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Grand Central Market replaced St. Paul's
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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ MAY 2019



A Tale of Two Gardeners

Over two decades, they've created a magical garden on Pine Street

PAGES 8 & 9

PHOTOGRAPH BY BARBARA WYETH

The Brown Bag

THE WINDOWS AT the Brown Bag, the quirky office supply store at 2000 Fillmore for many years, were the topic of an item in Image magazine in 1991:

This is the store that breaks all the rules. Its Fillmore Street windows are really shadow boxes, maybe 4 feet square but only about 6 inches deep, so the displays look more like collages. The employees, all collectors of various kinds, bring their own stuff in to use as props. The store itself, which is supposed to be a stationery shop, sells dishes and tiny plastic eyeballs.

"We don't want to be commercial," says owner Dawn Christensen. "There's *nothing* I won't buy." She is considering a "national mammogram week" window this spring using greeting cards with voluptuous Victorian women.

Employee Michael May (left) takes Christensen's ideas and turns them into windows.

A scissors window. A cowboy window. A magnet window. A recent gold window included crowns, swans, pencils, dice, stamp holders and doilies. "It's a far cry from forming men's suits," says May, a former men's retail display worker.

"We don't just pull merchandise from the store — we buy things for the windows and then sell them," says Christensen.

A window sometimes has a hidden message, she says, but "the people who would be offended don't get it."



DANIEL BAHMANI



La Meditteranee, at 2210 Fillmore, will celebrate its 40th anniversary on May 11.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

La Med Turns 40 This Month

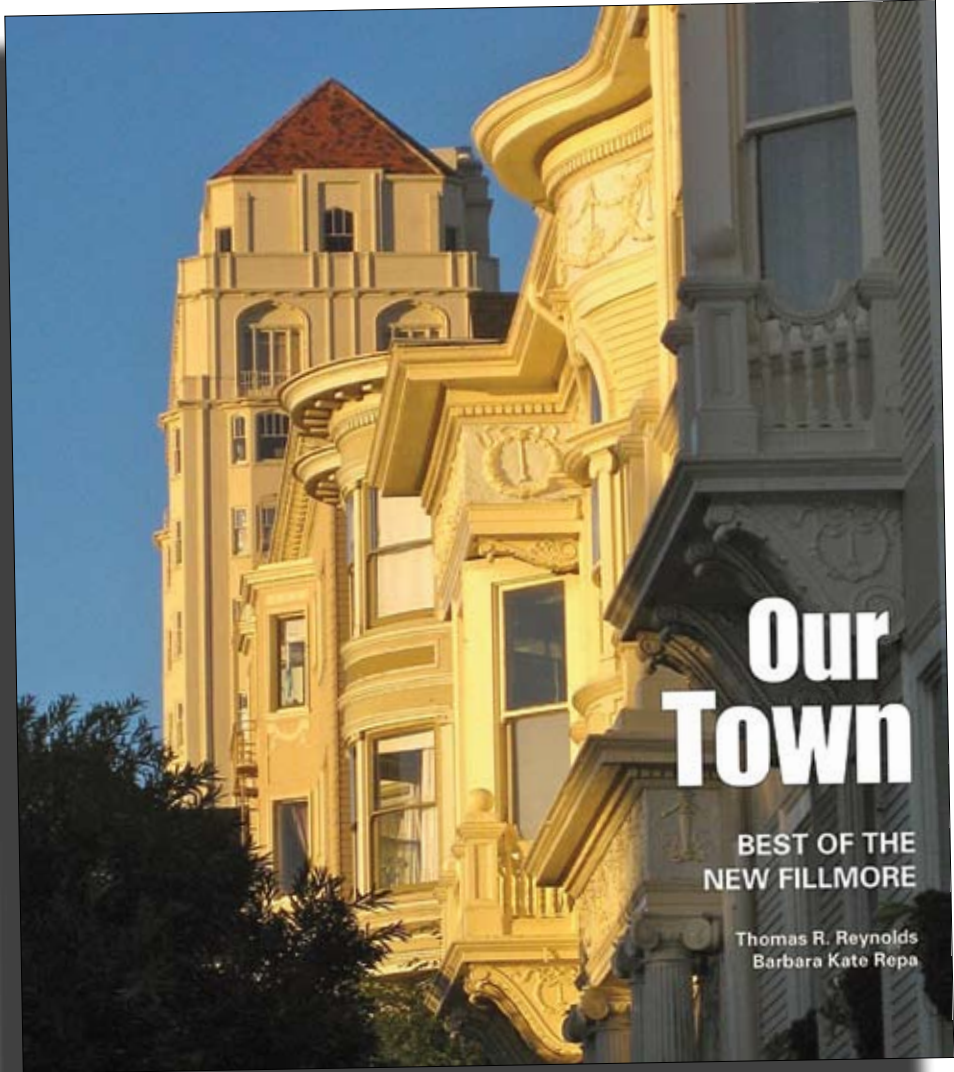
WHEN La Meditteranee founder Levon Der Bedrossian moved from Lebanon to California in 1967 to attend Chico State University, he lived in the neighboring town of Paradise, which was devastated by the recent Camp Fire.

Then he moved to San Francisco and opened La Meditteranee on Fillmore Street on May 11, 1979, serving the Middle Eastern meza dishes from Lebanon and the Armenian family recipes he had begun experimenting with for his fellow students in Chico. They were unique on the culinary scene in San Francisco at the time.

So it should come as no surprise to those who know Der Bedrossian and his special restaurant — which has consistently been voted the best Mediterranean restaurant in the Bay Area — that he would celebrate its 40th anniversary by donating all of the proceeds to support survivors of the Camp Fire in Paradise.

The 40th anniversary party will be held on May 11 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the restaurant at 2210 Fillmore.

Der Bedrossian is still involved with the business, but his son Vanick and longtime managing partners Alicia Vanden Huevel and Trevor Lederberger have taken the helm. In addition to the flagship on Fillmore, La Meditteranee also has locations in the Castro and in Berkeley, plus a catering kitchen in North Beach.



Pacific Heights Residents Association
& San Francisco Beautiful invite you to

A Celebration OF THE Neighborhood

Thursday, May 9, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Calvin Hall at Calvary Presbyterian Church
2515 Fillmore Street

A MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION
on the history of the neighborhood and the people
and places that make it a wonderful place to live

with THOMAS R. REYNOLDS & BARBARA KATE REPA
authors of *Our Town* and editors of the *New Fillmore*



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norfolkpress.com

Our Town is available at Browser Books on Fillmore Street
or by mail at ourtown.norfolkpress.com

Armed Robbery
Van Ness and Hayes
March 4, 9:45 p.m.

Two men entered a store, pulled out knives and threatened two of the employees inside. One man leaped over the counter and grabbed cash from the register. When an employee gave chase, the robber turned and snatched her phone. Both men fled before the police arrived. Neither employee was injured. The two suspects were described as being about 30 years old. The matter is still under investigation.

Attempted Robbery
California and 14th
March 26, 5:55 p.m.

