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December events: It's time for your Macy's window-gazing, Union Street holiday lights viewing, and downtown ice skating. That, plus concerts, galas, films, and more. 16

MarinaTimes

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PHOTO: MEL ASHER; MELASHAR.COM

Holidays the San Francisco Way

BY EILEEN MITCHELL

DECEMBER ALWAYS BRINGS TO mind iconic holiday images of windows framing snow-laden landscapes, children building snowmen, and happy families gathering around their wood-burning fireplace. Not so in sunny California, where Spare the Air days

have made fireplaces all but obsolete.

Yet, just because it feels like spring year-round doesn't mean San Franciscans downplay the holidays. Come December, the City That Knows How kicks into high gear with holiday events for every age, interest, and admirable cause.

Have any doubts? Mark your calendar, don your reindeer cap, and

prepare to celebrate the holidays in true San Francisco style.

FAMILY FARE

25th Annual Union Street Fantasy of Lights Celebration
Saturday, Dec. 5, 3–7 p.m.
2040 Union Street

HOLIDAYS, continued on 17

REYNOLDS RAP

A vote of disdain for Mayor Ed Lee

How the accidental mayor turned the city into a playground for social media tech players

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

“The horns quieted. Lee stood meekly behind [Willie] Brown. He tugged at his baggy business suit, clasped and unclasped his hands. The most colorful thing about him is his moustache, which is brown. ‘Ed, if you want to sit down, it’s all right...’ Brown said, gesturing back toward a chair. Lee sat.”

— “The Power Broker” by Elizabeth Lesly Stevens, *Washington Monthly*, July/August 2012

WHEN AN ARTICLE CALLED “THE POWER BROKER” ran in the July/August 2012 issue of *Washington Monthly*, it was no surprise that the title referred to former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown. An in-depth look at the inauguration of Ed Lee after he was elected to his first full mayoral term, author Elizabeth Lesly Stevens pulled no punches in pointing out Lee’s carefully crafted ascent over a two-year period. The groundwork laid by Brown, with help from longtime political pal and Chinatown rabble-rouser Rose Pak, paid off, lead-

REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 4

BELLINGHAM BY THE BAY

Hopes and fears at Christmas

BY BRUCE BELLINGHAM

BACK IN JUNE 1995, 100,000 people paraded down Market Street to the Ferry Building to see a show honoring Herb Caen.

The weather seemed to approve. It was a gorgeous day. Not a cloud in the sky. Joel Gray brought an orchestra from New York, Huey Lewis and the News sang a capella hits from the 1950s, and Walter Cronkite provided praise for his old friend, describing his amazement at such a crowd turning out for a newspaper columnist.

Marcia Brandwynne anchored a live broadcast on Channel 5. I was hired to provide color commentary.

“What is Walter Cronkite doing here,

Bruce?” Marcia asked on the air.

“Cronkite,” I explained, “met Herb when they were both correspondents during World War II. They flew in B-25s, on bombing runs over Germany. They remained friends over the decades.”

I recited that from

To contradict Walter Cronkite would have been worse than blasphemy.

memory, and I was very grateful when Cronkite told the same story from the stage. Yikes. To contradict Walter Cronkite would have been worse than blasphemy. ... Later, lunch was served for a couple dozen guests on the patio

at Flicka McGurrin’s Pier 29 restaurant. I was seated between two San Francisco legends: football great R.C. Owens and Carol Doda, the woman who introduced topless dancing to the city, and to the world.

Carol was truly one-of-a-kind. She died of kidney failure last month at the age of 78. It seems indecent to mark the age of a woman who was a real survivor — indefatigable — getting through the travail of working at Broadway’s Condor Club, navigating mobsters, hordes of lecherous men, and SFPDs vice squad, as well as bearing the weight of silicone-injected 44D breasts that were once insured by Lloyd’s of London. When Carol took her top off that fateful

BELLINGHAM, continued on 5



Some of the 65 horses and 45 artists of ODYSSEO, the latest show from the internationally acclaimed entertainment company *Cavalía*. PHOTO: COLOR-ISH COMPANY

Odysseo: A visual treat of horses and humans

BY LYNETTE MAJER

ODYSSEO IS THE MOST SPECTACULAR show I’ve seen, and I thought the first one, *Cavalía*, was special. Demonstrating the horse-human bond, some 40 horses interact with humans, who ride them, stand on them, jump them, and perform other seemingly impossible feats on them. Horses wander in a forest, run and splash in a lake, and then are brought

into line just by human voice command and body language. Acrobats twirl through suspended hoops, suspend themselves horizontally from poles on a carousel, and perform dizzying back flips across the stage.

But for all the technical and human virtuosity, it’s the horses that steal the show with their grace and beauty. Don’t miss it.

Odysseo: Tue.–Sun. through Jan. 10, AT&T Park; \$44.50–\$264.50, 866-999-8111, *cavalía.net*

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The Precinct - Cincinnati, OH

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December events

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News Briefs : Around the city

Palace, Lombard and new jail plans meet opposition

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

PALACE OF FINE ARTS TENANT?

The search for a new tenant for the Palace of Fine Arts has descended into bickering over whether it should be rented to a commercial tenant such as a hotel or restaurant or if it should be reserved for cultural organizations. Though the entire space cannot be used as a commercial space, part of it can, and the final three contenders included two that would use the site's theater space for a hotel, and another that would install a museum and restaurant. In late November, the Recreation and Park Commission voted unanimously to let all three compete for the final bid. The sponsors of the plans have until May to submit proposals.

A petition on Change.org claims that all three proposals fail to "preserve the site as the important cultural/educational center San Franciscans have known it to be, nor do they keep it a community space that is open and available to ALL people. Once again, our officials are preparing to sell out from under us another piece of San Francisco heritage. ..." As of mid-November, 17,500 people had indicated their support for the petition, which demands only cultural and educational uses for the site.

NEW JAIL OPPONENTS WANT MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY

When it comes to building a new \$380 million jail in San Francisco, the only thing everyone seems to agree upon is that the existing facilities at the Hall of Justice (known as County Jail No. 3 and No. 4) are in appalling condition — only No. 4 is currently functional, housing about 350 inmates. While Mayor Ed Lee and the majority of the Board of Supervisors support the project, opponents, including District Attorney George Gascón, believe a mental health justice center would be more appropriate given the city's struggle in dealing with the mentally ill homeless who often bounce from jail to San Francisco General Hospital to the streets.

According to a July 2015 presentation by the Government Audit and Oversight Committee, the inmate population is on a downward trend and the jail is now about 50 percent empty with 1,314 people in custody (there were nearly 2,000 inmates in 2009). The San Francisco Department of Public Health says up to 40 percent of those in custody receive support from jail psychiatric services, and people in Behavior Health Court wait approximately 90 days for a mental health treatment bed. Every day, an average of 40 to 50 people approved for transfer are awaiting treatment.

While there are five new hospitals under construction, none are required to have psychiatric beds. Mental health advocates believe a community-based facility offering tiered treatment services co-located with courtrooms serving mentally ill defendants would meet San Francisco's current needs far better than another jail. The 200,000 square foot, 95 feet tall facility will be

built just east of the existing Hall of Justice, with construction scheduled to begin in 2018.

LOMBARD CHANGES IRK LOCALS

The Lombard Street Safety Project, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency's package of street improvements and beautification projects, has met a chilly reception from many locals, who claim the project is moving too fast and not taking into account locals' concerns about traffic flow, obstruction of businesses, and other problems.

Local residents and businesses have been complaining to SFMTA, District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell, and other officials about stops for Muni and corporate buses that have been moved in front of private driveways, congestion, and worries about ill-thought-out traffic flow.

The Lombard Street Safety Project involves trying to improve pedestrian visibility at intersections, "transit bulbs" at four intersections (Lombard at Divisadero, Pierce, Fillmore, and Laguna Streets), relocating three bus stops, "pedestrian bulbs" at four intersections (Lombard at Pierce, Steiner, Fillmore, and Laguna Streets), and new transit stops at Lombard and Laguna and at Gough Streets.

APOTHECARIUM SQUEAKS IN

Following a contentious meeting with a large turnout of supporters and opponents, the effort by The Apothecarium to open a second marijuana dispensary in the city was approved in early November, just weeks after being delayed by a lack of commissioners at an October meeting (News Briefs, page 3, *Marina Times*, November 2015). The day before the Planning Commission vote, the Apothecarium put out a call for supporters to come out in force. "We are facing strong opposition from a small community group that is suggesting we'll be bad for the neighborhood," the company wrote on its Facebook page. It accused opponents of pulling a "dirty trick" and postponing the vote at the previous meeting.

The November vote could still be appealed. The Apothecarium's first San Francisco location is in the Castro; the company is also planning a new location across the bay in Berkeley.

NEW BATTERY EAST VISTA

Nov. 19 saw the opening of the new Battery East Vista in the Presidio, featuring awesome views, picnic area, bicycle parking, interpretive signage, and improved parking. The improvements were funded by a \$1 million grant to the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation.

SUBWAY MASTER PLAN

Legislation calling for San Francisco to develop a "subway master plan" got the nod of the Board of Supervisors in early November, along with a measure to draw in \$44 million a year in new revenue for transportation improvements. The subway master plan, pushed by Supervisor Scott Wiener, would require the city to develop a long-range policy for new subway construction throughout the city.

News tips? E-mail: john@marinatimes.com

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CHRISTMAS AT CALVARY

Dec 13: *A Charlie Brown Christmas* Service
5 pm: Featuring the Calvary Children's Ensemble

Dec 20: Longest Night Service
5 pm: Uplifting Words, Music & Candlelight

Dec 24: Christmas Eve Services
5 pm: Family Friendly for All Ages with
Children's Pageant & Carols
7:30 pm: Traditional Lessons, Carols & Sermon

Dec 25: Christmas Day
10 am: Worship Service

Come Celebrate the Opening of Our New
**NEIGHBORHOOD
PLAYGROUND**



Claire Lilienthal Alt. School
3630 Divisadero St, San Francisco, CA 94123
Saturday, Dec. 5
from 11 am to 1 pm
www.SFSharedSchoolyard.org



**Supervisor
Mark Farrell**

Join us for games, food, and kids' activities to celebrate opening Claire Lilienthal Alternative School as a neighborhood playground on the weekends.



**SFUSD Superintendent
Richard Carranza**

The Shared Schoolyard Project is a fiscally sponsored program of the San Francisco Parks Alliance



REYNOLDS RAP

CONTINUED *from page 1*

ing to Lee's appointment as interim mayor in 2011 when Gavin Newsom left office early to become lieutenant governor, and, subsequently, to an elected four-year term.

“If Lee wins a second term, he will be in place until 2020, giving Brown a hold on San Francisco’s government that will span a quarter century,” Stevens wrote in 2012. As Brown took center stage at the inauguration, he spent an hour cracking jokes and explaining how Mayor Lee would do his job. He then told Lee that he needed to “recognize state and national political figures in the audience” who could be pressured to support high-speed rail, one of Brown’s pet projects, and, ostensibly, his clients. Stevens observed that Lee “sat dutifully in his chair, gray and mute.”

The article also foreshadowed the enormous role that billionaire tech investor Ron Conway would play in Brown's scheme to push Lee to power — an alliance that would forever change the face of San Francisco. "I should identify some of your real friends," Brown said. "People like Ron Conway, who is here. Where are you, Ron Conway?" Stevens noted that Conway, who had not been politically active before joining forces with Brown and becoming Lee's largest donor, "stood and beamed."

Four years later, Brown grabbed that quarter century brass ring when Lee won a second may-

You can't walk down the street without hearing conversations blaming Lee for rising rents.

oral term. Why a formidable opponent didn't run against him is a mystery to most. I imagine Brown calling would-be candidates to an undisclosed SoMa tech office at midnight and, over a friendly game of Foosball, strongly suggesting they not run, with silver-haired henchman Conway standing behind him flashing wads of cash. One well-known politico who perhaps could have beaten Lee told me off the record, "No one can compete with Conway's money, and he would have thrown it at Lee's campaign if a strong contender entered the race."

