

V.F. NORTH BEACH

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NORTH BEACH FAIR

1991



— **ARTS & CRAFTS, BLUES, FOOD & WINE** —

Saturday & Sunday — June 15 & 16 — 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM

KGO 810

SF WEEKLY

KJAZZ 92.7FM

NORTH BEACH FAIR

SATURDAY & SUNDAY
JUNE 15 & 16, 1991

UPPER GRANT AVENUE, BETWEEN COLUMBUS & FILBERT
- GREEN STREET BETWEEN COLUMBUS & GRANT



BLUES SCHEDULE

Saturday, June 15

- 10 am: Hawkeye Herman
- 11 am: Big Bones & Paul Pena
- 12 noon: Opening ceremonies and Best of North Beach Award Presentation
- 1-3 pm: Mike Henderson Blues Band
- 4-6 pm: John Firmin & The Johnny Nocturne Band

Sunday, June 16

- 10 am: Hawkeye Herman
- 11 am: Larry Hunt & the Blue Flames
- 12-1:45 pm: Cool Papa
- 2-3:45 pm: Ron Hacker & the Hacksaws
- 4-6 pm: Stu Blank

Street Entertainment

- Filbert and Grant: Steel 'n Ivory
- Green and Columbus: Steve Seskin & Friends
- Green and Grant: Fred Anderson & Ngaio
- Grant and Union: Robert Klos

FOOD & DRINK

Vallejo Street Cafe (at Cafe Trieste)

Ice cream along with gyros, Polish sausage, Italian sausage and veal steak from Faire Foods. Beer, wine.

Green Street Cafe

Gyros, Polish sausage, Italian sausage and veal steak from Faire Foods. Grilled eggplant with pesto, Caesar salad and calamari from Miguel Romero. Kebobs, lemonade and sun tea from Gourmet Faire. Wine

Grant Street Cafe

Hot pasta, pasta salad and pizza from Pasta Prego. Italian chicken sandwiches, fajitas, Boboli, seafood with Cajun prawns, artichoke & garlic from Harvest. Beer, wine

Union Street Cafe

Italian sausage and veal steak from Faire Foods. Beer, wine

Carts

Coffee from Mr. Latte; Haagen-Dazs from Faire Foods; pretzels from Twisted Pretzel

Cafes offer Budweiser, Bud Lite and Carlsberg beer.

Special Thanks

The 1991 North Beach Fair thanks, with gratitude, sponsors KJAZ radio and KGO radio.

A special thanks to the staff, crew and individuals who worked generously to make this event possible: Terry Pimsleur & Company, and staff members Steve Bajor, Tyson Underwood, Jeff Edman, Jan and Heather Danforth, Rob Faludi, Laura Pappas, Russ Jennings, Tom Schaff, Marija Mrdjenovic; Marsha Garland of the North Beach Chamber of Commerce; Telegraph Hill Dwellers; North Beach Neighbors; and thanks to our ghostwriter, Richard Rappaport.

And a very big thank you to Scott Price and the staff of *SF Weekly*.

Festival Information

Admission: Free to the public

Hours: 10 am to 6 pm each day

Public Transportation: The festival can be reached by MUNI #15, #39, #45, #83 and #42 and also by the Bay & Taylor cable car line

For more information call (415) 346-4561

Produced by Terry Pimsleur & Company for the North Beach Chamber of Commerce.

Sponsored by KJAZ, KGO and *SF Weekly*.

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For advertising information on upcoming street fair programs, please call Chris L. Mitchell, *SF Weekly*, at (415) 541-7766.

