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MarinaTimes

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2013 in review

Boating billionaires, grumbling grassroots, and a crime-fighting tyke

by john zipperer

WHEN 2012 WAS coming to a close, you might not have been able to predict what was going to happen in 2013. But you would have been safe if you expected the new year's events to unravel according to San Francisco Code.

As we near the end of 2013, a lot of events made our city's headlines and occupied our conversations with friends and neighbors. We learned about one of the biggest sports in the world, and it wasn't soccer. Aaron Peskin reminded us he hadn't gone gentle into that good night. NIMBYism made

itself known on commercial and residential fronts. Residents of one of the richest cities on the face of the planet started complaining about costs of all kinds. And just when we were ready to slap our heads in disgust, a 5-year-old reminded us how to make magic.

In short, it was a year that highlighted all that is stereotypical and irritating about San Francisco, as well as all that is inspiring, and that makes you proud to call the city by the bay home. Let's revisit 2013 before we break out the Champagne for 2014.

America's Cup: One of the oldest competitive sporting events in the world had been underway in various stages for a while

already when January 2013 rolled around, but much of the first half of the year was taken up by complaints about how it had underperformed, scandals and on-bay tragedy, and just who would end up footing the bill for the leftover costs. When the finals finally got underway at the end of summer, even some locals who would rather move to Kansas than root for a bunch of billionaires racing ships on the bay found themselves caught up in the drama of the super-fast and super-dangerous boats and the comeback of the century by Oracle's team. That it all happened on the Marina District's front door — or front dock — made it all the more interesting.

2013, continued on 4



Pint-sized Batman Miles Scott, aka Batkid, brought a grim-faced determination to battling evil in San Francisco and saved the day in more ways than one PHOTO: MAKE-A-WISH GREATER BAY AREA/PAULSAKUMA.COM

@NITE



ARTWORK: S.F. ARTIST NIDHI CHANANI AT WWW.EVERYDAYLOVEART.COM

Have a cool yule in the city

by maryann lorusso

AS THE HOLIDAYS blow into town, so does the frantic holiday rush, starting right after Halloween and not ending until the last pieces of confetti have been swept from the floor on New Year's Day. It's certain that in January, we'll look back and wonder: Where did December go? Where did the year go?

Many of the season's most memorable treats — from eggnog to mistletoe, elf-themed parties to Santa

sightings — don't stick around long after the holidays. So we should enjoy these ephemeral goodies while they're here. Same goes for the festive nightlife that sweeps through San Francisco in December. Here are some of the more fun and festive ways to enjoy your month.

EVERYWHERE YOU GO ...

It's beginning to look a lot like the holidays. The trees are up in Union Square and Ghirardelli Square, and retailers are making every effort to lure you in. The

holiday shopping season kicks off Dec. 7 with the **23rd Annual Union Street Fantasy of Lights** on Union and Fillmore streets, a fun event that includes arts and crafts, caroling and a Santa visit. By now, both Union and Chestnut streets are aglow with lights, meters along Union are transformed into giant candy canes, and validated parking and late shopping hours (most stores won't close until 9 p.m. on weekends) sweeten any visit; additional details are available at unionstreetsf.com.

@NITE, continued on 22

BELLINGHAM BY THE BAY :: Tales of Christmas past

Polka dots for Christmas

by bruce bellingham

IT OCCURRED TO ME the other day how many things from the past always seem to come back. Mostly bad things — T.B. ...yellow fever ... **Tom DeLay**. Some things remain incurable. But it's not all bad. I've noticed how polka dots are back in style. They seem to be everywhere on

the streets of San Francisco. Or perhaps it's just me. I see all sorts of things this time of year — real or not real. "This is what I call White Toyota Syndrome," observed **Keven Guillory**, with whom I worked at KQED radio all those years ago. "That's when you buy a white Toyota, then all you notice are white Toyotas on the roads."

Polka dots are an undying, capricious beauty. They remind me of the old family photos and my mother in her polka-dot dresses, just like the famous movie stars of the World War II era — **Ginger Rogers** ... **Betty Grable** ... **Alice Faye**. Just like the songs from that time, such as, "When the Lights Come on All Over

BELLINGHAM, continued on 6

DISHING :: 'Tis the season

Bûche de Noël:

19th century French holiday cake makes a comeback

by susan dyer reynolds

THE CEREMONIAL BURNING OF A log on winter solstice (the year's darkest day) or, for Christians, on Christmas Eve, is an ancient French tradition purported to date back to Viking times. The log was gargantuan and aged in a way that allowed it to burn through the 12 days of Christmas (Dec. 24 through Jan. 6). Often rubbed with spices of the season, the "Yule log" aroma wafted through the home,



Chocolate hazelnut Bûche de Noël at B. Patisserie PHOTO: LEXI MARINE

a sweet reminder that the warmth of the summer sun would return soon. As the 19th century ended, however, compact cast-iron stoves replaced the grand fireplaces capable of holding the Yule log, and the tradition burned out. Always known for their innovation, French pastry chefs developed a cake called bûche de Noël, which translates

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TOP TEN STEAKS IN AMERICA

- Osso Steakhouse** — 1177 California Street, San Francisco, CA
- Bobo's** — 1450 Lombard, San Francisco, CA
- Peter Luger Steakhouse** — 178 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY
- Bern's Steakhouse** — 1208 South Howard Avenue, Tampa, FL
- CUT** — 9500 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills, CA
- Emeril's Delmonico** — 3355 South Las Vegas Boulevard, Las Vegas, NV
- Mario Batali's Carnevino** — 3325 S. Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV
- Chicago Cut** — 300 North LaSalle, Chicago, IL
- The Precinct** — 311 Delta Avenue, Cincinnati, OH
- Elway's Cherry Creek** — 2500 East First Avenue, Denver, CO



PHOTOS: MISHA BRUK

Osso Steakhouse

IF YOU HAVEN'T been to **Osso Steakhouse** yet, make a reservation today! There is so much to love about the place — great atmosphere, great food, great wine, great cocktails — you'll be happy you did.

The stylish Art Deco-inspired design provides an elegant yet relaxed ambiance. The New York Steak is dry-aged 4-6 weeks for a flavor that is nothing short of a revelation. For the truly hearty, try the three-inch-thick Bone-in New York New York

Empire Steak Building Cut. It's the juiciest, most perfectly marbled beef that has ever been set before you. "It's osso good!"

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Editor's Note

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REYNOLDS RAP ∴ The season of grace

What you can do

Ways to make a difference this holiday season

by susan dyer reynolds

A DAY NEVER WENT by that my mother didn't remind me of how fortunate we were to have our health, a home, each other, and food to eat. She got me into volunteering and donating at a young age: visiting home-bound seniors without family; collecting food and treats for local animal rescues and shelters; bringing toys to the firefighter toy drives for disadvantaged children. "There but for the grace of God go I," she used to say. "Never forget how fortunate you are, and never stop helping those who are less fortunate." Having grown up in the Bay Area, where instant millionaires and billionaires are minted what seems like every day, I am always shocked when I hear that local food banks have empty shelves; that there are home-bound seniors with no one to visit them; that the firefighters don't have enough toys for all the children who want them; or that our city animal shelter is struggling just to keep its doors open.

Donations and volunteers are needed for organizations like Meals on Wheels, the San Francisco Food Bank, and Animal Care and Control all year round, but it's especially tough during the holidays. If you can't volunteer or donate, there are small ways to make a difference. For example, if you shop on Amazon, switch your bookmark to Amazon Smile (www.smile.amazon.com). It works exactly like Amazon's regular website, except that every time you make a purchase, Amazon donates a portion of the purchase price to a charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support (I selected Friends of San Francisco Animal Care and Control), and you can change your charity at any time. If you want to volunteer at or donate to local charitable organizations this holiday season, here are some great ways to do it:

San Francisco Food Bank
Food drop-off: Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
 900 Pennsylvania Ave. (at 23rd)
 Additional food barrel locations citywide

The San Francisco Food Bank especially needs help during the holidays. Just weeks before this Thanksgiving, food banks throughout the Bay Area were severely short of turkeys (the food banks of San Francisco and Marin alone were short 1,800 turkeys), and they will likely be short for Christmas,

too. Donate turkeys, hams, or other holiday meal staples individually, with your family, or by initiating a company-wide donation drive where you work. Cash donations go a long way: For every dollar, the food bank can distribute \$6 worth of food. They also welcome you and your family to volunteer. Their website has a section entitled "7 Ways to Give This Holiday Season"; learn how you can help by visiting www.sffoodbank.org or by calling 415-282-1900.

Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly
Visits: Wednesday, Dec. 25
Gift drop-off: Mon-Fri thru Dec. 18, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
 909 Hyde Street, Ste. 628

Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly always needs volunteers to help prepare, pack, and deliver meals and gifts to over 800 isolated elders living with no support from friends or family who otherwise would be alone for the holidays. Families can make visits together. Please consider a Safeway or Walgreen's gift card (these will be included in the gift bags volunteers bring for the Christmas Day In-Home Visits event). Other non-gender-specific gifts are also welcomed (such as new small fleece blankets, 2014 calendars, and unopened boxes of chocolate). For more information on gift donations, visit www.littlebrotherssf.org/holiday-donations; for more on holiday in-home visits, visit <http://littlebrotherssf.org/volunteer-for-christmas> or by calling 415-771-7957.

Meals On Wheels
Ongoing
 1375 Fairfax Ave.
 (near Mendell)

Meals On Wheels feeds more than 2,000 seniors year round, and they always need donations and volunteers to make this possible. Delivery Assistant volunteers accompany staff drivers, visiting clients, helping with parking, and generally supporting drivers and clients to help ensure that each senior receives a friendly check-in along with meals. In partnership with the SF Food Bank, they also deliver groceries to seniors who have the means to prepare some of their own meals but need help with getting fresh food. Home Delivered Groceries volunteers bring these bags and a friendly smile to seniors. To become a Food Delivery Volunteer during the holidays or any time of the year, contact Danie Belfield

at dbelfield@mowsf.org or 415-343-1311.

Pet Food Express
Through Dec. 29
 All stores

The annual Giving Tree fundraiser provides toys and financial aid to dozens of Northern California shelters during the holidays. Last year, Pet Food Express raised more than \$80,000 for lonely dogs and cats in shelters. It's very stressful being in a shelter, and toys and treats are a great way to calm down animals while they wait to be adopted. Just buy a Kong toy or Zuke's treat to donate or make a monetary donation at any Pet Food Express store between now and Dec. 29 (and to say thanks, Pet Food Express will give you a coupon to use while shopping for your furry family members during January 2014). For more information, visit www.petfoodexpress.com/giving-back/annual-giving-tree

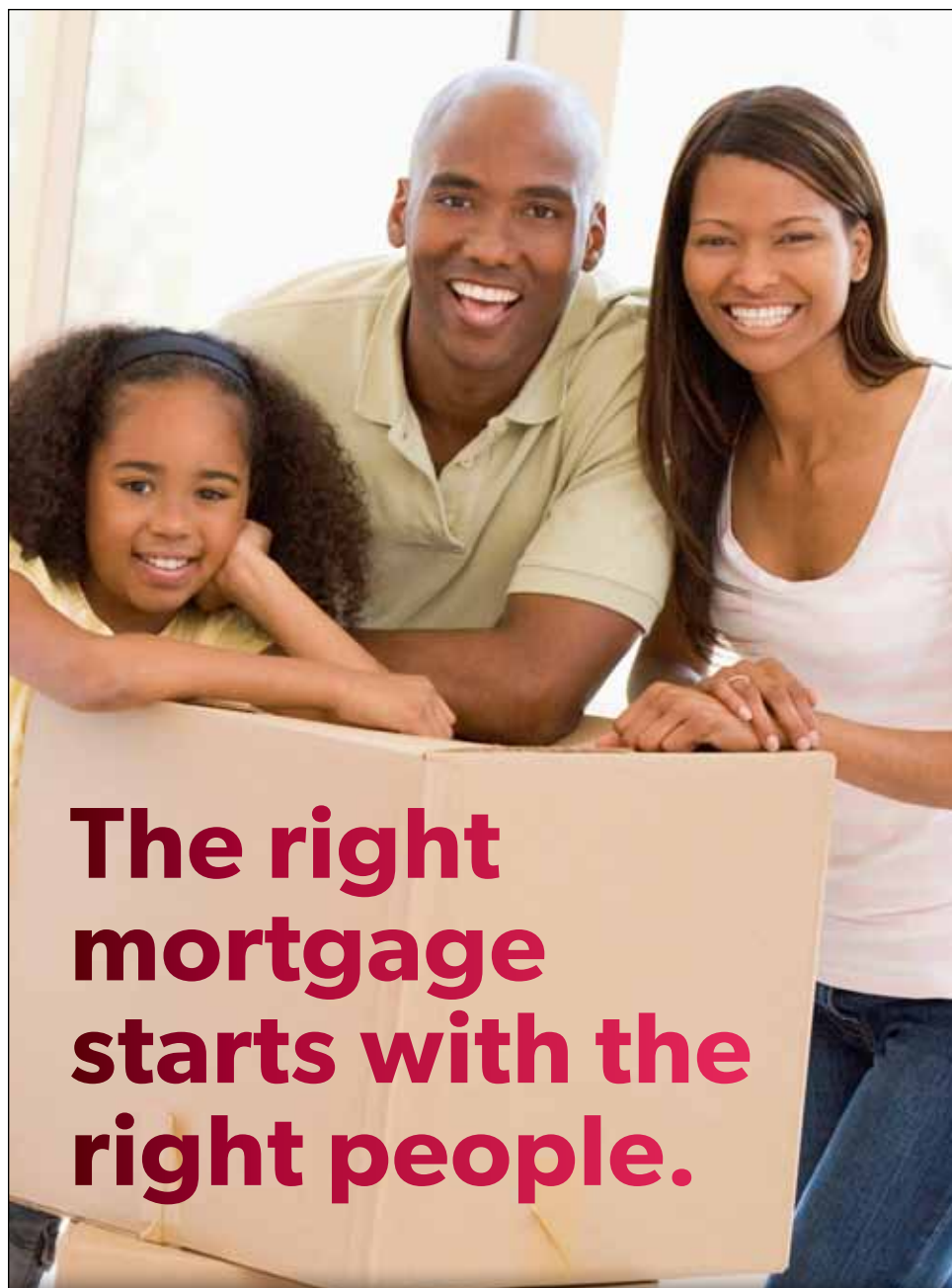
Tenderloin Tessie
Wednesday, Dec 25, 1-4 p.m.
 First Unitarian Church
 (Franklin & Geary Sts.)

For over 35 years, Tenderloin Tessie Holiday Dinners has fed the elderly, disabled, low-income families, the homeless, and anyone who doesn't have a place to go on holidays, and especially needs volunteers to help prepare and serve on Christmas. For more information call Michael Gagne, 415-584-3252, or visit www.tenderlointessie.com

S.F. Firefighter's Toy Program
Ongoing
 Any S.F. firehouse
 Additional drop-off locations on Union Street thru December

The San Francisco Firefighters Toy Program believes that no child should be without a toy during the holiday season, and donations of new unwrapped toys are graciously accepted throughout the year at any San Francisco firehouse. Since 1949, it has evolved from a few firefighters repairing broken toys and bikes for 15 families to 300 firefighters and friends volunteering their time to distribute over 200,000 toys to more than 40,000 disadvantaged children. The Toy Program also serves many community organizations, including shelters for abused women and children, inner-city schools, children's cancer wards, and pediatric AIDS units. For more information, call 415-777-0440 or visit www.sffirefighterstoys.org

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NEWS BRIEFS : Scammers, George Lucas's Crissy plan, Nike's popularity, Pagoda suit, TEP hearing

FAKE PG&E CALLS

The Lombard Business Merchants Association (LBMA) warns that Marina merchants have been targeted in a scam trying to trick them into giving credit information. A caller claiming to be from PG&E informs the merchants that their payment is due and their power will be turned off immediately if they don't make a payment. In an alert to LBMA members, the association's president, Awadalla Awadalla, notes that "It's a scam" because "PG&E usually send[s] a 7 days notice before they turn off your power."

Anyone who receives such a call and thinks it might be a real PG&E communication should hang up, look up PG&E's customer service number on a recent bill, and call the company directly to check.

THE STARS LINE UP FOR LUCAS

The Presidio Trust surprised many in November when it gave all three candidates for the development of Crissy Field

until January to make changes to their proposals. This has left some of the people making proposals feeling wrong-footed by the board.

George Lucas certainly has name recognition, but is it enough to win the votes of the Presidio Trust? The Trust and Board members have been interviewing the finalists as well as community leaders and residents to decide how best to develop the spot in northwest San Francisco with the spectacular view of the bay and Golden Gate Bridge.

Lucas' bid added to its momentum when investor Ron Conway e-mailed the Presidio Trust expressing his support. There were more than 30 co-signers of his letter, including Pixar's John Lasseter; the founders of Salesforce, Eventbrite, Yammer, and Twitter; Steve Jobs' widow; Joe Montana; and MC Hammer.

Lucas would be required to make some costly architectural changes, which does not appear to be a deal breaker. If he is chosen, a Trust official stated that they

hoped to utilize the plans of the remaining two finalists somewhere in the Presidio.

Lucas has said he will take his museum to Chicago if the Trust rejects it.

NEW NEIGHBOR NIKE?

Sports retailer Nike's hopes to open a new store at 2071 Union Street got a boost in November when the Union Street Association (USA) surveyed its members and found overwhelming response to "Just do it." More than 80 percent of the association's respondents to the survey were in favor and only 3.2 percent were opposed, while about 15 percent had no opinion.

Nike must get approval under San Francisco's Formula Retail category designed to inhibit chain stores in the City, and it has been going through the required actions, including neighborhood notifications and outreach meetings. In October, the retailer gave a presentation to a meeting of USA. USA reports that it will be issuing a letter of support for Nike.

CENTRAL SUBWAY LAWSUIT

SaveNorthBeachVillage.org and NoNorthBeachDig.org on Nov. 1 filed a federal lawsuit against the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), attempting to stop the use of the old Pagoda Theater as the extraction point for the boring machines creating the tunnels for the new Central Subway.

TEP PUBLIC HEARING

The *Marina Times* has been reporting throughout the year about SFMTA's Transit Effectiveness Project, which is working on ways to improve transportation within the City. If you have questions about the plans or are unsure if they will affect you, SFMTA will hold an informational public hearing at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3, at City Hall (Room 400).

You can also view a live feed of the hearing at www.sfgovtv.org.

Send news tips to editor@marinatimes.com

2013 CONTINUED from page 1

Cost of living: Even with low inflation, everything costs more these days. But San Franciscans felt a mixture of bewilderment, pride, fear, and greed this year as they watched housing prices reach record levels. People who could afford to buy a house often couldn't do so, either being outbid by all-cash buyers or simply unable to find anything in the City's teeny

inventory. Rents, too, began to remind us that this is the original gold-rush town. An inaccessible ownership market, combined with \$3,500 one-bedroom rentals, plus a spike

in Ellis Act evictions finally led some city leaders at the end of the year to attempt to mitigate the pain felt by some in the current bull market. Though housing prices have begun to moderate, they remain at stratospheric levels, making this certain to be an even bigger story in 2014.

8 Washington: Look no further than this Embarcadero project for an example of San Francisco's odd mix of rich people passing as tribunes of the poor plus referenda run amok plus Aaron Peskin trying to rule from the political grave. In November, the citizens of San Francisco defeated

Propositions B & C, measures that would have supported a condo project for rich people on the waterfront that upset other rich people in waterfront condos. The voters dealt a landslide rejection to high-profile supporters of the propositions, including District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell as well as Mayor Ed Lee and former Mayor Gavin Newsom. Other high-rise condo projects are certain to go up in this hot city still in the midst of a tech gold rush, but they'll

officials trying to distance themselves from what had seemed like such a simple little thing. Again: This isn't over.

Toasted: Along with real estate sticker shock, San Franciscans found themselves in the national news when Venture Beat's J. O'Dell complained about being charged \$4 for toast at The Mill. O'Dell blames the influx of well-paid tech workers for a situation in which "San Francisco becomes saturated with overpriced crap that is com-

parable in quality to less overpriced crap." The self-described Courage Campaign put its courage into action and created a petition urging Mayor Lee to "stop catering to the 1

percent" and stand up for affordability. Yet as "Kenton Kivestu" commented on quibb.com about O'Dell's manifesto, "This seemed like an article that took 2 random facts 'Hey, tech is hot right now!' and 'This place sells \$4 toast' and wrote a story out of them." Fair or not, the fact that it resonated so strongly with so many means that either the city will begin to offer affordable housing on a large scale or it will find a way to produce \$3 toast.

Pet Food Express loss: A multi-year effort to bring a Pet Food Express and a cat adoption center to a long-empty Lombard location was finally put to rest this year when city planners rejected the company's request for the second time, despite the endorsement of city planning staff. Local opponents of the project got their way and a storefront remains vacant (though we hear than may be changing — stay tuned). "Of course we will continue to support the animals of San Francisco, but future job and tax dollar growth from new stores will have to wait for a major change in city government." Pet Food Express co-owner Michael Levy told the *Marina Times*. "We need more legislators like Supervisor Scott Weiner who truly care about and support this city's animals."

Polk Street: A long in-development plan to expand biking on

Other high-rise condominium projects will be built near less well-heeled opponents.

probably be built near less well-heeled opponents.

Marina Green restaurant: The plan by the Recreation and Park Department to put a seafood restaurant in the place of a long-unused Naval building on the Marina Green had neighbors upset at the plan for alcohol-fueled noise near their front yards, Marina residents fearing their neighborhood would become a new Fisherman's Wharf, local community associations conducting damage control after first getting little feedback and then getting walloped with a ton of feedback from angry neighbors, and city



The America's Cup rode waves of hopes and criticism throughout the year in San Francisco PHOTO: COURTESY 2012 GUILAIN GRENIER/ORACLE TEAM USA

crowded Polk Street ran into the proverbial fan when local businesses and residents worried about the loss of parking on the busy commercial street. City planners adopted a bit of humility and adjusted their plans to address as many concerns as possible, so the project continues to move forward.

Shutdown: Though the federal government's partial shutdown was a made-in-Washington fiasco, its effects were felt here in San Francisco and the Northside, where even private companies catering to Alcatraz tourists were forced to trim staff when the popular prison attraction was closed. The shutdown overall made people wonder about Washington's dysfunction and the values that reign there. Then the year righted itself with:

Batkid: Hardcore conservatives used to put a negative spin on "San Francisco values," as if everyone in the city was a sex-crazed fiend

out to sell drugs and raise taxes or something. Then in November, Miles Scott, a 5-year-old boy who had battled leukemia since he was 18 months old, got to play Batman on the real streets of San Francisco, complete with a call for help from S.F. Police Chief Greg Suhr, a ride in a cool Batmobile, a damsel in distress tied to a fake bomb, an indictment against the Riddler and the Penguin from the federal attorney for this district, a rescue of the Giants' mascot, the key to the city from Mayor Ed Lee, thanks from President Barack Obama, and the streets lined with thousands of well wishers — including well-paid tech workers, underpaid service employees, government staffers, and all of the other people in the mosaic of this city, demonstrating our real San Francisco values.

E-mail: john@marinatimes.com

TIMES TRAVELERS : Machu Picchu



Terri Thornton and husband Jeffery Roloff brought along some good reading material for their visit to Machu Picchu PHOTO: COURTESY TERRI THORNTON



AMBIANCE



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BELLINGHAM

CONTINUED from page 1

the World.” They have an indefatigable lyrical bravura.

“I love to wear polka dots,” says **Jane Bartlett**, a young attorney who was watching football on the telly at McTeague’s Saloon on Polk (not polka dot) Street. “Polka dots just cheer me up.” Gawd knows we can use some cheering up.

