

## This 'n' That

*By Laura McHale Holland*

**Steven Dean**, receptionist for Zephyr Realty's 24th Street office for the past 11 years, was grateful for many things on Saturday, March 20. The warm, sunny weather. The encouraging smiles of friends and family. The supporters who had pledged generously for a walkathon held that day to raise money for Joaquin Miller School in Oakland, where his daughter **Mika** is in third grade. And the fact that he was able to walk six kilometers.

"Some of the checks are still coming in, but it's going to be over \$3,700 that I've raised, most of it from colleagues at Zephyr, and then Zephyr, as a company, matched those funds. But I also got considerable help from the good folks at B.J. Droubi," says Dean.

Dean has cerebral palsy, which makes ordinary things like walking challenging for him. He couldn't walk until he was 8 years old, and that was with a crutch. It took three more years of painful practice until he could walk independently.

"I always felt like I just wanted to be like everybody else. And I always believed that someday I would walk," recalls Dean. "But when I was 6 years old I went to a specialist, and he told me I shouldn't get my hopes up, that it was highly doubtful I would ever walk. Even though it hurt my feelings, I guess I decided after that to be proactive. I lived in a building that had a long corridor, and when I got home, I had my twin brother put some chairs and tables along the hallway and I tried to balance myself down the hallway, learning to walk. That's what got me started."

For Dean, walking six kilometers is a little painful, but he says, "I'm sort of used to pushing myself a bit if I have to. I'm really very fortunate. I have a beautiful wife and lovely daughter, and I love where I work. Who could want more than that in terms of day-to-day life?"

**Lynn Nelson** of Corwin Street also knows what it means to persist in the face of great odds. In 1985, two years after she'd had a mastectomy, she joined the San Francisco Peak Busters and ascended 14,110 feet in the Pike's Peak Marathon in Colorado. Now this soon to be 66-year-old freelance graphics designer, illustrator, and mother of three grown children is in training for the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer. It is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, July 10 and 11. She'll be walking 39.3 miles in both San Francisco and Marin over the course of two days.

"One of the things I discovered when I was going through my own cancer experience is that

I'm blessed with such an amazing circle of family and friends, and I think this event is one way I can offer some of that support back through fundraising for those who might need it now. It's also my way of celebrating that I've been cancer-free for 20 years," says Nelson.

To participate, each walker must raise a minimum of \$1,800. To receive a pledge packet, call her at 626-2858. You can also pledge online by going to [www.avonwalk.org](http://www.avonwalk.org)

and following the links at "Support a Walker/Crew Member." Be sure to select San Francisco and enter Lynn Nelson along with her ID number 441635 when prompted.

"I'd love to hear from people in the neighborhood who are interested in training with me. This is such a lovely area for walking," she says.

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Fundraising is the *raison d'être* of the St. Luke's Auxiliary, and the group just presented St. Luke's Hospital on Valencia Street with \$100,000 at its annual meeting on March 4. Thirtieth Street resident **Peg Purcell** was also confirmed for a two-year term as the Auxiliary's new president. Other Noe Valleyans of influence in the organization are treasurer **Janet Bollier**, gift shop chair **Carol Maerzke**, recording secretary **Mari Betta**, and St. Luke's Foundation president and CEO **Jim Hickman**.

"I was training for a marathon for the Lymphoma Society, and I fell while I was trying to get to my car. I'd already done eight miles that day. I ended up being out of work and unemployed, and Carol asked me to join the Auxiliary board while I was recuperating. That was three years ago, and here I am the incoming president," laughs Purcell. "The good part is that I really believe in giving back to the community. It's one way of showing gratefulness and appreciation. And I think people who volunteer end up getting back tenfold what they give," she adds.

Purcell, a millinery specialist, is also a founder of the San Francisco Hat Society. The objective of the group, says Purcell, is "to enjoy the company of others who appreciate the elegance or gracious style achieved by wearing hats, to educate ourselves in the history and social relevance of the hat, and to promote the wearing of hats, thereby supporting the milliner's craft."

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Science teacher **Lorri Ferguson** helped second-graders at St. Paul's Elementary School see the elegance and style of pupa (a developmental stage of certain insects such as bees, moths, and beetles) and moth probosces (long flexible snouts) on March 2. She submitted a lesson plan to the Bugscope Project of the Beckman Institute at the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign, and it was approved. That meant for two hours, free of charge, her students were able to operate an electron microscope remotely from their classroom computers.

"We collected insect specimens and mailed them to Illinois a week before we did our project," says Ferguson. "It was just fabulous for a 7-year-old to have a chance to operate an electron microscope. You get incredible magnification. We saw a little spec of pollen on top of a wasp's head, and it looked like a little soccer ball. The more detail we got, the more questions there were, and the more alive science became for the kids," she adds.

All specimens were from our Noe Valley terrain except for jumping beans, which Ferguson ordered from Mexico. When they examined a jumping bean sample under the microscope, students noticed a cocoon, but it was empty. It turns out that while scientists in Illinois prepared the specimen, a live pupa emerged and flew out into their lab.

"The kids were absolutely thrilled with the news, especially since a butterfly we had been raising had died the week before," says Ferguson.

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Depending upon a person's beliefs, death, while sorrowful, can also be a time of rebirth. In that vein, **Clare Tamony's** three loving sons expect that after she succumbed to stomach cancer on March 9, she joined friends in heaven for one long and spectacular St. Patrick's Day party.

From the day she was born, she was solidly connected to the old sod. "Her name was spelled Clare, instead of Claire, after County Clare in Ireland," says her youngest son **John**. "Her father was born in County Limerick, but they had relatives all over Ireland."

One of eight children, Tamony was born on Feb. 17, 1922, above her father's little store, Turner's Grocery. It was located where Randall, Laidley, and Whitney streets intersect. She was educated at St. Paul's all the way through high school, and was subsequently active in her alma mater's alumni association, even serving as its president for a time. She also attended mass almost daily.

Her husband, **Frank Tamony**, grew up nearby on Laidley Street. In 1950, early in their marriage, the couple moved to Valley Street. Frank worked as a machinist, and Clare concentrated on raising their three boys **Frank, Joe**, and John. Sadly, in 1965, her husband died suddenly from a heart attack, and Tamony was thereafter a single parent. She worked downtown as a sales clerk at Emporium Capwell, retiring in 1975. But she didn't slow down. She began serving a dose of her wit and charm along with doughnuts and cookies to patrons of Star Bakery, a place where her sons had worked when they were in school, and a favorite haunt of many a St. Paul's parishioner. She worked there until it closed in 1998.

"She became good friends with **Eugene Rauscher** [owner of the Bakery from 1945 until he sold the business in 1996], and kind of turned it from a German bakery into an Irish bakery," recalls John. "They baked Irish soda bread and sent it to restaurants all over the city, and all around the state."

Surviving Clare Tamony are her three sons, her sister **Dorothy**, her brother **Hank**, seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. She also leaves a legacy of "simple wisdoms"

that family members are passing on, such as "You never stay angry at your children"; "Even angels think they have sins"; "Taking the extra Sweet'n Low packets from restaurants is perfectly acceptable for grandmothers"; and "You have to really love your son to allow him to paint the house."

And now, dear readers, one of Clare Tamony's favorite Irish blessings:

May the road rise to meet you

May the wind be always at your back

May the sun shine warm upon your face

The rain fall soft upon your fields

Until we meet again

May God hold you in the hollow of  
his hand

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May you all send us news of your personal milestones as well. Contact us by e-mailing *thisnthat@noevalleyvoice.*

*com.* Or if it's more convenient, leave a message at 415-821-3324 or write  
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