It's a fact that big money influences people's decision making — just look

at Proposition F, the so-called Airbnb measure that would have strengthened regulations on short-term rentals. Supporters managed to garner an impressive 45 percent of the vote with little cash or publicity while Airbnb ran deceptive television ads ad nauseam (“You won’t be able to rent your in-law unit to your grandma”) at a cost of more than \$8 million. Had Airbnb not spent

that obscene amount to shove their misleading messages down voters' throats, I believe the measure would have passed.

As for Lee, he garnered just over 56 percent of the vote despite influential friends, buckets of money, and a field of unqualified challengers. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8,000 voters left the mayor category entirely blank on their ballots, and more people voted for challenger Vicki Hennessy for sheriff than voted for Lee for mayor. Several *Marina Times* readers reached out to say they either left the mayor box blank or wrote themselves in as a protest.

One woman said she “wrote Aaron Peskin in for all three choices.” District 3 voters put the progressive Peskin, a power broker in his own right, back in the Board of Supervisors seat he held from 2000 to 2009

and served as president from 2005 until he was term-limited out of office. Lee fought hard against Peskin's return, warning attendees at a gathering of prominent business, tech and labor leaders that "he was watching" (in other words, if you support Peskin, don't expect any favors from the mayor). Lee's allies poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the campaign of incumbent Julie Christensen, Lee's hand-picked appointee, some of it going toward last-minute personal attack ads against Peskin that came across as snarky and desperate. Peskin ran a clean, low-key campaign and ousted Christensen, ending Lee's control of

the board (and four years of sleepwalking through City Hall).

IT STARTED WITH A TWITTER

San Francisco's contempt for Lee's leadership began in his first term with the infamous "Twitter tax break," an exemption from the city's 1.5 percent payroll tax initiated by Lee in 2012 to attract technology startups to the crime- and

drug-infested mid-Market area with the promise they would help clean it up. Four years later, those start-ups have morphed into gargantuan public companies through IPOs that made it rain stock options. According to the San Francisco treasurer's office, in 2014 the city lost out on \$34 million in taxes from those companies, \$30 million more than in 2013. Meanwhile Mid Market is worse than ever, with filthy, urine-scented sidewalks and rampant drugs, crime, poverty, and homelessness.

Lee may be the technology pied piper, but he was unprepared for how those newly minted millionaires would drive up the cost of housing and, consequently, drive out longtime residents. To be fair, San Francisco has a history of being adverse to expansion, and that suppressed supply has led to surging demand. Lee's answer was to promote unregulated development of every vacant lot in the city, allowing speculators of multibillion-dollar condo complexes to ignore height limits and include the bare minimum requirement of below market-rate housing.

You can't walk down the street without hearing conversations blaming Lee for rising rents, increased evictions, the techie takeover, and the "hoteling" of buildings for short-term rentals. Not surprisingly, Lee opposed Prop. F and has remained conspicuously silent on the number of landlords kicking tenants out to list their apartments on the more lucrative Airbnb. A May 2015 report by San Francisco's independent Budget and Legislative Analyst Office estimated that between 5,249 and 6,113 Airbnb listings exist in San Francisco, taking between 925 and 1,960 long-term rental units off

REYNOLD'S RAP, continued on 5

BELLINGHAM

CONTINUED from page 1

night as she sat on the Steinway grand at The Condor, you knew the 1960s had arrived. The Summer of Love wasn't far off. ... "Carol was so sweet, so kind," **Diane Weissmuller** recalls. "She was a bundle of positive energy, never cruel to anyone." And she was funny. Amazing for someone who endured all sorts of vulgarity. ... After the dancing days danced away, Carol opened a lingerie shop on Union Street. I'd drop in sometimes, but there never was anything in my size. Carol never lost her penchant for performance, singing regularly with her band at Gino & Carlo in North Beach. Yes, she was indefatigable, truly one of a kind. ...

Former Mayor **Art Agnos** is recovering from open-heart surgery. He's doing well, I hear. Art officiated at my wedding to **Susan Bolding** in 1990. Being of Greek extraction, he had me stomp on a water glass, wrapped in a napkin, during the ceremony. Nice Mediterranean touch. ... I believe in Art's durability. He survived being shot twice by the Zebra Killers in 1974. Art was a social worker on a sidewalk on Potrero Hill at the time. Always the public servant. We must applaud the Trauma Unit at San Francisco General Hospital for saving his life. ... Speaking of hospitals, I offer a shout-out to St. Francis Memorial ... St. Mary's ... and CPMC in Pacific Heights. I've been to

all of them this year because of chronic heart trouble. "I think we're gonna run out of ambulances for you, Bruce," quipped a paramedic as I was transported to St. Francis. I'm grateful for the S.F. Fire Department, too. Good guys. ... I think I could write hospital food reviews at this point. ...

"What would St. Francis of Assisi do if he learned San Francisco was named for him?" I once asked Father **William Myers**. "I don't know if he'd laugh or cry," William said tersely. ... Sometimes I think living in San Francisco is like enduring a bad marriage. There's occasional abuse, but I keep staying here. It's been 45 years. ... One of a kind? Caen used to write "Only in San Francisco" items. I noticed that there's a plaque in the sidewalk in the Tenderloin honoring **Alex de Renzy** for bringing pornographic movies to town.

The newly opened Tenderloin Museum on Eddy Street (I saw the ever-attentive **Herb Gold** checking it out last month), six years in the making, displays artifacts that recall San Francisco's days as an "open city," when the Tenderloin provided "prostitution, gambling, and drinking." Come to think of it, the neighborhood hasn't changed that much. ... Drinking? Oh, yes, I remember. Early one morning the then-captain of the northern police station, **Ann Mannix**, rang me. "Sorry to call so early, Bruce," she explained, "But I have to go to a funeral this morning." "Anyone I know?" I asked. "It's our former chief, **Alex Fagan**. If you drink, Bruce, don't quit," she suggested. 'Alex stopped drinking, and he was dead in two weeks.' ... I'll keep it in mind. ...

It could have been a wonderful life: The director of the famed Christmas movie, **Frank Capra**, lived in the old Eddy Hotel in the 1920s. Today it's the Drake Hotel. Capra managed to get out of the Tenderloin. He was a great success in Hollywood. *It's a Wonderful Life* will be on TV at Christmas as long as there's Christmas. ... Among my holiday faves, **Bill Forsyth's** *Comfort & Joy*, and **Jean Shepherd's** *A Christmas Story*. I spoke to Jean years ago and asked if he could give advice "to a young writer living in San Francisco." ... "Get the hell out of San Francisco!" he barked. "It's too seductive. Ever hear of a successful writer living in the Virgin Islands?" ...

I love Nob Hill. I make sure I wander through Huntington Park at Christmas, if only to see the gingerbread house in the lobby of the Fairmont. Yes,

I wander through Huntington Park at Christmas, if only to see the gingerbread house.

that mysterious, secretive couple is in the darkness of the park. They sit on a bench, away from the madding crowd. The San Francisco Girl's Chorus is singing Christmas carols. The couple clutch each other tightly, aware of the dangers in the world, but glad to have each other. It's a good time to be in love. "Will it be a good Christmas?" she whispers apprehensively. "It's going to be great," he replies assuredly, holding her hand. We are going to make it the best Christmas." ... I could swear I can hear angels singing. Must be the eggnog. ...

Bruce Bellingham is the author of Bellingham by the Bay. He says the Virgin Islands look better all the time. Pester him at bruce@marinatimes.com.

REYNOLDS RAP

CONTINUED from page 4

the market. That amounts to nearly 25 percent of available units citywide (in popular neighborhoods like the Mission, Airbnb listings consist of nearly 30 percent of the rental market). Ellis Act evictions, where landlords can evict tenants if they take the building off the rental market, are up sharply under Lee as well. Data from the San Francisco Rent Board shows 2,120 notices of evictions were filed during the year ending Feb. 28, 2015 — a 54.7 percent increase from five years ago.

In a karmic twist, the monster Lee unleashed

is now affecting the tech companies themselves. Last September, billionaire venture capitalist Chamath Palihapitiya told *Business Insider* that if a start-up spends more than 15 percent of its funding on rent "a huge red flag goes up." According to Palihapitiya, every dollar that someone raises in Redwood City or Mountain View has to be multiplied by two for it to go as far in San Francisco. Once those firms go public, they are beholden to shareholders who want to see profits. Twitter recently laid off more than 300 employees, squashed expansion plans, and in mid-November its struggling stock sunk below the 2013 IPO price for the

first time. Privately held unprofitable start-ups are also having trouble living up to lofty valuations. Square (run by Jack Dorsey, who also runs Twitter) went public last month with a valuation a third less than the \$6 billion that private investors valued it at just one year ago. Could ludicrous valuations, tumbling stock prices, and exorbitant burn rates cause Lee's San Francisco Silicon Valley vision to go up in flames? Perhaps Palihapitiya hinted at the answer when he noted that every tech company worth \$100 billion or more started no farther north than Palo Alto.

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POLICE BLOTTER : From the officers of Northern Station

A brief criminal roundup of the Northside

The crimes described below are only a small snapshot of what the police officers of Northern Station are doing. For a more comprehensive list, visit [sf-police.org](#); under Compstat, select the link to Crimemaps.

MENTAL HEALTH DETENTION Aug. 25, 7:20 a.m.

Chestnut St. at Richardson Ave.

A female flagged down uniformed officers to tell them she had just been hit in the arm with a tennis racket. She said she was walking with a cup of coffee in her right hand when an unknown female hit her in the hand, causing her to drop her coffee to the ground. The suspect was yelling and reportedly talking “crazy,” and walked away. The victim was uninjured, and she described the suspect and her direction of travel.

Officers searched the area and spotted the suspect on the median. She was walking in and out of traffic, hitting cars with a tennis racket. Several cars had to slam on their brakes to avoid hitting her. She attempted to run away from the officers, but they were able to detain her. She appeared to have an

altered mental status and would not answer any of their questions. She had no identification on her and refused to cooperate with the police officers. They determined she was a danger to others and detained her for a mental health evaluation. She was taken to California Pacific Medical Hospital and the staff there took custody of her.

BREAKING AWAY

Aug. 26, 1:17 a.m.

Divisadero at Turk Sts.

Officers responded to a report of two male suspects breaking into a white van and removing a bicycle. The police officers arrived and found a suspect matching the description walking away from the area, pushing a motorized bicycle possibly involved in the burglary. When the officers tried to stop to talk with him, he ran away and jumped a fence.

The officers set up a perimeter and within minutes located and detained the suspect. He was positively identified by the 911 caller. The suspect was booked at County Jail; the other suspect was not found.

WHERE’S MY CAR?

Aug. 26, 4:18 p.m.

Marina Blvd. at Fillmore St.

Plainclothes officers conducted a surveillance operation for a suspect with a criminal history of stolen vehicles, property, and illegal narcotics. They spotted a male leaving an apartment building and getting into a black Honda. They ran a computer check on the Honda, which turned out to have been reported stolen. They surrounded the car and ordered the driver to get out; he complied, and he was taken into custody without further incident.

The driver told them he had just bought the car and did not know it was stolen. When they asked him who he bought it from, he gave them the name of the suspect the officers had been looking for. The vehicle and the suspect were transported to Northern Station for further investigation. The officers located the Honda’s owner and interviewed the suspect, who had outstanding arrest warrants and was subsequently taken to County Jail and booked.

GRAFFITI ART NO MORE

Aug. 30, 5 a.m.

Fell at Octavia Sts.

An officer spotted a male suspect who matched the description of someone involved in a prior graffiti hate crime incident. He approached the suspect and

began talking to him, but after a few moments, the suspect jumped on his bicycle and started pedaling away. The officer followed and after several blocks was able to take him into custody.

A computer check revealed that the suspect had several outstanding warrants for his arrest. The officers also collected several items of evidence from the suspect that were used and worn in prior incidents. After an investigation and notifications were made, the suspect was booked at Northern Station on charges of malicious mischief, graffiti, and hate crime.

CITIZEN’S ARREST

Sept. 1, 3:48 p.m.