By the way, there’s a great photo of **Bob Dylan**, **Michael McClure**, and **Allen Ginsberg** hanging in City Lights Books, home of the Beats, the non-Beats, and the post-Beats who never really wanted to be Beat in the first place. In the picture, Dylan is wearing the coolest polka-dot shirt from **Paul Sargent’s** Greenwich Village. ... Gosh, nostalgia is claiming my soul. ... In my days as a kid in the Village, I met some great people. Richie Havens was one of them. He died the other day. He was a different sort of musician — a black man who was also a folkie. He stole the show at Woodstock. Another great fixture of the Village was Lou Reed of the Velvet Underground. He died at the age of 71. The loss of Lou, a real genius, is incalculable.

I have traded the Village for the Marina, Pacific Heights, Nob Hill even, and the Tenderloin — part of the great San Francisco segmentation. Walk five blocks, and you’re in another world. I heard a tour guide on a double-decker bus the other day. He advised the tourists, “Always avoid the hills in San Francisco. Try to walk around them instead.” Either he was kidding or, as **Herb Caen** would say, he is clearly “unclear on the concept.” The Loin is an interesting territory. It makes the rowdy East Village of New York look like Disneyland. “I love the Tenderloin,” says **Herb Gold**, the most famous and enduring writer on Russian Hill. “I lived there for a while. There were always great stories that I collected. Made a nice piece for the *New York Times*.” ... Oh yes, there are many stories from the Tenderloin, but many of them are not printable — certainly not for the faint-hearted. Like Calcutta, much of life in the Loin is played out in the street. Everything is for sale. Yet, many families are growing in the Tenderloin, amid the maelstrom, and there is a great sense of people looking out for each other.

The people at the downtown Senior Center and the kids at the Tenderloin School painted an elaborate cityscape mural on O’Farrell and Jones, a terrific neighborhood project. The venerable Christian Science Church next door soon will be demolished to make way for condos, an all-too familiar San Francisco story.

One of San Francisco’s best portrait artists is **Jack Keating**. His many faces are appearing at Chow Restaurant on Castro & Market. Thanks to Jack, I now know what **Pearl S. Buck** looked like. I’m sure that Ms. Buck, author of *The Good Earth*,

would be grateful. Jack’s spot-on portrait of **Oscar Wilde** has permanent residence at O’Reilly’s Pub on Green Street in North Beach.

Kept Rawls, the splashy doyenne of California Street, was a little nervous about a hip replacement, but she’s fine. Hep Kep will always be hip, and will be dancing better than ever. I never asked her about polka dots, but I think I’ll let it go at that. Otherwise, I may be stooping to three-polka-dot journalism. Knock it off, Bruce. ...

Michael Feinstein will be headlining at his own club in the Hotel Nikko on New Year’s Eve. Over the years, Michael has recorded some terrific tunes from the Great American Songbook. (After all, he was the protégé of **Ira Gershwin**.) One of my faves is a song by Burton Lane: “I look in your eyes, and suddenly it’s Christmas ...” Yes, Jews can celebrate the Christian holiday, too. Sorry to tell you, Governor Palin, but there is no war on Christmas. Sure, some are unhappy with the commercial exploitation of the holiday — and even the political manipulation of the holiday. But few people want to obliterate Christmas altogether, as **Sarah Palin** suggests. She says it’s a plot launched by “angry atheists.” I could never be an atheist. There are no holidays. And who would hate Christmas? That’s like hating ice cream or the Beatles. Impossible.

Again, the soft, white holiday lights adorn the trees in Huntington Park. The Girls Chorus angelically performs carols, singing about mankind’s hopes and fears. The clerics and the politicians offer conciliatory words of advice on how to remain calm in a turbulent world. The gurgling fountain with the marble turtles remains a fixed point in an ever-changing city. Silhouetted away from the crowd and the rituals of this night, near Sacramento Street, is that couple I’ve noticed over the years. Showing little decorum, I shamelessly strain to hear what they say to each other.

With her hand in his, she murmurs, “Will this be a good Christmas?”

“The best,” he says quietly. “When I look in your eyes, it’s always Christmas, my sweet.”

“Will next year be better?”

“I am sure of it,” he replies. “Besides, you’re wearing polka dots. That’s a good omen. We can’t lose now.”

Polka dots for Christmas. That’s a cheerful notion, I think to myself. The night — with its music and the lights — is breezy but mild. The lantern at the entrance of the Pacific Union Club creaks and groans in the wind. Some say the spirits of broken-hearted lovers haunt the park. It’s a good time to be in love. I walk off Nob Hill somewhat restored. And it’s a good time to be hopeful. Hope, **Maurice Kanbar** reminds me, is the most important thing we have. I hope you have a grand holiday. ...

Bruce Bellingham is the author of Bellingham by the Bay. Find him at bruce@marinatimes.com.

A North Beach squabble boils and roils

by ernest beyl

I KNOW READERS OF MY “Sketches from a North Beach Journal” column are eager for an update of the very public squabble between that pugnacious, would-be Mother Superior of Vallejo Street — Angela Alioto — and the good Fathers of the Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi (same street). The fist fight between Church and Angela-State spilled over onto the Op-Ed pages of the *Chronicle* recently and now the august *Chronicle* reporter Carl Nolte has weighed in

with a recent Sunday piece detailing the beef over who is really in charge of the Shrine’s Porsioncola, a replica of St. Francis’s chapel in Assisi. Angela says she and her self-created Knights of St. Francis are. But the Capuchin Franciscan Fathers believe they are and say that St. Francis is on their side.

Angela has promised to carry the squabble all the way to the Vatican. She says she will go to Rome to talk to Pope Francis about this. Seems like much ado about very little. My hope is that this doesn’t side-

track the long-awaited Piazza St. Francis — or Poets Plaza — on that short stretch of Vallejo between Upper Grant Avenue and Columbus envisioned by Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

The smart money is on St. Francis and his team. As I postulated in an earlier column, St. Francis probably doesn’t really care what the pedestrian Piazza St. Francis-Poets Plaza is called. Let’s go with Lawrence Ferlinghetti’s Poets Plaza; St. Francis won’t mind.

E-mail: ernest@marinatimes.com

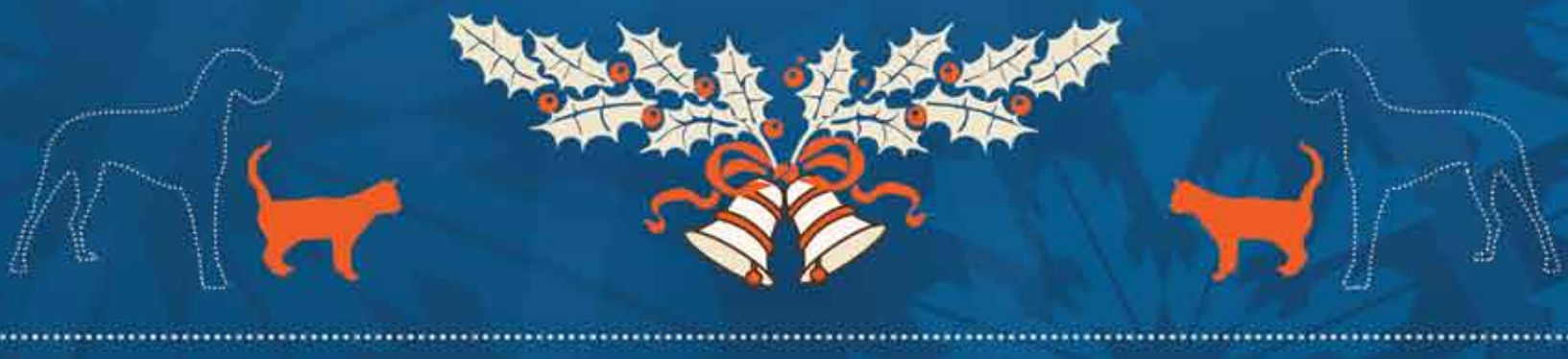


HAPPY HOLIDAYS



May Your Pets be
Happy, Healthy and Safe
This Holiday Season

VipPetCare.com



POLICE BLOTTER : From the Officers of Northern Station

Crime on the beat

The crimes below are a small snapshot of what the officers of Northern Station are doing. For a more comprehensive list, visit www.sf-police.org; under Compstat, there is a link to CrimeMAPS.

THE LIMITS OF SOVEREIGNTY
Friday, Sept. 20, 9:15 p.m.
 Fulton and Gough Streets

In response to a call about an “aggressive” male subject trespassing in an apartment building, officers arrived and learned that the subject had previously been removed from the premises but continued to return and try to enter locked apartments. This had been going on for four days.

The subject was immediately confrontational with the officers, and he refused to show them his hands or submit to being handcuffed. When the officers tried to pat search him for weapons, the subject began to flail his arms around before the officers could get ahold of both. He began screaming, “I’m a Moorish sovereign citizen — I’m a free man,” and he lifted his legs, forcing the officers to hold him up. The officers finally got him handcuffed and called an ambulance to come and evaluate him.

The apartment property’s security personnel signed a citizen’s arrest for trespassing and battery. Due to the likelihood of his repeating the trespass-

ing offence, the subject was booked at Northern Station.

TWO DRIVERS, TWO DUI VIOLATIONS
Saturday, Sept. 21, 10:57 p.m. and 2:35 a.m.
 Broadway and Larkin Streets, Van Ness Avenue and Chestnut Street

When officers arrived at the scene of a non-injury accident, they discovered the driver at fault for causing the accident might have been under the influence of alcohol. Removing him from his vehicle, they needed to hold him up to prevent him from falling down. The driver was unable to perform sobriety field tests, and the officers observed numerous signs and symptoms of alcohol intoxication, and arrested the subject. He refused to submit to a blood or breath test; he surrendered his license and driving privileges. He was cited and released to his nephew at Northern Station.

Just a few hours later, patrol officers observed a female driver throw a lit cigarette into the street, a violation in itself. They pulled over the vehicle to issue a citation, and when an officer asked for her California license and proof of insurance, she handed the officer a receipt for auto repairs and said she didn’t have her license on her. The officers smelled a strong odor of alcohol from inside the vehicle, and the driver spoke in a slow

mumbling tone when she told them she hadn’t been drinking. She told them, “I’m driving home from home.” She performed unsatisfactorily on field sobriety tests, and was booked at Northern Station.

WAKE ME WHEN WE GET THERE
Sunday, Sept. 22, 3:40 a.m.
 1125 Fillmore Street

A cab driver came into Northern Police Station to request assistance removing a drunken passenger who had passed out in the rear of his cab. The officer on front counter duty attempted to remove the subject who was in a deep sleep in the back seat, but the subject refused to move. There was an overpowering smell of alcohol in the back of the cab.

Finally successful in removing the subject, the officer attempted to sit him down on the sidewalk, but the subject veered into the roadway and the officer had to grab him to prevent him from walking into moving traffic. The subject became aggressive and took a swing at the officer. The cab driver tried to assist the officer and was bitten on the arm by the subject. Several officers arrived and assisted taking the subject into custody; he was handcuffed and later booked at County Jail.

I’M JUST WAITING ON A FRIEND
Wednesday, Sept. 25, 8:47 a.m.
 Ivy and Buchanan Streets

An Onstar employee reported the location of a car that had been reported stolen and was being tracked. Following the updates from the Onstar contact,

officers soon located the vehicle and removed its two occupants without incident. As the female subject exited the car, officers saw a key fall to the ground from the area of her lap; they determined that the key belonged to the stolen car.

The driver said that she didn’t steal the car; she said she was simply sitting in the driver’s seat until her friend returned from the liquor store. They were in the car to smoke marijuana and hang out; she said she had no idea the car was stolen.

The officers found burglary tools, stolen property, miscellaneous pills, and marijuana in the car. They field tested the drugs with positive results. The subjects were booked at County jail.

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY
Tuesday, Oct. 1, 1:03 p.m.
 Fillmore and Hayes Streets

Officers pulled over a vehicle with expired registration and issued a citation to the driver. The rear seat passenger told officers that he was currently on probation, which allows officers to search him and any vehicles associated with him without a warrant. The occupants were removed and the vehicle searched. In the back seat, they found a removable area of the seat cushion, under which they discovered several baggies of methamphetamine. The subject told officers the drugs belonged to him, and a field test of the drugs was positive. The subject was arrested. During a booking search of the subject, officers found in his pockets items commonly used by auto burglars.



Save the Marina Green!

- Preserve our Open Public Shoreline
- No Alcohol in Public Playgrounds
- Raze the Degaussing Station
- Restore the Open Shoreline
- Keep the Marina Green Pristine
- No Restaurant on the Green
- No Commercialization of the Green
- Prevent another Fisherman’s Wharf
- Violates SF General Plan & City Charter
- Voice Your Opposition

Call and write all Supervisors, the Mayor and the Rec & Park Commission
 Contact information available at www.SaveMarinaGreen.org

Marina Green Restaurant Opposed By:

- MAYOR ED LEE**, the Ronn Owens Show, KGO, January 31, 2013
- GAVIN NEWSOM**, Lt. Governor and Former Mayor, the Ronn Owens Show, KGO Feb 6, 2013
- ANGELA ALIOTO**, Former Board of Supervisors President
- RYAN SCOTT**, Cooking with Ryan Scott, KGO, February 16, 2013

- MARINA CIVIC IMPROVEMENT & PROPERTY OWNERS ASSN.**
- MARINA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**
- COALITION FOR SF NEIGHBORHOODS**, comprising 48 neighborhood organizations
- MAJORITY OF MARINA RESIDENTS**

Find out more and sign our petition at www.SaveMarinaGreen.org

Looking back: the year in review

by supervisor mark farrell

IT'S DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE that the New Year is almost upon us. For this month's article, I want to provide a "Year in Review" of the major legislative actions and projects that our office prioritized in 2013.

CPMC REBUILD

After a failed attempt to approve California Pacific Medical Center's (CPMC) plans to build a 555-bed hospital at the corner of Van Ness and Geary last summer, I joined two of my Board of Supervisors colleagues and entered into about five months of intense negotiations with CPMC and reached a deal in March of this year.

In District 2, CPMC will build a brand-new, 274-bed hospital at the former Cathedral Hill Hotel site on Van Ness Avenue. This state of the art facility will be CPMC's flagship facility in San Francisco and will provide incredible access to modern health care for all San Franciscans. Construction is estimated to take approximately five years, and we broke ground on the project on October 29, 2013.

Upon completion of the Cathedral site, CPMC will convert the existing Pacific Campus

in Pacific Heights to an outpatient medical facility, and ultimately sell the California Campus. I have worked with CPMC and the neighborhood to ensure traffic patterns are addressed and the Pacific campus is renovated in cooperation with local neighbors and the surrounding communities, and ensured the surrounding neighborhoods have significant impact on what type of facility ultimately replaces the California Campus.

PASSING UNANIMOUS BUDGET

Serving as chair of the Budget & Finance Committee was one of the highlights this past year. In a consensus-building process, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a balanced budget for fiscal years 2013-14 and 2014-15. Through our work in the committee, we found significant savings and reallocated those dollars for workforce training, social services, parks and open spaces, children and family services, and infrastructure.

The budget definitely reflected the priorities and values of both the mayor and the Board of Supervisors — but most importantly of San Francisco. With those savings we were able to add a half-dozen new gardeners for our city's parks, open a new Recreation and

Parks clubhouse in every district, add \$2 million in direct children services and another \$2 million in workforce training programs, plus much more.

Perhaps the best part of this was the fact that we were able to find savings and add services while still adding a record amount of funds into our city's budget reserves to protect against the next economic downturn.

HEALTH-CARE LIABILITY

Thanks to the overwhelming support of San Francisco's voters, we were able to pass Proposition A this November — a charter amendment that I placed on the ballot to solve our city's \$4.4 billion unfunded retiree health-care liability.

In November 2012, our controller's office issued a report that benchmarked San Francisco's current unfunded health-care liability at \$4.4 billion. The \$4.4 billion liability represents the future cost of providing retiree health-care benefits earned by current employees and retirees. Like many major cities, San Francisco's liability, which breaks down to \$13,487 per household, is funded on a pay-as-you-go basis out of the general fund, and less than one percent of the \$4.4 billion tab has been saved.

With the passage of Proposition A, San Francisco is poised to become, believe it or not, one of the most fiscally responsible cities in the nation by addressing both pension and retiree health-care liabilities through the initiative process. We will wipe out San Francisco's \$4.4 billion liability in approximately 30 years, without requiring any additional concessions from employees or requiring any reduction in benefits. We're simply requiring strict fiscal discipline at City Hall, so that we responsibly manage and plan for our City's financial future.

FREE WIFI

Back in May, after over two years of negotiations, I announced a generous gift from Google to provide free Wi-Fi to 31 parks, plazas, and open spaces across San Francisco. This will further cement San Francisco's role as a national leader in creating technologically driven solutions to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Free Wi-Fi service will have a number of positive benefits and implications: it will further close the digital divide in communities where Internet access is limited, increase government efficiency by providing our Recreation and

Park staff with more tools to more effectively manage their recreation centers and community programs, and enable organizations that serve our youth, seniors, and populations with no Internet access to further enhance their programs' effectiveness and outcomes.

The Free Wi-Fi project is set to go through the legislative process through the end of this year and the beginning of next year, with expected installation at the sites to begin in the Spring of 2014.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2014

We have a number of big projects for next year. Topping the list includes legislation to foster middle-income housing production and address the affordability crisis San Francisco is experiencing, enacting data-driven solutions to solve chronic homelessness, pushing environmental policies that help property owners make energy efficient upgrades to their homes, and focusing on my re-election efforts to continue representing District 2 on the Board of Supervisors.

We're extremely proud of the work we were able to accomplish this year and look forward to making 2014 another successful year.

Happy holidays to you and your family!

Seasons Greetings

from the members of the

Marina Merchants Association



Wishing you and yours a Happy Holiday!

Thank you for shopping the Marina and visit our website at www.themarinastf.com for holiday deals and events.

Come Celebrate the Season

Union Street Fantasy of Lights

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION Sat., Dec 7th ~ 3pm-7pm
FREE Entertainment Throughout Union Street!
 *Carriage & Pony Rides *Face Painting *Jugglers *Singers *Balloon Animals
 *Meet the Snow Queen *Cupcake Decorating *Costumed Characters

SANTA Arrives At 5:30 pm ~ 2071 Union Street
 Bring a Toy & Benefit SF Firefighters Toy Program!

UGLY/CREATIVE SWEATER CONTEST, Sat. Dec. 21, 2-4pm, 2071 Union St.

FANTASY OF LIGHTS CELEBRATION THROUGH DECEMBER
 *Caroling Stroll, Sat. Dec. 21, 1pm at St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church, 2325 Union St!
 *Bring **Food & Warm Coats** to 2071 Union St!
 *Donations accepted for Philippines Typhoon Relief Fund!
 *Merchant Open House Fri & Sat Evenings & Validated Parking!
 *Visit the **Online Union Street Holiday Calendar** to see daily activities, specials and treats!
 *Receive **Union Street Holiday Dollars** from Santa and his Elf Saturdays, 1-4!
 *Enjoy **Shopping and Dining** Under the Sparkling Holiday Lights!

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 Presented by The Union Street Association



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 4th Street. Berkeley 510-526-7766 | 356 Santana Row. San Jose 408-249-4800

NORTHSIDER :: Ending the year on a high note



Spa Radiance shows off its renovated reception area PHOTO: LANCE SKUNDRICH

Light 'em up

by john zipperer

HOLIDAY UNION STREET TREATS

In some climes, December holidays are a time for snowmen and snow forts — snow being the operative element. But in San Francisco's Northside, we're spared the cold fluffy stuff and instead highlight Christmas and other end-of-year holidays with beautiful light shows on display at homes and businesses. Union Street has been hard at work making plans to take its annual display of lighted buildings to the next level this year. Head over to Union Street on Dec. 7 from 3-7 p.m. for the kickoff of the 23rd Annual Union Street Fantasy of Lights celebration.

In addition to appearances by Santa Claus and his helpful elves, there will be jugglers, ponies gussied up as reindeer, face painters, balloon artists, costumed characters, singers, and other live entertainment.

From 3-5 p.m., you can decorate a cupcake at the Cudworth mansion (2040 Union St.), but you'll want to be sure to be finished (and have wiped the frosting off your face) by 5:30 when Santa arrives and sits for photos until 7 p.m.

And in classic holiday spirit, Union Street businesses are asking people to join them by bringing donations to their Holiday House (2071 Union St.). Used but good-shape coats for the One Warm Coat program, canned and packaged food for the S.F. Food Bank, and new unwrapped toys for the S.F. Firefighters Toy Program are all sought.

In addition to seasonal specials in the stores and streetwide activities, the Union Street Association is holding its first Ugly/Creative Holiday Sweater Event. They urge you to "wear your craziest, zaniest, or just plain unlikable

holiday sweater and see what happens!"

Oh, and did we mention the biggest Christmas gift of all in San Francisco? "Validated parking."

UNION STREET HELPING TYPHOON VICTIMS

Hats off to the Union Street Association. At its Holiday House, your family can help the victims of the Philippines' recent Typhoon Haiyan: Children can place a star on their Wishing Tree when making a donation to the Philippine Typhoon Relief Fund. Every weekend before Christmas, Holiday House will serve free refreshments and hold activities for children from noon until 5 p.m.

SANTA'S NOT ON TWITTER

Have your children checked out Santa's bright red North Pole Express Mailbox in front of Jest Jewels on Union Street? Santa gets very busy at this time of year so send your letters now.

Jest Jewels tells us that their Polar Express delivery sleigh will make sure to get all notes to Santa delivered on time.

EVEN SPAS GET SPA TREATMENTS

Spa Radiance is touting its makeover 16 years after arriving in the Marina. "It was scary, because we had become such a skin-care staple in downtown and the Marina was still an up-and-coming neighborhood, but it's been great," says Angelina Umansky, Spa Radiance's co-owner with her mother, Galina Rovner. They tapped Jay Jeffers Design Group to head up a major renovation of its 3,500 square foot Victorian at 3011 Fillmore Street, just steps from Union Street.

"Every year, I travel to France to train with best-in-class estheticians in these beautiful, distinctively clas-

sic Parisian buildings that have been quietly coaxed into the 21st century," adds Umansky. "I loved that they maintained the original, intricate crown molding, but subtly painted over it, creating a seamless look. That's the kind of soothing space I wanted to replicate for my clients."

In the early 1970s, the mother-daughter businesswomen immigrated to the United States from Russia, where they had learned natural skin care techniques "under the watchful eyes of Grandmother Rose." Since opening up their San Francisco business first in downtown in 1976 and then moving it to the Marina in 1997, the company has been able to boast such clients as Michelle Pfeiffer, Rosario Dawson, Mary J. Blige, and Sharon Stone.

SINGING IN THE RINGING SEASON

As the middle of the month approaches, you'll probably find work getting a little slacker but your personal schedule getting ever-heavier with all the holiday parties and gift shopping. If you can fit one more item onto your calendar, you might find it's a nice way to meet people and to lower your blood pressure. You can join the holiday carollers who will be walking up and down Union Street singing holiday tunes. If you're interested, meet at St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church (2325 Union Street, at Steiner) at 1 p.m. on Dec. 21. Carollers will return to St. Mary afterward for refreshments.

OVERHEARD ON THE ROOFTOPS

Large man in red velvet: "Ho, ho, ho!"

Got any tips for Northsider? E-mail: john@marinatimes.com

SKETCHES FROM A NORTH BEACH JOURNAL

Italian sausage, an antique map or a marching band

by ernest beyl

BECAUSE THE YEAR-END HOLIDAYS ARE approaching, I want to make a few gift suggestions from North Beach. So here is **Ernesto's Gift Guide** — a sketchy compilation of esoteric, off-the-wall gifts for you to give yourself or your best friend.

