

Nutrition revolution gaining in Tenderloin

Model mom-n-pops sell fresh produce, 25% see sales soar

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

THE TENDERLOIN IS slowly embracing a healthier marketplace — the corner stores where residents shop for snacks and many for meals.

The city's 2-year-old Healthy Retail SF program now supports nine stores, five in the TL, in their move away from heavy merchandizing of cigarettes, alcohol and high-calorie, no-nutrition nibbles and toward real food — brightly colored, fresh produce, whole-grain products and more, arrayed appealingly on modern shelving at the front of each store.

Fresh produce is definitely catching on, according to a program report released Oct. 28. Each of the nine stores is selling an average of 1,615 more produce items per month than before its healthy makeover. That means neighborhood shoppers are getting more fresh food and store owners are benefiting, too: They've increased their overall sales by an average \$5,000-plus, a jump of 25%.

More good news: The Healthy Retail SF program aims to get participating mom-n-pops to give more display space to nutritious food and less to tobacco and alcohol. The numbers won't be in for a year, but the report says that's already happening big time.

"This is a program that grew from the ground up and is showing the positive, collective impact of community members, nonprofits and city agencies work-

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HEALTHY CORNER STORE COALITION

Tammy Wong, a TL Healthy Corner Store Coalition food justice leader, peels tobacco product stickers off shopping baskets at Fox Market and replaces them with stickers promoting fresh produce as "a healthy way to flavor every meal."

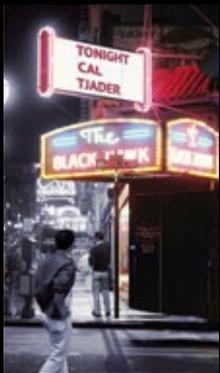
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BLACKHAWK ESSAY HONORED

'I can still hear it' wins SPJ award
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TWITTER TAX CUT COST RISES

\$55.6 million total so far, new report says

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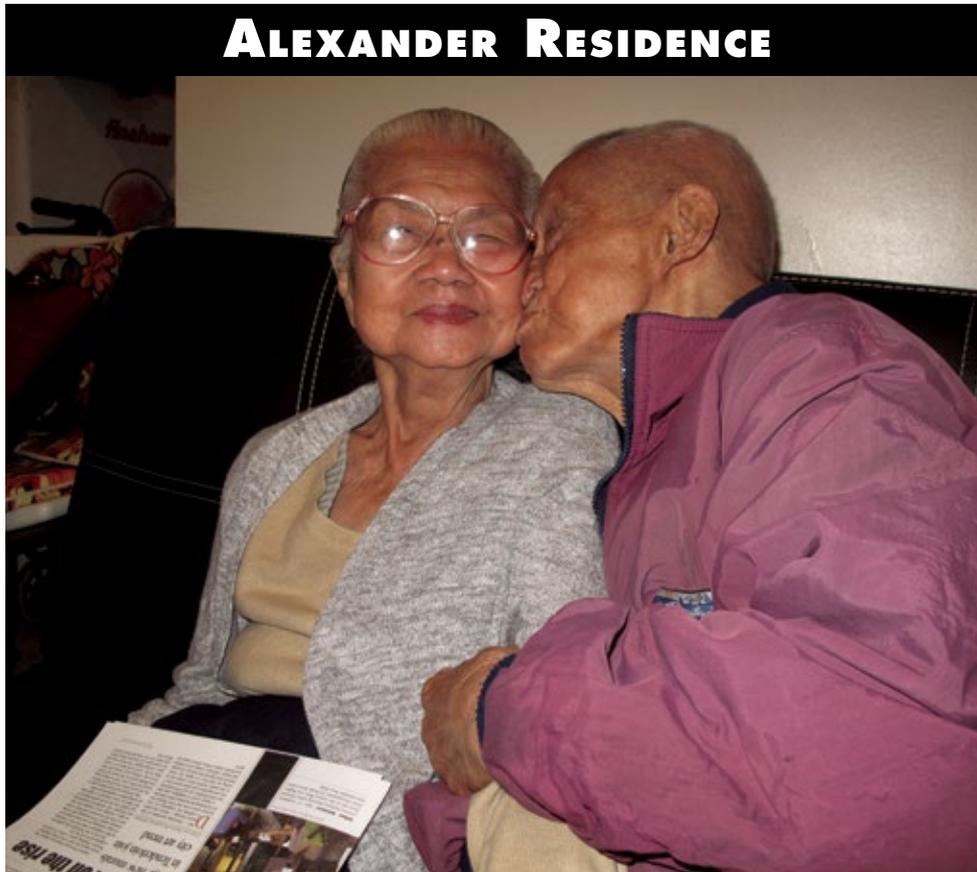


CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

ALEXANDER RESIDENCE



TOM CARTER

Emilio and Virginia Florendo kiss on the occasion of their 69th wedding anniversary, a remarkable milestone seldom achieved in the Tenderloin, where they have lived for 24 years.

Marriage milestone

Couple celebrate 69th anniversary at home in SRO

STORY BY TOM CARTER

OCT. 27, 1947, Harry Truman was president, "Forever Amber" was a hit movie, Groucho Marx's "You Bet Your Life" was on radio and Emilio and Virginia Florendo were married in the Philippines. He was 24, she was 17.

This year, the couple celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary at the Alexander Residence, where they've lived for 24 years.

It's quite an achievement of devotion in the City by the Bay, more so that it's found in the Tenderloin, San Francisco's poorest neighborhood where people on average die in their mid-50s.

Emilio is 93. Virginia will be 86 in December.

They were married at home in Pasay in Metro Manila, dressed in white finery. Family and friends attended, and there was scads of food for everyone. But they don't remember other details.

"Too long ago," Virginia says, wearily, seated on the living room couch next to Emilio in their 12th-story apartment. Both are small, delicate and handsome.

The Florendos had six children, three boys, three girls. Veronica, the "No. 5," as she is sometimes referred to, has been their live-in caretaker for the past six months and is by the window, preparing a large noodle dish. No. 2,

a daughter, is a nurse in San Diego. The other children live in the Philippines.

"It was a lot of work," Virginia says, "and I'm tired — I have trouble breathing. I had a very hard life. I knew nothing (in the beginning). You need to live your life for your children. And I'm here with God's blessing."

But humor perks her up, and she'll flash her beautiful smile that wipes away the years, making her an ageless shadow of her youth.

Despite the travails of motherhood, she says her fondest memory is the birth of her first child, Dolores, now 70.

The 69th anniversary was no big deal to Virginia. She didn't know of its arrival until Veronica told her, and she's not one for celebrations, anyway. "I don't usually celebrate birthdays," she confesses. And the special St. Boniface Mass they were to attend later downstairs, and the large food offering that Veronica was helping to prepare, seemed like too much fuss. But as a team, they were ready to do their part.

At their age, recreations are minimal. Even so, just about every day they try to go to Boeddeker Park just down the block. They stroll around it, "a very good park," she says.

She uses a walker and keeps an inhaler handy for her severe asthma. She uses oxygen at night from a tank next to her bed. She and Emilio had walked that morning.

"I used to do everything," she says. "But now I can't. I am weak."

Television plays a big role in their day and it was blaring in the next room. Emilio, still quick on his feet at 93, is hard of hearing.

He used to be a man of multiple talents.

"He is a jack of all trades," Virginia says proudly.

With no formal education, he was a me-

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