

THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ APRIL 2018



40 ft.

How Height Limits, Now Threatened, Came to Pacific Heights

By Susan Sward

ON A FRIDAY IN APRIL OF 1972, Charlotte Maeck got a purple postcard in the mail at her Pacific Heights residence that she initially thought was a hosiery advertisement from the I. Magnin department store.

On closer look, she saw it was a city announcement of a hearing the following Tuesday on a proposal to rezone the areas between Van Ness to Steiner and Union to Washington to permit structures of up to 160 feet — or 16 stories. Before then, height limits of 65 feet and 105 feet existed in various parts of Pacific Heights.

Maeck, who was busy raising her four children with her husband, orthopaedic surgeon Benjamin Maeck, in their home on Pacific Avenue, knew nothing about planning codes and had never been involved in the brawling political fights over development in San Francisco.

She came from Staten Island, where her grandfather founded a marine hardware company. “We were concerned about neighborhoods, and families watched what went on,” Maeck recalls. But “I knew nothing about zoning.”

That was about to change.

After being advised by a Haight Ashbury neighborhood activist that if nothing were done, the city would roll over Pacific Heights and implement the higher height limit, Maeck went into action.

The day after receiving that purple postcard, she oversaw the production of 5,000 flyers proclaiming: “Alarm, Alarm, Alarm, Alarm.” Families and their children, including Maeck’s, walked block by block, distributing the flyers. A meeting was called for the next day, Sunday, at Calvary Presbyterian Church.

That day the Pacific Heights Association was formed — and a 40-foot height limit for the neighborhood was set in motion.

POSTER FROM “BE THE CHANGE”

EMPOWERING YOUTH

A pair of sisters create an inspirational book that’s also a toolkit for change.

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FLASHBACK

The Legend of Don Rico

BY ROBERT RUTHERFORD

R

ICO BLEW IN to the Fillmore around 2008. It was rumored he was in the witness protection program. He was a mountain of a man as he strode down Fillmore Street attired in a Canali top coat, blue Armani suit, Robert Cavalli velvet purple drivers (no socks), his hair brushed straight up a la boxing promoter Don King.

Rico held court at the Royal Ground Coffee sidewalk tables each morning at Fillmore and California. Various dignitaries from Willie's World would stop, pay homage, tribute, salutations and seek consultation. He soon became capo of Fillmore: Don Rico. He didn't have a job; Don Rico was a gigolo by trade. His petite amie's dad was the King of the Gypsies here in San Francisco. He had plenty of moola.

He was writing a book titled *The Ten Commandments of Love*, aimed at men to help keep the spark of love alive in their relationships with the women in their lives. He frequented Las Vegas — some said he scored big time at the tables; others said he crapped out.

I tried several times to take his photo. Like Richard Conte in *The Godfather*, he vehemently declined photo requests. Indeed, Don Rico had many ripping tales of his days and nights in New York, Detroit, Chicago and Vegas. But he was always on the move.

"Don Rico is like a shadow," comrade and village icon Dan Max told me many times. "One minute you're talking to him, then in the bat of an eye he'd be gone, just the fleeting shadow on the sidewalk."

Don Rico suddenly moved to North Beach in late 2010, perhaps a second relocation by the witness protection program.

Then in late 2011 or early 2012 he disappeared forever, leaving only a shadow.

Fillmore has never been the same since.

THE NEW FILLMORE

P. O. Box 15115 ■ San Francisco, CA 94115 ■ 415-441-6070

editors@newfillmore.com

Editors | Barbara Kate Repa & Thomas R. Reynolds

Production Editor | Ginny Lindsay

Copy Editor | Donna Gillespie

Advertising inquiries ads@newfillmore.com or 415.441.6070

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STREET TALK

Women’s Community Clinic leaving Fillmore

Even after it was absorbed last year into the much larger HealthRight 360 organization, the **WOMEN’S COMMUNITY CLINIC** remained in its home upstairs at 1833 Fillmore. But no more.

May 4 will be the clinic’s last day of service on Fillmore before it moves to 1735 Mission Street, where it will join Lyon-Martin Health Services and Lee Woodward Counseling Center for Women. The goal: “to provide comprehensive health services to women and transgender people.”

THE DINING SCENE: The LoMo will get a notable new restaurant on April 10 when the pop-up **RTB FILLMORE** evolves into **AVERY** at 1552 Fillmore. It will offer tasting menus at \$89, \$189 and \$289, with sake pairings.

North on Fillmore past Union, the idea of sidewalks crowded with trendy young people waiting in line for a **SHAKE SHACK** hamburger horrified some local residents, but Union Street merchants have voted in favor of the plan to pair the hot burger chain with a **RUMBLE FITNESS** gym at Fillmore and Filbert.



BIG CHANGES AT DINO’S: The longtime pizza joint on the corner of Fillmore and California — known as **DINO & SANTINO’S** since Dino’s son was born — is about to get a major makeover and turn into a wine bar.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



GoBikes are already available on Steiner and Geary beside the renovated Kimbell Park.

No Go on Ford Bikes

Neighbors resist plans for a station at Alta Plaza Park

IN RECENT MONTHS plans have been unveiled to expand the city’s network of shared rental bikes with up to 14 new docking stations in Pacific Heights.

But as details of the locations became known, neighbors began to object — especially those living near the Steiner and Clay corner of Alta Plaza Park, who maintained the bikes would be an unwelcome commercial intrusion into the park and surrounding residential areas.

A bike station at Laguna and Washington, on the corner of Lafayette Park, has

also drawn opposition, as have other proposed locations.

Now the expansion of the bike-sharing program into the neighborhood has been put on hold.

“I have been assured that they have placed a hold on all Ford GoBike permits in District 2 until our office is presented with all information, plans and proposals,” said new District 2 Supervisor Catherine Stefani in an email to neighbors.

A community meeting and further outreach are in the works.

After 27 Years, Zinc Details Is Calling It Quits

ONE OF THE best-known and longest-operating businesses on Fillmore Street is shutting its doors at the end of the month. Zinc Details, at 1633 Fillmore, will end its 27-year run and its space will become an outpost of Orange Theory, a nationwide fitness club.

“I’ve met amazing people through our store,” says Vasilios Kiniris, who owns the design shop with his wife and fellow architect, Wendy Nishimura Kiniris. “But it’s time.”

Vas Kiniris, who has been vice president, president and now executive director of the Fillmore Merchants Association, intends to devote himself fully to small business affairs in San Francisco. He is also now executive director of the West Portal Merchants Association and executive secretary of the citywide District Council of Merchant Associations.

