St Mark's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

APRIL 9-15
HOLY WEEK
PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 9 - 9:00AM & 11:00AM
Procession around the Square

MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 13 - 7:00PM
Stripping of the Altar and Holy Communion

GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 14 - 12:00PM & 7:00PM
Stations of the Cross (12PM)
The Passion According to St. John (7PM)

EASTER VIGIL
APRIL 15 - 8:00PM
Service of Light, Scripture Readings, and Holy Communion - Baptism and Affirmation of Baptism

APRIL 16
EASTER SUNDAY
9:00AM
EASTER WORSHIP
Holy Communion and Children's Time

10:15AM
EASTER EGG HUNT
Easter Egg Hunt for All Children on the Square

10:30AM
EASTER MUSIC
J.S. Bach's Christ lag in Todes Banden

11:00AM
EASTER WORSHIP
Choral Eucharist Worship Service

Childcare and Parking will be available for all Holy Week and Easter Services

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Holy Week at Calvary

PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 9 AT 10 AM

MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 13 AT 7 PM

GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 14 AT 12 NOON

EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 16 AT 7 AM, 9 AM & 11 AM

CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WWW.CALPRES.ORG

Cherry Blossom Festival turns 50

Again this spring and for the 50th year, the **CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL** returns to Japantown. It's the big event of the year on the J-town calendar, drawing more than 200,000 people to celebrate Japanese culture in one of only three Japantowns in the U.S.

It takes place over two weekends — Saturday and Sunday, April 8-9 and 15-16 — on Post Street between Fillmore and Laguna. The grand finale is the parade on Sunday, April 16, from City Hall to Japantown.

■ **WE ALL SCREAM:** The new artisan ice cream makers coming to the northwest corner of Fillmore and Sacramento, **SALT & STRAW**, are almost ready to open here and elsewhere in the city as they import their special tastes from Portland.

And just in time: **YOPPI**, the frozen yogurt spot across the street at 2208 Fillmore, has closed and been papered over. Keep an eye out for designer eyeglasses, said to be coming next.

■ **IS YOU IS?** Up the block at Fillmore and Jackson, work on the long running is-you-is or is-you-ain't outlet for **BLUE BOTTLE COFFEE** has now resumed and the porta-potty has returned to the sidewalk. The corporate minders remain silent on what's going on or when it will open, speaking only through the unsuccessfully disemboweled poet whose mysterious words on the window counsel patience.

■ **NOT SO FAST:** The search for a buyer — and a visionary — to breathe new life into the **FILLMORE HERITAGE CENTER** has been extended. Proposals are now due by 4 p.m. on April 24.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



Fillmore Beach is back

On the spring solstice, the sun began its return, as it does every year, to the neighborhood gathering spot on the north side of Peet's at Fillmore and Sacramento.

New Shell Station Won't Have a Garage After All

As THE demolition, excavation and reconstruction of the Shell gas station on the corner of California and Steiner proceeds, it has become apparent it will no longer include a garage when the station reopens this summer with more gas pumps and a Loop convenience store.

Neighbors rallied to save the garage, which had been on the corner for decades, when new owners of the station proposed

to replace it with twice as many gas pumps and a massive grab-and-go store offering soda, snacks and a sushi bar.

Before giving its go-ahead, the Planning Commission reduced the number of additional gas pumps, limited the size of the store and directed the owners to rebuild the garage.

But soon after its renovation plans were approved in June 2015, Au Energy evicted

the mechanics who leased the garage and shut it down. It remained empty until demolition began earlier this year.

As construction began, the general counsel for the company said "I don't know" whether a garage would be included. He said the project "turned into a full rebuild" and was expected to take at least five months, with the station reopening "at the end of May at the earliest."

ST. DOMINIC'S CATHOLIC CHURCH



St. Dominic's warmly invites you to celebrate Lent in our beautiful church...

Weekday Masses:

6:30 & 8:00 am; 5:30 pm

Morning Prayer: 7:15 am (weekdays); 8:00 am (Saturday)

Evening Prayer: 5:00 pm (daily)

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

First Fridays: 2:00 & 9:00 pm (Sign-up required)

Sunday Masses:

Saturday evening: 5:30 pm (Vigil), 7:30 am (Quiet), 9:30 am (Family), 11:30 am (Solemn)

1:30 pm (St. Jude Pilgrim Mass in Spanish)

5:30 pm (Contemporary music)

9:00 pm (Candlelight)

LENT 2017

Stations of the Cross

every Friday in Lent at 12:15 pm & 7:30 pm

HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday, April 9

5:30 pm Vigil Mass (Saturday, April 8)

7:30 am Quiet Mass

9:15 am Family Mass, procession with donkey, meet at the Lourdes Grotto

11:30 am Solemn Choral Mass

1:30 pm St. Jude Pilgrim Mass in Spanish

5:30 pm Mass with Contemporary music

9:00 pm Mass by candlelight

THE SACRED TRIDUUM

Holy Thursday, April 13

7:30 am Tenebrae

7:30 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday, April 14

7:30 am Tenebrae

12:00 pm Seven Last Words of Christ

1:45 pm The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord (A simple version with read Passion Gospel)

3:00 - 4:30 pm Confessions

5:00 pm Stations of the Cross

(especially suited for Families/led by Youth Ministry)

7:30 pm The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord (A solemn version with chanted Passion Gospel)

Holy Saturday, April 15

8:00 am Tenebrae; 8:00 pm The Easter Vigil

No confessions this day

Easter Sunday, April 16

7:30 am Mass with Easter Hymns

9:30 am Family Mass

11:30 am Solemn Choral Mass

1:30 pm St. Jude Pilgrim Mass in Spanish

5:30 pm Mass with Contemporary music

No Mass at 9:00 pm today. No confessions this day.



Overture Workshop for Adults:

All Together Now



Join us for a chance to Sing with the San Francisco Opera Chorus under the baton of Chorus Director Ian Robertson!

In this interactive workshop, you will join a rehearsal of upcoming repertoire and learn about the essential role the chorus plays in opera performances.



Learn how many different voices—including your own!—can unite to create one dramatic force.

DATE & TIME

Tuesday, April 4, 2017
7-9pm

LOCATION

Wilsey Center for Opera
War Memorial Veterans Building
401 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

COST

\$35 per person
(discounts available)

Tickets: sfopera.com/overture

or call 415-864-3330

Free Programs at the Jewish Community Library

Why Jews Love the Moon Presented by Rabbi Sydney Mintz

Thursday, April 6, 7:00 p.m.
Rabbi Sydney Mintz of Congregation Emanu-El will explore the ancient lunar-Jewish connection that began in antiquity and continues today.



An Afternoon with Naomi Newman and Characters She Has Created

Sunday, April 9, 1:30 p.m.
Acclaimed actress and Traveling Jewish Theatre co-founder Naomi Newman will perform monologues featuring characters that have populated her stage work over the decades.

Michael Chabon on Moonglow In Conversation with Dan Schifrin

Sunday, May 21, 3:00 p.m.
Author Michael Chabon will discuss his most recent novel, *Moonglow*, this year's One Bay One Book selection.
RSVP to 415.567.3327 x703 is requested.



We Lend Haggadot

Passover is coming April 10.
Contact the Library to borrow *haggadot* free of charge!