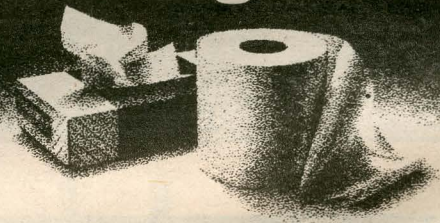
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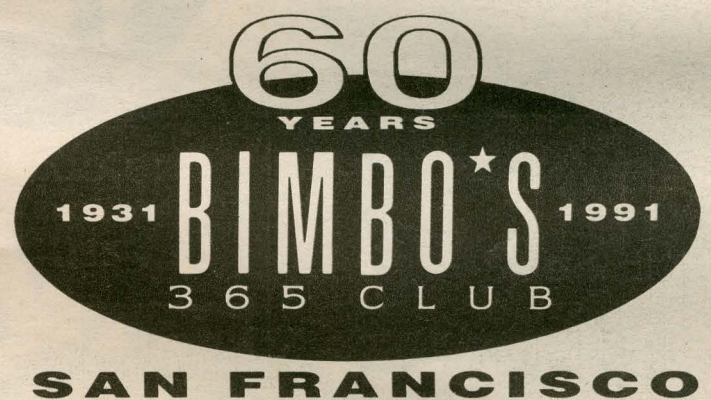
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Street art

Artisans of the North Beach Fair

FROM THE UNUSUAL to the practical, from apple dolls to cedar hope chests, from fused glass lamps to wooden dinnerware, from intaglio prints to fabric toys — if you fancy the original in arts and crafts, then the nearly 150 booths at the North Beach Fair will provide a weekend's worth of diversion all by themselves.

The North Beach Fair brings together some of the West's leading "street artists," although that term is a little misleading: Most of the award-winning work being displayed and sold belongs, and is sometimes seen, in showrooms and galleries.

But just as it is a pleasure for fair-goers to browse for quality arts and crafts in a lively out-of-doors setting, the artisans themselves like the busy interaction of a street fair, and feel it can be an important part of their work process.

"People don't always walk by and purchase something on the spot," says Richard Milam, who creates solid-wood cedar hope chests at his Hayward workshop. "They talk to me, take my card, or walk back a couple of times." Milam's hope chests are a slightly special case. They are massive and simply not something you can just stuff into a knapsack.

But even in the case of a fine artist, like San Francisco-based serigrapher Liz Collins, gatherings like the North Beach Fair have advantages over studio shows. "At galleries," she says, "you have to be sure that your paintings are hung correctly, that agents are actually selling your work. We do better at the street fairs because of the personal contact."

But whatever you happen to see and like at the North Beach Fair, dozens of artists and craftspeople like Liz Collins and Richard Milam will be on hand to show, talk about and sell their ceramic sculptures, acrylic clocks, pastels, collages, in-laid porcelain jewelry, handwoven Macedonian rugs, handpainted clothing, silkscreen prints, raku pots, sheepskin boots, leather sandals, miniature vases, traditional brooms, Japanese brush painting and more.

The variety of objects on display at the Fair is nearly endless. But there are a few simple themes that



Looking Back Original vendors displayed Italian folk art at the first North Beach Fair 40 years ago.

run throughout the show — quality and originality being primary.

It is a matter of policy on the part of Terry Pimsleur, who produces not only the North Beach Fair, but also the Union, Fillmore and Clement Street Fairs among others, to select only the top vendors to display their wares. Normally, only one of three is chosen for a Pimsleur-produced fair, and all arts and crafts are first care-

fully juried. Another long-standing rule is that the artists and craftspeople who made an item have to be on-site to sell them.

These rules apply, Pimsleur explains, "because it's important to maintain a level of quality and a spirit that matches the permanent businesses on the streets where we have our fairs. And quality breeds quality."

As Pimsleur shows go, the North Beach Fair is a small one. North Beach's historic streets are narrow and space is therefore limited. But the size and high quality of the show respects the traditions of artistic excellence that Grant Avenue represents.

It also means that the Fair draws the kind and size of audience artists and craftspeople appreciate. "I need a lot of people to go by to sell a hope chest," Milam says. "I figure out of 2,000 people who pass my booth, one person buys." Milam isn't complaining, mind you. With nearly a 100,000 people attending the North Beach Fair over the weekend, that works out to several very good day's worth of sales.

Perché?

Why "Busvan"?

When Ernest Busk began the company in 1946, his father and his uncles already had used the family name in their furniture companies, and so he had to create a new name (the "van" part referring to the moving or van business that then was part of the company).

Why so much stress on "shop and compare"?

Every week our buyers evaluate the products and prices at different groups of furniture stores in the Bay Area, both to get ideas for additional items to carry and to be sure that our prices are the lowest every day on every single piece of new furniture we sell. By telling our customers to shop and compare, we are asking them to confirm for themselves what we know already.