A man was waiting for the bus when a stranger approached and demanded his cell phone. When the man refused, the suspect pushed him and hit him with a beer bottle. Several onlookers intervened, and the assailant ran off. Officers summoned to the scene located the would-be thief. He struggled with the police, but eventually they subdued him. A records check revealed an outstanding warrant for his arrest.

Shoplifting, Making Threats
Divisadero and O'Farrell
March 27, 8:30 a.m.

A man entered the Walgreen's store and started taking items off the shelves. When an employee attempted to intervene, he threatened to harm her. He was known in the store as a habitual shoplifter. Later that same day at about 12:45 p.m., he returned to the store and once again began snatching things from the shelves. Because he had previously made threats, the employees did not interact with him, and he left the store with what he had stolen.

Two days later, employees at the Subway on Van Ness closed at 3:30 p.m. and accidentally left the door unlocked. Later, items were found to be missing. When officers looked at the video surveillance footage, they saw the same suspect enter the Subway wearing clothes that matched what he was wearing when he robbed Walgreen's. He first scouted for any employees, then took several food items and left. Three days later, officers on patrol saw the same individual crossing the street against a red light at Bush and Polk and placed him under arrest.

Street Robbery
Geary and Laguna
March 27, 5:55 p.m.

A juvenile approached a woman and snatched her phone from her hand. The woman fell to the ground as she struggled and suffered minor injuries. The robber, believed to be about 15 or 16 years old, fled the area with the phone. The suspect is still at large.

Attempted Robbery
Fillmore and O'Farrell
March 29, 7:00 p.m.

A man was standing near the Fillmore Center,

using his iPhone, when two individuals approached him and attempted to steal it. He fought them and succeeded in keeping possession of the phone, sustaining minor scratches on his neck. Police were able to obtain video surveillance footage of the scuffle and handed it over to investigators at Northern Station. The assigned investigator recognized one of the suspects as a serial phone thief frequenting the neighborhood.

On April 19, the investigator summoned a witness to the incident and conducted a photo line-up. The witness identified the suspect, and a few hours later, officers located and arrested him.

Attack With a Sword
Fillmore and Fell
March 29, 9:30 p.m.

A man who was leaving a liquor store across the street from the Church of 8 Wheels was approached by an individual wearing a Make America Great Again hat and shouting homophobic slurs. Others saw the same man, who appeared to be carrying a large sword tucked into a sheath in the back of his jacket. About 30 minutes later, one of the patrons standing outside the roller rink flipped the hat off the man's head.

He then unsheathed the sword and swung it at the man who had removed his hat. As the man raised a hand to protect his face, the swordsman swung the weapon again, slashing his hand and partially severing it. The attacker then fled, sword still in hand. The man who had been struck was hospitalized in critical condition.

Officers found a bottle of beer near the scene that the man with the sword had handled and were able to get fingerprints from it that identified him. Police were also able to obtain video footage of the incident. After several further investigative steps, the officers learned the suspect's address. The investigators then sent out a crime alert, identifying the man to police units and to the public. They also set up surveillance in the suspect's neighborhood. Finally, on April 3 at 9:22 p.m., they spotted him at Kentucky Fried Chicken at Eddy and Polk, and placed him under arrest.

Attempted Robbery
Geary and 8th
April 8, 11:13 p.m.

Police received a report about a large street fight in progress. When they arrived, one man was being treated by the medics, and a CHP officer had detained another. After obtaining statements from witnesses, the officers determined that the person detained claimed to be a victim in the incident. According to the man, the suspect approached him outside the Playland Bar and pointed a gun at him. The man who had been threatened then punched the suspect in self-defense.

The detained man stated that the fight had begun when he came upon two of his friends involved in a physical fight with two other individuals they said had robbed them. As more witnesses provided infor-

mation, police identified two more suspects, a man and a woman, one of whom was carrying a Colt 38 Special. Officers then learned that all the suspects were affiliated with a gang, and summoned the Gang Task Force to the scene to continue the investigation, sending out a citywide crime alert for a fourth suspect. Later in the day, they arrested that suspect in the Mission District.

Possession of a Gun, Making Threats
Pacific and Gough
April 12, 9:28 p.m.

Officers received a call from a worksite concerning a person with a gun. As they arrived, they saw a man who was bleeding from his head and summoned paramedics. Witnesses explained they had been having an ongoing dispute with the suspect, who had been stealing property from the worksite. One of the workers approached the man to discuss the issue. The man suspected of stealing became hostile, and an argument erupted. Witnesses say that the suspect then left the scene, but returned a short time later with a pistol in his waistband.

One of the workmen called for help from his co-workers, then picked up a construction tool for self-defense, hitting the gunman over the head. Witnesses seized the handgun, a black Colt 45 pistol, and called the police. Officers detained the suspect.

Theft, Vandalism
Van Ness and Pine
April 18, 12:24 p.m.

A woman walked into the Mattress Firm Store with a rock in her hand. She stole a pillow, then ripped an advertising paper off the wall and left the store. The manager followed her outside and struggled with her, trying to get the pillow back. Eventually he managed to wrest the pillow from her grasp.

The manager then remembered the advertisement and went back outside. He found the woman again, then retrieved the paper. When the police arrived, the manager pointed her out to the officers, who detained her about a block away. She was then booked.

Robbery
Geary and Laguna
April 27, 5:53 p.m.

A woman waiting at a bus stop heard someone rushing up behind her. She turned to be confronted with two men who attempted to take her cell phone. She struggled, but eventually the two pried the phone out of her hands. They then fled the scene.

Police investigators examined the video surveillance that had been set up in the area, recognized one of the suspects from similar robberies in the neighborhood and distributed a crime bulletin for his arrest.

Northern Station officers later spotted one man involved in the robbery and arrested him at Webster and Eddy. Three days later, they recognized the second suspect at Turk and Buchanan, and he too was placed under arrest.



SHANTI's Cancer Divas, a women's cancer support and writing group present
ART FOR CANCER

A Susie Isome Retrospective Benefit for SHANTI PROJECT:
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RETROSPECTIVE highlights the late **Susie Isome**, San Franciscan artist known for her artworks of fantasy and beauty.

Donations will go to SHANTI, a non-profit supporting San Franciscans for the past forty years. SHANTI helps to guide the health, quality of life and well being of people living with HIV, cancer, and vulnerable medical conditions.

ART FOR CANCER Closing Party June 27, 6-8pm

Contact and donations:
www.cancerdivas.org

Final Brunch at the Elite

By CHRIS BARNETT

USUALLY LAST CALL is 2 a.m. But for **THE ELITE CAFE**, the final pour came on a sunny Easter Sunday afternoon, April 21, ending a 38-year run as the city’s premier New Orleans-inspired, California-Cajun restaurant and saloon.

The plank was packed, the tables and signature booths filled most of the day with patrons old and new lamenting the death of a hangout treasured for most of its life by a lively mix of locals and visitors, who could always count on a bowl of spicy gumbo, a plate of oysters and a stiff drink, all mixed, cooked and served by pro waiters, bartenders and chefs happy to toil in this soul-filled space with 100 years of hedonistic history in its walls and rafters.