PET COLUMBARIUM

Consider booking a niche for your dog or your buddy's cat in the Pet Columbarium at the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi on Vallejo. You will recall that St. Francis was an animal lover. And each year on Oct. 4, Feast Day of St. Francis, the church conducts the Blessing of the Animals — all kinds of animals, including police department horses. The Pet Columbarium is a new venture for St. Francis's National Shrine. Contact Fr. Snider, Rector, who will explain. *National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi, 610 Vallejo Street (at Columbus), 415-986-4557, www.shrinesf.org*

A MARCHING BAND

I'm a big fan of the Green Street Mortuary Marching Band. Here's a resounding gift idea: Hire the band to play at your wedding — or your funeral, whichever comes first. Get in touch with band boss Lisa Pollard at saxladysf@gmail.com.

GINSBERG'S HOWL

Upstairs at City Lights Booksellers and Publishers is a vast repository of Beat Generation literature. A copy of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* or *Kaddish* makes a fine gift for a latter-day Beat wannabe. *City Lights Bookstore, 261 Columbus Street (at Broadway), 415-362-8193, www.citylights.com*

TANTE MARIE'S

Offer your pal an opportunity to attend "Basic Pastry Camp" — a weeklong course at Tante Marie's. This is the North Beach cooking school started by the tireless Mary Risley back in 1979. Your newly empowered friend will smother you with cupcakes, fruit tarts, pies, and other sweet stuff. *Tante Marie's Cooking School, 271 Francisco Street (near Bellair), 415-788-6699, www.tantemarie.com*

PICCOLO PRESS

A flyer from Piccolo Press, operated by Laura Sample-Mattos, advises us of holiday festivities and gifts at this tiny North Beach printing shop and gallery. I stopped in the other afternoon to eyeball some unusual holiday gifts. Perhaps the handsomest of these are signed glee posters by Laura's spouse, the highly acclaimed John Mattos. They are stunning. Laura is also featuring some handmade drink coasters with the theme Noel. She has coasters called No-L — that show the English alphabet without (you guessed it) the L. Some of us print devotees go to Piccolo Press just to look at the antique platen hand press on which Laura prints her gift cards. *Piccolo Press, 703 Columbus Avenue, 415-933-3035, piccolo-press.com*

ITALIAN SAUSAGE

I can think of no better holiday present than a dozen or so Italian sausages from Little City Market on Stockton. Proprietors

Ron Spinali and son Michael turn them out on a hand-operated sausage maker. Little City has several types. All are made with pork shoulder. Not trimmed ends of this and that. The Sicilian sausage has fennel, salt and pepper, and some white wine. Calabrese is a hot one with crushed chili peppers, garlic, nutmeg, and fennel. The Spinalis also sell a sausage called Puccini, a Northern Italian-style sausage popular in Lucca. It's made from a proprietary recipe from the collection of Graziano Lucchesi of Caffe Puccini, around the corner on Columbus. There's also a Green Street sausage that honors that North Beach street where Ron Spinali's father first opened his butcher shop in 1941. This one is made with Jalapeño peppers, Anaheim chilies, garlic, and chopped red and yellow sweet peppers. And, of course, Ron and Mike make a Christmas sausage. It's basically their Sicilian Sausage with provolone cheese, garlic, and chopped parsley. *Little City Market, 1400 Stockton Street (at Vallejo), 415-986-2601*

MAMA'S ON WASHINGTON SQUARE

How about a cash gift of \$50 to a friend who will stand in line for you at 50-year-old Mama's on Washington Square so you don't have to? If the stand-in gets there early enough, you can have your choice of one of 10 omelets for breakfast. If not, you may be in time for lunch of a Monte Cristo sandwich. Either way it works. *Mama's, 1701 Stockton Street (at Filbert), 415-*

362-6421, www.mamas-sf.com

BORDELLO MAP

Hoping to be included in a distant uncle's last will and testament? Get into Schein & Schein on Upper Grant and take a look at the antique maps and prints. Perhaps that uncle would like a rare, nineteenth century map of San Francisco bordellos. Jimmy Schein has one. *Schein & Schein, 1435 Grant Avenue (near Union), 415-399-8882, www.scheinandschein.com*

LIVE WORMS

Live Worms is artist Kevin Brown's gallery and painting studio on Upper Grant. Kevin's abstracts — oils and acrylics — fetch fair prices, and his work is not only shown at Live Worms, but has been displayed in one-man and group shows here in the United States and in Europe. I would be delighted if someone gave me a Kevin Brown painting as a present. And, if you don't know why his gallery is called Live Worms, drop in and he'll tell you. *Live Worms Gallery, 1345 Grant Avenue (near Green), 415-307-1222, www.sfliveworms.com*

FERLINGHETTI PLAZA

Make a major donation in your name to the Piazza St. Francis: Poets Plaza. I insist upon calling this project Lawrence Ferlinghetti Plaza because it was his idea. I'm sure St. Francis won't mind. He has enough stuff named after him, including a city. Get in touch with www.poetsplaza.org.

E-mail: ernest@marinatimes.com



A glee poster by John Mattos available at Piccolo Press PHOTO: ERNEST BEYL

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Goodyear Visa Prepaid Card by Mail-In Rebate with the purchase of a set of four select Goodyear or Dunlop tires on the Goodyear Credit Card. Hurry in! Offers valid October 1 through December 31, 2013.

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VALET PARKING

THE BACK STORY ∴ The Top of the Mark



The Mark Hopkins offers several tea parties over the holiday season
PHOTOS: COURTESY THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL MARK HOPKINS

A holiday tea party and a dear john letter

by ernest beyl

THE OTHER DAY I WAS INVITED to a tea party. Now, I don't usually go to tea parties — not my cup of tea, I am emboldened to add. As you may know, I'm more of a saloonist than a teapartyist. But because this particular tea party was going to be at the Top of the Mark, 19 floors up in the Mark Hopkins Hotel, I decided to attend and to engage in some serious reminiscence.

In 1946, I went to the Top of the Mark with my girlfriend the day before I shipped out for Okinawa as a private in the Marine Corp. In those days, servicemen going overseas from San Francisco to the Pacific theater considered it a rite of passage to have drinks at the Top of the Mark with their sweethearts — newly found or steady — and look out at the Golden Gate.

DEAR JOHN

Three months after my Top of the Mark date with my girlfriend — after chasing down scared Japanese soldiers who had refused to surrender and were hiding out in the north end of the island and giving us the illusion of war — I

heard my name shouted at mail call. On that day, I got The Letter, the famous "Dear John" letter. The girlfriend was getting married to some other guy from her high school class. I got over it. When I returned from the Pacific, I went back to the Mark Hopkins, took the elevator up to the Top of the Mark, and had a couple of big ones.

Servicemen going overseas considered it a right of passage to have drinks at the Top of the Mark.

THE MANSIONS OF NOB HILL

The history of the landmark Mark Hopkins Hotel on the crest of Nob Hill is another of those San Francisco Gold Rush tales we all love. Mark Hopkins was one of the founders of the Central Pacific Railroad that helped stitch trade and commerce from the East Coast out to the wild, Wild West. Hopkins, an opportunistic merchant, left New York City by ship in 1849 and sailed around Cape Horn to San Francisco. He became one of the so-called Big Four along with Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Collis Huntington. The Big Four became conspicuously wealthy beyond their dreams and built mansions on Nob Hill. The ornate Hopkins mansion survived its owner, who died in 1878. The building made it through the 1906 earthquake but burned to the ground in the fire that followed. And in 1926 mining engineer and hotel investor George D. Smith, opened the Mark Hopkins Hotel. Famed San Francisco moneyman Lou Lurie bought it in 1962, and the InterContinental Hotels Group bought it in 1973. It now has landmark status as one of the Historic Hotels of America by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The hotel certainly provides historic perspective to the life of a cer-



The view from the top of the Mark Hopkins Hotel

BACK STORY, continued on 13

BACK STORY

CONTINUED from page 12

tain callow youth who shipped out after sipping a few gin fizzes with his high school sweetheart.

TEA AT THE TOP

Oh yes! The tea party.

Each year the iconic hotel celebrates the holidays with a series of events, including special Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, holiday brunches, buffets, and tea parties. The tea party I attended was a press event to kick off the holiday season, which at the Mark Hopkins started late last month and will run through New Year's Day 2014. We were all there with our notebooks to road test the Holiday Tea Party at the Top of the Mark. It's an adult kind of tea party, and Champagne is available to get merrymakers merry. Fifty bucks per person with all the champagne you can drink. The hotel's executive chef, a European trained Serbian, Nenad Stefanovic, was there to ease our way through the tea sandwiches, French pastries and English scones served with Devonshire cream, fresh preserves and lemon curd. There are eight different types of tea. There's a kid's tea party, too — scratch the Champagne. And that's 40 bucks per kid.

SQUEEZING AT THE BAR

A young Sri Lankan woman, Nelum Gunewardane, dropped by our table, and we got to talking about the old days. That is, I got to talking about the old days and she graciously played along. You know you're a senior kind of guy when the G.M. of a leading San Francisco hotel is a good-looking youngster from Sri Lanka. "Where's the bar?" I asked her, slipping back in time a bit.

She said it was around the corner behind a huge, mirrored, floor-to-ceiling wall. I excused myself and got up to look. Sure enough, there was an eight-stool bar. No G.I.s, but a few tea-party fugitives. I took a drinks menu and went back to the tea party.

In the old days, I told Ms. Gunewardane, there was a huge oval bar right in the center of the room. Officers and enlisted men rubbed shoulders at this bar, squeezing their sweethearts and pointing out the Golden Gate Bridge. That was then. This is now.

100 MARTINIS

Later I scanned the drinks menu. The "cocktail program" — as most new bars are proclaiming boastfully now — offers 100 martinis. Each one, no matter what

The history of the landmark Mark Hopkins Hotel is another of those Gold Rush tales we all love.

the brand, is 14 bucks. On the rocks or straight up. What a wonderful world.

I thought it was a great tea party, and you can quote me. Contact the InterContinental Mark Hopkins Hotel for details about their fine holiday activities (888-424-6835, www.intercontinentalmarkhopkins.com).

But I spent most of my time looking out the windows to the Golden Gate and thinking about that "Dear John" letter.

Our columnist invites Dear John Letter recipients to meet at the Top of the Mark after the holidays and get to work on those 100 martinis. E-mail: ernest@marinatimes.com.

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Mr. Bubble, meet Twitter

by susan dyer reynolds

THE HYSTERIA surrounding the recent IPO of today's social media darling Twitter sent chills through my Silicon Valley born-and-bred bones. I worked at Apple through college and full time for several years. At the risk of dating myself, it was still called Apple Computer then, and it was common to see Steve Jobs wandering the halls and poking his head into meetings in rooms named after *Star Wars* characters. Jobs shared a belief with the leaders of most successful companies: If you build something great, they will come — more specifically, if you build a great product, they will buy. Jobs was certainly correct about Apple, which has gone from a small niche computer company to the second most valuable company in the world by creating innovative products that people didn't even know they needed, and now, it seems, can't live without.

It's not rocket science to conclude that the most successful companies make something tangible. Take, for example, Tiffany and Co., the 176-year-old creator of the world's most coveted diamond jewelry. In August of 2013, Tiffany reported in its second quarter a 16 percent rise in year-over-year profit and net income of \$107 million. At its current share price, which hovers in the \$83 range, Tiffany also pays a quarterly dividend of 1.65 percent, or \$1.36 per share. Tiffany's market cap is \$10.55 billion dollars — about half Twitter's current market cap. That might not be so scary if Twitter was raking in profits from selling your private information to advertisers via Tweets the way Tiffany is raking them in from selling you its spectacular diamonds, but Twitter, in fact, has never made a profit. In its recent IPO filing, the seven-year-old San Francisco-based startup revealed what most social media companies revealed before their IPOs: They're

growing fast, and spending faster. Twitter earned \$253 million in the first half of 2013, but net losses were nearly \$70 million. Though it might seem like everyone is tweeting what they ate for breakfast, in reality Twitter has just 200 million active users (by comparison, yesterday's social media darling, Facebook, has more than 1 billion active users).

None of this, however, seemed to worry mom-and-pop investors, who drove Twitter shares as high as \$50 on the first day of trading. At that price, Twitter was valued at more than General Mills, the 137-year-old corporation with a portfolio of more than 100 top-selling U.S. brands, including Betty Crocker, Yoplait, Pillsbury, Green Giant, Cheerios, and Häagen-Dazs. In September of this year, General Mills announced earnings for the first quarter of fiscal 2014: an 8 percent growth in net sales for a total of \$4.4 billion. General Mills also pays a dividend, which investors have received without interruption for 114 years; the current payout is 38 cents per share, a yield of a little more than 3 percent.

I always believed in Apple, and I still do. That's why I held onto my stock, adding to my position over the years during splits and dips. A few years ago I started getting calls from secondary market companies wanting to sell me shares privately held by employees at fledgling startups like Facebook, Zynga, Yelp, and Twitter looking to make some quick cash. "You could sell some Apple shares," one guy suggested. "Apple is turning into a value company; it's boring. These social media companies are the future." I had to laugh. That's what brokers were telling me in the late nineties about the dot-com startups, and we all know how that turned out. Like the last bubble, I made the right decision: Apple is up more than \$300 a share and, like most "value stocks," started paying a dividend; on the other hand, the pric-

es social media employees got on the private market were higher in many cases than what those stocks now publicly trade for. Maybe someday, Facebook, Zynga, Yelp, and Twitter will make more money than Tiffany, General Mills, and Apple; then again, they could go the way of MySpace and eToys.com.

In 2005, News Corp. paid nearly \$600 million for MySpace, which back then had more page views than Google. It was touted by M&A expert Tom Taulli as "one of the best acquisitions ever" in a *Businessweek* article that also suggested MySpace would grow by 20 percent per year. Unlike Twitter, Yelp, and Zynga, MySpace was profitable, but that changed quickly when fickle users moved on to Facebook and Twitter. In 2011, News Corp. sold MySpace for around \$35 million, far below the \$100 million it had hoped for, and less than 5 percent of its peak valuation.

In 1999, eToys.com was flying high and so was its stock. At \$84.25 a share, the company had an \$8 billion valuation — more than its largest bricks-and-mortar competitor, Toy "R" Us. Not unlike most social media companies, eToys spent a lot of money to grow its business and to stay relevant, racking up nearly \$250 million in debt before going bust in 2001. Toys "R" Us also went through some tough times, even taking itself private seven years ago. This past May they pulled plans for an IPO, citing reasons including a drop in net sales. Not that they're broke — in its most recent earnings report, the nation's number-one toy chain reported net sales of \$2.4 billion. That may sound like pocket change compared to the record \$7.5 billion profit on \$37.5 billion in sales that Apple announced during its most recent earnings call, but it's still more than Yelp, Twitter, and Zynga have ever made — combined.

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All that twitters isn't gold

by alan silverman

ON MARCH 10, 1876, ALEXANDER Graham Bell made the first telephone call — to his assistant in the adjoining room — uttering the immortal words, “Mr. Watson, come here, I want to see you.” On May 13, 1897, Guglielmo Marconi sent the first radio transmission across six kilometers of open sea, transmitting the equally stirring words, “Are you ready?” On March 21, 2006, at 9:50 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, Jack Dorsey sent the very first tweet containing the even more memorable phrase, “just setting up my twtr.” (The more observant reader might notice that the English language has evolved in the last 125 years to dispense with such frivolous items as capital letters, punctuation marks, and superfluous vowels — and is limited to thoughts profound enough to be expressed in 140 characters).

Twitter had an initial public offering of its stock in November, and the great reverence accorded to it by financial press would encourage one to believe that is an innovation as great as the telephone, the radio, and perhaps even sliced bread. It is hard to argue that Twitter has not made a significant impact on large sections of our society. By June 2013, there were over 200 million Twitter users active each month, of which almost 170 million were outside the United States.

When U.S. forces raided Osama bin Laden's compound in Pakistan, the first report to reach the West did not come from CNN, the BBC, or the Associated Press. It came via Twitter from a resident of Abbottabad. President Obama used Twitter to declare victory in the 2012 presidential election. Some have suggested that he should have used Twitter as a platform for people to sign up for the Affordable Health Care Act.

There were critics of the Twitter IPO process who said that the stock offering was not to the public but to a very select group of people and companies — unlike the Google IPO, which used a Dutch auction method, resulting in a broader distribution of shares. The initial share price of \$45.10 gave Twitter a company valuation of over \$25 billion. Sales revenue for 2012 was nearly \$317 million, almost double the previous year. The

only fly in this ointment is that Twitter has yet to make a profit. The company reported losses of \$164 million in 2011, \$79 million in 2012 and \$69 million in the first six months of 2013.

Shortly prior to the IPO, *The Wall Street Journal* interviewed Anant Sundaram, a professor at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. He stated that even with a valuation as modest as \$8 billion (about one third of the actual first day valuation), Twitter would need to grow revenues at a compound growth rate of 30 percent per year for the next 10 years. Even at that growth rate, he estimated that 70 percent of the initial offering price would be attributable to cash flows extending way beyond the year 2024. Positive cash flow is what you get when you actually make a profit, so Professor Sandaram expects that Twitter will eventually find a way to have revenue exceed expenses.

If we assume that Professor Sandaram is correct, it would appear that Twitter must

find many more customers and/or find a way of generating much more revenue from the existing customers. The discussions in the SEC filings about sources of revenue are a little vague. If the company is only able to generate the existing revenue per customer, then the professor's prediction would require Twitter to have about 2.75 billion customers by the end of 2023. Now the United States Census Bureau predicts the world population in 2023 to be about 7.75 billion, so Twitter will have to capture as customers about one third of the entire population of the earth — including remote places with high birth rates and no cell phone service (perhaps that is why the birth rate is so high — with no cell phones, what else is there to do?)

Professor Sundaram talked of growth rates and future cash flows but offered little guidance about profits or from where those profits might arise. In fact, the official offering document filed with the SEC also offers a lot of hope but not much substance in this regard. The key measure of potential revenue and profit is described by Twitter as “the total number of timeline views per monthly active user (MAU).” I will attempt to translate that into English for those readers who went to school when English was still being taught. A timeline view is the long stream of tweets showing all those you have chosen to follow when you log on to Twitter. The company believes that “timeline views per MAU” is a measure of “user engagement,” which is defined in the SEC offering document as the “measure of our ability to monetize our platform.” That is IPO-speak for eventually making a profit. In the three months ending June 2013, this advertising revenue per timeline view was \$2.17 in the United States and 30 cents in the rest of the world. With 85 percent of the active users outside the United States, that yields a weighted average of only 80 cents.

So why am I going on about this? The point is that the initial price of the stock does not represent the intrinsic value of the underlying business of the company, but merely the value of being an early owner of the stock of the company.

The initial stock price does not represent the intrinsic value of the underlying business.

The company itself stated “We do not anticipate declaring any dividends in the foreseeable future. Consequently, investors may need to rely on sales of their common stock after price appreciation, which may never occur, as the only way to realize any future gains on their investment.”

In a letter to Berkshire Hathaway shareholders in 2000, Warren Buffett said “The line separating investment and speculation, which is never bright and clear, becomes blurred still further when most market participants have recently enjoyed triumphs. Nothing sedates rationality like large doses of effortless money. After a heady experience of that kind, normally sensible people drift into behavior akin to that of Cinderella at the ball. They know that overstaying the festivities will eventually bring on pumpkins and mice. But they nevertheless hate to miss a single minute. They all plan to leave just seconds before midnight. There's a problem though — they are dancing in a room in which the clocks have no hands.”

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Five classic ways to enjoy Dungeness crab

susan dyer reynolds

WITH DUNGENESS crab season kicking off last month and people looking for places to take out-of-town holiday guests to enjoy one of our great local treasures, I decided to share five of my favorite classic preparations around the Northside. I love crab piled on a Louis salad, simmering in cioppino, Chinese fried, tossed with pasta, or, best of all, straight from the steaming pots at historic Fisherman's Wharf. There's no place in San Francisco where the crab is fresher and comes with views (and most places offer free two-hour validated parking), so it's no coincidence that three of my five picks are at the Wharf.

FRESH CRAB: ALIOTO-LAZIO FISH COMPANY

440 Jefferson Street (at Hyde), 888-673-5868, www.crabonline.com
 You can't beat crab straight from the steaming pots at the Wharf served in all its sweet, naked glory or with just a squeeze of lemon (and maybe a quick dip in some melted butter). Sisters Annette Traverso and Angela Cincotta are the third generation operating the Alioto-Lazio Fish Company, a woman-owned business that has been located on Fisherman's Wharf for over 70 years. One of the last family owned and operated fishing companies in San Francisco, Alioto-Lazio serves the freshest, most succulent Dungeness crab on the planet sold live, whole cooked, or cleaned and cracked. They also ship their crustaceans overnight almost anywhere (a great gift idea for those hard-to-buy-for relatives). If you haven't had crab from the first ladies of the Wharf, you're missing one of San Francisco's greatest gastronomic pleasures, as well as a part of the history that makes this city unique.

CRAB LOUIE: FISHERMEN'S GROTTO NO. 9

Pier 45 (at Taylor), 415-673-7025, www.fishermensgrotto.com

People rave about the crab salad at Swan Oyster Depot, but for \$24.50, all you get is some crab on a big pile of lettuce — that's not a Louis. When I want a truly

CRAB ALFREDO: THE FRANCISCAN CRAB RESTAURANT

Pier 43½ (at The Embarcadero), 415-362-7733, www.franciscanrestaurant.com

There are myriad ways to enjoy Dungeness at the Franciscan Crab Restaurant (hence the name), from whole roasted in secret garlic sauce to tucked inside enchiladas, but my favorite dish is the crab Alfredo, a generous heap of crab meat (including chunky legs) tossed in a creamy, buttery sauce that's lighter than expected, allowing the crustacean to shine. The Franciscan also offers one of the best prix-fixe menus around — \$29.95 for a cup of clam chowder or a house salad, an entrée and dessert (luscious house-made "kustard" ice cream) — and crab Alfredo is one of the entrée choices. If you haven't been to the Franciscan in a long time, the multimillion-dollar renovation provides a stunning setting to check out the multimillion-dollar views.

CRAB CIOPPINO: SOTTO MARE

552 Green Street (near Columbus), 415-398-3181, www.sottomaresf.com

Gigi Fiorucci's signature crab cioppino is so legendary that the highly regarded national food magazine *Saveur* featured the recipe on its lauded pages. Fellow *Marina Times* food writer Ernie Beyl said of it in his 2010 *Northside San Francisco* magazine review: "It was exceptional, a brilliant rendition of an old San Francisco standby, served in a large silver bowl with a lid. In a pungent, tomatoey broth were Dungeness crab legs and body meat lurking in their gelatinous shells, calamari, shrimp, clams, mussels, and even a few penne pasta. It's the hottest item on the menu and perhaps the most satisfying." I couldn't have said it better — in fact, I believe SOTTO MARE has the best rendition of cioppino in town (and yes, it's better than Tadich Grill's).

CRAB IN SALTED EGG YOLK BATTER: R&G LOUNGE

631 Kearney (at Commercial Alley), 415-982-7877, www.rnglounge.com

R&G has long been regarded as one of the Bay Area's best Chinese restaurants. They're famous for salt and pepper crab, but fellow *Marina Times* food writer Tony Ching says you can get that version done well at a number of places (including Thanh Long, their sister restaurant, Crustacean, and PPQ Dungeness Island). When Tony heads to R&G, it's for salted egg yolk Dungeness crab. Salted eggs are an Asian delicacy (they're also used to make mooncakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival). An egg (usually duck) is brined, rendering the white intensely salty and leaving the yolk with a subtler salinity and bright orange hue. At R&G, they use the yolk to make a batter in which they dip the crab and then fry it.

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com



What's your crab of choice? PHOTO: ROB_ROB2001 / FLICKR

Brunch Across the Bay...



