

NEWS

*Trash talk about falling leaves*

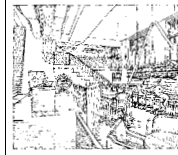
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FOOD & WINE

*Dosa transforms the old Goodwill*

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# NEW **FILLMORE**

SAN FRANCISCO ■ NOVEMBER 2008



## The Local Bookshelf

This neighborhood is rich in books — and the people who write them

**T**IMES HAVE NEVER BEEN TOUGHER for independent bookstores, given the troubled economy and the dominance of chain stores and online ordering. Yet Browser Books and Marcus Books on Fillmore are still going strong. Their secrets: Be a part of the community — and

pay attention to the wishes of local book buyers.

And there's something else at work here: This is not only a neighborhood of readers, but of writers, too. In recent months, half a dozen new books written by local authors or exploring local topics have arrived on the shelves.

SPECIAL REPORT | Pages 7-14

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## LETTERS

### The Sign Was the Same

Recalling when the Elite was the Asia Cafe

TO THE EDITORS:

The *New Fillmore's* October issue had an interesting article by Chris Barnett about the Elite Cafe. ["There's a Reason They Call It the Elite."] The article said it originally opened in 1928 as the Lincoln Grill, but in 1932, with Prohibition, it became the Asia Cafe.

That was the name when I moved to San Francisco in 1956. At first I lived at Baker Acres, a wonderful co-ed residence club located at the corner of Jackson and Baker Streets. In those days there were many such residence clubs that supplied housing and meals for the thousands of young adults who moved to the city in the years following World War II.

Very few of the residence clubs served meals on Sunday evenings, and that is what drew me to the Asia Cafe at 2049 Fillmore Street, just a short walk from Baker Acres.

The sign that hangs outside the Elite now is exactly the same sign that was there in the 50s, except the wording was "The Asia Cafe." The wooden booths inside were the same, but the prices were definitely different. I remember getting a four-course meal — soup, salad and a meat dish with potato and vegetable, finished off with coffee and a dish of ice cream — all for a total cost of 85 cents. Sometimes the menu would include a special steak dinner. One Sunday evening, feeling flush, I ordered the steak dinner. Total cost: \$1.15. It's not just the name that has changed over the past 50 years!

But even in the 1950s, the prices at the Asia Cafe made it one of the best bargains in San Francisco.

JOE BEYER

TO THE EDITORS:

I am writing in response to the

article, "In Japantown, Old Customs Meet New Condo Owners," in the September issue of the *New Fillmore*.

I was appalled and outraged by the comments made by Mr. David Zisser. I found them to be reminiscent of the "ugly American" image and all that is abhorrent in the so-called urban renewal initiatives.

Nihonmachi is a vital organization, providing crucial services to members of this community, from the youngest to the oldest among us. It was unnecessarily arrogant of him to assume that he should dictate what is or is not an authentic celebration for this community.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JONAS

In the true spirit of being a good neighbor and embracing San Francisco's diversity, he should

offer, on behalf of his building's owners association, to pay to clean the sidewalk as a contribution to the Nihonmachi Street Fair and all the wonderful work the participating organizations do for this city.

Regarding his rather off-handed statement about the bowling alley, I was indeed saddened by its closing. Although it may not have met his personal aesthetic, it provided a much used and sorely missed recreational venue for people of all ages. Now the only such facility this side of Market Street is in the Presidio. And, sadly, that historic site is also in jeopardy of closing because of the desires of a few whose resources outmatch the many.

JANICE DIRBEN-COOK

TO THE EDITORS:

I was very surprised to see the article on Solstice being the place in the neighborhood to get laid. ["Best Bar for a Booty Call," September.] Very unlike your great paper. So out of character.

HOWARD LAWRENCE

## THE NEW FILLMORE

2130 Fillmore Street #202 ■ San Francisco, CA 94115  
415 / 441-6070  
[editors@newfillmore.com](mailto:editors@newfillmore.com)

Editors Barbara Kate Repa & Thomas R. Reynolds  
Art Director Ginny Lindsay Reporter Donna Gillespie

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### We welcome your ideas

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

### Archive of recent issues: [www.NewFillmore.com](http://www.NewFillmore.com)

Your comments and letters about the neighborhood are welcome there, too.

## Falling Leaves Accumulating on the Streets

Cutbacks in sweeping assailed as a bad idea

BY DONNA GILLESPIE

NEIGHBORHOOD residents frustrated by a new reduced street cleaning schedule got to vent their ire at an October 16 hearing, where supervisors Jake McGoldrick and Michela Alioto-Pier called unsuccessfully for a temporary halt to the program.

Many streets that were previously swept every week are now being cleaned only on the first and third weeks of the month. "This was one of the issues that got more mail than anything I've seen in a long time," said Alioto-Pier.

The city services and operations committee was shown a photo of a section of Webster Street, near Japantown, 14 days after its last cleaning. Plastic bags and other garbage, as well as drifts of wet leaves, were visible along the street.

Particularly troubling to some Pacific Heights residents is the accumulation of leaves, which under city guidelines are not considered litter.

"They define dirty as clean," said Clay Street resident Ian Burke during the public comment period. "There's more than leaves on the leaves."

Burke also complained there was inadequate public outreach about the changes. "Postcards were sent out after it was implemented — 'This is the program and it's too bad.' This is arrogance," Burke said. "This is completely a bad idea."

Edward Reisen, director of the Department of Public Works, defended the new schedule, stressing that it will save the department a million dollars a year.

"We are using scarce, valuable taxpayer resources," Reisen said. "We must direct it to where it's needed most. We have to be smart about how we use our resources."

Alioto-Pier confronted Reisen on the contentious issue of leaves.

"Your intent is good," Alioto-Pier said. "The issue is that I have neighbors who woke up, went outside and found that things had changed. We're talking about leaves. Leaves should be considered litter — especially for a city that is trying to 'green' itself."

Reisen said his department's limited

## NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



### Stairway to Heaven

Steelworkers assembled a new stairway on the priory behind St. Dominic's Church this month, part of a continuing restoration program. But plans to build a five-level parking garage behind the church were put on hold after staffers at the Planning Department recommended that alternatives be explored.

budget does not allow him to give special attention to specific blocks.

"Some trees are more prolific leaf droppers than others," Reisen said. "If it's only in one spot, do we put this block on the route and clean because of one tree? If we have one very busy tree, we'd need to send someone there once every few days."

Compost bins may be the solution to the leaf dilemma. "Maybe we need to put green bins on certain blocks," Alioto-Pier suggested.

"Piles and piles of trash are accumulating in the gutters," McGoldrick charged. "It's very visible. The neighbors know it, and we've been hearing from them. It's a key issue."

McGoldrick also spoke out on behalf of drivers perplexed by the new every-other-week street sweeping schedule. The number of parking citations has dramati-

cally increased, he said, since the sweepers started coming only twice a month.

"It gets to be a numerical adventure," he said. "Is this the first or the third? You need to carry a pocket calendar. Also, the language on the signs is smaller now. People have to get out of their cars to see it."