Once said to be a combo Chinese restaurant and gambling parlor, the Elite was the brainchild of serial restaurateur and Pacific Heights resident **SAM DUVALL**, who beat out star chef **JEREMIAH TOWER** for the lease in 1981 when he had the stomach to dispose of a dead rat on the premises after Tower refused the broker’s request to do it.

Today the building’s new owners, **RICK HOWARD** and **GEORGE KARAS** — who also own **HARRY’S BAR** across the street — are looking for a new tenant. But the selection process is out of their hands. **ANDY CHUN**, the most recent owner of the Elite, is making that call. Rumor has it the main contender is **ADRIANO PAGANINI**, who gave budget Italian foodies the **PASTA POMODORO** chain and has a long string of other restaurants in town. He’s Howard’s first choice. Three other bidders have reportedly dropped out.

But on that funereal Sunday, the bar was buzzing with elbow benders trying to divine what went wrong.

- Amity Gay, a PR exec, was sipping a flute of bubbly that failed to raise her spirits. “This is an institution, our go-to for girls’ weekend brunches,” she said. “Today I started with a biscuit, like all good Southern girls.”
- A couple of bar stools away, technology marketing specialist Spencer King said he read about the closing and wanted to have a final sinfully rich soft shell crab Benedict. “Most places in town don’t have this historical vibe,” he said.
- Dublin-born Anna McEntee said she was shocked to learn of the closing. “It’s a great place for the neighborhood, but in recent years it lost its spark.” Added her brunch buddy, Abdellah Cherkaoui, “I love this landmark and am so disappointed to see it go. It’s the spirit of the Fillmore and links us to the city.”

The Elite’s staff, many of whom have landed jobs elsewhere, stuck around to the bitter end — mainly, they said, as a tribute to co-general managers Will Herrera and Scotty Wolf of the restaurant consultancy **Piss & Vinegar**. “Best manager I ever had,” beamed server Michelle Brown in a nod to Herrera, who was holding his 3-year-old



The blue storefront at 2043 Fillmore has turned red, and **APIZZA** is coming.

daughter in his arms as he said his farewells. “I feel grateful for the opportunity, and for the staff who could have walked away but stayed,” he said. Wolf was working the booths, a half-filled glass of Wild Turkey 101 in his hand. Again and again, the question was pondered by seasoned patrons: What went wrong? In his next breath, Wolf answered the question himself: “A few years ago, they tried to change the vibe. It just didn’t work.”

BOOMING: The year-long pre-opening playbook **NOOSH** followed has clearly worked: Tease out tasty informational tidbits while holding invitation-only parties to build an appetite. The Eastern Mediterranean restaurant and bar at Fillmore and Pine opened slowly, but is now a hot ticket with lines down the block. It has already scrapped one early stumbling block — requiring diners to fork over their credit cards the minute they walk in the door. Noosh’s all-day menu has kept its promise on pricing: moderate for really fresh, flavorful foods like hefty kebabs (two skewers each, \$7 to \$9), chubby pita sandwiches (\$12), large, soft Turkish flat breads (\$15) and small plate appetizers (\$5 to \$8). Still to come: that 7 a.m. opening for breakfast and the high-end prix-fixe culinary offering in the main dining room.

STILL IN THE OVEN: The entrepreneurial French doughboy **PASCAL RIGO**, who created the La Boulangerie bakery chain, sold it to Starbucks for \$100 million, then took back some of his Bay Area outlets, says his newest venture, **APIZZA** — featuring affordable organic pizza pies — probably won’t open in May. But the French blue front of his long vacant shop at 2043 Fillmore, now being converted into the eat-in or take-out pizza palace, has been painted a flaming crimson red.

The Beat goes on. Send newsy local items to chris@cbarnmedia.com or call 415-921-5092.

Muni Fare Prices as of July 1, 2019

 \$3.00 Adult Single Ride Fare (Cash & Limited Use Card)	 \$1.50 Reduced Fare Single Ride (Cash & Limited Use Card)	 \$2.50 Adult Single Ride Fare (Clipper® & MuniMobile®)	 \$1.25 Discount Single Ride (Clipper® & MuniMobile®)
 \$40.00 Reduced Fare Monthly Pass (Muni Only)	 \$81.00 Adult “M” Monthly Pass (Muni Only)	 \$98.00 Adult “A” Monthly Pass (+ BART within SF)	<p>311 Free language assistance / 免費語言協助 / Ayuda gratis con el idioma / Бесплатная помощь переводчиков / Trợ giúp Thông dịch Miễn phí / Assistance linguistique gratuite / 無料の言語支援 / Libreng tulong para sa wikang Filipino / 무료 언어 지원 / การช่วยเหลือทางด้านภาษาโดยไม่เสียค่าใช้จ่าย / خط المساعدة المجاني على الرقم</p>



ARASH MALEKZADEH

Kelly Johnson and his daughter Leda Meredith as he was dying on May 7, 2018. At right he sits on Fillmore Street, where he spent many days drinking coffee and talking with friends.

GRATITUDE, COURAGE & RELIEF

A year ago, Kelly Johnson's decision to end his life drew the neighborhood together

BY LEDA MEREDITH

WHEN I LANDED at SFO in mid-April of last year, the first change to hit me was that my dad Kelly Johnson couldn't pick me up at the airport. He wasn't able to drive anymore. The reason for the visit to my hometown was that he had gone into hospice care. I'd canceled everything on my schedule and come to be with him. We didn't know how much time we would have together.

Seeing the elevator chairs that had been added to the two flights of stairs in his Victorian building was a jolt, as were the tubes in his nose; he was on full time oxygen at that point.

But every detail of the home was familiar — from the books on the shelves to the ceramic owl container that he used to hide an Easter egg in when I was a kid.

Neither of us knew then that he would choose to die in less than a month, embracing California's End of Life Option with gratitude, courage and relief. As he sat hunched over his desk trying to summon up the appetite to finish a piece of toast, we couldn't have imagined the next few weeks would become a nonstop musical and gustatory celebration with friends.

Doctors and hospice workers say it's not uncommon for terminally ill people to experience bursts of robust health just before they die. In my dad's case, increased dosages of steroids and painkillers may have contributed.

But I believe it was also the love he was surrounded by — and the peace that he'd made with his past; so many stories I'd never heard before came out near the end. Also, for the first time in years, he had the power of choice and was in charge of his life. His physical health had deteriorated beyond control, but he got to choose when and how to make his exit. And he did so with his usual flair.

One of the ways my dad made peace with his impending

death was to organize his life into eras that he could look back on with pleasure and pride. On his website, kellyjohnson.com, you'll find them: the Chicago vaudeville circuit, the San Francisco Dance Theater days, the Berkeley Symphony days and his classical piano concert days.

Organizing these eras, and the combined self-image that he created, became extremely important to him. It was how he embraced his memories and himself when the end was an actual event on his calendar.

It took me a while to understand this and I made some blunders. For example, there was the matter of the bread seeds. Years ago my dad baked a lot and, for several years, anytime he went to a party he would bring what he called The Seeded Loaf. This was a delicious, oblong loaf of bread with an array of seeds sprinkled over the crust: poppy, caraway, sesame, anise. He kept the jars of seeds on the lowest of several spice shelves in his kitchen.