“I think it’s perfect timing,” says Kiniris. “Retail is morphing into a new reality, and I’m parlaying my knowledge of small business and what makes a vibrant street.”

At one point Zinc had three shops and 20 employees on Fillmore Street.

“There’s a real sense of community on Fillmore,” he says. “I want to share that.”




Zinc’s Vas Kiniris



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CRIME WATCH

Auto Theft, Burglary of Residence Lake and 15th February 19, 2:30 p.m.

A man who had both of his cars stolen earlier in the day returned home later to find that someone had broken into his residence. He then realized he had left a pair of house keys inside one of the cars, and called the police.

Both cars were found, and an arrest was made in connection with the theft. Police suspected the car burglar in custody was also responsible for the burglary of the home. They brought the man who had been robbed to county jail to search through the property that had been seized. He found several items that belonged to him. The burglary suspect refused to tell the officers how he came to be in possession of the property that was not his own. He was booked on felony charges.

Robbery with a Knife, Aggravated Assault Geary and Masonic February 21, 11:15 a.m.

A man entered the Target store, filled a cart with merchandise and walked out, bypassing the open registers. Store employees saw the man and cart leaving the store, and a security guard approached him to ask if he'd paid for his merchandise. The shoplifter then pulled out a knife and shouted at the security guard to get back. Fearing for his safety, the guard retreated and called the police, who caught up with the thief nearby on Presidio Avenue.

Officers searching the suspect found he had two knives. He had also filled his cart with more than \$400 worth of merchandise. A computer check revealed he was currently on probation for theft. He was booked into county jail on multiple felony charges.

Resisting an Officer Masonic and Oak February 21, 5:01 p.m.

Officers on patrol noted an individual lying on the sidewalk amidst a scattering of belongings that were obstructing the way. A records check revealed that the man had an outstanding misdemeanor warrant. Officers advised him to take care of the warrant and move his belongings, and he agreed to do so. But when officers later returned to the location, they found the same man with all his belongings still strewn over the sidewalk. As officers placed him under arrest he began to struggle, kick and resist. Once inside the patrol car, he slammed his head against the door and sustained a head injury. Medics arrived and transported the suspect to S.F. General, where he was medically cleared. He was then booked for the violations.

Burglary of Vehicle Baker and McAllister March 3, 12:11 a.m.

A man witnessed a suspect attempting to break into a car and called the police. When the officers arrived, the witness advised them that the suspect was hiding between two nearby homes. Officers located the man and learned he was on probation for burglary. While searching him, they found three methamphetamine pipes, a screwdriver, a flashlight, a headlamp and a wrench. They placed him under arrest for burglary and for violating his probation.

Terrorist Threats, Battery California and Commonwealth March 7, 7:00 p.m.

A Muni driver came to the end of her line and was doing a sweep of the bus. She saw that a man was still on the bus and asked him to get off. His response was: "How about I kill you before I get off the bus?"

The man then got off the bus. Once outside, he approached a pedestrian, pushed him twice in the chest and shouted, "Do you want to die?" while moving his hands toward his waistband as though reaching for a weapon. Then the suspect fled. When officers arrived they located the man, who was identified by the two individuals he had threatened. The officers recognized the suspect from a crime bulletin. He was booked into county jail on multiple charges.

Pedestrian Struck in Crosswalk California and Baker March 9, 7:40 p.m.

A woman was crossing California Street in the crosswalk when she was struck by a car turning west onto the street; she suffered life-threatening injuries and was transported to a hospital. The driver of the car was not arrested, but was cited for failure to yield to a pedestrian.

Armed Robbery California and Broderick March 10, 10:15 a.m.

A suspect approached a man who was sitting in his car, pointed a handgun at him and ordered him to get out of his vehicle and hand over his belongings. The driver complied. The robber then jumped into the man's car and sped off westbound on California Street with the robbery victim's wallet and cell phone. Police are still investigating the matter.

Mental Health Detention Lyon and McAllister March 15, 10:05 a.m.

Officers received a call from the USF campus police about a woman who was behaving oddly. Two officers arrived to find a combative female; she fought with the officers, who struggled to contain her until medics arrived, got free of them once, then ran through traffic in an attempt to escape. When they had her in custody, the officers judged her a danger to herself and others. She was transported to S.F. General for a mental health detention.

Robbery with Force Geary and Commonwealth March 22, 4:51 a.m.

A woman was standing at a bus stop on Geary when a man approached her to ask if he could use her phone. When she pulled out her phone, the man snatched it, then began choking her with both hands while shouting obscenities at her.

He grabbed the woman's backpack and fled on foot. When the police arrived they transported the her to S.F. General for an evaluation of her injuries. The suspect is described as a black male from 30 to 40 years old, 6 ft. tall and weighing about 180 lbs.

Assault California and 2nd March 28, 6 a.m.

A man suffered life-threatening injuries when he was struck in the head with a bicycle lock. The assailant fled the scene, leaving the injured man lying on the sidewalk; when police arrived, they took him to the hospital. Anyone who has further information about this attack is encouraged to contact the police through the anonymous tip line: 415-575-4444, or to text TIP411 with "SFPD" at the start of the message.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All information comes from Richmond Station, which serves the neighborhood west of Divisadero Street. No information was released again this month from Northern Station, which serves the area east of Divisadero.

Two Top Toques

By Chris Barnett

HE'S NOT READY just yet to serve up the new name or the food concept planned for the now-shuttered and butcher-papered space on the northwest corner of Pine and Fillmore. But **JOHN LITZ**, who jettisoned the old **THAI STICK** sign last month, just introduced his partners in the venture he's set to establish there: the top toque team of **SAYAT AND LAURA OZYILMAZ**. Between them, the two chefs have cooked at five of the 50 world's best restaurants, according to the respected San Pellegrino list for 2018, including: **11 MADISON PARK** and **LE BERNARDIN** in Manhattan, **BLUE HILL AT STONE BARN** in Tarrytown, N.Y., **MURGARITZ** in San Sebastian, Spain, and San Francisco's own **SAISON**. All are either Michelin two or three star rated. Currently, the duo are owner-chefs of **ISTANBUL MODERN SF**, a pop-up restaurant on Russian Hill. Insists Litz: "Our goal is delicious, casual, fine dining at reasonable prices."

STIRRING: Shuttered for more than two years and presumed dead, **LA BOULANGE** at 2043 Fillmore may yet be resurrected this fall as a serve-yourself French cafe. Construction workers are now inside. Earlier reports that it was coming back to life as a pizza place or a rotisserie — or maybe another reborn **LA BOULANGERIE** — never panned out.