300 block of Fulton St.

Officers responded to a report of a stolen cell phone. The victim told them she’d gone into the employees-only restroom and accidentally left her cell phone on top of the soap dispenser; when she later went back for it, it was gone. The victim and officers viewed surveillance video showing people entering and leaving the bathroom, and they saw a female suspect enter the bathroom and later leave it with a pink phone in her hand. Speaking with the police, the employee denied taking the phone, but based on the video evidence and the victim’s statement, they determined the suspect stole the phone. The victim signed a citizen’s arrest form, and the suspect was cited for petty theft and released.

She was hitting cars with a tennis racket. Several cars slammed on their breaks to avoid hitting her.

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2015: The year in review

BY MARK FARRELL

AS WE APPROACH THE END of 2015, there is much to be thankful for, from our streaking World Champion Golden State Warriors to our strong local economy and low unemployment numbers. The year 2015 has also brought many challenges. Our housing affordability and cost-of-living continue to increase, and we need to do more to ensure that the economic prosperity the city is experiencing helps as many San Franciscans as possible.

Housing affordability and the cost-of-living continue to be a top concern. As budget chair, I made it a top priority to advocate for more housing investments in our city budget and was able to secure a historic \$25 million additional investment to help build new affordable housing; the voters also approved the \$310 million housing bond, which I co-sponsored with my colleagues and Mayor Ed Lee. Additionally, I am a lead co-sponsor of a bill to update our inclusionary housing laws that will streamline the entitlement process to build more new housing quicker and incentivize more on-site affordable and middle-income housing units in market-rate projects. There is

no silver bullet to our housing crisis, but we must continue to do everything in our power to build new housing units quickly, responsibly, and appropriately.

Homelessness in San Francisco continues to persist, and the most cost-effective and humane solution continues to be providing housing for the homeless. I secured funding in our budget for a District 2-specific homeless outreach team that will be focused on getting the district's homeless into housing and services to help put them on a path toward self-sufficiency. I am close to passing legislation to help vulnerable individuals maximize the public benefits for which they qualify, saving the city valuable resources in the long-run. I also partnered with Bevan Dufty and Mayor Lee to support the innovative and successful Navigation Center, which is housing homeless individuals, and am co-sponsoring a bill to create a Navigation Partnership Fund that will encourage philanthropic giving from the private sector to open more Navigation Centers.

As property and violent crime have increased in San Francisco this year, public safety is a top concern to residents in every neighborhood. For years, our police and fire departments have been understaffed. Every year since

I was elected I have secured more funding for new fire and police academy classes to have more public safety personnel out in our streets. During the year, I hosted numerous public safety town halls throughout the district, where I brought together the leaders of our neighborhoods, police, and district attorney's office to discuss how we can reduce crime and keep our communities safe. I also met with PTA's at Sherman Elementary and Marina Middle School to discuss public and pedestrian safety improvements to keep our children safe.

To address gun violence in San Francisco, I passed common-sense gun safety policies that will help aid police in their investigations and deter criminals from illegally obtaining guns in our city. I believe we need to do everything in our power to reduce gun violence to keep our communities and families safe.

When I first came into office, I revamped the San Francisco Shared Schoolyards Project to open up public schoolyards on weekends for the community to use and enjoy by privately raising funds to cover the costs of the program. The project was so successful that we announced we will expand from 28 participating public schools to 80 by the

end of 2016. In a dense urban environment like San Francisco, I believe we have to do everything in our power to create more open space for our residents, visitors, and families.

As our city continues to grow, the use of our parks is at an all-time high, and our Recreation and Park Department is working tirelessly to address the nuts and bolts issues that our residents deserve and expect to see fixed. Unfortunately, funding for Rec and Park has not kept pace with the needs and issues that have to be addressed in our neighborhood parks. I introduced a community-driven funding plan for the June primary election — that will not raise taxes a penny — to fix a structural budget shortfall that has existed in the department since the Great Recession.

Our world-class parks and open spaces deserve a sustainable funding source to make the badly needed improvements and upgrades to everything from fixing the broken swing, adding more park rangers, and creating more programming options in our parks for our residents to access and use. This measure will guarantee improvements and upgrades to every neighborhood park in San Francisco. I hope to earn your support this June!

During the budget process, I secured funding to host the first-ever series of free District 2 Family Movie Nights in the Presidio. As a father of three, I firmly believe we need to provide more family services and programming opportunities to keep our city diverse and strong. After two family movie nights, we have seen the demand grow, with the last movie night bringing out more than 1,000 people. The movie nights will continue through June, and I encourage you to attend our next movie night on Friday, Dec. 11, at the Presidio YMCA.

Last, the Francisco Reservoir Project is moving along in a timely fashion. The agreement between the city and the Francisco Parks Conservancy will be up for approval by the Recreation and Park Commission and Board of Supervisors in early 2016.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2016

Next year our office will continue to implement solutions addressing affordability, homelessness, housing, broadband connectivity, and public safety. We are extremely proud of the work we were able to accomplish together this year and look forward to making 2016 another successful year.

E-mail: Mark.Farrell@sfgov.org



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MARINA-COW HOLLOW INSIDER

Union Street lights up and Marina's true colors shine

BY LYNETTE MAJER

MARINA SHOWS ITS TRUE COLORS

In the week following the Paris bombings, in a show of solidarity, the merchants on Scott Street proudly displayed French flags in front of their businesses, a truly touching sight. Organized by Supervisor Mark Farrell, **Reed & Greenough** (3251 Scott Street), **Spaghetti Bros.** (3213 Scott Street), and **Scotland Yard** (3232 Scott Street) pledged to donate 100 percent of their proceeds from specific drinks sold Wednesday, Nov. 18 to the Entertainment Division of Paris, which supports the city's hospitality industry. *Nous sommes tout Parisiens.*

On a lighter note, did you know that **Reed & Greenough** (3251 Scott Street) has a rooftop beehive? Owner Paul Owens says the hive heads out daily to the Presidio and returns to make the honey that the bartenders use to make that Prohibition-era, gin-based cocktail with the name you can't say without grinning, the Bee's Knees. Drop in for a taste of honey and a hive tour anytime they're open.

It's that time of year again for the **Union Street Fantasy of Lights** from Van Ness Avenue to Steiner and for good measure, Fillmore Street from Union to Lombard, to add some festivity to your Christmas shopping. Don't miss the kick-off event on Dec. 5 at the Cudworth Mansion (2040 Union Street) with all things Christmas: Santa, elves, "reindeer," horse-drawn carriage rides, and lots more, including donation bins for the San Francisco Firefighters Toy Program. Visit sresproductions.com for schedule and details.

ARTISTS REJOICE

San Francisco's favorite art supply store, **Flax**, has opened an outpost at Fort Mason (Building D). Judging by the crowds on their opening weekend — with live music, product demos, and refreshments — it's on track to be a smashing success. Fort Mason's resident arts community is especially excited to have a go-to, walk-to supply store, and in a supportive move, Flax is stocking materials just for them. Not an artist? You'll still find something here to love and sure to spark your inner creativity.

IT'S LIKE THEY NEVER LEFT

Everything seemed business as usual at the "new" **La Boulangerie de San Francisco** (1909 Union Street) recently. The interior appears the same as does the menu (like those adorable little petite baguette sandwiches in the grab-and-go case). There looked to be just a few more pastry and bread choices, which is never a bad thing, and the place was filled with customers. Great to have them back in the 'hood.

CHICKEN AND WINE

Lucky Dogs on Filbert Street between Steiner and Fillmore quickly morphed into **Rooster & Rice** (2211 Filbert Street) about a month ago. Owner Aric Doo reports it's had a warm reception, especially from the lunchtime crowd. Now chef Tommy (who has a restaurant in Palo Alto) is cooking up Khao Mun Gai — organic poached Mary's chicken over rice served with a chili-garlic-ginger-soybean sauce, a side of chicken broth, and a cucumber and cilantro garni. You



Reed & Greenough shows its support for France. PHOTO: LEXIE LEE

can have that three ways, and add extras like an egg or veggies.

Ghirardelli Square has a new tasting room: **Bluxome Street Winery** (851 Beach Street, Suite F-201A), in the Woolen Mill building. It's the second location for Bluxome, which has been producing wine for five years in their SOMA location. Drop by for a taste any day from noon to 7 p.m. in the historic space with exposed brick and views of the bay.

CANDLES AND MORE

Eurasian Interiors (1861 Union Street) recently opened another location at 2176 Chestnut Street in the former Heritage Row space. In addition to their wide selection of upper-end candles and restored antiques (housed upstairs), you'll find a finely curated selection of jewelry, handbags, and scarves. Bonus: They love dogs.

Speaking of candles, **Glassbaby** (2070 Union Street) relocated last month from Sacramento Street. The store is a visual delight, with every color votive imaginable made at their studio in Berkeley, where you can watch the actual glassblowing. And you can feel good about making that purchase: Glassbaby donates 10 percent of each sale to organizations that provide assistance to those in need.

Gala Boutique (2277 Union), across from Rose's, is hosting a **Public Glass** pop up through Jan. 4, featuring handmade glass from local artists.

BETTER THAN MILL VALLEY

Cabana Home (3024 Fillmore Street), open for several months now, is loving the Fillmore foot traffic, compared to their previous location in Mill Valley. In addition to their design services, you'll find a fine selection of home accessories and gifts, plus a charming back patio space, and friendly designers.

MORE MERCHANTS GIVING BACK

Jest Jewels (1869 Union Street) this past summer hosted five happy hour charity events where they matched dollar-for-dollar jewelry sales for the Dress for Success organization (providing clothing, confidence, and career development for low-income women). Over \$5,000 was raised — congratulations!

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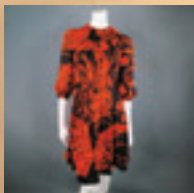
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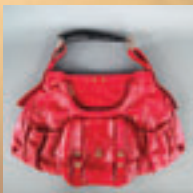
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San Francisco is ready for its close-up

A new look at the city's personalities is a biography of the ever-changing city by the bay

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

SAN FRANCISCO IS HAVING AN IDENTITY crisis. People are arguing and legislating and propositioning about what the city is and what it is becoming. Who are these new people filling up that fancy coffee shop where my old dry cleaners used to be? Why is that decrepit old parking lot being replaced with a huge apartment building? Why was my bus stop just super-sized? What is this place, anyway?

People who want to know where this city is going would do well to know where it came from, who built it, and who was run out of town on a rail. Ernest Beyl, the *Marina Times*' resident docent of San Francisco history and highlights, has provided a guide to the characters of the past in his new book *Sketches from a North Beach Journal* (Grizzly Peak Press, 2015), which is subtitled "Heroes and Heroines, the Wise and the Wily: San Franciscans from the Gold Rush to Yesterday."

In fact, much like his *Marina Times* column of the same name, Beyl uses this book to take a prose walk down the streets of North Beach (and parts thereof), giving you insight into the personalities who made the place what it is. Beyl introduces you to (or, if you're a long-timer in the city, expands your knowledge of) people who are noteworthy because of their achievements, their special way of standing out from a crowd, or their ability to tell a tale well.

There are some old favorites in here, such as Joshua Norton, a mid-19th-century local business tycoon who had an Icarus-like financial career, finally leaving town in failure. Years later, he would resurface, thoroughly out of his mind, but charmingly so as the self-styled Emperor Norton, ruler of this country and protector of Mexico. "And he was serious," Beyl writes. "He had gone mad. But nicely mad. He issued his own currency and he used it to pay his expenses. And, strangely, his phony money was honored. He used it for all his needs and for the needs of his two mongrel dogs, Bummer and Lazarus, his constant companions." Thirty thousand people came out for Norton's funeral in 1880, celebrating a man who would be just as at home on the streets of this city today.

There are also snapshots of lesser-known life here, such as the topless shoeshine stand, or the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s entry into the Hearst family as the make-good for a gambling debt.

Many of these stories present people from the edges of respectability (con artists, madams, journalists), which is both a reminder of who really built this town and an inspiration for people hoping to transcend a humble or unrespectable beginning to become respectable, such as the former madam who became a mayor.

