



From Uncertainty to Opportunity

Downtown and Mission Bay are seeing a real estate resurgence, says Jennifer Gottlieb-Shetrit. p. 4



"Mountainhead" Review

Erin Maxwell appraises HBO's new tech bro dramedy from Succession's Jesse Armstrong. p. 5



Yinka Shonibare, CBE. *Man Moving Up*, 2022, Fiberglass mannequins, Dutch wax printed cotton textile, bespoke globe, brass, leather, paper, cotton, silk, steel, aluminum, and painted wood. 68 7⁄8 x 87 1⁄4 x 76 3⁄4 in. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND JAMES COHAN GALLERY, NEW YORK PHOTO: STEPHEN WHITE & CO

‘Black Gold: Stories Untold’ exhibiting at Fort Point

BY SHARON ANDERSON

THE FOR-SITE ORGANIZATION presents its highly anticipated new project *Black Gold: Stories Untold*. This innovative exhibition invites

more than fifteen contemporary artists to reflect on the resilience, struggles and triumphs of African Americans who lived in California from the Gold Rush to the Reconstruction period following the Civil War (c. 1849-1877). Black

Gold is located at the Fort Point National Historic Site, the only extant Civil War-era fort on the West Coast of the United States, and will be on view from June 6 to Nov. 2, 2025.

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REYNOLDS RAP

Opinion

S.F. Department of Public Health head: ‘Public drug use is really a problem for other people’

Dr. Hillary Kunins says role of health department and nonprofit partners is to ‘protect and support’ street addicts in absence of safe consumption sites.

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I RECEIVED AN ANONYMOUS message containing a recording of a Dec. 20, 2023, phone meeting led by Dr. Hillary Kunins, Director of Behavioral Health Services and Mental Health SF, regarding harm reduction strategies for 2024. Attendees included San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) employees and nonprofit providers funded by the city to handle harm reduction initiatives. The 45-minute meeting centers on the group’s support for harm reduction and worries that

REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 2

SPORTS CORNER

A Baseball Life

Dusty Baker reflects, part 1

BY RICHARD KELLER

THE UNMISTAKABLE FIGURE OF Dusty Baker stands out in any Giants’ family photo. His commanding presence and wide, welcoming smile make him instantly recognizable to Giants’ fans of all ages. His record-breaking 10-year term as Giants manager is so well-documented, you feel like there’s nothing about him that you don’t already know.

But if you’re looking to find some of the missing deets, picture yourself sitting with Baker in a boat on a lake, your fishing lines dangling into the water. Ask a few questions, sit back and listen. Let him tell it.

To start with, how did a guy born Johnnie B. Baker, Jr. come to be known as Dusty? “There’s a longstanding debate in my family about whether it was my mother Catherine or my aunt Loreena who first called me that. It came about because as a boy, I liked playing around in the dirt all the time,” he said. “At first it was only my name at home. The neighbors, my classmates, the guys I played

sports with all called me Johnnie B. But eventually, everyone picked up on Dusty, and the name stuck.”

If the female members of the Baker clan were responsible for his renaming, it was the male side who introduced him to his all-time favorite pastime. “I grew up fishing with my dad. It’s what we did on Saturdays. We fished for the meat, as well as the sport. With so many lakes and rivers around us, in Riverside and in Sacramento, we were never at a loss for places to fish,” he said. “I always feel a great sense of peace when I’m out on the water. Oftentimes during my managing days, I’d find a place to sit and cast my line, and work out the next day’s lineup while I waited for a bite.”

Baker was always sports-minded, but unlike many of his contemporaries, he didn’t harbor fantasies about playing Major League baseball. “My favorites list as a teenager was basketball, football, track, and then baseball. Where I grew up in Riverside, you played everything. Baseball was the sport you played in the summertime, nothing more,” said Baker. “The only difference about it was my dad



Dusty Baker as an LA Dodger bats against the Yankees during the World Series at Yankee Stadium, October, 1977. PHOTO: FOCUS ON SPORT/GETTY IMAGES

was my Little League coach, so there was maybe a bit more incentive to play well in baseball because of that. He had also been Bobby Bonds’ coach, and I used to follow them around as a kid. I fell in love with baseball when I hurt my knee playing basketball. I’ve loved it more than I ever thought I could.”

A Southern California native, Baker naturally was a Dodgers fan at first. “Tommie Davis was my baseball hero growing up. That’s why I always wore number 12, to honor him,” he said. “I picked up on the Giants when they signed Bobby Bonds. In fact, we were working

KELLER, continued on 8

Reynolds Rap,
continued from cover

funding won't be there for their budgets. Both SFPDH and nonprofit providers lament the attitudes of San Francisco residents toward drug users. Kunins, in particular, is defiant and passionate, apologizing for "getting emotional" at one point.

