



# Glen Park News

## Glen Park Responds to COVID Crisis

**W**hen the Bay Area went into COVID-19 lockdown on March 17, downtown Glen Park, for the most part, shut its doors, too.

by  
Gail  
Bensinger

No streams of commuters pouring out of the BART station. No clumps of St. John school kids in their slightly disheveled

uniforms heading to Cuppa for frozen yogurt and bubble tea. No solitary techies with laptops setting up office at Bello. No families grabbing a table at Gialina's for pizza night. No one getting a mani-pedi at any of the salons on Diamond Street or a haircut at any salon.

No seniors lingering and chatting over muffins and coffee at Destination

Bakery, or over tuna sandwiches or pancakes at Tyger's. No gym regulars working out at FitGlenFit. No jazz aficionados assembling for live concerts at Bird & Beckett. No baseball on the diamond in Glen Canyon Park, and nobody on the climbing wall in the Rec Center. No noise on the playgrounds at Big Blue or Dolores Huerta Elementary. No toddlers and

their accompanying adults assembling for story hour at the library. No steady hum of traffic coming from Highway 280.

And no Glen Park Festival on April 26. The organizers emailed in mid-March: "We have decided to postpone this April's festival in the best interest of our community, attendees, supporters and general public health. We do hope to still host a 2020 festival later in the summer. We will announce a new date as soon as one has been set." They requested that sponsors and vendors keep pledges, contributions and reservations in place for the to-be-rescheduled street fair.

Now just a few doors are open at neighborhood businesses: Canyon Market and the two corner mom-and-pop stores on Diamond Street—Buddies at Chenery and Glen Park Delicatessen at Bosworth—provide groceries and snacks. Glen Park Hardware, Glen Park Cleaners and Critter Fritters are considered "essential" businesses under the City's shelter-in-place regulations. The Dignity Health-GoHealth Urgent Care facility across from the BART station is open to handle non-coronavirus-related medical needs.

But the near-empty sidewalks and empty parking places along Chenery and Diamond streets highlight a neighborhood under siege by a disease.

Probably most of us have been stunned by the rapid transition of the epidemic from a few isolated hotspots to an all-consuming pandemic that has changed the lives of most people on Earth. As the reality of the dangers of COVID-19 became clear, suggestions became policy, which in turn became official orders. Two days after San Francisco and other Bay Area counties directed people to stay home and all but select businesses to remain open, California Gov. Gavin Newsom ordered that all of the state's residents shelter in place.



Shoppers line up outside of Canyon Market after it started limiting the number of people in the store at one time.

Photo by Liz Mangelsdorf

### ❖ FROM THE EDITORS ❖

**U**nprecedented. We hear that word a lot in this era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented shutdown of businesses. The unprecedented closure of schools. The unprecedented forced distancing of neighbors, co-workers, friends, family members and other loved ones. The unprecedented quick spike in unem-

ployment and freefall of the stock market. The unprecedented run on toilet paper and canned beans and giant bags of rice. Seems one of the few things that grocery stores are not running out of is frozen okra.

Also unprecedented? No quarterly printed edition of the *Glen Park News*.

Instead of the neighborhood paper

being dropped off at your doorstep or left in stacks for readers to pick up at local shops and the library, we're publishing this edition only online. Driving that decision was the Department of Public Health's social distancing order. Most Glen Park businesses have been shuttered, or are open

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# GLEN PARK NEWS

The *Glen Park News* is published quarterly by the Glen Park Association. Signed articles are the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the Glen Park Association.

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## ◆ GLEN PARK ASSOCIATION ◆

California's housing crisis has been in the news lately, and our elected officials have been hard at work addressing the twin problems of not enough homes for Bay Area workers and available homes being too expensive for most would-be residents to afford.

State Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) introduced Senate Bill 50 last year. After months in committee, it was tabled until this year's session, then defeated in January. SB-50 would have allowed taller, multi-unit apartment buildings near transit stops like Glen Park BART. However, while SB-50 would have permitted these buildings to have more units, it didn't require them, so tall single-family homes would have conformed to the new zoning.

Supervisor Rafael Mandelman



Scott Wiener

(D-District 8) has responded with his own plan, "Density With Character: Glen Park Pilot," which was unveiled to the Glen Park Association before SB-50's fate was decided. You can find Bonnee Waldstein's Notes on the winter meeting of the Glen Park Association on Page 6 and at [glenparkassociation.org](http://glenparkassociation.org). Here are some highlights:

Mandelman identifies two problems he's heard about from Glen Park constituents, which he would like to address: the housing crisis (not enough homes, and available homes are too expensive) and "monster homes" (conversion of existing single-family homes into ever-larger single-family homes). His goals were to limit monster homes and promote density (more units per lot).

With the help of the Planning Department, Mandelman developed a proposal to change zoning in Glen Park to meet those goals: Retain existing height limits, for the most part, while legalizing small townhouses and multi-family homes. The plan incentivizes additional units by restricting

the size of single-family homes, while allowing multi-family buildings to have more square footage on that same lot. The mechanism is to use "floor area ratios" (FAR), which is the square footage of the structure divided by the lot size.

The version of the plan shared with the GPA proposes an FAR of 0.6 for a single-family home; that is, on a 2,500 square foot lot, a single family home could be 1,500 square feet. But a two-family house, or a house plus a cottage, could have an FAR of 1.2, for a total floor space of 3,000 square feet on that lot. Triplexes could have an FAR of 1.8, and fourplexes 2.4. Setbacks and lot coverage requirements would be maintained.

The proposed FARs are subject to change, so Mandelman wants to gather constituent feedback as to whether neighbors are comfortable with these values or want them to be raised or lowered.◆

*Hilary Schiraldi is vice president of the Glen Park Association.*

## ◆ FROM THE EDITORS ◆

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strictly for takeout service, so there are few places to drop off the paper. We also didn't want to put our volunteer cavalry of paper carriers at unnecessary risk when they drop the *Glen Park News* at people's front doors.

Then there's the timing issue. By the time you read this, what we wrote may be outdated. The news is changing by the hour. Printing a newspaper that's published every three months at this unprecedented period of history just

didn't make sense, when even the daily print and broadcast media are having trouble keeping up with the latest developments.

But that doesn't mean there isn't a *Glen Park News*. We still have our columns, photos and stories. You can find all of them here, in our traditional layout, only this time in digital format. We expect this to be a one-time situation, and to roar back with a printed summer edition.

You will read on this site about the

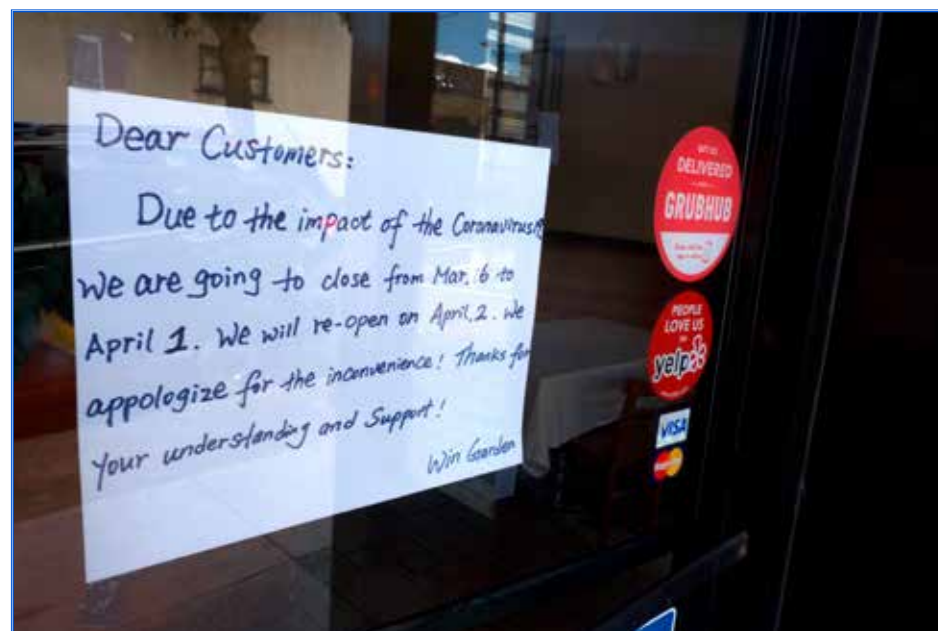
empty streets, and the shuttered businesses, and the businesses that have remained open to serve the neighborhood.