SHAKEN: Moscow-born barkeep **KORINA KOTOVYA** will decamp from **FLORIO** to uptown Oakland later this year, where she will open an intriguing-sounding Russian-Creole fusion bar-restaurant called The O.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION: Closing in on its third birthday at 1963 Sutter, **GARDENIAS**, known to locals and serious foodies for its fresh, seasonal, current take on California cooking, will be featured this month on PBS's popular *Check Please, Bay Area* program. The crew filmed there in early March. Co-owners **MARGIE CONARD** and **DANA TOMMASINO** turned the old Roostertail side street storefront into a warm, unpretentious hideaway that looks like old Napa Valley meets the South of France. Pray that their Meyer lemon ice cream is on the menu.

A PAUSE TO REFRESH — OR ADIOS: One of S.F.'s first Peruvian restaurants, **FRESCA**, at 2114 Fillmore, has abruptly and mysteriously closed. A window sign is vague on the reason. An employee at another Fresca outpost in West Portal says: "It's a remodel. Not sure when it will reopen."

EMPTY SPACES: Vacant storefronts are popping up like spring flowers on the boulevard. The former **SANDRO** space at 2033 Fillmore has yet to be leased. The space that housed **VINO!**, the wine shop on California next to Mollie Stone's, which was a pop-up shoe shop over the holidays, shows no signs of new life. And at 1919 Fillmore, the holiday pop-up called **MINTED** is papered over. But none of them has a "for lease" sign, and may already be claimed.

NOT QUITE AS HOT: Cushman & Wakefield's **SARAH BRETT SCHWARTZ**, who partners with **PAM MENDELSON** on the retail leasing team that hammers out virtually every storefront lease on Fillmore these days, insists rents are no longer spiking and that when leases expire, turnover is normal. "It's not like the craziness of 2016," she says. Landlords aren't talking. **DAVID FISHBEIN**, the Los Angeles leasing agent who dangled wads of "key money" under the noses of longtime Fillmore tenants to lure them out and re-lease to deep-pocketed international retailers, isn't talking either — and the windfalls of cash seem to have vanished.

LOVE STORY: Headhunting is a tough, competitive business but **JUDITH AND RICHARD SHIREMAN** who found each other and married 52 years ago, share a busy executive search practice and, every so often, a libation on the boulevard. What's their secret to a long, happy marriage? "Humor," says Judith. "And don't get mad at each other at the same time," chimes in Richard. Living at the same Sacramento Street address for 43 years, they're also 'hood historians. "Gough was a milkman," he says. "And Octavia was his wife," she adds.

The Beat goes on. Send sightings and newsy local items to chris@cbarnmedia.com.

Doing the Hard Work



We have poor, mentally unstable, addicted human beings living on our streets, it costs our city hundreds of millions a year, and we are still failing to fix the problem. All of us have had enough.

Homelessness is the biggest concern in this upcoming Mayoral election, and it should be. The homeless crisis diverts money and resources away from their primary purposes, while shifting spending and staffing priorities from where they should be.

Police Officers spend their day acting as social workers, when they should be policing. Department of Public Works serves as a disposal company, when its employees should spend their days beautifying the City and maintaining it.

I fixed homelessness before and I will do it again as your next Mayor, because we need to end this crisis now. As Heather Knight's recent *SF Chronicle* article explained— My Ten-Year Plan moved 11,362 homeless adults into permanent supportive housing.

San Francisco Chronicle

"...the city's "Ten Year Plan to Abolish Chronic Homelessness," an initiative begun by then-Mayor Gavin Newsom in 2004 and crafted by a council headed by Alioto.

"By 2014, the city had moved 11,362 homeless single adults into permanent supportive housing. Another 8,806 were given bus tickets home to receptive family members or friends through the city's Homeward Bound program.

(Hey, any real politician would have taken credit for those, too. Come on, Angela!)

"Obviously, all that effort was great, but it made little dent in the city's stubborn, increasingly in-your-face homeless population. Alioto says that's exactly why she wants voters to send her to Room 200 in June.

"She thinks the city's much-hyped Navigation Centers — more relaxed, service-rich homeless shelters — are OK, but the city needs to focus far more on permanent housing solutions so people don't wind up back on the streets.

"Or you might as well just throw the money away," Alioto said, adding she would focus her first 100 days as mayor on cleaning the streets and moving those in tents inside.

"It would be me actually doing the hard work, and it is hard work," she said.

"Now that would make a good billboard."

Angela's experience, drive, and passion to improve the lives of all San Franciscans is unmatched in this race. She will rise above the petty, divisive politics in City Hall and find solutions to the issues that affect all of us.

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTORIA DUNHAM

A Shopkeeper Goes Shopping

Notes from a buying trip through Southeast Asia from the proprietor of Fillmore's 1906 and HiHo Silver

BY VICTORIA DUNHAM

FIRST STOP: Bangkok. I've been busy buying — the very reason I'm here after 16 hours and 59 minutes on a plane. Spent a full day at the chatachuck market, the weekend market in Bangkok and the largest one in Asia.

My 'hood in Bangkok, for convenience sake, is Silom. Much like San Francisco, the contrast is extreme. The Lebua Tower sports a spectacular view, so they say, and also a two-star Michelin restaurant. But for the privilege of paying top dollar for a drink at the bar, you have to have closed shoes and long pants — ergo the shoe and pants rental stall just outside the tower. Opportunity knocked.

Arrived in Laos today. Night market is calling.

The whole reason for coming to Laos was to find some textiles. I have to admit I scored big time. Connected with folks who have been working to preserve the weaving heritage of Laos, including four organizations that are pretty damn inspiring. Moving fast despite the heat, so all I got were street shots from Vientiane, the big city in Laos. No worries for me; don't do temples, just shop.

We found a most excellent restaurant with the best spring rolls I have ever had and went to the worst night market — it even beat Chiang Rai, which held that award previously.

Then up to the delightfully funky Luang Prabang, sitting on the Mekong River, which is pretty laid back. Dusty roads except for the two or three that run through town. Exotic blooms everywhere, lovely old cars, street food including those who are just cooking for the family. Found some fab restaurants, both funky and upscale. (Lots of buffalo on the menus, as in water buffalo.)

On to Hanoi.

I was just beginning to think that TripAdvisor was the "go to" source for advice. The boys I travel with use it all the time and we have consistently had fabulous food. Then when we needed a hotel in Hanoi — we've been winging it so far — this hotel came up "highly rated," so I didn't give it a second thought. Should have.