Reisen seemed willing to take a second look at the revised sweeping schedule. "The program is imperfect," he said, "because of our inability to get to a fine level of detail. This is a first pass at it. We may need to adjust."

Mohammad Nuru, deputy director of public works, suggested that another way to reduce the cost of removing leaves is to get the public involved. "We are looking at an adopt-a-street program," Nuru said. "We give people biodegradable bags, and let them take a street. Give us a month, and we'll come up with a program."

## Ring of Shoplifting Teens Nabbed

Merchants hope it's the end of a six-month spree

BY DONNA GILLESPIE

FOR SIX MONTHS, a shoplifting ring of teenage girls has been robbing shops along Fillmore Street, intimidating both shoppers and employees.

Heidi Says, Margaret O'Leary, Shabby Chic, Her, LTH Market and My Boudoir have been targeted repeatedly.

"They are extremely aggressive, and they are relentless," said one store owner who asked not to be identified. "They come once or twice a week. They look for a lone female in a store, and they use strong-arm tactics — in one store, a girl was pushed."

But mid-afternoon on October 6, after making their way down Fillmore Street from Margaret O'Leary, six girls were apprehended in Crossroads Trading Co., the vintage clothing store at 1901 Fillmore.

Some merchants expressed hope the arrests will bring the crime spree to an end. "The D.A. is on this now," one store owner said. "This time they'll probably get them off the street."

But not all merchants are so hopeful. "Only three were booked," said another victim of the group. "That means these three had merchandise on them. The rest will be right back."

Merchants have felt besieged by the belligerent group of teens, and some shopkeepers have expressed frustration and fear, expecting to continue to see the same faces again. Because the shoplifters are minors, they are taken into police custody and then released to their parents — and soon, the shop owners say, they're back on Fillmore Street.

Merchants describe a core group of six who are always present, but occasionally they arrive in groups as large as 12.

"Sometimes a single adult male, at times two, will stand guard outside the store," said the merchant who asked not to be identified.

Captain Croce Casciato of Northern Station said he is encouraged because every merchant targeted in the most recent series of thefts had security cameras in place. "Everything was caught on film," Casciato said. "This is great. Cameras help — we advocate the use of cameras."

## Places & Spaces in Florence

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**Parole Warrant Arrest  
Eddy and Gough Streets  
October 2, 7:10 p.m.**

Officers in plainclothes observed a suspect sitting in the park who matched the description they had been given of a car burglar. They detained the man, who told them he was on parole. A computer check revealed a "no bail" warrant for his arrest. The officers were unable to find any stolen property on him or to locate a witness who could identify him as a suspect in the auto break-in. They arrested him for violation of parole.

**Threats and Probation Violation  
Franklin and Ellis Streets  
October 2, 11:45 p.m.**

Officers responded to a call concerning a man trespassing at a hotel. A witness at the scene told them he had an earlier argument with the suspect, who insisted on visiting a tenant who was no longer staying at the hotel. The suspect intended to go into the former tenant's room and retrieve property he said belonged to him. The witness told the man that no items belonging to him were in the room. The suspect first refused to leave the building, then threatened to come back and throw a Molotov cocktail through the hotel's window. The suspect was placed under arrest and booked for making the threats.

**Aggravated Assault and Conspiracy  
Bush Street and Van Ness Avenue  
October 3, 2:00 a.m.**

Officers arrived at the scene to find medics treating a man who was bleeding from the head. He was having difficulty remembering what happened to him. A second man involved in the incident told officers that a minivan had pulled up beside

**They're Men in Uniforms,  
But They're Not There to Help**

**C**APTAIN Croce Casciato of Northern Station urges neighborhood residents to be on the alert for two men posing as city Water Department employees who come to the door announcing there is a problem with the water lines and claim they must get inside to clear the lines.

The two men wear Water Department uniforms and carry radios. Typically, one of them distracts the person who answers the door while the other enters and takes property.

In one case, they asked a resident them. Two men jumped out of the van and began punching them. The man reported that his companion fell to the ground after receiving blows to the face and that he discovered later he had been robbed; his wallet was no longer in his pocket. A witness got the license number of the van, which was broadcast on the police radio. A short time later, two officers located the minivan. The two men who had been attacked identified the suspects, who were placed under arrest and booked.

**Attempted Homicide  
Steiner and Eddy Streets  
October 15, 11:30 p.m.**

Dispatch gave officers a description of a man who was wanted for attempted murder, advising them that the suspect

to run the water in the kitchen when they were in the bathroom area. While unobserved, they took whatever was at hand. At another location, they damaged the water lines as they pretended to do repair work.

Several similar incidents have occurred in the Fillmore and the Marina.

Casciato advises that if an alleged Water Department employee visits you unsummoned and cautions about a water line problem, you should tell the person to wait outside — then immediately call 911.

**Recovered Stolen Vehicle,  
Possession of Stolen Property, Narcotics  
McAllister and Fillmore Streets  
October 20, 9 p.m.**

Officers responded to the report of a stolen car. They located the vehicle, but the driver did not comply with their request to get out of the car. When the officers continued their requests, the driver took out a crack pipe and smoked out of it. The officers then entered the car and took the suspect into custody. The vehicle and its owner were reunited and the suspect was arrested and jailed.

**Heroin Offense  
Van Ness Avenue and Fern Street  
October 16, 4 a.m.**

Officers on patrol observed a man believed to have been involved in an act of vandalism on the previous night. When the officers stopped the man, he informed them he was on parole. The man then told them he had heroin in his possession. When of-

ficers searched him, they found heroin and narcotics paraphernalia. The suspect was placed under arrest.

**Vandalism  
Gough Street and Geary Boulevard  
October 16, 5:30 p.m.**

Officers observed a man walking down the street who was wanted for an act of vandalism that caused \$50,000 in damages. They approached the suspect and he did not resist. A computer check confirmed the warrant for the man's arrest. He was booked at Northern Station.

**Possession of Stolen Property  
Eddy and Buchanan Streets  
October 20, 5:45 p.m.**

A man broke into a vehicle and stole a GPS device. Officers saw him and shouted for him to stop, but the suspect fled the scene. Two officers chased him but were unable to apprehend him. Later, an officer on patrol saw the man and recognized him as the suspect he had pursued earlier in the day. The officer approached the man and took him into custody. The GPS device was still in the suspect's possession.

**Recovered Stolen Vehicle,  
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**'You Exercise Your Body — Why Not Your Brain?'**

By ANNE PAPROCKI

**A** DECADE AGO, Pacific Heights resident Jan Zivic was in a serious auto accident that left her in a coma. Her physical body eventually recovered, but her cognitive abilities just weren't what they had been. Her doctors encouraged her to do cognitive exercises to improve her memory and get her brain fully functioning again.

Now, after years of work with a variety of brain puzzles and games, she has become a true believer in brain fitness activities. "These programs do work," Zivic says. She credits her brain workout with restoring her cognitive abilities.

Instead of just putting the traumatic accident and years of difficult recovery behind her, her experience led Zivic and business partner Lisa Schoonerman to open Vibrant Brains, which they believe is the first cognitive health club in the country.