My dad had asked me not to remove or give away any of his things while he was still alive. "I know it's going to be more of a pain for you to deal with afterward, but I don't want my home disappearing around me while I'm still in it," he said.

I imagined how grim things such as the outlines of absent paintings on the walls could be and thought I understood completely. But I didn't realize that the bread seeds were in the same category.

One day I opened a jar and noticed that the sesame seeds had gone rancid. He hadn't baked The Seeded Loaf in years, so I didn't see any harm in throwing them out. Big mistake. He let me know that the jars of seeds were a reminder of the years when he was the guy who would show up at the party with The Seeded Loaf tucked under his arm. After that, I was careful not to get rid of anything in the apartment.

The transformation my dad accomplished during his final days included going from someone who had been

wearing the same jeans and hoodie for months to a semblance of the dapper, well-dressed man he'd once been. In the documentary film about his final days, *A Dance With Death*, there is a scene in which he has several colorful shirts hanging on the Japanese tansu in his bedroom. In the film, he says he remembers where he wore each of them, and how he felt when he was wearing them.

For his death, he chose a button-down shirt with musical notes on it and white cotton pants. This was the outfit he wanted to wear on his trip to Peet's on that final morning. When he chose it, I pointed out that San Francisco weather is fickle, and he might be cold in such light clothing. He said: "I don't care. I'm going to go out looking good."

The day before my dad's death, his health tanked. Gone was the robustness of the past two weeks. Doubled was the quantity of painkillers he required. He told me he wasn't sure he was going to make it to his planned demise the following day. He also told me: "I'm glad I feel awful today. I had started to forget why I wanted to die."

On the morning of May 7, 2018, Kelly Johnson went out the front door at 2217 Fillmore Street for the last time. It was a glorious sunny morning, with dozens of friends waiting, and jazz diva Kim Nalley sang.

There is one detail that comes back to me again and again. As my husband wheeled my dad's chair down the street to meet his friends waiting at Peet's, I walked backward in front of him tossing pink and orange feathers. "We used to put those on our Christmas trees!" he exclaimed with a surprised and delighted smile. He had always been fond of that quirky family tradition.

Later that morning, as we got ready to take him back home for his final hours, one of his friends told me she had spotted a bird flying off with some of those colorful feathers. I like to think the nests in the trees around Fillmore Street were more colorful than usual last spring.

He would have loved that.

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KATHRYN AMNOTT

‘A Dance With Death’ screens May 7

AS PART OF a year-long series on death and dying, the Main Library will screen the documentary **A DANCE WITH DEATH: THE FINAL DAYS OF KELLY JOHNSON** on May 7, the first anniversary of his death. The screening is part of a program from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. called “How to Die in California.” For more information, go to sfpl.org.

■ FIRST PERSON

How I Helped My Dad Die

MY DAD WANTED to be an example to others suffering from terminal disease, as well as their caregivers. He wanted them to know that they could spend those last days celebrating love and memories, rather than slipping inexorably into ever-increasing physical pain and psychological despair.

That said, California’s end of life option is not for everyone. For starters, to qualify for the program, two doctors have to affirm that the person’s illness is incurable. My dad’s long-time primary doctor refused, and he had to find another.

The person must also be of sound mind and able to have clear conversations with hospice workers and doctors. In my dad’s case, these conversations took place over the three weeks before the date he had chosen for his death. They included questions such as: “Are you still sure you want to do this?” and instructions about what the process would be on that last day.

The physical process for dying under the law is that the person first takes an anti-nausea medication, then the contents of 90 capsules of Seconal emptied into a glass and mixed with juice or other liquid. The person must be able to lift the glass on his or her own. If the person is too physically weak, a caregiver may hold the glass, though the person must drink the mixture through a straw; no one else can empty it into his or her mouth. The person choosing to die must still be clearly acting of free will. In addition, an official witness must be present. For my dad, it was one of the hospice nurses.

The end was painless: My dad drifted off to sleep almost immediately and within minutes was dead, although we had been warned by

hospice workers that in some cases it takes longer.

From my experience, the most important thing I can advise caregivers is that in the weeks before the death, it really does take a village. I was my dad’s primary caregiver during those final days, but I had help from friends and neighbors, my husband and the hospice team. Even with all of that, during the last week I hired a night nurse because I had been keeping an ear out in case my dad needed something in the middle of the night. It is stressful to know that you are about to lose a loved one who is so very important to you. In my case, it helped to ask my dad’s friends to spend time with him while I went to a yoga class every day.

Be aware that some of the well-meaning people around you may have strong objections to the end of life option, for religious or other reasons. They are likely to hit you with their objections rather than confronting the dying person with them. Also, you and others may have the urge to take care of the person in ways that are no longer meaningful. For example, if a person with only a few days to live wants to eat something you consider unhealthy, allow it.

Most important of all: listen. Some of the stories my dad wanted to share at the end were shockingly personal. Others I had already heard a thousand times. It didn’t matter. What mattered was that people who loved him were there to listen to the story of his life as he remembered it.

Finally, know that the group Compassion and Choices (compassionandchoices.org) is a useful resource for people considering the end of life option, as well as for their caregivers.

— LEDA MEREDITH



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Two Girls and a Garden



Theresa Joyce and Susan Meyers: longtime gardeners, artists and friends.

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARBARA WYETH

IT'S A BRIGHT, breezy spring afternoon. I'm walking on a tree-lined block of Pine Street and noticing these grand Victorians and manicured front yards for the first time. The garden in front of 2418 Pine Street is especially lovely: formal, with roses, yet inviting, with a Little Free Library box at the front gate.

I am here to meet Susan Meyers and Theresa Joyce, longtime gardeners, artists and friends, who tend the grounds around this classic and much-loved San Francisco Victorian that Susan shares with her husband. The two friends met almost 20 years ago.

"I was working at Sloat Garden Center," says Theresa, an estate gardener and artist now living in Occidental. "We just connected, on so many levels."

They bonded over their enthusiasm for the art of painting with plants. When talking about their ideas for the garden, they frequently finish each other's sentences, a sure sign of the deep connection that has developed over their years of working together.

There are actually three gardens here. In the front garden are parterres and elegant rose bushes, loaded with plump, tight buds just starting to bloom.

To the left, along the side of the house, a wooden gate opens to a lush, quiet, very green Japanese garden. Along the stone pathway are meditation nooks and several Buddha figures. "Neither one of us is Buddhist," Susan says, "but we love the

art and sensibility of Japanese culture." Theresa adds: "And of course the amazing gardens." Says Susan about an especially treasured statuette: "This one I got on a trip to Japan. It's over 100 years old."

From the quiet of the Japanese garden, the next gate opens onto a riot of color and fun. The large back garden could be described as an English-style garden, but Theresa says it best: "It's a storybook garden."

The expansive grassy yard is lined with colorful blooms and beds of vibrant ground cover, mingling with vintage lawn ornaments and flea market finds. Each corner is a vignette of plants, flowers, artifacts and little themed scenes.

A small rose and clematis bedecked cottage is a space for solitude and quiet — and for Susan, a therapist who works from her home, it sometimes serves as a welcoming and friendly space to be with her clients. "This space is often my therapy, too," she says.