Jewish Community Library

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CRIME WATCH

Cocaine Sales

Eddy and Van Ness

February 11, 6:45 p.m.

Officers were working in plainclothes when they recognized an individual from prior arrests. There was a stay-away order in force, prohibiting the man from being in the area. While they observed, two males approached him separately within four minutes. The suspect accepted cash from one man, then handed him a baggie containing an off-white substance. The procedure was repeated with the second man. The officers then detained the suspect, placing him under arrest for narcotics sales; the two customers were not detained. The suspect was transported to Northern Station for further investigation.

Outstanding Warrant,

Possession of Burglary Tools

Laguna and Filbert

February 12, 8:48 p.m.

Officers on patrol were stopped at Laguna and Greenwich when they saw a man on a black bicycle ride diagonally across the intersection. The man then rode on the sidewalk in violation of the civil code. He was unable to provide the officers with identification. A computer check of his name and date of birth revealed an outstanding arrest warrant for burglary, with bail set at \$100,000. Officers placed him in handcuffs and arrested him.

At Northern Station, officers searched the man's property and found a wallet, a screwdriver and four keys that looked like mailbox keys. They also located wire cutters, a hammer, a putty knife, pliers and a rock wrapped and tied off with a strip of yellow caution tape. The man had a history of burglary arrests. He was transported to county jail, where he was booked.

Failure to Register as a Sex Offender

Van Ness and Chestnut

February 12, 9:33 p.m.

Officers received a call about a man who was holding a knife to a woman's face. The 911 caller told police dispatch the man had just left the scene on the 47-Van Ness bus. Officers located the bus and stopped it at Van Ness and Pacific. From a witness's description, they found the suspect among the passengers; he had a small pocketknife clenched in his right hand. Officers ordered him to exit the bus, but he refused. They then placed handcuffs on the suspect and escorted him off the bus.

The officers attempted to interview the woman who had been threatened, but she declined, saying she did not want to press charges. The officers then did a computer check on the man and discovered he was a sex offender who had failed to register. They transported him to county jail for booking.

Loaded Firearm in a Vehicle

Post and Divisadero

March 6, 10:51 p.m.

Officers saw a vehicle with expired registration. A records check proved it had been expired for so long that the officers had the authority to tow the car.

Additional officers responded and asked the four occupants to exit the vehicle. Police saw a loaded firearm tucked into the waistband of one of the passengers. They seized the semi-automatic pistol and placed the man under arrest; a criminal history check revealed he had prior arrests for carrying loaded firearms. He was booked at county jail for multiple firearm-related charges.

Street Robbery

Bush and Baker

March 7, 9:45 p.m.

A man was on the sidewalk talking on his cell phone when three men approached him. One of them lifted up his hoodie, displaying a silver semi-automatic handgun in his waistband. He held the handle of the firearm in a threatening manner while the other two took the pedestrian's cell phone. After searching for other valuables, they fled on foot.

Officers responded but could not locate the suspects, nor were they able to track the stolen phone. The suspect carrying the gun was described as a black male aged between 20 and 24 years old; about 5 feet 9 inches tall, and weighing 160 pounds. The man who was robbed was unable to accurately describe the other two suspects, but said they were males of a similar age. The investigation into this incident is ongoing.

Discharging a Firearm Within City Limits

Baker and Bush

March 10, 4:30 a.m.

Area residents heard gunshots in the early morning hours and called 911. Responding officers located five bullet casings at the scene, but did not find anyone who had been injured, nor evidence of property damage. No one was able to provide a description of the shooter to the police.

Assault on a Muni Bus

Geary and 20th

March 16, 4:05 p.m.

A Muni driver stopped the bus and called the police when an agitated male passenger assaulted two passengers without any apparent provocation. When officers arrived, the man refused to get off the bus. He resisted while the police struggled with him, but was eventually detained and handcuffed.

The two passengers left the scene without pressing criminal charges. The suspect was cited for resisting arrest, then transported to the hospital where he was given a mental health evaluation.

VALUE YOUR BUILDING.

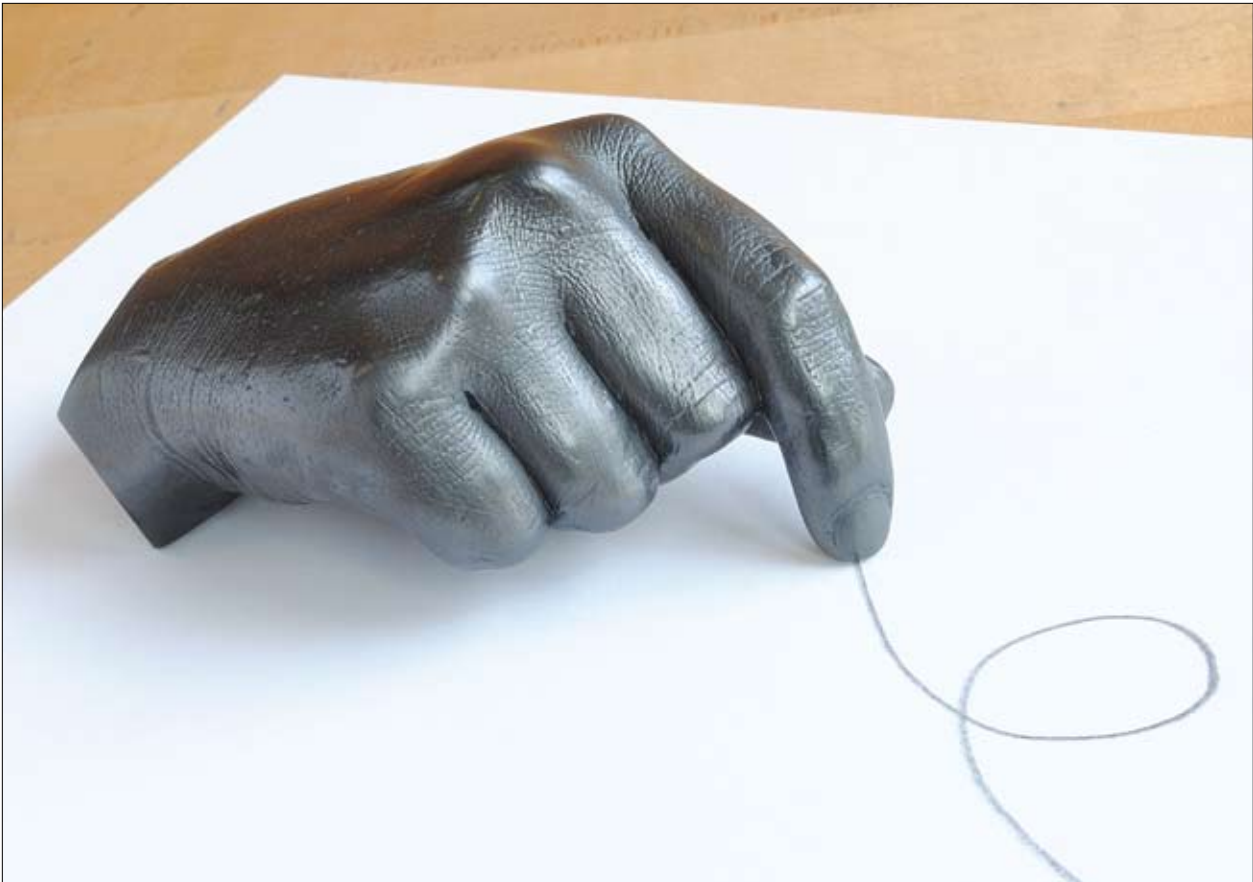
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By His Own Hand

Agelio Batle and his family of artists make sculptures that write



Agelio Batle's graphite hand, available at Hi Ho Silver at 1904 Fillmore.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JON BATLE

By Claire Carlevaro

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, I saw a piece of artwork by Agelio Batle at the Hayes Valley gallery owned by the visionary Federico de Vera. I bought the wall sculpture, then went in search of the artist.