As *Marina Times* readers know, Beyl is an inveterate haunter of restaurants and saloons. He not only knows how to tell a good story, but he knows how to listen to a good story and pass it along. Through his discussions with bartenders (for you kids, that's a mixologist), club owners, and restaurateurs, we are able to vicariously witness the greats and near-greats who came through town on their ways to vast fame and fortune. Lenny Bruce. Phyllis Diller. Dizzy Gillespie. To name only a very few.

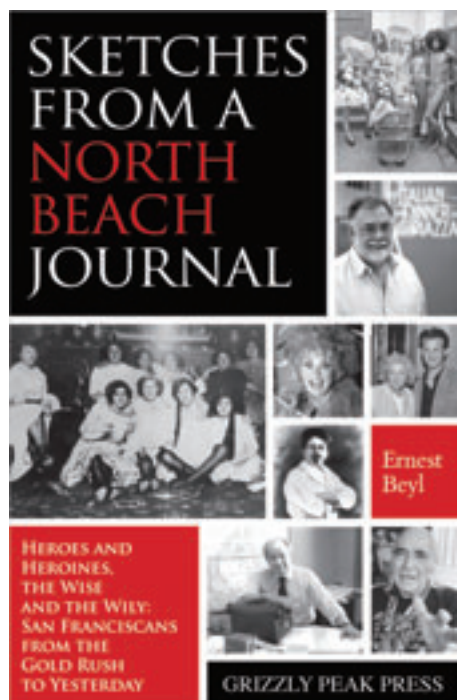
Beyl also gives us up-close views of radical lawyer Tony Serra, restaurateur Ed Moose, cooking guru "Tante Marie" (a.k.a. Mary Risley), Beyl's favorite Irish bartender, Michael McCourt, filmmaker and businessman Francis Ford Coppola, and others.

Many of the people in this book lived decades ago, but they would find kindred spirits in young newcomers to the city who want to disrupt the way things are. They were independent. Beyl presents us with a panoply of people who

didn't shy away from doing and saying what they wanted and what they meant, without caring about political correctness or social opinion. Whether they were starting up newspapers or music careers or brothels, they took chances, reshaped their own life stories, created art (or food or comedy or commerce), and then often got to live on in the city that was changed to whatever degree by what they had introduced.

Sketches from a North Beach Journal has something for lifelong San Franciscans and for new arrivals alike. The book won't solve San Francisco's current identity crisis, but everyone who is worried about that crisis should read it, because it shows that the city has always had a crisis like this. From frontier mission to mining town to military base to one big red-light district to baby boomer Valhalla to techno-town, San Francisco has always been changing and upsetting people with its changes. What will it become? It'll be the same, which is to say it will be different from today, different from everywhere else, weird, annoying, amazing.

E-mail: john@marinatimes.com



Sketches from a North Beach Journal, 221 pages, Grizzly Peak Press, \$16.95

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TABLEHOPPER :: Comings and goings



Oysters, eggplant parmigiana, and toasted ravioli at Spaghetti Bros.

PHOTO: SLOANE MORRISON

Smell that spaghetti and
garlic bread in the Marina?

BY MARCIA GAGLIARDI AND DANA EASTLAND

MARINA/COW HOLLOW

Now open is **Spaghetti Bros.** (3213 Scott Street, 415-400-8500), the new project we mentioned last month from former Bix and Fog City chefs Erik Lowe and Aaron Toensing.

Their menu is playful and innovative, adding seasonal NorCal ingredients, technique, and refinement to many classic American dishes. You can start with Aaron’s garlic bread, or toasted ravioli and marinara, then move on to a chopped salad, clam linguine with Jimmy Nardello peppers, and spaghetti with uni butter. (But then there’s the orecchiette mac and cheese, with New York cheddar Mornay and green chile salsa.) You can ramp up with a half chicken, duck breast scallopini, and Swedish meatballs, plus there are a few large-format table options, like a 16-ounce Flannery dry-aged prime New York steak with creamed spinach-delicata squash gratin, l’entrecôte sauce, and rosemary frites.

The pasta is made in-house, and their Josper (a charcoal-fueled oven and grill that can sustain temperatures above 650) will be getting a workout. Toensing will be rocking the desserts with house-made gelato, spumoni, and a Hatch green chile-apple pie with a cheddar cheese-flecked crust.

The bar features some cocktail classics (Boulevardier, La Floridita daiquiri), with Negroni variations as a highlight (courtesy of general manager and bar director William Sanders, also a Bix alum). The wine list strikes a good balance between quality and value with both Old- and New-World selections, but if you want to bust out with some Bollinger, you can do that, too.

The former Republic bar has been given quite the overhaul by designer Michael Guthrie and architect Mark Topetcher. There are four areas: a bar, lounge, main dining room, and private dining room, with seats for 120 in all. There’s a 20-seat, copper-topped bar, red leather banquettes with plaid upholstered backs, an elevated lounge with mocha leather banquettes, and the 50-seat dining room has classic white tablecloths and Thonet bentwood chairs with beige leather seats and tartan upholstered backs. Hours are 4:30–11 p.m. (bar), and 5:30–11p.m. (restaurant). Look for some additions, like a daytime sandwich shop.

Looking for some late-night street food? **Lasan** (3145 Fillmore Street, 415-346-4900) has you covered with their Late Night at Lasan menu. It’s available on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 p.m.–2 a.m. and is cooked and served right on the sidewalk. The special menu includes snack items

and finger foods, as well as naan wraps stuffed with chicken tikka, lettuce, tomato, onion, cilantro, and cucumber, with mint and tamarind chutney and a choice of hot sauce for \$8. Or go the fully fried route with a samosa, fries, and pakora combination for \$6. Plus, beers are only \$4 with food purchase.

NORTH BEACH

Chubby Noodle North Beach (1310 Grant Avenue, 415-296-9600) is now serving lunch daily 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. (they are also open for dinner 5–10 p.m.).

Piccolo Forno (725 Columbus Avenue, 415-757-0087), the new, casual addition from the Ideale crew, is now open. Hoodline reports that the new spot opened softly Oct. 28 and is serving pizza, salads, espresso, pastries, and antipasti all day. After they get their pizza oven, hours will be daily 10 a.m.–10 p.m.

CHINATOWN

Sam Wo Restaurant and Bakery (715 Clay Street, 415-989-8898) reopened Oct. 21 in the former Anna Bakery space. The new location has multiple floors (like the previous location), and they even installed a dumbwaiter (ahhh, nostalgia). You’ll notice other original artifacts in the space, and many of the original menu items, too, from the barbecue pork rice noodle roll to jook to wonton soup. Look for beer and wine to come soon, and the bakery part of the business to ramp up, too.

Hours for now Monday–Wednesday 11 a.m.–3 p.m., Wednesday–Saturday, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. and 6–11p.m., closed Sunday.

PACIFIC HEIGHTS

As reported earlier this year, there are changes afoot at the former Pizza Inferno on Fillmore. *The New Fillmore* was first to report that it’s now softly open as **Academy** (1800 Fillmore Street, 415-775-1800), from chef Nick Pallone and Peter Fogel. They’ve revamped the space, giving it a more open feel, with reclaimed wood tables and an open bar, plus they’ve added a wood-fired oven for Neapolitan-style pizzas. The menu is fun and seasonal, with a section of snacks, cured meats, vegetables, pizzas, and heartier main dishes. There are also 24 beers on tap and a selection of wines. It’s the perfect before-movie spot, just a block from the Sundance Kabuki.

Marcia Gagliardi writes a popular insider weekly e-column, *Tablehopper*, about the San Francisco dining and imbibing scene; get the latest news at tablehopper.com. Follow @tablehopper on Twitter and Instagram for more. *Dana Eastland* is the associate editor for *tablehopper.com*.



The cozy but elegant bar at The Dorian. PHOTO: ©KEITH BAKER

The Dorian: Victorian meets modern in a bar

BY JULIE MITCHELL

WHEN OSCAR WILDE wrote his famous philosophical novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, its protagonist was perhaps both indecent and immoral, at least at the time. Chestnut Street’s newest bar and restaurant, The Dorian, is neither, but its lavish array of fine whiskeys and handcrafted cocktails and its Victorian-inspired interior certainly feel decadent.

LEATHER AND DARK WOOD

Led by operating partners Anderson Pugash, Benson Wang, and Jack Herr of Union Street’s Palm House, along with others including general manager Chris Goodyear and executive chef Chris Ricketts, The Dorian bills itself as “a modern-day parlor for the bohemians, libertines, and freethinkers among us.” With a generous bar as its focal point, the two-level restaurant is divided into three distinct spaces — the state room, the drawing room, and the study — featuring opulent rich blues and greens, textured wallpaper, brass fixtures, leather, and dark wood. The main bar highlights an impressive whiskey display with teal and purple accents, and the study, a loft-like space upstairs, incorporates leather and dark wood, offering an intimate setting for small private groups. Special touches such as faux antique books on shelves and portraits on the walls mesh easily with modern, bright lighting and an overall open ambiance.

COCKTAILS AND WHISKEYS

The cocktail menu is intriguing with specials including the Alibi, with bourbon, salted pistachio, lemon, orange marmalade, and angostura; the Clockwork, with rye, Punt e Mes Italian vermouth, Benedictine, herbal liquor, and black walnut; City Lights, with mescal, spiced pear liquor, sweet vermouth, orange, and sparkling wine, and the New Century, a bottled cocktail that serves three-to-five people and includes bourbon, Lillet Rouge, grapefruit, lemon, cinnamon, crème de cacao, and mint. All specialty cocktails are \$12, and there is also a hand-selected list of more than 75 American whiskeys. A “world tour” whiskey flight of three samplings is \$30, and a plentiful selection of beer and wine by the glass and the bottle are also available.

AMERICAN CLASSICS MENU

As far as the menu goes, The Dorian offers American classics, all designed to share. It’s hard to go wrong with the

irresistible truffle fries (\$11), the fall salad of pear, almond, Humboldt fog goat cheese, and pomegranate (\$13); Brussels sprouts with tangerine and hazelnut (\$10.50), or the seasonal flatbread with hen of the woods mushrooms, Point Reyes blue cheese, and wild onion (\$13).

Carnivores will delight in the steak tartare with quail egg, Meyer lemon, and capers (\$19); the rib eye with watercress, crispy onion, and Dorian steak sauce (\$29.50); and the house burger, served with “fancy” sauce, bacon jam, white cheddar, caramelized onions, and fries (\$15.50); add \$2.50 for avocado. There is also the Royal Dorian burger with peekytoe crab and black truffle for \$40. An artisan meat and cheese selection is available for \$21.

Those looking for something lighter will be drawn to the chicken Caesar salad with white anchovies and garlic croutons (\$14); mussels and garlic bread (\$15); free-range chicken with wild rice, Bloomsdale spinach, and quince (\$19.50); local rock cod with celery root, andouille sausage, “cioppino” (\$25); or yellowfin tuna with an avocado, hearts of palm, and jalapeno (\$17). The bountiful and beautiful shellfish tower with peekytoe crab, shrimp, and Miyagi oysters, is \$58, and definitely meant for the table.

DON’T MISS DESSERT

Sharing plates has the advantage of leaving diners with room for dessert, and The Dorian’s butterscotch pudding with vanilla bean whipped cream and rosemary shortbread (\$11) is simply scrumptious. There is also an over-the-top banana split made with caramelized banana, house-made fudge, and vanilla, banana walnut, and strawberry ice cream (\$12). If you can’t handle all that, a scoop of one of those flavors as well as chocolate and salted caramel are available as are strawberry and lemon sorbets (\$3). After-dinner libations like Moscato D’asti and ports are listed on the dessert menu.

HAPPY HOUR

Early birds shouldn’t miss The Dorian’s happy hour, Tuesday through Friday from 4:30–6:30 p.m. The menu features Miyagi oysters (\$1), truffle fries (\$5), deviled eggs (\$1.50), half-off select bottles of rose and Champagne, the Alibi cocktail (\$9), house wine by the glass (\$5), and Drake’s 1500 Pale Ale (\$4).