"The topic of public ... open-air drug use feels like is a driving preoccupation for the city," Kunins says. "There's also the issue of open-air drug selling, which I know are not unrelated As a longtime progressive advocate in public health, I have been pretty silent about this because I have always felt it's about stigma and it's about prejudice, and we should be protectors, and we are responsible for supporting people, and their public drug use is really a problem for other people." Other people, meaning those who live and work in the city and see the carnage occurring on the streets, where two people per day die of drug overdoses. "I feel that we can't get around saying something about this and obviously safe consumption is the solution and that can't happen right now ... this is also preoccupying us. I don't have the specific answer but it's been hard not to talk about this without having consumption spaces"

Prior to her appointment by former mayor London Breed on Jan. 27, 2021, Kunins, an internist and addiction medicine physician, served as Executive Deputy Commissioner of Mental Hygiene at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where she oversaw "strategic and equity-driven initiatives to improve the behavioral health of all New Yorkers — including children, youth and families, and people who are justice-involved, who are experiencing homelessness, who live with developmental challenges, and who use drugs."

As Kunins speaks on the call of nonprofit providers, all of whom praise her profusely for her brave leadership (keep in mind, they are dependent upon her for their money), the rallying cry is to continue pushing harm reduction on a city that has grown weary of the kid-glove handling of public drug use and sales. "This has really been a difficult time, and I really appreciate this group. There's so much stigma — I'm getting emotional, so sorry," Kunins says. "Like, to the extent of which you all showed up at that last hearing is extremely important. We're planning to open a crisis diversion unit at Geary and Hyde ... we'll be having a community meeting, and getting people who are supportive at that meeting is extremely helpful."

Eleana Binder, Public Policy Director at GLIDE's Center for Social Justice, chimes in about funding worries for their harm



Homeless people are seen as the city grapples with fentanyl issues, Feb. 26, 2024.
PHOTO: TAYFUN COSKUN/ANADOLU VIA GETTY IMAGES

reduction programs. Keep in mind that GLIDE had \$18 million in revenue and total assets of \$59.4 million for 2023, paying then-CEO Karen J Hanrahan over \$805,000 in compensation. They also paid their retired late founder Cecil Williams over \$285,000 and Chief People Officer Bernadette Robertson, over \$250,000. GLIDE also paid over \$1,300,000 to seven additional employees.

Beyond worrying about how much taxpayer money her organization will receive, Binder asks, "How can we as providers partner with the city to make sure public health intervention is prioritized rather than some of the criminalization that has been ramping up? Thinking about public messaging to promote the positive things that are happening." Kunins says things like site visits are occasionally used "strategically" and that there are "people on this call who have been in San Francisco much longer [than I have] and know how to move those needles." (I'm sure there was no pun intended.)

Kevin Liu, who works on harm reduction for Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation, asks about a request for proposals (RFP) that went out to providers that could be up to \$8 million. "Are there specific objectives attached to that we should know about?" Kunins laughs, "We are not allowed to talk about the RFP because it has been released, and it could be unfair to people not in this meeting who are potential applicants."

Kunins stresses that for all nonprofit partners, "providing syringe services and other drug use equipment is part of the fabric of what should be considered substance use services" She explains, "The way the syringe services are funded is that San Francisco Aids Foundation is the lead, and they subcontract with GLIDE, Saint James, Homeless Youth Alliance. So, the Friday night shift will be covered either by the San Francisco AIDS Foundation or GLIDE. We're working that out now, but there will not be any loss of services or any funding that will be lost." The Sierra Health Foundation

grant to Saint James will be going away because Saint James is going away, someone reminds Kunins, and there was HEP C funding to Saint James that will also be sunset.

At times the call veers into an almost cult-like anger toward the community. "We very much realize the scrutiny and the evidenced harassment you and all your colleagues are experiencing and I just wanted to acknowledge that," Dr. Jeffrey Hom, Director of Population Behavioral Health for SFPDH says, his voice shaking with anger. Wes Saver, Senior Policy Manager at GLIDE, chimes in, "I really hate that you all have to be so careful with your language around harm reduction — you shouldn't have to make it your job to make other people feel good about being dangerously ignorant and wrong."

Kunins adds, "I've met with a smaller group of you about the language around harm reduction and the challenges that we, that I, am having in government," she tells the group. "That it engenders very strong feelings in describing what that means as a strategy. If you all feel that we have stepped too far back from the term ... I'll say one more thing. I think people coming out and talking about their lived experiences as current or former users goes a long way in reaching the people we need to influence."