As we write this, the expected surge of COVID-19 cases has not yet hit San Francisco. At this time, we can only hope (with all hope) that our neighbors will be spared, and those who are sick will recover. As many of us shelter in place and telecommute from home, we want to give a big thanks to those who are working on the front lines—the doctors, nurses and other medical workers, police, firefighters, street cleaners, bus drivers, mail carriers, delivery service workers, grocers, garbage men, construction workers, journalists, cooks at takeout restaurants, nursing home staff and many others. This essential workforce has been amazing.

So, too, have our many neighbors who have been looking out for each other—shopping and running errands for the homebound and checking in with folks via phone and computer to make sure those who have been isolated from the outside world aren't forgotten.

And let's not forget, it's spring. There's a lesson in this season: rebirth and hope.

We will get through this, together. ◆



The note on the Win Garden's front door announcing its temporary closure.

Photo by Liz Mangelsdorf



## ❖ NEWS FROM CITY HALL ❖

**M**ore than 110 neighbors attended a community meeting hosted by my office on Jan. 28 to discuss a 305 percent increase in car break-ins in and around the Diamond Heights Shopping Center. (See “News from Diamond Heights,” below.) We convened this meeting because we need to work together to curb this alarming increase, even at a time when reported car break-ins are down 2 percent citywide.

The meeting was also an opportunity for residents to meet and talk with our new District Attorney Chesa Boudin and new Ingleside Police Station Capt. Chris Woon. I look forward to working with each of them on implementing effective crime prevention strategies, improving City response for victims of crime, and increasing successful prosecutions of car break-in cases.

**All-Electric Buildings:** On Jan. 7, my legislation to incentivize all-electric buildings and curb the use of natural gas in new construction was passed unanimously by the Board of Supervisors. The next day, we kicked off the next phase of our Climate Emergency efforts with a stakeholder meeting to build consensus on banning natural gas in new construction.

The months-long fires that raged across Australia are a tragic reminder that we must act boldly and swiftly to reduce our carbon footprint and combat climate change. In the months ahead, my office will be collaborating with environmental advocates, labor unions, developers and all stakeholders to end the use of natural gas in new buildings in San Francisco.

**Density with Character:** On Jan. 23, I joined the Glen Park Association’s winter meeting to discuss ways to allow more housing units in Glen

Park, while discouraging monster homes and protecting the character of the neighborhood. We are working on a “Density with Character” proposal to make it harder to build oversized single-family homes, while allowing and encouraging increased density for smaller homes within existing height limits.

I heard a lot of support at the meeting for increasing housing opportunities in San Francisco and particularly for increasing housing in areas with access to transit, like Glen Park, while also preserving the character of the neighborhood. My office is further developing this proposal and will continue to engage the Glen Park community as we finalize legislation later this spring. ❖

*Rafael Mandelman represents District 8, which includes Glen Park, on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.*

## ❖ NEWS FROM DIAMOND HEIGHTS ❖

**F**ollowing the outcry after a car window was smashed during a robbery, while a man and his daughter were in the car, at the Diamond Heights Shopping Center parking lot, Supervisor Rafael Mandelman con-

vened a Community Safety Meeting on Jan. 28. More than 110 people came to hear from Mandelman, District Attorney Chesa Boudin, Ingleside Police Capt. Chris Woon, and SF SAFE and shopping center representatives.

As a response to the increase in thefts from cars in the shopping center, Henry Avila, senior vice president of operations of Donahue Schriber, the company that owns the shopping center, itemized a number of crime prevention measures already undertaken or in the works:

Security personnel are now using a Segway motorized scooter to monitor the parking lot more quickly. Security hours have been increased. The

shopping center planned to upgrade its security cameras as a deterrent and to help with crime prosecution. New LED lighting and signage indicating not to leave belongings in cars will be installed. And the shopping center will pass out cards with instructions entitled “How to

Respond to Auto Break-ins.”

It is hoped that these new crime prevention measures will help stem the 305 percent increase in crime last year within a perimeter of 1,000 feet around the shopping center. Nineteen incidents had been reported in 2018, a number that jumped to 77 in 2019.

### Playground update:

With no rain in February, the contractor doing the renovations at Christopher Park was able to lay rebar and concrete foundations for some of the playground work; the fence extension around the Noe Valley Nursery School in the park was completed so that the preschool students have a safer play area during construction; and trees and shrubbery were removed so that the pathway from Duncan Street to the park can be replaced. Construction updates may be found at [sfrecpark.org/1145/George-Christopher-Playground-Improvements](http://sfrecpark.org/1145/George-Christopher-Playground-Improvements). The construction is scheduled for completion in fall 2020. ❖

*Betsy Eddy is president of the Diamond Heights Community Association. Contact her at [dhcasf@gmail.com](mailto:dhcasf@gmail.com).*



Jay Davis, security guard at the Diamond Heights Shopping Center.

Photo by Betsy Eddy

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The mission of the Glen Park Association is to promote the collective interests of all persons living in Glen Park, to inform and educate about neighborhood and citywide issues, to promote sociability and friendships and to support beneficial neighborhood projects.



# Rare Sighting: A Tanager in Glen Canyon

Glen Canyon was aflutter on the early morning of Jan. 22.

A flock of bird watchers descended on the 70-acre natural area, armed with cameras boasting the latest high-powered lenses. They stood, even sat, beneath the eucalyptus tree that houses great horned owls each year,

trained their cameras by on another gum tree rooted on the bank of Islais Creek and watched with patented birder patience.

That patience paid off.

Perched on a branch, a bright red male summer tanager stared back at the Audubon-loving eavesdroppers and sightseers that Wednesday morning.

The vagrant songbird was far from its territory, which is the southern United States, Mexico and northern South America.

The first sighting of the flame-colored bird came on Friday, Jan. 17, by parents at the Glenridge Cooperative Nursery School, located in the park, according to the school's director, Mame Campbell. "I have been worried about it surviving, but maybe it is doing a good job of dodging the red-tailed hawk," she said.

Prior to January, this bird species doesn't appear to have been sighted ever before in Glen Canyon. But word spread via the power of the Internet, on eBird.org and iNaturalist.org.

"It didn't have to go to Mexico this year," said Dylan Hayes, a Recreation and Park Natural Resource Division



A red-tailed hawk in Glen Canyon Park.  
Photo courtesy of Grace Ruth.



This bright-red tanager perches in Glen Canyon Park, far from its natural habitat.

Photo courtesy of Grace Ruth

naturalist. "It's here for a good meal and water."

Hayes, as he is each Wednesday, was in the canyon to supervise Friends of Glen Canyon Park volunteers, several of whom had arrived on time at 9 a.m. for their regular work party, only to discover a sea of unfamiliar faces and a bird that was hundreds of miles from its familiar habitat.

"It's off-course," said Hayes, "It'll get a good meal here. Water, too." After the previous day's rain, Islais Creek was running high.

The tanager's home habitat is open wooded areas, especially where there is oak, of which Glen Canyon has its fair share. They eat mainly insects—especially bees and wasps—and berries. With the canyon's abundant native and Himalayan blackberry, the migrant visitor had ample sustenance while it remained.

On her way out of the canyon, a dog walker stopped a Friends of Glen Canyon Park volunteer and told him she'd seen the tanager the day before. Sitting on a branch opposite it was a



Photographers wait to get a glimpse of the tanager in Glen Canyon Park.

Photo by Liz Mangelsdorf

red-tailed hawk, she said, the closest she'd seen such a raptor in all the years she's been walking her dog. She hoped the bird was still in one piece.

The volunteer told her that it was. "I'm so glad," the dog walker said. She and her canine companion walked over to take a look for themselves. ♦



## ✿ DIGGING THE DIRT ✿

**R**ewild your garden! This practice can be a soothing antidote to our deep fears about the consequences of climate change. The constant rumble of bad news is disheartening: raging forest fires, retreating glaciers, species disappearing at a frightening rate, and now the news that the Antarctic ice is melting faster than expected.

by Kay  
Hamilton  
Estey

Many Glen Park gardeners are noting declining bee and bird populations. We all want to act, pick a cause and fight for our planet.

Rewilding or wilding is a widespread movement. One joyful example is the cascade of healing environmental events that followed the reintroduction of gray wolves into Yellowstone National Park (see reference below). Farmers are returning exhausted land back to nature, letting their waterlands creep back in, leaving fields fallow and reducing the use of chemicals. These projects aren't fast fixes, but there is an opportunity here for all gardeners to help restore balance in their local environment.

Let's consider starting small. We can preserve insect and bird life, and even safeguard the rich microbial life of the soil. Here are 10 quick pointers to get started:

•**Change the aesthetic:** Perfection



A scarlet sage plant (*Salvia splendens*).