The Dorian: 2001 Chestnut Street (at Fillmore), 415-814-2671, dorianssf.com; Thursday–Sunday 4:30 p.m.–midnight; Friday–Saturday 4:30 p.m.–2 a.m.

E-mail: julie@marinatimes.com

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APPETITES AND AFTERTHOUGHTS

Curry for Christmas: An ancient Indian culinary mystique

BY ERNEST BEYL

YES, I KNOW, FOOD WRITERS IN DECEMBER issues are supposed to write about turkey and roast beef for those year-end holiday dinners. But I'm going to write about curry. I'm a curry geek and proud of it. You may be, too, but if not, here are some things you might like to know about this passion for curry.

Many years ago, I sailed on the Peninsular and Oriental passenger ship Himalaya as press officer. My job was to seek out interesting passengers for the press to write about when we hit port. And as a freelance writer, I was also looking for a good story. I found it aboard the Himalaya: the ship's glorious curry. In those days, Indians, usually from the state of Goa, the one-time Portuguese province on the Indian subcontinent's southwest coast, staffed the galleys of these ships. In the kitchens of the grand old Himalaya, one Goanese worker attracted me. He was the curry cook, who prepared the various Indian curries for the crew. Passengers found curry on their menus once a week or so, but the ship's British staff and Punjabi and Goanese crew found curry on their plates everyday. I was considered crew and got my fill of all things curry.

THE UNMISTAKABLE SNIFF OF CURRY

One day I wandered into the galley and sought out the curry cook. "What is curry powder?" I asked. He decided to show me.

On a long worktable, he laid out small piles of dried leaves, roots, twigs, berries, seeds, and such. Cardamom, caraway, anise, ginger, garlic, chilies, fenugreek, cloves, cinnamon, turmeric, coriander, fennel, mace, poppy seeds, cumin, mustard seeds, black peppercorns, bay leaf, saffron, sometimes asafetida — maybe more. I can't remember. Then, seemingly at random, he took a pinch of this and a pinch of that and dropped them in a large stone mortar. And with a mammoth pestle he pulverized the lot of it. It was the magic of the curry cult — a group of which I am now a member in good standing. When my newfound Goanese friend was finished, he allowed me to peek into the mortar. A vaguely yellow-orange powder greeted me, and I sniffed the magnificent, unmistakable smell of curry.

A PSEUDO CURRY THAT TASTES CURRYISH

To many— probably most— curry powder comes from the supermarket in a small jar or a small rectangular tin. And that's fine. When prepared with that powder, a pseudo kind of curry tastes curryish.

To some few, curry is something else again — home-ground curry powder, pulverized in a mortar. Magic powder! Your clothes will smell of it. You entire house will be redolent with that remarkable smell.

CURRY TO MAKE YOU SCREAM FOR MERCY

The curry concept dates back more than 4,000 years on the Indian subcontinent. Archeologists figured it out from studying shards of pottery and from forensic dental tests. The word

curry probably comes from a Tamil Indian word *Kaari*, which originally referred to a meat or vegetable dish eaten with rice. It was a kind of spicy stew. Cookery in India has long been considered a gift of the gods — and it is. Historians believe the spicy food concept began logically in a hot climate and with a people that used its indigenous spices for flavor. The spicy curries were a good foil for the hot weather, and in a country where refrigeration was nonexistent, the spices worked as a food preservative.

Curry can be mild or it can be as hot as a blast furnace. In India, curry was not prepared as a fiery gravy over rice until after Columbus mistakenly took the New World for the Spice Islands and sent chilies back to Europe. From there the hot capsicum pods made their way to India and Southeast Asia.

I recall on a visit to Kuala Lumpur, I cockily uttered the word hot when my turbaned waiter asked how I wanted my curry. Fortunately he had placed me in a special air-conditioned dining room away from the local customers. After the first bite of my lamb curry over rice, I screamed for mercy — and water.

BRITS LOVE CURRY AND IT LOVES THEM

Perhaps the greatest devourers of curry outside of India and Southeast Asia are the British. There are thousands of curry houses in Great Britain, and the UK even celebrates a national curry week. (It's in October in case you want to pop over to London to attend.) The British love of curry dates to the British Raj in the 19th and 20th centuries when colonial India was dominated by British civil servants and the military. The Brits ate what their colonial Indian household servants provided them — and that was curry, in all its forms, and with all of its accompanying condiments, usually referred to as sambals. In the galley office aboard the Himalaya, there was a notice posted that listed more than 20 sambals, including chopped onions and tomatoes, raisins, dried banana, ground coconut, cucumber, mangoes, limes, hard-boiled eggs, and a variety of chutneys.

CURRY IS BIG IN SAN FRANCISCO

And, of course, curry is big in food-savvy San Francisco. There are some fine Indian restaurants here and some of them are noted for their curry dishes. A few that come to mind are Dosa (1700 Fillmore Street and 995 Valencia Street), which features classic South Indian dishes; Udupi Palace (1007 Valencia Street) also serving South Indian fare; Amber India (25 Yerba Buena Lane) is upscale and has a wide variety of Indian dishes of various styles, and Lahore Karahi (612 O'Farrell Street) in the Tenderloin has wonderful curry offerings.

And that's the story of the curry cult. When writing this story I suggested to my editor that the printer sift some good curry powder between the pages of this paper for realism. But that idea never gained traction.

For a list of common curry ingredients, see the online version of this article at marinatimes.com.

E-mail: ernest@marinatimes.com



Emtu Estate winemakers John and Chris Mason donate 100 percent of their wine sales to charity.
PHOTO: EMTUWINES.COM

Wineries that give back 100 percent ... and more

BY KENNETH MAJER

IT'S HEARTENING TO KNOW in these tumultuous times of conflicting values that there are producers of our favorite elixir who want to make a direct, positive contribution. Here are some wines to enjoy this holiday season of giving with the comfort of knowing that proceeds go to very good causes.

PlumpJack Wines: PlumpJack honors Tessa Thomas Newsom, who lost her fight against breast cancer in 2002. All proceeds of Tessa's Cuvee Chardonnay go directly to the Stanford Supportive Care Center. This complex, medium-bodied wine from Russian River grapes has a satin-like texture featuring hints of pineapple and pear. As you toast and pair this wine with shellfish, prawns, or lobster, remember the generous philanthropy of the PlumpJack Group (415-346-9870, plumpjackwines.com).

Ehlers Estate: This unique winery actually belongs to a not-for-profit foundation. When founder Jean Leducq passed away in 2002, he left a foundation that he and his wife, Sylviane, had started in 1996. As a result, 100 percent of the proceeds from Ehlers Estate wine sales go to cardiovascular research. The winery, located north of downtown St. Helena, uses organic and biodynamic growing practices with their Bordeaux grape varieties. If you like big and "chewy" reds (a meal in a glass), try the 2012 Estate 1886 Cabernet (707-963-5972, ehlersestate.com).

Emtu Estate: This small winery in Forestville is owned and operated by John and Chris Mason who produce wine from the grapes grown in their three-acre backyard. All proceeds from their wine sales are donated to charity through their Labyrinth Foundation. When the couple isn't busy with the winery or caring for

rescued birds housed on their property, they travel around the world helping needy communities. Their Pinot Noir is truly exceptional — it's been served at Chez Panisse, A16, and at President Obama's inaugural dinner (707-887-1239, emtuwines.com).

As you toast and pair this wine with shellfish, prawns, or lobster, remember the generous philanthropy of the winemaker.

Lookout Ridge: Lookout Ridge gives more money to charity than it takes in. For every case of Lookout Ridge wine purchased, the winery gives a wheelchair to a needy individual through their Wines for Wheelchairs program. Each of these excellent wines (90+ points) is made by high-profile winemakers such as Greg LaFollette, Andy Erickson, and Cathy Corison. Current releases are a 2010 Andy Erickson Cabernet Sauvignon and a 2010 Brian Maloney Pinot Noir (707-282-9030, lookoutridge.com).

Staglin Family Vineyard: Philanthropy has always been important to Garen and Shari Staglin. When their son was diagnosed with schizophrenia, they turned their efforts toward fundraising for mental health research. Buy their Napa Valley 2014 Salus Chardonnay (citrus, cream, almond, pear, cantaloupe, and lemon); the 2012 Estate (Rutherford) Cabernet Sauvignon (ripe red fruits, crème de cassis, cinnamon-chocolate); or the 2012 Booth Bella Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon (purple and blue fruits, tropical flowers, smoky spices) and 100 percent of the proceeds benefit continued mental health research (707-963-3994, staglinfamily.com).



2012 Salus Estate Cabernet Sauvignon
PHOTO: STAGLINFAMILY.COM

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MICHAEL SNYDER ON ... TELEVISION

Deck the screen with yuletide broadcasts

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

IT'S THAT MOST WONDERFUL TIME of the year — if you're a department store Santa, a pine tree salesperson, or a child of privilege. For the rest of us, Christmas (and any other holiday of the season) can be a time of frenzied angst-fueled gifting, unmet expectations, and forced jollity. So we should be grateful that we can retreat into the holly-and-hot-toddy dream world built by Hollywood and brought to our local cinemas and home video screens every December.

Hark! There it is, funneled into our brains as we sit and watch in wonder: families are reunited at yuletide after tribulations; dogs and/or cats “save” Christmas for pet owners; cranks learn the true meaning of the celebration, whether it is unselfish compassion for our fellow humanoids or something more religious in tone having to do with a newborn baby swaddled in a grubby desert manger 2,000 plus years ago. Our halls are decked with this stuff.

I may not be a church-going Christian; I'm more of a pantheist, if anything. But I am caught up in the fuss, frolic, and feels. And one of the inevitable ways I get in the spirit is through a long-running TV special: *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, the first and greatest

of the animated programs inspired by the long-running *Peanuts* comic strip written and drawn by the late, beloved Sonoma resident Charles Schulz. I'm on board from the first notes of composer-pianist Vince Guaraldi's dreamy ballad, “Christmas Time is Here,” one of the most beautiful melodies associated with the season.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

All of the Andy Williams family Christmas TV specials are nearly forgotten, even though the 1960s crooner was a perennial presence on network television every December. Most shows of that ilk are too time dated and era specific to get much contemporary replay other than on a netlet such as Me TV or a cable outlet such as TV Land. The only exceptions seem to be clips like Bing Crosby doing a 1977 cross-generational duet of “The Little Drummer Boy” with David Bowie, revisited for the oddity factor.

Most viewers don't recall that *The Simpsons* cartoon sitcom was launched by a Christmas-themed special. Meanwhile, the stop-motion animated *Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town*, *Frosty the Snowman*, and *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* get trotted out every year, along with the zillionth broadcast of the heart-warming 1946 Frank Capra movie *It's a Wonderful Life* and, in an annual marathon of repeat showings on the 25th, the frankly awesome 1983 feature film, *A Christmas Story*, based on the nostalgic, prickly/funny Jean Shepherd stories about a working-class Depression-era Midwestern family.

But it's *A Charlie Brown Christmas* — wherein the elementary-school-age *Peanuts* (including hapless round-headed Charlie) get a lesson in what really matters during the holiday — that invariably moves me.

SOMETHING MORE IN STORE

I do yearn for something more than that to generate viewing



A Very Murray Christmas starring Paul Shaffer, Bill Murray, George Clooney, and Miley Cyrus. PHOTO: ALI GOLDSTEIN/NETFLIX

joy — and I don't mean the expected/dreaded Christmas episode of *The Big Bang Theory* or *Empire* or *Family Guy*. So I was pleased to learn of a project that's probably a bit more snarky than the usual holiday pabulum. Coming on Dec. 4 to wherever a digital signal can reach: Actor and comedy titan Bill Murray in *A Very Murray Christmas*. This bauble is a present from the folks at the video streaming service Netflix, and it will be available throughout the rest of the month.