In the end, the place has been redeemed by the perfectly kind and helpful staff, who directed us to two phenom restaurants. That said, it is not even close to a five-star, which was its rating. Note to self: Do a better job of researching and don't auto-trust TripAdvisor.

Hanoi short version: Yes, they do still



On a spring trip through Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, Victoria Dunham shopped for new and unusual offerings for her two Fillmore Street boutiques, 1906 and HiHo Silver.



wear cone hats. The place has more people on more motorbikes than you have ever seen — literally swarming every street. You have to dodge them even when you have the right of way — and, actually, you never have the right of way as a pedestrian; they do, and they let you know with non-stop honking. Life is on the line just maneuvering across a street. I was actually bumped by a gal on a bike one night, though she was more upset than I was — I didn't even have a bruise — and had to assure her that it was all okay. Quite the contrast having just come from the oh-so-chill Laos.

Unlike Laos, Vietnam was a bust in terms of shopping. But on the bright side, possibly some of the best food I've ever had. It's all about selling it, buying it and eating it. Comfort food like the best pho bo or pho ga to the most incredible spring rolls to finding Hanoi's best restaurant in 2014 on the funkiest street imaginable.

My iPhone shots of the streets cannot capture the swarming humanity or the contrast of street life, with chickens walking their last walk right next door to a fancy dance store or restaurant. Every time you turn around, it's all about contrast. But it's really about the food.

Time for happy hour on the last night here. Chiang Mai tomorrow and what feels like back home to Thailand and most definitely back to the work I seem to love.

Whew! I am ready to head back to San Francisco. Remind me that three weeks is a half-week too much. That being said, everything evolved brilliantly. My timing could not have been more perfect. I wanted to check out the Bangkok Gem Show — check. I wanted to find textiles in Laos — check. And I ended up connecting with two women I really needed to meet the day before they were both leaving on trips.

And even though Vietnam was a bust — except for perfect weather, fabulous food and the amazing experience of being a pedestrian against the motorbike chaos that exists there — it was at least memorable. The three days there landed me in Chiang Mai at the perfect time to meet up with the man I went there to see. So check once again.

However, it is now March and hotter than Hades. I stayed by the Ping River and those mosquitoes sure do love my poor ankles.

Now in Bangkok, the temperature is 86 with humidity — and feels like 99, according to my phone. Three more days pulling together the end strings and then I head back. I will sweat my way through it. Thank goodness for AC!

Empowering a New Generation to Get Involved

By SABRINA MOYLE

WHEN I WAS a teen I loved being creative, but I didn't think creativity could change the world. We were told that the arts were frivolous. I didn't think my voice mattered and, as a result, I didn't speak up.

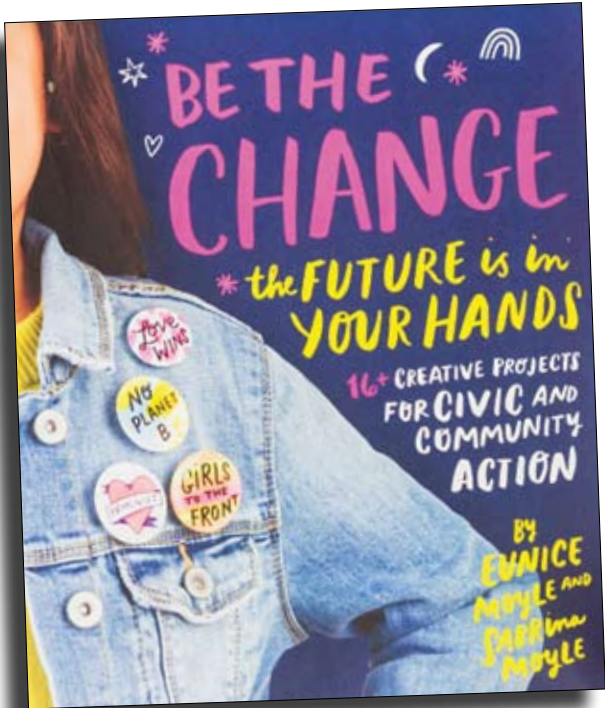
Fast forward to today: We're riding a rising wave of youth activism. In Parkland, Florida, youth leadership has thrived on strong school arts programs in theater, music, journalism and debate. Like so many others, I am inspired by these youth, and now more convinced than ever that creativity can empower positive social change.



Author Sabrina Moyle at home on Steiner Street.

I became passionate about teaching youth when I had my first children, twin boys, in 2010, at California Pacific Medical Center on California Street. As with other parents, the arrival of my children was a wakeup call. The best way to teach is to model, I reasoned, so to teach them well, I would have to become the person I wanted them to be. No small feat.

I had my first "aha moment" watching Deborah Anaya and her teaching staff at Calvary Nursery School on Fillmore Street. I saw them interacting with 3-year-olds in a curious, caring and respectful way. They were grounded



and wise. I realized that since life is a journey of inquiry and experience, their approach is relevant far beyond preschool.

Following my own line of inquiry, I created an intentional, self-designed program of reflection and renewal. I rewired my brain, discarded old stories and created new positive thought patterns. I joined the boards of Calvary Nursery School and the Mosaic Project, an Oakland-based nonprofit that teaches 4th and 5th graders empathy, assertive communication and peaceful conflict resolution by bringing together students who are separated by neighborhood and school — for example, pairing Oakland public school students with students at the neighborhood's Town School for Boys. I advocated for small businesses.

I decided to use my personal assets and platform to do good. At Hello!Lucky, the design studio my sister Eunice Moyle and I founded, we created a get-out-the-vote campaign for the 2016 election, featuring T-shirts and a

bumper sticker. We started selling products that give back to causes we support; our enamel pins have raised more than \$10,000 for Planned Parenthood and the ACLU. We also designed posters for the 2016 Women's March on Washington that were downloaded 5,000 times and used around the world.

It was at the Women's March in 2016 that I woke up to the power of creativity in civic action. Creative posters made the Women's March; they brought unity in diversity and amplified marchers' messages. That's when we began writing *Be the Change: The Future is in Your Hands*. Intended for girls ages 10 to 15, *Be the Change* is one part inspirational coach, one part organizing toolkit and one part creative craft book.