Repeatedly, Kunins emphasizes the importance of having "clients" attend meetings and hearings, particularly before city officials, to sway them with their "lived experiences" because it is sometimes more effective than having people hear from nonprofits who receive millions in funding from the department. But Vitka Eisen, CEO of the controversial harm reduction nonprofit HealthRIGHT 360, isn't a fan of that idea.

"Because we take a strong stance against coercive treatment, sometimes I try to use our contract to emphasize that we are motivated by care and not money," she says. "I try to turn it on its

head and say, 'But wouldn't we want that? It would drive more clients to us!' But, of course, that's not what we want because it's not good care and it's unsafe and it doesn't work." Eisen, who went through a 12-step program for her own addiction, tells Kunins that people who speak from lived experience "can be damaging ... dismissive of things that are not 12-step. It can be a challenge."

"As someone who is really outspoken about harm reduction ... harm reduction, harm reduction, harm reduction ... it's really hard to get people to come in and talk about their experience. It's no longer a war on drugs, it's a war on science, and it makes me really crazy," says Lydia Bransten, Executive Director of the Gubbio Project — but her real concern is about money, money, money. "My question is around the opioid settlement funds ... we have in the '23-24 budget \$11,000 set forth for the wellness center and neighborhood security ... can we have a conversation about what is happening there? Are you looking to fund those of us doing the work right now?"

Bransten makes frequent media appearances asking for funding. When a safe consumption site in the Mission she counted on running didn't open in 2023, she took to ABC7 News. "Those are people that are not sitting on the street. These are people who are able to rest But being able to translate that into funding has been really challenging," Bransten told reporter Tara Campbell. "What we really need is ... we need the San Franciscans who think that this organization is a value and that we're doing work that matters and makes a difference for the people living on the street and the community we live in to support us."

Bransten, a previous member of the Gubbio Project's board, agreed to become its new director in 2021, stating she had "enough money in the nonprofit's coffers to survive six months." As of Aug. 10, 2022, Bransten listed a salary for herself of \$80,398 and total salaries and other compensation as \$427,528 — but total revenue was just \$339,326, for revenue less expenses of negative \$152,785.

Toward the end of the call, Jennifer Friedenbach, CEO of the Coalition on Homelessness, offers her two cents and, surprisingly, makes the most sense of anyone. "It would be more effective and efficient to go where people are already receiving services ..." she says, then rambles on about "potential" and "spaces being ignored" and "the political thing is to open a new space" and having "already existing spaces that they should figure out rather than opening new ones, 'especially in light of this current budget situation.'"

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Anderson,
continued from cover

EARLY CALIFORNIA STATEHOOD
AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF BLACK
INDIVIDUALS

This presentation was inspired in part by *Gold Chains: The Hidden History of Slavery in California*, a public education campaign produced by the ACLU of Northern California, one of FOR-SITE's community partners. During this time in history, California decied slavery and gained statehood with the Union as a "free" state. Simultaneously, the state's official government policies allowed the very practices they claimed to be against. As a result, African Americans toiled as slaves in gold mines during the Gold Rush and beyond. During this time of struggle, the successes of Black entrepreneurs, and the experiences of African American Army regiments known as the Buffalo Soldiers created and contributed to cultural, social and political environments. Illustrating these contributions are artists including Akea

Brionne, Demetri Broxon, Adrian L. Burrell, Adam Davis, Cheryl Derricotte, Carla Edwards, Mildred Howard, Sir Isaac Julien CBE, Tiff Massey, Umar Rashid, Trina M. Robinson, Alison Saar, Yinka Shonibare CBE, Bryan Keith Thomas, Cosmo Whyte, Hank Willis Thomas, and the artists of Creativity Explored.

BLACK GOLD HIGHLIGHTS

Artist Trina M. Robinson explores the relationship between memory and migration through film, installation, print media and archival materials. A newly-commissioned 16 millimeter film tells the story of Brigadier General Charles Young (1864-1922) who was born a slave and went on to lead a company of Buffalo Soldiers in San Francisco's Presidio, and became the first Black U.S. National Park Superintendent.

British artist Yinka Shonibare contributed a large-scale sculpture *Man Moving Up* (2022). An adult male burdened by suitcases climbs a golden-railed staircase in a symbol of struggle toward

upward mobility. The figure is also a symbol of renewed place, and seeking an improved home. As a symbol of the Great Migration, Black Americans left the rural South to the North seeking economic and social justice. The Victorian-style costume is a symbol of the Jim Crow era when segregation and economic disenfranchisement placed new challenges on the African American population.