Why a policy of "all sales final"?

Although we always will replace any new item that is found upon receipt to be damaged or defective, we have found that returns due to a customer changing their mind about the color or size or whatever raises the price of everything else, and so we stress that all sales are final. In order to keep our guaranteed-lowest prices, we prefer to help those who have considered their purchase carefully and know what they want. For the sake of all of us, we respectfully suggest that others should shop elsewhere.

Why the big push into solid-wood furniture?

Our customers tell our salespeople what they want, our salespeople tell our buyers, and our buyers get it. We attend at least 16 furniture shows around the United States each year, and we have no preconceived ideas of what we should or should not have in our stores. Whatever San Franciscans want, we buy.

Why not one "sale" in 45 years?

A "sale" lowers the price when a retailer wants to sell, not when a customer wants to buy, which Ernest thought was not a way to build good long-term customer relations. Our policy of the same low price everyday enables customers to shop at their convenience, not at ours.

Why display all of the unusual arcade and art pieces?

We love San Francisco and enjoy acquiring and restoring unique items from its history. The huge murals from the 1939 Fair, the wax figures, the Playland clowns, the Laugh-in-the-dark pieces, the orchestrions, the automata, and the other items throughout our stores are preserved for our customers (and staff) to enjoy.

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Discover North Beach through a walking tour

DISCOVERY WALKS, CONDUCTED by the North Beach Chamber of Commerce, provide an intimate, accurate, insider's view of North Beach, and offer a forum for comments on both the historical and contemporary aspects of this famous community.

A Discovery Walk costs \$10 and lasts 2½ hours. At extra cost, special arrangements for lunch may be made through the North Beach Chamber of Commerce, which is familiar with menus, restaurant hours, prices and banquet facilities. Walking tours can accommodate 20-25 people and are only conducted for pre-arranged groups. Call (415) 403-0666 for information and arrangements.

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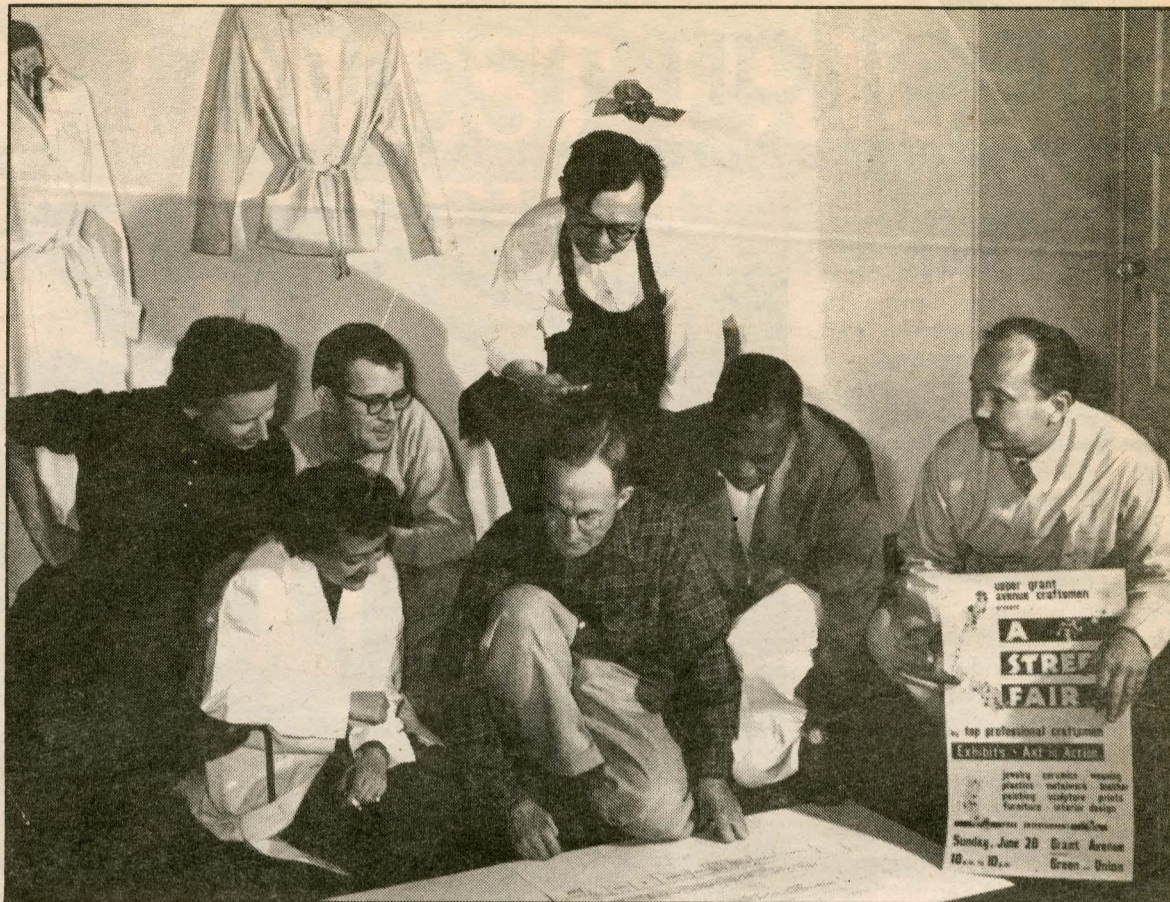
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Get It Right Peter Macchiarini (center) and six co-founders of the North Beach Fair iron out details for the event's debut back in 1954.