Thus began my journey with a man whose creativity is born in spirituality and nurtured by skill: a true seeker, an explorer and a remarkable inspiration. Nature and the human figure are his inspirations. He delights in discovering the potential of unused materials, often castoffs: found photos, plastic milk cartons, discarded reference books.

In addition to his steady creation of unique works,

Batle has invented a form of graphite artistry available in many museums and shops, including Hi Ho Silver at 1904 Fillmore Street.

As he began experimenting with graphite in the late 1990s, Batle posed a query: "What if I were to cast a life-size version of my fist? Then a pencil could mimic a hand, and a hand could act as a pencil."

His idea was to transform a conceptual art project into a design that could be replicated and shared. With it, he launched a successful cottage industry and a multi-generational family business. In his San Francisco studio sprouted more artistic shoots: a graphite feather, a bird skull, a cicada, an alligator, a ginkgo, an octopus,

a nautilus, a lady slipper orchid — even a pea pod.

"When I work with graphite, I can't get it out of my head that the material is from the dead," says Batle. "This non-precious, lustrous mineral is the exhumed remains of plants and animals that perished a million years ago. A bit more pressure and it could have been diamonds — an irony in and of itself."

Among those involved in creating Batle's art are his wife Delia and his sons Noa and Nilo.

"From a very young age, my father told me: Anything worth doing is worth doing differently," says Nilo Batle, now a film student at the California Institute of the Arts. "At the time, I did not fully understand what he meant

TO PAGE 6 ►

FISHER FOUND

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"I work with graphite, a material from the dead. A bit more pressure and it could have been diamonds."

— AGELIO BATLE, who creates graphite sculptures that write



JOHN WILSON WHITE

► FROM PAGE 5

and only applied the philosophy to artistic pursuits. As I grow older, I try to apply this philosophy to all aspects of my life."

Batle's friend, the writer and teacher Jim LeCuyer, remembers him striving to combine a background in chemistry with his creative talents while developing the graphite compound used in his practical sculptures. The artistically formed pencils charmed buyers at craft shows, and soon Batle and his family had

established a network of sellers around the world.

"It's quite an achievement," says LeCuyer. "Agelio is proof that intelligent thought creatively applied can not only make a fine life for one person, but for all around him."

■

That includes his brother Gil Batle, now working as an artist after a troubled past that included multiple terms in prison.

"Agelio saved my life. Today I'm clean and sober and

actually making a decent living with my art and I owe it all to Agelio," says his brother. "He would hire me and house me, again and again and again. At times it was difficult and frustrating for me to express myself on this art path, but later it became clear when he told me: You can't just make art, Gil, you have to live it."

Claire Carlevaro, for many years the owner-director of the Art Exchange Gallery in San Francisco, is the author of the recently published book The Art of Agelio Batle.



Figuratively Speaking

Painters KIM FROHSIN and SANDY OSTRU in conversation with PAUL KARLSTROM, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART

Thursday, April 13, at 7 PM

APRIL EXHIBITION

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The Art of the Sneaker

Superga launches a new line of artistic designs

AS ATHLEISURE wear becomes ever more popular, it is sometimes difficult to stand out in a crowd.

But not for anyone at the March 18 kick-off event for new kicks at Superga, at 2326 Fillmore, which offered mimosas for the grown-ups, face painting for the kids and ice cream for all provided by the neighborhood creamery Smitten.

The main event was the man himself: Matthew Langille, who has designed a new line of artistic shoes for Superga and was creating special one-of-a-kind shoe designs on the spot.

“We got people into the store who were curious about Matthew,” says Superga owner Claudia Volpi.

Most — particularly the younger fashionplates — were particular about the designs they envisioned. They wanted shoes featuring dinosaurs, dragons and monsters with swords. Some with a tiger on one side and a leopard on the other — that sort of thing.

“It’s kind of nerve-racking to design on the spot because people are standing there watching you,” says Langille, who claims he was stumped only once: by a request for sneakers adorned with the sun setting behind the Golden Gate Bridge. “I live in New Jersey,” he shrugs.

Langille traces his artistic roots back to the tender age of 11, when he began blowing glass. That inspired him later to enroll in

art school, where he felt a bit adrift among his classmates who tended to dwell on dark themes: eating disorders, rape, depression.

“My work from the beginning was about making people smile,” he says, describing his style as having “Keith Haring/Dr. Seuss vibes.” He became more contented when he switched to drawing and printmaking. “All the cute girls were there,” he says. “My drawings weren’t considered good; they were unique — naïve, childlike and whimsical. I dove into that and embraced it.”

The art world embraced him, too. Langille’s first paying gig was an illustration for *Playgirl* magazine loosely titled “What Republicans and Democrats Are Like in Bed.” But he quickly developed a focus on fashion, with gigs at Marc Jacobs — “back in the day when women would do anything to wear the label” — as well as designing watches for Swatch’s artist collection. His portfolio eventually included more than 250 global brands.

“It was fabulous, but overwhelming,” he says.

Now married — his wife is one of the cute girls he met in art school — and with a young child, he picks his projects and operates his own design firm, specializing in graphics for various fashion houses.

Langille’s cheery designs are naturals for kids, adorning everything from backpacks and onesies to pint-size travel pillows. Grown-ups are attracted by their optimism, too.



“We didn’t want to do something that had been done before.”

— CLAUDIA VOLPI, owner of Superga, whose new sneakers feature spots of multi-colored confetti and doodles of jellyfish

His first foray into shoe design began just last year when a pack of paparazzi captured a pair of light-up shoes with linear stripes he’d customized for the Halloween costume of Blue Ivy, daughter of Beyonce and Jay Z.

His collaboration with Superga began soon after when a friend introduced him to Claudia Volpi, whose shop brought the Italian classic casual shoes to Fillmore.


“We didn’t want to do something that had been done before,” says Volpi, who enlisted Langille to create unique designs for her store, which operates independently


from the Superga brand licensed elsewhere in the U.S. by shoe magnate Steve Madden. The result: sneakers with cityscapes, doodles of jellyfish and spots of multi-colored confetti. Limited supplies are offered at the Superga shop on Fillmore, with prices ranging from \$30 for kid sizes to \$74 and up for women’s styles.

Langille and Volpi, pleased with their “cool collection,” both hope to continue their collaboration.

“My dream is that Superga Italy would manufacture a collection of my designs,” says Langille.

“Ah — my dream, too,” says Volpi.