Oakland artist Demetri Broxton's ornate hand-stitched beaded portrait celebrating Black whaling ship captain and Bay Area civic leader William T. Shorey (1859-1919) and his family, his largest textile piece to date, will be on display measuring three feet across by five feet tall. The family portrait floats in front of waves of blue and green beads. Each figure is embellished with cowry shells of a type once used for protection by the Yoruba people of Nigeria and for the purchase of humans during the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Tulsa-based artist Adam Davis will create new tintype portraits during the

run of the exhibition, linking past and present through an early photographic approach popular among Civil War soldiers.

ART IN CONVERSATION
WITH AN HISTORIC SITE

Fort Point National Historic Site was a former military fortification located beneath the south anchorage of the Golden Gate Bridge. The area was constructed to protect San Francisco's harbor from potential naval threats as the region became rich with the discovery of gold. Completed in 1859, the fort never saw active military engagement. Today it is preserved as a part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which is managed by the National Park Service.

"Black Gold: Stories Untold" is exhibiting June 6 – Nov. 22, at the Fort Point National Historic Site, 201 Marine Dr.

Sharon Anderson is an artist and writer in Southern California. She can be reached at mindtheimage.com



Adam Davis. *Jantae Spinks Holding Family Portrait*, Los Angeles, CA, 2021 Tintype on lacquered aluminum. 5 x 4 in. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND FOR-SITE, SAN FRANCISCO



Exhibition curator and FOR-SITE founder Cheryl Haines COURTESY OF FOR-SITE, SAN FRANCISCO PHOTO: JAN STÜRMANN



Fort Point with Golden Gate Bridge above PHOTO: WILL ELDER



Hank Willis Thomas. *Solidarity*, 2023 Patinated bronze. Approximately 86 3/4 x 24 3/4 x 36 3/4 in. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND FOR-SITE, SAN FRANCISCO



Portrait of Brigadier General Charles Young, March 21, 1916 PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Demetri Broxton. *He Who Stands at the Crossroads*, 2024. Japanese & Czech glass beads, sequins, cowrie shells, quartz, brass elements, 24k gold-plated brass, pressed glass, Swarovski crystal, wooden beads, rayon chainette, wool, serigraph printed on Japanese sateen cotton, mounted on birch board. 40 x 15 in. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND PATRICIA SWEETOW GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

From uncertainty to opportunity

BY JENNIFER GOTTLIEB-SHETRIT

THE YEAR BEGAN WITH STRONG activity and renewed momentum across Bay Area real estate, despite persistently high interest rates. A buoyant stock market and optimism surrounding San Francisco’s new mayor Daniel Lurie helped drive robust activity in Q1. Butch Haze, a luxury agent at Compass, described, “There was a euphoria that took place with a new mayor, and it was palpable. January, right out of the gate, was one of the hottest markets we’ve seen in San Francisco in a long time, and yet rates hadn’t changed. We saw the stock market bustling, and it was electric.”

But by April, that momentum quickly shifted due to geopolitical headwinds, with fears over tariffs and stock market volatility affecting buyer confidence. The uncertainty hit the condo market particularly hard. And while turn-key houses in prime neighborhoods continued to attract strong interest, many condos — especially those in downtown high-rises — have struggled. “Buyers can deal with a bad market, and they can deal with a good market — but what they can’t deal with is uncertainty,” said Haze.

DOWNTOWN AND MISSION BAY ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT

Downtown San Francisco has taken some very harsh blows after the pandemic triggered a mass exodus of residents and office workers, leaving behind emptier streets, shuttered storefronts, and rising concerns about rampant crime and drug

use. In the past five years, too many major retailers have pulled out, and commercial vacancy rates soared, creating a ripple effect that drained energy and confidence from the city.

This year, however, there have been signs of promising growth in both San Francisco’s retail and office sectors, bolstered by revitalization efforts from the city and other key stakeholders. Now, a growing segment of influential players and investors are eyeing these opportunities downtown and betting on its long-term future. “I think purchasing downtown is the most exciting real estate opportunity that’s been available in a long time,” said Haze. “The area was so beat up ... but you can already see some of our ultra-high net worth clients investing into Jackson Square. That positive energy is going all through the SOMA area and the East Cut.”

This renewed confidence is bolstered by significant corporate commitments. A recent report by *CRE Daily* noted that quarterly office leasing activity in San Francisco surged to a 10-year high in Q1 2025. Databricks announced a plan for a \$1 billion investment in San Francisco over the next three years, including a new 150,000-square-foot headquarters at One Sansome, according to *SF Chronicle*. Other major players like JPMorgan Chase, Google and Anthropic are also expanding their footprints in the city. Most recently, Coinbase is negotiating a lease for a new 150,000-square-foot headquarters at Mission Rock, marking an emphasis on in-person operations after years of remote work.

