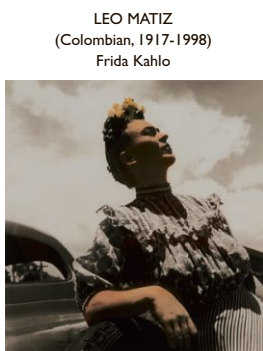


Upcoming Events at Michaan's!

Free Appraisal Event
 Wednesday, February 5th; 9 am - 12 pm
 Wednesday, February 19th; 9 am - 12 pm

February Gallery Auction
 Friday, February 14th; 10 am
Preview:
 Sunday, February 9th; 10 am - 5 pm
 Thursday, February 13th; 10 am - 5 pm
 Friday, February 14th; 9 am - end of auction

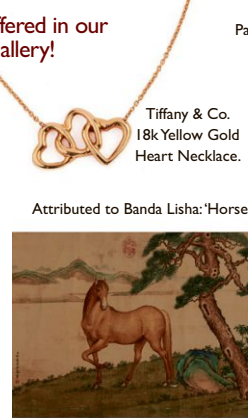
February Annex Auction
 Mon., Feb. 10th; Tues., Feb. 11th; Wed., Feb. 12th | 9 am
Preview:
 Sun., Feb. 9th; 10 am - 5 pm;
 Mon., Feb. 10th & Tues., Feb. 11th; 9 am - 5 pm;
 Wed., Feb. 12th; 9 am - end of auction.



All Lots to be Offered in our February Gallery!



Sparks-Withington Sparton Visionola Type C Projector Console



Tiffany & Co. 18k Yellow Gold Heart Necklace.

Attributed to Banda Lisha: 'Horse'



Diamond, Rhodium-Plated, 14k White Gold Band.

MICHAAN'S AUCTIONS

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San Francisco Chronicle

SFCHRONICLE.COM SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025 CONTAINS RECYCLED PAPER \$3.00

Mysterious group linked to 6 deaths

Members hold paranoid views of society, technology — leader 'Ziz,' who faked drowning in bay, has disappeared

By Michael Barba, Matthias Gafni, Rachel Swan and Megan Cassidy

"Ziz" was dead. Or at least it seemed that way. Just before midnight on Aug.

19, 2022, the Coast Guard steamed through San Francisco Bay after an alarming report. The eccentric computer programmer and blogger, born Jack Amadeus LaSota before adopting the name Ziz and feminine pronouns, had fallen

from a boat. For hours, rescue crews searched by air and sea. They found nothing.

An obituary appeared in a newspaper. A probate case was filed in court, citing witnesses to the death.

Then, almost five months later and 2,500 miles away, Pennsylvania state troopers swarmed a hotel near Philadelphia International Airport. The elderly parents of a woman close to LaSota had been shot to death in their home

several days earlier, and the troopers thought the daughter — who was staying at the hotel — might have the murder weapon.

Inside Room 311, the troopers didn't locate a pistol but found **Ziz continues on A14**

Banquets back on menu



Photos by Emily Steinberger/Special to the Chronicle

Chinatown's tables filling up in hopeful sign after lean years

By Mario Cortez

Leon Zhou, co-owner of dim sum restaurant Lai Hong Lounge, was delighted to see the streets and restaurants of San Francisco's Chinatown packed Wednesday morning, when Lunar New Year festivities began. Inside his family's restaurant and banquet hall, large circular tables were filled with customers sipping soups and eating rice noodle rolls.

"The amount of people out



ABOVE: From left, Supervisor Chyanne Chen with her daughter; Mayor Daniel Lurie; and Supervisor Connie Chan with son Edo at the Far East Cafe.

TOP: Guests hold hands and sway to a performance at the banquet celebrating the election wins of Supervisors Connie Chan and Chyanne Chen.

was insane," he said.

After several fallow years after the COVID-19 pandemic, Zhou and others in the nation's oldest Chinatown hope that both 2025 and the Year of the Snake are a time of resurgence.

Banquets, they say, are back. Feasts at banquet halls for major events like Lunar New Year have historically held a unifying role in the neighborhood, bringing together residents and numerous civic associations and family organizations. Revelers eat through a procession of dishes — soups, rice, noodles, barbecued meats and fresh seafood — meant to invite good fortune for the year.

Banquets continues on A12

Car seller owes \$38K for buyer's parking tickets

By St. John BARNED-SMITH

According to San Francisco, Sobhuza Williams was one of last year's biggest parking scofflaws.

More than 150 times in 2024, the city's parking control officers cited his 2008 BMW X3 for any multitude of infractions.

For violating street cleaning rules. For parking on the sidewalk. For lacking plates.

There's just one problem: Williams doesn't own the car.

Williams said he sold his BMW in 2023 for \$1,000. But what should have been a simple sale to a man he knew turned into a still unfolding fiasco, he said. Now, Williams owes more than \$38,000 in city parking tickets, along with other fines in Berkeley and Oakland, as well as unpaid bridge tolls. And he has been unable to extricate himself from his predicament.

"I was getting all types of tickets," he said.

With \$38,350 in outstanding fines, the X3 was one of the cars with the highest amount of unpaid fines in San Francisco last year. The Chronicle attempted to reach several vehicle owners in the top 10. Many were difficult to track down.

When the Chronicle reached Williams, a surprising story emerged, a cautionary tale about how a suppos-

Sale continues on A13

Trump's orders lead trans woman to flee

Fearing for her safety, she leaves sanctuary of S.F. to seek asylum in other countries

By Raheem Hosseini

Lynn Riordan stopped at the bank, saw that it was closed for the holiday, and rode BART to San Francisco International Airport. Sixty-six and feeling her age, she regretted carrying all that luggage. She had packed for three weeks, three countries, three potential new homes.

"I mean, how often do you flee your own country?" the transgender woman quipped.

If the televisions inside the airport were tuned to the inauguration, Riordan said she didn't notice. She boarded a plane before President Donald Trump signed an executive order stating that gender is deter-

Woman continues on A10



Chloë Ellingson/Special to the Chronicle

Lynn Riordan, a 66-year-old transgender woman, checks into her flight at Toronto Pearson International Airport on Jan. 25.