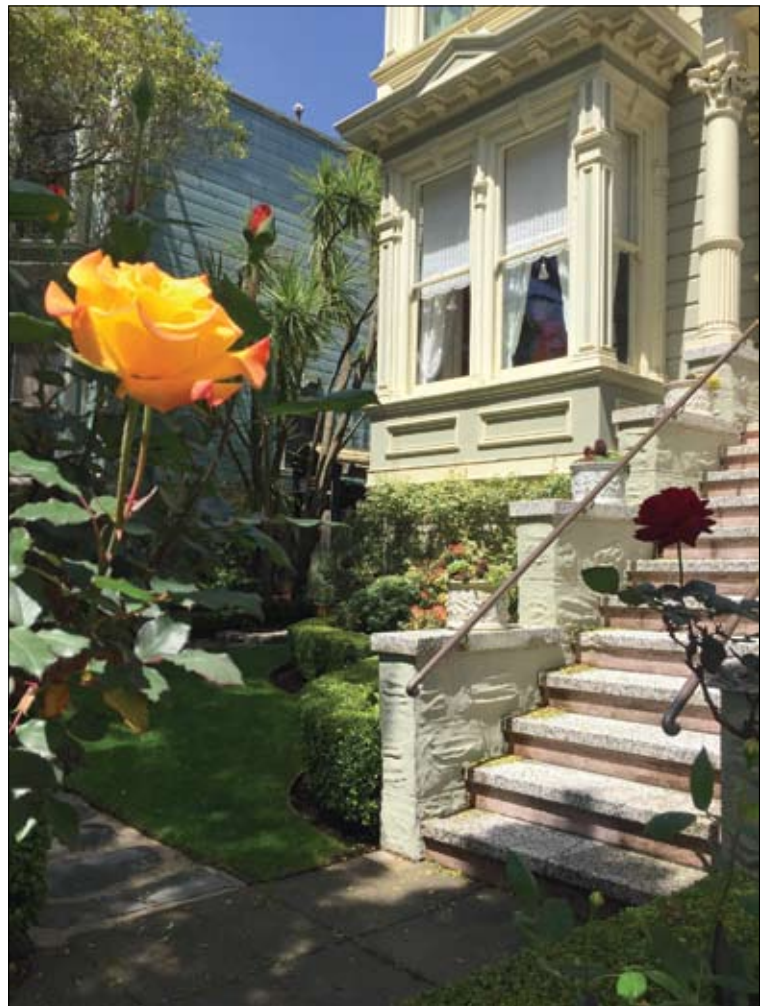
At the back of the garden is another smaller cottage, a playhouse for Susan's fortunate granddaughter.

In San Francisco we usually see only the facades of buildings and houses chock-a-block on the street. But behind most are yards and open space.

When entering the wonderful gardens Susan and Theresa have created, green and lush, filled with birds, bees and butterflies, with things to marvel at and make you smile, I feel like a child discovering a secret and magical place.



DICKIE SPRITZER



On May 4, a garden party

THE GARDEN AT 2418 Pine Street is actually three gardens: a rose garden in the front (above), a Japanese garden along the side (left) and an exuberant English country garden in the back (top). On May 4, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Susan Meyers and Theresa Joyce will welcome the public for a day-long party they're calling the **TWO GIRLS AND A GARDEN SHOW**. "This event celebrates friendship and the joy of tending gardens," they say. There will be live music, light refreshments and garden projects for kids. In addition, they will be offering greeting cards, art prints and other crafts for sale. Little Free Libraries will also be available for adoption.

Asian American Filmfest Screens at Local Theaters

By ANDREA CHASE

THE Center for Asian American Media's CAAM-Fest37 comes to two local theaters — the AMC Kabuki and New People Cinema — from May 9 to 19, presenting distinct facets of the Asian American experience.

SEADRIFT looks at the arrival of Vietnamese fishermen on the Texas gulf coast in the 1970s. Economic and racial tensions come to a head when a white crabber is shot and killed. Perceptively directed by Tim Tsai, the film captures the beauty of the landscape, the hopes of a refugee population striving to make a new start and an insular community that embraces racism all too quickly. (AMC Kabuki, May 10 at 5:10 p.m. and May 12 at 12:30 p.m.)

Marion Lipschutz and Rose Rosenblatt's BEI BEI follows Bei Bei Shuai, a Chinese immigrant charged with murder after attempting suicide while pregnant. When the fetus died, the state of Indiana brought charges against her, resulting in a legal battle that drew international attention. The film is an astringent study of politics and the justice system that puts the system on trial along with Shuai. (New People Cinema, May 10 at 7:40 p.m., with Lipschutz in attendance; AMC Kabuki, May 14 at 9:10 p.m.)

Actor Danny Pudi returns to CAAMFest in BABYSPLITTERS, a comically bittersweet tale of parenting and baby fever. Two couples at odds over reproducing come up with an original solution: co-parenting as a foursome with the husband of one couple fathering a child with the wife of the other one. Director Sam Friedlander takes on the comedy



ALBERT CHAU

The festival honors the late Public Defender Jeff Adachi.

and drama of treading the complex emotions engendered by taking this plunge with a clever and perceptive script, and with pitch-perfect performances from co-stars Emily Chang, Maiara Walsh and Eddie Alfano as the other co-parents and Brian Thomas Smith as an obstetrician rolling with the punches. (AMC Kabuki, May 11 at 9 p.m.)

Journalist Assia Boundaoui returns to the neighborhood of her childhood in suburban Chicago in THE FEELING OF BEING WATCHED. She's there to investigate the FBI surveillance of her family and friends to uncover the reasons for the domestic spying conducted by the government on American citizens after 9/11. The results are disturbing, calling into question issues that should worry all Americans about privacy and the presumption of innocence in the face of racial and religious profiling. (AMC Kabuki, May 12 at 7:40 p.m.)

HAPPY CLEANERS is a small gem of a film from first-time feature film directors Julian Kim and Peter S. Lee. It starts with a bang — or rather the crash of dishes — as American-born Kevin (Yun Jeong) clashes with his Korean-born

parents over the path his life should take. He wants to go the food truck route; they want him to go to medical school. What threatens to be a standard generational culture clash quickly becomes something richer and deeper as the two generations are forced to grapple with their differing definitions of the American dream. Lee, Kim and co-writer Kat Kim provide unexpected and compassionate insights in the immigrant experience, while also sharing the wonder that is acorn jelly. (AMC Kabuki, May 11 at 2:40 p.m. and May 13 at 9:10 p.m.)

Cai Chengjie's THE WIDOWED WITCH tells the serio-comic story of the hard times of Er Hou, newly widowed for the third time, and suddenly imbued with magical powers. Performing unintentional miracles in borrowed shaman's regalia, she travels with her mute brother-in-law, taking on life's ups and down with a stone face of determination and bemusement as the landscape switches from color, to black and white, to an evocative mix of the two. The magical element is tempered with a neo-realism that makes for a unique cinematic experience. (AMC Kabuki, May 15 at 9:10 p.m.)

