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THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ SEPTEMBER 2019





Celebrating 'the New Market Street'

ABOVE: A souvenir from the 1913 Fillmore Street Carnival

FTER THE 1906 earthquake and fire, when Fillmore Street was hailed as the "new Market Street of the municipality," local officials marked its newfound celebrity with a ribald Fillmore Street Carnival in the fall that stretched for 10 days from Fulton to Sacramento.

Heartened by the successes of the first few carnivals, the sponsoring Fillmore Street Improvement Association vowed to make the 1913 event the biggest yet. Metal arches with elaborate lighting crossed the intersections, and local storekeepers were exhorted to decorate their windows and storefronts.

The carnival kicked off with an evening parade that began at Market and New Montgomery Streets, then came down Golden Gate to Fillmore. The processional was complete with bands and floats "constructed with

the same lavish disregard for expense that marked the street decorations" — including one float featuring a Hawaiian scene with an active volcano.

"The spirit of the fiesta took complete possession of those who had come from many parts of town to pay their respects to Fillmore Street, and the fun was not long reaching the point of hilarity," the *Chronicle* reported. "Midnight arrived all but unnoticed and the dance went on and on until the musicians finally packed their instruments and left the bandstand."

There was behind-the-scenes drama in the hotly contested race to become Fillmore Street Queen and reign over the event. Though the winner would not be announced until opening day, a first-time competitor, Miss Ray Leake, considered herself a shoo-in. "Miss Leake has

a host of friends working for her and they are all as confident that she will be returned the winner," the *Chronicle* reported.

Alas, Miss Leake's hopes were dashed in the early morning hours of September 26, 1913, when Miss Maxine Hutchinson, a resident of Fillmore and O'Farrell, was named queen, handily winning the race by more than 12,000 votes. Miss Leake was not mentioned in the top 10 finalists.

Succeeding queens were tarnished by bad luck and perfidy. The 1914 queen, Manilla Matney, who later became an actress, was reportedly injured in an accident at a local hotel. In 1915, Annie Rosenwein of Buchanan Street, a candidate for queen at age 16, pressed "statutory charges" against Henry J. Kearney, a carnival committee member described as "33 years old and married."



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



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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS







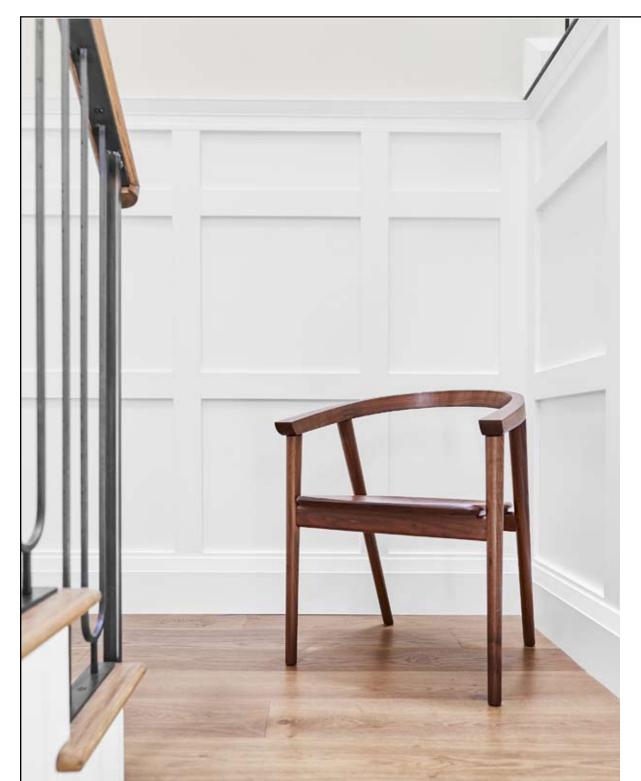
Zen garden honors Japantown's first generation

NEARLY FOUR YEARS after it was first proposed, a new garden honoring the founders of Japantown will be dedicated this month at the foot of Cottage Row, near Fillmore and Sutter.

It began as a celebration of the creation of Japantown in 1906 after the earthquake and fire. Cottage Row was occupied primarily by the first, or Issei, generation of Japanese-Americans in the early 20th century, making it an apt location. But some neighbors objected, and the garden

became the topic of contentious community meetings. The idea prevailed. On August 19, master Japanese gardener Shigeru Namba began arranging a truckload of stones according to traditional Zen principles intended to

inspire peace and tranquility. The garden will be dedicated on September 21 at 6:30 p.m., with neighbors invited to attach multicolored origami cranes — a symbol of peace — to bamboo sticks in the garden.



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CRIME WATCH

Dognapping Webster and Post July 13, 5 p.m.

A woman tied her dog to a post outside the Nijiya Market in Japantown. When she came out of the store, her dog was missing. She obtained video footage from the store that showed a man approaching her dog and picking it up. A witness saw the same man getting on a Muni bus with the dog.

The following day, officers in the Tenderloin recognized the stolen dog through a crime alert and multiple social media accounts. The dognapper was not found. Officers collected the dog and returned it to its owner.

A week later, the officer assigned to the case saw that the dog thief had been arrested for an unrelated incident. He interviewed the suspect at county jail, where he confessed to the dognapping and was booked for the offense.

Hot Prowl Steiner and Fulton July 17, 3:25 a.m.

An unidentified individual broke into a car parked in front of a house, then used the remote he found inside the vehicle to open the garage door while the resident was home. The suspect removed a bicycle from the garage and fled. No arrest has been made in this matter.

Auto Burglary Fillmore and Golden Gate July 20, 3:58 p.m.

A witness saw two men breaking into a car in the McDonald's parking lot. The officers viewed the video surveillance footage with Northern Station's street crimes unit. One officer recognized the two men. Six days later, officers on patrol spotted one of the men standing on the sidewalk. They approached him and placed him in handcuffs without incident.

Robbery Webster and Fulton July 25, 4:45 a.m.

A driver was stopped at an intersection when a man rushed up to her car, flung open the door and snatched her phone, along with a wallet containing her credit cards and ID. He also tried but failed to grab a bluetooth device. The man fled on a bicycle. The driver suffered non-lifethreatening injuries, and refused medical treatment. No arrest has been made.

Burglary California and Cook July 25, 3 p.m.

A Walgreens manager spotted a man removing items from the store shelves. The shoplifter fled on foot while the manager called the police, providing them with a description and his direction of travel. When officers located the suspect, he broke into a run. Police chased him, then managed to place him under arrest. After the police viewed the video footage of several Walgreens stores in the area, they learned that this shoplifter was responsible for multiple recent store robberies. He was booked at county jail.

Robbery Franklin and Ivy July 25, 8:30 p.m.

A pedestrian was approached by an individual who sprayed him with pepper spray. The assailant then snatched his duffel bag and some cash. The suspect is described as a 23-year-old male. Police said a second suspect, a 30-year-old woman, may also be involved. No arrests have been made and the matter is still under investigation.

Assault Bush and Polk August 4, 1:19 a.m.

Officers posted near McTeague's bar witnessed security guards escorting an unruly patron out of the bar. The man started fighting with the guards, who requested assistance from the officers. Before the police could approach, the belligerent man punched a bystander with great force, causing him to drop to the ground. Officers then ran toward the suspect, who resisted arrest. Eventually they gained control of him.