Photo courtesy André Karwath/Creative Commons

### The Lake Isle of Innisfree

by William Butler Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

is death, the frozen garden created by the chemical industry. The perfectly tended weed-free garden, with its rows of blooming plants, is basically a chemical creation (and a lot of work). Those immaculate roses are drug-addicted darlings hooked on the constant application of herbicides, fungicides and pesticides. There is another way!

•**Drop the chemicals:** No matter what the label says, they are bad for the environment. Perhaps the contents are “bee-friendly” or “safe for perching birds,” but what are they doing to your soil? Slowly killing the rich bacterial life underground that nurtures thousands of useful creepy crawlies, including microbes and bacteria. The delicate webs of fungus-like mycelium in the soil transmit nutrients and water to plant roots, even providing immunity to disease. Soil saturated with chemicals is dead soil with no insect life, leading to declining populations of birds, bees, butterflies—their food has gone!

•**Plant tougher and hardier plants:** Rewilding is not a recommendation for ugly gardens—far from it. You can still fill your gardens with blooms; in fact, bees will be drawn to all those bright colors. You just need to be careful about introducing tender

plants that need intensive chemical help to thrive. This is no time to be delicate. Native plants, roses developed for this area that resist fungus, all the salvias you can find, fungus- and mite-resistant fuchsias—you can still have beauty.

•**Weed judiciously:** I still pull out oxalis and a nasty grass that seeds in everywhere. I don't want to be overwhelmed by invasive opportunists, but many other “weeds” aren't harmful and can just be left alone.

•**Let overgrown and rangy plants have a place:** Perfection, frankly, is a bore, and the new wild aesthetic has its own wonderful charm, humming and buzzing with insect and bird life, and heavy with the scents of rambling salvias.

•**Put water in somewhere:** Everything loves water, a precious resource in this semi-arid climate. Even bees will sip at a flat plate of water dotted with a few small stones to land on. Birds will hang out near a sheltered, safe water source.

•**Leave a bit of bare dirt:** Gretchen LeBuhn, a biology professor at San Francisco State University and a pollination expert, recently gave a fact-filled talk to the garden club about her research into native bees and their unfortunate decline in this area. She suggests leaving some bare dirt for our native solitary bumblebees, which burrow into the soil to raise their young. Her recent book, “The Bee-Friendly Garden,” is packed with useful planting ideas. You can order it at from Bird & Beckett Books.

•**Love the accidental garden:** My garden is now 30 years old. It's somewhat neglected, and filled with plants

that have seeded in, some dropped by birds, others just repeats of something already there.

•**The battle still rages:** Some insects are big eaters. My treasured large orange daylilies sprouted the other day. The next day the shoots were completely gone. I surrounded the empty space with ground eggshells and coffee grounds and bingo—the evil eaters went away and the daylilies are growing again. It's difficult, but I basically leave the insects alone. The milkweed is covered in large, rather smart-looking yellow and black aphids. They arrive each year for a month, eat, then suddenly disappear. I try to cultivate a Zen attitude toward them, and they do not kill the plants.

•**Lawn:** People love lawns, and I get that. But let your grass grow longer, and tolerate more flowering weeds. Keep it watered, and it will add to the precious insect life of your garden. The front lawn of the famous Great Dixter house and garden in the Cotswolds is a wild meadow. Definitely not neat, it is filled with green waving grasses dotted with wildflowers and native orchids. It looks wonderful. It buzzes with life.

I am advocating rewilding as a more gentle and accommodating approach to nature, where we try to fit in with it, rather than forcing it into shape. Call it “ungardening” if you wish! Yeats expressed so clearly our deep connection with nature in his poem “The Lake Isle of Innisfree.” Please enjoy your own version of his “bee-loud” glade. The birds, bees and butterflies will love you for it.

#### Resources:

•*The Bee-Friendly Garden*, Kate Frey and Gretchen LeBuhn, Ten Speed Press, 2016.

•*Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm*, Isabella Tree, Picador, 2018.

•[www.theguardian.com/uk/environment](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/environment). Articles on recent climate change news, rewilding.

•[Rewilding.org](http://Rewilding.org). Articles from the Rewilding Institute, including Kenneth Brower on Point Reyes National Seashore.

•[www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem](http://www.yellowstonepark.com/things-to-do/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem). A great read. ♦

Kay Hamilton Estey is the Glen Park Garden Club columnist. For more information about the garden club, including its activities and lecture series, contact her at [kay.estey@gmail.com](mailto:kay.estey@gmail.com).



# New Ingleside Captain Meets with GPA

The winter meeting of the Glen Park Association had a great turnout—folks were anxious to hear from several local leaders who came to give updates and hear about neighborhood concerns.

**Introducing Capt. Woon:** Ingleside Police Capt. Chris Woon made his first appearance at the GPA since assuming his position at the Ingleside Station. Born and raised in the Ingleside, he gave a brief rundown of his extensive

and varied law enforcement positions over the past 25 years, including: airport bureau patrol; officer at Northern, Ingleside and Taraval districts; dog handler for explosives (“best partner in the world”); sergeant at the Mission and Southern stations with the investigations and risk management units.

Woon explained that each captain must apportion resources according to the needs of the district. Ingleside is one of the largest, and officers are spread out all over. In the event of a serious crime, officers from other districts provide backup to each other.

An Ingleside officer is assigned to do traffic enforcement. The downtown motorcycle unit will come out to provide support to troubled areas, such as the Elk and Chenery intersection. Plainclothes officers use the crosswalk to catch violations.

The captain gave some statistics.

The top increases in need for police over the past couple of years are homelessness and quality-of-life issues, people living in cars, living on sidewalks and in need of medical assistance. These take up a lot of resources, as do violent crimes—domestic violence, assaults, and robberies and burglaries. However, burglaries are down 30 percent and robberies are down 13 percent.

What can we do to deter crime? Neighbors can form a neighborhood watch, facilitated by SF SAFE. They will also do free home security assessments. Have a phone tree with your neighbors. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't leave items visible in your car. Get a dog!

Most importantly, report ALL crimes so the police can allocate their resources where needed. Any crime in progress or having just happened should be reported to 911. If it's a “cold crime,” call police at the non-urgent number, 415-553-0123.

**Legislative Update:** State Sen. Scott



Capt. Chris Woon

Wiener, whose district includes Glen Park, noted that the state has been relitigating what he called the Trump administration's nonstop assault on California's basic values. “With all the chaos, we also have problems we have created, and we have to fix.”

Homelessness is exacerbated by the housing crisis, meth, opioids and mental health issues. Major encampments have spread outside the cities—into the suburbs and coastal and inland areas. California has 25 percent of the nation's homeless population.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has allocated more than \$1 billion to help cities and counties ramp up emergency shelters, mental health services, eviction support and access to MediCal.

Wiener cited his legislative activity:

- Legislation passed to streamline approval of navigation centers.

- Legislation to create a pilot program of conservatorship for persons with intractable issues of mental health and addiction.

- Proposed legislation to require insurance companies to approve all mental health and addiction care, not only in crisis. He wants to expand access to young people in high school and college.

- Wiener favors state authorization for safe injection sites to deter

crime, infection and syringe litter. He realizes this is an uphill climb with the current administration in Washington.

- After several years of intransigence, the Cow Palace has ceased holding gun shows. It's the result of a temporary ban; there will be legislation to make the ban permanent.

**Glen Park Association Updates:** GPA president Scott Stawicki gave a rundown of some transit issues in Glen Park.

- Diamond/Bosworth Intersection: The improvements made thus far (traffic light patterns, lane adjustment, sidewalk bulb-outs, etc.) were actually Phase One. Phase Two was meant to address the Arlington/Bosworth intersection. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency presented several concept plans, none of which were deemed to be improvements and, in fact, worsened the traffic situation in some respects. That part of the plan is now dormant.

- Pedestrian Crosswalk at the I-280 South On-Ramp: The GPA is pushing for safety improvements. SFMTA tends to take a “comprehensive” approach to problem solving, which causes solutions, even seemingly simple ones, to get stalled for a very long time.

- Private Buses at the BART Station: They block sight lines for vehicles attempting to enter the I-280 South on-ramp. SFMTA has no jurisdiction

over this. By California state code, it's CalTrans' responsibility because the bus zone is adjacent to a highway. Google and Genentech voluntarily pay to use the bus zone; UCSF chooses not to pay.

- Traffic Calming on Residential Streets: SFMTA seems to be more willing to do this. The latest example is the pending installation of speed humps on Chenery Street around Lippard Street. To get traffic calming on a street, 50 percent of the residents must sign a petition to the SFMTA. Stop signs are not part of the traffic calming program.

- Elk-Sussex crosswalk: This project was supposed to be completed but it hasn't been started. We now hear construction will start in late spring to install a pedestrian-activated flashing beacon at both sides of the intersection. All parking on the Glen Canyon Park side of the street will be removed for safety considerations.