IT'S TIME TO HEAD OVER to Sausalito for a weekend brunch. **Salito's Crab House & Prime Rib** is the ideal destination that's just minutes from the city. For \$9.95 you can get three eggs with bacon and spicy sausage and iron skillet open face omelets all come with house made kettle toasted bread.

Specialties include bacon bruschetta benedict and crab benedict, served with crispy potatoes and toast. There are other options and if you start with a chili mary, a blood orange mimosa or a peach bellini, you will think you are truly on vacation. If you're not in the mood for breakfast, the full menu is offered as well with a selection of cheeses and salumi with kettle bread to a full-blown feast of whole roasted Dungeness crab and prime rib. The menu is accessible. It's simple food, well-sourced, abundant and comforting yet sumptuous.

You can craft your dining experience by begin-

ning with oysters or sizzling iron-skillet roasted mussels, shrimp and crab and move to specialties such as a crab enchilada, fresh fish or prime rib. Sweets have their own category with freshly made beignets, Tortuga Caribbean rum cake and salted caramel vanilla crunch cake.

It's the perfect getaway on a foggy city day. You can take the ferry and pretend you're on vacation in a faraway village. At least for a day!

Salito's is fresh, bright and full of casual ambience. Large, multi-leveled decks overlook the water and the beauty of the area is absolutely breathtaking.

It's the perfect getaway on a foggy city day. You can take the ferry and pretend you're on vacation in a faraway village. At least for a day! Sitting on beautiful Richardson Bay, the blue sky and sparkling water are the perfect setting for an afternoon or evening of cocktails and dining *al fresco*.

Brunch is served on the weekends beginning at 10:00 am.

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ADVERTISEMENT.



Top: B. Patisserie's modern interpretations of the Bûche de Noël; Bottom: Le Marais Bakery's traditional Bûche de Noël B. PATISSERIE PHOTOS: LEXI MARINE

DISHING

CONTINUED from page 1

to “Christmas log,” to carry on a small (and edible) part of their history.

The traditional bûche de Noël is vanilla or basic yellow sponge cake baked in a shallow pan, filled with chocolate buttercream and rolled into a log shape, and then frosted with more chocolate buttercream. A fork or other implement is used to create a bark-like texture. The cakes were often elaborate exercises in realism, decorated with marzipan or meringue mushrooms, forest gnomes, and holly leaves, along with real pine branches and berries, and then dusted with powdered sugar to resemble snow.

Because of the time-consuming complexity, French-American pastry shops rarely attempt the bûche de Noël, but a couple in the Northside, including B. Patisserie in lower Pacific Heights and Le Marais Bakery in the Marina, are doing their unique takes on this classic dessert just in time for the holidays.

B. PATISSERIE

Acclaimed pastry chef Belinda Leong, who has worked for notable chefs including Gary Danko and David Kinch (Manresa), learned the traditional style bûche de Noël while working in France for pastry chef Pierre Hermé, dubbed by *French Vogue* as “the Picasso of Pastry.” Leong’s bûche de Noël is a modern, elegant version sans the literal bark and gnomes. She likes to play with flavors and textures and, while the decorating may not be over the top, Leong’s cakes are incredibly laborious and intricate. This year she will make four varieties: **vanilla raspberry** (almond sponge cake filled with vanilla mascarpone cream, Valrhona Ivoire white chocolate vanilla ganache, vanilla sponge cake soaked in vanilla syrup, vanilla sable breton, raspberry gelee, fresh raspberries, glazed in vanilla glaçage and garnished with fresh raspberries, macarons, and vanilla bean); **chocolate hazelnut** (chocolate macaron biscuit filled with layers of Valrhona Caraibe chocolate mousse, Guanaja chocolate cream, roasted hazelnuts, and hazelnut feuilletine, garnished with chocolate and macarons);

chocolate and salted caramel (flourless chocolate biscuit filled with Four Barrel coffee chantilly cream, salted caramel crème brûlée, toffee bits, Four Barrel coffee ganache, and Valrhona Jivara chocolate mousse, garnished with Four Barrel coffee glaçage); and **roasted pear and cream cheese** (gingerbread cake, roasted caramel pears, cheesecake, cream cheese mousse, and speculoos sable).

B. Patisserie: *bûche de Noël \$75 each; serves six to eight. Place advanced orders (highly recommended) at 415-440-1700 or stop by the shop, 2821 California Street (at Divisadero), Dec. 23 or 24; www.bpatisserie.com*

LE MARAIS BAKERY

Recently hailed San Francisco’s “Best New French Bakery” by *Conde Nast Traveler*, Le Marais draws on owner Patrick Ascaso’s French upbringing and his admiration for California influences. The bakery works closely with Bay Area farmers and producers known for their humane and sustainable practices to create a variety of sweet and savory specialties, including artisanal breads, cakes, tarts, and croissants. Head pastry chef Phil Ogiela is a respected veteran of top eateries such as Fifth Floor, Elisabeth Daniel, 231 Ellsworth, Aziza, and Dandelion Chocolate (where Ascaso fell in love with his work). Le Marais

will offer a fairly traditional bûche de Noël with some stylish, creative touches: vanilla cake with chocolate genoise filling and dark chocolate ganache icing generously covered with wide curls of chocolate shavings and topped with white cinnamon-dusted meringue mushrooms. It will be made with all organic ingredients and chocolate from TCHO chocolate (a San Francisco-based craft chocolate maker that sources their own cacao beans directly from growers and makes their chocolate from scratch).

Le Marais Bakery: *bûche de Noël \$45 each; serves eight. Place advanced orders at 415-359-9801, info@lemaraisbakery.com or stop by the shop at 2066 Chestnut Street (at Steiner); www.lemaraisbakery.com*

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A couple Northside pastry shops are doing unique takes on this classic dessert.

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Grab a banquette and look out the twenty foot windows at the beautiful bay.

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NOT-TO-MISS DISHES :: Where to find good eats



Mixt Greens PHOTO: COURTESY MIXT GREENS

From salad to scallops

A panoply of deliciousness

by tony ching

ROASTED MILK TEA AT COOL TEA BAR
728 Pacific Avenue (near Grant) in the Miriwa Center, 415-781-8312

This is really a not-to-miss drink rather than a dish, but it's so good I had to mention it.

Boba teashops originated in Taiwan and are popping up all over the City. There are places like the Quickly chain that use stale tapioca and powdered tea, and The Boba Guys, a shop using all organic ingredients, but the tea tastes like watered-down milk. And then there's Cool Tea Bar, an amazing little boba tea-shop that's tucked inside an indoor strip mall in Chinatown. At Cool Tea Bar, they steep fresh tea and make the tapioca balls (the "boba") on site, producing that just-chewy-enough texture. Their best seller is the roasted milk tea — you can smell and taste the nuttiness, and it's perfectly balanced with the green tea. The fragrant jasmine milk tea and Oolong milk tea are also not to miss, but my personal favorites are the roasted milk tea and the kumquat green tea. Additions like the fresh boba, grass jelly, or aloe are optional.

SWEET POTATO RAVIOLI AT MASON PACIFIC
1358 Mason Street (at Pacific), 415-374-7185, www.masonpacific.com

I went to Mason Pacific a few times right after it opened, and it left me with fairly low expectations for future visits — until I ordered the sweet potato ravioli. It's perfect for the season, and better

than similar versions at top Italian restaurants. Tender house-made pasta is filled with moist sweet potato, topped with Parmesan cheese, beurre fondue (butter emulsion), and a generous shaving of burgundy truffles. Harvested in southern Italy, burgundy

SEA SCALLOPS AT RICH TABLE
199 Gough Street (at Oak), 415-355-9085
www.richtablesf.com

Rich Table is currently my favorite restaurant in San Francisco. Chef Evan Rich always uses the very best seasonal ingredients,

and the menu changes frequently so I never get bored (even when I visit multiple times in one week). The sea scallops are large

Harvested in southern Italy, burgundy truffles have an aroma reminiscent of hazelnut.

truffles have an aroma reminiscent of hazelnut and are more robust in flavor than summer truffles; they complement the delicate sweet potato but don't overpower it. If you're a ravioli lover, don't miss this dish.

STEAMED SPARERIBS OVER RICE NOODLES WRAPPED IN LOTUS LEAF AT TAISHAN CAFE
1125 Clement Street (at 12th), 415-668-0838

Taishan Cafe is a very traditional clay pot restaurant that serves cuisine from Taishan (a county-level city in southern Guangdong Province, China). Their specialty is clay-pot rice with various toppings such as Chinese sausage, yellow eel, salty fish with pork patty, or chicken and mushrooms. My favorite is the steamed spareribs with black bean sauce over ho fun (flat rice noodles) wrapped in a lotus leaf. The aroma from the lotus leaf combined with the porky goodness from the spareribs is enticing, and the earthy flavors are simple and comforting. A few tips: Get there early because they always run out of noodles; also, they'll give you complimentary house soup, but only if you ask.

and plump, seared to caramelized perfection and cooked just beyond translucence inside. It's a generous portion, topped with wilted escarole and rutabaga miso puree. Rutabagas (originally a cross between cabbage and turnip) are a sadly underused root vegetable, and they shine here in chef Rich's capable hands.

COWBOY SALAD AT MIXT GREENS
475 Sansome Street (at Commercial Alley), 415-296-8009, www.mixtgreens.com

When I'm in the mood to eat like a health nut, I head to this place for lunch. Mixt Greens offers the freshest vegetables in their salads, which are the best in the Financial District. My favorite is the cowboy salad — crisp romaine hearts, grilled chicken, roasted red peppers, black beans, sharp cheddar, and red onion with a Point Reyes blue cheese dressing and a chipotle-honey drizzle to add a little sweet heat. Ask for it "Tony's Way" — substitute the black beans for edamame, the roasted red peppers for yellow beets, hold the chicken, and add extra dressing.

E-mail: www.tony1andonly.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY SABROSA

Home-style Mexican food with an eclectic twist

by julie mitchell

IF THE CHILLY WINTER TEMPERATURES have you craving a trip to Mexico, take heart. Now you can sample fresh tastes from south of the border right in Cow Hollow. Stop by brand-new Sabrosa on the corner of Fillmore and Greenwich, and cure your win-

Dungeness crab served with chayote squash, carrot, radish, and chips and guacamole; and a salad of kale, beets, avocado, watermelon, radish, walnuts, shallots, Meyer lemon, and chilies. All of these dishes resound with bright flavors and an intriguing mix of heat and spice. Rather than serving chips with salsa and guacamole, Sabrosa offers up crispy strips of fried tortillas with guacamole and mole sauce; a welcome twist on the old standby.

In addition to international and locally made wine and beer, Matt Stanton, owner of El

Dorado Cocktail Lounge in San Diego, has created a bar program featuring ample selections of tequilas and mezcals and seasonal cocktails that include the Pepino Diablo with Blanco tequila, Serrano chili, cucumber, fresh lime, and cracked salt; and the Eterno Llama with jalapeno-infused Blanco tequila, strawberry, orange liqueur, fresh lime, and ginger beer — tart, tangy, and refreshing.

Serving dinner nightly, Sabrosa has plans to offer weekday lunch and weekend brunch soon. Stop in for a cocktail and stay for dinner. It's a surefire way to get into the holiday spirit.

In spring, you'll want to sit at the patio tables along Greenwich and Fillmore.

ter doldrums with a signature cocktail or Margarita and something unique and spicy from the kitchen. This light-filled bar and restaurant designed by husband-and-wife team Clinton Miller and Parisa O'Connell is sure to become a Triangle fixture.

Sabrosa, which opened in mid-November, is decorated in warm gray accented in teal and gold tones, with one dark walnut wall, and another fashioned from old subway tiles. The floors are traditional tile, and the deep, backlit onyx bar and plenty of tables, communal and otherwise, are welcoming. Come spring, you'll want to sit at one of the patio tables that will line the restaurant along both Greenwich and Fillmore.

Jose Ramos, former opening chef at Nopalito, helped conceive the menu at Sabrosa, which spotlights sustainable, home-style Mexican cuisine featuring ingredients and recipes inspired by his mother and grandmother.

Just a few of the items on the menu include seared Mayan spice-rubbed rib eye with mashed plantain, Brussels sprouts and escabeche rojo (red sauce); ceviche with lime-cured fish, persimmon, pineapple, pomegranate, pickled onions, and chilies;

Now you can sample fresh tastes from south of the border right in Cow Hollow.

Sabrosa: 3200 Fillmore Street (at Greenwich), 415-638-6500, www.sabrosasf.com; dinner nightly 5 p.m.–2 a.m. through December; to come: lunch and dinner Monday–Friday 11 a.m.–2 a.m.; brunch weekends 10 a.m.–2 a.m.

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THE TABLEHOPPER :: 'Tis the season of change



The bar at the Big 4 PHOTO: DESIGNERSRAUM.COM

The Big 4 is closing (and we don't know if it's forever)

by marcia gagliardi

BIG NEWS ON NOB HILL: IT LOOKS like this will be the last holiday season we'll be able to spend in the **Big 4** (1075 California Street, 415-771-1140) as we know it. The new owners of The Huntington Hotel, Grace International (a Singapore-based company) have announced they will close the 66-year-old hotel and the Big 4 from Jan. 4, 2014 to spring of 2014 for a \$15 million remodel. Details are sparse: Is it a massive renovation? Will the piano remain? What is to become of chef Gloria Ciccarone-Nehls and her annual Big Game Dinners? What about all the amazing artifacts? There's

a whole lotta history in that dining room. All I do know is I am going in for one last cocktail (or two), and really hoping it stays with us. Yes, parts of the bar and the dining room could benefit from some updating, but there's a lot that really shouldn't be touched (I hope the owners take a page out of the recent Tosca playbook).

But in the good news department: Can you believe that after five years of laying dormant, that someone is restoring **Julius' Castle** (1541 Montgomery Street) on Telegraph Hill? The new owner is Paul Scott, a resident of Telegraph Hill, not some techie who wants to convert it into the ultimate playpen, but someone who wants to restore the place to its former glory. I'm thrilled to hear this historic location (since 1922!) is going to get another run out on the track — that bar was fabulous (and a favorite of my grandfather's). Stand by for updates.

Some fresh blood on Russian Hill: Now open in the former Luella is **Stones Throw** (1896 Hyde Street, 415-796-2901), featuring Cal-American cuisine from chef Jason Halverson (Michael Mina). He is partnering with general manager Ryan Cole, also an alum of the Mina Group, plus Jason Kirmse and Cyrick Hia (Fat Angel), and front-of-house and operations partner Tai Ricci (SPQR, Michael Mina). There are some good bar snacks, tasty starters like sunchoke soup or squid ink conchiglie pasta (\$12-\$16), and mains (from duck breast to chestnut ravioli, \$16-\$29). The beer list is amazing, and the wine selections are also appealing and well priced. The 49-seat space is casual and has an 11-seat bar, so it's an easy place to swing by. There's a bright yellow exterior, so you can't miss it.

Update on what's opening in the former Marbella/Rex Café: **Verbena** (2323 Polk

All I do know is that I am going in for one last cocktail (or two).

Street) is coming in mid-December from Berkeley's Gather crew. Chef Sean Baker will create a menu of contemporary seasonal California cuisine, and wine director Michael Ireland (French Laundry, Quince, Restaurant at Meadowood) will pair wines (his list will be very producer-driven).

The space is 2,200 square feet and will have room for 58, plus 12 seats in the upstairs mezzanine, and eventually (they hope) room for 16 at outside tables. Abueg Morris Architects (Nopalito, Comal, Hi Lo BBQ, Roam) are behind the renovation. Verbena will serve dinner nightly, plus weekend brunch.

Now open on Nob Hill is **Ala Romana** (1098 Jackson Street, 415-292-3699), an enoteca and pizzeria in the former Rue Saint Jacques location by Lorenzo Logoreci of nearby Allegro Romano. Chef David Taylor (A16) has put together a Roman-inspired menu (think antipasti, pizza, pasta, and some meaty mains). Let's scoot over to Cow Hollow. Freshly open in the former City Tavern space is **Sabrosa** (3200 Fillmore Street, 415-638-6500). Chef José Ramos, who was a founding chef at Nopalito and has been at Nido in Oakland until recently, helms this Mexican restaurant. He is joined by partners Andy Wasserman, Hugo Gamboa, and Adam Snyder (Redford and The Brixton), and San Diego barman Matt Stanton. Look for a lively bar scene, but the place will be grounded with Ramos's home-style, ingredient-focused cooking. The food will be seasonal, local, and not completely traditional, but built around recipes from Ramos's mother, grandmother and aunt. There's a large, 24-seat bar, a communal table for 12, and outdoor seating.

Over in Laurel Heights, **Nico** (3228 Sacramento Street, 415-359-1000) is now open, serving contemporary Cal-French cuisine, featuring local, seasonal, and foraged ingredients and modern cooking techniques. Nicolas and Andrea Delaroque are behind the project; French-born Nicolas has worked at Manresa, Atelier Crenn and Coi. The intimate space is full of wood, stylish but casual (no tablecloths), with a small pewter bar at the front and a mohair banquette along the wall. The wine program is of note as well.

Happy Holidays/buone feste to all!

Marcia Gagliardi is the founder of the weekly *tablehopper e-column*; subscribe and get more food news and gossip at www.tablehopper.com. Follow her on Twitter: @tablehopper.



Impress your guests with simple, satisfying popovers and Yorkshire pudding

by susan dyer reynolds

WHETHER YOUR family passes Pillsbury crescents or brown-and-serve rolls, the bready part of a holiday dinner is often woefully neglected. For some reason, people think making cravable favorites like popovers and Yorkshire pudding is more difficult than cooking a roast or a turkey, but it's actually very simple. You don't have to tell your guests about the simple part — just impress them with these satisfying homemade alternatives to store-bought starches.

A few quick tips: Special popover pans are readily available at kitchen supply stores like Williams-Sonoma and Sur La Table — or even Fredericksen Hardware — but muffin pans work just fine. For the Yorkshire pudding batter, I let it sit in the refrigerator for two hours or so. This step is optional, but I think it helps the pudding rise higher. Finally, whatever you do, don't open the oven while baking or you

may wind up with deflated Yorkshire pudding or popovers.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING

Serves 4-6

¾ cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
3 eggs
¾ cup milk
½ cup pan drippings or vegetable oil

Mix together the flour and salt in a medium-sized bowl. In smaller bowl, beat together eggs and milk until frothy. Stir in dry ingredients until just incorporated. Refrigerate mixture for two hours (optional).

Heat oven to 450 degrees (if you're cooking a turkey or prime rib, crank up the temperature after you remove the meat to rest).

Pour pan drippings or vegetable oil into a 9x9-inch oven-safe baking dish. Put dish in oven for about 30 seconds, or until drippings or oil is just smoking. Remove dish from oven (carefully), pour in batter, and return dish to oven. Bake until puffed up and

brown, about 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

POPOVERS

Serves 4-6

1 tablespoon melted butter (cooled to room temperature)
2 eggs
¾ cup milk
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup all-purpose flour

In a small ramekin, melt butter in microwave; set aside to cool.

Heat oven to 425 degrees with popover/muffin pan inside to warm (again, you can turn up the temperature when you remove the meat to rest).

In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together eggs and milk. Add salt. Whisk in flour. Add cooled butter. Spray pan with nonstick spray. Using a ladle, fill each pan well half full. Bake on parchment- or foil-lined baking sheet for 25 to 30 minutes, or until puffed up and golden brown. Remove from pan and serve immediately.

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MICHAEL SNYDER ON FILM : Seven for Santa

Christmas on screen

by michael snyder

CHRISTMAS MOVIES ARE PART of the fabric of Western culture. And no matter how much you hope the season will be about “peace on Earth and good films to all men (and women),” it doesn’t always play out that way.

Some holiday movies will genuinely touch your heart. Yes, the corn quotient can appear to be high, especially with the classics. Renowned for its emotional climax set at Christmas, *It’s a Wonderful Life* — the beloved 1946 drama from populist director Frank Capra concerning the immense importance of one ordinary man’s life — is a perennial. The line between quintessence and cliché, however, can seem mighty thin when something is so well known and so long-lived. Still, the tears are jerked, the smiles break out, and the good feelings suffuse us, which is probably as Christmas-sy as you can get.

But, as hard as we try, we can’t forget the multitude of bad holiday features out there. Alas, for every misfire that can generate unintentional laughs as camp (*Santa Claus Conquers the Martians*) or sheer idiocy (Arnold Schwarzenegger’s *Jingle All the Way*), there are many more films that are just bad, tedious and painful to watch (*Surviving Christmas*, *Fred Claus*, *Christmas With The Kranks*, *Ernest Saves Christmas*, *Jack Frost*, and so on).

So it’s off to the vaults for some timeless suggestions that will serve as a livelier alternative to the video Yule log on your home entertainment screen. Here, in alphabetical order, are seven Christmas films that warm my eggnog, trim my tree, and deck my halls. (*It’s a Wonderful Life* isn’t included, because it doesn’t need to be. It’s sacrosanct!) A few are extremely

familiar; some not so much. I trust that you’ll enjoy some of them, unless you’re unlucky enough to succumb to your inner Grinch.



PHOTO: © DIMENSION FILMS

Bad Santa (2003)

Directed by Terry Zwigoff

Surely the most profane Christmas film on this list — and the funniest. Every year, an alcoholic department-store Santa (Billy Bob Thornton) and a conniving little person, who serves as his elf and partner-in-crime, get jobs in a different mall and rob it after casing the place. In the middle of their latest caper, Santa meets a hot bartender who falls for him and a sad, chubby boy who needs a friend. Hilarious and a bit poignant.

A Christmas Carol (1951)

Directed by Brian Desmond Hurst

There is no better cinematic retelling of Charles Dickens’s immortal, supernatural morality tale than this British version starring Alastair Sim as the archetypal Scrooge — a greedy codger for the ages whose overnight conversion to kindness and generosity has true resonance. There have been many live-action interpretations of the story, not to mention vari-

ous cartoon adaptations from a Mr. Magoo TV special to a recent and less-than-satisfying motion-capture feature. But this nearly flawless template trumps them all.

A Christmas Story (1983)

Directed by Bob Clark

Who’d imagine that the director of the notorious low-brow teen sex comedy *Porky’s* would go on to helm one of the cleverest, most amusing and wholesome Christmas films ever? But he had the advantage of a script drawn from legendary humorist Jean Shepherd’s wonderful novelized memoir of growing up in an Indiana town during the Depression. Such a good and durable family-friendly flick that it sometimes runs in marathon repeat Christmas Day showings on a certain cable network.



PHOTO: © NEW LINE CINEMA / WARNER BROS.

Elf (2003)

Directed by Jon Favreau

The most unobnoxious role in Will Ferrell’s career, to date, is that of an ungainly human adopted and raised as an oversized elf in Santa’s workshop until he’s sent out into the real world to find his destiny. This cute, cheerful and amusing comedy

is also enhanced by the presence of an endearing Zoey Deschanel as the man-child elf’s naïve love interest, alongside veteran actors including Edward Asner, James Caan, Mary Steenburgen, and, as Papa Elf, the devastatingly droll Bob Newhart.

Holiday Inn (1942)

Directed by Mark Sandrich

My favorite Christmas film of all time is a musical mix of romance and comedy that benefits from the seemingly effortless performances of stars Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby — and a collection of holiday-themed tunes (including “White Christmas” in its movie debut) by one of the greatest American songwriters, Irving Berlin. Crosby and Astaire play scheming members of a song-and-dance trio that breaks up on Dec. 24 when they compete for the hand of their female partner. Leaving the act, Crosby’s character decides to open an inn in Connecticut where he puts on shows, but only on holidays. Then, Astaire’s character decides to snake his former colleague’s new girlfriend. Note: This is not to be confused with the inferior 1954 remake *White Christmas*. And to caution the politically correct: There is a Lincoln’s Birthday number done in blackface by Crosby and co-star Marjorie Reynolds.

Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

Directed by George Seaton

I guess another title for this sweet fable could be “Good Santa,” with its saintly bearded fellow who gets the coveted Santa gig at Macy’s in Manhattan and swears that he’s the real Kris Kringle. Despite how cloying a message movie such as this one could be, it’s surprisingly down-to-earth. And in addition to note-perfect performances by Maureen O’Hara, John Payne, and Edmund Gwenn as the loveable

old geezer with the Claus complex, you get the opportunity to see a very young and super-cute Natalie Wood in one of her first roles.



PHOTO: © METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993)

Directed by Henry Selick

Starting with the brilliant idea of one mythical holiday land in conflict and merging with another, this idiosyncratic fantasy features unforgettable characters, exquisite stop-motion animation, and a set of memorable and witty songs by Danny Elfman. The premise involves Jack Skellington, the Pumpkin King of Halloween Town, finding a portal into Christmas Town. He decides to take over the cheerful, previously unfamiliar dimension and replace Santa, with troubling repercussions. Co-written by Tim Burton, it’s one of his most charming and enduring creations.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture every week on KPFK/Pacifica Radio’s David Feldman Show, and on Michael Snyder’s Culture Blast, available online at YouTube and Digidive TV. You can follow Michael on Twitter: @cultureblaster

@NITE

CONTINUED from page 1

For a more official season opener, attend the **World Tree of Hope Tree Lighting** (www.rainbowfund.org), a free event at City Hall on Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Hosted by Mayor Ed Lee and Rainbow World Fund, the event features the Grammy-winning San Francisco Boys Chorus, free cocktails and snacks, and of course, the lighting of the World Tree of Hope. For something different, head to the **9th Annual Parol Lantern Festival and Parade**, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10. A series of lantern-making workshops at the Bayanihan Community Center culminates with a parade and festival in Yerba Buena Lane, Jessie Square and St. Patrick’s Church; visit bayanihancc.org for details.

Looking for more classic holiday fun? Hit the ice at the **Safeway Holiday Ice Rink** in Union Square (www.unionsquareicerink.com), open through Jan. 29, or the **Holiday Ice Rink at the Embarcadero Center** (www.embarcaderocenter.com), open through Jan. 5. Bring a carafe of hot chocolate and listen to holiday music underneath the stars and sparkly city lights. The Union Square rink features a couple of fun holiday events, including “Single in the City” on Dec. 5, and “Drag Queens on Ice” on Dec. 12. After a round of

skating, stroll around downtown and ogle at the holiday-decorated department-store windows — you won’t want to miss the popular Macy’s Holiday Windows, featuring cute dogs and cats for adoption. For even more classic holiday fun, visit the Cow Palace, which has been transformed into Victorian London for the **Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party** (dickens-fair.com). There, you can visit a re-created Dickens city of winding lanes, music halls, pubs and shops, and bump into some colorful characters from literature and history.

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

If the holidays mean music to you, San Francisco’s got you covered. **The San Francisco Symphony** offers a repertoire of holiday events this month, including “A Creole Christmas” featuring the Preservation Hall Jazz Band on Dec. 15, and “Colors of Christmas” starring Peabo Bryson, CeCe Winans, Melissa Manchester and Ruben Studdard, Dec. 16–18. Handel’s “Messiah” arrives Dec. 19–21, followed by “Twas the Night” on Dec. 23, a holiday concert featuring the San Francisco Symphony Chorus.

In the nearby jazz district, **SF Jazz** (sfjazz.org) hosts several holiday concerts starring City Church Little Big Band, Lavay Smith & Her Red Hot Skillet Lickers, Arturo Sandoval and Pete Escovedo’s Latin Jazz

Orchestra. A Windham Hill Winter Solstice Concert, as well as a New Year’s Eve bash with Pete Escovedo, round out the season. A few blocks away on Fillmore Street, **Yoshi’s** hosts a handful of its own seasonal shows, including Greg Adams & East Bay Soul: Sweet Soul Christmas on Dec. 19; San Francisco vocalist Natasha Miller’s Annual Holiday Concert on Dec. 23, and Clairdee’s 11th Annual Christmas Eve Show on Dec. 24. And **Feinstein’s** at the Hotel Nikko (www.hotelnikkosf.com) welcomes Broadway diva Betty Buckley from Dec. 5–15, followed by songstress Connie Champagne’s holiday tribute to Judy Garland on Dec. 18.

The bigger holiday stages also await. For some of us, it’s not Christmas until we’ve seen the Sugar Plum Fairy twirl around the War Memorial Opera House stage for the San Francisco Ballet’s beloved version of Tchaikovsky’s **The Nutcracker** (www.sfballet.org), through Dec. 29. For others, the season demands hearing Tiny Tim declare, “God bless us, everyone!” during the American Conservatory Theater’s interpretation of Charles Dickens’s **A Christmas Carol** (www.act-sf.org), Dec. 6–28.

YOU’VE GOT TO LAUGH A LITTLE

Running out of wrapping paper on Christmas Eve, or discovering three hours before your guests arrived that you never

defrosted the turkey may not sound funny now. But you’ll be laughing about those things in January. Meantime, the holidays offer some other ways to get a laugh that’s not on you. How about watching a Jewish comedy on Christmas in a Chinese restaurant? From Dec. 24–26, the **21st Annual Kung Pao Kosher Comedy benefit** (www.koshercomedy.com) features four comedians, a seven-course dinner show including dim sum cocktails, and Yiddish proverbs in the fortune cookies. Or how about Tranny Shack’s seasonal favorite, **The Golden Girls: The Christmas Episodes!**, a spoof of the television sitcom, running from Dec. 5–22 at the Victoria Theatre (trannysack.com).

And, if the sight of grown men and women dressed as elves and other mythical holiday figures makes you smile, join **Elf Party 2013**, Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Regency Ballroom. If you thought Will Ferrell was funny in his elf suit, you’ll love seeing hundreds of grown men and women donning holiday costumes during this wild and festive dance party, which benefits local charities like Family Giving Tree and BayKids. For tickets, which start at \$45, visit www.theregencyballroom.com.

Maryann LoRusso is a San Francisco-based journalist who also writes a blog for women at www.redtypewriter.com.

Hotel Chelsea shines in photographs



PHOTO: © VICTORIA COHEN FROM HOTEL CHELSEA

by sharon anderson

ALARRY RIVERS PAINTING, drag queens using a phone booth as a changing room, and an animated group of partygoers emerging from the lobby elevator: These are some of the memories that Victoria Cohen shares in her new book of photographs, *Hotel Chelsea* (Pointed Leaf Press, \$95).

Cohen can't help but look back 25 years earlier and remember the Chelsea as she stood in the lobby waiting for a friend. The Hotel Chelsea's particular brand of quirky charm is the subject of Cohen's first collection of photographs. But instead of the bustling chaos of the hotel's past, the viewer is confronted with a series of rooms devoid of people. Some contain ornate fireplaces, decor rich in textured color, and views

from expansive windows. Others appear minimal. A room with a tidy bed, its blankets and pillows smoothly ordered, is punctuated by the absence created by an empty chair.

Located at 222 West 23rd Street in New York City, the Hotel Chelsea was constructed in 1883 and went on to become one of the city's historical landmarks in 1966 due in no small part to the famous inhabitants who visited the hotel through the years. Artists from Henri Cartier-Bresson to Robert Crumb frequented the Chelsea along with writers and musicians including Bob Dylan, Gregory Coors, Herbert Huncke, Dylan Thomas, Patti Smith, Brigit Berlin, Allen Ginsberg, and Charles Bukowski.

In 2011, the hotel was sold, and its new owners decided to renovate the space. The very

idea of refreshing the hotel's look seemed to contradict the creative bohemian history and landmark status of the Chelsea. Before the interiors were forever altered, Cohen gained access to the uninhabited space to document the dwellings where so many songs, stories, and artworks were conceived.

The resulting photography collection communicates a haunted beauty that, like a time capsule, forces the viewer to imagine these spaces occupied by its storied tenants who lived and sometimes died within its walls. There's a certain tension and anticipation associated with the images; Cohen knows that the clock is ticking. Passageways, doors, light fixtures, corners, dated-yet-charming kitchenettes and dining sets — aspects of the hotel that might only receive a casual glance from an occupant — are documented with devotion through the camera's lens. Throughout the book, absence consistently suggests presence. Cohen's lush photographic style and keen sense of composition captures and preserves the space where so many dreams were born.

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

THE BEST OF BOOKS ∴ Popular reads

Flying off the shelves

compiled by sandy mullin

BOOKS INC. BEST-SELLER LIST

1. **The Boys in the Boat**, by Daniel James Brown
2. **Dear Life: Stories**, by Alice Munro
3. **Tender Bar: A Memoir**, by J. R. Moehringer
4. **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck, Book 8**, by Jeff Kinney
5. **Goodbye Year**, by Toni Piccinini
6. **The Goldfinch**, by Donna Tartt
7. **Allegiant (Divergent)**, by Veronica Roth
8. **Season of the Witch**, by David Talbot
9. **Wild**, by Cheryl Strayed
10. **Orange is the New Black**, by Piper Kerman

STAFF PICKS FOR ADULTS

The Luminaries: A Novel, by Eleanor Catton

Murder, gold, sex, opium, shipwrecks — this massive, compelling novel (winner of the 2013 Booker Prize) has everything it takes to keep you enthralled for 800 pages.

— Tom Gartner

Burial Rites: A Novel, by Hannah Kent

A stunning historical novel set in 19th century Iceland about a woman accused of killing a cruel lover. The harsh setting, the intricate relationships, and the gradual revelation of the truth blend to create uniquely meaningful suspense.

— Tom Gartner

STAFF PICKS FOR KIDS

Age 10 & up: Wild Boy, by Rob Lloyd Jones

A recluse turned circus freak finds himself accused of murder. Armed with only his wits, a Holmesian sense of observation and deduction, and the reluctant company of circus acrobat Clarissa, Wild Boy navigates Victorian London on a quest to clear his name, solve the murder, and discover the nature of the mysterious Machine That Changes You.

— Marie Siegenthaler

Ages 8-12: Mister Max: The Book of Lost Things: Mister Max 1, by Cynthia Voigt and Iacopo Bruno

Left alone when his parents depart to Kashmir, Max is forced to find work. Is he a dogcatcher? A child wrangler? Detective? All of the above? A charming, wholesome and suspenseful mystery.

— Marie Siegenthaler

Ages 4 & up: Cinders: A Chicken Cinderella, by Jan Brett

Beautiful illustrations reminiscent of those found in old European folktales are the highlight of this retelling of the classic story. And you won't think twice about the fact that chickens are stand-ins for all of the main characters. It is thoroughly charming.

— Sandy Mullin

Sandy Mullin is the manager at Books Inc. in the Marina.

An exhibition of original illustrations and works on paper
On view through March 23, 2014

Frog and Toad

and the World
of Arnold Lobel



736 Mission Street, San Francisco
Plan your visit at thecjm.org

**CONTEMPORARY
JEWISH MUSEUM**

connecting art, people, and ideas

Frog and Toad and the World of Arnold Lobel is organized by The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, in collaboration with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Massachusetts. Image: Arnold Lobel. Title page from *Days with Frog and Toad*, 1979. Graphite, ink, and wash on paper, 19 15/16 x 15 15/16 in. (matted). Courtesy of The Estate of Arnold Lobel. Copyright © The Estate of Arnold Lobel. Patron Sponsorship for this exhibition is provided by an anonymous donor.

DECEMBER EVENTS HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

LIGHTINGS

39th Annual Bill Graham Menorah Lighting

Daily thru Wednesday, Dec. 4

Union Square

Mark the fourth through seventh Candle Lighting Ceremony on the 25-foot-tall menorah; see website for times and other activities. Free, 415-668-6178, www.chabadsf.org

Holiday Tree Lighting

Thursday, Dec. 3, 5 p.m.

555 California St.

Join Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Carly Rae Jepsen, the Dick Bright Orchestra, Pacific Boys Choir, honorary chairs Karen & Ronnie Lott (former 49er and NFL Legend) and current 49ers Marcus Lattimore and Alex Boone in the lighting of an 80-foot-plus white fir tree and holiday festivities benefitting UCSF Medical Center and Benoiff Children's Hospital. 925-930-9848



84th Annual Golden Gate Park Holiday Tree Lighting

Thursday, Dec. 5, 5-7 p.m.

McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park (501 Stanyan St.)

The lighting of a Monterey cypress includes live entertainment, Santa visits, carnival rides, and more. Free, sfrecpark.org

Annual Holiday Lights Tree-Lighting Ceremony

Friday, Dec. 6, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Lincoln Blvd. at Funston Ave.

Join in this decades-old Presidio tradition featuring the Golden Gate Carolers. Light refreshments will follow at the Presidio Community YMCA as well as a lantern-lit 20-minute forest walk at 6:15 p.m. Bring a flashlight and meet in the YMCA gym. Free, 415-561-5500, www.presidio.gov

Fantasy of Lights Christmas Celebration

Saturday, Dec. 7, 3-7 p.m.

Union Street (btw. Van Ness & Steiner) & Fillmore St. (btw. Union & Lombard)

Thousands of twinkling lights will illuminate Victorian houses and shops with merchant open houses and extended hours, entertainment, pony rides, face painting, costumed characters, a horse-drawn carriage, photos with Santa, cupcake decorating, an Ugly/Creative Sweater Contest, and much more. Free, 800-310-6563, sresproductions.com



Holiday Lights & Sights Parade

Friday, Dec. 13, 5:30 p.m.

Fisherman's Wharf to Crissy Field

The oldest and largest lighted boat holiday parade returns and features more than 60 boats festooned with lights and holiday decorations. Free, 415-673-3530, visitfishermanswharf.com

MUSICAL & CHORAL PERFORMANCES

American Bach Soloists: Händel's Messiah

Wed-Thu, Dec. 11-12, 7:30-10:30 p.m.

Grace Cathedral

Performed to sold-out audiences year after year, purchase your tickets early to this famous San Francisco holiday event. \$15-\$94, 415-621-7900, www.americanbach.org

S.F. Girls Chorus Alumnae: Make a Joyful Noise

Friday, Dec. 13, 8 p.m.

Old First Presbyterian Church (1751 Sacramento St.)

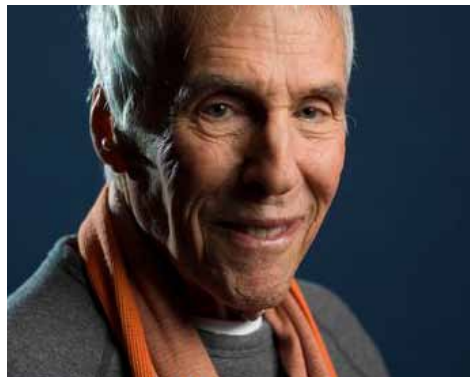
The highest caliber of women's choral music celebrates the traditions of Christmas and their modern reimagnings. \$14-\$17, www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Russ Lorenson: Christmas in San Francisco

Fri-Sat, Dec. 13-14, 7:30 p.m.

Pa'ina Lounge & Restaurant (1865 Post St.)

This annual jingle-jazzy holiday show features Wesla Whitfield, Mike Greensill and Veronica Klaus. \$25-\$45, www.christmasinsf.com



Burt Bacharach

Fri-Sat, Dec. 13-14

Davies Symphony Hall

Enjoy a festive evening when Bacharach, his band and vocalists join the S.F. Symphony for holiday cheer and the music you know and love. \$40-\$98, 415-864-6000, www.sfsymphony.org

G. Scott Lacy's Holiday Cabaret

Fri-Sun, Dec. 13-15 & Sunday, Dec. 22

Hotel Rex (562 Sutter St.)

Featuring special guest stars at each performance, this cabaret promises a light and bright seasonal blend of music and song with no-minimum drinks and dining. \$20-\$40, 415-857-1896, www.societycabaret.com

Sing You a Merry Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 14 & 21, 11 a.m.

Grace Cathedral

Sing along with your favorite Christmas carols as the toys of St. Nicholas's workshop lead you on an extraordinary journey sure to fill you with the joys of the season. Particularly suited for ages 8 and younger. \$15-\$50, 415-392-4400, www.cityboxoffice.com

Piedmont East Bay Children's Choir: Stary Nights Candlelight Concert

Sunday, Dec. 15, 3 p.m.

Old First Presbyterian Church (1751 Sacramento St.)

Ring in the season with the sweet sounds of children singing from this internationally acclaimed organization. \$14-\$17, 415-474-1608, www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Advent Lessons and Carols

Sunday, Dec. 15, 3:30 p.m.

Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption (1111 Gough St.)

St. Mary's Cathedral Choir and St. Mark's Lutheran Church Choir perform works by Stanford, Victoria, Lauridsen, Demantius. Free (with free-will offering), 415-567-2020, www.stmarycathedralsf.org

A Chanticleer Christmas

Sunday, Dec. 15, 8 p.m.

St. Ignatius Church (650 Parker Ave.)

This Bay Area tradition is a joyous recounting of the Christmas story. \$35-\$55, 415-252-7541, www.chanticleer.org

Christmas Concert: Gloria

Sunday, Dec. 15, 8 p.m.

Calvary Presbyterian Church (2515 Fillmore St.)

Celebrate the advent season with Antonia Vivaldi's Gloria followed by the dramatically contrasting Gloria by Francis Poulencs. Free, 415-346-3832, www.calvarypresbyterian.org

A Brass and Organ Christmas

Thursday, Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m.

Grace Cathedral

The Bay Brass joins the cathedral's Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ in a festive program of Christmas classics. \$15-\$50, 415-392-4400, www.cityboxoffice.com

Golden Bough: Celtic Yultide Celebration

Friday, Dec. 20, 8 p.m.

Old First Presbyterian Church (1751 Sacramento St.)

Hear Old World carols from Ireland and Scotland. \$14-\$17, www.oldfirstconcerts.org



Kitka: Wintersongs

Saturday, Dec. 21, 8 p.m.

Old First Presbyterian Church (1751 Sacramento St.)

The women's ensemble performs sacred and secular music from Slavic, Baltic, Balkan, Jewish, and Bosnian-Muslim traditions. \$14-\$17, www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Christmas with the Celts

Sunday, Dec. 22, 2 & 6 p.m.

Yoshi's S.F.

Irish, Scottish and Irish-American musicians from the PBS show play traditional instrumentals and hybrid Celtic pop-rock originals. \$28-\$55, 415-655-5600, www.yoshis.com

Magnificat: A Venetian Christmas Mass

Sunday, Dec. 22, 4 p.m.

St. Mark's Lutheran Church (1111 O'Farrell St.)

Magnificat together with The Whole Noyse perform Andrea's Mass, motets and canzoni by Giovanni and appropriate chant for the feast day. \$12-\$35, www.sfems.org

Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir

Monday, Dec. 23, 7 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.

Slim's (333 11th St.)

This multiracial and multicultural choir promotes a message of faith, hope, love, and joy in a rollicking, feel-good, energy-packed show that's the best way yet to spend a Christmas Eve. Ages 6 and up. \$15, 415-255-0333, www.slims-sf.com

PERFORMANCES & PARTIES

Broadway Against Bullying

Monday, Dec. 2, 7-9 p.m.

Club Fugazi

This holiday cabaret benefitting No Bully and their efforts to bring innovative, sustainable solutions to bullying, harassment and violence in schools features stars from some of Broadway's biggest hit musicals. \$75-\$150, 415-421-4222, www.childrendefensetnetwork.org

Glide's Annual Holiday Jam: Celebrate50

Wednesday, Dec. 4, 6-10 p.m.

War Memorial Opera House

Celebrate the season and Glide's 50th anniversary with this music and spoken word event benefitting Mo's Kitchen and other Glide programs and featuring Dr. Maya Angelou, Valerie Simpson, Judith Hill, San Jose Taiko, Tom Johnston of the Doobie Brothers, Glide Ensemble and Change Band, and more. 75-\$500, 415-864-3330, www.glide.org

12th Annual Jingle and Mingle & SantaFest

Thursday, Dec. 5, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 9 a.m.-noon

Golden Gate Club (135 Fisher Loop, the Presidio)

Bid on one-of-a-kind designer wreaths to support homeless children while enjoying cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, then take the kids for gingerbread house decorating, Santa photos and crafts. \$125 & up, 925-935-9938, www.childrenofshelters.org

25th Annual Holiday Hob Nob on the Hill

Friday, Dec. 6, 6 p.m.-midnight

St. Francis Hotel

Enjoy a cocktail reception only or the entire evening with dinner, desserts and dancing. Proceeds support programs at Saint Francis Memorial Hospital. \$75 & up, 415-363-6679, www.hobnob2013.eventbrite.com

Help is on the Way for the Holidays XII

Monday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m.

Marines' Memorial Theater (609 Sutter St.)

Benefiting Positive Resource Center and Maitri Compassionate Care, this annual gala includes entertainment by cabaret stars Shawn Ryan, Carly Ozard, Tim Hockenberry, and Kim Nalley; 12-year-old singer-actress Veronica Powers, comedian Bruce Valance, and more. \$40 and up, 415-931-2515, www.richmondermet.org

Cirque Dreams Holidayze

Wed-Sun, Dec. 11-15

Curran Theatre (445 Geary St.)

The perfect way to come in from the cold, forget the holiday stresses and rediscover the magic of the season, this show of 30 artists, 300 costumes and 20 acts features penguins spinning, puppets dancing, reindeer soaring, toy soldiers marching, snowmen balancing and more all high above a landscape of holiday wonderment. \$45-\$160, 866-746-1799, www.shnsf.com

It's Christmas, Carole!

Thu-Sun, Dec. 12-22

Creativity Theater, Yerba Buena Gardens

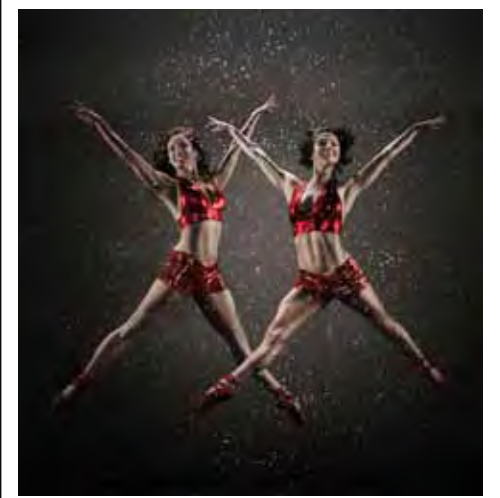
This world-premiere "human cartoon" tells the story of a grumpy secretary working for Scrooge Industries who is visited by ghostly spirits. \$10-\$20, itschristascarole.com

Crones for the Holidays: The Sequel

Sat-Sun, Dec. 14-29,

Exit Theatre (156 Eddy St.)

The Crackpot Crones comedians present a follow-up to last year's vadevillian holiday variety show. \$15-\$20, 415-931-1094, www.theexit.org



Smuin Ballet: The Christmas Ballet

Wed-Sun, Dec. 18-22; Tuesday, Dec. 24; Thu-Fri, Dec. 27-28

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

The program features new works including stunning classical ballet, rollicking character numbers from Bach, and sacred carols to klezmer, gospel and Elvis. \$24-\$64, 415-912-1899, www.smuinballet.org

Paula Poundstone's 4th Annual Ha Ha Ho Ho Holiday Show

Friday, Dec. 20, 8 p.m.

Palace of Fine Arts Theater

Famous for her razor-sharp wit and spontaneity, you won't want to miss Poundstone's take on decking the halls and holiday hilarity. \$35-\$40, 800-745-3000, www.ticketmaster.com

Guardsmen Annual Christmas Party

Saturday, Dec. 21, 9 p.m.-1:30 a.m.

Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center

Enjoy a hosted bar, D.J., dancing, and a spirited crowd while you party the night away in an indoor winter wonderland and support at-risk youth through the Guardsmen S.F. \$50-\$135, 415-484-6568, <http://guardsmentreelot.org>

JUST FOR FUN



27th Annual Macy's Holiday Windows

Daily thru Jan 5 (except Dec 25),
9 a.m.- 8 p.m. (most days)
Macy's Union Square

The SF/SPCA's magical Holiday Windows adoption outreach program returns to find homes for kittens, cats, puppies, and dogs while raising funds for the organization's programs. SPCA volunteers will be on hand to introduce the animals and the adoption process. Free, 415-554-3000, www.sfpca.org

Botanical Wreath-Making Workshop

Saturday, Dec. 7, 9 a.m.-noon & 1-4 p.m.
Strybing Arboretum, S.F. Botanical Garden,
Golden Gate Park

Create festive wreaths and garlands using colorful greens and cuttings from the garden. Bring pruners, wire cutters and ornaments/ribbons. \$35-\$45, 415-661-1316 ext. 400, www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

SFMade Holiday Gift Fair

Sat-Sun, Dec. 7-8, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fleet Room, Bldg. D, Fort Mason Center

Discover locally made gift items including jewelry, gourmet gifts, home and garden items, pet gear, toys, holiday cards and decorations, and more from 100 local brands. Free, 415-408-5605, www.sfmade.org



27th Annual Cable Car Caroling

Sunday, Dec. 8, 12:30-6:30 p.m.
Galleria at the Design Center (101 Henry Adams St.)

Bring the family and climb aboard classic cable cars that dash through the city, visiting nursing facilities, group homes, and private residences to spread the gift of song and goodwill while lifting the spirits of seniors. Afterward, share in a festive holiday dinner and entertainment to support the Institute on Aging. \$10-\$70, 415-750-4143, www.ioaging.org

Rock the Square 33rd Annual Celebrity Bell Ringing

Friday, Dec. 13, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Union Square

Featuring S.F. celebrities and local bands, this day of bell ringing, singing, music, and fun seeks to spread the joy of the holiday season and the spirit of giving to support The Salvation Army. 415-503-2736, www.celebritybellringing.org

Old Time Maritime Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 14, 6-7:40 p.m.
Hyde Street Pier

Experience Christmas 1901, meet and talk with captains and crews aboard historic ships, and take a lamplit guided tour (tours leave every 20 minutes). 415-447-5000

Holiday Caroling on Union Street

Saturday, Dec. 21, 1 p.m.
Meet at St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church
(2325 Union St. at Steiner)

Join the caroling while strolling down Union Street and return to the church for refreshments. 800-310-6563, sresproductions.com

5th Annual Renegade Craft Fair Holiday Market

Sat-Sun, Dec. 21-22, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Concourse Exhibition Center (635 Eighth St.)

Snag homemade gifts for everyone on your list among the more than 250 indie crafters on display. Includes interactive workshops, music, craft-making for kids, and food and drinks. Free, www.renegadecraft.com

POTABLES & EDIBLES



Fisherman's Wharf Crab Fest

Sunday, Dec. 8, noon-3 p.m.
Maritime Museum (800 Beach Street)

Celebrate crab season and the holidays with signature crab dishes prepared by Wharf chefs complemented by local wines to support the Fisherman's Wharf Community Benefit District, which seeks to preserve and enhance the waterfront. \$40-\$45, www.visitfishermanswharf.com/crabfest

Guardsmen Annual Crab Feed

Thursday, Dec. 12, 6 p.m.
Guardsmen Christmas Tree Lot, Fort Mason Center

Start with cocktails, then enjoy a fresh crab and pasta dinner, and finish your evening with D.J. AJAX spinning tunes. Proceeds benefit at-risk youth. \$65, 415-484-6568, <http://guardsmentreelot.org>

Festa dei Dolci Italiani

Thursday, Dec. 12, 7-9 p.m.
Museo Italo Americano (Bldg. C, Fort Mason Center)

View the new exhibition, Unescoitalia: The World Heritage Sites in the Work of 14 Photographers, enjoy special Italian holiday sweets, savories and wine, find gifts, and maybe even win a raffle prize. \$35, RSVP by Dec. 6, 415-673-2200, www.sfmuseo.org

5th Annual La Cocina Holiday Alley

Friday, Dec. 13, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Crocker Galleria (50 Post St.)

This fair promises one-stop shopping from local food artisans for all your foodie needs plus live music, drinks and a gift-wrapping station. 415-824-2729, www.lacocinasf.org

CHILD'S PLAY

Children's Magical Tea

Fri-Sat thru Dec. 31, noon, 12:30 p.m. & 1 p.m.
Top of the Mark, Mark Hopkins Hotel

This elegant tea service includes finger sandwiches and freshly baked scones accompanied by a specialty tea selection and a buffet menu designed for children. Includes a magic show, face painting and a cookie-decorating station with the chef. \$48-\$50, 415-616-6941, www.topofthemark.com



'Tis the Season for Science

Daily thru Jan 5
California Academy of Sciences

Don't miss this reindeer rendezvous of live caribou this holiday season. \$19.95-\$29.95, www.calacademy.org

Teddy Bear Tea

Fri-Sun, Dec. 6-8; Sat-Sun, Dec. 14-15; Fri-Tue,
Dec. 20-24, 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Ritz-Carlton

This special tea experience features Santa's elf, plenty of stuffed animals, the giant Ritz-Carlton Teddy Bear (photo ops available), hot chocolate, cookies and pastries, assorted sandwiches, holiday entertainment, and a teddy bear gift. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Greater Bay Area Make-A-Wish Foundation. \$110, 415-296-7465, www.ritzcarlton.com/sanfrancisco



Holiday Crafts Day

Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Randall Museum (199 Museum Way)

Get crafty and make presents and decorations for the holidays! Create one-of-a-kind hand-made gifts and items including beeswax candles, scented gift soaps, wooden trains, candy houses, and more, followed by a special holiday performance of the Daniel Da Vinci Comedy Circus Show. Free, 415-554-9600, www.randallmuseum.org



Mark Foehringer Dance Project | SF: Nutcracker Sweets

Various days, Dec. 7-24
Southside Theater, Fort Mason Center

This Nutcracker redux is just 50 minutes long and is designed for families with young children. Live music and dancer Brian Fisher, this production is as zany as it is beautiful. Suitable for ages 3 & up. \$18-\$28, 800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com

Holiday Heroes

Monday, Dec. 9, 5:45-8:45 p.m.
AT&T Park

Bay Area sports and media stars come together for the ultimate party to benefit the Junior Giants Baseball Program, the 49ers Foundation, Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream Foundation, Raphael House, and others. Enjoy celebrity athletes, ballpark fare and drink, cooking demonstrations, face painting, kids' activities, and much more. \$150 and up, 650-321-4142, www.wenderweis.org

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Project Glimmer: Boxing Joy

Saturday, Dec. 7, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
S.F. Firefighters Toy Program headquarters
(2225 Jerrold Ave.)

Prepare gifts for distribution by putting them in pretty boxes and bags for delivery to at-risk girls and women during the holiday season. Light snacks and beverages served during three-hour shifts. <http://projectglimmer.org/boxing-joy>, amber@projectglimmer.org

Christmas Outreach

Saturday, Dec. 14, 8:30-2 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 25, 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
City Impact (230 Jones St.)

City Impact strives to help meet the physical needs of the hungry, lonely and poor and needs volunteers to help cook, prepare and deliver meals and toys to kids, and serve hot sit-down meals to the homeless. \$25, 415-292-1770, haley@sfcityimpact.com, www.sfcityimpact.com



26th Annual Curbside Donation Drive

Sat-Tue, Dec. 21-24, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
St. Anthony Foundation (121 Golden Gate Ave.)
Giving for the holiday season made easier! Drop off your holiday gifts of hams, pantry items, unopened hygiene items, new socks, cold-weather outerwear, and monetary donations without ever leaving your car. 415-592-2700, www.stanthony.org

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS

Circa 2013 NYE Extravaganza

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 5 p.m.-midnight
Circa (2001 Chestnut at Fillmore)
From a three-course dinner menu to D.J. Joe G playing Top 40 hits and culminating in a complimentary midnight champagne toast, spend your last hours of the year preparing for 2014. Contact for dinner specials, 415-351-0175, www.circasf.com

BATS New Year's Eve Special

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 8-9:45 p.m.
Bayfront Theatre, Fort Mason Center
BATS' all-star cast presents a magical evening of scenes and stories sure to capture your heart and imagination with a lot of laughter and joy! \$35-40, 415-474-6776, www.improv.org



Not Your Normal New Year's Eve

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m.
Marines' Memorial Theatre
Ring in the New Year with an evening of hilariously unconventional stand-up comedy featuring Laurie Kilmartin, Brent Weinbach, Kellen Erskine, Casey Ley, Dan St. Paul, Joe Klocek, and hosts Jill Bourque and Brian Copeland with live music by D.J. Lucio K. \$45-\$199, 415-392-4400, www.cityboxoffice.com

S.F. Symphony: New Year's Eve Masquerade Party

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 9 p.m.
Davies Symphony Hall
Enjoy a spectacular concert, then join the Prosecco and dessert after-party and get your groove on with Hit Waves on the first tier, or harken back to the golden age of the 1930s with the Peter Mintun Orchestra and dance on the stage. \$85-\$195, www.sfsymphony.org, 415-864-6000

NYE Countdown 2014 SF

Tue, December 31, 9 p.m.-2 a.m.
Horizon Restaurant and Lounge (498 Broadway)
Dance the year away on two dance floors to the hip-hop, top 40, and club hits that will go nicely with your premium party favors, LED glow sticks, balloon drop, and a confetti blast that you'll still be picking off your clothes when you get home in the early hours of 2014. Ages 21 & up, \$20, 415-576-1118, www.horizonsf.com

5th Annual Streets of S.F. New Year's Eve Party

Tuesday, Dec. 31, 9 p.m.-2 a.m.
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center
Party in the New Year with a premium-hosted bar at this event that boasts the best bartender-to-guest ratio of any NYE party in the Bay Area as well as state-of-the-art visuals and sound, and music by world renowned D.J. talent. 125-\$150, www.eyehartsf.com

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HEALTHFUL LIFE :: Party smart

Avoid the festive 15

by thalia farshchian

THE HOLIDAYS CAN be a tempting time in terms of eating and drinking. All too often, we pay for our choices in the New Year when we step on the scale or find a favorite outfit a bit snug. By maintaining a balanced regimen, you can still enjoy the holiday festivities, avoid the aftermath, and launch into the new year ahead of the game.

PICK YOUR POISON

There are things we indulge in because we want them and then things we indulge in because they are in front of us. Most people know which indulgence they prioritize — commonly sugar, salt, or alcohol. These may change from day to day, but like many things in life, knowing what you want is key.

DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Our bodies cannot store alcohol, and we make every effort to get it out of our system. Alcohol negatively affects our blood sugar and can cause low blood sugar, known as hypoglycemia. The hypoglycemia increases hunger, which results in the familiar munchies. Alcohol has no nutrients, fat, carbohydrates, or protein, but this blood sugar imbalance can greatly affect weight.

DRINK SMARTER

Follow these guidelines when consuming alcohol:

- Never drink on an empty stomach.
- Consider alcohol your treat, and maintain a clean diet consisting of vegetables, lean protein, and healthy fats.
- Moderation is key — for men, no more than 4 drinks per day and no more than 14 drinks per week. For women, no more than 3 drinks per day and no more than 7 drinks per week.
- Drink a glass of water between each alcoholic beverage.
- Alcohol impairs nutrient absorption, so take a good B-complex before a night out to avoid or reduce a hangover.
- Avoid diet soda mixers and carbonated beverages, which actually increase the rate of intoxication.

• Drinking alters your liver metabolism, so consult your doctor if you are taking any medications.

STAY HYDRATED

Staying hydrated is key to maintaining a health-

SIT DOWN AND SLOW DOWN

The purpose of the holidays is to connect and spend time with those you love, so make sure to sit down and be present for the entire experience. Slow down by chewing your food thoroughly (approximately 30 chews per bite) to let your satiety signals keep up with your intake. This eating tip alone can make a giant impact!

KEEP UP WITH SLEEP

The holiday season can bring about long evenings, but staying on top of your sleep will help you reduce stress and fatigue. The fatigue from lack of sleep can lead your body to crave more food, particularly sugar and salt, to maintain energy levels.

EXERCISE FIRST THING IN MORNING

During the holidays, there is potential for last-minute exciting activities to derail your plans. Getting your exercise out of the way in the morning allows you to check it off your list and stoke your metabolism at the start of the day. By combining cardiovascular exercise like walking, cycling, jogging, or swimming with weight training, you can increase your metabolism and build muscle to burn more calories. If you are traveling, plan a body weight regimen ahead to keep you on track.

START YOUR NEW YEAR OFF BY DETOXING WITH THE DOC

I will be kicking off the new year with a three-week detox with the Doc Workshop educating you on nutrition and personalizing a plan to your lifestyle. You will take away tools you can implement for the rest of 2014 to achieve your health goals. Please call 415-732-7029 for more information.

Thalia Farshchian is a naturopathic doctor at Discover Health. Her background includes both conventional and alternative modalities, and her practice is primarily focused on weight management, hormone imbalances and gastrointestinal conditions. E-mail: drthalia@discoverhealthmd.com

Alcohol impairs nutrient absorption, so take a good B-complex before a night out.

ful weight and to eliminate accumulated toxins. A good general rule is to drink half your body weight in ounces. When properly hydrated, your body is more inclined to release toxins from fat cells to be removed from the body.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE FESTIVITIES

If you know you have particular dietary needs, bring a dish to your events even if it is not a potluck. People never say no to more delicious food and you remain guilt-free. Here is a crowd pleaser:

Spicy Pumpkin Hummus Serves 12

- 1-14 ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 1/4 cups pumpkin puree
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/4-1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (more or less to taste)
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Place garbanzo beans in the bowl of a food processor. Process until very finely chopped. With the motor running, add the garlic through the tube and process until very fine. Add the remaining ingredients and process until smooth. Taste for seasoning, adding additional salt, pepper and lemon juice, if desired.

Serve with fresh vegetables or sweet potato chips.

AVOID BANKING CALORIES

Many people “bank” food for the day, so they can indulge more in the evening. This tactic usually backfires because you will find yourself ravenous by the time the evening comes. Eat healthful meals consisting of lean protein, healthy fats, and vegetables if you know you are going to indulge later.

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The Dunn family trying to capture the perfect family photo

Picture-perfect holiday photos

by liz farrell

IT'S DECEMBER AND THAT MEANS THE holiday rush is upon us. One of my favorite parts of the holiday season is the tradition, and the one I look forward to every year is receiving holiday cards from all over the world. It's the one time of the year I'm actually excited to get mail.

The best advice is to color coordinate without being too "matchy matchy."

Even though families of my generation shy away from a traditional Christmas letter and with all the pictures on social media sites, there is still something special about receiving a card with a picture on it around the holidays.

We take many pictures in our family, so I know the labor of love that goes into taking and picking just the right picture. I am not an expert, but between our immediate family and trying to capture 12 nieces and nephews under the age of 7, I hope I can shed a little light on what it takes to get a great family picture.

PLAN IT OUT

Whether you are planning to hire a professional or just have a friend take your photo, one of the best first steps is to make a game plan. First, find a date that works for everyone, and avoid squeezing it in between soccer games or after work. Second, choose the setting and everyone's clothing. The best advice I have received on this is to color coordinate without looking too "matchy matchy." Get it all laid out and organized down to the socks and hair bows so you can avoid last-minute meltdowns. Third, depending on the ages of your children, it may be helpful to arrange for an extra set of helping hands. This person can be another set of eyes, help with hair bows and collars, keep the children's attention, and maybe even make the baby smile.

IT'S ALL ABOUT TIMING

This can be a critical piece of advice, especially if you have small children. We have all been there struggling to get our children to smile when they are overtired

or hungry — it's no fun for anyone. Time of day is important, and photographers will often suggest taking photos in the morning after breakfast and before naps when children usually are at their best. Keeping them well fed and well hydrated is important. We usually pack a few non-messy snacks and lots of water. It also never hurts to throw in a few bibs or napkins to avoid spills. One of the best ways we have found to keep kids motivated for pictures is good old-fashioned bribery. Decide on something beforehand that you can use during the photo shoot to keep them interested and paying attention, like a lollipop or small toy.

KEEP IT NATURAL

Choose a setting that means something to your family, maybe a park or special picnic spot. This will help everyone feel more comfortable. When posing for the pictures, do things that you would do naturally, such as walking together, reading a story, or sharing a joke. This will allow the photographer to snap at just the right moment when you are all relaxed and enjoying the moment. And don't be afraid to laugh at yourselves. Sending a silly picture will most likely be the most remembered.

Remember, when taking pictures especially with small children, there is no such thing as the perfect picture. Embrace the ages and stages of your children and go with a "majority rules" approach — the picture where the most people look their best wins. Be open to the photo that was

I know the labor of love that goes into pictures.

taken without a lot of planning but turned out great (on the family vacation, for example). Sometimes the best pictures are those we don't plan for.

I hope these tips will take away some of the stress and make the experience more enjoyable for everyone, which will reflect in your pictures.

Liz Farrell is the mother of three young children. She was formerly a television producer in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco. E-mail: liz@marinatimes.com



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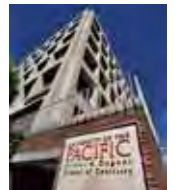
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The San Francisco Bay's entrance was originally named "Chrysopylae" meaning Golden Gate because it resembled Istanbul's Golden Horn. The Golden Gate bridge consists of 23 miles of ladders and 300,000 rivets in each tower, and was the world's longest span when it opened in 1937. It is so long that by the time the painters get from one end to the other, it's time to paint the opposite end again.

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THE URBAN HOME & GARDEN

Snow cable chains

by julia strzesieski

DURING THE HOLIDAYS AND WINTER ski months, many San Francisco residents take to the road to hit the ski slopes. Veteran Tahoe travelers know that tire chains, or more accurately, tire cables or traction devices, are sometimes necessary when crossing the mountains in winter. In Northern California, chain requirements are most often enforced on Interstate 80 over Donner Pass, U.S. Highway 50 over Echo Summit, and Interstate 5 north of Redding.

Tire cables are sold by the pair and help car or truck tires get more traction in conditions where snow or ice have accumulated on the road. Although four-wheel drive and all-wheel drive vehicles with snow tires used to be exempt from chain control areas, currently there is no exemption and all vehicles are required to have chains in these weather conditions.

Cable chains usually feature tough carbon steel rollers that provide traction and long wear and are galvanized for rust prevention. The low-profile steel rollers allow increased tire-to-road contact, resulting in better stability and considerable reduction in noise and vibration.

Many hardware retailers and tire stores stock the most popular-sized cables for cars and passenger trucks. You will need your specific tire size as set forth by the ISO metric tire code. Virtually all tires have this information molded into the sidewalls, or you can use the factory spec for your tires if they have not been changed since you purchased your car. At most retailers, tire cables are not returnable even if they are unused, so it is important that you purchase the correct size.

HOW TO READ YOUR TIRE SIZE

The tire code consists of a leading letter and a string of numbers, for example, P285/40R15. The leading letter "P" cor-

relates to a passenger car; "LT" signifies a light truck. (European car models may not have a letter.)

Following the letter (or lack of one), there is a three-digit number (285 in the example below), which is the NSW, or tire width in millimeters.

After the slash are two or three additional numbers. In the example below, 40 represents the aspect ratio 40 percent, or the percentage of the total width of the tire that the sidewall would cover if placed directly over it.

Following the last series of numbers, there may also be an additional letter indicating the construction of the tire carcass: "B," (bias belt), "D" (diagonal) or "R" (radial, which is the standard on most vehicles).

Finally, the tire size will terminate with another two-digit number, 15 in the example, which is the wheel diameter the tires are designed to fit.

IMPORTANT

If you buy a pair of tire chains, you often must buy a pair of tensioners with them. These are essentially six small rubber bungee-type cords, bound by a circular rubber piece in the center and come two to a bag. This is an integral part of the several popular systems and may not be omitted.

If you are required to put chains on your tires, you must pull completely off the roadway. Independently employed chain installers are usually available if you don't wish to install them yourself. These folks do not sell or rent chains, and they do not work for Caltrans. Be sure to have cash for their services, get a receipt, and note the installer's badge number.

Be prepared — don't get caught on a mountain pass without snow cables!

Julia Strzesieski is the marketing coordinator for Cole Hardware and can be reached at julia@marinatimes.com.



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Real estate prices vary greatly across the city by the bay, but the closer to the Marina and the Bay you live, the more you can expect to pay. PHOTO: BROCKEN INAGLORY / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

2013: A year at the top

What really happened to San Francisco real estate this year?

by john zipperer

A YEAR AGO, AS SAN Francisco headed into 2013, its residential real estate market was firing on all cylinders and — sticking with the auto metaphor — there were no brakes. There were a few predictions of a crash, but those worries would not be realized. Instead, 2013 turned out to be a year in which the local market recorded new highs in housing prices and rental rates, and commercial development changed the skyline.

Time's Christopher Matthews offered an assessment in November in which he asked whether certain U.S. housing markets were headed

toward "Housing Bubble 2.0." San Francisco appears third on his list of the "overvalued" markets, which could indicate a crash in the offing. Luckily, he threw water on his own fire by noting that the mortgage market is much more constrained than in the pre-Great Recession go-go days, and the degree of overvalue is less than in 2004.

So how did San Francisco perform in 2013? And specifically how did the City's Northside do?

Starting with our neighborhoods, Frank Allen Realtors provides some helpful info guaranteed to deflate many hopeful homeowners. As of November 18, the median selling price for single-family homes for the previous 180 days

was \$2.41 million in the Marina, \$3.58 million in Cow Hollow, \$4.95 million in Presidio Heights, and a sinus-clearing \$5.25 million in Pacific Heights.

Median selling prices for condos in the Marina for that same timeframe were \$1.16 million, \$1.07 million in Cow Hollow, \$1.24 million in Pac Heights, and \$1.78 million in Presidio Heights, according to that same Frank Allen source. Note that in this sample, 71 of the sales in the Marina over the past 12 months were condos, 33 were single family residences, 11 were tenants-in-common units, plus three each of three-unit and two-unit properties.

A few random statistics from Zephyr help fill in the details. It

reports that, for example, the average days of a property on the market also varies greatly by neighborhood, with North Beach having 44 days and Presidio Heights having 56 days. Meanwhile the average price per square foot was highest (for a 90-day period in the fall) in Noe Valley at \$2,678 (up 344.1 percent over the previous 90 days), but you could get a bargain in Glen Park for \$343, according to Zephyr. Those numbers probably underscore the likely effects of individual sales that warp the overall averages; Noe Valley's a great neighborhood, certainly, but it's not that far out of whack; and this writer can attest to the many charms of his former neighborhood, Glen Park.

There have been numerous reports that prices have begun to moderate slightly in San Francisco, but that doesn't mean they're crashing by any means. According to Trulia, citywide average listing price as of early November was \$1,534,456, which was down \$87,688 (or 5.4 percent) from the week before. Yet the median sales price was \$840,000, which was up \$92,000 (or 12.3 percent) from a year earlier. Naturally, any such numbers can be affected by a few outsized sales, especially in a market with relatively few properties on the market, which remains the case in San Francisco.

In mid-November, Redfin report-

INVESTOR, continued on 30



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REAL ESTATE UPDATE Present and accounted for

A home for the holidays

by stephanie saunders ahlberg

WHATEVER HOLIDAYS YOU celebrate, I think we all look forward to being in our home with friends, family, and loved ones. Throughout history, there have been countless songs, poems, and expressions written about home, going home, love of home, and home and family.

A big part of the American Dream has been, and continues to be, to own one's own home. Of course, in San Francisco, many rent rather than own. Still, the desire to own is strong.

What about the month of December? Is this a good time to buy? Though you might not have time enough to purchase a home and move into it by the holidays, it is not too late to make a new home your biggest holiday gift ever to the family.