Retail is also experiencing a revival. New



STEVE PROEHL/GETTY

flagship stores from Zara and Nintendo are opening in Union Square, and Polo Ralph Lauren is opening in Jackson Square, signaling renewed interest in the city’s commercial corridors. Meanwhile, initiatives like the Vacant to Vibrant program, supported by a \$1 million investment from Wells Fargo, aim to transform empty storefronts into thriving pop-up shops, injecting vitality into downtown streets, according to *Axios San Francisco*.

MISSION BAY’S RESURGENCE

Mission Bay is similarly booming with revived energy, after an influx of new office leasing activity and restaurant openings this year. Once quiet and underdeveloped, the area is home to UCSF and Thrive City and is now quickly becoming a magnet for biotech, AI, and ambitious startups. The explosive growth of AI companies, led by OpenAI’s significant presence, has transformed Mission Bay’s landscape and office vacancy rates. OpenAI’s office policy of requiring in-office attendance five days a week is a bold move and reviving the former trend

of in-office culture for tech employees. According to real estate firm Cushman & Wakefield in the *SF Standard*, the area’s office vacancy rate is 12.2%, significantly lower than the citywide average, and the neighborhood is commanding more than double the price per square foot rate compared to office leases in FiDi and SoMa.

Looking ahead, industry professionals seem optimistic that the market is poised for continued resilience and growth, especially now fueled by the most recent stock market rebound in May. Traditionally, the Bay Area’s real estate market starts to slow down in June but Haze suggests that this year’s summer market may be different. He observed, “I see an amazing adjustment with buyers not being scared off by high interest rates and really understanding that rates are going to come down and there are opportunities right now.”

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Muni Fare Increases as of July 1, 2025 All other fares remain unchanged.

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\$5.70		One-Day Pass (No Cable Car) - Adult (MuniMobile®/Farebox)
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SFMTA.com/Fares

Muni Alert

June 21



Service Changes Start on June 21

5 Fulton, 9 San Bruno and 31 Balboa will turn around on weekdays at Market Street where riders can transfer to buses or trains.

6 Hayes-Parnassus replaces the 6 Haight-Parnassus and 21 Hayes with a new route including portions of each.

Stop and route changes citywide.



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FILM :: Billionaires Behaving Badly

Review: ‘Mountainhead’ scales the modern media machine

BY ERIN MAXWELL

IN AYN RAND’S *THE FOUNTAINHEAD*, architect Howard Roark stands as a symbol of individualism by rejecting conformity in favor of self-reliance, vision, and unshakable determination. But what happens when those ideals are warped? When the drive for power and money eclipses the urge to help the greater good? When one’s self-importance replaces true independence? Then you get *Mountainhead*.

Written and directed by *Succession*’s Jesse Armstrong, HBO’s *Mountainhead* follows four megalomaniacal billionaires who meet up for a boy’s weekend of skiing, poker, and mutual reinforcement in an isolated mountain lodge, when all hell breaks loose in the free world, partially due to circumstances of their own making. Included in the collection of cash-holes are host Hugo “Soup” Van Yalk (Jason Schwartzman), the “Richest Man in the World” Venis (Cory Michael Smith), AI innovator Jeff (Ramy Youssef), and father figure Randall (Steve Carrell).

Venis is a Musk-esque figure with the White House’s ear and the social awareness of a bucket. He owns Traam, a social media platform with 4 billion users, whose latest update has sparked global political unrest due to his inability to regulate its use. The platform’s content tools churn out deepfakes and

fabricated news, flooding the world with misinformation, igniting political chaos, and fueling violent outbreaks on a global scale.

Armstrong takes the already terrifying issue of disinformation and, like Thomas Paine, pushes it to a ludicrous and grim conclusion by handing global influence to sociopathic tycoons. As deepfakes and misinformation spiral, these detached plutocrats watch the chaos unfold through their screens, unable to tell what’s real. While the world burns outside their modernist mountaintop cage, each man schemes for what the others have, whether it’s control over AI, a key investment, or a shot at immortality. And since they have no moral issue with toppling economies or fueling mob violence, turning on one of their own over a business deal is no big leap.

At times, *Mountainhead* comes off as an absurdist riff on Jean-Paul Sartre’s *No Exit* for the Patrick Bateman sect. Overall, the execution as a four-hander plays well due to the tight, rhythmic cadence between the actors as the cast performs like a finely tuned, morally bankrupt machine. Each actor escalates the cartoonish villainy to glorious heights, but there are times when their toxic masculinity and bro-culture mentality become wearisome to watch.