**GPA Officers Election:** The annual election of officers is mandated in the bylaws of the Glen Park Association. This year there was only one change in the slate of candidates, which was elected by voice vote of the members in attendance: Hilary Schiraldi, formerly a chair of the Safety Committee, has replaced Stephany Wilkes as vice president). The GPA officers are listed on Page 3.

Congratulations and thanks to all! ♦



The intersection of Elk and Sussex streets, where construction of a pedestrian-activated flashing beacon is scheduled to begin later this year.

Photo by Liz Mangelsdorf



# Fairmont Plaza Open Space Comes to Life

Fairmont Plaza sounds as if it's located at an El Camino Real shopping mall in San Mateo County.

Actually, it hugs a hilltop—part of the Rancho San Miguel Mexican land grant bestowed to José de Jesús Noé in 1845—and now serves as a natural area frontier separating San Francisco's Fairmount Heights and Diamond Heights neighborhoods.

To get there from Glen Park, take the 90 steps of Amatista Lane that rise near the corner of Miguel and Bemis streets.

On Jan. 11 and again on Feb. 15, neighbors either selected this route or dropped down from Everson Street to the postage-stamp-sized park to plant 900 drought-tolerant shrubs and plants under the watchful eye of Recreation and Park's Natural Resource Division (NRD).

Once a derelict thicket strewn with moribund eucalyptus and threatened by an eroding hillside, the minuscule space, a long-time destination for unleashed dogs and the occasional homeless encampment, has been transformed by pathways, box steps, and native plants that offer nectar sources and potential fruits, berries and nuts for wildlife. Strategically planned, the space will act as habitat for perching and nesting resident and migratory birds, as ground cover for wildlife, and as stabilized

ground to thwart further erosion.

John Kleman, who lives on Bemis Street, volunteered alongside Rec and Park personnel on both work days. He was accompanied his daughter Sonia.

"It's going to be great to walk through here, give it a chance and see its progress," Kleman told the *Glen Park News*. "It's been a collaboration between neighbors and Rec and Park, and signals community building as well as park building."

"This was a neglected space," echoed Cherie Mayman, who has lived on Everson Street for 50 years. On Jan. 11 she joined Kleman in placing gallon-sized coffee berry plants in the ground. "I can walk through here now and not be scared for fear of a branch falling."

She took a moment and pointed out a particular tree. "I used to have a fort in that tree."

Near it dangled a jury-rigged rope swing that Rec and Park would remove, as it posed public safety issues.

The department had already removed approximately 20 trees, focusing on aged-out eucalyptus that constituted a threat. With the gum trees gone, an expansive scenic overlook of Bernal Hill and downtown San Francisco now gets plenty of daylight.

Kleman and Mayman were among 18 volunteers who assisted eight NRD gardeners supervised by Christopher Campbell, a chief natural resource specialist.



Work party volunteers and Rec and Park's employee, Christopher Campbell.

Photos by Murray Schneider



Rec and Park employees use an auger to dig holes for native plants.

The collaboration was a long time coming. "The Recreation and Park Department and the Friends of Fairmount Heights have been partnering for this wildlife enhancement and erosion control for 15 years," said Madison Sink, Recreation and Park communication associate for policy and public affairs. "The project is supported by department operations staff, and was reviewed by the neighborhood volunteer group that provided seven letters of support."

"Fairmount neighbors, park users and Rec and Park's Natural Resource Division have been working side-by-side to beautify and restore the area," Campbell added. "Patrick Rafferty, a neighbor and our greatest advocate for the project, has been instrumental in encouraging and enlisting his neighbors to volunteer."

The work on Jan. 11 proved a mammoth endeavor, during which 600 native plants were planted in holes dug with augers and rotor hammers. Now yarrow, California sage, iris, lupine, monkey flower, hummingbird sage, California fuchsia, Point Reyes ceanothus, gooseberry and red flowering currant have been restored to habitat

in which they thrived in the late 18th century, when indigenous Americans traveled across the same ground delivering cattle from Mission Dolores to the Presidio.

Over a three-hour period on two Saturday mornings, volunteers teased open gallon containers, removed plants and placed them in pre-dug holes, along with a handful of super-absorbent polymers called water babies that provide hydration for plants as they take root. Then each plant was backfilled with soil, and a downhill berm was fashioned.

On Feb. 15, Christopher Campbell stood next to first grader Sonia Kleman, who attends Glen Park Elementary School. Sonia's mother fingered a plant, one of 300 that would be planted that morning, while Sonia studied it.

Campbell asked if she knew what her mother held. Sonia nodded and said she liked it. Campbell told her it was an iris and it would grow and boast pretty blue colors.

Campbell, who is a plein-air painter when he's not wielding an auger, said by email, "Projects like this build a profound sense of ownership. ♦"



## ❖ (HI)STORIES OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS ❖

Is it “Is-LISS”? Maybe it’s “Is-LAY-iss”? Or, is it “Is-LAY”? The origin and pronunciation of Islais Creek has long been a matter of debate.

It was once the largest creek in San Francisco. Now, a tributary still flows above ground through Glen Canyon from the southern slopes of Twin Peaks (a second tributary flowed from the base of the northern slopes of San Bruno Mountain and converged near today’s Bosworth and Lyell Streets).

Nearly a century ago, the creek was diverted below ground just north of today’s Glen Canyon Park Recreation Center. From there, it continues its historic course under the Glen Park Greenway and Alemany Boulevard to its mouth at San Francisco Bay, just south of Cesar Chavez and Third Street.

After more than 200 years of conjecture and possible misinterpretation of fact, it is no surprise that we con-

tinue to struggle with the pronunciation today. Let’s look at the proposed origins of the name Islais, and add another possibility to the queue.

First, what Islais Creek is not: The United States Coast Survey map of 1859 identifies the creek as “Du Vree’s Creek.” The origin of this name has been a mystery, but new research has revealed a few insights.

The first mention of a William “Dufrees” appears in the Daily Alta California in September 1851. In a description of the ticket for the upcoming election, “Dufrees” is running for county justice of the peace. In an article a few months later describing the proposed route of the Pacific & Atlantic Railroad before it crossed Precita Creek from the south, “the line then crosses Islar’s Creek and is conducted along the slope of the high ground at the head of the marsh three fourths of a mile above Capt. DeVrees’ house.” Then, in a March 1852 article of the same paper, “Captain DeVries, a gentleman who

resides four miles south of Mission Dolores and who has between thirty or forty acres of land under cultivation,” was called out for the wagonloads of fresh vegetables he transported into the city daily. In 1859, the captain is arriving in port from Japan.

The distance from Mission Dolores to the railroad crossing noted at “Islar’s Creek,” (derivation unclear) is only about two miles, whereas going four miles south of Mission Dolores would place him generally in today’s Crocker-Amazon district near the route of the old Mission Road and the origin of the creek’s San Bruno tributary. In both cases, the captain is situated somewhere near the creek.

Because the captain’s first name is never shared, and that there seem to be so many phonetically spelled names for “De Vries,” we may never know his true origins. However, one additional piece of information may provide a clue.