Up in Bohemia

A history of the North Beach Fair

IF NORTH BEACH, circa 1954, was one of the focal points of post-war American Bohemianism, then upper Grant Avenue was among its gravitational centers. And without a 1954 meeting of a group of San Francisco artisans seeking recognition for the confluence of talent then gathering on upper Grant, there might be no North Beach Fair today. Indeed, the very institution of American urban street fairs would be vastly different.

What avant-garde jeweler Peter Macchiarini, leatherworker Rhoda Pack, metalworker Harry Dixon, potter Johnny Magnani, artist-sculptor Sargent Claude Johnson and others decided on that day may have been plans for one of America's first artist and merchant sponsored urban street fairs.

Money was solicited from local merchants, "two dollars here, five dollars there," and on Father's Day 1954 (June 20), the single block of Grant between Green and Union was closed off to traffic.

The theme of the first fair was "art in action," and a number of North Beach's greatest artisans took their crafts out into the street. Attendance was in the high hundreds, a response encouraging enough to plan a fair for the following year.

By 1956, the two-year-old Upper Grant Avenue Street Fair was drawing enough people and interest to be well-reported by the San Francisco daily newspapers. Over 70 craftspeople were represented at the fair.

In 1957, the Sixth Army Bagpipe Band and a children's puppet show enlivened festivities. And by the end of the '50s, a

decidedly beat flavor had been added to the fair. There was a Poet's Corner, complete with bongo accompaniment and even a beard contest.

But the slightly "off-beat" nature of the fair did not sit very well with staid San Francisco police and fire authorities, who could not seem to understand why over 10,000 people would want to take the time to stroll up and down a closed-off block of Grant Avenue on a beautiful June day. Macchiarini remembers having to fight very hard to keep the fair from running afoul of certain powerful city officials.

Nevertheless, throughout the '60s, the fair increased in size and scope. Two and then three blocks of Upper Grant were closed off and the fair's run was increased to Saturday and Sunday. Attendance climbed to over 50,000. But in 1971, the Board of Supervisors voted against closing off Grant Avenue for the first time in 17 years. Peter Macchiarini and other Grant Street regulars protested.

A deluge of phone calls by fair supporters, intervention by Supervisor John L. Molinari and a scathing support column by the *Chronicle's* "Ironhat" Charles McCabe, made it possible for the 1972 fair to take place on schedule.

From 1972 through the end of the '70s, the fair was still very much a family affair. According to Marsha Garland, director of the North Beach Chamber of Commerce, "We worked the fair, had dinner at La Bodega and played at night; it was chaotic, fun and wild."

Things continued apace until 1985, when the fair was called off for that year. According to one Grant Avenue merchant, the break

was not unwelcome. "In 1954 it was new — but it's crazy to do the same kind of street fair that every other neighborhood has."