Located at 3235 Sacramento Street, just east of Presidio, the cheerful "brain gym" offers others the chance to work with the same type of puzzles and cognitive exercises that changed Zivic's life.

Since Vibrant Brains opened last December, adults of all ages have been going to the gym to do various brain exercises on the store's 20 computer stations.

An annual membership fee of \$600 gets you unlimited access to the "neurobics circuit," which includes entertaining games such as Penguin Pursuit and Monster Garden that work on memory and focus, as well as spatial, verbal and math skills.



**A new 'brain gym' on Sacramento Street is the first cognitive health club in the country**

"You exercise your body," says Zivic, "so why wouldn't you want to exercise your brain?" Both owners say that doing regular cognitive exercises can increase memory and improve brain function — and even boost confidence.

Schoonerman notes that while Vibrant Brains can help those recovering from injuries or mild strokes, it's not designed for people with dementia. But its programs can help people maintain a level of healthy brain fitness.

"You can do things to strengthen and improve brain function," Schoonerman says. "And it's best to strengthen and improve your brain function before you have a problem."

Fans of the mental gymnastics at Vibrant Brains, who range in age from 27 to 78, claim positive results. One man who had been having trouble reading novels be-

cause he kept forgetting the characters is now able to read a book without problems. Another can play an entire piece on the piano without forgetting notes. One 60-year-old woman says she even plays better tennis.

Some members of the brain gym are referred by their doctors after an accident. Some hear about it from friends. Others simply wander in, their interest piqued by the colorful sign they can see from the street.

In fact, Schoonerman and Zivic say, they picked the location on Sacramento Street because they knew their idea would appeal to people in the neighborhood. Their storefront is located between two campuses of the California Pacific Medical Center and near UCSF Mt. Zion Hospital.

The program ideally requires three trips

a week to the brain gym. An average workout is about an hour. Zivic and Schoonerman recommend at least 20 minutes per session. They also stress the importance of continuity.

"You can't expect to run a marathon after going to the gym once," says Zivic. "While the exercises can be done at home, Zivic and Schoonerman say there are advantages to participating in the program at their shop.

"It's the same as joining a health club — you're more likely to exercise there than on the treadmill at home, where there are distractions," says Zivic. The socializing and community aspect of doing brain exercises with other people is also an important component of brain health, she says.

Though the methodology is based on scientific research, the Vibrant Brains program is designed to be "fun, not clinical," says Schoonerman. A lounge area is equipped with games and even provides blueberries, walnuts and other "brain food" snacks.

Vibrant Brains also has a retail section, which sells everything from books to games and T-shirts. All of the software used in the "neurobics circuit" is also available for purchase. And there is a series of monthly lectures about brains and brain function.

Zivic and Schoonerman plan to begin programming for teenagers in the near future. They also have a second Vibrant Brains location in the works. It will be located inside the Jewish Community Center in Foster City — where there's also a more traditional gym.

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# Dosa Comes to Fillmore This Month

Think of it as the lobby of a grand hotel in India

INSIDE THE double-height construction site with its massive windows opening onto the corner of Post and Fillmore, a team of craftsmen are grinding smooth the top of the expansive bar made of recycled glass, mirror and mother of pearl.

It's immediately clear the dynamic young couple creating their dream restaurant here have embraced architect Jim Maxwell's environmentally correct philosophy. It's equally clear this is going to be a seriously sexy place.

Dosa on Fillmore will be the full realization of the ideas Anjan and Emily Mitra expressed on a smaller scale three years ago when they opened the first Dosa, their acclaimed South Indian restaurant on Valencia Street.

"We're embracing the textures and colors, the warmth and the intimacy of the space on Valencia and elevating it to evoke a grand hotel lobby in India," says Maxwell, leading a tour of the work in progress. "We're making it exotically Indian, but contemporary — without it being the forbidden something Anjan had growing up in India, which became one of our design edicts."

There will be nine-foot lotus petal light fixtures hanging in the huge front windows and bar lights dangling with red and amber jewels — "Emily's earrings," says Maxwell. All will be shades of rusts and browns and golds, with wooden shutters made of coconut palm fiber behind the bar, softening the southern light.

Even the rest rooms are elegant, with gold porcelain floor tiles and walls lined with tiles printed with red roses in the women's room and a more manly mocha damask tile in the men's room.

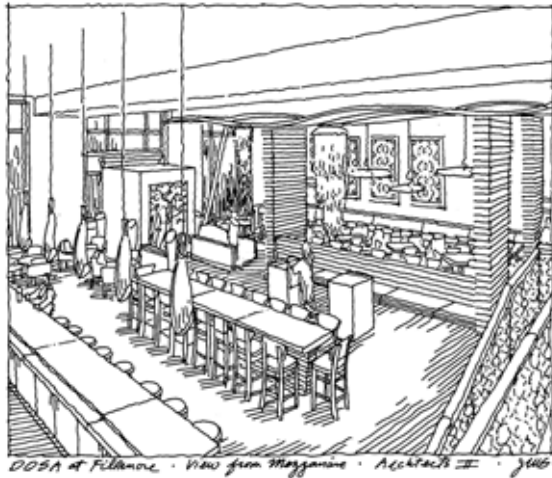
It's a big place. The main dining room can seat 120, with room for 40 more up a sculptural antique gold metal staircase on the mezzanine. Plus there's a communal dining table in the bar.

Then there's the kitchen, which occupies almost as much space as the dining room and bar, with a huge flat-top griddle for making the namesake dosa, the oversized crepes of rice and lentils ubiquitous in South India.

Almost from the day Dosa opened on Valencia, it has been in the top ranks of San Francisco restaurants — for its fresh and unusual food, its atmospheric decor and its stylish clientele. And the Mitras are upping the wattage considerably with their new place. The menu will expand and more catering will be possible. There will also be an inventive cocktail program.

Once their Valencia operation was hitting its stride, they began looking for the right space to do something on a grander scale. Emily happened into a conversation with one of the owners of the building at Fillmore and Post, who was considering what to do with the space after Goodwill left last year.

If all goes according to plan, Dosa on Fillmore will open in mid-November.



## With Dosa, Going Green in a Big Way

By JIM MAXWELL

DOSA ON FILLMORE is hoping to have a big impact on the neighborhood, but little impact on the environment.

We are transforming the former Bank of America and Goodwill building at 1700 Fillmore, at the corner of Post, into a shining example of green building and business practices. Owners Emily and Anjan Mitra are already changing the way they operate their first location, on Valencia Street, working closely with environmental restaurant consultants to change everything from the types of cleaners they use to the faucet heads on the sinks.

The greening of restaurants marks a real change in the mindset of restaurateurs, whose industry involves the liberal use of water, electricity and toxic cleaning chemicals. As a restaurant designer for the past 18 years, I've long promoted green design. With Dosa, I have clients who have embraced green business practices to the fullest.

At the new Dosa location, every piece of equipment is being analyzed for energy efficiency.