While the police were questioning the suspect, onlookers began to swarm menacingly about them. Officers requested emergency back-up. When back-up arrived, the police were able to transport the suspect to Northern Station, where he was booked for assault

Code Violation, Outstanding Warrants Church and Duboce August 6, 6:09 p.m.

An officer was on patrol in response to numerous complaints from local business owners and residents regarding individuals obstructing the sidewalk and urinating in doorways. The officer spotted two men smoking a vape pen in a Muni shelter, which is a municipal code violation. He carried out a warrant check, which revealed there were three outstanding warrants against one man for stolen vehicle and drug-related offenses, with a combined bail of \$45,000; the second man had a misdemeanor warrant for \$7,500. The two were arrested and transported to county jail.

Hit and Run Pierce and Lombard August 10, 6 p.m.

Officers on patrol witnessed a car driv-

ing at a high rate of speed. They notified dispatch of the reckless driver, but did not pursue the car because of the potential risk to pedestrians. They resumed their patrol. Then, several blocks away, pedestrians waved the officers down, pointing to the scene of a hit-and-run accident that had resulted in an injury involving the same speeding car. Several witnesses reported they had seen a man with a firearm fleeing the area. Police were unable to locate the man, but an officer later found the firearm a block away. A man was standing about two feet from the gun, pretending to tie his shoe. He fled from officers, abandoning the firearm, and after a short foot pursuit he was arrested. Officers seized the firearm. Additional officers arrived to gather video surveillance.

Plainclothes officers found a second suspect based on a description from witnesses, but the witnesses were unable to provide a positive identification. Because the suspect could not identified by the witnesses, police could only charge him with fleeing on foot, which constitutes resisting arrest. The pedestrian who was struck sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

Shooting, Possession of a Loaded Firearm Fillmore and Golden Gate August 10, 11:40 p.m.

Officers responded to the McDonald's parking lot after a report of a shooting. Four people were hit. Officers found two of those injured sitting on the ground and they were transported to the hospital. Police then discovered three parked vehicles that were damaged from gunfire.

The first responding officers detained two cars that had gunshot victims inside; these men were also transported to the hospital. In the second car, police found a backpack they believed belonged to the gunshot victim inside. They opened it in an attempt to identify him and found a black semi-automatic pistol. Because the pistol was concealed in the man's car, police arrested him for possession of a loaded firearm. The shooter is still at large, and the investigation is ongoing.

Burglary, Narcotics Paraphernalia Steiner and Fulton August 14, 2:28 a.m.

Officers on patrol spotted a garage door wide open in the middle of the night. A man left the garage carrying two large trash bags, but did not put them into the garbage cans in front of the house. Police believed he was committing a burglary. They followed him for a block, then detained him without incident. Before police questioned him, the suspect admitted that he had taken the bags from the garage without anyone's permission. Officers then conducted an arrest

search and uncovered burglary tools along with narcotics paraphernalia. The man was booked on multiple charges.

Burglary Gough and Greenwich August 14, 11:03 p.m.

A man saw an individual peering into cars. Eventually he pulled a bag out of one of the vehicles, then took the bag into a stairwell and began looking through it. The witness called the police.

Officers located the suspect based on the description given by dispatch. He was detained without incident. During the arrest, the suspect complained of stomach pain and was transported to S.F. General. Later he was booked at county jail.

Fatal Stabbing Van Ness and Fern August 16, 3:41 a.m.

An argument broke out between two men in Fern Alley. One man started poking at the other man with a sharp stick. The man who had been assaulted then stabbed the other man with a knife, fatally wounding him. Officers found the man who had been stabbed and transported him to S.F. General, but he was declared dead soon after arrival. The encounter was caught on surveillance cameras.

Several days later the police located the individual responsible for the stabbing. He was arrested for homicide.

Attempted Burglary 3rd Avenue and Cabrillo August 17, 11:18 p.m.

A woman who was walking home realized that a man was following her. When she made it to her front door, she spotted the man going through her back gate. He then struggled to open her back door. She yelled at him to leave and called 911. Officers found the man hiding between parked cars a short distance away. The woman identified the suspect and he was booked at county jail for attempted burglary.

Collision Webster and Geary August 24, 5:20 p.m.

An officer in plainclothes who was chasing two car break-in suspects through Japantown called for back-up. An unmarked police car responding to the call struck an officer and one of the suspects. Both were taken to the hospital. According to the hospital's earliest report, the officer is expected to survive while the suspect is in life-threatening condition. Images posted on social media show that the police car crashed into a bus stop at the intersection. The police have not released any further information about this incident.





FILLMORE BEAT

Whither the Palace Cafe?

By Chris Barnett

ROZEN IN TIME, the PALACE CAFE at 1843 Fillmore Street, just south of WALGREENS, has been shuttered for decades. Talk on the street is that it's still set up just as it was the last time the door opened many years ago. It seems a safe bet the tiny cafe will not re-open any time soon.

But now that the big ficus trees out front have been chopped down and replaced, the sign for the cafe is visible again, complete with its bright Dr Pepper logo. People



are taking notice — and city officials are, too. A sign was posted on the front door of the cafe a few weeks ago by the Department of Building Inspection declaring it "unsafe and/or a public nuisance." A new city ordinance penalizes property owners who leave storefronts empty — and this one has been empty for decades.

In the 1940s, it was the Fillmore Chop Suey Cafe, a hotspot with a towering neon blade. By the '50s, Dr. Leonal V. Dickey had acquired the building, which housed three apartments plus his dental practice over the cafe. His family still owns it, and his son, also a dentist, still has a dental office there. Family members still live in the flats upstairs, but are private about past and present.

When the Fillmore was ravaged by urban renewal in the 1960s and '70s, the neighborhood "was desolate with windblown empty tracts of land," the younger Dr. Dickey told a visiting reporter last year. He said the Palace Cafe "became a meeting place for healthcare professionals and

community stakeholders whose goal was the improvement of health, education and housing for the underserved population," including displaced residents, small business owners and public school children in the Western Addition.

Today, neglected and tomb-silent, the cafe, with its old-style slatted glass windows, looks like days gone by. Dr. Dickey said the family had thought of remodeling and reopening the cafe, but the cost and effort of getting it up to code derailed the idea. Perhaps the new city ordinance cracking down on empty storefronts will change that.

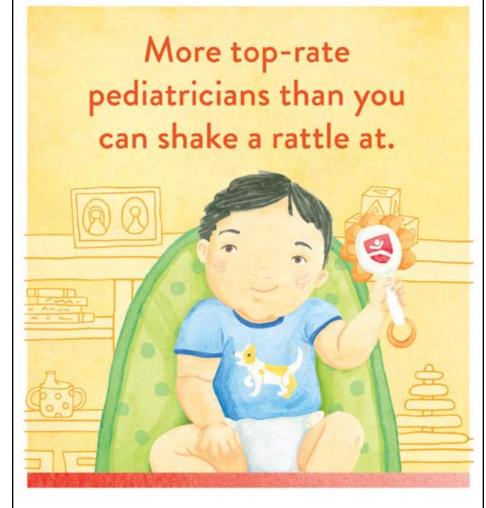
ENTERING: The long-awaited organic pizzeria from **PASCAL RIGO** at 2043 Fillmore to be called **APIZZA** promises to open this month. A glimpse inside reveals split level seating and an intriguing raw wood interior. As August ended, signs were up and a posting in the window announced an application for a beer and wine license. . . . Latest word on the successor to **THE ELITE CAFE** is that it will be an Italian restaurant from serial restaurateur **ADRIANO PAGANINI**, not unlike his **A MANO** offering in Hayes Valley, but ratcheted up a bit. There's no word from his company on when it will open.