In 1986, in search of its roots, the fair was renewed under the stewardship of the North Beach Merchants Group and Terry Pimsleur and Company. Pimsleur and her staff added outdoor cafes that provided food and drink, and guaranteed a thorough post-fair clean up. The Fair's original musical theme, rhythm and blues, returned, top performance and street artists were signed, and contests like the Best of North Beach, neighborhood-related exhibits and activities started "to give the fair more of an Italian/Bohemian flavor" says Terry Pimsleur.

In 1987, the fair expanded to include a block of Green Street as well as the four blocks of Grant Avenue.

In the seven years since the Pimsleur organization took over production of the North Beach Fair, the number of artists and craftspeople has grown to nearly 150 — double the number who took part in the original fairs of the '50s.

Surveying what he has wrought, the still-peppery Peter Macchiarini says, "We are very proud to have started something for the community that has spread and grown into a great cultural institution."

And as a tribute to the Upper Grant Avenue Fair's founders, a special award will be given to honor Peter and Virginia Macchiarini at the opening ceremony of this year's fair. The efforts of the Macchiarinis and other Grant Avenue pioneers nearly forty years ago helped invent the American urban street fair.

Back in time

Looking at the roots of the North Beach mystique



Heart of North Beach Open-air booths, folk and blues music, and culinary delights will transform Green Street this weekend.

THIS FATHER'S DAY weekend, as you browse closed-off Upper Grant Avenue and Green Street for this rendition of the North Beach Fair, try opening up your senses and conjuring a little with your imagination.

With the cars gone, the blocks of Grant, between Filbert and Vallejo, and Green, between Columbus and Grant, seem like a place from another time. The designer clothing stores, second-hand emporiums, distinctive restaurants and aromatic coffee houses are more open and inviting.

This is North Beach Fair weekend, and the streets are more vibrant than usual. A colorful crowd glides past open-air booths filled with glittering stained glass concoctions, original art, designer jewelry, handworked leather and hardwood sculptures. The breeze carries aromas of cappuccino and calzones, courtesy of North Beach's Italian restaurants. And the never-ending stream of local musical talent playing folk and blues carries the tuneful message from the main stage on Grant and Columbus across the Fair's bustling scene.

Don't be surprised if you find yourself transported to an earlier time. A time before Lillie Coit's priapic monument crowned the city's most famous hill, and the giant black hands of a semaphore told that a sidewheel mail ship was coming through the Golden Gate. Joseph MacGregor's hilltop telegraph not only gave Telegraph

Hill its name, but also signaled the beginning of an earlier kind of neighborhood festival. Businesses shut and schools let out, as one and all rushed down to the docks for the arrival of the mail packet from the East.

San Francisco, in the days after the miners arrived, was reputed to be more a Pacific Coast port of call than an American city, much nearer to Honolulu and Valparaiso than to New York or Philadelphia. So mixed was the population that there were 37 foreign consulates to handle the polyglot melting pot. And the North Beach/Barbary Coast neighborhood was as tough and as dangerous a mix as Toulon's Chicago district, New York's Hell's Kitchen or Shanghai's Suzhou Creek.

Indeed, it was finding crews for outbound voyages to points far east that gave the North Beach area a reputation it never quite lived down. Rogues like Limey Dirk, Shanghai Kelly and Jimmy the Pig used gambling, "pretty waiter girls," gin, opium, chloral hydrate and whatever else they could think of to separate hapless fun-seekers first from their money and then from their senses.

Enough unlucky patrons found themselves dropped through trapdoors of waterfront establishments and spirited by rowboat to one or another outbound China hellship, that the term "Shanghai'd" became synonymous with "North Beach."

Even after kidnapping ceased to be the preferred way of hiring a

crew in San Francisco, North Beach maintained its reputation of being a place to watch your back. And also your feet. Dance halls like Purcells, the Hippodrome, Spider Kelly's and the Moulin Rouge introduced America to the turkey trot, the grizzly bear, the bunny hug and other dance crazes that swept out of North Beach for points north, east and south.

San Francisco, in the days after the miners arrived, was reputed to be more a Pacific Coast port than an American city.

By the latter part of the 19th century, the notorious Barbary Coast had been limited to a single block, and an influx of Italian fishermen, scavengers, dockworkers and shopkeepers began to give North Beach a decidedly Genovese flavor. Rents were cheap, it was close to the boats and canneries on Fisherman's Wharf, and there were trattorias

and Old World charm enough to make a Genovese, Neapolitan or Milanese feel at home.