- Refrigeration is being handled by remote condensers on the roof, removing heat from the building and reducing the cooling load.

- Solar tinting on the enormous windows will reduce heat gain, and ultra-high efficiency heating and cooling units work together for optimal control of the interior temperature.

- Another computer-operated monitoring system controls the exhaust fans in the kitchen, sensing the amount of heat generated under each hood and adjusting the fan speed accordingly.

Dosa will also be tapping the power of the sun with a solar system that preheats water in a 580-gallon tank. The plans also provide for a future solar power voltaic plant on the roof.

While these measures increase the initial investment, each has been evaluated to determine how long it will take to recoup the additional costs with the long term savings.

"We're not just investing in our environment, we're investing in our daughter's future," says co-owner Emily Mitra.

The ultimate goal is also to have the restaurant be LEED certified — the ultimate green designation — so attention is being paid to every detail of construction as well. Metal framing is used wherever possible — it's recyclable and also uses less material. All wood is certified or sustainably harvested.

While most of these environmentally friendly steps are behind the scenes, the finish materials throughout the restaurant were also selected because of their recycled or sustainable content. Bamboo floors, recycled glass tiles and cabinets and tabletops made from coconut palm will complete the decor. Even employee uniforms are being made from organic cotton, and to-go containers will be compostable or recyclable.

Dosa's owners aim to be leaders in the green restaurant movement — and they hope other local small business owners will emulate their example, making the Fillmore a green center within the city.

Dosa designer Jim Maxwell owns Architects II in the Marina and is a principal in Full Plate Restaurant Consulting. He has lectured and conducted seminars on green restaurant design.



Film critic David Thomson's work is published around the world, but he writes from his home on Washington Street.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCY GRAY

## A Lifetime of Loving Film

In his latest book, critic David Thomson sums it all up

By DONNA GILLESPIE

■ MARCUS BOOKS

*"Money fluctuates. The need is still there."*

POSSIBLY NO other book store in the country carries such an impressive collection of works of literature, philosophy and history by African American authors as Marcus Books.

In a comfortable space on the ground floor of a classic Victorian at 1712 Fillmore, you'll find academic books, biographies, studies of African history through the ages and books for children, along with a unique collection of calendars and fine art prints.

Marcus Books has evolved into a vital hub of cultural life in the neighborhood and an intellectual center for the black community, holding events for such luminaries as Toni Morrison and Muhammad Ali. December will bring author and recording artist Sister Souljah, bestselling author Terry McMillan and U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee.

Marcus Books had its beginnings in the 1950s as a print shop run by Drs. Raye and Julian Richardson.

TO PAGE 14

“WHAT SHOULD I SEE?”

It's the question film critic and historian David Thomson is asked most often — sometimes even as he walks his dog in Alta Plaza Park or runs errands on Fillmore Street.

Now, more than three decades after he published his landmark *Biographical Dictionary of Film*, Thomson has responded to the question comprehensively in a new book published last month titled *Have You Seen...?* Its subtitle bills it as "A personal introduction to 1,000 films, including masterpieces, oddities, guilty pleasures and classics (with just a few disasters)." It's a cineaste's dream. One page each for 1,000 films, arranged in alphabetical order, with Thomson's insightful and provocative prose, makes for a weighty tome — in the very best sort of way. Nearly every film you've ever fallen in love with is here, along with many others from around the world that may be new to the average moviegoer.

And these one-pagers are far more than mere plot summaries. They include the story line, mostly, but also cinema history, an analysis of camera angles, a running tally of Academy Awards and an opinionated but thoroughly informed view from a lifelong student of film who has considered its full 100-year history.

A reader can learn something on nearly every page.

TO PAGE 9

■ BROWSER BOOKS

*"I didn't think bookstores like this still existed."*

BOOK LOVERS discouraged by the proliferation of chain stores and websites deserve a leisurely afternoon at Browser Books.

It's an old-fashioned bookstore that emanates warmth — wood paneling and music greet you as you enter, and there are lamp-lit nooks that beckon patrons to sit and read. Carefully chosen classics line the shelves, but better-quality popular books can be found here as well. If a staffer recommends a book, it's likely some forgotten gem, not something everybody's already reading. At 2195 Fillmore, next door to Peet's Coffee, Browser is a bright, inviting spot that offers a cozy respite hours after the other shops on the street have gone dark.

"We have more books per square inch than anyone around," says owner Stephen Damon. Just don't come in asking for a romance novel or a western — Browser doesn't carry them. "We're very selective, very literary," says Damon. "I keep important books."

TO PAGE 14

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## A Magnificent Moment

Briefly, where the post office now stands on Geary, designer Tony Duquette created a magical space

IN THE LATE 1980s, while driving down Geary Street in San Francisco, designer Tony Duquette discovered an abandoned and vandalized synagogue. He immediately purchased the building, seeing its potential as a home to his homeless exhibition, *Our Lady Queen of the Angels* [which he created and exhibited in Los Angeles to celebrate the city's bicentennial].

After thoroughly remodeling and updating the structure, Tony began creating a new exhibition to be combined with the old exhibition and renamed the *Canticle of the Sun of Saint Francis of Assisi*, after the patron saint of San Francisco.

The building itself was historic, and what Tony did with it architecturally was equally historic. When he found the building it was missing all of its windows, and the first order of business was to seal it up beautifully. Using his favorite material, cast resin, he created amazing inverted conch-shell windows in the two towers and replaced the original stained-glass main window with a creation made from Plexiglas, resin, golf balls, sliced plastic drinking glasses, plastic salad servers from Pic 'n Save, and all manner of everyday items, which he found beautiful in their repetition.

The main floor of the synagogue would be home to the exhibition. Tony and his

volunteer workers created beautiful fabric mosaic tapestries representing the teachings of St. Francis. An 18th century figure of St. Francis was positioned at the center of the old altar, surrounded by a flock of Rajputani clay birds — perched in dead tree branches — to which he preached a sermon. Giant faux malachite urns from an 18th century Austrian palace graced the sides of the stage, and behind those were the amazing 15-foot-tall gold-leaf Baroque trees that Tony had prominently displayed for years in his Los Angeles studio.

Above all of this was a giant copper sunburst made from the destroyed and discarded pipes of the building's original pipe organ. All around the 80-by-80-foot room (and nearing the top of its 40-foot ceilings) ran a horseshoe balcony. It was on this balcony that Tony positioned his army of 28-foot-tall angels, with the 18-foot-tall Madonna in her pavilion holding court at the back. This entire ensemble was artfully hidden by a theatrical scrim, but when the lighting illuminated them from behind, the tableaux appeared and disappeared, to amazing effect.

Under the balcony Tony positioned various sculptures, furniture groupings and works of art. For this celebratory environment Tony asked his friend Herb Alpert to compose the music. Charlton Heston

recited a new poem by Ray Bradbury, and the whole place was set to computerized lighting.

In the basement Tony set up several party rooms and various gallery spaces. The biggest of these galleries held an exhibition of his wife Beegle's paintings. The exhibition, like Tony's other exhibitions, was a brilliant popular success.