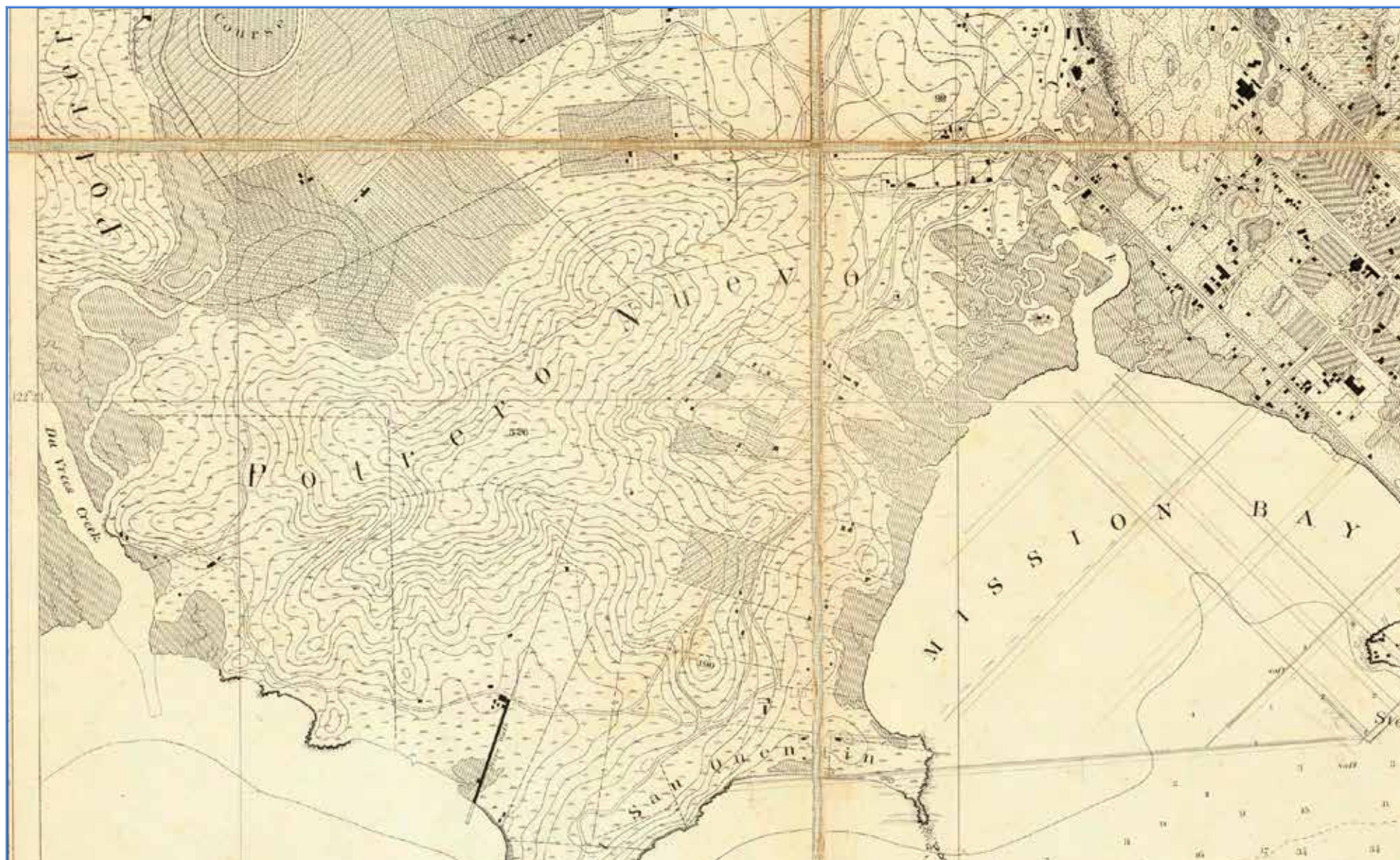
In December 1849, a German-born sailor by the name of Adolphus

Windeler arrived in San Francisco aboard the ship Probus. With the Gold Rush in full swing, the crew abandoned the ship and headed for the Sierra foothills. Windeler notes in his diary that the commander of the Probus was a Capt. DeVries. Perhaps the captain had decided to abandon ship and stay in California, as well.

Now, for the potential derivation of “Islais.”

Pedro Fages, a Spanish soldier who had traveled with the Portola expedition in 1769 and later became governor of Alta California, was the first to transcribe the term as “yslay,” having heard the term while among the Salinan tribe of the Salinas Valley. According to later researchers, Fages’ definition is very clear that the term referred to the cherry, a highly valued food among native peoples of the California coast. It is theorized that since the explorers-conquerors had no Spanish name for the plant, they adopted the native

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A snapshot of a portion of the 1859 U.S. Coast Survey map. On the far left is “Du Vrees Creek,” the first American name given to Islais Creek.

Map courtesy of David Rumsey Map Collection.



## ❖ (HI)STORIES OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS ❖

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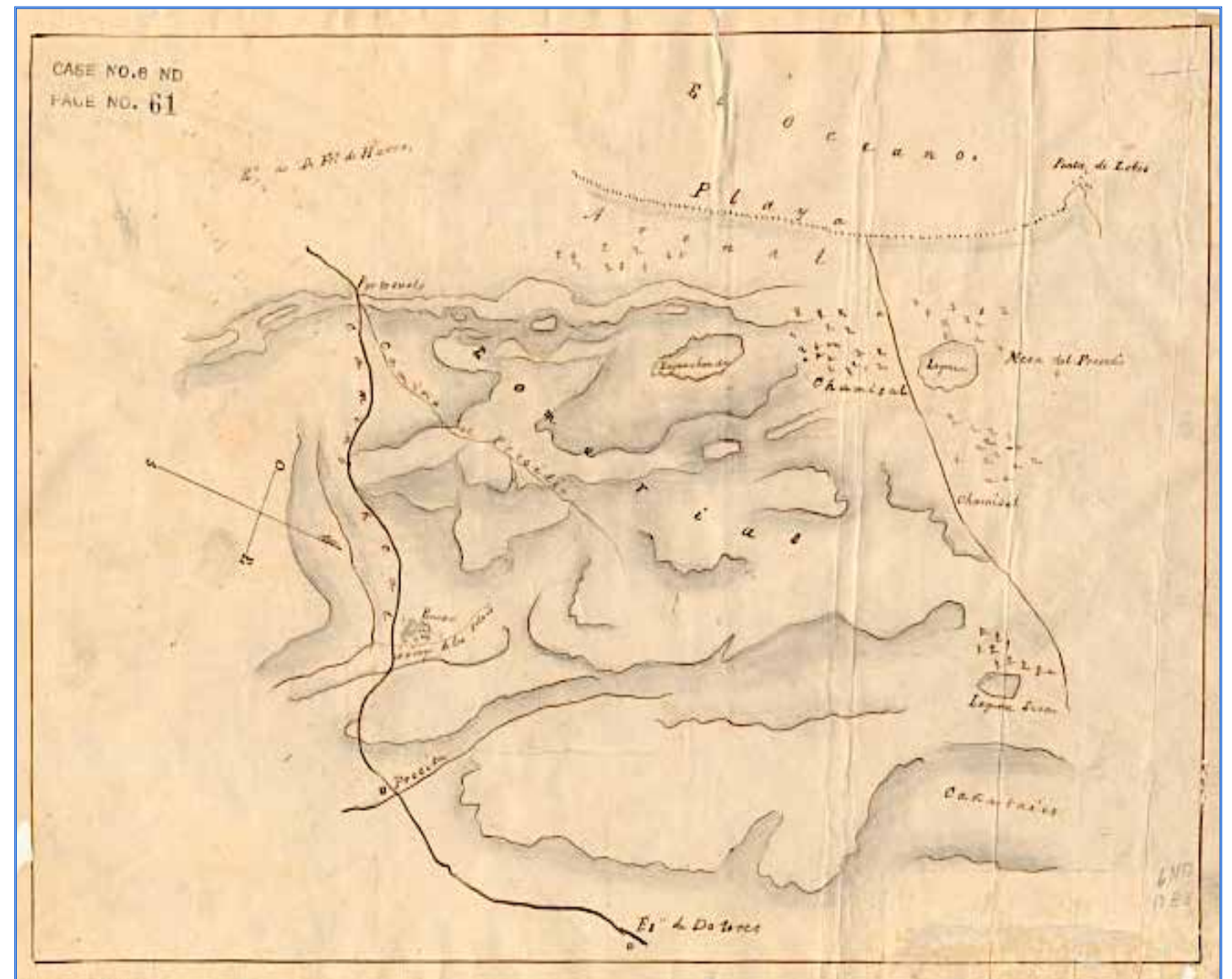
moniker. By the early 1800s, it had become part of the California Spanish lexicon.

One of the earliest appearances of “Islais” or “Yslais” on Spanish maps occurs in the mid-1800s. A hand-drawn map from the Spanish and Mexican Land Grant Records of the Salinas y Visitacion Rancho of San Francisco, dated 1834 and housed at the California State Archives, includes the words “Los Islais.” In 1857 court documents submitted for obtaining an American patent for his 4,300-acre Rancho San Miguel (on which Glen Park is now located), José de Jesús Noé included a map showing “Arroyo de los Yslais” next to a “penasco” just south of “Precita.” In Spanish, “penasco” refers to a “large rock.” In fact, a large rock about 40 feet high was represented on San Francisco maps into the 1870s, near today’s site of the Glen Park J-Church streetcar stop.

Anthropologists, linguists and naturalists have generally agreed that “Islais” is a modern spelling of the Native American name of the holly-leaved cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*) that is said to have grown abundantly along the banks of the creek. In the 1940s, Smithsonian ethnologist John P. Harrington declared the word “slay” to be of Salinan origins. As noted earlier, the Salinans lived in the area of today’s Salinas Valley and along the Coast range near Monterey. Their language was considered similar to that of the *Prunus ilicifolia* who populated the region of Santa Barbara. Of note, the Costanoan language of the Ohlone, whose territory ranged from Santa Cruz to the Golden Gate, was unrelated to the Salinan language.