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UPPER MARKET/SF

WEST PORTAL/SF

April 2017 NEW FILLMORE 7

BY MARK FANTINO

MY INTRODUCTION TO Carol Field came in the spring of 1997, in the weeks preceding the release party for her book *In Nonna's Kitchen*. An informal dinner was planned with dishes from the book, which was at least one part investigative journalism into the secrets and traditions of Italian grandmothers.

The dinner was to be held at Vivande Ristorante in Opera Plaza, and all of us cooks were to page through the house copy of *In Nonna's Kitchen* and select recipes that spoke to us. I chose Tuscan Chicken Liver Pâté (*Crostini di Fegatini*), which was a bewitching concoction of soft-cooked onions, capers, anchovies and chicken livers, all moistened with Vin Santo.

I remember testing a batch. My coworker peered into my pot, squinched up his face and declared: "That's everything I hate all mixed together in one pot." I disagreed. But livers, like anchovies, will forever fall firmly into two dividing camps: those who think it must be an acquired taste and those, like me, who insist it is instead a *required taste*. It remains one of my favorite ways to prepare chicken livers, though difficult to talk about without causing some kind of reaction.

What I liked best about Carol Field's books were the captivating stories she tied into traditions. Carol was one of those rare authors able to combine academic food writing with the occasional recipe. Those are the best kinds of cookbooks — ones that arm you with background knowledge and a much clearer picture than measuring ingredients and a succession of instructions.

Her best known work will forever be *The Italian Baker*, and rightly so. But my personal favorite is *Celebrating Italy*. In it, she composes an almanac of foods and traditions linked up with feast days sprinkled throughout the Italian calendar year that celebrate bizarre saints little known to the rest of the world.

The strangest she writes about is perhaps the blood orange festival in Ivrea — the locals' way of celebrating the town's freedom from tyranny, led by one brave young



Carol Field at home in her kitchen on Washington Street.

Celebrating Italy

In her books on Italian cooking, Carol Field tied tradition to captivating stories

girl, the Miller's Daughter. Ivrea, in the 12th century, practiced the cruel medieval "right" of *prima noctis*, which allowed the local lord to sleep with a bride on her wedding night. The Miller's Daughter concealed a knife in her robes and decapitated the unjust lord. The city went

into wild revolt, overcoming the guards of the castle, and the streets ran red with blood. The festival consists of the townsfolk pelting one another with blood oranges, which are not grown in Piedmont and must be imported from the south, in a re-enactment of the battle the townspeople waged on the soldiers with stones. In the end, the streets run red with blood orange juice. In the three days over which the festival takes place, the oranges are not used for food at all — only as artillery.

Another of Carol's recipes I have used as a secret weapon, particularly when I am truly stuck for an idea, is her Marinated Sole with Pine Nuts and Raisins (*Sfogi in Soar*), also from *Celebrating Italy*, which she ties in with the July 19 Feast of the Redeemer in Venice.

The recipe dates back to the late 1500s, and is a small part of a larger festival celebrating the end of a particular plague from that period. It is simplicity: very lightly cooked fillets of sole covered and marinated in cooked onions, toasted pine nuts, raisins and vinegar, served either cold or at room temperature.

The book paints a picture of Venetians bobbing up and down in their boats in the Adriatic lagoons snacking on this wonderful and refreshing sole dish. I have used it at picnics to great success as well as in the form of canapés. Every time they are a smash hit, and I have Carol to thank for that.

I didn't know Carol well. I am not sure she knew my name. But when you spend so much time reading what someone has written, and it speaks to you, inspires and fills you with enthusiasm, you feel you know the person. I found myself waving hello as she turned from her Washington Street home onto Fillmore and telling her how much I loved her chicken liver recipe or her marinated sole. My enthusiasm always caught her off guard, and I sometimes felt like I was embarrassing her, which was never my intention. I just wanted her to know I thought her work was great.

She always replied shyly and graciously, usually with just a soft-spoken "thank you."

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Carol and John Field

■ FAREWELL

The neighborhood loses two of its finest

The neighborhood lost two of its outstanding citizens and creative minds when architect John Field and author Carol Field died within a few days of each other.

John Field was noted for the homes he designed in Pacific Heights and especially for his enlightened approach to shopping centers, including the Stanford Shopping Center and downtown Santa Barbara. He was also a filmmaker and a photographer.

Carol Field was a prolific author who became an authority on Italian food, even though she acknowledged she was “the first Italian in my family tree.” After trips to Italy to make *The Urban Preserve*, John’s first architectural documentary, Carol made it her mission to learn everything about Italian baking. They later owned a home there, and many more books and a novel followed. Earlier she had been a co-owner of the beloved Minerva’s Owl bookstore on Union Street.

Carol suffered a stroke shortly after John died of cancer and never recovered.

“She couldn’t make it without him,” neighboring chef and cookbook author Joyce Goldstein told the *Chronicle*. “They were a blessed couple.”

“She seemed to listen as much with her eyebrows as her eyes,” wrote Corby Kummer in *The Atlantic*. He told the Fields he enjoyed visiting them “to observe at close range your utter companionability. You were and will remain my models for the complete and caring civility with which two people can treat each other.”

When Italy Came to the Neighborhood

By CAROL FIELD

NOW THAT THE new edition of my book *The Italian Baker* has been published, I have been reliving the adventure of working with bakers all over Italy. It started in San Francisco in 1981 when Il Fornaio, then a bakery featuring Italian breads and sweets, opened at the corner of Steiner and Union Streets. I couldn’t believe my good fortune: Italy had come to my neighborhood.

I found myself there almost every day, learning from bakers from Rome, Florence, Ferrara and elsewhere. They were wrestling with the problem of adapting American ingredients to their Italian recipes and I listened and was intrigued. I wrote an article for *Attenzione*, a magazine for lovers of Italy that, alas, no longer exists. It got such a strong response that it began to seem a logical next step to write a book.

When my family lived in Italy in the ’70s, our rental house in Liguria was no more than 30 miles from good friends who lived in Tuscany, but it could have been 200 for all the differences in the food and bread. In Liguria, we ate focaccia as our daily bread; in Tuscany, it was saltless loaves. In Liguria we ate pesto on pasta; in Tuscany pasta turned up rarely so we ate hearty soups instead. Easter in Liguria was celebrated with *torta pasqualina*, 33 phyllo-thin layers of dough enclosing a chard and egg filling. In Tuscany Easter week brought *pan di ramerino*, rosemary and raisin buns that reminded me of hot cross buns with an apricot glaze.

On the 12 or 13 trips to Italy it took to write *The Italian Baker*, I realized that I had plunged into an unknown world. With good introductions, there I was, an American woman turning up in Italian bakeries at 10 or 11 at night wanting to learn how bakers made the iconic breads of their cities and regions and countryside. Night after night, city after city, trip after trip, I was determined to get it down.

I, who relied on books, discovered there were no books on the subject. Bread making is an art handed down from father to son, so I ended up relying on the equivalent of oral history, with the additional challenge of learning a whole new vocabulary. I watched, wrote copious notes, asked question after question, saw massive amounts of flour whirl in a machine with water and yeast and salt. I wrote down numbers. I laid

Always there was the rhythm, from Washington Street to Italy and then back again.

breads on a table, set a tape measure in front of them, took their pictures and asked about ovens and temperatures and wondered how their big deck ovens would translate at home.