The book starts by looking at what it means to "be the change." You can't change anyone but yourself, Gandhi said, but you can transform yourself from within, step-by-step. *Be the Change* also explores what it means to be creative. Tapping into your creativity regularly helps strengthen your inner voice, which in turn strengthens your sense of purpose and helps counter the desire to seek validation in material things, status and peers. This is especially important for children growing up in a high-status neighborhood like Pacific Heights. Creativity keeps us grounded.

Be the Change offers creative civic action projects — from making protest posters and bumper stickers, creating team T-shirts and constructing lemonade stands to raise money for charity, as well as tear-out postcards and buttons that teens can start using right away.

I believe that without a strong inner life and connection to creativity — as well as the skills to respect others' voices and resolve conflicts peacefully — it is simply impossible to engage in effective civic action and service. Being the change starts from within. It starts small. Meditating. Journaling. Reading. Doodling. Listening. But ultimately, it can create ripple effects that can positively change communities — and even the world.

Be the Change (Quarto Books, \$14.95) is available at bethethechange.pub and soon at local bookstores.

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"I hadn't wanted this fight, but it fell into my lap. Paul Revere went out to warn the citizens — and we had to do the same."

— CHARLOTTE MAECK, founding president of the Pacific Heights Residents Association

How Pacific Heights Got a 40-Foot Height Limit

► FROM PAGE ONE

The fledgling association — later renamed the Pacific Heights Residents Association — covered the neighborhood from Union to California and Van Ness to Presidio. Several hundred residents attended that first meeting and voted unanimously to fight for a 40-foot height limit.

Maeck says other neighborhoods had negotiated with the city and won 40-foot height limits. "I had no idea why our neighborhood was left out, but we wanted that 40-foot limit as well," she says. "We had known nothing about this until I got the postcard announcement. We wanted to keep our neighborhood as everyone else had theirs — to preserve our homes and families," she adds. "I hadn't wanted this fight, but it fell into my lap. Paul Revere went out to warn the citizens — and we had to do the same."

Allan Jacobs, now a professor emeritus of city and regional planning at UC Berkeley, recalled that Maeck fought with great energy for her cause. "She was good, she was strong," says Jacobs, who developed San Francisco's first comprehensive master plan during his tenure as the city's planning director from 1967 to 1975.

Faced with the association's opposition, city planners delayed action on the proposal and told its leaders they would have to get petitions supporting the 40-foot limit from property owners in the neighborhood.

"The city told us we'd have to come in with at least 90 percent of residents in the area agreeing to the 40-foot limit," recalls Maeck, who became the association's first president. "So we hit the streets." The association faced a three-week deadline to collect signatures. In that time, Maeck says more than 91 percent of those contacted signed the petition for the height limit.

To pursue the fight, Maeck transformed the third floor of her home into a campaign headquarters.

"The whole top floor of my home was charts and people," she says. "I had no computer, and I still don't. I was running around every night giving messages to the association's board members."

Area captains were assigned. Each time a property owner signed the petition, that property was colored in on maps created to keep track of the signature collection drive. Residents south of California Street heard of the fight and asked the association to expand the area seeking the 40-foot limit.

"During World War II, Octavia and all those blocks below Sacramento were single family houses, and during the war they were run-down rooming houses," Maeck says. "After the war some of the Japanese (who had been interned in camps) returned to the area, and working people came in with no money to speak of. We heard from all kinds of people. They called me up and said: 'We are fixing our places up and we want that 40 feet.'"

In planning circles, there was some amusement that any area south of California Street could be considered part of Pacific Heights. But the association agreed to expand the area to be governed by the 40-foot limit south to the mid-line of Bush Street, the northern

boundary of the Redevelopment Agency's jurisdiction.

In June 1972 the Planning Commission approved the 40-foot height limit for the neighborhood, except for the area south of Lafayette Park and what was then the Pacific Presbyterian Medical Center. Maeck and the association found this unsatisfactory and enlisted then-Supervisor Dianne Feinstein to push to include the disputed area. That move succeeded. Today all of the land included in the Pacific Heights Residents Association from Van Ness to Presidio Avenue and Union to Bush Street is governed by the 40-foot limit, except for portions of pre-existing, highrise corridors including Gough, Franklin, Laguna and a block and a half of Buchanan at Sacramento.

Even after the Planning Commission adopted the height limit for the area, the push to enshrine the limit into city records was not over. The Planning Department told the association it had to redraw the maps it had created to mirror the lower heights, Maeck says. So association members, assisted by the late John Kirkpatrick, a retired architect from Skidmore Owings & Merrill, went block by block, researching the occupancy of every building affected by the 40-foot limit. The late architects Herbert McLaughlin and John Field were also part of the team.

In 2007 Maeck's husband died, and a few years ago she sold her home and moved to a condominium near one of her sons and his wife and baby. Now 91, she still attends Pacific Heights Residents Association monthly board meetings to keep up on issues, and she vigorously opposes

legislation by state Senator Scott Wiener to increase height limits up to 85 feet, or eight stories, on properties near a transit stop. The measure, SB 827, would be effective throughout the state, and would up-zone almost all of San Francisco.

"Over 90 percent of the city's parcels currently have a height limit of 45 feet or less," according to a Planning Department study. "Under this bill many of them would have height limit increases, to height limits ranging from 45 feet on narrower streets to 85 feet on wider streets."

When Wiener, a San Francisco Democrat, introduced his bill, he said his aim was to add housing near public transportation, stating: "One of the fundamental problems is we have enormous swaths of land in California, including in some of the most transit-accessible parts of the state, that are zoned for hyper-low-density housing."

Maeck is not persuaded.

"That bill is a disaster. The problem is that buses run all over this city, and this legislation would destroy the neighborhoods with up to 85-foot buildings along the transit corridors and into adjacent residential neighborhoods," she says. "Why should I spend \$5 million if I might move in only to learn the neighbors next door plan to go up to 80 or 85 feet?"

As Maeck looks at the city today, she worries that people no longer value the residential qualities of neighborhoods such as Pacific Heights. "We are in a new situation," she says. "New people have come to the city, and they don't value neighborhood character in the same way."



"We hit the streets." Families distributed 5,000 flyers, walking block by block.