Unfortunately, after being open only a brief time, the entire building — and all of its contents, including the majority of Tony's personal collections and original works of art — burned one night as the result of an electrical fire.

Excerpted from Tony Duquette, by Wendy Goodman and Hutton Wilkinson.



A lavish new book documents the short-lived Duquette Pavilion on Geary (above) and Duquette's home, the Little House of Flowers, on Octavia Street.

JAMES CHEN

## The Hills Are Alive With 1,000 Films

FROM PAGE 7

"After *The Biographical Dictionary of Film*, I did not believe it was a sane idea to write another very long book on the same subject," he writes. "I wondered whether I would be idiot enough to take on another half-a-million-word project."

From his home office on Washington Street, where he has lived for many years with his wife and family, Thomson has established himself as one of the — and perhaps the — most thoughtful and prolific writers about film. He writes regularly for *The Guardian* and *The Independent* in London, where he grew up loving movies, and for *The New York Times* and *The New Republic*. He has written nearly two dozen books on Hollywood subjects ranging from Orson Welles and David O. Selznick to Warren Beatty and, most recently, Nicole Kidman.

He acknowledges that the scope of his project made it far different from the usual lists of the Top 10, or even the Top 100.

"Going for a thousand is a gesture toward history," he writes. "If you're picking 10, you may not consider the silent era in Sweden. But if you're doing a thousand, then those Stillers and Sjostroms deserve reappraisal. And they may be among the best early films we have."

Thomson says his editor chided him after reading an early draft of the book, saying, "We're snowed under with 'greats' and I'm still on B!"

He seems to have overcome that problem in subsequent drafts.

"Enthusiasm is too easy and it can lead to lazy writing and formulaic thinking," he says. "A little severity in such writing can be as welcome as the song of the blackbird at the end of a hot day."



*"Be ready to be shocked by what I have left out, but try to see what I have offered."*

— DAVID THOMSON

Thomson leaves no doubt what he means when he gets to the *The Sound of Music*, the perennial favorite and winner of the Oscar as Best Picture of 1965. "Christopher Plummer," he writes, "is caught between heavy boredom and the apparently serious urge to start kicking some of the children."

But he acknowledges his prejudices. "Yes, you're right: I am a very sick, vicious old man, but writing a thousand of these little recommendations can drive you crazy, especially when I come to a picture that I loathe but which — unquestionably — has to be in the book, if only because millions of the stupid and aggrieved will write in to the publisher, 'Where was *The Sound of Music*?' if it is not. It is here."

You won't come away wondering what he really thinks.

Yet Thomson shows a refreshing willingness to re-examine the attitudes and opinions of viewers and voters and critics alike, including some of those he expressed himself earlier in his career.

"It's not regarded as dotty now to say that Cary Grant is the most intriguing actor in the history of movies — yet in 1975 that was still fanciful," he writes. "The wheels of fashion keep turning. I still think Keaton is funnier, and sadder, but historically Chaplin towers over so much."

Thomson brings an international perspective, but his life in the neighborhood has affected his work — and not only because parts of *Greedy* were filmed nearby on Polk Street and *What's Up Doc?* took those missing chips out of the grand staircase on the south side of Alta Plaza Park.

"Living in San Francisco, I have access not just to my library of tapes and the libraries of friends," he writes, "but to the resources of Le Video on 9th Street, one of many outstanding stores in the U.S. There are so many fewer films that are hard to see."

And while he — like everybody else — now sees fewer films on the wide screen in a dark theater, he still finds value in the communal experience of watching movies.

"I rely on a group of friends and family with whom I see or discuss films," Thomson writes. "We do not agree all the time. But we have seen that as the point. I have benefited from remarks, recommendations, and insights, and helpless cries of pain and ecstasy from so many people."

David Thomson's new book and a subscription to Netflix will make a great Christmas gift this year.

### FAMILY FICTION



**'Uncle Otto' grows from a Fillmore salon**

Even while Winfred Cook was growing up in St. Louis, he had an itch to travel. He had a taste of the big three — New York, Chicago and Los Angeles — but when he arrived in San Francisco, he was home.

Since he opened his first salon here in 1973, Cook has become one of the most influential African American hair stylists in the country, with a clientele that has included political activist Angela Davis — whose iconic Afro he transformed into a modern short cut — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, singer Nancy Wilson and many who live nearby in the Fillmore. Winfred's Hair Salon, at 1967 Sutter Street, just east of Fillmore, has been a landmark for more than 35 years.

Now Cook has published his first novel, *Uncle Otto*. It began as a short story about his family's migration from Arkansas to St. Louis. Cook traced the threads of his family history by consulting relatives and others who knew his Uncle Otto Green — and then imagined the rest of the story.

*Uncle Otto* is available locally at Marcus Books at 1712 Fillmore.



*With a diverse range of color and textures, I attempt to show, not only the clothing, but also the architecture and other elements of a particular time in a place where they can tell of their lives, in addition to creating and developing with their magic those always new sounds which should be made known.*

— Ode to the People of Africa "Spirits of the Drums" — Mario Ayra, 2008 —

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## A Dog and His Family Find a Home at Alta Plaza

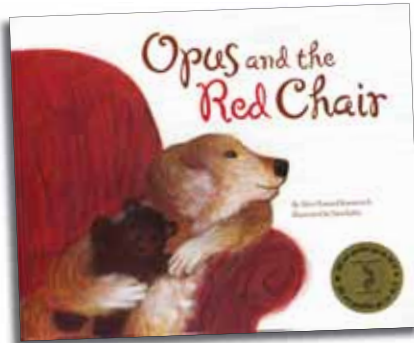
By ALICE KOESTERICH

“WHAT do you mean we’re moving — again?” I couldn’t believe my husband was suggesting we move a second time in less than three years. The nightmare of driving from New York to Boston with a car-hating dog still haunted me.

Moving to San Francisco was not going to be any easier. Now we also had a newborn — and Opus, our dog, was in remission from cancer.

I didn’t worry about the transition for our son. He was so little. But the thought of Opus in a crate scared me. He did not handle separation or change well. Not at all.

As for many people, our dog was our first baby. Dog was three when he was diagnosed with soft tissue sarcoma. We were told by a local veterinarian in Boston to euthanize him. Instead we contacted New England Veterinary Oncology Group. The doctors said there was hope because he was so young. After two



behind death and divorce. When children and dogs face a family move, with no say, many experience fears of abandonment and a loss of routine and creature comforts.

So I decided, in the afternoons, while our son napped, to write a story about our voyage from Boston to San Francisco told through the eyes of Opus, who is soothed when his favorite perch, a comfortable red chair, also makes the cross-country move.

Unfortunately, Opus’s cancer returned after 20 months of remission. The oncologist at UC Davis said there was nothing that could be done. We had to say goodbye, even though Opus was only five. The day after he died, the great folks at George declared Opus Day and gave out treats in his name.