EXITING: After a 15-year run at 2413 California, the **DE NOVO** boutique called it quits at the end of August. The women's shop was said to be squeezed out by its landlord, who levied a hefty rent hike to renew the lease. . . . Hot handbag and clothing designer **REBECCA MINKOFF** also shut down the store at 2124 Fillmore and moved out even before the official closing date of August 30. Representatives at Minkoff's New York headquarters would not say whether a rent hike or sagging sales drove out the shop. **THE RESET**, a woman-owned and funded fashion pop-up at 2053 Fillmore, is moving into Minkoff's old storefront, and a luxury cashmere and CBD oil emporium, **GARIN**, is replacing the Reset. . . . Continuing the exodus, London-based women's fashion boutique **JIGSAW** closed its store at 2121 Fillmore after 12 years on the street and is shuttering all its U.S. outlets, plus some Australian and European shops. "Financial issues — we need to save on costs," said assistant manager Maddy Kroell, who is going back to school to become a graphic designer.

GONE, TOO: Over at 1818 Divisadero, **SUNSHINE EXPRESS CLEANERS** pulled up stakes last month after a pricey renewal rent quote, confided the owner, packing up after 30 years.

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





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Sonny Lewis performing at the Fillmore street fair in 1992 with bassist Charles Thomas and drummer Jack Dorsey.

Fillmore's Own Sonny Lewis

A new release, 'Fillmore Street Live,' captures the local saxman at the Fillmore street fair in 1988

By Scott Yanow

Nonny Lewis is a jazz legend who almost slipped away into history. A superior tenor-saxophonist and flutist based in the San Francisco Bay Area since the early 1960s, Lewis made relatively few jazz recordings during his career.

He can be heard with Smiley Winters (playing next to altoist Sonny Simmons and trumpeter Barbara Donald) and on two records with trumpeter Dr. David Hardiman — but until now, no albums have been released under his own name. The previously unknown music on Fillmore Street Live is a major find that gives us the chance to appreciate his inventive style and artistry.

Pianist Rob Catterton, who produced the release for Sonoma Coast Records, met Sonny Lewis at a session in 1987. "I was young and green but Sonny was gracious and very kind," Catterton said. "After those sessions ended, I eventually summoned up the courage to call him, and we would rehearse on piano and tenor or flute, just the two of us. Sonny lost the ability to play in the late 1990s due to something called focal dystonia. Despite going to a hand specialist, he had to retire from playing. We've remained friends all these years, and recently he brought me 25 or 30 cassettes in a paper bag. They were mostly audience tapes, but two tapes stood out. They were recorded directly from the soundboard at an outdoor fair on Fillmore Street on July 2 and 3, 1988, and they really show what a great player Sonny Lewis was. As soon as I heard them, I knew this material had to be released."

At that point, Sonny Lewis had already had a productive career. A professional since he was a teenager in Boston, he gained early experience playing with R&B and rock-and-roll bands. Always a versatile player, Lewis could fit comfortably into almost any setting. After studying at

the Berklee School of Music, he spent time in the early 1960s working in Europe, performing with Bud Powell, Kenny Drew, poet William S. Burroughs and classical composer Terry Riley, and appearing on the original recording of Riley's In C.

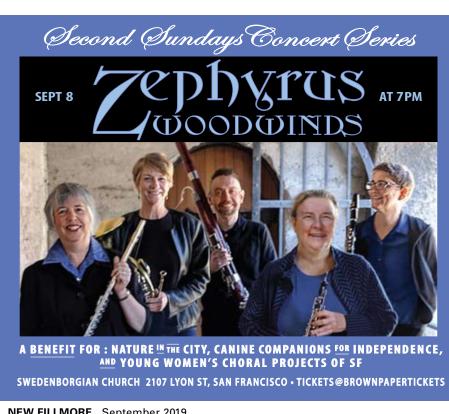
After moving to San Francisco in the early '60s, Lewis created his own combos featuring several young musicians who would go on to fame, including Eddie Henderson and Tom Harrell. During the '70s he went on the road, touring with Barry White for a year, gigging with Merle Saunders and Art Blakey, and touring and recording with R&B group the Whispers for over a decade. Lewis played on many of the Whispers' hit recordings, including three gold albums.

Returning to San Francisco in the 1980s, Lewis led a series of quintets featuring vocalists, including recording artist Micki Lynn, who was also featured on these dates. The Fillmore Street sessions have already provided enough material to release a full album of incredibly well-played instrumental jazz, and Sonoma Coast Records may be able to obtain the rights to release Micki Lynn's set in the

Sonny Lewis's quartet includes Percy Scott, a wellknown Bay Area keyboardist for more than 30 years. Percy toured extensively with the Whispers, and appears playing next to Lewis on one of David Hardiman's albums. Bassist Harley White Sr., an influential educator, has been prominent in Northern California for some time, recording with pianists Earl Hines, Ed Kelly and Jessica Williams, singer Margie Baker and many others. In addition, Harley worked with all-stars Teddy Wilson, Benny Carter, Dizzy Gillespie and Sonny Stitt. Drummer Paul Smith recorded with Sonny Simmons (Manhattan Egos, 1969), violinist Michael White, bassist Paul Brown and organist Gerry Richardson.

All three of these fine musicians give Sonny Lewis strong support, with each of them taking concise and consistently worthy solos.

Jazz journalist and historian Scott Yanow is the author of 11 books, including Jazz on Record 1917-76. This article is adapted from his liner notes for Fillmore Street Live.







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FIRST PERSON



Richard Rodriguez at home on Fillmore Street.

My Fillmore

Like any street in any great city, Fillmore is always changing, always dying, always being awakened

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK WING

By Richard Rodriguez

ROWING OLD on Fillmore Street has taught me how much a city can change, how much I have changed — and how a city continues despite it all.

Lately, if I have any sort of errand on Fillmore, I will most often take a digressive route. I leave my apartment on Clay Street, climb the Aztec steps into Alta Plaza, then circle around Pacific Heights. I climb back up the hill

So much of my life has been consumed by exercise. When I could still jog, I used to run through Pacific Heights on my way to the Presidio. The great houses were blurred landmarks in those days.

Now, exercise offers more of an opportunity to pause. I have favorite houses. Many mansions have had their facades lifted. After being swathed in netting or shrink-wrapped in white plastic for months, even years, exteriors are revealed to the street in pristine turn-of-the-century clarity. I have long admired the novels of American wealth — Wharton, James, Fitzgerald — and the interior secrets they revealed. Walking along Vallejo or up Steiner, however pleasant, is not like reading novels. There is no discernible narrative.

I know the Getty house. I know the confectionary palace where Danielle Steel lives. I can tell when Nancy Pelosi is in town from the assembly of black security cars. I know the Whittier mansion, which was briefly the consulate of the Third Reich. I even know where a bitten Apple executive lives. I never see anyone in a window.

I do see Mexican construction workers feverishly employed, or lounging in the manner of Manet, following their noonday meals. The sidewalks are empty except for the occasional Filipina housekeeper walking a joyless dog.

One late Saturday afternoon, I came upon a friend of my sister's, who lives on a block I admire, and mentioned that I never see any of these houses lit up for dinner parties. "Nowadays, people entertain at their clubs," she said. As we talked, a garage door creaked open; a grey sedan soundlessly rolled into the street.