Needless to say, the 1906 earthquake and fire shook things up a bit in North Beach. But for those of the God-fearing persuasion who felt that the disaster was divine punishment, locals pointed to the survival of a liquor distillery and happily quoted the immortal doggerel:

If, as they say God spanked the town
For being over frisky,
Why did He burn His churches down
And spare Hotaling's Whisky?

North Beach, largely destroyed by the ensuing fire rather than the quake itself, was soon rebuilt. And one of San Francisco's grandest figures, Bank of America founder A.P. Giannini, was instrumental in getting the construction under way. To meet the desperate need for housing, he personally saw to the building of what is today the San Remo Hotel on Mason Street.

At the same time that North Beach was gaining a reputation as "Little Italy," it was also becoming a mecca for generations of writers, poets, musicians, painters and artists. Low rents, cheap food and a reputation for tolerance brought writers Joaquin Miller and Charles Warren Stoddard, poet Ina Donna Coolbrith and even anarchist Emma Goldman to North Beach in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

But it was a later influx, in the

late '40s and early '50s, that truly established North Beach's literary credentials. A lively group of aging Italian anarchists, hanging out around the A. Cavalli & Co. Bookstore on Columbus (where City Lights Books is today) and still waxing hotly about Sacco and Vanzetti, happily made room for a younger group of rebels.

At the Black Cat Cafe, at Henri Lenoir's Vesuvio and later at the Cellar on Green Street and the Coexistence Bagel Shop on Broadway, Dianne DiPrima, Bob Kaufman, Kenneth Rexroth, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Michael McClure, Lenore Kandel, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and other talented explorers wrote, recited and endlessly talked about the cool literary state of "beatitude," soon shortened to "beat."

The beat movement reached its zenith in the late '50s and focused international literary attention on North Beach as nothing had before. But in the '60s, the angular be-bop of the beats gave way to the rounded folk sound of soon-to-be-legends Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez and Tim Hardin as well as to the comedy of Jonathan Winters, Lenny Bruce and Dr. Irwin Corey. All were part of the '60s North Beach renaissance happening at clubs like the Purple Onion and the Cafe El Matador.

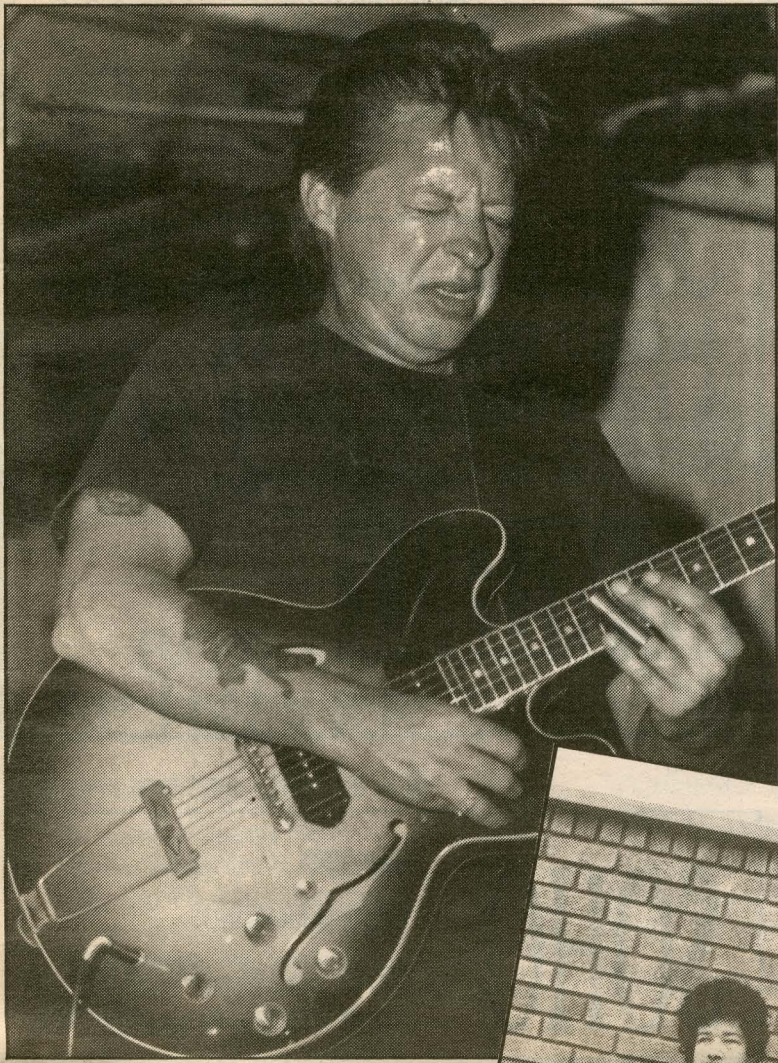
In the last two decades, legends have continued to come out of North Beach, including Boz Skaggs and the dozens of blues musicians who hung out and played (and still play) at the Saloon on Grant. At Club Fugazi on Vallejo, Steve Silver's Beach Blanket Babylon has gone through dozens of renditions and about a hundred trademark, float-sized hats in its 17 years.