To help heal the loss, I pulled out the story I’d written about Opus and enlisted some talented people to help turn it into a book. Illustrator Sara Kahn and designer Sue Redding contributed their time and talents to create *Opus and the Red Chair*, and they did it all for the love of animals. Profits from the book will benefit the Animal Cancer Foundation, whose research in comparative oncology focuses on cancers that occur both in humans and in dogs and cats.

In the afternoon, Lily, the manager of Blu, or the staff at Kiehl’s often gave him treats. We looked forward to our walks and visits, which were increasing our sense of community and helping us make new friends in the neighborhood. Having a friendly dog like Opus quickly ended any feeling of being a stranger in a new city. Everybody wanted to pet him.

As I was dealing with the transition of making new friends and finding new routines, I could only imagine what a child or a dog thinks and senses during a move. According to psychologists, moving ranks among the top 10 stress inducers, just

months of chemo and radiation, the tumor disappeared.

We packed up our home in Boston and flew west with baby on board and a healthy but unhappy dog in a crate.

On our first day in the neighborhood, we took Opus to Alta Plaza Park, where he was greeted by another golden retriever, Riley — and we were greeted by Kip, a friend from our dog park in New York, who had moved here with his two dogs four years ago.

Immediately we felt at home with old friends in our new park. The view of the city from the top of Alta Plaza was breathtaking — far more beautiful than the snow-covered Boston Commons we had just left behind.

Opus soon became a fixture on Fillmore Street. Every day at noon I would

put our son in a stroller and walk down to George, the classy pet shop on California Street, to get Opus a midday treat from Debra, the manager. He would dutifully wait until we got back home on Clay Street to eat his treat.

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## Grammar Matters. Period.

A local author’s thin book will help you write better

By JANIS BELL

IN OUR upscale neighborhood there are plenty of high-end shops.

What strikes me as noteworthy about that statement has nothing to do with the location of my apartment in lower Pacific Heights. Instead, I marvel that upscale is one word while high-end is hyphenated. I also wonder how heights can be low.

Paying close attention to the way we use English is, for me, an occupational hazard. I’ve been teaching writing in San Francisco universities and businesses for more than three decades.

So what do I see when I walk around the neighborhood? I notice, with pride, that Whole Foods sports signs reading “eight items or fewer,” rather than less. And I observe, with pleasure, that Yoshi’s contains an apostrophe, unlike Mels, for example.

I know my focus on the written word is exaggerated, but I also know most people aren’t paying enough attention to the sentences they write. Like it or not, the way we write influences the way people perceive us — intelligent and attentive to detail, or underinformed and careless. And because of email, we are now making those impressions many times a day, broadcasting to the whole world not only what we think but who we are.

The question, then, is why not take a little time to improve our writing?

That’s the question that led me to write *Clean, Well-Lighted Sentences*, a small book focused on the most common errors in grammar and punctuation. I wrote it for people who are writing well enough to be producing correspondence at work or papers for school, people who want to improve their sentences but don’t have the time to slog through a traditional text.

I wrote it as a conversation, sprinkled with humor, to make it easy and even enjoyable to read. I also wrote it for people who want to make sure they understand the material and can apply the knowledge they gained. There’s a quiz, followed by answers and explanations, at the end of each chapter.

So why is upscale not hyphenated and high-end is? When a two-word adjective first enters the language, it is often hyphenated; when it becomes commonplace, the trend is away from hyphenation. This applies to words containing prefixes, as well. Many years ago, coordinate was co-ordinate and coworker was co-worker.

If I also made you wonder about heights being low, you may just have to accept that and hope it stops there. If all our lower heights remain geographical, we’ll be lucky indeed.

*Clean, Well-Lighted Sentences* is available locally at Books Inc. at 3515 California Street. Janis Bell will speak and answer questions there on Thursday, November 6, at 6:30 p.m.



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## Life in the Heights and Those Who Have Lived It

By now, it seems the enterprising editors at Arcadia Publishing have issued historical picture books on every neighborhood in San Francisco and then some. Yet despite many efforts, they had never managed to capture Pacific Heights.

Tricia O'Brien has now filled the void. Her new book of neighborhood historical photographs was unveiled in grand fashion in the gilt-and-ivory ballroom of Le Petit Trianon, at 3800 Washington Street, during the Victorian Alliance's annual house tour on October 19.

O'Brien successfully accomplished what others had not — partly by expanding the scope of the book to include both Pacific and Presidio Heights, which allowed her to include the neighborhood she called home as a child.

The first picture in the book is of the author's family home on Clay Street, between Spruce and Locust. After that, she unfolds an album of more than 100 photographs



*"That's what the neighborhood used to be — dirt, not fancy houses."*

— TRICIA O'BRIEN

Jackson Street and Presidio Avenue in the 1890s.

of historic homes, schools and institutions, plus the people who brought them to life.

"It gives a flavor of those who lived in the neighborhood," says O'Brien. "I wanted to go beyond the architecture — that's already out there."

Since she grew up in Presidio Heights, she began her search for photographs by calling on family friends. "I started with people I knew," she says. "They introduced me to others."

Many of the photographs in the book come from private family collections — among them some from families whose roots go back to the Gold Rush. Other images come from the Catholic Archdiocese, from the many private schools in the neighborhood and from San Francisco Heritage, the architectural preservation group headquartered in the Haas-Lillenthal house. There are many photographs of cable cars, which at one time traveled all through the area.

"Many people are surprised how far out the cable cars went," O'Brien says. "The cable cars — and the earthquake — were the major reasons these neighborhoods were created."

She found that many families had been in Presidio Heights for generations, some moving only a few blocks from where they were born.

"There was more land in Presidio Heights," she says. "Originally there wasn't much out here — only cows."

One of O'Brien's favorite photographs in the book shows a cable car coming west on Jackson Street in the 1890s, curving south onto Presidio Avenue. Only one house is visible, and the cable car tracks have been carved through the rising hills.

"It's hard to imagine — there are all those big buildings there now," she says. "That's what the neighborhood used to be — dirt, not fancy houses."

■ THE BROWSER | FRED MARTIN

## At the Bookstore, a Model Multiple for Our Times

Yes, the world is an insane mess. You have to be something of a multiple personality just to keep up — with the wars, the economy, all the technologies, all the choices, too little time. It helps to remember it's been done.

Odysseus, for example, was truly a model multiple. He was a model soldier and commander of men, partly because he was a shifty, ruthless bastard. He was a battle-scarred veteran who longed for the world back home, but was somehow unable to make it there for 10 long years — after a decade at war.

He started out as a model son and husband, respected and happy in his marriage and his little kingdom, and then he got called up. He had to get comfortable in the killing fields, and 10 years of that somehow made it a little difficult for him to rejoin civilization. Gods turned against him, humans acted stupid and greedy, sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll were all too available.

Still, he remembered — for years, mourned for — who he was, what he'd lost in these epic distractions. He followed his heart — and waited patiently for his luck to turn. When it did, he did the right things, using all the tricks he'd learned along the way, all the multiple disguises he was famous for, and at last he made it home.

Sound like a multiple for our own times? An epic version of anyone familiar? If you're feeling a little stretched between the demands of all your competing selves, don't despair.