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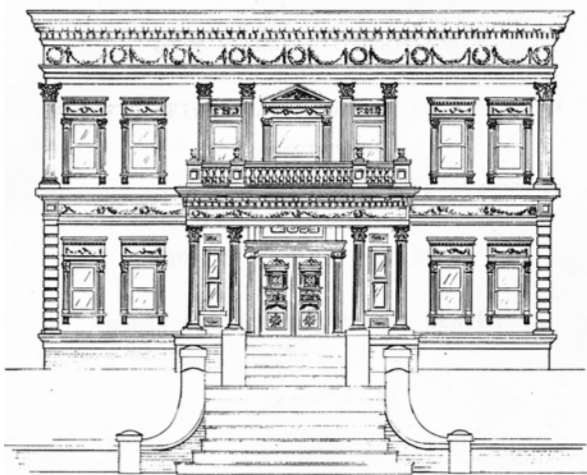
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Molera Home Was the One That Got Away

WHEN CHARLOTTE MAECK recalls the development fights she participated in, her biggest regret is the loss of the Molera family home at 2055 Sacramento Street. The dwelling was located east of Octavia Street, facing Lafayette Park, and today is the site of the hulking 10-story, 86-apartment Grosvenor Court, built in 1974.

The home had been the residence of Frances Molera, the San Francisco-born great niece of General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. The descendant of a pioneer Monterey County family, Molera had inherited from her family vast tracts of land in Big Sur and Castroville.

The 4,800-acre Andrew Molera State Park in the



The Molera family home facing Lafayette Park (above left) was replaced by a 10-story apartment building.

Big Sur area was originally part of the Molera family's Rancho El Sur property. Molera, who never married, sold the land to the Nature Conservancy with the promise it would become a state park named after her brother, who died in 1931. She died at the age of 88 in 1968, and the park opened in 1972.

Maeck said that in 1972 and 1973, many preservationists battled to save the Molera home in San Francisco, with *Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen taking up their cause. "Why would anyone not want to save a classic landmark structure — to try to save our history?" she asks. "It was sad that history was wiped away."

Reflecting back over the Pacific Heights Residents Association's 40-plus years of existence, Maeck says the group also got involved in numerous citywide

issues. Working with activists from the Mission and Haight Ashbury, in 1972 the association organized the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, which still exists today. She says the Pacific Heights group also supported environmental safeguards for development projects citywide.

Under the leadership of the late Anne Bloomfield, an association board member, the city established the Webster Street Historic District, which consists primarily of houses in the Italianate architectural style built between 1878 and 1880.

The association was also part of the unsuccessful fight to save the City of Paris department store.

— SUSAN SWARD



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War Dramas at the Vogue and the Clay

By Andrea Chase

THE OSCARS are not always the most reliable barometer of cinematic greatness.

Recall, for example, the year that *Kramer vs. Kramer* beat out *Apocalypse Now*. This year's oversights were less egregious, and it was heartening that *A Fantastic Woman* won the Best Foreign Language prize. It's a mystery, though, why the film *1945* wasn't even nominated in that category. This extraordinary Hungarian film by Ferenc Török, opening at the Clay Theatre on April 20, focuses on a little-recounted part of post-World War II history — and for that reason, it offers worthy viewing even over and above its impeccable filmmaking.

At the end of World War II, a small, Soviet-occupied village in Hungary is about to celebrate a wedding in a style as high as its straitened circumstances allow. But there are issues. The bride is still recovering from a broken romance with the town Lothario, which is causing friction with her new in-laws.

Things get much worse. The morning of the wedding, a train deposits two strangers and their large crate in town. The strangers — one old, one young — are Jews. Their



STEEFAN HILL

Asa Butterfield stars in *Journey's End*, which will break your heart and raise your hackles.

reason for being there remains a mystery as they make their way across the village speaking to no one, not even each other.

The silent strangers slowly tear the town apart as speculation runs rampant about why the two men are there. It's speculation made all the more toxic as the village's anxiety is slowly revealed to be collective guilt for not only standing by as Jews were deported to concentration camps by the Nazis, but for being actively complicit. The groom's father, for example, didn't become a semi-prosperous shopkeeper through hard work, but by commandeering the shop after its Jewish owner and his family were arrested.

Török's use of black-and-white cinematography becomes a potent metaphor for good and evil, with no shading in between. That the current Soviet occupiers are abus-

ing the villagers with impunity lends a poetic justice to what is happening as the locals watch the strangers through half-closed shutters and from around corners.

This is a film that is wrenching to watch, but totally engrossing as tempers flare, suspense builds and a series of seemingly small, meticulously observed, vignettes of village life unfold over the course of one pivotal day.

Opening at the Vogue Theater on April 6, *JOURNEY'S END* takes us back further in time to World War I.

Based on the novel of the same name by R.C. Sherriff and Vernon Bartlett, this haunting story about the futility of war has had earlier incarnations on the stage and in a 1930 film. Yet Saul Dibb's vibrant retelling of trench warfare in the waning days of

the War to End All Wars will break your heart and raise your hackles as it revisits the familiar story.

Asa Butterfield is Raleigh, the new recruit with a cherub's face who is both painfully young and even more painfully idealistic as he arrives at the front lines eager to do his part for king and country. He's requested this posting to be near his school chum, Captain Stanhope (Sam Claflin), whose horror at seeing him there is as much due to the danger at hand as it is his fear that Raleigh will tell his sister, Stanhope's sweetheart, the toll that the war has taken on him in shellshock and drink. Forced to speak in whispers because the German trenches are within earshot, the quiet fails to quell the horrors of war that come down hard on Raleigh, and it is painful to watch his innocence cruelly ripped from him.

The scenes of battle, savage as they are, pale in comparison to the rigors of living in the trenches, where the tension of imminent attack is channeled into pointed small talk and bad jokes. When the rumors of a suspected assault by the Germans are confirmed, the grim reality of what is to come is tempered with the counterintuitive relief of knowing when to expect it.

This is a film of passionate performances that prompt a palpable empathetic bond, without ever once resorting to histrionics or melodrama. Dibb and a cast that includes Toby Jones, Tom Sturridge, Stephen Graham and Paul Bettany, move past the cliché of the stiff upper lip to find the cool grace under pressure that is true courage, making their sacrifice all the more an indictment of the generals and politicians who put them in harm's way.

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By Pamela Feinsilber

SUSAN ROEMER's second act began before she completed act one. A dancer for nine years with Smuin Ballet, she started designing costumes for dancers, collaborating with choreographers within and outside the group, even before she retired from the company in 2016.

Working from her home not far from Fillmore, she has helped create the costumes for two world premiere ballets this month: Val Caniparoli's "If I Were a Sushi Roll," in Smuin's season finale program at the Yerba Buena Center from April 20 to 29; and David Dawson's "Anima Animus," in S.F. Ballet's Unbound B program at the War Memorial Opera House from April 21 to May 4.

Which came first, designing or dancing?

