



Cliff Wong, former Atchison's Pharmacy owner, walks through Central Drug Store in the Excelsior district after he and son Jeff brought over an apple pie on Wednesday in honor of owner Jerry Tonelli's retirement.

Photos by Jessica Christian/S.F. Chronicle

Beloved drugstore closing down

117-year-old Excelsior store adds to long list of shuttered pharmacies

By Jerry Wu

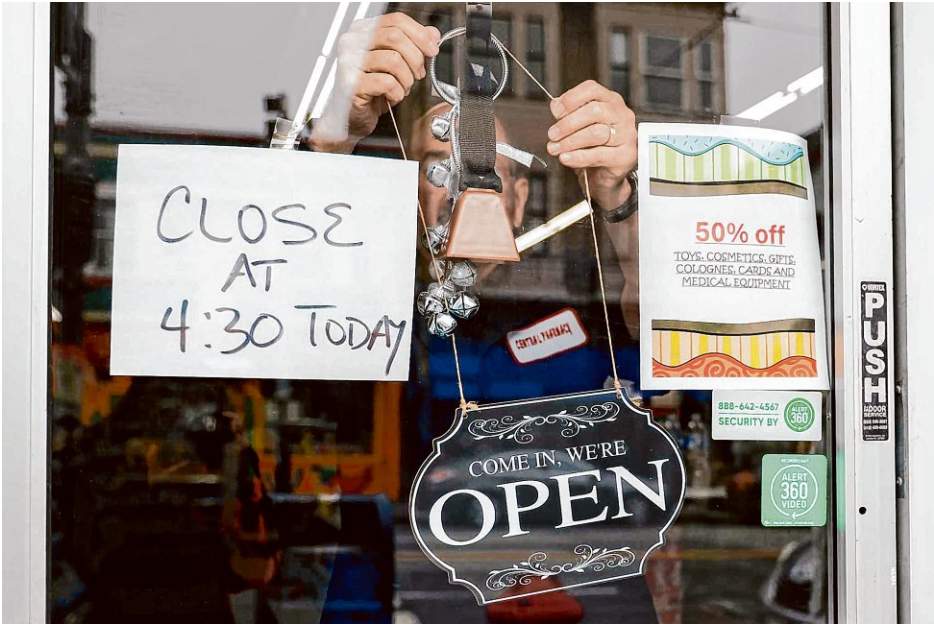
It seemed like a belated reunion was unfolding Wednesday at 4494 Mission St.

The old men and women visiting were greeted by familiar neon, red cursive words as they entered the dimly lit Central Drug Store, which many of them had frequented for decades. It wasn't long before laughter rang through the building while sounds of clinking bottles and package rustling hovered in the background.

In less than a month, against many community members' wishes, the Central Drug Store will permanently shutter its doors.

Located in the Excelsior district, the pharmacy announced this month that it will permanently close on July 15 — 117 years after it opened in 1908. At age 71, owner Jerry Tonelli said he will retire after working at the pharmacy since high school. His father had taken over the store in 1965.

"We've had pretty much the same custom-



Tonelli, 71, opens his store for the day. He has worked at the pharmacy since high school and said that with his retirement, the building probably will be sold.

ers over the years, and then their children, and then their children's children," said Tonelli, dressed in his daily navy blue work uniform. "It's just a whole cycle of life that we've seen come through here, and it's funny, because after a while it becomes part of your social life."

Central Drug joins a growing list of pharma-

cies shuttered in past years in what's increasingly become a pharmacy shortage across San Francisco. Fifty-one pharmacies in San Francisco have closed since 2015, Supervisor Jackie Fielder's office told the Chronicle in February. A dozen more were projected to close this year.

Central Drug is the oldest operating business in

the Excelsior district today, according to San Francisco Legacy Businesses.

Mario Gentile, 67, who grew up with Tonelli, remembers frequenting the pharmacy in his childhood to peruse the comic book selection. Jerry Garcia, one of the founders of the rock band the Grateful Dead, would some-

Closing continues on A10

S.F. supes back fewer layoffs in budget deal

Lurie, board disagree on number of positions to restore in proposal

By Aldo Toledo

After nearly 15 hours of negotiations that stretched well into the early morning, San Francisco supervisors reached a deal with Mayor Daniel Lurie over his two-year budget proposal, restoring funding for critical city programs after an extended standoff over spending for homeless services.

But Lurie and the board remained in disagreement Thursday over how many of the about 100 proposed layoffs would be reversed, with Supervisor Connie Chan, the budget committee chair, saying the board found funding to stave off all layoffs, and the mayor's office saying it has agreed to restore only 57 positions.

Lurie last month unveiled a \$15.9 billion budget that seeks to close an \$800 million two-year budget gap by cutting more than 1,400 positions that would result in about 100 layoffs, slashing \$185 million in funding for nonprofits and other savings. Since then, the Board of Supervisors, mayor's office and city staff have been poring over hundreds of pages of budget documents and hearing hours of presentations from every city department to identify savings.

The board's budget and appropriations committee continued its negotiations until about 2 a.m. Thursday.

"Under the circumstances, with no good options, we were able to restore funding for programs and services that impact our most marginalized com-

Budget continues on A10

City puts brakes on requests for 'traffic calming'

By Rachel Swan

When San Francisco transportation officials began taking requests for "traffic calming" designs on residential streets, the projects piled up quickly.

That was in 2013, and city leaders were just starting to elevate road safety as a priority — it would take another year to adopt Vision Zero, the initiative to end traffic fatalities within a decade. But people already grasped the idea that subtle changes to a street could reduce the risk of crashes, while making the environment quieter and more livable. Applications poured in for speed bumps and raised crosswalks, concrete islands and rubber road cushions, durable posts and new markings to make lanes wider or narrower.

Now, with a looming budget crisis and a backlog of about 300 resident proposals, leaders of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency decided it's time to suspend the program.

Many factors played into that decision, said Viktoriya Wise, the agency's director of streets. Chief among them was trust. SFMTA staff want to assure the public that they're committed to safety and can deliver on any application the agency has approved, even if the demand is overwhelming.

Traffic continues on A9

Gray whale numbers lowest since '70s

Amount migrating past Central California is smallest since federal protections started

By Tara Duggan

A key population of whales that migrate along the California coast dropped this year to its smallest size since the 1970s. The decrease in population happened as a high number of the whales died in San Francisco Bay, and both may be tied to the impact of climate change on food supplies in the Arctic.

There are likely fewer than 13,000 gray whales on the West Coast, according to a new estimate by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine

Fisheries Service, which conducts surveys of the cetaceans as they pass Central California. That's compared with a high of 27,000 in 2016, reached decades after federal protections for marine mammals helped boost their population.

The survey counted only 85 gray whale calves traveling with their mothers along the coast, the smallest number since the 1990s.

Earlier this year, scientists in Baja, Mexico, also reported seeing many dead whales in lagoons where the whales give

Whales continues on A10



Noah Berger/For the S.F. Chronicle

A dead gray whale floats in April in San Francisco Bay off Alameda. Large numbers of the whales died and washed ashore in the Bay Area this spring.