However, the holly-leaved cherry was apparently not very abundant in San Francisco. In fact, no evidence has been found in historical literature documenting the presence of native *Prunus ilicifolia* farther north than San Mateo Creek. Could there be another derivation of the name?

In March 1907, an obituary appeared in the *San Francisco Call*: “SCION OF OLD MEXICO CITY DIES IN CITY. Islais Creek is Said to Have Received Name From His Ancestors.” As told in the article, 74-year-old Florencio Yslas, a member of a prominent family of early California, had claimed to



Map of Rancho San Miguel, 1857, from the court case submitted by José de Jesús Noé. “Arroyo de los Yslais” and “penasco” can be seen on the left side of the drawing. The viewer’s orientation is looking southwest.

Map courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley via Online Archive of California.

be the grandson of the man for whom the creek was named. The difference in spelling between “Yslas” and “Islais” was said to be due to the differences between English and Spanish spelling and pronunciation.

According to Florencio and his daughter, he had come overland to California from Sonora, Mexico, in 1849 with his father, José Francisco Yslas. According to family trees at Ancestry.com, Florencio was one of 15 children of José and Maria Teresa Bernal, the latter also of Sonora. José was the son of Teodoro Yslas. Teodoro married Anna Maria Anza of Tubac, Santa Cruz, Arizona, Mexico. Anna Maria’s father was Francisco Anza, whose brother, Juan Bautista Anza, led the expedition that established the San Francisco Presidio and Mission Dolores in 1776. Therefore, Juan Bautista Anza was Florencio’s great-grand-uncle.

Florencio had claimed the creek was named for his grandfather. That would

have been Teodoro Yslas, who was only 2 years old at the time of the naming. If accurate, that was quite a gift Juan Bautista gave to his brother’s young son.

As described in the *Glen Park News* (Summer 2017), the route first taken by Anza as the expedition left the upper peninsula in 1776 became the route of the original El Camino Real, which already may have been an existing trail established by the Ohlone centuries earlier. Later known as the Old San Jose Road, it passed through Fairmount Heights and Glen Park before turning south in the area of today’s Diamond and Chenery streets. It is this general area where Anza would have first crossed the creek he named for Teodoro Yslas.

So, which is it? Is Islais Creek named for the cherry, or Juan Bautista Anza’s nephew? Given the similarity in the pronunciations of “islay” or “slay” for the cherry and “yslas” for the boy, it may be that both derivations are cor-

rect. Fages may have documented a word for the cherry used (and eaten) by the Salinans and Chumash. Yet, without native holly-leaved cherries in San Francisco, the creek may have instead been named for Anza’s nephew.

Language differences, varying interpretations by researchers over time, and forgotten recollections of long-passed residents have forever muddled Islais Creek’s true namesake. And for the pronunciation? According to Spanish resources, “Yslas” appears to be pronounced “Is-LISS.”

*Evelyn Rose, director and founder of the Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project, is documenting the histories of Glen Park and nearby neighborhoods. To learn more, visit [www.GlenParkHistory.org](http://www.GlenParkHistory.org). The Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project meets four times a year and offers a portfolio of history walks to choose from. Join the mailing list: [GlenParkHistory@gmail.com](mailto:GlenParkHistory@gmail.com). ❖*



# Glen Park Responds to COVID Crisis

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When tech workers and others started telecommuting from home, a few local businesses saw an upswing. Lunch-time sandwich sales increased noticeably, said Rick Malouf, the owner of Cheese Boutique. At Pebbles, the number of both in-house and carry-out lunches also were higher than usual, according to Claudio Waqued, who helps his son Marcello, the owner.

But that wasn't true for everyone. Tommy Baik, who owns Glen Park Cleaners, said business dropped because his clients were working from home—presumably while wearing casual clothes that don't need dry cleaning.

That all changed on March 16, when Mayor London Breed announced that San Francisco and other Bay Area counties were imposing a draconian stay-at-home order to minimize spread of the disease. Epidemiologists talk about “flattening the curve”—spreading the potential for succumbing to illness over time, crucially, to prevent a sudden spike of new cases that will overwhelm the medical system. That is the aim of the new rules.

The order directed everyone to stay at home as much as possible, and those at greatest risk—anyone over 65 or with an underlying condition that might make a virus infection lethal—to stay at home at all times. There were exceptions for all but the most at-risk: You can shop for food or medicine, or go to the bank or the gas station. But virtually all other in-person business and work came to a halt. City government in San Francisco also is up and running, with a priority on essentials, such as police, fire, medical, street cleaning, public works construction and animal care.

St. John Catholic School closed when the Bay Area diocese shut all 90 of its schools on March 12. Glen Park Elementary and Dolores Huerta Elementary closed when City public schools were shut down March 16. The Glen Park Library first cut its group programs, then closed altogether. Rec and Park cancelled all public classes and organized events in Glen Canyon Park, although the trails remain open for hikers and people walking their dogs. The library and recreation center were opened for emergency child care for City employees required to work in the emergency and for low-income families.

For a neighborhood of small, indi-



The empty sidewalk in front of Cuppa, above, and the boarded-up windows at Glen Park Station, right.

Photos by Liz Mangelsdorf

vidually owned businesses, this has been a difficult and confusing time. Manhal Jweinat, owner of Manzoni, Le P'tit Laurent and Higher Grounds, decided to shut all three of his eating spots on March 14. Cuppa downshifted to takeout only, then closed altogether. Win Garden, the Chinese restaurant closed, and One Waan, the Thai one, switched to takeout, as did Bello coffee house.

Canyon Market kept its doors open and reserved its first hour of business, 7 a.m.–8 a.m., for seniors, complete with the 10 percent discount that normally applies only three days a week. “Seniors are able to shop when the store is less busy, and recently after the store gets cleaned at night,” said Janet Tarlov, who co-owns the market with her husband Richard.

On the day before the mandatory closures took effect, Canyon customers lined up to be admitted, so that not too many of them crowded the narrow aisles. But people were clearly stocking up—the paper goods and dairy shelves had plenty of bare space, and a lot of fresh vegetable bins were picked over. The inventory at the market, as well as grocery stores across the city, including the Safeways on Monterey and in the Diamond Heights shopping center,

fluctuate day by day, and sometimes hour by hour, depending on when deliveries come in.

Joseph Tingin, manager of Glen Park Hardware, spent a recent day restocking shelves and showing customers where cleaning products and disinfectants were located. He said there had been a run on hand sanitizer, which they hadn't been able to replenish, but that they had other cleaning supplies.

As the crisis continues, keep in mind that what was true, or the best possible information, as this story was written may well be out of date as new developments overtake us all. Before you set out to shop, call your places of destination to make sure they're open. (Many websites have not been updated to reflect new



hours or restrictions.)

This is hard on everybody, but the goal is to keep us all as healthy as possible. And we in Glen Park are not alone. Everyone everywhere is going through this, too ♦.



# SOTA Cyclists Pedal Towards the Future

Over 45 days and 3,350 miles this summer, eight students from the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts at the top of Glen Canyon plan to spread their environmental message by “pedaling towards the future.” That future would see a healthier planet, the result of promoting sustainable transportation, lowering greenhouse gases and combating climate change.

The students hope to grab a lot of attention for the global issue of climate change by taking on this major non-academic test.

Bike wheels will start spinning the morning of June 5 at Ocean Beach. Averaging 85 miles a day, with stops for overnight camping, the group plans to reach New York City on July 27. The weary travelers will relax for three days on the Amtrak train that will bring them and their gear home.

The ride is being organized and led by Glen Park resident Emmet Forde, a 17-year-old senior at SOTA, who is studying technical theater and working part-time at Destination Bakery on Chenery Street. The challenge is by far

the largest yet undertaken by SOTA’s Leadership Club, whose students organize wilderness expeditions like treks in Mt. Diablo State Park and along the John Muir Trail.

While doing everything they can to keep expenses down, they still need to raise money for the cross-country trip and are relying mainly on GoFundMe donations plus individual contributions.

The adult sponsor and chaperon of the students on the adventure will be outdoorsman Andy Padlo, SOTA’s European literature teacher. All crew members will ride their own standard touring bike, and will need to carry up to 40 pounds of their personal supplies and some group gear.

To prepare for the ride, the students will be biking as much as they can while keeping up with their studies. Although his family owns a car, Emmet will bike to and from school every day.

In an interview with the SF Bike Coalition, Emmet observed that the trip represents work toward a future that is brighter, safer and healthier for young people, one that values those goals above fossil fuel interests. Knowing their future will be shaped by



The SOTA bike crew rests during an overnight practice ride.