Yesterday, on Scott Street, a car parked at the curb as I walked by, and two young men got out. "Mom took the Mercedes," one of them said. The other said nothing. They entered a large brick house through the front door.

ILLMORE STREET IS THE OPPOSITE. There are people about. In midafternoon, girls from neighboring prep schools begin the parade, their skirts hiked as high as those of majorettes. Tourists follow. Then come the Mexican and Central American women, pushing prams and speaking Spanish to their comprehending charges. A man dressed in a rubber speedsuit straddles his mount at the corner of Pacific. He barks a command to his cell phone: "Find Blue Bottle!"

I meet an assistant professor from North Carolina at a cafe. He tells me a wonderful story: He had lived in New York, loved New York, then moved away for a job. A few years after, he returned to the city. As he sat in a taxi on Third Avenue, he realized how much he missed streets crammed with life and distraction. His fond realization was followed immediately by dismay. New York hadn't noticed his absence in the least.

Fillmore Street doesn't notice my presence, much less my absence. I am fading from the street because I am old. In Pacific Heights, a security camera will focus briefly upon my interest if I stop to admire a mansion. On Fillmore, the procession of shops that cater to the insecurities of young women has no designs on me. A beautiful Indian couple studies the young people waiting in line for ice cream cones; I study the beautiful Indian couple.

You expect an old man to complain about how much Fillmore Street has changed. Any street in any great city is always changing, always dying, always being awakened. If you look at photographs of Fillmore Street from 100 years ago, you can still orient yourself — architecturally, I mean — so much of Fillmore remains. It is with a certain poignance, the poignance of being alive, that you imagine yourself — your little errand — among the ghostly pedestrians of 1919.

I check the marquee at the Clay Theatre because it is Friday. I lean into the bookstore to greet Fred, in his black T-shirt. Dino sits outside his cafe.

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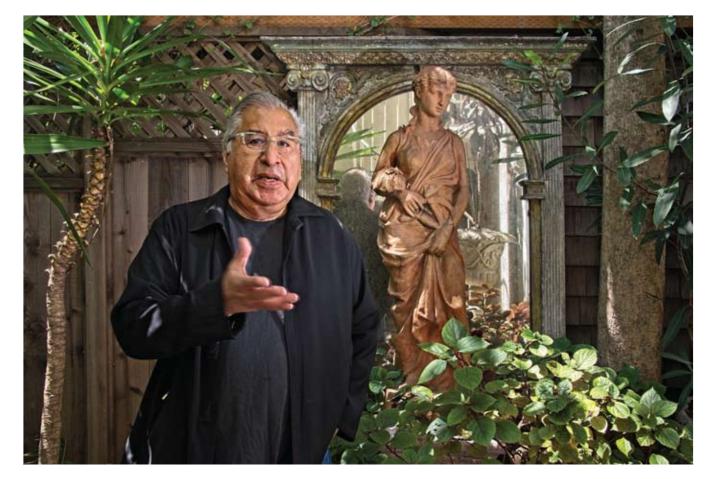
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Richard Rodriguez in the garden of his home of 40 years on Clay Street, where he has written four books and hundreds of essays for the PBS NewsHour.

I nod to the fine mystic poet who worked so many years at D&M Wines and Liquors.

We are still alive.

I wave to Maria; she's on break from Mollie Stone's; she passes, speaking urgently into her phone to someone she calls mi amor. She doesn't notice me waving. I miss the bird shop near Pine where an enlightened grey cat slept through decades of the jungle din. Across the street, when I pass the cosmetics shop that used to be Mrs. Dewson's Hats, I am entering the street of the dead.

Ruth Dewson is standing at the checkout line at Mollie Stone's. Mrs. Dewson greets the cashier, "How you doin' today, darling?"The cashier shrugs. "Breaking even, I guess," he replies. Then she: "Oh, honey, you've got to do better than that. It's the homeless who are breaking even."

I recall Gloria, the woman who stood outside the donut shop, now a Mexican cafe. Gloria would ask for a quarter, but only from people she recognized. She became alarmed if one dredged up a handful of spilling change from a pocket. She'd only take a quarter.

AM WALKING SOUTH NOW. When I cross Post Street, the \$25 burger and the high decibel ambience are replaced by ■ Burger King and Goodwill. The Boom Boom Room still stands sentry to the memory of jazz. There is a handsome new marquee on the Fillmore Auditorium. Long before Bill Graham's legendary tenancy in the '60s, the Fillmore had been an African-American dance and music hall.

In the late 1950s, San Francisco urban planners conceived a scheme for an ethnic and racial cleansing they called "redevelopment." Blocks of the Western Addition were erased. Lives that urban planners imagined as unruly were relegated into uniform, rectangular spaces.

For several blocks, you will see names incised in cement like tombstones — names of bakeries and delicatessens and bars. This stretch of Fillmore was Jewish and Japanese and African American. At 935 Fillmore, a stone plaque remembers Leola King's

Blue Mirror. Louis Armstrong played there when Fillmore was the "Harlem of the West."

In the plaza leading to Safeway's parking lot, embedded on the pavement are names of people with some association with the neighborhood: Isaac Stern, Ernest J. Gaines, Mel Blanc, African-American pastors, educators, Japanese-American community leaders.

Once a year on the first weekend in July, Fillmore Street recalls itself as music. In an inversion of the Dia de los Muertos. the dead return to serenade us. As much as anyone, Mrs. Dewson was responsible for the Fillmore Jazz Festival — music flowing uphill, from Eddy to Jackson Street.

Recently, just about where Leola King once held sway, I was shoved from the sidewalk by a teenager in a blue sweater who said not a word. Another time, on a bright afternoon, one block south of the police station, several teenagers pulled another boy out of a car. The captive broke free and ran. The others gave chase. Then shooting. I hid behind a light pole. One boy spied me as I peered from my hiding place. Our eyes met. For maybe two seconds he deliberated whether I mattered or not. Apparently not. He turned and ran.

CAME UPON A MAN IN A STRAW HAT among the mansions. He looked very old, very pale. He wore a sort of summer-in-L the-city linen jacket over a checkered shirt. He was resting his body against a railing. I asked if he needed help. He didn't say yes, but he resumed his climb at my side. We walked together up Broadway, past tourists happily snapping each other in front of the house where Mrs. Doubtfire was filmed. We passed the home where Francis Ford Coppola lived years ago. The old man dragged his cane behind him.

At the top of the hill, the old man said he was alright. I left him there, catching his breath and leaning on his cane. I turned around and followed behind a gaggle of majorettes from the girls' school. I descended Fillmore, all the way to Louis Armstrong.

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Lucky Clay Street!

CLAY STREET has been my lucky street. I've written four books in an Italianate Victorian house on Clay Street.

My first book, Hunger of Memory, remains controversial for its political objections to affirmative action and bilingual education. But a front page notice in The New York Times Book Review meant that I was suddenly a writer — which is how I found myself, one winter morning, in the green room of the Today show, listening to Rod Steiger declaim on his latest divorce.

My second book, Days of Obligation, about California and Mexico, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in non-fiction, but never found an audience. One of its chapters, "Late Victorians," concerns the architecture of Victorian houses in San Francisco in the Age of AIDS.