Murray has at least one holiday-themed movie in his filmography: *Scrooged*, a comedic modernization of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*. This is another thing altogether. Directed by Sofia Coppola (who gave Murray one of his best seriocomic roles when she cast him in her piquant movie *Lost in Translation*), it's being described as homage to the Christmas TV variety shows of yore — like the Andy Williams and Bing Crosby extravaganzas or John Denver cavorting with *The Muppets*. The jocular Murray plays himself in

the project, which presumes that he's planning to shoot a holiday television special in Manhattan, the place where his career took off in the 1970s when he was a “Saturday Night Live” cast member. A snowstorm shuts down the city and may prevent his guests — including George Clooney, Paul Shaffer,

Amy Poehler, Chris Rock, Jason Schwartzman, Jenny Lewis, and Miley Cyrus as themselves — from showing up. Somehow, I think they will make it. After all, a Christmas

I may not be a church-going Christian, but I am caught up in the fuss, frolic, and feels of the season.

miracle is yet another staple of movies and TV.

I have no doubt that I'll be checking into *A Very Murray Christmas* — just as soon as I get comfy with *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Priorities, priorities.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture on KPFK/Pacifica Radio's David Feldman Show and Thom Hartmann Show and on Michael Snyder's Culture Blast, via GABnet.net, Roku, and YouTube. You can follow Michael on Twitter: @cultureblaster



Charlie Brown and Linus in A Charlie Brown Christmas. PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

THE BEST OF BOOKS : Flying off the shelves

Best sellers: Marina Books Inc.

COMPILED BY BRIAN PETTUS

BOOKS INC. BEST-SELLER LIST

- 1. **Hilo Book 1: The Boy Who Crashed to Earth**, by Judd Winick (hardcover)
- 2. **111 Places in San Francisco that You Must not Miss**, by Floriana Peterson (paperback)
- 3. **Season of the Witch**, by David Talbott (paperback)
- 4. **The Mystery of the Lone Wolf Killer: Anders Behring Breivik and the Threat of Terror in Plain Sight**, by Unni Turrettini and Kathleen M. Puckett (hardcover)
- 5. **Enchanted Forest: An Inky Quest & Coloring Book**, by Johanna Basford (paperback)
- 6. **Michelin Guide San Francisco 2016: Bay Area & Wine Country** (paperback)
- 7. **The Sense of an Ending**, by

- Julian Barnes (paperback)
- 8. **The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing**, by Marie Kondo (hardcover)
- 9. **Old School (Diary of a Wimpy Kid Book 10)**, by Jeff Kinney (hardcover)
- 10. **The Martian**, by Andy Weir (paperback)

BEST SELLERS OF THE YEAR

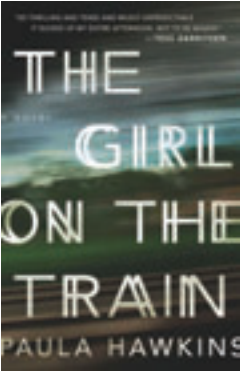
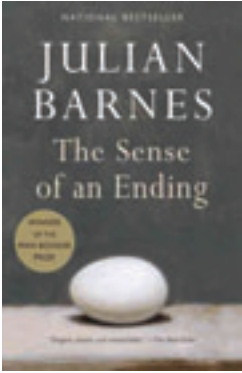
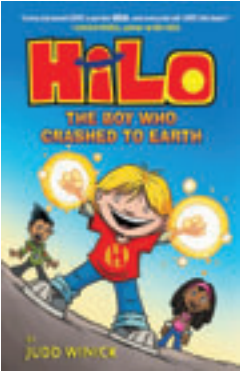
The holidays are here, and I thought I'd look back at the year and highlight our customers' varied interests. Here are the top sellers so far this year:

- 1. **Girl on the Train**, by Paula Hawkins
This suspenseful mystery was heralded as a Gone Girl-style thriller, and our customers continue to rave about it.

- 2. **Mindfulness Coloring Book: Anti-Stress Art Therapy for Busy People**, by Emma Farrarons
You've heard about the adult coloring book trend, and how relaxing and Zen-like it can be, and this pocket-size workbook has been the perfect fit for our customers.

- 3. **Go Set a Watchman**, by Harper Lee
Lee's second book, a sort of alternate timeline version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, found great success earlier this year, and no surprise: Who wouldn't want to read more about Scout and Atticus Finch?

- 4. **111 Places in San Francisco that You Must not Miss**, by Floriana Peterson
Rounding out our eclectic best



sellers is this wondrously crafted guide to San Francisco and its environs; our home city benefits from an original viewpoint of how to process and see the city by the bay.

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Brian Pettus is the manager of Books Inc. in the Marina.

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DECEMBER EVENTS

WHAT NOT TO MISS THIS MONTH

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

LIGHTINGS & MORE

86th Annual Golden Gate Park Holiday Tree Lighting
Thursday, Dec. 3, 4–7 p.m.
McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park (501 Stanyan St.)
The lighting of a Monterey cypress includes live entertainment, visit from Santa, caroling, sledding, a snow play area, rides and games, and more. *Free, sfrecpark.org*

Presidio Holiday Tree Lighting & Forest Walk
Friday, Dec. 4, 5:30–8 p.m.
Lincoln Blvd. at Funston Ave.
Join in this decades-old Presidio tradition featuring the Golden Gate Carolers. Light refreshments and kids’ activities will follow at the Presidio Community YMCA (63 Funston Ave.) as well as a lantern-lit 20-minute forest walk at 6:15 p.m. Bring a flashlight and meet in the YMCA gym. RSVP requested. *Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov*

25th Annual Union Street Fantasy of Lights
Saturday, Dec. 5, 3–7 p.m.
Union Street (btw. Van Ness & Steiner)
Fillmore Street (btw. Union & Lombard)
2040 Union Street
Thousands of holiday lights set off the Victorian buildings, transforming Union Street into a magical backdrop for Santa and a team of elves, who will be at 2040 Union Street from 5:30–7 p.m. Celebrate with jugglers, live reindeer (ponies in costume), face painters, balloon artists, costumed characters, singers, live entertainment, horse-drawn carriage rides, and more. See website for schedule and details. Bring toys to donate to the S.F. Firefighter’s Toy Program. *Free, sresproductions.com, 800-310-6563*



Festival of Lights: Hanukkah Under the Dome
Sunday, Dec. 13, 3–5 p.m.
Westfield San Francisco Centre
As a part of the Bill Graham Menorah Project, this annual celebration featuring Rabbi Moshe, families are invited to enjoy traditional Jewish treats, crafts, music, and entertainment. *Free, 415-780-2575, westfield.com*
PHOTO: BILLGRAHAMMENORAH.ORG

Light the Menorah
Wednesday, Dec. 16, 5–6:30 p.m.
Ghirardelli Square
Visitors are invited to join Rabbi Peretz Mochkin in lighting the first candle of the Menorah in this celebration for the entire family. *Free, 415-775-5500, ghirardellisq.com*

NEW YEAR’S CELEBRATIONS

30th Annual Japanese New Year Bell-Ringing Ceremony
Thursday, Dec. 31, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum
Participate in the striking of the 16th-century bronze bell to leave behind any negative experiences, wrong deeds, and ill luck of 2015. First come, first served; pick up tickets at admission desk. *Free with museum admission (\$15), 415-581-3500, asianart.org*

BATS: New Year’s Eve Special 2016
Thursday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m.
Bayfront Theatre, Fort Mason Center
Ring in the new year with a night of laughter and scenes and stories sure to capture your heart and imagination. \$35–\$45, 415-474-6776, *improv.org*

A New Year’s Event with Seth MacFarlane
Thursday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m.
Davies Symphony Hall
The Academy and Grammy award-nominated singer, songwriter, actor, producer, and director lights up the stage in this concert of Broadway and jazz hits with the symphony. \$85–\$230, 415-864-6000, *sfsymphony.org*

New Year’s Eve Dinner Cruise
Wednesday, Dec. 31, 9 p.m.
S.F. Belle (Pier 3)
Enjoy live entertainment, dancing, a huge roof deck fireworks viewing, open cocktail bars, a four-course seated dinner, festive party favors, a boarding photo, and more. \$275, 415-438-8300, *hornblower.com*

7th Annual Streets of S.F. New Year’s Eve Party
Wednesday, 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’s party in the Bay Area as well as state-of-the-art visuals and sound, and music by Girl Talk, Too Short, Amp Live, and more. \$125 & up, *eyeheartsf.com*

COMMUNITY CORNER

Christmas Card Drop-off
Wed.–Mon., through Jan. 31
Diamond Massage & Wellness Center (1841 Lombard St.)
Drop off your cards to send to St. Jude’s Ranch for Children in Boulder City, Nev., where they will be recycled to create new holiday and all-occasion greeting cards. Recycled cards are sold to support St. Jude’s programs and services for abused, neglected, and homeless children, young adults, and families. 415-921-1290, *diamondwellness.com*

S.F. Firefighters Toy Program
Daily
Any S.F. firehouse
In its 61st year of helping children, the S.F. Firefighters Toy Program is the largest in the U.S. and is looking for donations of unwrapped toys. 415-777-0440, *sf firefighterstoys.org*

Project Glimmer: Boxing Joy
Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Project Glimmer Warehouse (560 Forbes Blvd.)
Sort and wrap holiday gifts for more than 50,000 at-risk teenage girls and women. Morning or afternoon shifts available. Refreshments provided. Registration required. *Free, projectglimmer.org*

Christmas Outreach
Saturday, Dec. 12, 8:30–3 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 25, 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.
City Impact (230 Jones St.)
Help deliver groceries, cook, prepare and deliver meals to Tenderloin residents, disperse toys to kids, and serve hot meals in a dining room setting to the homeless. \$25 donation, 415-292-1770, *sfcityimpact.com*

GALAS & BENEFITS

Cable Car Caroling
Sunday, Dec. 6, 12:30–4:30 p.m.
Institute on Aging (3575 Geary Blvd.)
Tour the city on motorized cable cars, stopping to carol for low-income seniors at their residences and then present them with gift bags. Proceeds benefit the Institute on Aging. \$60, 415-750-4141, *cablecarcaroling.org*

Dig Deep Shopping & Fundraising Event
Sunday, Dec. 13
Shopping: 7–10 a.m.
Target (2675 Geary St.)
Donor event: noon–4 p.m.
Presidio Knolls (250 10th St.)
Make a donation then help Dig Deep spend the donations at a private shopping event for underprivileged Bay Area children. Afterward, enjoy family activities, food trucks, music and other holiday surprises, including sliders from the Slider Shack, holiday cocktails, hot cocoa, and desserts. 415-202-0770, *digdeepsf.org*

THEATER



ACT: A Christmas Carol
Wed.–Sun, Dec. 4–22
Geary Theater (405 Geary St.)
Featuring a lively cast of dozens, gorgeous costumes, and those deliciously spooky ghosts, the Bay Area’s favorite holiday tradition returns with a sparkling, music-infused production of this timeless classic. \$25–\$180, *act-sf.org*
PHOTO: KEVIN BERNE

The MeshugaNutcracker!
Thu–Sun, Dec. 4–7 & 11–14
Marines’ Memorial Theater
This musical blends Tchaikovsky’s unforgettably beautiful holiday score with witty lyrics and traditional Jewish songs to create a musical treat that’s perfect for the holiday season. \$54–\$72, 415-392-4400, *marinesmemorialtheater.com, themeshuganutcracker.com*

Mittens And Mistletoe: A Winter Circus Cabaret
Fri.–Sun., Dec. 18–20
Tue.–Sun, Dec. 22–27
Dance Mission Theater (3316 24th St.)
This charming, light-hearted, variety program suitable for all ages features innovative clowning, spectacular circus feats, and holiday high jinks performed by some of the most talented Bay Area and international theatrical circus artists. \$418–\$65, 415-225-7281, *sweetcanproductions.com*

23rd Annual Kung Pao Kosher Comedy
Thu.–Sat., Dec. 24–26
New Asia Restaurant (772 Pacific Ave.)
Enjoy this uniquely Bay Area holiday tradition of Jewish comedy and delicious Chinese cuisine. This year’s event features Tonight Show guest Dana Eagle, America’s Got Talent contestant Wendy Liebman, New York Friars Club Roasts writer Mike Fine, and producer/ M.C. Lisa Geduldig. \$47 & \$67, 925-855-1986, *koshercomedy.com*