Yes, there are fewer homes on the market during the holidays, but those who are selling during this period are motivated sellers. Likewise, those who are buying now are serious buyers. So if getting a new home (or even an investment property) is on your list, you might consider continuing your search during the holidays. Why wait until the busy, hyper-competitive spring buying market?

If you're thinking about selling your home during the holidays, it is a great time of year to put mulled spices on the stove when showing your property. It makes the buyer feel right at home. You can even put out a plate of holiday cookies for those coming through.

As a buyer, when looking for your new home, ask yourself, "How does this home make me feel?"

What are some of the words you would use to describe the property? Bright? Cheerful? Happy? Chic? Beautiful? Think about the adjectives that make you feel most content when you think of "home." Is there a match?

The holidays are always special. But spending them in a home you own with your family seems the most special of all. If you're serious about buying a home, continue your search during the holidays.

Who knows — you might just own that home sooner than you think possible. And what a holiday gift that would make! Happy Holidays!

Stephanie Saunders Ahlberg has been a real estate agent for more than 30 years and joined Hill & Co. in 1983, where she has consistently been among the top 10 salespeople. She can be reached at www.realtyinsanfrancisco.com.

INVESTOR

CONTINUED from page 29

ed the citywide median listing price was a lower-than-Trulia \$849,000, at a median square foot price of \$743, and purchasers paid 106.7 percent of the asking price. Trulia, Zillow, Redfin, and other services have different stats based upon the particular properties reported on their sites, but they are consistent in showing that the market remains strong, presenting a prime selling opportunity for owners and a challenge for buyers.

Paragon Real Estate Group reports that from May 1 to September 30, the most expensive house sales were in Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, and Cow Hollow, with \$4,775,000 as median sales price. If you're looking to remain in Fog City but want to pick up a bargain, there's Bayview's \$475,000 or Visitacion Valley's \$580,000 median prices. According to Pacific Union, for the entire first 10 months of 2013 (numbers weren't in yet for the final two months), sales prices in the City were more than 100 percent of the asking price. That's saying something, considering just last December 2012 sales prices were a reported 91 percent of asking prices.

Not surprisingly, San Francisco made the National Association of Realtors' list of the five most expensive housing markets with an average price of \$705,000, topped only by San Jose's \$805,000. You have to move all the way to San Diego, the fifth most expensive market

in the entire country, to get below Bayview's prices; San Diego's median price was a reported \$485,000.

THE OFFICE SECTOR

Nationally, the commercial real estate sector experienced a good 2013 and expects that to continue into 2014, with office space and multifamily real estate doing quite well.

According to LoopNet, an online commercial real estate marketplace, San Francisco is a good place to be a commercial developer or landlord. Asking rents for office, industrial, and retail are all up noticeably from a year earlier, with average asking rents for office reaching \$39.57 per square foot (up 1.1 percent over the past year), industrial asking rents at \$15.54 (up 12.1 percent), and retail asking rents at \$40.06 percent (up 8.6 percent), LoopNet reports.

Going more in-depth into the office market, we see a good snapshot of what's happening overall to the San Francisco economy.

Matching available office inventory with the market need for commercial space can be as difficult as trying to fire an arrow accurately while running. When there is an economic downturn, demand for office space can disappear quickly; new companies are few and far between, some existing companies are driven out of business, and other businesses either cancel their expansion plans or cut costs by reducing the amount of space they lease. But in many ways, a downturn is the time to start the

multi-year process needed to plan, get approvals, and build office space, because if a developer waits until the market is strong again before beginning the process, the new office space might come on the market after it has peaked and is headed back downward.

It won't surprise anyone to report that the office market is currently strong, and neither will the reasons for that raise an eyebrow. "San Francisco County added 12,700 jobs year-over-year, while unemployment fell to 5.6 percent — well below the national average of 7.3 percent," notes real estate services firm Jones Lang LaSalle in its 2013 third-quarter report. It's not just Twitter and other social media companies behind the expansion; Jones says it's also cloud computing and e-commerce companies.

In the first three quarters of 2013, total net absorption — the amount of inventory newly leased — reached 816,000 square feet of office space, and more than 200,000 sf of that was just involved in two large deals, according to Jones. Overall, the firm's research office reports that office vacancy rates fell over the past year, as did the amount of new supply of office space. Against that background, two speculative developments broke ground, each expected to bring more than 100,000 square feet to the market, and Jones expected leasing activity to remain strong through the end of the year.

E-mail: john@marinatimes.com



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Margaret Handelman, resident since 2011

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The Marina Times Real Estate Market Report: October 2013

By Hill & Co.

SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow	77 Pixley Street	3BD/2.5BA	\$2,125,000	Above	3
	3052 Octavia Street	4BD/4BA	\$3,100,000	Above	21
	3150 Buchanan Street	4BD/3.5BA	\$3,600,000	Above	12
	2720 Lyon Street	2BD/3.5BA	\$3,854,000	Above	19
	2529 Union Street	3BD/3.5BA	\$4,200,000	Above	10
	2829 Greenwich Street	4BD/4.5BA	\$5,850,000	Below	62
Lake	352 Lake Street	6BD/3BA	\$2,850,000	Above	12
	120 Lake Street	4BD/4.5BA	\$3,425,000	Below	93
	82 6th Avenue	4BD/3.5BA	\$3,650,000	Above	10
Laurel Heights	18 Manzanita Avenue	4BD/3BA	\$3,025,000	Above	26
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina	59 Rico Way	3BD/1.5BA	\$1,692,000	Below	32
	230 Capra Way	3BD/2BA	\$1,900,000	Above	26
	1650 Bay Street	3BD/2.5BA	\$2,125,000	Above	45
	501 Marina Boulevard	5BD/4BA	\$5,214,000	Below	39
Nob Hill (no sales)					
North Beach (no sales)					
Pacific Heights	2668 Vallejo Street	4BD/5BA	\$9,500,000	At	3
	2622 Jackson Street	7BD/6BA	\$13,300,000	Above	19
Presidio Heights	60 Arguello Boulevard	5BD/3.5BA	\$4,330,000	Below	42
Russian Hill	18 Moore Place	2BD/1.75BA	\$1,600,000	Above	25
	131 Culebra Terrace	3BD/3BA	\$2,500,000	Above	10
	2430 Hyde Street	3BD/3.5BA	\$5,675,000	Above	6
	864 Francisco Street	4BD/3.5BA	\$6,500,000	Below	124
Sea Cliff	259 32nd Avenue	3BD/2.5BA	\$1,927,000	Above	12
	250 32nd Avenue	4BD/2.5BA	\$2,408,000	Above	8
Telegraph Hill (no sales)					

CONDOS

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow	2701 Van Ness Avenue #503	1BD/1BA	\$505,000	Above	19
	2378A Union Street #A	1BD/1BA	\$560,000	Above	7
	2920 Buchanan Street #4	1BD/1BA	\$780,000	Above	25
	2629 Chestnut Street	2BD/1.5BA	\$1,450,000	Above	28
Lake	182 8th Avenue	2BD/2BA	\$1,100,000	Above	21
	4502 California Avenue	2BD/2BA	\$1,100,000	Above	16
	51 14th Avenue	2BD/1.5BA	\$1,120,000	Above	12
	240 24th Avenue	2BD/2BA	\$1,199,000	At	28
Laurel Heights	8 Jordan Avenue #3	2BD/2BA	\$1,176,000	Above	17
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina	3120 Franklin Street #1	1BD/1BA	\$680,000	Above	19
	1921 Jefferson Street #303	2BD/2BA	\$820,000	Below	72
	1540 Lombard Street #J	2BD/1BA	\$825,000	Above	10
	1540 Lombard Street #D	2BD/1BA	\$885,000	Above	43
	1111 Bay Street #202	2BD/2BA	\$1,050,000	Above	21
	3244 Broderick Street	2BD/2BA	\$1,250,000	Above	26
	2021 Jefferson Street	2BD/2BA	\$1,475,000	At	13
	66 Cervantes Boulevard	2BD/2BA	\$1,605,000	Above	20
	3743 Fillmore Street	2BD/1.5BA	\$1,700,000	Above	13
Nob Hill	41 Reed Street	0BD/1BA	\$325,000	Above	49
	1615 Jones Street #5	1BD/1BA	\$485,000	Below	43
	1177 California Street #922	0BD/1BA	\$486,000	Below	32
	1177 California Street #208	1BD/1BA	\$535,000	Above	12
	1440 Broadway #104	1BD/1BA	\$715,000	Above	16
	1650 Jackson Street #404	1BD/1BA	\$725,000	Below	38
	1234-1254 Washington Street #1250	3BD/2BA	\$947,500	Below	61
	1566 Jones Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,150,000	Above	40
	1310 California Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,155,000	Above	16
	1419 Clay Street	4BD/2BA	\$1,200,000	Above	104
	1308 California Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,270,000	Below	34
	1320 Taylor Street	3BD/2.5BA	\$1,600,000	Above	21
	30 Miller Place #1	2BD/2BA	\$2,000,001	Above	21
	North Beach	33 Vandewater Street #204	1BD/1BA	\$520,000	Below
600 Chestnut Street #111		2BD/2BA	\$790,000	Below	163
865 Vallejo Street #101		2BD/1BA	\$900,000	Above	16
445 Francisco Street #101		2BD/2BA	\$995,000	At	36
Pacific Heights	1817 California Street #109	1BD/1BA	\$530,000	Below	87
	2211 California Street #307	1BD/1BA	\$540,000	Above	46
	2556 Gough Street	1BD/1BA	\$735,000	Above	27
	2800 California Street #301	2BD/2BA	\$890,000	Above	33
	1945 Washington Street #203	2BD/2BA	\$915,000	Above	16
	3110 California Street #1	2BD/2BA	\$950,000	At	38
	1800 Washington Street #913	2BD/2BA	\$1,180,000	Above	17
	3128 Washington Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,270,000	Below	154
	2882 Jackson Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,275,000	Above	98
	2400 Steiner Street #2	1BD/1.5BA	\$1,280,000	Above	4
	2200 Sacramento Street #702	2BD/2BA	\$1,375,000	Above	21
	2846 Sacramento Street	2BD/2BA	\$1,450,000	At	17
	1890 Green Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,541,500	Above	15
	1870 Jackson Street #702	3BD/2.5BA	\$1,700,000	Above	10
	2240 Green Street #4	2BD/2BA	\$1,775,000	Above	41
	1927 Jackson Street	3BD/2.5BA	\$1,975,000	Above	9
	1980 Vallejo Street #2	4BD/3BA	\$2,725,000	Above	14
1980 Vallejo Street #5	3BD/3BA	\$2,850,000	Below	153	
Presidio Heights	436 Laurel Street #436	2BD/2BA	\$930,000	Above	18
	122 Arguello Boulevard	3BD/2BA	\$1,500,000	Above	27
	331-335 Spruce Street #333	3BD/2.5BA	\$1,708,000	Above	73
	132 Locust Street	3BD/2BA	\$1,860,000	Above	26
	136 Locust Street	4BD/2BA	\$2,575,000	Below	124
Russian Hill	1925 Leavenworth Street #11	0BD/2BA	\$423,000	Below	57
	2555 Leavenworth Street #102	2BD/1BA	\$720,000	Above	34
	1101 Green Street #404	1BD/1BA	\$725,000	Above	34
	1000 North Point Street #1002	2BD/1BA	\$990,000	Below	91
	945 Lombard Street	2BD/1BA	\$1,175,000	Above	36
	1325 Filbert Street	2BD/2BA	\$2,600,000	Above	35
	1374 Union Street	3BD/3.5BA	\$2,700,000	Above	47
	1000 North Point Street #309	2BD/1BA	\$815,000	Below	124
Sea Cliff (no sales)					
Telegraph Hill	237 Greenwich Street #A	0BD/1BA	\$415,000	Above	26
	382 Green Street #1	1BD/1BA	\$535,000	Below	73
	382 Green Street #2	1BD/1BA	\$565,000	Below	129
	382 Green Street #6	1BD/1BA	\$601,000	Above	87
	382 Green Street #5	1BD/1BA	\$717,500	Above	131
	339 Filbert Street	2BD/2BA	\$1,450,000	At	32
	341 Filbert Street	3BD/3BA	\$3,425,000	Below	192

The data presented in this report is based on the San Francisco Multiple Listing Service and is accurate to the best of our knowledge, but cannot be guaranteed as such. For additional information, contact Hill & Co., 1880 Lombard Street (at Buchanan), 415-321-4362, www.hill-co.com.

MYSTERY HOUSEBUYER :: Ruhan and Ben's story

Match game 2013: Buying without tears

by anonymous

BEN AND RUHAN WANT A HOUSE in San Francisco. Not just any home — a house, with a yard, good neighborhood, multiple bathrooms, off-street parking, and the usual wishlist of incidentals. Their budget doesn't agree.

Ben and Ruhan currently rent, but as they have watched their friends buy homes in recent years, they realized that they, too,

location, location is perhaps the savviest way to compromise. The saying is usually deployed in defense of a property that is expensive — if you want to be located in the prime spot, you've got to be willing to pay for it. But if being in San Francisco city limits is enough, and Ben and Ruhan don't have to live next to their favorite restaurant or be within a two-minute walk to the Google bus, then they've just found something that they can give up and that will save them a ton of money.

Naturally, if this couple were only thinking about prices, they would probably have jumped at the chance to buy a two-bedroom, two-bathroom house in Oakland for the list price of

They have plenty of time to wait until their budget and the market agree.

had a growing desire to own a place of their own. A place they couldn't be evicted from. A place where the rent can never go up, forcing them to find a new place to rent in a landlord's market. (\$3,500 for a one-bedroom apartment? Seriously?) A place, in short, in which they can anticipate growing old. That will take a while, because this couple is in their early 30s. So they have plenty of time to grow older, and though they don't know it, they have lots of time to wait until their budget and the market agree.

They hope to spend about \$650,000. If their desires matched their budget and the market, they would buy a great condominium in trendy SOMA or a fixer-upper house on the southern end of the City.

From a simple search on Zillow, I found a one-bedroom, 1.5 bath condo just under \$650,000 that even includes a parking space. Or for that same price they might take an Opera Plaza two-bedroom, three-bathroom

\$629,000. Or the Berkeley three-bedroom, two-bathroom home priced at \$575,000. There are options.

But Ruhan and Ben have been insistent: They want to buy in San Francisco. They can compromise on location, size, parking, age and condition of the property, and other things. But location might well be what can give them the biggest gain for their compromise.

If they were up for being pioneers, and they were willing to face down San Francisco's ever-present anti-gentrifiers, they might consider buying in one of the City's less expensive up-and-coming neighborhoods. Forget about doing that in the Tenderloin; for a host of structural and political reasons, the Tenderloin is not going to become Lincoln Park West. But, Mission is attracting many newcomers who are coming in and investing in the neighborhood (to the consternation of some longtime locals, of course). Or

Even in pricey areas such as the Marina District, bargains can be found.

townhouse condo and be right in the midst of museums and concert halls and even a handy courthouse for when they have jury duty. (O.K., most people don't put that on their wish list, but it's there nonetheless.) There's even a single family home in

Outer Mission that's a trust sale; it has two bedrooms and one bathroom, but it needs work. (The listing says "Needs new kitchen, baths, plumbing and too much to list." Good to know they're not overselling it.)

But Ben and Ruhan are not there yet; they're not yet matching their means to their wants. Real estate advisors, agents, and other commentators bring up this topic all the time, and that's for the simple reason that people shoot for the moon when they are buying a home, especially if it is their first home (so they might not have been paying sufficient attention to how things really work).

They can compromise on all kinds of things, and that could be demoralizing if they don't realize that some things don't really bother you if you lose them.

The old saying that the most important thing in real estate is location,

they might consider Dog Patch and be right near downtown. Or head out to the far western end of the City, and what they give up by not being near downtown they gain by being near the Pacific Ocean.

Even in pricier neighborhoods such as the Marina, bargains can be found, but probably not without some of those other compromises coming into play. (Forget the yard for \$650,000.)

Ben and Ruhan will find a place, but it will probably take them a while to reach the point where they know what they are willing to compromise. When I last heard from them, they were still at the shooting-for-the-moon stage and had not yet come down to earth. When they get here, the good news is that they will still be able to purchase their home in San Francisco.

Anonymous is in an undisclosed location.

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S.F. is different

by carole isaacs

ARE YOU A RECENT TRANSPLANT to San Francisco trying to get your sea legs in the city by the bay and thinking about buying a home? Are you a first-time home buyer? Are you a buyer who has owned a home for many years and is thinking about downsizing? Even if you have read about the high price of San Francisco real estate and the competitive nature of making an offer on a home, the realities of the market will be quite an eye opener.

"You don't need to sugar coat the information you give me," a buyer who had just moved to San Francisco wrote in an e-mail. I replied that another client who was a recent transplant said to me after looking at property for some time and getting to know the market, "I've learned that in San Francisco, real estate is a blood sport." I had to agree it was not for the faint of heart or a buyer who was not committed to living in the City. Only the most aggressive and focused buyers meet with success.

Following the request to not sugar coat information, here are some things to keep in mind.

- Since the beginning of 2013, real estate in San Francisco has gone up 15-25 percent, depending

on whose information you are considering. It may feel like it is time to wait for prices to settle down or even go down. Waiting to buy is a serious mistake. This is the beginning of what most informed people believe is a 20-year growth period in the Bay Area.

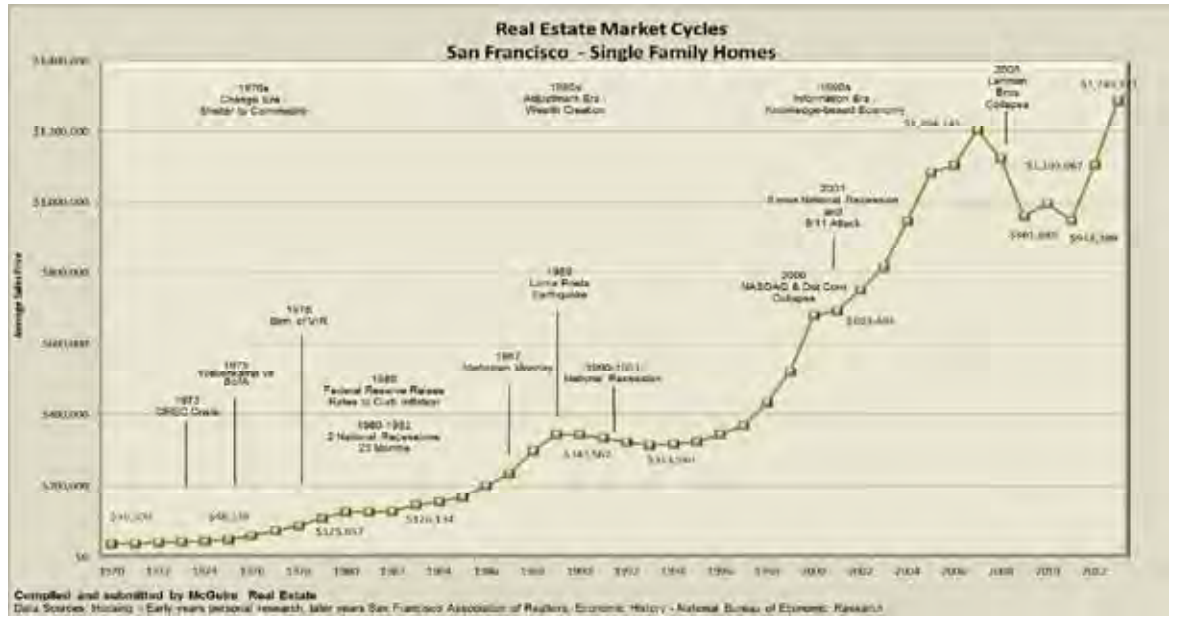
- There are so many high-rise buildings under construction today or in the works that single-family homes are going to be under extraordinary demand in years to come. New transplants continue to flow into the City at a pace that will keep the demand for housing high.

- The pace of sales in recently completed and soon-to-be-completed buildings is amazing to even the most experienced developers.

- The market is moving fast, and desirable homes are in contract in 10 days or less. This will leave you breathless when it comes time to make an offer and you have little time to consider what to do. This is when you must trust your real estate agent for advice.

- Winning offers often have few or no contingencies. This is difficult for new buyers to understand and makes it extremely important that they carefully read the disclosures.

- Don't let the cash offers discourage you. Investors and others with cash are closely comparing their investment options and often



believe they should pay less since they are paying cash. Remember the bank's money is green too! In the end most sellers are looking at how much money will be in their bank accounts when the deal is done.

- Inventory is so low that few homes fall out of escrow and come back on the market.

- Buyers submit back-up offers. This means that the seller has accepted another offer, but will take a back-up offer in case the first offer falls out of contract. The contract price and terms are settled and the contract is fully ratified and in back-up position. Believe it or not, there may be as many as three back-up offers on a desirable home.

- Because so many homes have back-up offers, even fewer homes come back on the market if they fall out of escrow.

- It may take six months or more to find a home that works for you. Patience is key to buying a home.

- If a house comes up early in your search that you love, don't pass it up to save on a few months' rent that are left on your lease. It is difficult to believe but true that in San Francisco, rarely are two homes alike. Over the years, owners have remodeled and updated their homes. Homes here have little in common with the track homes of the suburbs or other cities.

- Before you start your search online or go to your first open house, memorize this simple mantra: *San Francisco is different*. Once you have begun your search and find yourself thinking, "Oh my God, I cannot believe the price," this is a time for your mantra to kick in and automatically say to yourself: *San Francisco is different*.

The mantra will be helpful. It will inspire you to think differently and carefully walk around the home and ask the agent questions. No question is too small, and the agent's job is to answer questions.

Remember *San Francisco is different*. It is a mecca for people seeking a better, more enjoyable life. A city of parks, restaurants, and neighborhoods where you can walk to coffee, use public transit, and bike to work in many areas. We all pay more to live here. When I leave San Francisco for a vacation or to visit family and friends, I always feel very fortunate when I return that I live in such a fabulous city.

Carole Isaacs is a Realtor with McGuire Real Estate. Visit her online at www.caroleisaacs.com or call 415-608-1267.

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WEEKEND TRAVELER :: Squaw Valley

Winter playground

by garrick ramirez

Ski season is here and those in the know will head to beautiful Squaw Valley for its excellent terrain, alpine charm and après fun. The lofty monuments that mark both the entrance to the valley and its Olympic legacy lend only a hint of the splendor hidden beyond. Nestled at the base of six towering granite peaks, the toy-like mountain village is an inspiring sight from the road leading in. There's something about the setting that feels far-flung from California. And why not? Squaw Valley was modeled after the iconic ski resorts of Europe. Yet, the clear days and deep cerulean skies are 100 percent Tahoe.

PLAY

Host to the 1960 Winter Olympics and proving ground to some of the world's best skiers, **Squaw Valley Ski Resort** is renowned for its varied terrain and technical lines. Just ask the die-hards who never tire of endless laps off the legendary KT-22 run. But who knew Squaw was ideal for beginners too? Instead of being stuck in parking lot snow, kids and never-evers can frolic at mountaintop Bailey's Beach and enjoy the same Sierra vistas as everyone else.

For blue lines, hit the fast lifts and quick tree runs in the Shirley Lake area. Or try nearby **Alpine Meadows**. Your lift ticket gets you access to the adjacent resort, a mere 15 minutes away via a free shuttle that runs throughout the day (800-403-0206, www.squaw.com; 800-403-0206, www.skialpine.com).

Like its European progenitors, the resort was created with recreation at two levels of the mountain. Take the thrilling **Aerial Tram** that ascends 2,000 feet to High Camp where you can ice skate above the clouds or join the party at the heated pool and hot tub. Or board the **Funitel** — the only European-style gondola in existence in the United States — up to the Gold Coast area where you'll enjoy a decidedly American invention: a ski-in ski-out Starbucks (800-403-0206, www.squaw.com).