Back home on Washington Street, I tried to recreate the miracles of these breads and sweets, taking a formula for 20 kilos of flour and working to reduce it to two or three loaves. Motes of flour swirled in the kitchen air. I could make a starter, which Italians call a *biga*, with flour and water and a small amount of yeast, and it bubbled energetically in the space of hours. I made hundreds of loaves, trying out variations in proportions and types of flour. A typical day found me making several kinds of bread, documenting each stage and each variation and finally sitting down around 6 p.m., glassy eyed.

Every visit to a different region of Italy taught me more. I learned that authentic bread sticks were easy to shape, that durum flour made fantastic bread in Puglia and Sicily and that the cracker thin crusts of Roman pizza were very different than the Neapolitan version.

I came back to San Francisco having tasted breads made for Easter in various regions. In Friuli it was a Gubana, a brioche-like bread with raisins and nuts moistened with five different liqueurs. In Naples, Casatiello — a spicy cheese bread flecked with chunks of salami and freshly ground pepper. In Umbria, an intense cheese-flavored bread baked in terra cotta flowerpots.

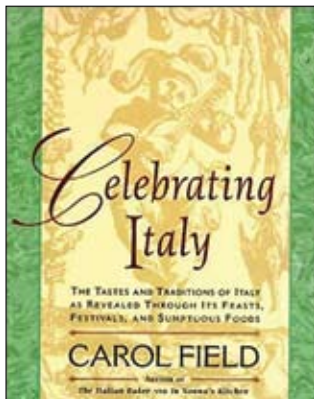
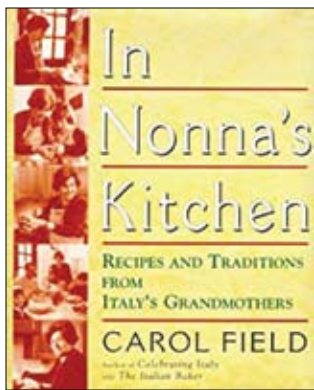
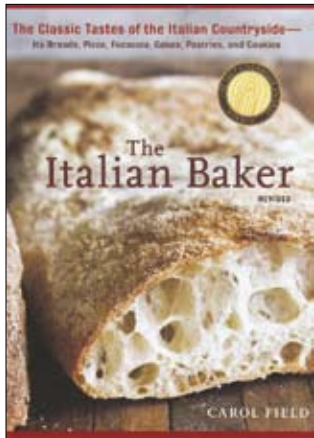
And always there was the rhythm, from Washington Street to Italy and then back again, each trip full of discoveries to be reproduced so that Americans could bake the iconic tastes of Italy. Friends knew to come by on baking days. Our next-door neighbors looked out the window and arrived in their pajamas.

Since all those trips and the first edition of *The Italian Baker*, which was published in 1985, more tastes of Italy have come to the neighborhood. Pizzeria Delfina makes pizza for ever-expanding crowds. SPQR makes outstanding “modern Italian” food and serves a gorgeous array of Italian wines. Mollie Stone’s sells cheeses imported from Italy and blood orange juice from Sicily.

In April 2010, the James Beard Society named my book one of 13 essential books on baking in America. But my publisher, HarperCollins, let the book go out of print a month or so later. So my agent got the rights back and Ten Speed Press in Berkeley bought them. The contract to print a new version was signed last fall. It was a big rush to get everything done — all new American weights in every recipe, color photographs, some revised and new recipes, including one for almost natural yeast, and new sources for ingredients and equipment.

It’s wonderful to relive an experience after so many years. Once again I can say: Italy has come to my neighborhood.

First published in the December 2011 edition of the New Fillmore.



Carol Field wrote many books on Italian food and became the authority on Italian baking.

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A Country Cat Moves to the Fillmore

An author, adopted by a kitten, finds he wants to know more

By THOMAS McNAMEE

MY NEW BOOK, *The Inner Life of Cats*, is subtitled *The Science and Secrets of Our Mysterious Feline Companions*. That tells you that it's a science book.

But it's a story book, too — the story of Augusta, who moved from Montana to the neighborhood with my wife, Elizabeth, and me in the summer of 1997. Augusta had just turned two years old, and was still a country kitty, but that did not mean that she was naïve or inexperienced. She had grown up not only with cows and horses and dogs and big, tough barn cats, but also with coyotes, rattlesnakes, eagles and bears. Her life had been a challenge from the start.

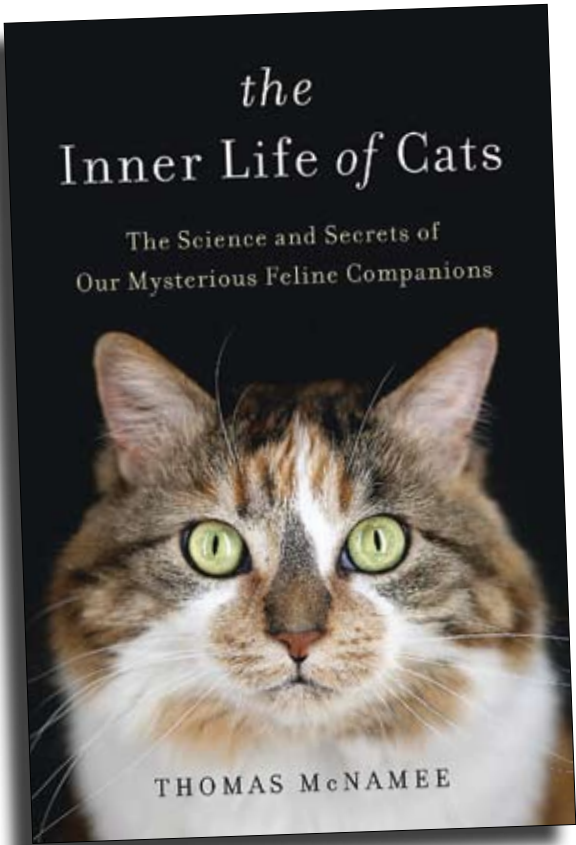
We didn't know much about raising a kitten, and we continued to make mistake after mistake — first in her kittenhood on the ranch and then here in San Francisco. We did learn things, but usually retrospectively. Augusta turned into a great cat, but mostly because she was born a great cat, and because we didn't do anything terribly wrong. When she died, at the age of 15, I was distraught. Finally we got another kitten, who had been beautifully nurtured by Pets Unlimited on Fillmore, which is now the San Francisco Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and by then we had learned the basics of proper cat care.

I read *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell and Know* by Alexandra Horowitz, an excellent book. And I did some research and saw there was no equivalent book about cats. So to expiate my guilt over Augusta, and maybe to help the many cat owners as lost as Elizabeth and I were, I decided to steal Alexandra's idea.

Several years of more research — 315 bibliography entries — and hard labor later, the book was published on March 28.

Given Augusta's early life in Montana, we thought surely the tiny yard behind our Victorian near Fillmore Street would be a piece of cake. Not so. Two big bad things were going on.