MUSIC

S.F. Bach Choir: A Candlelight Christmas
Fri. & Sun., Dec. 4 & 6
Calvary Presbyterian Church (2525 Fillmore St.)
Performing with the Renaissance wind band, The Whole Noyse, this program features contemplative, lush, mystical, jubilant Christmas music from many periods and countries — from Bach chorales to American shape-note hymns, early motets, to new creations. \$30, 855-473-2224, *sfbach.org*

Annual Sing-It-Yourself Messiah
Saturday, Dec. 5
Workshop: noon–2 p.m.
Concert: 8–9 p.m.
Calvary Presbyterian Church (2515 Fillmore St.)
Come sing your Handel halleluiahs with the S.F. Academy Orchestra, soloists, and choirs. Open to all singers whether currently members of a chorus or individuals seeking their yearly Messiah fix. All are invited to rehearse at the free workshop before the concert. Reception follows. Suggested donation \$25, 415-346-3832, *calvarypresbyterian.org*

Christmas Classics and Chanukah Shtick
Saturday, Dec. 12, 8 p.m.
Hotel Rex (562 Sutter St.)
Lauren Mayer and G. Scott Lacy deliver a joyful evening of tinkling piano keys and voices raised in merriment. \$30–\$50, 415-857-1896, 800-982-2787, *societycabaret.com*

A Cathedral Christmas
Sat–Mon, Dec. 12–13 & Sat–Sun, Dec. 19–20
Grace Cathedral
A beloved San Francisco tradition and one of only a handful of such choirs in the country, the Choir of Men and Boys accompanied by full orchestra performances favorite carols and holiday masterpieces. \$15–\$60, 415-392-4400, *cityboxoffice.com*

Colors of Christmas
Mon.–Tue., Dec. 14–15, 8 p.m.
Davies Symphony Hall
Peabo Bryson, BeBe Winans, and Grammy nominee Oleta Adams perform an unforgettable evening of pop hits and holiday favorites with the S.F. Symphony. \$35–\$115, 415-864-6000, *sfsymphony.org*

Handel’s Messiah
Wed.–Fri., Dec. 16–18, 7:30 p.m.
Grace Cathedral
American Bach Soloists present their celebrated annual performance of Handel’s masterpiece. \$10–\$105, 415-621-7900, *americanbach.org*

Holiday Sing-Along
Thursday, Dec. 17, 7-8 p.m.
Presidio Officer’s Club (50 Moraga Ave.)
Gather around the piano to share music and holiday cheer, led by performers from 42nd Street Moon. Festive drinks from Arguello restaurant will be available for purchase. *Free, registration required, 415-561-4400, presidioofficersclub.com*

Blind Boys of Alabama Holiday Gospel Concert
Thu.–Fri., Dec. 17–18, 7:30 p.m.
SFJazz (201 Franklin St.)
The five-time Grammy Award-winners have become known worldwide with celebrated albums including the star-studded releases Go Tell It on the Mountain and Talkin’ Christmas, which was a collaboration with blues legend Taj Mahal. \$35–\$95, 866-920-5299, *sfjazz.org*

Golden Bough: Christmas in a Celtic Land
Friday, Dec. 18, 8 p.m.
Old First Presbyterian Church (1751 Sacramento St.)
Hear Old World carols from Ireland and Scotland. \$18, 415-474-1608, *oldfirstconcerts.org*

DANCE

Dance-Along Nutcracker
Sat.–Sun., Dec. 12–13
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
Join in a fun-filled, zany dance-along concert. This year’s theme, “The Nutcracker of Oz” blends Tchaikovsky’s classic fairytale with an adaptation of the story of Oz. \$30, 415-978-2700, *ybca.org*

S.F. Ballet: ‘The Nutcracker’
Daily, Dec. 16–31 (except Dec. 25)
War Memorial Opera House
A tradition since 1944, this annual production is set in early 20th-century San Francisco. Join the adventures of the Nutcracker, the Mouse King, and Clara. Ages 5 & up, \$29–\$450, 415-865-2000, *sfballet.org*

POTABLES & EDIBLES

Holiday Entertaining with Bon Appétit Magazine
Saturday, Dec. 5, 10 a.m.–noon
Sur La Table (2224 Union St.)
Learn how to prepare savory and festive hors d'oeuvres with ease and elegance. \$69, 800-243-0852, surlatable.com

Annual Crab Feed
Thursday, Dec. 10, 6–10 p.m.
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center
This event held among the Christmas trees sells out every year. Start with cocktails, then enjoy a fresh crab and pasta dinner. Finish your evening with dancing to tunes spun by D.J. AJAX. Proceeds benefit at-risk youth. \$95, 415-856-0939, guardsmen.org

SPORTS & HEALTH

Great Santa Run
Sunday, Dec. 13, 8:30 & 9 a.m.
Starts/Ends: Sports Basement Presidio
This figure eight loop around Crissy Field is flat, fast and scenic; the Rudolph one-miler along the dirt trail starts 9 a.m. Family and referral discounts available; Santa suits provided in race packet. \$25–45, 415-246-1390, titanium-racing.com

Santa Skivvies Run
Sunday, Dec. 13, 10:30 a.m.
Starts/Ends: LookOut (3600 16th St.)
Don your gay apparel, favorite festive costume, or strip down to your undies to raise awareness and fight HIV/AIDS and benefit the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, \$50, 415-487-3000, santaskivviesrun.org

CHILD’S PLAY

ODC: The Velveteen Rabbit
Wed.–Sun., Dec. 2–13
YBCA Theater (701 Mission St.)
Told through music, dance, and a powerful narrative, The Velveteen Rabbit celebrates the unique relationship between a little boy and his stuffed rabbit, and the enduring power of love. \$15–\$75, 415-978-2700, ybca.org



Presidio Forest Wreath-Making Workshop

Sat.–Sun, Dec. 12–13, noon–5 p.m.
Main Post Lawn
Create holiday décor with trimmings from the Presidio forest with help from our merry volunteers. Greens, wire, clippers, and frames are provided. Bring your own trimmings — ribbons, cards, and mementos. Food available for purchase. *Free, registration required.* 415-561-4400, presidioofficersclub.com
PHOTO: PRESIDIOOFFICERSCLUB.COM

JUST FOR FUN

SFMade Holiday Gift Fair
Saturday, Dec. 12, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Calif. College of the Arts (111 8th St.)
Discover locally made gift items including jewelry, gourmet gifts, coffee, chocolate, wine, home items, bags, body products, men's and women's apparel, children's wear, pet gear, and stationery from more than 80 vendors. *Free,* 415-408-5605, sfmade.org

Holiday Caroling on Union Street
Saturday, Dec. 19, 1 p.m.
2325 Union Street
Meet: St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church (2325 Union St. at Steiner)
Join the caroling strolling up and down Union Street and return to the church for refreshments. Free, sresproductions.com, 800-310-6563

calendar@marinatimes.com

HOLIDAYS

CONTINUED *from page 1*
Revel in cupcake making, face painting, balloon artistry, horse-drawn carriages, “reindeer,” live entertainment, and more, in the glow of thousands of lights setting off Union Street's Victorian buildings. At 5:30 p.m. have your photo taken with The Man himself, Santa. Bring toys to donate for needy children — collection barrels will be on site. 800-310-6563, sresproductions.com

29th Annual Macy's/S.F. SPCA Holiday Windows
Daily through Jan. 3, 2016
Macy's Union Square
Nothing captures the holiday spirit better than the San Francisco SPCA and Macy's annual Holiday Windows featuring heart-tugging dogs and cats in search of loving homes. Last year, 267 animals found homes and \$90,000 was raised to provide year-round support for the SPCA's lifesaving programs. Over the last 28 years, Holiday Windows has helped more than 8,500 animals find loving forever homes. Each window is equipped with a camera that streams video so you can watch (or select!) available puppies and kittens right from your computer. 415-554-3000, sfsPCA.org

ICE SKATING

Holiday Ice Rink at Embarcadero Center
Daily through Jan. 3, 10 a.m.
Justin Herman Plaza (adjacent to 4 Embarcadero Center)
Channel your inner Kristi Yamaguchi or Brian Boitano at the largest outdoor rink in the city with sessions starting every 90 minutes. 415-837-1931, embarcadero.center.com

Friends of Larkin Street Annual Holiday Ice Skating Party
Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6:30–9:30 p.m.
Justin Herman Plaza (adjacent to 4 Embarcadero Center)
Last year, more than 320 people of all ages took part in this popular event for Larkin Street Youth Services, which provides support for homeless and at-risk youth and young adults. 415-673-0911, larkinstreetyouth.org



Valerie Simpson to perform at the Glide Annual Holiday Jam.
PHOTO: GLIDE ENSEMBLE



De Marillac Academy students watch the unveiling of the San Francisco SPCA and Macy's annual Holiday Window. PHOTO: S.F. SPCA

Holiday Ice Rink in Union Square
Daily through Jan. 18, 10 a.m.
Union Square
Take a spin at the base of the 83-foot tree with 33,000 twinkling lights. Also with 90-minute sessions, a portion of proceeds benefit the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department. 415-781-2688, unionsquareicerink.com

MUSIC & DANCE

San Francisco Symphony's 2015 Holiday Concert Season
Various dates through December
Davies Symphony Hall (201 Van Ness Ave.)
The family-friendly lineup includes classic traditions and new twists on old holiday favorites with Bugs Bunny and Charlie Brown, in addition to Holiday Brass, a Classic Christmas, Handel's *Messiah*, and more. 415-864-6000, sfsymphony.org

Smuin Ballet Holiday Dance Program: The Christmas Ballet
Dec. 17–27
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission St.)
This annual yuletide treat offers something for the naughty *and* nice. Enjoy ballet, tap, and swing to a wealth of other genres drawn from holiday traditions from around the world. 415-912-1899, smuinballet.org

DO A MITZVAH (GOOD DEED)
Glide Annual Holiday Jam
Thursday, Dec. 3, 7–10 p.m.
Warfield Theatre (982 Market St.)
This spirited evening of

spoken word, storytelling, and live music will feature inspiring performances by Valerie Simpson, Justin Vivian Bond, Youth Speaks, Glide Ensemble & Change Band, and many others. Bay Area radio host and San Francisco Giants announcer Dr. Renel Brooks-Moon will emcee. Proceeds help raise funds for Glide's programs and Mo's Kitchen, which serves three meals daily to San Francisco's most in-need individuals and families. 888-929-7849, glide.org

Jingle & Mingle
Thursday, Dec. 3, 6:30 p.m.
Golden Gate Club (135 Fisher Loop, the Presidio)
The Children of Shelters designer wreath and art auction features wreaths from some of the West Coast's top designers and fine arts from talented local artists in a festive holiday setting. Proceeds benefit homeless children. 925-935-9938, childrenofshelters.org

Run Wild San(ta) Francisco 5K Run/Walk
Sunday, Dec. 6, 9 a.m.
Crissy Field
San Francisco Firefighters are calling all Dashers, Dancers, and Prancers to participate in the Santa Hat run that supports their annual toy drive. Participants will receive that quintessential holiday fashion statement, the Santa hat, finisher medal, and commemorative t-shirt. 415-759-2690, rhodyco.com

Holiday Heroes
Monday, Dec. 7, 5:45–8:30 p.m.
AT&T Park
The club level of the ballpark is transformed into a holiday wonderland for almost 700 children and their families to raise funds and awareness for Bay Area at-risk children. The interactive family-friendly event includes a gourmet buffet, silent auction, activities for kids, as well as a behind-the-scene glimpse of the ballpark and photo opportunities with the Giants' World Series trophies. Holiday Heroes connects at-risk children with professional athletes to provide encouragement, hope, and direction. 650-321-4142, holidayheroes.org