Photo courtesy of Emmet Forde

the effects of climate change, they want to see efforts to mitigate that damage.

They also want to encourage young people to get outside and be physically active, and to venture beyond their comfort zone as they take a step toward adulthood. Along the way, they will be welcoming other young people to join them in a section of the ride.

“We are seeking to expand our world view by seeing parts of the country we wouldn’t be likely to see otherwise,” said Emmet, “which we know can help to inform our own activism and help push efforts to understand each other in an increasingly divided nation.”

You can follow their journey on Instagram: @youthbikeamerica. ♦

## Shopping in the Age of a Public Health Emergency

The morning chill was still upon Glen Park on the morning of March 24, when the line started forming outside of Canyon Market.

By 6:50 a.m. shoppers over age 65 began queuing up outside, in the second week of the market’s 7–8 a.m. senior citizen shopping hour.

Wearing a French beret, a puffy coat and boots to ward off the chill, co-owner Janet Tarlov played host to seniors who’d social-distanced themselves by six feet while waiting in line.

At exactly 7 a.m. she opened the doors.

An older woman asked Tarlov if she’d be checking identification.

“It’s the honor system,” Tarlov answered. “I trust everyone.”

Later that afternoon, on the telephone, she clarified: “If a pregnant young woman walked in,” she said, “I wouldn’t stop her.”

The store is keeping its Wilder Street door locked so it can limit the number of shoppers in the store at any one time.

Over the course of the hour people entered and exited. Tarlov stood at the Diamond Street entrance, greeting shoppers and using a towel and a bucket of heavy-duty food-grade sanitizer to clean the handles of shopping baskets before handing them to customers.

The store keeps a large sign by the entrance telling incoming customers what has sold out. Sometimes it has included bread, eggs, milk and flour, but what’s available changes daily.

Canyon Market is also learning new habits. “We no longer serve hot soup,” Tarlov said. “Now we list the soups of the day and customers must go to the deli to request them.”

By the time this reporter and his wife left the store, hefting three stuffed-to-the-brim cloth bags, it was 7:28 a.m. and there were at least 25 people circling the aisles or waiting to check out. Everyone shopping during the early-morning hour got a senior discount, even though it was a Tuesday, because the discount has been extended to the senior hour every day.

Tarlov said her employees have

stepped up to keep the store running.

“No one asked our staff to be an essential service, but they are and they are amazing,” she said. “The challenge is to balance this service while helping make our staff and the public as safe as possible during this health crisis.”

“Our staff is putting themselves out there,” she said. “The Glen Park community spirit is evident and it’s heartening that most everyone is respectfully working together, especially since there is no reason to believe matters will change soon.” ♦



The sign on Canyon Market’s doors, announcing the seniors-only shopping hours.

Photo by Murray Schneider



# Jazz Tradition Lives on at Bird & Beckett

Jessica Levant makes a habit of crisscrossing San Francisco, sometimes two or three times a week, looking for jazz joints and dive bars where she can hear incomparable West Coast jazz and bebop. Levant frequents supper clubs such as Bix's and Feinstein's and bars such as the Saloon and the Lucky Horseshoe.

On Dec. 13 she staked out another favorite haunt—Bird & Beckett's postage stamp-size performance stage—to listen to Eric Shifrin front Eric & the In Crowd.

"Bird & Beckett is in a neighborhood," Levant told the *Glen Park News*. "It brings a sense of community to people, and owner Eric Whittington is especially personal. He knows your name, and on top of that he's passionate about jazz."

Levant, whose photographs have hung at the San Francisco Women Artists Gallery in the Inner Sunset, has compiled two books on local jazz musicians and clubs where they hone their chops. She's a lifetime jazz buff, whose opinions on the quintessential American musical genre are respected in Bay Area jazz circles.

"I ushered at SFJAZZ for eight years at the Masonic Auditorium and Herbst Hall," she said. "But I prefer watching music at clubs and bars. I want to hear and interact with musicians and listen to them interact with one another."

Whittington, proprietor of Bird & Beckett Books and Records since 1999, receives die-hard neighborhood support. He runs his business as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Bird & Beckett Cultural Legacy Project. In addition to selling books, LPs and CDs, he also sponsors book launches and poetry readings to celebrate the written word.

He has cultivated a cozy jazz vibe, moving bookshelves around and setting out folding chairs for his music audiences. And he lines up jazz and blues musicians who have few peers.

The bookstore's jazz connoisseurs, like Levant, know their music. Until the Covid-19 shutdown, Bird & Beckett hadn't missed offering a Friday night of jazz in two decades. Whittington asks his audience for donations to "help pay the band."

"You go to SFJAZZ and see Dave Brubeck, Etta James and Ruth Brown, as I did, and you're in a concert setting," said Jessica Levant. "You're receiving and the musicians are giving."



Howie Dudune and Chuck Peterson at Bird & Beckett in 2014.

Photo by Murray Schneider

"You go to Bird & Beckett to be interactive, to listen to jazz in an intimate setting," she said. "The interaction between seasoned players, even if they haven't played together before, creates an experience both visual and auditory."

"I like to sit in Eric's bookstore and I enjoy players saying to another, 'What key are we playing?' Or simply overhearing the patter with one another between numbers."

The night she attended, Shifrin and Rick Elmore, the band's trombonist, played off one another, verbally as well as musically. Elmore recalled Little Willie John, a bluesman whose R&B career was cut short because of an explosive temper. It landed Little Willie in the penitentiary after he committed a homicide. Elmore went on to tell the audience, which was hooked, that it was like the time Dick Cavett interviewed Ethel Merman and asked her what was the secret of her success.

"Repeat bookings," the Broadway musical actress had replied.

"We're just working musicians," Elmore told the audience. "We keep playing gigs."

Shifrin was now well into his first set, ending the final notes of Bob Dorough's "Devil May Care." There's nothing minor league about Shifrin, who was the Fairmont Hotel house

pianist for 15 years. Shifrin is one of 250 elite musicians Levant and contributor Linda McGilvray photographed and profiled in a two-volume work, "San Francisco Bay Area Jazz and Bluesicians."

Whittington weighed in on Shifrin's pedigree, saying, "He's like Mose Allison, Dr. John and Albert Ammons."

Shifrin had dedicated the evening's

music to the late saxophonist Ralph Carney, a revered sideman. Carney had performed with Tom Waits, and recorded with Neko Case, k.d. lang, Laura Veirs and Elvis Costello.

Carney's career underscores Ethel Merman's advice: "I just pick up an instrument and blow," he'd said.

Carney performed with Shifrin doz-

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Eric Shifrin and Jessica Levant at Bird & Beckett.

Photo by Murray Schneider



# Jazz Tradition Lives on at Bird & Beckett

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

ens of times. “Ralph and I played together in a band called EaR Candy. Ralph named it for Eric and Ralph. Get it? EaRCandy,” Shifrin said. “We played together, oh, over 25 times in dive bars like The Lucky Horseshoe and the Rite Spot Cafe.”

Taped on the Bird & Beckett window is a photograph of Bay Area jazz musicians taken in front of San Francisco City Hall. It’s an homage to the classic 1958 Esquire photo “A Great Day in Harlem,” by photographer Art Kane - on a Harlem front stoop at 17 East 126th St.

Sitting in the front row is former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, surrounded by local music legends. Jimbo Edwards sits in the front row next to Sonny Buxton. Edwards ran Jimbo’s Bop City, a Fillmore District club where Billie Holiday and John Coltrane once performed. John Handy is there, as is guitarist Eddie Duran, who played sets with Charlie Parker and a very young Chet Baker at the Say When Club in the 1950s. So is Vernon Alley, who is seated next to fellow San Franciscan Duran in the second row. Alley played at the 1959 Monterey Jazz Festival with Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster and Roy Eldridge and, like Eric Shifrin, was a fixture at the Fairmont Hotel.

“In that photograph, which was taken in 1999, the month Bird & Beckett opened, are some of the players who performed in the bookstore,” said Whittington. “Sadly, many are gone now.”

“Pianist Frank Jackson and guitarist Eddie Duran are in the second row,” said Whittington. “In the fourth row are alto Bishop Norman Williams and drummer Benny Barth. Pianist, composer and jazz historian Don Alberts is in the fifth row, and bassist Chuck Metcalf is in the seventh row.”

Shifrin delights in telling a story about Vernon Alley.

“I played maybe five years at the House of Shields on New Montgomery Street,” Shifrin said. “Probably around 1995, Vernon drops by and we invite him to sit in.” He smiled at the recollection. “I made sure to play above my everyday level.

“The drinkers were doing a lot of jabbering,” Shifrin said. “Vernon stopped and told them, ‘Something important is happening here.’”