In the '70s and '80s, North Beach remained the place where San Francisco's clubs, cafes and counter-culture collided. You could still find the offbeat alleybound hideouts like Vesuvio and Specs, celebrity hangouts like the Washington Square Bar and Grill, where Tom Brokaw might be holding court, and Jeanette Etheridge's Tosca Cafe, where you could see Nureyev one day and Nicholson the next. There was the epochal City Lights Bookstore where Ferlinghetti presided over the legacy of the beats, and a copy of Ginsberg's *Howl* or Bukowski's *Dirty Old Man* can still be had in the distinctive City Lights paperback original.

Today, North Beach is in the midst of a renaissance. Historic watering holes such as Vesuvio are being refurbished, and clubs like the Condor reopened as a restaurant and a museum of the Carol Doda topless era. And a new generation of North Beachers, men and women who have a passion for the traditions of the neighborhood, are opening eateries like the Gira Polli and the Stinking Rose, a 'heavy-on-the-garlic' Italian establishment opening on the former site of Rick's Cafe Americaine on Columbus.

Singing the blues

Two days of live blues at the Beach



counselors who played Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters, B.B. King and Jimmy Reed for him. According to Hacker, "I fell in love with the music and it's been part of my life since." On the San Francisco blues scene for over a dozen years, Hacker introduced his first album, *No Pretty Songs*, in 1989. He has played the San Francisco Blues Festival, Monterey Jazz Festival, Long Beach Blues Festival and festivals all over Europe. Hacker is a regular at the Saloon and is now working on his second album, *Bar Stool Blues*.

Michael "Hawkeye" Herman: "Keepin' the Blues Alive" is a key phrase for Hawkeye Herman, who has performed at major blues and folk festivals throughout the known world. He has won acclaim as an acoustic blues/folk

Ron Hacker
giving it all he's got.



Big Bones and Paul Pena
playing the blues
on an S.F. street corner.

Michael "Hawkeye" Herman, Big Bones and Paul Pena, Stu Blank, Larry Hunt and the Blue Flames and others.

Some of the highlights of the North Beach Fair's mini blues festival are:

Mike Henderson: A "two fisted, hard workin', good lovin', guitar playin' man" — his own characterization — who has lived in the Bay Area since the late '60s, recorded on E.J. Records and played with blues legends Sunnyland Slim and Albert Collins at venues like the Monterey Jazz Festival, the Torino Jazz Festival and on KQED-FM's West Coast Weekend.

Ron Hacker & the Hacksaws: Sent off to the juvenile center when he was 12 for breaking into parking meters, Hacker was introduced to the blues by

guitarist and recently finished a record *Everyday Living*.

Big Bones & Paul Pena: A Delta harmonica and guitar duo in the tradition of Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee, Big Bones and Paul Pena came together when Pena heard Big Bones playing his harp on a San Francisco street-corner. Pena, a blind guitarist, has played with John Lee Hooker and Mississippi Fred McDowell, gone on the road with T-Bone Walker and recorded with both Walker and Bonnie Raitt. Before his bout with hard times, Big Bones opened for the likes of southern legends Ted Taylor and Chick Willis.