Then again, maybe you'd just like a little island escape. You want to spend some good down time with a can-do pulp hero on some dandy adventures and still respect yourself in the morning.

Either way, you could do worse than pull in and fuel up at the little island of (in)sanity called Brower Books and dip in to the mother lode of literature on the world's original multiple man.

For Homer's great *Odyssey* itself and its recent translators, I recommend Lattimore for his big rolling music, Fitzgerald for his perfect ear, Fogles and Lombardo for his modern take.

For an elegantly shell-shocking plunge into the dark heart of the poem, read Jonathan Shay's two books applying Homer like a cauterizing salve to

*Dip in to the mother lode of literature on the world's original multitasker.*

the horrific problems of returning war vets. *Achilles in Vietnam* and *Odysseus in America* are first rate lit crit and first rate self-help in essentially one book. They are also, along with Simon Armitage's exciting BBC dramatization of the *Odyssey*, stirring real re-enactments of the world's greatest adventure stories.

For, believe it or not, an historical biography of the mythic hero Odysseus, there's Charles Rowan Bey's illuminating *Odysseus: A Life*. For the latest historical and archeological revelations about the war Odysseus survived, and the Bronze Age world he lived in, read Barry Strauss's *The Trojan War*.

For a superb vision of how Odysseus's narrative mirrors the experiences of other soldiers in other wars, read Charles Frazier's Civil War novel *Cold*

*Mountain*, and let him flesh out the other half of the story: what happened to those Iman (Odysseus) left behind, especially his amazing wife Ada (Penelope), who fought to preserve the frail fabric of civilization, who somehow kept the home fires burning and the embers of love alive.


On this note I'll pass on the news, gleaned from a Brower Books regular, of a production starting this month at the Exit Theater of *Current Nobody* by Melissa James Gibson. Running from November 14 to December 13, it's an adaptation of the *Odyssey* with the roles reversed — Odysseus as stay-at-home dad.

Finally, to guide you back to the front of the store — and maybe the front of the story — there are two new tomes that look to be worthy companions to the books I've mentioned. Norman Fischer's *Sailing Home* contains a Zen priest's often insightful thoughts on the *Odyssey* as — can you imagine? — a psychologically acute tool for navigating our archipelago of identities and finding the right way to bind them together.

If that sounds too simplistic and reductive, and if you're ready for a magisterial odyssey through our long cultural obsession with the *Odyssey* since its earliest days as an oral poem almost 3,000 years ago, there's Edith Hall's brilliant, fluid, constantly surprising *Return of Ulysses*, the Romans' name for Odysseus. It's a feast of a book, a many-headed Scylla of a book, as multiple as the man himself.

See you at the bookstore.

For 28 years, Fred Martin has been offering advice and observations behind the check-out counter of Brower Books at 2195 Fillmore Street.

  
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**California Pacific Medical Center**  
invites you to a Community Forum

Building for the Future of Health Care  
in San Francisco

**Cathedral Hill Hotel**  
Van Ness at Geary  
Thursday, October 23, 2008  
7 - 9 p.m.

**California Campus**  
**Bothin Auditorium**  
California at Cherry  
Monday, October 27, 2008  
7 - 9 p.m.

**St. Luke's Campus**  
**Griffin Room**  
Cesar Chavez at Valencia  
Tuesday, October 28, 2008  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Davies Campus**  
**B-Level Auditorium**  
Castro at Duboce  
Wednesday, November 5, 2008  
7 - 9 p.m.

**Pacific Campus**  
**Calvary Presbyterian Church**  
2515 Fillmore at Jackson  
Thursday, November 6, 2008  
7 - 9 p.m.

We invite you to attend an upcoming Community Forum to learn more about California Pacific Medical Center's plans for health care delivery in San Francisco.

State law requires that California hospitals be retrofitted or rebuilt to meet new seismic safety guidelines by 2015. California Pacific Medical Center faces the same challenges shared by all San Francisco medical institutions in planning for the future to continue to provide high quality health care to the community.

Come and hear our plans for the future of health care in San Francisco.

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■ BEYOND BOOKS



**Creating online games for the Smithsonian**

Novelist and screenwriter John Maccabee has had an office upstairs at Fillmore and Pine for 16 years. He came seeking the right blend of busyness and quiet to write — and he's found a creative home from which he has published three novels and sold more than a dozen screenplays and television scripts.

Then, four years ago, he founded CityMystery, which designs interactive alternate reality games. His latest was designed for the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. — the first game of its kind sponsored by a major museum. It's a ghost story in which players are actively engaged in creating artifacts for an exhibition at the Smithsonian. Along the way they banish unruly spirits that haunt the museum and two of its curators.

The entire multimedia experience, created by Maccabee and his colleagues in the Playtime Anti-Boredom Society, is called *Ghosts of a Chance*, and can be found at [www.ghostsofchance.com](http://www.ghostsofchance.com).

Fans of alternative reality games, which can last for weeks or months, love the thin line between fiction and fact. In his game, Maccabee has created characters who can befuddle even hardcore players.

All of this creativity comes out of a studio space above Thai Slick, fueled by forays across the street for lunch at Johnny Rockets.

**Kinokuniya Is the Source for Books in Japantown**

**I**N JAPANTOWN, upstairs in the Kinokuniya Building at 1581 Webster Street, is another bookstore unique in the neighborhood. Although part of a global operation, Kinokuniya is one of the few Japanese-language bookstores in this country and the only one in San Francisco.

The first Kinokuniya store opened in 1927 in a small wooden building in the Japantown entertainment district of Tokyo. Moichi Tanabe, son of a charcoal dealer — and a lifelong friend of artists and musicians — followed his bohemian yearnings and opened a bookstore against his father's wishes. It had only five employees. In May of 1945, it burned to the ground during an air raid.

Within months Tanabe managed to reopen his bookstore. Today, there are 27

Kinokuniyas in Japan, and the bookstore has spread across the globe — to Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, New York and California. And coming soon is a Kinokuniya in Dubai.

Japantown's Kinokuniya was the chain's first international location. It has been a part of the neighborhood for almost 40 years.

Founded to help provide local Japanese Americans with a means of getting news from Japan, the store has an impressive array of Japanese literature, newspapers and magazines. It also has a substantial English language section, where you can find Japanese classic and popular fiction, works of history, an exquisite collection of Asian art books and a broader-than-average selection of works on Buddhism. Anime-in-

spired toys, t-shirts and handbags, Asian art calendars and CDs, and DVDs offer other aspects of Japanese culture.

But Kinokuniya's most popular publications — manga, or Japanese graphic novels — are offered on the first floor. Manga is the Japanese word for comics; translated literally, the word means "whimsical pictures."

Manga plays a far larger role in Japanese literary life than graphic novels do in the United States. It's widely popular with Japanese of all ages and includes a vast range of genres — historical drama, humor, mystery, horror, erotica, science fiction and fantasy. Even nonfiction books on sports and business are available in manga form.

The store's name is derived from the Kinokuniya prefecture in Japan.