One: Our next-door neighbors were harboring a couple of near-feral cats who jumped in and out of their several broken windows. The female seemed to be having kittens rather often. The kittens, as they matured, traveled freely. The body of one of them lay squashed flat as a pancake in the middle of the street for two days until I picked it up. The basement of the house was full of rats, which were also having babies, which Augusta thought



A kitten finds a family

The little black kitten had never felt snow. The snow was fresh-fallen powder, and a single pair of tire tracks led from the gate to the ranch buildings. She called for her mother. She tried to climb out of the tire track, but the snow crumbled beneath her paws and she fell back in. She could not walk very well, but she could, so she did, crying for her mother with every step. Night was falling.

■ EXCERPT

She came to a building that smelled of food, and there were people inside, but also a dog barking. She continued along the tire track and came to a bridge. After a long moment of hesitation, feeling the booming of the water below, the kitten hurried forward. She followed the track to a wooden wall. She struggled along the wall through stiff grass and sharp-crusted snow, calling again for her mother. She found a little opening in the wall, just whisker-wide. The building smelled of strange things, but was not so terribly cold. She found a pile of rags, licked the snow from between her toes, and fell asleep.

The next morning, I saw a little black shape darting amid the unidentifiable junk in the barn. A few clumsy minutes of chase and I had captured the kitten, who quieted as I tucked her into my jacket. She was shivering.

I found the kitten's footprints, smaller than a dime, brightly visible in the snow all the way from the county road, more than a quarter of a mile. Someone — in the middle of the night, in a blizzard — had just dumped her there.

— from *The Inner Life of Cats*

was great. When she brought them into the kitchen as living gifts for us, however, we didn't think it was great at all. Late at night the air was filled with the shrieking and wailing of estrous female feral cats and their numerous male admirers.

Two: The numbers of these feral crooners were greatly enhanced, we came to learn, by another neighbor, who, in the name of mercy, put out heaps of cat food at night in several places within our block — in amounts sufficient not only to feed feline wanderers from well beyond the block, but also to attract rats and at least one family of raccoons.

Such generous feeding of feral cats was going on all over San Francisco, encouraged and even supported by the SPCA. It was trapping, doctoring and neutering feral cats, then returning them to where they'd been trapped, in the hope of ultimately reducing the feral cat population. Trap, Neuter and Return — TNR, as it's called — has become the preferred method of feral cat population control across much of the United States. In many cities, including this one, euthanasia is forbidden except in cases of mortal injury or illness.

In closely bounded colonies, it can work wonders. Cats had nearly wiped out California quail in Golden Gate Park; then trapping and moving the cats allowed the quail to recover. In other places, TNR cannot keep up with the continuous abandonment of kittens by people like our then-neighbors.

And life on the street can be grim, whether a cat is neutered or not. Half of all feral kittens don't make it to their first birthdays. Disease and injury are the rule. The idea that it is merciful just to neuter a cat and turn it loose in its old haunts continues to strike me as a delusion. Yet it is the prevailing philosophy among cat-loving institutions.



Author Thomas McNamee

Eventually Augusta developed hip dysplasia and was too weak to scale our fence, so she was spared physical danger except when we went back to Montana every summer. We kept close watch on her there, and the only thing that ever got her was cancer, at the age of 15.

After a long period of grieving, we adopted a magnificent kitten, Isabel, from the peerless Pets Unlimited on Fillmore Street, then surely one of the great pet hospitals and adoption centers in the country. Subsequently, Isabel has suffered a bad raccoon bite, has been trapped and returned by an SPCA volunteer — she has an embedded microchip — and does bring us a big live rat from time to time. But we still let her out to prowl the local back yards. I know the cat-loving institutions consider this a terrible idea. But Isabel doesn't kill birds, and I know how she loves her freedom, and that's the call we've made.

Moral life in the city is complicated.



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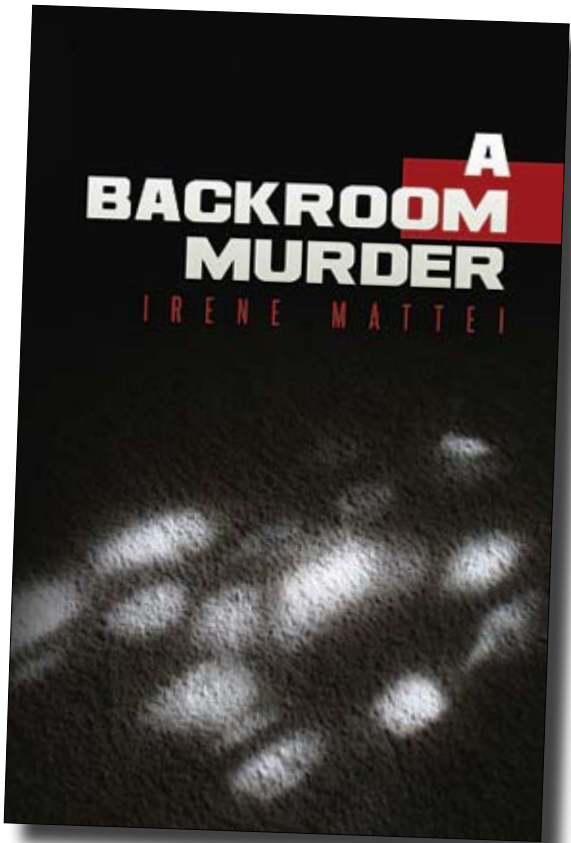
BY IRENE MATTEI

I GREW UP in New York and was living in Los Angeles when, after a car trip up the coast in 1961, I realized that San Francisco was where I wanted to be. I thought about it all the time and came to visit every chance I got. But it wasn't until 1976 that my husband and I, having abandoned hope for successful careers as actors, decided to make the move — a decision we never regretted.

That our neighborhood became the area around Fillmore Street had more to do with our golden retriever, Inda — and good luck — than any wise decision on our part. Just when it seemed impossible to find a landlord who would accept the three of us, by chance I saw a barely decipherable, handwritten sign in the window of a Victorian on Baker Street. When I phoned and asked if our dog would be acceptable, the person on the other end said yes. When I asked when I could see the flat, I was told to just go on in; the door was open.

It didn't matter that the building was in desperate need of a paint job or that the interior needed work that the landlord, it turned out, wouldn't do. Our dog was welcome and we spent the next 38 years congratulating ourselves on how smart we'd been to land in a place so perfect. Inda loved Alta Plaza Park. My husband enjoyed the homemade pies at the long-disappeared Millard's, a tiny eatery on the north side of the Clay Theatre. Browser Books was on the south side of the Clay back then. And I went to work at an electronics company located in the old China Basin Building.

It was when the electronics company went belly-up that I first starting thinking about writing a mystery novel. I've always enjoyed reading them, especially when I'm feeling depressed, but most of my favorite authors were dying off, and the kind of mysteries I like were becoming difficult to find. I decided that if no one else was going to write the kind of book I wanted to read, I'd have to do it myself. And the best part was that, unlike being an actor, I didn't need anybody else's permission to do it. There were no



It Happened in Hollywood

But a new murder mystery was written in the neighborhood

casting directors to worry about. And I could still use the skills I developed as an actor. Building a character and finding motivations are all part of the job — and writing the novel is like a giant improvisation where I could play all the parts.

It is an intensely liberating experience. It also turned

out to be more complicated than I'd expected.