Sessue Hayakawa had a long and illustrious career on both sides of the Pacific, but few know that he was a pioneer of silent cinema here in the United States. CAAM remembers that with a film that Hayakawa both produced and starred in: THE DRAGON PAINTER, from 1919. Full of delicious melodrama and lyrical images, it's a love story tinged with myth about a painter (Hayakawa) who discovers that happiness has its price. (New People Cinema, May 11 at 2:30 p.m., featuring a live score by Goh Nakamura.)

Other highlights include a screening of Chihiro Wimbush and Corey Tong's LOOK BACK: JEFF ADACHI, a tribute to the late San Francisco Public Defender who worked tirelessly for citizen rights. The program will also highlight his talents as a filmmaker with clips from his films THE SLANTED SCREEN, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK SOO, THE RIDE and DEFENDER, as well as a preview of a film Adachi was working on just before he died. (Kabuki 8, May 12 at 2 p.m.)

For more information about CAAMFest 37, go to caamfest.com/2019.



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Popping Up Again

The return of California Realism

By PAMELA FEINSILBER

FOR TWO DECADES he ran the Thomas Reynolds Gallery, an elegant, welcoming art gallery just off Fillmore Street. Since 2015, Thomas Reynolds has exhibited art online and privately by appointment. When a jewel of a space at 1906 Fillmore became available a couple of years ago, he organized a pop-up exhibition. And now, until the end of June, he's showing art there again.

We met when you were my boss as editor and publisher of *California Lawyer* magazine. The next thing I knew, you had an art gallery. How did that happen?

I got interested in art and design as a young lawyer in Chicago, going to the Art Institute on Thursday nights. When I came to *California Lawyer*, we aimed for strong covers — we even had a Gauguin on the cover once when we wrote about litigation over the bequest that created the Armand Hammer Museum in L.A. I think you edited that story. Through the magazine, I met some wonderful, just-emerging contemporary California painters. Francis Livingston and James Stagg both painted early covers of *California Lawyer*, and both were in my first gallery show, in 1994.

What made you decide to open a gallery?

I happened into the graduate exhibition of a young painter who lived near Fillmore, Veerakeat Tongpaiboon. His family owned Neecha, the Thai restaurant then at Sutter and Steiner, and many of his paintings were of this area. I lived here, too, and had already fallen in love with the neighborhood. On a lark, I rented the three-room Victorian space at 2291 Pine Street to show Veerakeat's paintings, and those of a few other artists I admired. I had a six-

week lease — it was to be one exhibition, not a new venture.

What happened?

I loved it — both being surrounded by art and becoming more involved in the neighborhood. And people loved Veerakeat's paintings. His first three shows sold out and he was able to buy a home in the neighborhood, where he still lives and paints. I found a lot of satisfaction in helping launch the careers of some incredibly talented painters who've had great success.

When you opened, most of the galleries were near Union Square. Why Fillmore?

Throughout its history, this area has been home to a number of important artists. And many people who live here appreciate — and collect — art. Plus, it was *my* neighborhood, and I felt a strong desire to be a part of it.

How did you find the artists you showed?

Fairly often, they found me. Ken Auster walked into the gallery one day, a legendary surf artist from Laguna Beach who wanted, as he said, to be “a real artist.” A new plein-air movement — artists painting outside, in the landscape — was just beginning again, a century after the first California Impressionists. That provided the spark Ken needed to work outside, where he wanted to be. He brought that same on-the-spot feeling to his cityscapes.

Your focus has been on California art?

Well, I found art to be a good way of learning about this edge of the world. It's a fairly short history, just since the Gold Rush, in 1849. There's a thread that runs from the early California painters through the Society of Six and the Bay Area figurative painters in the '50s.

Some of the figurative painters were still around. Paul Wonner and Theophilus Brown lived their final years just down Pine Street in the Towers, which Brown called “the Versailles of retirement homes.” I had the good fortune to know them both and show their work.

And we helped bring back Henry Villierme, a forgotten member of that group, who created some wonderful paintings after he retired from his day job and got back in the studio.

You closed your gallery four years ago to go online. Yet here you are with another pop-up. Why?

Just lucky, I guess. I closed on my 20th anniversary and was happy to be free of “retail jail,” as a friend on Union Street called it, though I was still showing art online. When this perfect little gallery space with white walls and track lighting became available a couple of years ago, it seemed like a good opportunity to return for a few months. Now it's become available again, and I've popped up again.

It's great to have a place old friends can stop by, and to be back in the thick of things on the street — which certainly has changed over the 25 years I've been here, and ever more quickly in recent years.

What are you exhibiting?

The current exhibition, “California Realism,” is a private collection of some of the best paintings that have come through the gallery over the years. It's wonderful to be among these “greatest hits” and to see them pass on to a new generation of collectors.

The Thomas Reynolds Gallery is at 1906 Fillmore Street through the end of June. For more information and hours, go to thomasreynolds.com or call 415-676-7689.

How to collect art

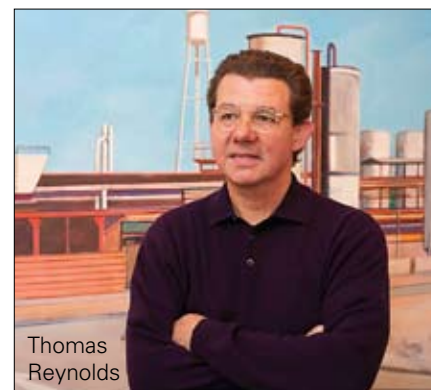
FOR 25 YEARS I've given in to my interest in art as the proprietor of a neighborhood gallery. Over the years I've found many generous people willing to share their enthusiasm and their knowledge. In the process, I've found that a few simple rules can help shape a collection.

■ DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO BUY.

Especially when you're first beginning to collect, it is much more important to look than to buy. Go to the museums and to galleries and auction houses. Let your eye learn what is good and what is better — what you like and what you love. Later on, when you find yourself still remembering the one that got away, you'll learn the corollary to this rule: Don't be too slow to buy, either, when love comes along.

■ **FOCUS YOUR COLLECTION.** Especially at the beginning, as you start to learn what excites you most, concentrate on one or two things. It could be cityscape paintings, or photographs, or work by women artists. This will give your looking a focus.

■ **COLLECT IN DEPTH.** Find a few artists whose work moves you and invest in them, in the fullest sense of the word. Buy multiple works that show the full range of their talent. This will often provide the added satisfaction of forming



a bond not only with a piece of art, but also with the artist.

■ **STAND ON YOUR TIPTOES.** Someone advised me early on, “Stand on your tiptoes when you buy art,” and it was good advice, if somewhat mysterious. What he meant was: Stretch yourself and buy one strong work, even if it costs more than you'd planned to pay, rather than “because it was cheap.” Ask to pay over a period of a few months.

■ **BUY WHAT YOU LIKE.** I encourage people to buy art with their gut, not with their head. If something speaks to you, or makes you smile, or stays with you, pay attention. Chances are that connection will endure and grow richer through the years. And another corollary, also important: Like what you buy, because you'll likely be living with it for a long time. There is a limited resale market for art. So be sure what you invite into your home is something you will always want as part of your life.