Whittington has seen his own changes after 21 years in Glen Park.

In the past decade, two part-time book store clerks have departed. Blanche Bibb passed away, and Loretta Marcel moved to Portland, Ore., where Ralph Carney died at age 61, after sustaining an injury in a fall at his home.

Drummer Jimmy Ryan and horn player Howie Dudune died, and blues vocalist Dorothy Lefkovits moved to New Jersey. Tenor saxophonist Chuck Peterson relocated to Santa Rosa.

Bird & Beckett is a third place—that is, neither home nor work. It’s embroidered into the fabric of Glen Park, a cultural phenomenon where music aficionados can assemble and enjoy a quintessential American art form.

After a Friday night Bird & Beckett



Ralph Carney, photographed in 2015 by Jessica Levant.

date, Jimmy Ryan would spend the next day practicing at his house across I280 in the Excelsior. Chuck Peterson on Arlington Street would do the same. While Whittington didn’t discover either, he provided a space to showcase each of them.

Jessica Levant turned up again at Bird & Beckett on Jan. 24 to hear Grant Levin, then again on Jan. 31 to hear the Macy Blackman Trio.

Blackman, whom Whittington describes as Fats Domino meets Professor Longhair, was backed by tenor sax player Nancy Wright and on bass by the ubiquitous Bing Nathan. The threesome went through two sets of New Orleans ragtime, covering King Oliver and James P. Johnson.

Between numbers Wright spotted Eric Shifrin, who’d dropped by to pay his respects and who’d camouflaged himself between Elmore Leonard and Dennis Lehane.

“You never know who’s going to walk into Bird & Beckett,” Wright quipped.

Blackman vacated his stool. Shifrin

took it. Blackman picked up a cornet and quipped, “This is going to be a culture shock!”

Then he took a place next to bassist Nathan.

The jabber among the musicians hit high notes. Wright volunteered that “If I Can Be with You One Hour Tonight” was a favorite tune. Later, about “Down in the Alley,” she doubled down, saying “We haven’t done this in an eternity,” which egged Blackman to rib, “We’ve been together for 13 years. That’s an eternity.”

Nathan didn’t take second fiddle. “You’ve heard of mindfulness; this is mindlessness,” he joshed

At the set break, Blackman, took a drink from a water bottle and surveyed the milling throng. “There aren’t any places like this to play anymore,” he told the *Glen Park News*. “That’s why it’s important.

“Besides, every time I come here, I buy stuff!”

Earlier, Jessica Levant emailed a similar refrain: “Playing jazz in a bookstore is the perfect thing—if you can swing it!” ♦



Macy Blackman Trio, with Nancy Wright, Eric Shifrin, Macy Blackman, and Bing Nathan at the book and jazz venue in January. Photo courtesy of Jessica Levant



❖ GLEN PARK REAL ESTATE ❖

Although I'm not one to toot my own horn, I still want to share that in January, at a wonderful gala at the Palace of Fine Arts, I was installed as president of the San Francisco Association of Realtors for 2020. I am honored and humbled to represent my fellow Realtors in our wonderful city. While my duties include traveling all over the country each month, I will still be representing my clients in the sale and purchase of their homes.

I'm often asked if I like what I do, and I can say without hesitation that I love it. Thank you to so many of you for all your support over the years.

**The Recent Market:** This is the time when I wrap up the previous year and give you all the interesting numbers. Before I do that, let's take a look at the previous quarter. Between Nov. 4 and Feb. 16, 20 homes were sold in Glen Park. The median sale price for a single-family home here was \$1,850,000; the median list price was \$1,795,000.

The average overbid was about 9 percent over the asking price. The median price per square foot is still hovering just over \$1,000. The average days on market was 17, unchanged from the previous quarter. Over all, it was a very active period with a good amount of inventory coming onto the market.

As of this writing, there are 10 homes for sale in Glen Park. Currently there are 1,056 active listings in the city, which is just about what it was during the last quarter. That's a lot of homes compared to what we've seen over the past couple years.

Now, let's take a look at the numbers from 2019 as a whole, for single-family homes in Glen Park:

*Total Number of Homes Sold in Glen Park:* 69 (up 9 percent from 2018)

Single-Family Homes					
ADDRESS	SALE DATE	DOM	LIST PRICE	SALE PRICE	SP/LP
159 Laidley St.	11/5/19	0	\$1,999,000	\$2,700,000	135.07%
66 Sussex St.	11/6/19	26	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	100.00%
52 Harper St.	11/12/19	4	\$1,275,000	\$1,510,000	118.43%
55 Sussex St.	11/12/19	14	\$1,495,000	\$1,850,000	123.75%
1716 Sanchez St.	11/14/19	45	\$1,995,000	\$1,995,000	100.00%
1753 Noe St.	12/2/19	5	\$4,995,000	\$4,995,000	100.00%
845 Chenery St.	12/6/19	28	\$2,395,000	\$2,650,000	110.65%
185 Beacon St.	12/11/19	14	\$2,495,000	\$2,950,000	118.24%
56 Conrad St.	12/16/19	19	\$1,688,000	\$1,648,800	97.68%
37 Chenery St.	12/20/19	61	\$1,550,000	\$1,575,000	101.61%
10 Mercato Ct.	12/23/19	0	\$1,795,000	\$1,800,000	100.28%
135 Stillings Ave.	12/27/19	12	\$1,095,000	\$1,200,000	109.59%
250 Beacon St.	1/13/20	0	\$4,500,000	\$4,990,000	110.89%
91 Whitney St.	2/11/20	12	\$1,295,000	\$1,635,000	126.25%
536 Chenery St.	2/12/20	14	\$1,095,000	\$1,335,000	121.92%
Condominiums/Multi Unit Buildings					
ADDRESS	SALE DATE	DOM	LIST PRICE	SALE PRICE	SP/LP
4 Joost Ave. #2 - Condominium	11/4/19	41	\$729,000	\$760,000	104.25%
1883 Church St. - 2-unit Building	11/22/19	60	\$1,895,000	\$1,850,000	97.63%
691-699 Chenery St. - 3-unit Mixed Use Building	12/26/19	190	\$2,795,000	\$2,400,000	85.87%
1849 Church St. - 4-unit Building	12/31/19	14	\$1,795,000	\$2,025,000	112.81%
216 Roanoke St. - Condominium	2/4/20	87	\$799,000	\$818,000	102.38%
DOM - Days on market		SP/LP - % over or under list price			

*Average List Price:* \$1,763,101  
*Average Sale Price:* \$1,965,274  
*Average Days on Market:* 24  
*Average Price per square foot:* \$1,156  
How does this compare to 2018?  
*Total Number of Homes Sold in Glen Park:* 63

*Average List Price:* \$1,991,758  
*Average Sale Price:* \$2,180,376  
*Average Days on Market:* 21  
*Average Price per square foot:* \$1,206  
Comparing year to year, the number of homes sold was up a bit in 2019. The

average list and sale price were down a bit from 2018. Still amazing numbers, considering that five years ago the average sale price was \$1,491,000. That's an increase in value of 31 percent in just five years.

How do Glen Park's numbers compare to the rest of the city as a whole? Here are the numbers for 2019 for all of San Francisco:

*Total Number of Homes Sold in San Francisco:* 2,172  
*Average List Price:* \$1,851,316 (an

increase of 4.5 percent over 2018)  
*Average Sale Price:* \$2,013,811 (an increase of 2.3 percent over 2018)

*Average Days on Market:* 25  
*Average Price per square foot:* \$1,012

If you would like a full copy of the stats for San Francisco, which also includes condos and breakdowns by district, feel free to email me your request at [marc@opni.com](mailto:marc@opni.com) and I'll send you a copy of the report.

**Predictions for 2020:** I predict that we'll continue to see conservative appreciation in home prices, as we did in 2019. We had overall appreciation of 2.3 percent last year, so I expect it to be similar in 2020—2 to 4 percent.

So the question is: Is this a normal market? Well, what's normal in this city?

But having watched the real estate market for the better part of 30 years, this is what I would consider a stable and healthy real estate market. Solid appreciation at a steady rate. This makes for much more affordable housing overall. Interest rates continue to play a big factor as they have come down a full percentage point from a year ago. The Federal Reserve recently lowered the prime rate, and we are unlikely to see any rate increases in 2020.

In the meantime, enjoy the spring-time weather, and I'll see you in the neighborhood!

I'm pleased that this is an interactive column answering questions that you have and writing about topics that are of interest to you as a reader. You can send any questions or topic requests to me at [marc@opni.com](mailto:marc@opni.com).

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Median Sales Price  
San Francisco



Median Sales Price  
Glen Park



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