**Marcus Books**

• FROM PAGE 7

In addition to printing, the Richardsons also sold books by African American authors, promoting such eminent authors as Richard Wright and Langston Hughes.

"They were independent thinkers," their daughter Karen Johnson, who now manages the store, says of her pioneering parents. "In 1959 they thought of black as a positive value and realized no one should be in charge of our collective wisdom."

The Richardsons helped bring to public consciousness the work of such scholars as J.A. Rogers, one of the first historians to challenge Eurocentric interpretations of the history of

civilization. "And to this day he's still best-selling and mind-blowing," Johnson says, "which is a statement of how much we've been collectively brainwashed into not even looking at Africa as a cradle of civilization."

Marcus Books has continued to press ahead through lean times, and Johnson says the underlying reason is commitment. "Money was never our primary concern," she says. "Money fluctuates. The community's need is still there."

Marcus Books has a sister store in Oakland managed by Blanche Richardson, another daughter of the founders.

"We're usually open until 7," says Johnson, "but we'll stay open for the lingerers — if they're cool."

**Browser Books**

• FROM PAGE 7

Browser's story is interwoven with the colorful history of the neighborhood. The store was founded in 1976 a block north of its present location, just beside the Clay Theater, where Carlos Santana's band also recorded. Beat poets read their poems and a head shop once flourished.

"This is a great neighborhood for a literary bookstore," Damon says. "We have a loyal clientele." Damon treasures an in-person review he received from local author Alice Adams. "Thank God for Browser Books," she told him. "I don't think bookstores like this still existed."

Browser is open every day until 10 p.m. — even if it's New Year's Day. The store closes only on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES**

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Date	Asking \$	Sale \$
2955 Octavia St	3	2	2	2285	10-Oct	1,950,000	1,910,000
3926 Clay St	5	2	7		7-Oct	2,795,000	2,825,000
3074 Pacific Ave	3	2.5	2		30-Sep	4,500,000	4,650,000
2714 Pacific Ave	4	4.5	2		23-Sep	4,795,000	Not Disclosed
3460 Clay St	6	4.5	3		24-Sep	5,995,000	6,150,000

Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts							
2090 Pacific Ave		1		740	19-Sep	599,000	620,000
2886 Jackson St	2	1	1	1270	25-Sep	819,000	819,000
3109 Buchanan St	2	1	1		24-Sep	849,000	835,000
3065 Clay St	1	1	1	1187	3-Oct	849,000	850,000
3033 California St	3	2.5	1	1700	30-Sep	989,000	989,000
1760 Pacific Ave #7	3	2	1	774	9-Oct	1,195,000	1,050,000
3334 Clay St	3	2	1	1856	16-Sep	1,195,000	1,050,000
2825 Laguna St	4	2	1		22-Sep	1,450,000	1,458,000
1944 Green St	2	2	1		8-Oct	1,495,000	1,550,000
3622 Sacramento St	3	2	2	1705	7-Oct	1,675,000	1,660,000
2915 Laguna St	3	2.5	2	2823	7-Oct	2,550,000	Not Disclosed
2917 Laguna St	4	3.5	2	3134	7-Oct	3,175,000	Not Disclosed
2127 Broadway #6	3	3.5	2		26-Sep	4,795,000	Not Disclosed

**What a difference a month makes**

We are in a very different time now from only one month ago. This month we have seen fewer properties go into contract, with many buyers taking a wait-and-see attitude. Yet almost 70 new properties have come onto the market, which will put downward pressure on prices if buyers choose to remain on the sidelines.

Despite the unsettling economic news, several homes came onto the market, went into contract within 10 days and have since closed — including 3926 Clay, 3460 Clay, 3074 Pacific and 2714 Pacific. So there are buyers out there moving forward, given the right opportunities.

Several other new listings have also gone into contract quickly: ■ 3711 Clay, a 3,600 sq. ft. home with 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths and an elevator — well priced at \$3.25 million — went into contract after only 11 days on the market and is now pending.

■ 2829 Steiner #1, a newly updated 1 bedroom condo in a remodeled three-unit building listed at \$879,000, went into contract after 10 days on the market. The upper 2 bedroom, 2 bath unit, with a private roof deck, also was in contract, but has since fallen out, and is now available at a reduced price of \$1.995 million. The lower condo, also with 2 bedrooms and 2 baths, is still available at \$1.595 million.

— JOHN FITZGERALD jfitzgerald@pacunicon.com

**JAZZ**

**Bringing Back the Banjo**

By ANTHONY TORRES

**B**ELE FLECK and the Flecktones are bringing their holiday tour to Yoshi's from November 18 to 23, and they are a group you really should check out.

When I first saw Bela Fleck and the Flecktones several years ago, they came on after Oscar Peterson, who delivered an incredibly sophisticated set of beautiful jazz standards and original compositions, and Peterson followed Arturo Sandoval, who had completely scorched the stage.

When the Flecktones came on stage, the air of anticipation in the audience was palpable — which was intense, considering the two acts they had to follow.

As they began to play their particular type of jazz, anchored by Bela Fleck on banjo, it seemed historically appropriate to see someone re-integrating the banjo into jazz, especially since the banjo was integral to the early development of jazz.

Bela Fleck is one of the premiere banjo players in the world, and someone who is central to transmuting associations of the instrument. He has redefined the parameters of jazz by blending bluegrass, rock and country music.

The Flecktones are great because of what flows from the sum of their parts. The band includes Victor Wooten, whose virtu-

oso bass playing technique is so incredible that he is regarded by some as perhaps the best bass player in the world. As incredible as that statement may seem, Wooten won the Bass Player of the Year award from Bass Player magazine three times in a row. He's the only player ever to win the award more than once, so that should tell you something.

Wooten's double-thumbing technique, which was first created by Sly Stone's bass player Larry Graham, uses the thumb to strike the string both downward and upward, like a guitar pick. In combination with his Stanley Jordan-like two-handed tapping and open hammer-pluck technique, it sets him

apart from almost any other bass player on the planet and allows him to play with the lightning speed of a lead guitar player like Eddie Van Halen.

Victor's brother, percussionist Roy Wilfred Wooten, better known as "Future Man," is an inventor, musician and composer and a four-time Grammy Award winner.

As gifted as these guys are individually, as a group they are what Duke Ellington used to refer to as beyond definition. They really have to be seen and heard live — experienced, that is — to be fully appreciated. That is something you will have a chance to do this month at Yoshi's on Fillmore.



The Flecktones are taking their new holiday album on tour.

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1:30, 5:30 & 9:00 pm  
**WEEKDAYS**  
6:30 & 8:00 am & 5:30 pm  
**SATURDAY**  
7:40 am Rosary, 8:00 am Mass

**PRAYERS & SACRAMENTS**

The church is open for prayer all day and into the early evening.

**Liturgy of the Hours (Daily)**

Morning Prayer 7:15 am/Sat 8:00 am  
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm  
Reconciliation Sat 5:00 pm,  
Sun 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00 am, 5:00 pm  
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament  
Mon & Wed 8:30 am & 6 pm  
Tue & Fri 8:30 pm

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