My third book, Brown, about racial mixture and forbidden love in America, was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award

My last book, Darling, is a series of essays about the "desert religions" -Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

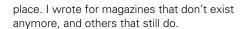
Lucky Clay Street! Lucky Victorian house! Publication comes with a certain irony: I live as a writer in an age of declining mass literacy. Many of my friends have never read a book I have written.

I wrote an essay for The New York Times a few years ago about a naked old man walking down Divisadero Street toward the Castro. "Nakedness in a Digital Age" is about being a writer in a city that doesn't read. Or see. Most of the people who passed the naked man didn't bother to look,

> and didn't notice the old dude had glorified his body with golden glitter.

On Clay Street, I began writing for newspapers before newspapers began to fold for lack of advertising. I wrote for lots of newspapers,

all over the



In 1990, I was invited by the PBS NewsHour to perform — that's the verb I intend, perform — short essays at the close of the evening's news. I appeared on the NewsHour for nearly two decades, which is longer than the tenure of I Love Lucy.

There are still mornings, fewer now that I am in my mid-70s, when I am picked up at 5 o'clock for an early flight. As the car passes the Fillmore Street Bakery, I can see the windows are steamed up — the beginning of a new day. Already I feel a homesickness for my apartment on Clay Street. The bakery will open in a few hours and no one will notice my absence on Fillmore Street. I will wake up tomorrow far away.

— RICHARD RODRIGUEZ



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A Festival of Indie Shorts in Japantown

By Andrea Chase

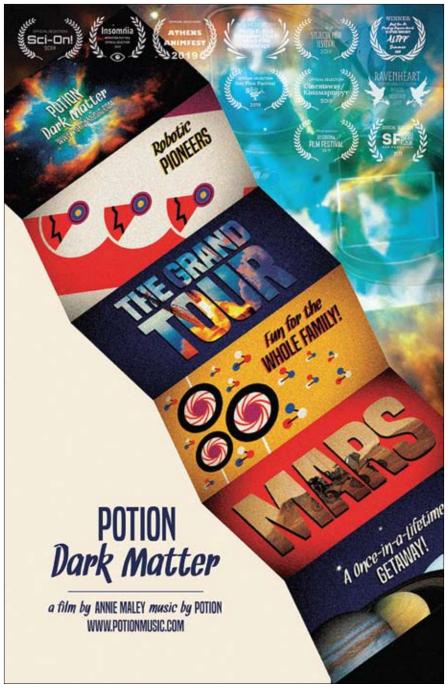
empire of film festivals he's founded with this month's SFIndie Shorts — three days celebrating the specific magic that is the short film. Running from September 13 through 15 at New People Cinema at 1746 Post Street in Japantown, it features 12 programs on diverse topics including art, relationships and, suitably for the closing night, death.

"Our longstanding loyal audience in San Francisco really loves shorts," Ross says. "The shorts programs at SF IndieFest, SF DocFest and Another Hole in the Head are consistently some of our best attended programs, so we now do a whole weekend of them. This year you'll find documentaries, horror and sci fi, comedies, dramas and even one featuring kids."

He's also a fan of the neighborhood forum. "New People Cinema is a great venue — decent size, good location, friendly management," he says. "We've been holding Another Hole in the Head there for years and have hosted weekend screenings during our documentary festival there in the past as well."

This month's filmfest will feature 83 globe-spanning short films from 23 countries, with an accent on locals: 22 of the films are by local filmmakers. Here are some highlights.

Opening night's program (September 13,6:45 to 8:15 p.m.) is titled Infinite While It Lasts: Relationship Stories, featuring a number of films including "Background" from Spain's Toni Bestard, which chronicles a timid courtship without dialogue,



San Franciscan Annie Maley's animated music video "Dark Matter" screens on September 14, and her band, Potion, provides the soundtrack.

but with a few piquant twists. It's a perfect example of how a short film can deliver the same impact as its feature-length cousins, taking its audience on the sort of emotional adventure in 15 minutes that is just as valid and satisfying. It's a miniature masterpiece. Sarah K. Reimers' "Bitten," playing in the

same program, explores a different kind of relationship — between a woman and her dog — when the dynamics suddenly shift.

Of note among the local filmmakers is San Franciscan Annie Maley. Her animated music video, "Dark Matter," is part of the For Art's Sake: Arty/Funny/Maybe a Little Weird program (September 14, 9 to 10:30 p.m.). The program caps the second day of the festival, which begins at noon. "Dark Matter" posits a '50s vibe to what an ad for the Exoplanet Travel Bureau might look like. When Maley is not creating oneiric visions, she's in a band called Potion, whose eponymous song provides the soundtrack for the film.

That program also includes Doug Cox and Patrick Lundberg's "Pie," a comic riff on one man's struggle against a universe bent on sending pastry his way, and Adam Karsten's equally comic riff on the politics of separating art from its maker in "Not So Hilarious Any More."

The final day of SFIndie Shorts, September 15, runs from noon to 9:30 p.m. More international offerings are included in the collection titled Global Affairs: Short Stories From Around the World (4:30 to 6 p.m.). In Rakan Mayasi's "Bonbone," a Palestinian couple find a sweet way to start a family even without conjugal visits when one of them is in an Israeli prison. Ladj Ly's gritty police drama "Les Miserables" focuses on new realities, but similar situations, in the Paris neighborhood where Victor Hugo wrote the novel.

The closing night program, Death With Benefits: Genre/Sci-Fi/What Have You (9 to 10:30 p.m.) includes "Luz Azul" ("Blue Light") from Spain's Alfonso Segura Ballesteros and Andres Malo Segura. Set in the near future of minimalism and pervasive artificial intelligence, the consequences of commodifying memories are sketched in stark and elegant detail. "Someone You Know is in the Woods" by Hannah Whitney is an equally elegant, equally disquieting tale of a reunion between friends where something is not quite right. On the lighter side, there's Colton Tran's "Killer Date," in which Ed (Joey Beni), an aspiring serial killer with a chipper personality and a can-do attitude, finds that he can't plan for everything. And maybe he shouldn't.

For more information and tickets, go to sfindie.com.

■ Q & A

She's Been Screening Films About Aging Since She Was Young

By Pamela Feinsilber

HEILA MALKIND IS the founder and executive director of the Legacy Film Festival on Aging. Now in its ninth year, the festival — which she describes as presenting "fresh views of later life" — takes



Sheila Malkind

place at the New People Cinema, in Japantown at 1746 Post Street, from September 20 to 22. The programs, which begin at 11 a.m. on Friday and noon on Saturday and Sunday, consist of a number of short documentaries. Saturday and Sunday afternoons also feature two full-length films,

including "What They Had," a narrative about dealing with Alzheimer's starring Blythe Danner and Hilary Swank, and "Satan and Adam," about an older musician and his unlikely younger protege.

You directed a program for elder artisans in Chicago when you were 25 years old. Obviously you've been interested in seniors and aging for a long time.

I know! I wouldn't say I had a reverence, but I had an admiration and respect for older people and loved to hear their stories. I remember one of the ladies told me that someone had hurt her feelings, and it shocked me. I had thought older people were above that. They are wise

sometimes, but not all the time. They're just like everyone else.

How did you get interested in showing films about aging?

When I was living in Chicago, a local movie theater was putting on a festival of films about older adults called Silver Images. I volunteered to help and was on the jury. I'd been working for a choreographer who was in her 80s, and when she died, in her 90s, I had to look around for a job. That was right around the time the director of the festival left.