As a group, everyone brings something unique to the Silicon Valley scumbag soirée. Youssef plays the mor-



PHOTOS: HBO

ally conflicted Jeff, while Schwartzman wrestles with the indignity of being the only mere millionaire in the room. Carell shines as the group’s “Papa Bear,” a dying man looking for the answers to immortality. But Smith steals the show as the delightfully unhinged Venis, a pseudo-Elon who cannot comprehend the world he manipulates.

Mountainhead plays like a chilling what-if scenario that uncomfortably closely reflects the state of the modern world: a handful of oligarchs control the technology, which in turn shapes how the public consumes information, giving them unchecked power over society. Their devotion to wealth, influence, and the art of the flex far outweighs any concern for humanity and its future. With the real-world threat of AI looming and the one-percenters tightening their grip, Armstrong makes a compelling case for revolution, populating his story



with loathsome figures who radiate both charm and menace. And while he occasionally pushes their portrayals into near buffoonery, the message remains loud and clear: this is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a fistbump.

“*Mountainhead*” is streaming on HBO Max.

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THE BEST OF BOOKS : Flying off the Shelves

The Marina Books Inc. best sellers

COMPILED BY CHRIS HSIANG

Here is a list of the most popular books sold last month at Books Inc. in the Marina

HARDCOVER FICTION

- 1. **Great Big Beautiful Life**, by Emily Henry
- 2. **James**, by Percival Everett
- 3. **Onyx Storm**, by Rebecca Yarros

HARDCOVER NON-FICTION

- 1. **Abundance**, by Ezra Klein & Derek Thompson
- 2. **Let Them Theory**, by Mel Robbins
- 3. **Notes to John**, by Joan Didion

PAPERBACK FICTION

- 1. **The Ministry of Time**, by Kaliane Bradley
- 2. **Remarkably Bright Creatures**, by Shelby Van Pelt
- 3. **Hello Beautiful**, by Ann Napolitano

PAPERBACK NON-FICTION

- 1. **The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder**, by David Grann
- 2. **Sociopath: A Memoir**, by Patric Gagne
- 3. **Your Brain on Art: How the Arts Transform Us**, by Susan Magsamen & Ivy Ross

YOUNG READERS

Young Adult: **Sunrise on the Reaping**, by Suzanne Collins

Middle Readers: **London Calling: City Spies, vol. 6**, by James Ponti

Picture Book: **San Francisco: A Book of Numbers**, by Ashley Evanson

Kid Graphic Novel: **The Cartoonists Club**, by Raina Telgemeier & Scott McCloud

NEW AND NOTABLE RELEASES

Atmosphere: A Love Story, by Taylor Jenkins Reid

Joan Goodwin has been obsessed with the stars for as long as she can remember. Thoughtful and reserved, Joan is content with her life as a professor of physics and astronomy at Rice University and as aunt to her precocious niece, Frances. That is until she comes across an advertisement seeking the first women scientists to join NASA's space shuttle program. Suddenly, Joan burns to be one of the few people to go to space.

As new astronauts become unlikely friends and prepare for their first flights, Joan finds a passion and a love she never imagined. In this new light, Joan begins to question everything she thinks she knows about her

place in the observable universe.

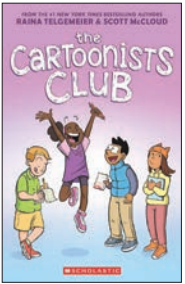
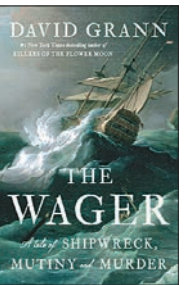
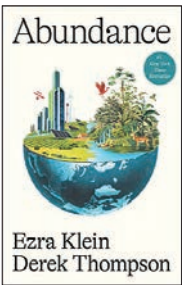
Then, in December of 1984, on mission STS-LR9, it all changes in an instant. Fast-paced, thrilling, and emotional, *Atmosphere* is Taylor Jenkins Reid at her best: transporting readers to iconic times and places, creating complex protagonists, and telling a passionate and soaring story about the transformative power of love — this time among the stars.

Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil, by V.E. Schwab

This is a story about hunger. 1532. Santo Domingo de la Calzada.

A young girl grows up wild and wily — her beauty is only out-matched by her dreams of escape. But María knows she can only ever be a prize, or a pawn, in the games played by men. When an alluring stranger offers an alternate path, María makes a desperate choice. She vows to have no regrets.

This is a story about love. 1827. London. A young woman lives an idyllic but cloistered life on her family's estate until a moment of forbidden intimacy sees her shipped off to London. Charlotte's tender heart and seemingly impossible wishes are swept away by an invitation from a beautiful widow — but the price of freedom is high-



er than she could have imagined.