Stu Blank: Stu Blank is a San Francisco blues and rock guitarist who has been enthralled Bay Area audiences for well over a decade. He is a regular at the Last Day Saloon and myriad other clubs around the area.

EVER SINCE SAN FRANCISCANS began to populate the valley between Telegraph and Russian Hills and call it North Beach, music has been a centerpiece of neighborhood life and often a popular export.

First there were the notorious Barbary Coast melodian "concert saloons" and Broadway's Mexican fandango houses in the mid-1800s. The can-can made its appearance in 1879, much to the editorial dismay of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

There were the post-1906 'quake dance halls like the Thalia and Midway which scandalized the nation with dances like the turkey trot, the bunny hug, the chicken glide, the "Texas Tommy," the grizzly bear and the notorious "Salome dance." In the early '50s came clubs like the Purple Onion and Cafe El Matador, which brought be-bop and "cool" jazz to blue-note perfection. In the '60s and '70s, North Beach clubs including the Saloon, Savoy Tivoli and Mooney's Pub helped make rock, and especially blues, a San Francisco specialty.

The North Beach Fair continues this neighborhood tradition by presenting two full days worth of blues music from the concert stage at Grant and Columbus and at street corners throughout the fair.

Running from 10 am to 6 pm on both Saturday, June 15 and Sunday, June 16, Grant Avenue will throb to sounds from the Mike Henderson Blues Band, Ron Hacker and the Hacksaws,



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North Beach Fare Jose and Marta Castellucci, owners of Ristorante Castellucci in North Beach.

IF YOU'RE THE type who makes mental checklists of the best food and drink the Bay Area has to offer, *buon gusto*, because once again in 1991, the North Beach Fair will kick off its two-day, Father's Day weekend-run by handing out Best of North Beach Awards for the finest Italian cuisine whipped up by the neighborhood's finest chefs.

Now in its fourth year, the Best of North Beach awards test the cooking creativity of over two dozen competitors in seven categories. This year the categories include pasta, pizza, risotto, calamari, Italian sausage, cappuccino and biscotti. All in all, a real test for North Beach's highly competitive chefs, as well as a mix of foods rich enough to keep a single team of judges in Maalox for a month.

Even with three teams of celebrity and food critic judges, the prospect of shuttling between a dozen or so great restaurants and consuming scores of dishes within the course of a marathon afternoon is enough to daunt even a James Beard or a Luciano Pavarotti.

Not to mention *Examiner* columnist Rob Morse, who last year anchored the team scouting for North Beach's best cappuccino. After a dozen or so cups of caffeine-rich brew, Morse was so buzzed that, according to sources, he returned to his newspaper and stayed up the entire night writing a week's worth of columns.

This year, Morse has been given equally onerous duty, joining North Beach Fair producer Terry Pimsleur and La Pergola's Giancarlo Bertolotti on the team assigned to judge cappuccino,

biscotti and risotto. At least this time they'll have a little starch with their caffeine.

Other teams include celebrated chef Jacky Roberts, owner and chef of Amelio's, and *Sunset* magazine food editor Jerry Di Vecchio judging pasta and Italian sausage. Restaurateur Modesto Lanzone, food writer Bill Cetarra and KGO's restaurant reviewer Russ Riera are assigned to pizza, calzone and calamari.

Regardless of the dangers of over-consumption, judging is taken very seriously. Italian food is not just a staple of North Beach, but one of its greatest arts. And judges prepare by acquainting themselves with the various qualities that make up a great dish.

Over the last several years, competition in the Best of North Beach contest has stiffened because of the new wave of Italian bakeries, bistros and cafes that have opened. According to fair producer Pimsleur, "North Beach now has so many chefs who deserve to be singled out, it's harder and harder to select only three winners in each category."

Last year's Best of North Beach first prize winners included the **Mona Lisa Restaurant** for both the best pasta puttanesca and calzone, **Viva Pizza** for its ratatouille pizza, the **Luciano Rock Opera Cafe** for cappuccino and **Basta Pasta** for zabaglione.

This year's competition is by invitation only, judging will take place on June 12 and awards will be handed out at the North Beach Fair's opening ceremonies at noon on Saturday, June 15.

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