And you continued showing the same kinds of films when you came to San Francisco in 2003. What's in this year's festival?

It's hard to talk about any one film because all are great, really. But one interesting film is "A Chance to Dress," the story of an MIT professor who's a cross-dresser. He talks about how hard it was to come out after a lifetime of secrecy.

"Les Dames," in French, is about women who have a life behind them — their husbands died, or they divorced — and they're figuring out the next step. After each of the eight programs, we have someone who's an expert in that field talk. We'll have a certified retirement coach after that one.

"Life Model" is about an aging nude model and what it means now that there's more openness, more availability to be what you want to be as you age — more freedom, in some ways. Although you can't discard the fact

that older people have health problems and losses. Like yesterday, I went to renew my driver's license, casually took the vision test — and didn't pass it. I was like: what? I always had great eyesight, but now I don't.

Why did you choose New People Cinema as the site for the festival?

I think it's such an excellent, beautiful theater, and we have a very personal relationship with the manager and projectionist now, so things run pretty smoothly.

And it's near the Fillmore neighborhood, which is so exciting, with all the shops and places to eat and the side streets with beautiful houses. I like the inexpensive hairdresser, Supercuts. And the store next to it, Nest — whoever owns it knows how to find the most unusual and lovely little treasures. It's a pleasure to go in there. And then there's Chouquet's; I meet a friend there. They have the best omelet I've ever had. I subscribe to the *New Fillmore* and find out new things about the neighborhood all the time.

You've just turned 81. How have you stayed so youthful?

I don't know if I'm youthful, but I'm interested in life. I'm kind of a nosy person; I like to know everything that's going on. I love to walk. I especially love to walk the hills. I've met a wonderful man, and he likes to walk, too

For a complete schedule and ticketing information, go to legacyfilmfestivalonaging.org.

A Moving Experience

How a young Redevelopment Agency staffer helped save some of the neighborhood's finest Victorians

By Carlo Middione

N THE LATE 1960s and early '70s, I worked at San Francisco's Rede-L velopment Agency in my desire to conquer the world's ills and to help make people safer, happier and more comfortable.

Long before my wife Lisa and I opened our restaurant Vivande on Fillmore Street, which we operated for three decades, I was the supervisor of community relations for the A-2 project in the Western Addition. My primary job was to make friends with the community and garner support for Redevelopment Agency programs — and to make sure residents knew what the programs were for and what they were supposed to do for them, even though this proved to generate plenty of conflict at times.

Some programs were good, like homemaking, which included learning to sew so that new curtains could be made at a fraction of the cost of buying them; learning furniture refinishing; learning nutritious cooking methods and selecting food to reflect the highest yield of nutrition for the money spent, with easier and more cheerful ways to cook that removed the drudge factor.

Child care was always at the fore. There were so many children, and parents at risk of being too tired and frustrated raising them, that they had no time or energy for anything else. Then there were programs to encourage folks to attend classes day or night at local schools to improve their job prospects or simply to study subjects that might interest them.

As time wore on and my interplay with many families and agencies and entities increased, along came The

Apparently I had then a certain amount of charm, with a kind of persuasiveness and a dogged determination to get things done. This made me anathema to some agency staff, who for the most part liked me, but not too much. What they did like, though, was that I was never at a loss for words and that I had little trouble letting my views be heard and read. Sometimes I was the messenger boy, delivering often unpopular demands or ideas of what the agency should or could do to make life easier for the inhabitants of our project.

ou would think moving a gigantic, antique, rickety but baroquely fancy Victorian building would be daunting and scary. But when you worked so closely with the urban cowboys — also known as house movers — who did the actual moving, you quickly got the hang of it.

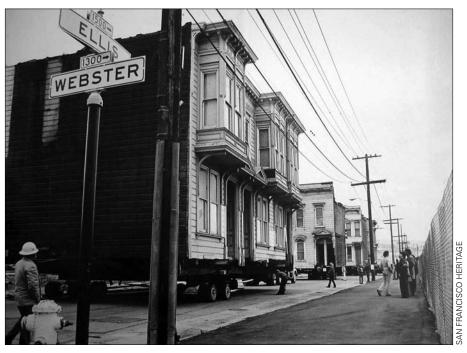
I never actually pulled a house along, or cut it off its foundation, or mounted it on cribs and beams, or attached a truck or tractor. But I got to coordinate every single facet of the move from letting the contracts to cajoling the police and fire departments — and of course the Department of Public Works — into walking along the street the night of the actual move with a hard hat and a flashlight, like a cheerleader urging the team to victory. Then there were the other players on the field I had to coordinate



The Redevelopment Agency engineered the move of 29 Victorians to new locations



One night a driver, obviously drunk, somehow got himself caught between two massive Victorians. He could not believe what was happening.



with, such as PG&E and the telephone company.

I'm not talking about moving one building, but 29 of them over a twoand-a-half year span.

The agency head who hired me, Jus-

tin Herman, was a man of many words and even more action. We got along like buddies in a Western movie, but he was always The Boss, no doubt about that. His vision was a flat buildable space after the ravaging of the bulldozers tore down and chewed up every single piece of physical history so that new developers could come in with tinkertoy, erector set spaces that humans would somehow occupy. I liked my end of the work — of helping folks get to a better place spiritually, intellectually and even physically when the time was right — rather than Justin's work, which was essentially land

In time, with the dedicated help of many people inside the agency, including Enid Sales and Susan Bragstad — and even more outside such as G.G. Plat and Charles Page of San Francisco Heritage — a certain number of important Victorian buildings were chosen to be saved and go on the National Register of Historic Places as examples of the era.

And not all Victorians were torn down. Many areas had, and still have, non-historic status Victorians that were rehabilitated and are magnificent examples of architecture and layout still highly useable in the 21st century. We simply should have more.

When the Victorians to be moved were selected, we had to find appropriate lots to contain them. Sometimes that meant tearing down one to make room for another.

Before a move, the urban cowboys would first remove the boards covering the mudsill and part of the foundation of the buildings. Beams of steel or heavy wood were inserted under the building to support it. The studs were cut to detach the structure from the mudsill. Jacks were set under the beams, and the structure was lifted a little bit at a time, usually a few inches on one side and then a few inches on the opposite side, until the structure was clear of the foundation. Then some earth was removed from under the building to allow cribs to be built while the details of the move were arranged. The beams would be lowered onto the cribs, which were boxes made of heavy wood that could be stacked until more preparation was done. Without this system, jacks must remain under the beams. Sometimes the houses stayed in mid-air, frozen in time for months — in some cases for years.

THEN MOVING A house, the path had to be clear of all obstacles. Routes needed to be chosen so that overhead trolley and bus lines did not have to be removed; otherwise the cost could be horrendous. In the late 1970s, there were still plenty of telephone lines and electric power lines running across streets. These had to be cut and decommissioned to let the house roll down the road, then reinstalled. It was back-breaking, timeconsuming work. With some homes moving from Turk and Gough to Sutter and Fillmore, many blocks of travel were

I was particularly proud when we moved a four-unit Victorian from the corner of Eddy Street kitty-corner to another lot on Steiner. All the arrangements had been made: police, fire, telephone company, DPW and PG&E were informed and all miraculously cooperated.

The house on dollies was attached to the tractor. The wheezing and

TO PAGE 12 ▶

Before Vivande, He Helped Save and Move Victorians

► FROM PAGE 11

groaning and squeaking and creaking meant that movement had begun. It is really dramatic and exhilarating to see such a sight.