This is a story about rage. 2019. Boston. College was supposed to be her chance to be someone new. That's why Alice moved halfway across the world, leaving her old life behind. But after an out-of-character one-night stand leaves her questioning her past, her present, and her future, Alice throws herself into the hunt for answers ... and revenge.

Murderland: Crime and Bloodlust in the Time of Serial Killers, by Claire Fraser

Indelibly mapping the lives and careers of Ted Bundy and his infamous peers in mayhem — the Green River Killer, the I-5 Killer, the Night Stalker, the Hillside Strangler, even Charles Manson — Fraser's Northwestern death trip begins to uncover a deeper mystery and an overlap-

ping pattern of environmental destruction. At ground zero in Ted Bundy's Tacoma stood one of the most poisonous lead, copper, and arsenic smelters in the world, but it was hardly unique in the West. As Fraser's investigation inexorably proceeds, evidence mounts that the plumes of these smelters not only sickened and blighted millions of lives but also warped young minds, including some who grew up to become serial killers.

A propulsive nonfiction thriller that transcends true-crime voyeurism and noir mythology, taking readers on a profound quest into the dark heart of the real American berserk.

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TV ∴ Sister Scrutiny

Review: ‘Sirens’ calls forth family dysfunction in a world of wealth

BY ERIN MAXWELL

SISTERS DEVON AND SIMONE DeWitt aren’t exactly close these days. Ever since Simone scored a swanky gig as assistant to Michaela Kell, the activist wife of billionaire Peter Kell, she’s tossed her family on the back burner and effectively shut it off. Living on a luxurious compound surrounded by an army of staff bound by an iron-clad NDA, Simone has long forgotten her struggling sister, their ailing father, and everything having to do with their emotionally wrought upbringing.

Based on Molly Smith Metzler’s play *Elemeno Pea*, Netflix’s *Sirens* is a limited series exploring the complexities of familial bonds and the corrosive effects of privilege. Simone (Milly Alcock) works as a personal assistant to the controlling Michaela (Julianne Moore), spending her days catering to her boss’s every whim and her nights doting on billionaire boyfriend Ethan Corbin II (Glenn Howerton). But on the insular island of Martha’s Vineyard, everything falls under Michaela’s watchful gaze, something that doesn’t sit right with Simone’s estranged sister.

Meghann Fahy plays Devon, a self-sabotaging mess determined to free her sister from Michaela’s grip. During an impromptu visit to the island to confront her sister, ghosts from their past resurface as key figures on the estate get caught in their orbit and pulled into their conflict.

As estranged sisters who reunite in Cape Cod’s bougie cousin for a seaside showdown, Alcock and Fahy share a



PHOTO: NETFLIX

chemistry that creates a portrait of a family shattered by mental illness and addiction. As Devon, the older sister who gave up her independence to raise her baby sister to the best of her abilities, Fahy fully inhabits a woman on the brink: emotionally volatile, impulsive, and burdened by unresolved mental health issues. Alcock portrays Simone as the younger sister on the receiving end of much of that trauma, using her job as a socialite’s assistant as a means to escape. Together, they deliver a compelling portrait of two women shaped by damage, duty, and divergent paths to survival.

The supporting cast is stacked: Moore shines as the ultra-controlling Michaela, while Kevin Bacon plays her husband Peter, a laid-back billionaire who quiet-

ly tolerates his wife’s escalating frenzy. Howerton portrays a wealthy tycoon smitten with Simone despite a notorious history of summer flings. Together, the supporting ensemble adds fuel to the dysfunction surrounding the sisters, deepening an already volatile dynamic.

Despite its powerhouse performances, *Sirens* falters with tonal inconsistencies, veering from absurd comedy to emotional intensity. While it sets out to satirize the ultra-wealthy, the series never fully commits to its dark humor, offering only brief flashes of snark without the follow-through. This inconsistency extends to some of its characters, who feel more like narrative devices than fully realized people. As a result, some characters come off as caricatures,

while the motivations of others are lost in the plot.

Sirens isn’t just a dramedy about the complicated bond between two sisters — it’s a meditation on the fragility of relationships in general: marriage, work, lovers, parenthood, even that high school himbo who lingers past his due date. Though the series has issues concerning tonal shifts and character development, the themes of Metzler’s play remain sharp, relevant, and emotionally resonant. *Sirens* captures the chaos of personal connection, reminding us that even the most dysfunctional relationships are often rooted in love and the hope we can fix what’s broken — even if that broken might prove unfixable.

“Sirens” is streaming on Netflix.