Dancing, by far. I watched my mom sewing, but it was never a passion of mine. I started when we were performing the Christmas Ballet; it was a long run, and I wanted to do something creative to relax, but nothing too physical. A girl in the neighborhood was selling a sewing machine for \$50. I went on YouTube and basically taught myself how to thread the machine and just enough to get started.

What did you create first?

I made plenty of terrible-looking things before I made my first leotard. I took apart one I liked — it was really basic, no sleeves — and sketched out a pattern. I used Christmas wrapping paper with penguins on it. After that, I would make a leotard for myself and the dancers would say: "Can you make one for me?"



Susan Roemer works on costumes for this month's premiere of "If I Were A Sushi Roll."

The Dancer Is a Designer

Smuin Ballet's Susan Roemer finds her second act

And when did you begin designing costumes?

It wasn't that much later. Smuin Ballet has a choreography workshop, when every dancer has the opportunity to choreograph a piece. One of the other dancers asked me if I would make costumes for his piece, which had three dancers — two men and a woman. I don't know if I would call it ignorance or beginner's luck, but I just went for it. It felt like a huge outlet I hadn't tapped into before. That was around 2012. I must have worked on 50 projects since then.

What about the costumes for "If I Were a Sushi Roll"?

The dancers are basically wearing the same thing, so you get a sense of a community. Everything else has movement and color. It's a bit random — the whole ballet is kind of a celebration of randomness. It's about everything and nothing at all.

Where do you get your design ideas?

I find inspiration in architecture, small details and coloring. I like to peer into doorways and windows. I always include inspirational images for the choreographer

from photos I take on my phone, and one of the pictures for Val's piece was a Victorian house that's completely black. It looks like it's wearing a tuxedo. It feels so formal — not uptight, but classy and bold. I take a run from my place up to the top of Alta Plaza Park; for me, it is so good for gaining perspective. The house is between Lafayette and Alta Plaza parks. Every day I go for a walk, it's different from the day before. Even if you look at the same house, it's not the same. It could be the way the light is, or if I'm in a different mood.

So you get ideas while just walking or running in the neighborhood?

I totally get inspiration from my neighborhood. And out on Clement Street, there's a little place called Fabrix I would call my back-pocket resource because they have such an unusual collection of fabrics; inevitably I'll find something I need or want. Photo shoots with dance colleagues help take my designs to an entirely different place. I did one a few years ago at the Beauty Supply Warehouse on Fillmore. It has so many wigs and extensions; it gave me a good concept for displaying my work, and it's always good to have something a little fancy for a model.

Your company, S-Curve Apparel, also sells athletic clothing. Do you sew every piece?

I make every piece, but I'm working on a manufacturer's line. The name will be Tangent Fit. I want to be able to walk in during the week of production, so I'm looking at factories on Market Street or slightly below. It's interesting to discover there's still a lot of manufacturing going on in San Francisco without our knowing it.

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Japan Center Turns 50

Architect of the Japantown complex also designed the twin towers in New York

By BRIDGET MALEY

MAJOR PORTIONS of the Western Addition were wiped out in the name of redevelopment for new plans that began to take shape in the late 1950s. This is reflected in the complex history of Japan Center, bounded by Laguna, Geary, Fillmore and Post, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Japanese families first migrated to the area after the 1906 earthquake. Census records from 1920 reveal a remarkable concentration of Japanese-American families living in the area between Bush and Geary. By 1940, this thriving community, with more than 200 businesses owned by Japanese Americans, was comparable only to Little Tokyo in Los Angeles.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor changed everything. With the American entry into World War II, all people of Japanese ancestry were removed from coastal locations to inland internment camps. This left storefronts, houses and apartments vacant in what had been a prosperous and active Japantown.

The Victorian-era housing and commercial storefronts that survived the 1906 earthquake and had become home to the Japanese community were soon inhabited by African-Americans migrating to the Bay Area seeking war-related civilian jobs.

The black community thrived in the Western Addition and began to leave a lasting imprint of its own.

Fast forward to the early 1960s. Aging buildings led some to argue the area was blighted and overcrowded with substandard housing. Federal funding was secured to establish Western Addition redevelopment projects labeled A-1 and A-2. Opposed by leaders in both the African-American and Japanese-American communities, these projects eventually moved forward, resulting in extensive demolition of Victorian-era buildings and displacement of established residents.

Just one of a number of Western Addition projects of this era, the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center was a binational endeavor partially funded by Japanese corporations, with prominent Japanese businesses as tenants. The project was conceived in the 1950s, but did not gain significant momentum until the mid-1960s. A November 1959 *Chronicle* article described an initial concept for the center. Ultimately, a much larger three-block complex would displace more than 50 businesses and some 1,500 residents. Construction commenced in 1965 and was substantially completed in three years.

Designed by Minoru Yamasaki, with local architects Van Bourg-Nakamura Associates, the complex included shops and restaurants in an interior mall, a hotel and



The Peace Pagoda is a modern, concrete interpretation of traditional building practices.

SHAYNE WATSON

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The Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, a binational endeavor partially funded by Japanese corporations, when it opened in 1968.

a theater, most over underground parking. Yamasaki had been selected in 1954 to design the U.S. consulate in Kobe, Japan. His highly successful House of Science in his native Seattle was a centerpiece of that city's 1962 World's Fair. Yamasaki's work on several corporate towers led to the commission for New York City's twin towers at the World Trade Center, which he designed in 1964; construction on the twin towers began in 1966.

During this same period, Yamasaki was engaged in the Japan Center project. A recent monograph on Yamasaki by architectural historian Dale Gyure sheds light on his work and association with what has

become known as New Formalism, offering a broader story than his best-known but ill-fated World Trade Center towers. Gyure says of Japan Center in his monograph: "He (Yamasaki) once told a reporter, 'I couldn't build a Japanese house if I tried ... I don't know how. I haven't the training or the background for it.' His

sensitivity about the subject boiled over on at least one occasion during the design process. When Justin Herman, head of the Redevelopment Agency, advised designing the hotel rooms as authentically Japanese as possible, Yamasaki peevishly replied, 'As I have told you before, I really do not know enough about Japanese detailing to feel adequate in this respect ... Neither we nor Van Bourg-Nakamura are suited to this kind of Japanese detailing.' Statements like these made the faux historicism of the final buildings difficult to understand."