The one thing no one could have possibly thought of was the deficient space between two wooden power poles on opposite sides of the street. The building swung out over the curb and onto the street at such an angle that it immediately jammed between the two poles. Forcing the building to move forward would have toppled at least one pole; backing up was not an option.

But here is where my intuitive engineering skills flowed forth. I asked PG&E to send two of the heaviest-duty trucks they had, along with long lengths of steel strand cables. I had them strap the cables high up on one of the poles and then attach them to the two trucks. Then in tandem, the trucks slowly and gently pulled the pole back enough that the house squeaked through. This whole thing took up the better part of a day. I walked around with a puffy chest.

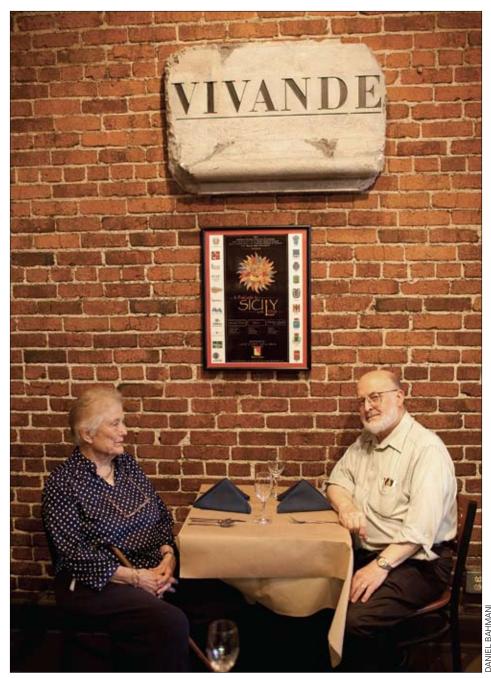
Several times we moved anywhere from four to six houses in a night. With the streets cleared and the work lights on the houses, it was eerie and otherworldly. Most people were silhouettes; it was as quiet as a graveyard. The only disruptions were drivers unaware of the house move who would come barreling down the street to be stared down by a grand

old lady with wooden lace not giving way.

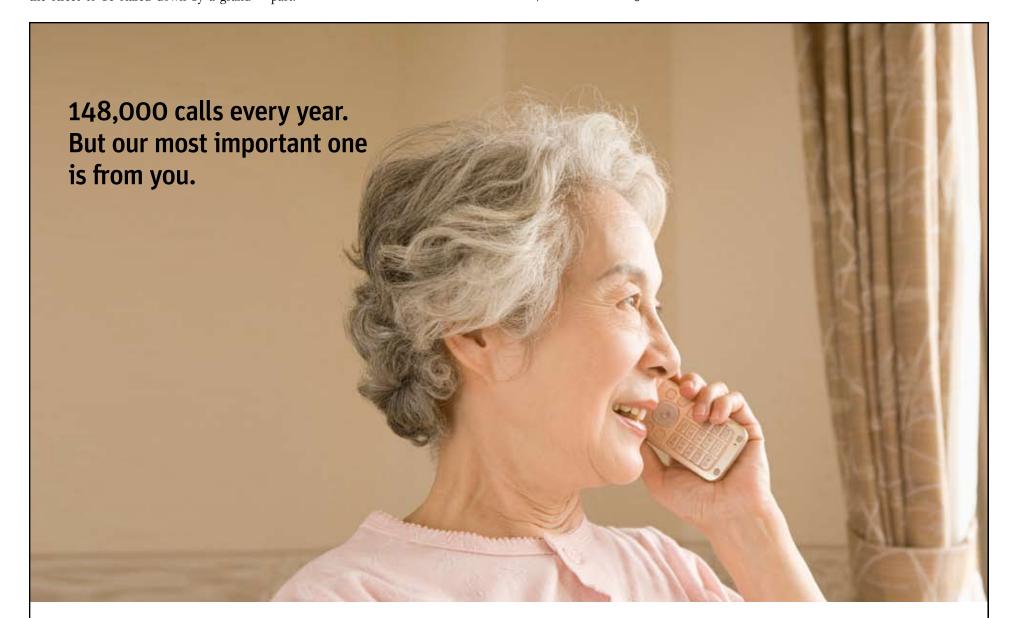
One night, when the houses from Franklin and Golden Gate were lined up and moving like an elephant train, an obviously drunk man crossed the barriers, drove through our security guards sporting bright yellow jackets and hardhats and somehow got himself caught between two massive Victorians. He was unable to get out in any direction, front, back or sideways. I whistled for the caravan to stop mid-block and called in the police. As we moved to another cross street, they got him out of the caravan and off to jail. He simply could not believe what was happening.

FTER THE PROJECT was finished, many beautiful and important Victorian buildings had been saved. Some scattered here and there in the A2 project are breathing life and projecting the past with dignity, acknowledging bygone craftsmanship and setting a tone of the city in its heyday.

A group of these charming old girls make up what is now called Victorian Village on Fillmore Street between Sutter and Post. Sometimes, modern-thinking folks wonder why one would want to retain and even embellish museum quality art works in the form of buildings. But no other works of art are alive with community life while also preserving a historical picture of important and beautiful times



Long before Lisa and Carlo Middione opened their restaurant, Vivande Porta Via, on Fillmore Street, he was the supervisor of community relations for the Redevelopment Agency and coordinated the move of many Victorian homes in the path of the wrecking ball.





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ARCHITECTURE

THE VALLEJO STREET TWINS

By Bridget Maley

ONSTRUCTED IN 1890 by Swedish immigrant contractor and builder Albert Wilford, the twin Victorian-era houses at 2121 and 2127 Vallejo Street are each topped by a domed dormer above the bay windows, with an unusual ostrich-leather facia band just below the main roof.

Scholars of San Francisco Victorian residential architecture confirm these treatments are infrequent in the city's surviving high-style houses. The Vallejo Street twins sit back from the street and are wedged into the hillside. Originally accessed via a staggered, steep set of stairs climbing the hill, each now has a streetfront garage.

The houses are an eclectic mix of fishtail and zig zag shingles, arched openings, turned spindles and lacy wood decoration, applied floral ornament and stained glass windows. There are even cherub heads projecting above the arches. With the exception of the garage additions, these two houses retain a remarkable number of their original exterior architectural features on a neighborhood block that conveys only a hint of its former Victorian splendor.

Wilford, born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1843, immigrated to the United States in 1866 at the age of 23. Wilford first appears in San Francisco directories in 1871. In 1890, he married Charlotte Brader, also a Swedish immigrant, who had two sons, Edward and Louis Brader, from a previous marriage. The Wilfords had one daughter, Hazel, who was born a year after they married. Wilford's stepsons followed him into the building industry, also becoming successful contractors.

An 1889 lawsuit reveals a bit about Wilford's personal history. His sister-in-law, Johanna Fogelholm, accused Wilford, who had legally changed his name from Aaron Albert Fogelholm to Albert Wilford some years earlier, of taking advantage of her and her daughter. The February 23, 1890, *Examiner* quoted Wilford extensively on the subject:

There was no foundation for the suit,





The twin Victorians at 2121 Vallejo (left) and 2127 Vallejo (right) in 1952, before garages replaced the staggered steep stairs to the entries.

and it has been abandoned.... The only truth in the whole thing was the statement that my name was formerly Fogelholm. My reason for changing it was that my associates laughed at me so much about it. I have been in business here for 24 years, and this is the first time anything has ever been said against me. I used to send money to my brother in Sweden, and when he died... I kept regularly on sending it to his widow.... The most cruel slander was about my living with a woman on Folsom Street. This is not true. I boarded in a house kept by a lady who is my cousin, and that was all the foundation there was for their malicious accusations.