MarinaTimes Pick us up anytime!*

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Dusty Baker played for the Atlanta Braves 1968-1975. PHOTO: LOUIS REQUEUNA/MLB VIA GETTY IMAGES

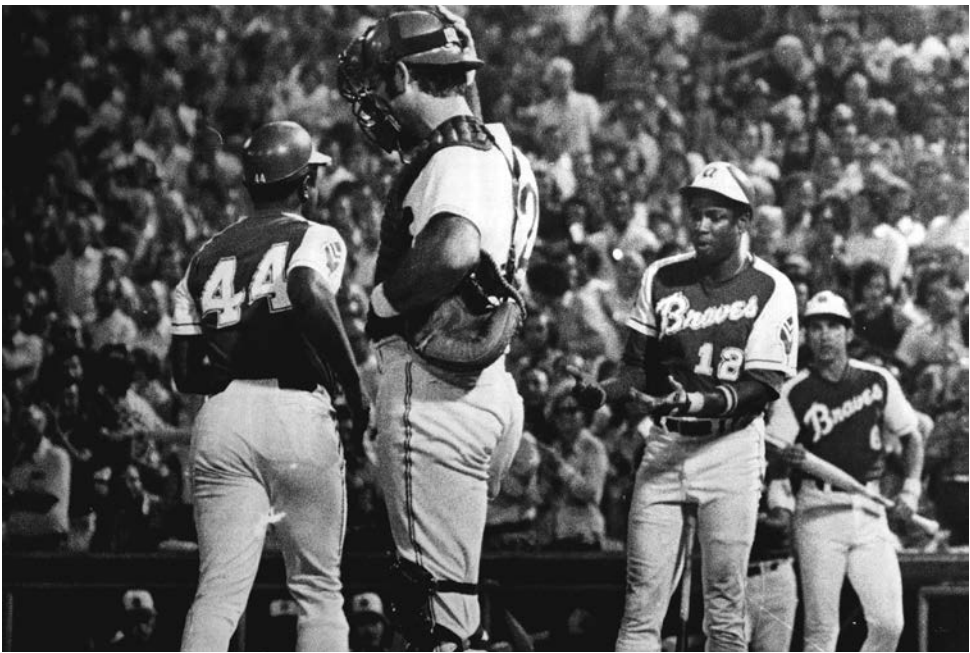
Keller,
continued *from cover page*

out together on the day he signed with them. So then I started rooting for both teams, which isn't easy to do. When our family moved up to Sacramento, that's Giants' country, and I couldn't help being drawn into it, while still keeping a certain rooting interest in the Dodgers."

When the teenaged Baker himself inked his first pro contract with the Atlanta Braves in 1967, it was at the height of the Vietnam War, when popular opinion about it was fading fast while any able-bodied male who wasn't in school was subject to the military draft. "When I signed with the Braves, they

asked me to see one of their executives, an Army veteran, who encouraged me to join the National Guard, so I could be in and out of active duty in six months," Baker recalled. "But those were the days when there was a lot of civic unrest and rallies against the war. And the National Guardsmen were the ones assigned to confront the people with whom I identified. So instead, I joined the Marines and served six years as a mechanic in the reserves."

Juggling his baseball and military schedules was often demanding, but Baker found a way to work things out. "When you join the military, you're on their schedule, so when your unit is called, you go, baseball or no baseball," he related. "Sometimes when I came back



Dusty Baker congratulates Atlanta Braves teammate Hank Aaron after Aaron's 703rd home run, August 17, 1973. PHOTO: SPORTING NEWS VIA GETTY IMAGES



Dusty Baker as a Dodger argues with the umpire after being called out at second base during a game against the Giants on June 29, 1980. PHOTO: ROBERT STINNETT/MEDIANEWS GROUP/OAKLAND TRIBUNE VIA GETTY IMAGES

from my service duty, my baseball skills would be a bit rusty, but fortunately there were players like my roommate Ralph Garr, who helped me get back in the swing of things, so to speak."

Long before his military obligation ended, Baker was well on his way to a magnificent 17-year Major League playing career that stands proudly alongside anyone of his era. Along with his .278 lifetime batting average, he slugged 242 homers, with 1,013 RBI and 137 stolen bases. His prime years were spent with the Braves and Dodgers, including the World Series ring he earned in 1981 with LA.

Toward the tail end, Baker spent the 1984 season in the Giants outfield, batting .292 in 100 games. "It was a fortu-

nate thing for me to play a season back home, where my family, especially my dad, could drive to the game and watch me play," he said. "Plus, it was great to get to play for Frank Robinson as our manager. We didn't win as many games as we wanted to, but it was still a very worthwhile experience. Plus, getting to know (owner) Bob Lurie was a special part of it all."

The hook-up with Lurie would prove to be the most beneficial for Baker in ensuing years. Though he had no way of knowing at the time, his ties to the Giants were just beginning.

Stay tuned for part 2 in the July issue.
Comments: letters@marinatimes.com

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