SHOP

One part alpine village and one part Epcot, the Village at Squaw Valley is an atmospheric outdoor marketplace with restaurants, boutiques, and ever-present views of Tram Face, the striking mountain cliffside with a less-than-cuddly name. Given the number of mountain outfitters, you'd be fine packing only a toothbrush. Newly opened **Parallel Mountain Sports** is a one-stop shop with a com-



Alpine charm at the Village at Squaw Valley

PHOTO: GARRICK RAMIREZ

prehensive selection of gear and outerwear. Across the way, upscale **PlumpJackSport** has fitted ski and winter wear to transition you seamlessly from the lifts to the lounge (530-452-4478; 530-584-6181, www.plumpjacksport.com).

DINE

Wildflour Bakery is known throughout the mountain for its fresh, still-warm cookies and Scharffen Berger hot chocolate. But go in the morning and tell yourself it's for one of their breakfast sandwiches or homemade bagels (530-583-1963, www.wildfloursquaw.com).

There's no shortage of casual spots to grab a pint and a bite after the slopes, but tradition maintains that you join the rest of the mountain on the patio at **Le Chamois**. A local institution since 1969, "The Chammy" is the quintessential après-ski bar. You'll rub shoulders with ski legends ... and everyone else for that matter. Yep, it's crowded, boisterous

and undeniably fun (530-583-4505, www.squawchamois.com).

Feeling more Burgundy than Bud? Sample a flight at the alluring **Uncorked at Squaw Valley**. Owner Kali has created a soulful wine bar and retail shop that's a warm haven in the Village. Settle in with a cheese plate or snag a bottle to take to dinner (530-584-6090, www.uncorkedsquaw.com).

Families and groups will appreciate **Fireside Pizza Company** for its streamlined service and reliable grub. Pizzas do exactly what pizzas should and a gluten-free option has everyone covered. Mason jars are alternatively filled with beers and draft root beer while a blazing firepit warms the brave folks outside (530-584-6150, firesidepizza.com).

Popular sushi spot **Mamasake** encourages you to get raw at Squaw. Creative rolls, large cuts of nigiri and an assortment of fusion comfort foods are a welcome break from the ubiquitous burgers and

pizzas. Projection-screen ski flicks and a nice beer and sake list keep the vibe lively (530-584-0110, mamasake.com).

STAY

A snowball's throw from the lifts, the **PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn** is an ideal base camp. It's a stylish, boutique property with a modern lodge motif. Rooms are winter cozy with gratifying extras like plush robes, single cup Keurigs, and free WiFi. Guests are also treated to a hearty breakfast spread with warm dishes complemented by homemade breads, jams, and granola. But what did I secretly love the most? The luxurious bottle of hand cream that provided thoughtful relief to dry winter hands (530-583-1576; www.plumpjacksquawvalleyinn.com).

Garrick Ramirez can be reached on Twitter at @WeekendDelSol or at garrick@weekenddelSol.com.

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Giggles & Smiley (A346357/356) King Pigeons make great pets & companion birds. They are sweet, smart, calm, & full of personality.



Sky (A343638) is sweet & lovely. She is a happy, easy-to-handle, fun, & curious rabbit. And just look at that lush & luxurious fur.



Horchata (A345983) is a sweet 3 yo cuddle buddy. This Chi mix loves walks, belly rubs, & playing in the park. Come adopt her!



Mary Jane (A345900) is a sleek, 2 yo beauty. She is very friendly, affectionate, a bit of a talker, & will do best as the center of attention.



Rosie (A346085) is a 2 yo sweet loving, goofball who spreads fun & smiles everywhere she goes. Rosie is ready for a good home!

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Dec. 1 - Dec. 5

Hill & Co. Holiday Toy Drive

Dec. 6 - Dec. 20

The barrels are back!

Food Drive: Please remember the hungry kids and people of San Francisco this Holiday Season. Bring in cans of food, or packaged foods, and place them in our barrels for delivery to the San Francisco Food Bank. Please NO GLASS or Fresh Foods.



Toy Drive: Please drop off toys and books - unwrapped and new - and place them in our barrels for delivery to the San Francisco Fire Department.

Next time you're out shopping for food or toys, please remember the barrels, and the good you can do for others this holiday.

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SKYLAR'S HOLIDAY PICK



Give a dog a BarkBox, a unique gift that gives back

by susan dyer reynolds

WHEN I ADOPTED Skylar Grey from San Francisco Animal Care and Control, she was 2 months old, 19 pounds, and, we think, had been living in a car with a kid who fed her French fries from the Dollar Menu at McDonald's. A lot has changed in little over a year: Skylar is now 14 months old, 63 pounds, and she eats better than we do.

Bully breeds in general, and blue nose pit bulls like Skylar in particular, can have very sensitive stomachs, and Sky has the most sensitive stomach I've ever encountered. During our first six months together, she had giardia, a ubiquitous parasite found everywhere from puddles to grass, four times (think 2 a.m. whining puppy wake-up calls and bouts of diarrhea). It's not uncommon in puppies, which have developing digestive systems and are exploring (Sky still goes for grass like she's grazing the Sizzler salad bar), but it makes you realize the importance of a healthy digestive system.

My friend Cat Obuhoff from Cat Fix It was over one day setting up my new MacBook Air, and she brought along her Boston terrier, Sydney, one of Sky's best dog-park pals. "Oh, by the way, I brought you some treats for Skylar," she said, pulling them from her backpack. "Syd didn't like these." I told her about Sky's sensitive stomach and she said, "Well, BarkBox is perfect for you." Considering myself pretty knowledgeable about all things dog, I was surprised, as Cat maneuvered around the website, that I'd never heard of it. She typed in her username and password

and sent me an invite to try the service. "Now you get \$5 off and I get a free month — it's a great way to sample a variety of toys and treats to see what Sky likes and what works with her tummy," she said. Great idea. "And they donate 10 percent to dog charities," she added. Even better.

Here's how it works: Go

Challenge Winner HeARTs Speak Shelter Photography Workshop Initiative (www.heartsspeak.org), an innovative program developed to improve photography skills of shelter personnel and volunteers (better photos dramatically increase an animal's chances of adoption). They also work with rotating specific organizations for monthly promotions — for example, they gave a free BarkBox to every bulldog rescued in October.

You can also give BarkBox as a gift.

My dear friend and KGO Radio cohort Ryan Scott had a birthday recently. As a celebrity chef, he not only has everything, he has friends who can give him what he doesn't (Rachael Ray gave him a really nice watch that probably cost more than some people make in a year). He and his girlfriend, Leslie, absolutely adore their dog, Pumpkin, so for Ryan's birthday I gave them a BarkBox. It's a total win-win situation: Ryan got a unique gift for his lucky dog, and dogs not as lucky as Pumpkin are getting help as a result.

Skylar loves her BarkBox — she waits patiently each month as we unwrap the surprises together (it's just as much fun for me). Some items, like Honest Kitchen Ice Pups, are now a regular part of her regimen. Products she turns her nose up at or that don't agree with her sensitive tummy, I give to friends for their dogs (and encourage them to sign up).

If you're looking for a unique gift for your dog or a friend's dog, give a BarkBox — the dogs will love it, and best of all it's a gift that gives back.

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com

The folks at BarkBox are serious about helping dogs.

to www.barkbox.com and select the size of your dog ("Small and Cute" up to 20 pounds, "Just Right" 20 to 50 pounds, or "Big & Bold" for 50 pounds and over). Choose a plan — \$29 a month for one month, \$24 for three months, or \$19 for six months (you save over 34 percent on this plan, so it's obviously the best deal). Shipping is free, and 10 percent goes to help doggies in need. Plans automatically renew, and you can cancel at any time. Each month, you receive a box in the mail with four or more carefully selected products for your dog: toys, bones, treats, hygiene products, and new stuff just hitting the market. (If your dog loves a certain item, or you want to gift a favorite item to your doggy's friend, the folks at BarkBox offer exclusive opportunities to order more at a great price through their app.)

BarkBox is serious about helping dogs. They work closely with rescues, shelters, military dog organizations, sanctuaries, and low-cost spay-and-neuter programs. In 2013, they donated over \$150,000 and over 1,000 BarkBoxes, supported 80 charity events, and awarded a \$10,000 grant to the Hugo

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ELLIE

This loving, lightly brindle girl (we think she's a Great Dane mix) has done her stint as a doting, loving mother to her two pups and is ready to receive love and attention on her own. Ellie's maternal instincts are still evident — she will check in on dogs around

her to make sure they are fine and not in distress. Once the other dogs have checked out, she is content to play and have some fun for herself. And does she have fun! She loves playing with any toy she can get her paws on! Ellie is house trained and great with other dogs. Once you meet Ellie you will fall in love with her just like we have.

NAPOLEON



Meet Napoleon the Puggle (pug/beagle mix)! He is 8 years old and about 26 pounds; he's very healthy with no breathing issues, and has the energy of a puppy. Napoleon is already house trained, knows commands, and can be trusted to run off leash in parks.

Napoleon is looking for a loving home. He is extremely expressive, loves meeting new people, and he has a way of making peoples' hearts melt. He'd a great walking buddy along Crissy Field or the Marina Green and can go for miles. He also loves the company of other dogs. He is a very sweet boy who will add some holiday joy to your life!



NELLIE

Lovely young Nellie is ready to become part of your life. This is a sweet little one who loves to play and snuggle. She gets along with kids and dogs of all sizes and she looks forward to going to puppy training classes with you. She is about four months

old and will grow to be a medium sized dog. Nellie's ideal home is with humans who have experience with pitties or border collies. Like with any puppy, patience and training classes are a must and, of course, lots of love!



ROO

Roo is about a year old and weighs 13 pounds. In person he looks like a miniature husky. Roo is a young, friendly, outgoing little dog. He plays well with other

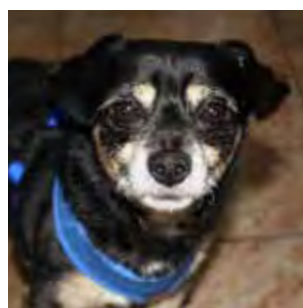
dogs, he loves people, he is good with cats, and he adores children. He would really like a home with some kids to play with, and maybe another dog. He will benefit from some leash training work (he likes to "take you" to meet everyone while on walks!) but he is smart and eager to please, and he will make a wonderful companion for a family or an individual.



TRISTAIN

Tristan is a very sweet, loving, purebred white miniature poodle weighing about 13 pounds. He is around 7 years old. When Tristan was picked up as a stray,

he looked like he had been neglected for a very long time, but it is obvious that he was once someone's beloved lap dog. This cuddle bug bonds quickly and shadows his person. Tristan has some vision issues, but he will know his way around a new environment in just a day. He loves going on walks, and stays right by your side; he doesn't pull on the leash, so he'd be a great companion for a senior citizen looking to stay active (and have the company a sweet, quiet lap dog at night). Tristan would do best in an adult-only home as children might startle him, but he is very cat friendly.



WILLIE WONKA

Willie Wonka is as sweet as his name implies. Wonka is a tri-colored Chihuahua mix with long lashes that curl around his eyes.

He is a friendly guy about 5 yrs. and loves people. Wonka is about 9 1/2 pounds, is easy to pick up, and loves to be held. Willie Wonka has special needs. His hind legs are a bit "wonky" and not as strong as his front legs. He has difficulty with steps. But his MRI revealed no significant problems — he just needs someone who understands his needs. Wonka loves to walk and can cover surprising distances. Big dogs and children overwhelm him as they challenge his maneuverability. Wonka is a gentle boy, looking for a gentle home.

Come join us for a Grateful Dogs fundraiser!

Doc's Clock Fundraiser, December 7, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

2575 Mission Street (Between 21st and 22nd Street) | 415-824-3627



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE AND OTHER DOGS:

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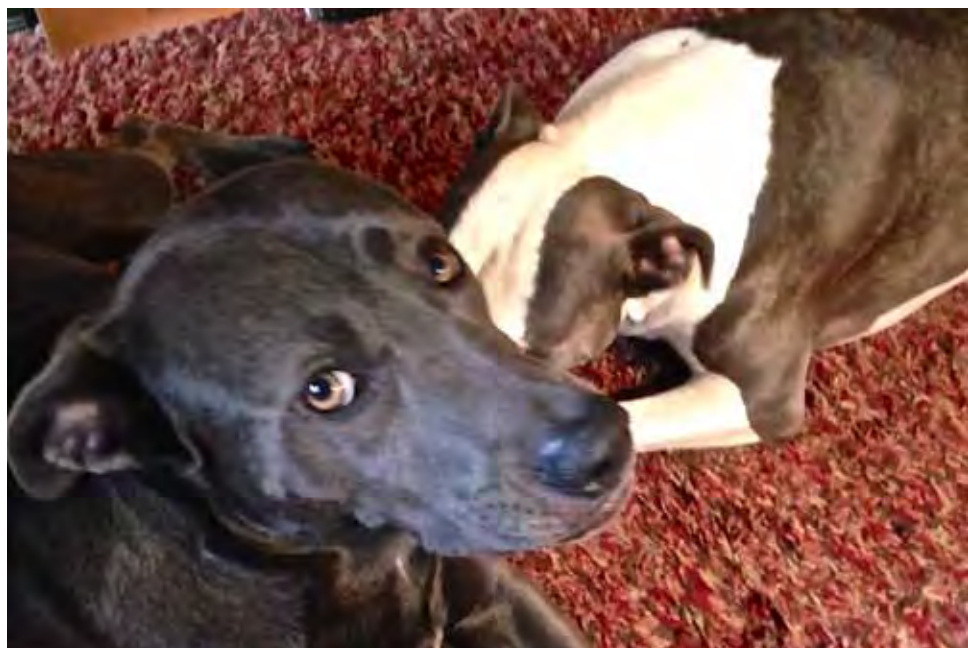
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Karma is a bitch named Skylar

by susan dyer reynolds

*Tell me have you ever heard
About this little five-letter word?
What comes around goes around
I'm telling you, baby,
It's called karma ...*

— "Karma," by Jessica Andrews

ON A JUNE DAY IN 2009, I CALLED Steve. "Come over and meet my foster puppies," I said. "It's gorgeous out. We can sit in the garden and have cocktails." When Steve arrived, there was a pitcher of martinis and three four-month-old pit bull mix sisters. I had picked up the puppies from Rocket Dog Rescue that morning. They came from the now-closed Kern County shelter in Bakersfield, notoriously dubbed Doggie Auschwitz, which was located in a rural area where people rarely spay or neuter their pets, leading to an influx of over 500 dogs a month. Even with the help of rescue groups from California and beyond, only a small percentage of the dogs made it out alive. "These are the luckiest pups in Bakersfield," I told Steve, and I wasn't exaggerating — they had been just seven hours from the death chamber when Rocket Dog stepped in to save them.

As Steve arrived, the pups were climbing all over Jazzy. Just moments ago, she had been enjoying a peaceful nap on the sun-drenched lawn, and while she was easygoing as always, even Jazzy had her limits. She playfully rolled over on her back, but when those needle-sharp puppy teeth were too much, Jazzy would chase them and butt them with her nose just like their mama would have done. Every time Jazzy found another place to lie down the pups were right there, nipping at her ears, her legs, and her tail as Jazzy's bright blue eyes begged for mercy.

The youngest and oldest were black and white, but the middle sister had a silver-colored coat and golden eyes. "I really like this one," Steve said. A few martinis later, Steve left with a puppy.

In about a week Rocket Dog found good homes for the other two sisters. Steve named his new baby Blue, in honor of big sister, Jasmine Blue, and over the next year, they became inseparable. They played constantly: games of chase on the beach, wrestling matches in the backyard, and their favorite, tug-o-war (which Jazzy always won). When

Jazzy became sick with cancer, Blue knew something was wrong. She went from the bratty little sister to the caretaker, sleeping beside Jazzy for long hours and only playing if Jazzy felt well enough to initiate it. When Jazzy lost her top canine and three other teeth to the tumor, Blue could easily have taken her tug-o-war crown, but she didn't; she let Jazzy win every time. When Jazzy passed away, Blue was as devastated as everyone else, sleeping with Jazzy's favorite Ugly Doll tucked under her chin and turning down her favorite treats.

On a September day in 2012, I called Steve. "It's time for you and Blue to meet Skylar Grey," I said. When Steve and Blue arrived, Skylar raced across the garden and, in all her puppy clumsy glory, body slammed Blue, who was none too pleased. She growled and gave Skylar "The Elvis," with her left upper lip raised; and then "The Double Elvis," with her left lip raised, and then her right; and finally,

Skylar raced across the garden and body slammed Blue, who was not pleased.

the "Full Vampiria," raising her front upper lip to bare her canines. She ducked under the lavender and then ran to the rosemary bush trying to find respite, but Skylar was so small she fit anywhere — there was no escape.

Blue finally gave up and rolled over on her back, but when Sky's needle-sharp puppy teeth were too much, Blue chased her and butted her with her nose just like her mama would have done. Every time Blue found another place to lie down Sky was right there, nipping at her ears, her legs and her tail. "Stop that," I said to Sky as she nibbled on Blue's ankle. "This is not KFC and that is not a drumstick." Sky flopped beside Blue, her tongue — so long it could be the Eighth Wonder of the World — hanging out the side of her mouth, covered in dirt, as her sides heaved with exhaustion.

Sky quickly got her second wind and pounced on Blue again. My mind flashed back to the first time Blue and her sisters came barreling into the backyard and piled on top of Jazzy. "This looks familiar," Steve chuckled. Blue realized she had no choice but to lie there and take it — Sky was like The Tasmanian Devil with Energizer Bunny batteries and no off switch. Blue gasped for air, her tongue unfurled like a flag of surrender. "Sorry Blue," I said as her golden eyes begged for mercy. "Karma is a bitch named Skylar."

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com

City and County of San Francisco Outreach Advertising 2013 – 12A

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The Board of Supervisors is evaluating the effectiveness of Outreach advertising. Was the information in this ad helpful and/or interesting to you? Please provide your comments at (415) 554-7710 or email board_of_supervisors@sfgov.org. Please include the publication name and date.

Notice of Availability of Request for Proposals (RFP)

Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) has announced the availability of the RFP for 2014-2015 programs under the following funding sources and program areas:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG): Capital Projects, HOPE SF Community Building Services, Housing Development and Public Space Improvements;
- Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA): Capital Projects; and
- General Fund: Capital Projects

The RFP is available electronically on MOHCD's website at www.sfmohcd.org. All proposals must be submitted electronically by 5:00pm on Monday, December 16, 2013. Please visit www.sfmohcd.org for more information.

Tell us where you need curb ramps!

Do you use a wheelchair, walker, or scooter? Do you have trouble getting to the nearest transit stop? You can make a request for a curb ramp in your area by calling 3-1-1. Just jot down the intersection and tell the 3-1-1 operator how a curb ramp would increase access for your neighborhood. There are approximately 50,000 curb ramp locations in San Francisco and we are trying to reach them all. We appreciate your help! This is a project of the Department of Public Works and the Mayor's Office on Disability.

From the Department of the Environment

Guess what? San Francisco has a website that tells you how and where to recycle almost anything! sfenvironment.org/recyclewhere

San Francisco Arts Commission

Join the San Francisco Arts Commission for a Town Hall meeting to learn more about its plans for the future. Director of Cultural Affairs Tom DeCaigny will present our vision for the next five years and our goals for getting there. You'll also have an opportunity to ask questions, share comments and provide input on priorities for arts-related policy in the City. on Sat., Dec. 14, 10-11:30am at the County Fair Building in Golden Gate Park. Visit sfartscommission.org.

SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT

AUXILIARY LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE TEAM (ALERT)

The San Francisco Police Department has developed a volunteer citizen disaster preparedness program. The ALERT program will train members of the public to assist law enforcement in essential tasks after a major disaster. Such tasks may include: traffic control, foot patrol of business and residential areas, and reporting criminal activity. Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age and live, work, or attend high school in San Francisco.

ALERT volunteers will first complete the Fire Department's Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT) training (www.sfgov.org/sfnert), and then graduate into an eight hour Police Department course specifically designed for ALERT team members. For a comprehensive overview, please visit our webpage at www.sanfranciscopolice.org/alert

Additional information can be obtained by emailing sfpdalert@sfgov.org, or by calling Sergeant Mark Hernandez (SFPD, Ret.), Coordinator, at (415) 401-4615.

The City and County of San Francisco encourage public outreach. Articles are translated into several languages to provide better public access. The newspaper makes every effort to translate the articles of general interest correctly. No liability is assumed by the City and County of San Francisco or the newspapers for errors and omissions.

CNS#255918

**ADOPTION EVENTS EVERY SUNDAY AT PET FOOD EXPRESS:
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Can't have a pet but still want to help save lives? Consider volunteering, donating, or fostering! Visit www.rocketdogrescue.org for more information.



CARLOS & RAMON

Meet Carlos and Ramon, two adorable young terrier/Pekinese mixes who ended up at a high kill shelter up north. They are the sweetest boys who love each other very much. They are looking for a home preferably together or each with another dog. You won't find any boys

cuter than these. They can be shy at first but will warm up once they get to know you.



LULU

Meet Lulu, a Chihuahua/Dachshund mix (also known as a Chiweenie!) who is around 8 months old. Lulu spent the first few months of her life living under a truck in the lot of an auto repair garage. She was scrawny, but has been nursed

back but to a healthy 21 pounds! She's almost full-grown but will still grow a little bit more. Lulu is curious about almost everything. She likes all people — adults and kids — as well as other dogs, but she's not sure about cats or other small animals because she hasn't met any yet! Lulu likes new experiences and is always up for an adventure. She loves to play and then cuddle when it's time to settle in.



JAGGER

"Moves like Jagger!" Yes, this young pup has some smooth, graceful moves! Jagger is about 4 to 5 months old, 22 pounds, and very loving. He was found wandering with his brother Bowie (also available for adoption!) in the cold

woods near Red Bluff. These pups have danced past any danger and are ready to tackle the big city! Jagger is almost fully house trained, is learning crate training, and loves to play with other dogs! He is a big cuddle bug who wants to dance his way into your heart!



PAXTI

Meet Paxti, a darling, 6 month old American Bulldog mix. This sweet-heart is a true gem — she's loving, gentle and kind. She does well with kids, and with most other dogs (she was raised with her two sisters). Paxti

would love an active home where she could walk along the Marina Green or Crissy Field. She's energetic but not hyper, and she settles down well in the house. Who can resist that face?



AMY

Meet Amy, a 10-year-old chocolate Lab mix who was originally rescued from the streets of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. She has been a much-loved dog and it shows. Unfortunately, Amy's owner has serious health problems and cannot keep her any longer. Amy

has lived as an only dog in her current home, but she really does enjoy the company of other dogs and would do well in a home with another canine. She has an incredibly sweet disposition and loves to be around people, so she'd be a terrific family dog. (Bonus: she's also great with cats!) Amy absolutely adores being able to roll around in the soft grass and her playful side definitely comes out, but she's also a gentle, calm girl in the house who would love to curl up with you while you read a good book, or keep the kids company while they do their homework.



PIGEON

Meet Pigeon, one of the most unique dogs you will ever meet (she even has one captivating, Jazzy-like blue eye!). This lovely, tiny girl is a 2 to 3 year old muscular short stack, not standing any taller

than the average person's knee. She has a good amount of energy but also loves to settle down and hang out inside the house with her people. Pigeon is a comical girl who loves to keep you laughing, even though there was nothing funny about the start of her life — she came to Rocket Dog Rescue from a high kill shelter after she being dumped there with her dead puppies inside her, and had to undergo emergency surgery to save her life. Pigeon's ideal home is someone who has experience with bully breeds, and who will let her be an only dog (she deserves to be doggy queen of the house after all she's been through!).

**ROCKET DOG RESCUE | 415.756.8188 | P.O. BOX 460826, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94146
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