Developing a structure for the novel was most time-consuming and difficult. Mysteries are genre fiction, but there are many choices within the genre. I wanted an amateur detective within a classic structure, while remaining contemporary in style. All the pieces had to be carefully calibrated to work together, especially in a book like mine where there are a lot of moving parts to track. Most important, I wanted the answer to “whodunnit” to remain hidden until the end — not easy if I was going to be fair to the readers and put out all the clues for them.

Fortunately, coming up with plots and characters was easier. While I had assumed that the most interesting stories would come from my experiences as an actress, I soon realized that most actors are not all that fascinating. The situations and people I had come across in temporary office jobs — some of which became permanent for a while — were a lot more complex and offered more to work with, starting with an office manager at an advertising agency I was looking forward to bumping off. However, gratification had to be delayed. She didn't fit into the first book, which is set in an electronics company. Spoiler alert: I'm all set to finish her off in the next one.

And although *A Backroom Murder* took much longer than I'd expected to finally get born, the time flew by. While the book was gestating, the old Fillmore became “new.” From a quiet street without even one clothing store other than the charity shops — and Broemmel's Pharmacy the closest thing to a beauty products emporium — it blossomed into the fashionable center of activity it is today.

I became a widow, gave up the flat my husband and I had enjoyed for so many years and moved closer to Fillmore — from a six-block walk to a convenient two blocks away. And I finished the book. It takes place back in Hollywood, but it couldn't have been written anywhere but this neighborhood.

A Backroom Murder is available online and at Books Inc. in Laurel Village.



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BY BRIDGET MALEY

THE IMPOSING temple-front church on the southeast corner of Divisadero and Clay was built for the Sixth Church of Christ Scientist congregation and designed by architect William H. Crim Jr. *Architect and Engineer* announced the project in its December 1921 issue, noting that “the edifice will cost \$100,000.”

Edifice is a good word for this bold, classically inspired church. The two-story fluted columns with Ionic capitals march along both the Clay and Divisadero facades. The Clay Street porch has a series of decorative wood-paneled entrance doors capped by arches. The pedimented roof originally sat over a simple entablature inscribed with the words “Sixth Church of Christ Scientist.” Today, it reads “Church of Christ,” with a smaller set of letters below declaring “Iglesia Ni Cristo,” indicating the current ecclesiastical occupant, a primarily Filipino congregation, which has maintained the building since the mid-1970s.

The *Chronicle* reported on January 3, 1914 that the Sixth Church of Christ Scientist had been formed. The article said “services will be held in the Majestic Hall, corner of Geary and Fillmore Street,” the building later to be known as the Fillmore Auditorium. The article also noted: “This church was organized to relieve the crowded condition of the First Church, which has been recently dedicated, but has been crowded to overflowing for some time.”

Almost eight years later, another *Chronicle* article about the congregation had a multi-tiered headline: “New



The classical Clay Street facade of the Sixth Church of Christ Scientist in the mid-1920s.

A Temple for the Christian Scientists

At Divisadero and Clay, an imposing classical church

Scientist Church Plans are Completed: Imposing Structure to be Located at Clay and Divisadero: To Relieve Congestion: Value of Nearby Properties Will be Much Increased.” The piece described the building as “reclassic, of the Ionic order, with imposing facades on both street frontages.” It also noted: “The Clay street facade will

feature a colonnade of eight columns surmounted by a pediment. Flanking this, on Divisadero Street, will be a pavilion treatment, simple and effective.”

The interior was explained as “cruciform in plan, developing into a dome ceiling supported on elliptical arches and pendentives. The lighting of the auditorium will be

from east and west and also from a large ceiling light at the apex of the dome, to which will be transmitted light from the clerestory.” The projecting clerestory that lights the auditorium is still visible from uphill on Divisadero Street.

The architect, William Crim, was a native of San Francisco. He graduated from the city’s Lick High School and subsequently attended the California School of Mechanical Arts.

After completing his studies, Crim was employed for a number of years by architects Percy and Hamilton, where his penchant for classical architecture may have been established.

Crim then worked for Willis Polk, another classically trained architect, before forming a partnership with Earl B. Scott. In 1910, Crim took over Scott’s interest in their business and practiced alone until his death in 1930.

Crim completed several other churches for Christian Scientist congregations, including the Second Christian Science Church at the southeast corner of Dolores and Cumberland. Facing Dolores Park, it is equally imposing, replicating a domed Roman temple with Tuscan columns. That building has been recently adapted into condominiums. Crim also designed the First Church of Christ Scientist Los Gatos. Prominently sited on Main Street, the Los Gatos structure also has a temple front.

One of Crim’s most interesting projects is a large warehouse for a sugar company. This building sits over the Carquinez Straight and is a highly visible landmark while crossing I-80’s Carquinez bridge.

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William Crim’s design for the Christian Scientists is now home to the Iglesia ni Cristo.

SHAYNE WATSON

The *Chronicle* noted of the complex in September 1917: “Millions of dollars are being invested in construction of groups of buildings over the water at Crocker by the California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company.” The lighted C & H sign is still visible at night when driving across the bridge.

A beloved San Francisco institution, the Tadich Grill, at 240 California Street, is another of Crim’s landmark designs. Crim also executed a number of school projects in Northern California, including the Park Presidio School and Noe Valley’s James Lick Middle School, which was being designed by his office at the time of his death.

Crim completed numerous residential projects in San Francisco, Alameda, Piedmont, San Mateo and other enclaves in Northern California. A par-

ticularly excellent example is the house he designed for Harry R. Williar at 2668 Vallejo, near Divisadero. An *Architect and Engineer* article published in January 1919 detailed several of these projects, noting: “Perhaps the greatest asset an architect in his ascendancy can have is the continued goodwill of his clients, and this has invariably been the case with Mr. Crim.”

In the fall of 1902, Crim married Juanita Castillar and they had one son, also named William.

At the time of his death, Crim’s estate was valued at a fairly considerable sum for the day and also included a number of real estate holdings, which appear to be of his own development.

While not as well known as some of his contemporaries, Crim’s designs, especially his work for the Christian Scientists, provide exemplary examples of reclassicist architecture.



Crim also designed the home of Tadich Grill at 240 California Street.

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NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Days	Date	Asking	Sale
2456 Bush St	2	1	2	n/a	61	3/10/2017	1,300,000	1,260,000
2407 Sacramento St	3	2	4	2,149	8	3/8/2017	2,695,000	3,200,000
2637 Pierce St	5	3	0	3,961	14	3/3/2017	4,250,000	4,100,000
2070 Pine St	5	3	4	4,400	53	3/15/2017	4,995,000	4,295,000
2106 Baker St	4	3	4	3,790	114	3/3/2017	5,995,000	5,300,000
3060 Pacific Ave	6	5	2	n/a	15	2/24/2017	8,250,000	10,250,000

Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts								
1700 Gough St #7	0	1	1	510	13	2/17/2017	499,000	570,000
1805 Fillmore St #204	1	1	1	610	9	3/8/2017	569,000	603,000
2299 Sacramento St #1	1	1	0	844	13	3/9/2017	699,000	741,000
2655 Bush St #119	1	1	1	793	107	3/15/2017	869,000	850,000
2839 Pierce St #1	1	1	1	720	7	2/24/2017	749,000	854,000
2117 Bush St #A	1	1	1	911	26	2/27/2017	895,000	965,000
1792 Green St	2	1	1	1,012	37	2/21/2017	1,150,000	1,150,000
2595 Clay St #1	2	1	1	990	9	2/23/2017	1,049,000	1,240,800
1895 Pacific Ave #301	1	1	1	1,167	14	3/13/2017	1,299,000	1,275,000
2845 Union St #2	1	1	1	1,300	61	2/23/2017	1,315,000	1,300,000
2194 Green St #2194	2	2	1	1,350	63	2/21/2017	1,385,000	1,363,500
2655 Bush St #421	2	2	1	1,080	3	2/24/2017	1,365,000	1,365,000
2200 Pacific Ave #3D	2	2	1	1,850	37	2/28/2017	1,565,000	1,540,000
2200 Pacific Ave #3A	2	2	1	1,856	44	2/16/2017	1,600,000	1,550,000
440 Locust St	2	2	1	1,396	20	2/17/2017	1,598,000	1,625,000
2545 Post St #1	3	2	3	1,902	8	2/17/2017	1,595,000	1,835,000
2368 Union St	3	3	0	1,950	0	2/17/2017	1,850,000	1,875,000
1650 Broadway #202	3	2	1	1,582	57	2/24/2017	2,080,000	1,888,000
3051 California St #B	3	4	2	2,047	79	2/17/2017	2,250,000	2,050,000
3186 Clay St	2	2	1	2,043	12	3/3/2017	1,995,000	2,200,000
3993 Washington St	2	2	1	1,945	1	2/22/2017	2,750,000	2,650,000
1650 Broadway #601	3	2	2	1,839	23	3/9/2017	3,995,000	3,700,000



The sale of 3060 Pacific for \$2 million over the listing price suggests that classic homes still have their appeal.

Grand classic commands a premium

While many San Francisco homebuyers engage in bidding wars for sleek, modern homes, the fact that a classic, French Norman-style Pacific Heights home recently sold for \$2 million more than its original asking price proves that traditional properties haven't lost their allure.

The home at 3060 Pacific Avenue recently sold for \$10.25 million after listing for \$8.25 million. The sale was the second eight-digit, single-family home transaction in the neighborhood this year. Located at the eastern edge of the Presidio about a block from the Lyon Street Steps, the six-bedroom, 1927 home was sold by the Fay family trust. The Fay family members were longtime owners of Young Man's Fancy, a Laurel Village clothing store that closed its doors about 20 years ago after 44 years in business.

Despite the home's highly desirable location and the fact that it had been lovingly maintained, it had not been renovated and lacks the impressive public room views that many neighboring properties provide. Still, it found a buyer in a brisk 15 days — more than twice as fast as the average pace of sales for single-family homes in the neighborhood over the past year.

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



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The Ancient Art of Origami

Japantown's Paper Tree teaches the art of folding paper — and helps preserve a part of Japanese culture

By Fran Moreland Johns

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED in creating a bit of art to make your home the envy of the neighborhood, here's how: Pick up a 6-by-6-foot piece of paper at Paper Tree, located at 1743 Buchanan in Japantown. Fold it carefully about a thousand times or so in precisely the proper manner and *voilà* — a dragon such as few have ever seen.

You may want to practice on something slightly less elaborate. But a glimpse of "Ryujin 3.2," the dragon created by one of the world's most highly skilled origami artists, now on display at the Paper Tree, is definitely an inspiration.

Origami is the ancient art of folding paper into limitless shapes. While other cultures have adapted paper-folding into various traditions, it is most closely associated with Japanese culture and heritage. It was the aspiration to honor and perpetuate this cultural tradition that led Nobuo and Shizuko Mihara to found Paper Tree in 1968. The shop is one of only a handful of family owned and run businesses remaining in Japantown.



Linda Mihara shows off some of the examples of origami artistry on display in Japantown's Paper Tree.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DICKIE SPRITZER

NOBUE MIHARA was 11 when he was interned with his father Tokinobu Mihara at Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming in the spring of 1942. With his grandparents already on buses headed for the camp, U.S. military troops came to take Nobuo, his 9-year-old brother Sam and his parents to join them. His grandfather would lose his sight because of inadequate treatment and die in the camp. The rest of the family was released from Heart Mountain after the war. They came home to find their stored possessions had been looted and stolen.

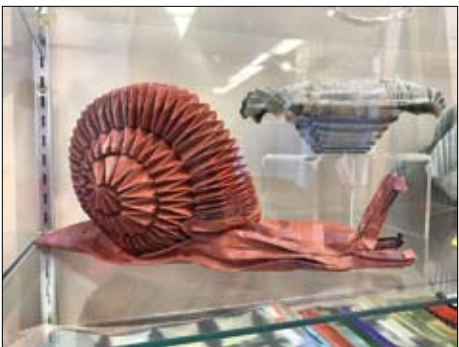
Undeterred, Tokinobu Mihara rebuilt his family's life and made significant contributions to his heritage and to his adopted country. The Miharas owned a publishing and import business — Oriental Culture Books, based in Japantown — and published the first English translation of the Japanese-American dictionary. In the 1950s, they published one of the first origami books in English.

TODAY, PAPER TREE carries on the tradition. Nobuo and Shizuko Mihara can usually be found in the store, along with their daughter Linda. Another daughter, Vicky, runs an origami business in Berkeley. Their son Roger, now



retired, is the only child who did not choose an origami career. Paper Tree is filled with books offering remarkable examples of origami art, plus a wide assortment of paper for everything from small crafts to shoji screens, and related supplies such as Kami cords — shiny, twine-like ribbons made of foil-wrapped paper and used for decorating money envelopes or tying special gifts. There are also assortments of Yuzen — beautiful papers with patterns similar to those of the traditional Japanese dress.

The shop also hosts regular classes and sponsors the origami portion of the Cherry Blossom Festival every April. Since their childhood, when they sat outside the store demonstrating origami, Linda and Vicky Mihara have taught the art of delicate folding. According to Linda, who says she was



hugely influenced by her grandfather, he saw teaching origami to new generations as a way to preserve an historic element of Japanese culture.

"My first teaching experience was in fourth grade at Raphael Weill Elementary School, which is now Rosa Parks Elementary," Linda Mihara says. "I liked to sit and fold during recess, and one day the teacher asked if I would teach the others in our class." Their teaching tradition continues. Linda and Vicky still teach classes on both sides of the bay and can be found demonstrating origami at festivals.

Among the extraordinary pieces on display at the shop are a black and white tiger, designed by Hideo Komatsu and folded by Steve Zheng, and Linda Mihara's "Peace Sphere," comprised of 18 cranes folded and



shaped into a circle from a single sheet of paper with a few specific cuts. Linda also recently completed the world's largest origami birthday cake, commissioned in celebration of the first (paper) anniversary of Great Wolf Lodge Indoor Waterpark and Resort in Anaheim. The cake stands nine feet tall and features animals from the Pacific Northwest, including origami wolves, bears and beavers.

DESPITE THE COMPLEXITY of the elaborate examples on display in Paper Tree, Linda Mihara believes anyone can learn to create origami masterpieces. She teaches groups of 7- to 10-year-olds, as well as adult students — and cites one local folder, now 91, who first learned the craft in his 80s.

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