Ultimately, Yamasaki felt that the developer and the Redevelopment Agency did not execute the project he envisioned. The building interiors Yamasaki shied away from were designed by decorator Takenaka Komuten. The Peace Pagoda set in Yamasaki's plaza was conceived by Yoshiro Taniguchi, a Japanese architect who had designed the Japanese Crown Prince's palace. The complex's boxy buildings are broken up by Yamasaki's concrete panels and interspersed wood, evoking Japanese shoji screens. The central Peace Plaza opens up the otherwise walled-off complex.

The Peace Pagoda, a modern, concrete interpretation of traditional Japanese building practices, was deliberately placed at the center of the development. But unlike other elements of the project, its construction was funded through donations drawn largely from San Francisco's sister city, Osaka, Japan. It was given to San Francisco as a symbol of friendship and peace between Japan and the United States. On March 28, the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the complex, the Japantown community celebrated Japan Center, which has been both controversial in some aspects and successful in others during its five decades in the community.



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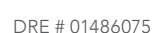
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1701 Franklin St	11	5	5	7,125	15	2/27/2018	6,995,000	7,000,000

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2833 Sacramento St	3	2	1	1,875	26	3/12/2018	1,350,000	1,550,000
1770 Pacific Ave #103	2	2	1	1,500	11	2/27/2018	1,495,000	1,575,000
2655 Bush St #605	2	2	1	1,003	10	2/22/2018	1,639,000	1,600,000
1835 Franklin St #1202	2	2	1	1,550	12	2/16/2018	1,749,000	1,760,000
2655 Bush St #401	3	2	2	1,600	7	2/22/2018	1,995,000	1,910,000
2046 Divisadero St	2	2	1	1,555	8	3/2/2018	1,595,000	1,925,000
2568 Sutter St	4	2	2	n/a	19	2/27/2018	1,990,000	1,990,000
2655 Bush St #601	3	2	2	1,375	2	2/20/2018	2,200,000	2,000,000
2055 Bush St	3	3	2	2,532	78	2/23/2018	1,998,000	2,050,000
3827 Clay St	2	2	1	n/a	38	3/14/2018	2,295,000	2,400,000
3354 Clay St	3	2	1	2,445	27	3/6/2018	2,495,000	2,600,000
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— 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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FAREWELL

By BARBARA KATE REPA

I MET MARY KUEI BOYER a decade ago at an art exhibition at the Sequoias, the high-rise senior community on Geary near Gough.

“I think you would like to get to know me,” she said, and she was right. We shared many long lunches and talks. She provided the entertainment, with her fast-paced stories that sped along ever faster as she became more and more excited. I was there to receive her wisdom and marvel at her ability to clean her plate.

This wisp of a woman with an outsized appetite was an enigma in many ways. She was impish but thoughtful, modest but proud, outgoing but intensely private. She had a lot to teach about both living and dying.

Born in a poor rural Chinese village near Beijing, she later fled to Taiwan after the revolution. On the way she was captured, but escaped by kicking open the cage that confined her. Later she moved to Japan, where she held different jobs, including running a beauty parlor, cafe and bar. After marrying an American and moving to New York, she realized her dream of launching an upscale fashion business, Custom Gowns by Madame Kuei. She later moved her successful business to Florida, before eventually selling it and becoming something of a real estate mogul.

For the past decade, Mary lived at the Sequoias, charming the staff and gamely participating in everything from art class to laughing class. She put in long, sometimes sleepless nights — just as she had during her fashion career — while sewing creations to be auctioned at the annual fundraising gala.

She also befriended many of the residents. Among her favorites was Joe Ries, who fortuitously lived in the room next to hers in her final months. As her thin frame grew even thinner, she was often cold. So she suggested opening the wall between them “so we could cuddle.”

Ries still marvels over Mary’s strength and resolve in traveling to Fort Lauderdale in December to say



The ever-fashionable Mary Boyer died March 21.

LESSONS IN
Living & Dying

goodbye to her many friends there. “She loved to travel, but she knew that would be her last trip,” he says. He also recalled her propensity to dole out gentle fashion advice to friends. She had hinted pointedly that he could improve his sartorial panache by wearing a pocket handkerchief. When he still failed to don one after several months, she silently slipped him one under the dining table one day.

She asked Ries, known for his booming voice and raucous sense of humor, to officiate at a memorial

gathering to be held on April 25 at the Sequoias. “Mary was concerned that people remember her with a smile, and that’s easy to do with her,” he said. She also left him with some final marching orders: “There’s no need to cry for me. I’ll only die once.”

Mary gave me wise counsel in the months before my mother died a few years ago, also at the age of 93. “Don’t be sad when your mother dies,” she said. “She had a good long life, and you two had a good relationship. You have to think of that and be happy.”

Mary had a good life — and a good death, too, which she faced with her usual pragmatic acceptance. “No one really wants to die,” she said. “But we do die.”

In her final weeks, Mary said she was not in pain, but she was constantly hungry. Esophageal cancer prevented her from eating or swallowing much. But she remained fashion-conscious to the end. “I’m dressed like a hobo in here,” she lamented, shunning the conveniences of button-front shirts and casual sweatpants. When her dutiful daughter bought her a warm sweater, she waved it away dismissively. “I will not be seen in polka dots,” she said.

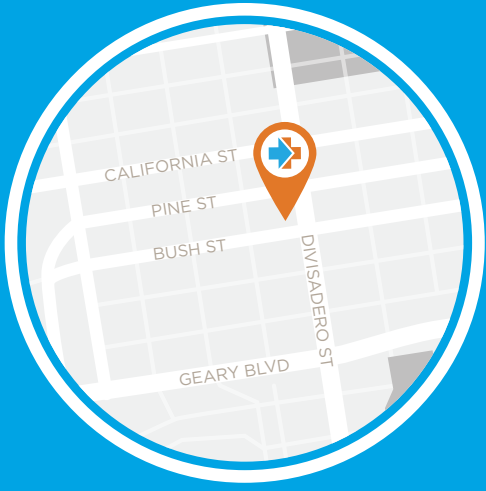
I last saw Mary about a week before she died on March 21. She motioned for me to retrieve the small bottle of Chanel No. 5 from her bedside table, then dabbed a few drops behind her ears and a few behind mine.

She took my hand with a surprisingly strong grip, her fingernails freshly manicured in a fittingly rose-colored polish. “I have a favor to ask you,” she said. “After I’m gone, I want you to write something — not ‘she did this and she did that,’ but about how much I loved living here at the Sequoias. I want the world to know what a good place this is not only when you’re living, but also when you’re dying,” she said, gesturing to her private room abloom with flowers from well-wishers and the padded barcalounger she inhabited like a queen.

“Will you do that for me?”
Farewell, dear Mary.

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