— THOMAS R. REYNOLDS

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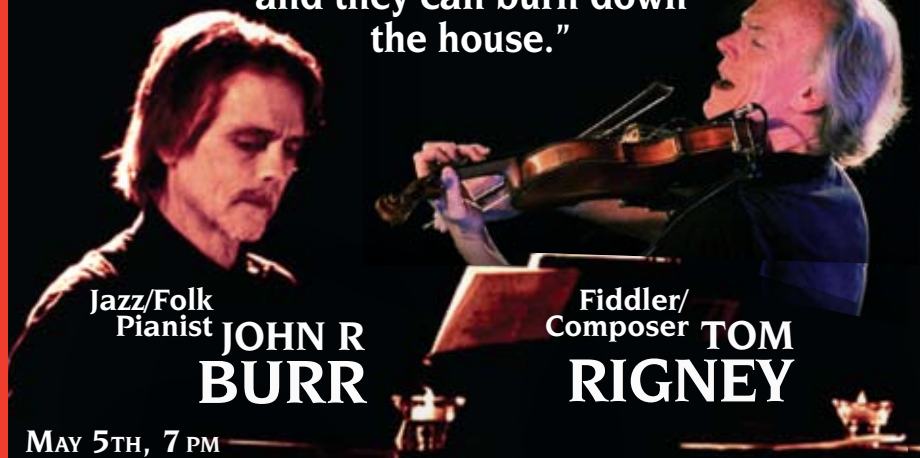
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Grand Central Market Rose From the Ashes of a Church

The city’s newest drive-in market opened in June 1941

By BRIDGET MALEY

SINCE IT OPENED in June 1941, touted as the city’s “newest drive-in market,” the Grand Central Market, now Mollie Stone’s, at 2435 California Street, has been a bustling neighborhood grocery.

The *News Call Bulletin* declared that “a program of entertainment would signalize its opening.” A photograph appearing with the article showed a gleaming white building with a black tile base and a Streamline Moderne blade sign. There were two entrances on California Street and one facing west toward the parking lot, for customers who took advantage of the readily available parking. This modern grocery was inserted into a block that had once housed a stately Episcopal church.

The south side of the 2400 block of California Street looked drastically different in 1915 when it was mapped by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company. At the

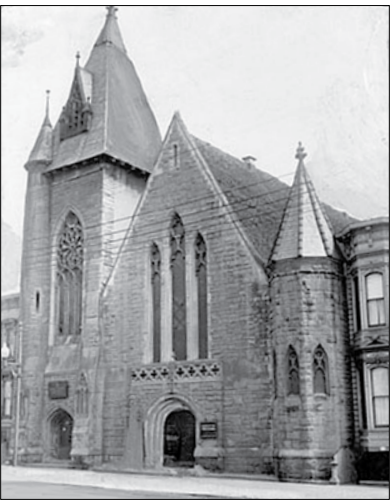
southwest corner of California and Fillmore Streets was a drugstore with apartments above it. Several other businesses, including a Japanese laundry, were west of the drug store along California Street. Mid-block there were several small single

family dwellings and the imposing St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. At the southeast corner of California and Steiner were two additional small-scale store buildings.

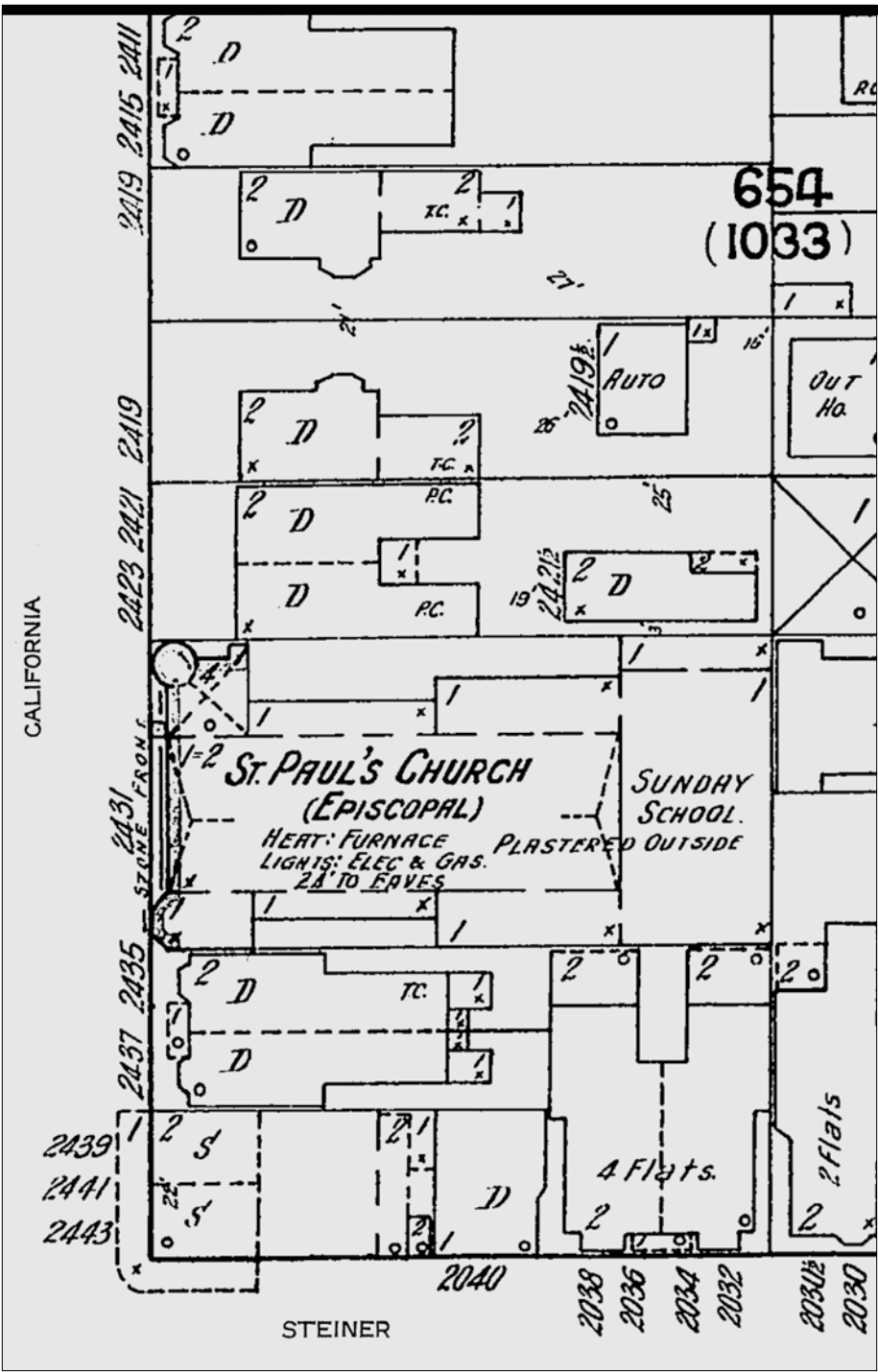
St. Paul’s, designed by the architect Samuel Newsom, was a small ecclesiastical building with a steeply pitched main gable and a red stone facade. The church, which was completed in 1896, burned in 1933, and several adjacent residences, also owned by

the Episcopal Church, were damaged by the fire. The church was not rebuilt and the land then became available for commercial development.