About this same time, Wilford was beginning to develop a set of houses along Vallejo Street. Not only did he build 2121 and 2127 Vallejo, but within this single city block bounded by Vallejo, Webster, Buchanan and Broadway, he built a total of 15 houses. One grouping was clustered at the southwest corner of Vallejo and Buchanan, which included 2121 and 2127 Vallejo (originally numbered 2105 and 2107)

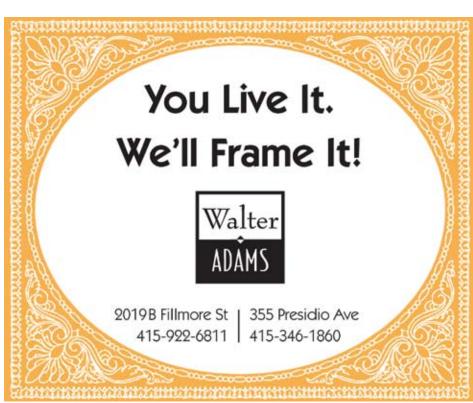
and the other collection of parcels at the southeast corner of Vallejo and Webster. Each grouping had two houses that faced Vallejo, and then either five or six houses facing Buchanan or Webster. Many of this Wilford grouping have been demolished or heavily altered, but of the entire collection, only the two houses at 2121 and 2127 appear to have had the unusual dormer. The late neighborhood architectural historian Anne Bloomfield wrote the National Register of Historic Places nomination for these houses and they were listed in August 1985.

Wilford's own home, at 3009 Jackson Street, appears to have been part of another of his speculative groupings. Between May and September 1891, Wilford applied for five water tap installations for five contiguous parcels at 3001–3009 Jackson Street on the southwest corner of Jackson and Baker. There Wilford built five similar two-story wood-frame homes, speculating he could sell them later. He retained the westernmost house in this grouping for his own

family, who resided there from 1892 to 1910. The Wilfords' house and the house immediately to the east are no longer present in this grouping. However, 3001, 3003 and 3005 Jackson Street remain, with many original architectural features intact.

Albert Wilford personifies many of San Francisco's Victorian-era builders. He was an ambitious immigrant who developed a formula for purchasing portions of a city block, subdividing the area into standard 25 x 100-foot lots, applying for water service, then building a grouping of dwellings on the newly subdivided parcels.

Few details are available about Albert Wilford's life or the extent of his impact on Victorian-era San Francisco. But upon his death in November 1915 at the age of 72, he bequeathed \$100,000 to his daughter, Hazel Dougall. This was a large sum at that time, indicating at least some success in his speculative development practices, which extended into the 1910s.







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3363 Washington St	6	6	1	n/a	13	7/16/19	4,995,000	6,820,000
2536 Greenwich St	4	7	4	6,016	53	7/16/19	8,455,000	8,250,000
Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts								
2415 Van Ness Ave #602	0	1	0	567	12	7/19/19	545,000	633,000
2415 Van Ness Ave #2017	1	1	0	617	10	7/19/19	595,000	700,000
2315 Divisadero St #B	1	1	1	617	48	8/14/19	798,000	825,000
2062 Green St	1	1	0	630	19	7/19/19	795,000	840,000
3040 Pierce St	1	1	0	590	12	8/5/19	599,000	850,000
2121 Laguna St #5	1	1	1	n/a	5	7/26/19	795,000	895,000
3014A Sacramento St	2	2	0	1,038	122	7/29/19	935,000	935,000
3025 Sacramento St	1	1	1	n/a	14	7/20/19	688,000	971,000
1973 Clay St	1	1	1	817	27	8/2/19	989,000	1,025,000
2369 Union St #2	1	1	0	789	14	8/14/19	899,000	1,150,000
2295 Vallejo St #304	1	1	1	765	4	7/19/19	995,000	1,214,000
2185 Bush St #312	2	2	1	1,217	12	8/7/19	1,195,000	1,350,000
3031 Octavia St	3	1	1	1,069	9	8/1/19	1,195,000	1,400,000
2541 California St #8	3	2	1	n/a	19	8/1/19	1,398,000	1,425,000
1568 Union St #301	2	2	1	1,183	0	7/22/19	1,625,000	1,625,000
2200 Sacramento St #507	1	2	1	1,100	7	7/25/19	1,595,000	1,650,000
3561 Sacramento St	3	2	1	n/a	19	7/17/19	1,695,000	1,700,000
2935 Sacramento St	3	2	2	1,532	32	8/13/19	1,795,000	1,825,000
2539 Clay St #4	2	2	1	1,550	37	8/9/19	1,998,000	2,000,000
2928 Washington St	3	2	2	2,124	9	8/2/19	2,095,000	2,095,000
1951 Jackson St	3	3	1	1,906	0	8/6/19	2,200,000	2,200,000
2447 Jackson St	3	2	1	2,158	2	8/7/19	2,398,000	2,650,000
2441 Vallejo St	4	3	1	2,915	65	8/1/19	2,995,000	2,900,000
1940 Vallejo St #5	5	4	2	3,220	119	7/19/19	3,995,000	3,750,000
2121 Webster St #609	3	3	1	2,395	19	8/8/19	5,935,000	5,700,000



Despite declining sales, condos at The Pacific at 2121 Webster Street continue to command top dollar. A three-bedroom unit sold last month for \$1 million more than its original sales price two years ago.

Summer sales continue to slide

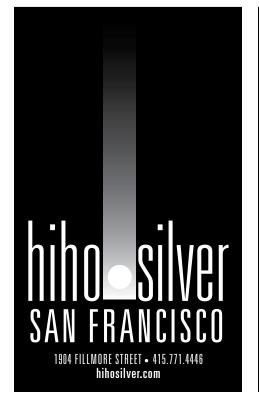
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SALES in local neighborhoods declined again as summer neared its end, with a pair of notable transactions underscoring the need for sellers to be realistic when pricing their homes.

There were 28 single-family home and condominium sales in Pacific Heights, lower Pacific Heights, Cow Hollow and Presidio Heights between mid-July and mid-August, a 22 percent decrease from the same period last year. Yet of this year's late-summer home sales, 19 — or 68 percent — sold for more than list price.

One of the properties that sold for well under its original price was 2440 Scott Street, a four-bedroom, single-family home that fetched \$5.7 million in early August, nearly \$1 million less than its initial asking price. Perhaps more telling: The home was on and off the market for two years.

While condominiums at The Pacific at 2121 Webster Street continue to command top dollar, #609, a three-bedroom unit that changed hands in early August, sold for \$5.7 million — about \$250,000 less than its list price, but still \$1 million more than its original sales price in 2017.

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





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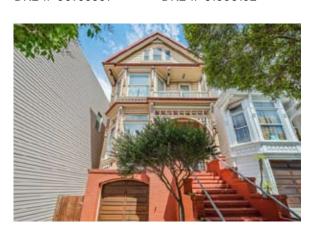
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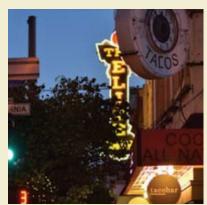




















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