The architect of the Grand Central Market was Albert W. Burgren, who was at the twilight of his career when he designed



St. Paul’s Episcopal Church stood on the site until it burned in 1933.



A detail of the 1915 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of the south side of the 2400 block of California Street, showing the footprint of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church.

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Grand Central Market shortly after it opened in June 1941.

this modern grocery. Burgren, who was born in San Francisco in 1876 to Swedish parents, began a prolific partnership with T. Paterson Ross in 1900 that lasted until 1913. Their projects included a number of hotels and apartment buildings built after the 1906 earthquake, as well as the iconic Sing Fat Building in Chinatown. After his split with Ross, Burgren opened his own

office, but continued some collaborative work until Ross was severely injured in 1922 at a construction site. Burgren served in Europe during World War I, returning to San Francisco and working mostly in commercial architecture until his death in 1951 after a long and prolific career.

The Grand Central Market included a meat counter run by the Petrini fam-

ily, which also had counters at the Lick Super, Sunset Market and Manor Market. Petrini's was established in 1935 by Frank Petrini, who immigrated from Lucca, Italy, at the age of 12, and was known to have the best meats in Northern California. Petrini's advertisements are remembered for their inspiring quotes, which also appeared on walls and signs throughout the stores. The

quotes were published in a collection in 1992 titled *The Proverbs of Frank Petrini: Food for Thought*.

The Grand Central Market became Mollie Stone's in 1998, one of nine stores across the Bay Area. When the new owners remodeled the building, Mollie Stone's kept the Grand Central blade sign, with some modifications.



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2748 Bush St	1	2	1	1,050	16	4/2/2019	1,165,000	1,608,000
3019 Broderick St	3	2	1	n/a	69	4/10/2019	2,239,500	2,209,500
2381 Bush St	4	1	0	2,115	12	3/22/2019	1,945,000	2,625,000
1953 Webster St	3	4	1	n/a	13	3/18/2019	3,300,000	3,300,000
3039-3041 Baker St	4	4	2	n/a	57	3/22/2019	3,600,000	3,350,000
80 Wilmot St	3	3	2	n/a	13	3/22/2019	3,895,000	3,650,000
2973 Pine St	5	4	2	3,584	0	3/19/2019	4,650,000	4,650,000
1945 Franklin St	5	8	5	6,957	53	3/19/2019	5,995,000	5,405,000
2832 Sacramento St	4	4	2	3,120	13	4/2/2019	4,900,000	5,500,000
2457 Scott St	6	6	2	5,876	61	4/8/2019	6,250,000	6,200,000
2720 Pierce St	5	5	3	4,380	11	3/28/2019	6,700,000	6,500,000
3367 Washington St	5	5	2	5,817	60	4/9/2019	8,950,000	8,000,000
2324 Pacific Ave	8	9	2	11,328	0	4/8/2019	15,000,000	14,000,000
2900 Vallejo St	6	9	4	9,702	46	4/5/2019	29,000,000	27,000,000

Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts

2701 Van Ness Ave #406	0	1	0	528	5	3/29/2019	599,000	670,000
2211 California St #407	1	1	0	615	69	4/1/2019	779,000	779,000
1998 Broadway #1602	1	1	1	n/a	175	4/12/2019	875,000	875,000
1800 Washington St #615	1	1	1	n/a	7	3/21/2019	849,000	929,000
2311 Scott St #4	1	1	1	735	66	3/22/2019	859,000	950,000
2912 Steiner St #6	2	1	1	860	114	4/4/2019	899,000	960,000
360 Locust St #2	2	1	0	n/a	6	4/3/2019	879,000	1,000,000
3234 Washington St #4	2	2	1	1,119	23	3/29/2019	1,050,000	1,065,000
3132 Washington St	2	1	1	n/a	35	3/21/2019	1,049,000	1,070,000
2130 Sutter St	2	1	0	1,032	19	4/12/2019	1,095,000	1,170,000
2687 California St	2	2	1	1,238	49	3/27/2019	1,250,000	1,275,000
2733 Bush St	2	2	1	1,100	12	4/14/2019	1,200,000	1,285,000
1856 Franklin St #6	3	2	1	n/a	162	3/22/2019	1,470,000	1,400,000
1326 Lyon St	2	2	0	1,336	3	3/26/2019	1,095,000	1,400,000
3190 Scott St #305	2	2	1	1,270	11	3/28/2019	1,198,000	1,525,000
2160 Pacific Ave #1	2	2	1	1,520	17	3/21/2019	1,495,000	1,550,000
1775 Broadway #7	2	2	1	n/a	4	3/18/2019	1,495,000	1,550,000
1998 Broadway #604	2	2	1	n/a	37	3/22/2019	1,595,000	1,595,000
2920 Buchanan St #6	2	2	1	1,250	8	3/28/2019	1,495,000	1,632,119
3828 Sacramento St #2	3	2	1	1,440	11	3/29/2019	1,595,000	1,638,000
2019 Green St	2	2	1	n/a	5	3/22/2019	1,649,000	1,885,000
2429 Franklin St	3	3	1	2,100	26	3/21/2019	2,195,000	2,195,000
1790 Vallejo St #1	3	2	1	2,200	21	4/9/2019	2,450,000	2,450,000
2900 Washington St	3	2	1	2,175	80	3/20/2019	2,495,000	2,495,000
2471 Vallejo St	3	3	1	1,874	0	3/20/2019	2,600,000	2,600,000
1790 Vallejo St #2	2	2	2	2,200	21	4/9/2019	2,650,000	2,650,000
2425 Divisadero St	4	3	1	2,400	22	4/8/2019	2,800,000	2,775,000
3467 Jackson St	4	2	0	2,320	3	3/18/2019	2,795,000	2,795,000
2847 Baker St	3	2	1	2,101	0	3/29/2019	2,995,000	2,850,000
2963 Pacific Ave	3	2	1	2,395	6	3/19/2019	3,695,000	3,750,000

Blockbuster sales kick off spring season

TWO RECENT high-end home sales in the neighborhood underscored the prediction that local homebuyer demand would be robust as the spring season began in earnest.

A six-bedroom mansion at 2900 Vallejo Street (above) sold for \$27 million on April 5, the second highest single family home sale in San Francisco since the beginning of 2017 (although there have been a few larger off-market transactions). Located just a block from the Presidio and the Lyon Street steps, with a 55-foot frontage on a corner lot, the home was once owned by Billy and Vanessa Getty and later extensively renovated. The property's value more than doubled since it changed hands in July 2015 for \$12.5 million, and the appreciation was largely due to the complete remodel, which included a seismic upgrade.

Three days later, 2324 Pacific Avenue (above left) sold for \$14 million. With more than 11,000 square feet of living space, the home was the second largest single family transaction in the city during the last two-and-a-half years by size. Originally built in 1906, the eight-bedroom home features many of its original period details, along with modern amenities, including a chef's kitchen.

— Data and commentary provided by PATRICK BARBER at Compass Real Estate. Contact him at patrick.barber@compass.com or call 415-345-3001.

14 NEW FILLMORE May 2019

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