Help Is on the Way for the Holidays Gala
Monday, Dec. 7, 6–10 p.m.
Marines' Memorial Theater (609 Sutter St.)
The Richmond/Ermet Aid Foundation (REAF) presents a star-studded holiday concert and gala with an impressive lineup of celebrity performers guaranteed to knock your holiday socks off. Ticket sales benefit Larkin Street Youth, which supports at-risk youth and young adults ages 12–24, and Aguilas, which creates a supportive environment for gay/bisexual Latinos. 415-931-0317, reaf-sf.org

Guardsmen Christmas Tree Lot Party
Saturday, Dec. 20, 9 p.m.–1:30 a.m.
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center
Party on, Garth. Enjoy a hosted bar, music, dancing, and a lively crowd at this indoor winter wonderland. All proceeds benefit at-risk Bay Area youth. 415-856-0939, guardsmen.org

Great Dickens Christmas Fair & Victorian Holiday Party
Sat.–Sun. through Dec. 20, 10 a.m.–7 p.m.
Cow Palace
Traverse the lamp-lit lanes of Victorian London and mingle with costumed characters from the times of Charles Dickens, while shopping, dining, and more. dickensfair.com

Mercato di Natale (Italian Christmas Market)
Sat.–Sun., Dec. 5, 10 a.m.
Building C, Fort Mason Center
Inspired by the famous Christmas markets in Northern Italy, find the perfect gift from selections such as artisanal Italian food, handmade jewelry, Italian fashion and accessories, art objects, and other unique craft items all made by Italian artisans. 415-673-2200, museoitaloamericano.org

Warp Speed: a Holiday Trek
Saturday, Dec. 26, 8 p.m.
Building B, Fort Mason Center
Beam up unconventional holiday cheer with the Bats Improv salute to the classic sci-fi TV series featuring Kirk, Scotty, and what's-his-name. Audience suggestions will inspire an all-new crew of characters on the Star Trek Enterprise to boldly go where none have gone before. 415-474-6776, improv.org



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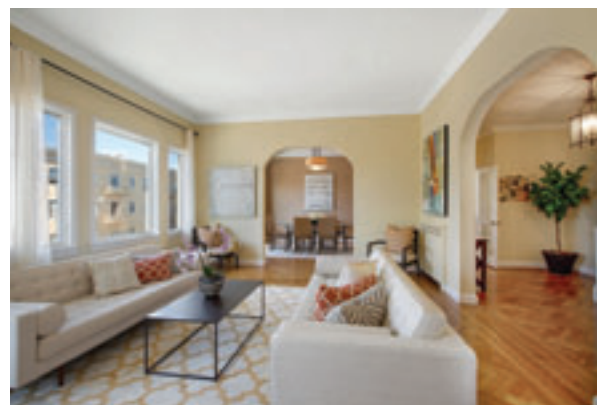
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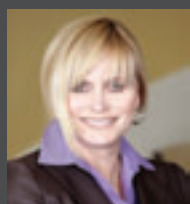
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URBAN HOME AND GARDEN



Choosing and caring for your holiday tree

BY JULIA STRZESIESKI

NOTHING MAKES A HOME MORE FESTIVE or aromatic over the holidays than a freshly cut Christmas tree. The Christmas tree has become such a recognizable symbol and a part of the holidays over generations. Long before Christmas trees as we know them today were around, trees that remained green year-round had special meaning. Many ancient cultures believed that evergreens would protect against ills and evil spirits and hung boughs over doorways and windows.

CUT TREES

Select the freshest-looking tree available. To test for freshness, gently grasp a branch between your thumb and forefinger and pull it toward you. Very few needles should come off in your hand. Shake or bounce the tree on its stump. You should not see an excessive amount of green needles fall to the ground. Some loss of interior brown needles is normal.

Care for your cut Christmas tree as you would a bouquet of fresh flowers. Make a straight cut across the base of the trunk, taking off about an inch and immediately place the trunk in water. Check the water level often — a fresh tree may absorb several pints to a gallon of water each day. Place the tree in a cool spot, away from your television and other appliances.

After the season, it's easy to compost your tree in San Francisco. Each year, tens of thousands of Christmas trees are collected throughout the city, chipped, and used as boiler fuel at waste-to-energy facilities. Recology Sunset Scavenger and Recology Golden Gate (recology.com) will pick up trees left curbside the first two weeks in January. Please note: All ornaments, including the tinsel, must be removed, as well as plastic and metal stands. Trees with wood stands are collectable, but please do not put them in plastic bags.

LIVE POTTED TREES

Buy a tree that is suited to your climate zone. Think about where you'll eventually plant your tree, and buy the right tree for that location. Or plan to donate it to a Bay Area park after the holiday season (visit fuf.net for information).

Pick up your live tree by the pot — *not* by the stem. Many live plants start their decline during careless transport. Keep your live tree indoors for no more than 10 days and locate it well away from any heat source, keeping it well watered, but not sitting in water.

After its holiday tour of duty, move your live tree to an outdoor location where it will get filtered sunlight and protection from wind. Allow it two to three weeks to acclimatize in this interim location, and then put it where it will stay until next December, or plant it. You can keep the same live tree in its container through several holiday seasons, depending on how fast it grows, but plant it before it becomes root-bound.

FRESH, FAUX, OR POTTED?

Just like in every aspect of our world today, Christmas trees have come under scrutiny regarding their sustainability. Many have firm beliefs as to what constitutes a Christmas tree. Here are some pros and cons to help you make the best choice for your home.

Fresh: One obvious asset to a real tree is the scent that permeates the entire house; another is the tradition of choosing one. Nearly all Christmas trees in the United States are sustainably farmed these days and are probably somewhat local. Most tree farms plant two or three trees for every harvested tree, which takes about 7–10 years to reach “cut size.” During that time, the trees absorb carbon dioxide, contribute oxygen to the environment, and provide a habitat for birds and animals, in addition to creating green space and preserving the land from development. While real trees are compostable, the downsides are that they are used only one season, and they may be farmed using pesticides and fertilizers.

Faux: Though an artificial tree can be a pricey investment, over the years, it can be a worthwhile one. Set up and dismantling are easy, and they don't drop needles. Many come conveniently prelighted and their realism has greatly improved down to softness of needles. On the downside, they contain PVC and possibly other plastics (so they will never biodegrade), are often treated with fire-retardant chemicals, and most are made overseas, which adds to their environmental footprint.

Potted: An obvious advantage is that a potted tree can be used year after year and then planted when it becomes too large to move. There are several considerations, including buying a tree suited to your climate and where you might eventually plant the tree, but if you don't mind hauling in the tree each year, there's really no downside.

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

A house should be a home

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

I LOVE VICTORIANS, so I was thrilled, when I moved to San Francisco in the early 1990s with four college roommates, to find a railroad Victorian in the Haight-Ashbury. Located on the lower level of a two-unit building circa 1899, the flat had all its original detail and charm, from wainscoting to lion-head ceiling medallions. We shared two levels, a garage, and more than 2,000 square feet, and we paid \$1,600 a month.

To familiarize myself with the area, I took walks each day in a different direction, spending hours studying the intricate facades of the many Victorians and Edwardians that make San Francisco so special. On one of those excursions I spotted a butter-yellow Victorian, its decorative early 1900s flourishes accented in white. It wasn't the biggest or the most extravagant house, but something about it caught my eye, and my heart. Every time I passed it, I loved it more. This was my dream house. Sometimes I would sit on the curb across the street and notice how the sunlight flecked the period-style fringed window dressings, or how the sunny yellow hue

brightened up the neighborhood even on a gloomy winter's day. If San Francisco had laws against house stalking, I might have been arrested.

After more than two decades and many changes, the one thing I can always count on is the little yellow-and-white Victorian. But while it has remained the same, the neighborhood around it has not. Construction equipment clogs the streets, houses are being stripped

biggest house, the pimped-out house, the most connected house — the “Internet of things” with a bed in it for the rare moments not spent at work.

While the city protects historically significant exteriors, they don't have any say about the interiors. An ornate Queen Anne a few blocks away sold for \$10 million, then the new owner spent two years ripping its Victorian guts out. Day after day I watched workmen haul spectacular hand-carved wooden fireplace mantles and elegant staircase bannisters out to the street and toss them in a dumpster. The sound of cracking wood made me sick. I'm sure they would have stripped off the period flourishes if the city had

allowed it, but they had to settle for painting the entire house, from the bottom of the steps to the top of the turret, matte white. Once the neighborhood's grande dame perched on an illustrious corner, the enormous eyesore now appears to be in perpetual primer awaiting a coat of color and some gilded trim.

I pray every time I pass by the little yellow-and-white Victorian that I won't see a “for sale” sign. In all the years of passing it, I had never seen a human being. Then

After more than two decades, the one thing I can always count on is the little yellow-and-white Victorian.

of their character to suit the modern tastes of a different demographic, and recent transplants are margining against their stock options at “latestcoolapp.com,” willing to pay double Zillow's *Zestimate* to fend off a bidding war in a frenzied attempt to “just buy something.” The reverence for San Francisco's glorious past, held so dear by those of us who grew up in the city or lived here for many years, is quickly going down the custom Italian drain. Now it's all about who has the



Lovers of Victorians appreciate the period detailing on both the interior and the exterior of the homes. PHOTO: BRUCE FINGERHOOD; WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

one afternoon while my stepmom Kickie was visiting, I decided to take her to see it — and there, in the driveway, was a woman. I slowed the car and rolled down the window. “Is this your house?” I asked. She nodded. “I have always loved it,” I blurted, giddy as a tween at a Taylor Swift concert. “It has always been my dream home.” She smiled, a bit taken aback. “Really? Well, thank you,” she said, walking up to the car. She explained that in the 1980s she and her husband were renting a flat down the street and they had also loved the little Victorian. When it went on the market, they jumped at the chance and bought it. “This market now is crazy,” she said. I agreed, and told her that in

my nightmares the little yellow-and-white Victorian was sold to someone who gutted all the details and charm, just like the Queen Anne down the street. “I think that's awful,” she said, shaking her head. “But you don't need to worry. We're not going anywhere, and we love it just the way it is.”

Driving Kickie back to San Jose, I felt elated and filled with a sense of relief. “They love it just the way it is,” I said. “They appreciate all the period detail and the history,” said Kickie, who shares my love of Victorians. “It's more than a house; it's their home, and they love it the way it is... just like you.”

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com

Warm Holiday Wishes
From all of us at Hill & Co.



Bolinas
Offered at \$4,495,000
Splendid Family Estate. This gorgeous, 9 building estate is located on over 10 acres of land overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Bolinas Lagoon. Buildings include the main house, carriage houses, cottage and several studios. Open field and natural sanctuary of trees provide gorgeous and relaxing walks through the property.
RoseLaneBolinas.com
Marcus Miller
415.516.5760



Exciting New Price!

Lower Haight
Offered at \$3,299,000
Unique Victorian Home. This historic Victorian 4BD/2BA home in the Lower Haight features a magical garden, renovated kitchen, and many unique features. Shown exclusively by appointment.
630PageSt.com
John L. Woodruff, III
415.999.9827



Pacific Heights
Offered at \$2,995,000
Sophisticated City Condo. Exquisitely renovated 3BD/2BA full-floor unit with stunning views of Lafayette Park. Comfortable and expansive floor plan with 2 private outdoor decks, den/library, 2 fireplaces, and exceptional period detail throughout. In-unit laundry, and 1-car garage parking.
2151Laguna2.com
Claire Myers
415.595.6108



Exciting New Price!

Noe Valley
Offered at \$2,650,000
Lovely and Spacious Home. This large 5BD/3BA property is located in a prime Noe Valley location. The formal living room features southern windows with great natural light. Huge open kitchen/family/dining room provides great entertaining space and has beautiful views of downtown. Large garage and laundry.
4390-26thStreet.com
Thomas Cooke
415.321.4391



Cow Hollow
Offered at \$2,650,000
Charming Cape Cod Style Home. This beautiful 3BD/3.5BA home, including an attached studio apartment, features a formal living room with a fireplace, remodeled open plan granite kitchen with dining and family area, 2 decks, private rear patio-garden, wine cellar and 1 car garage.
3027Webster.com
Stephanie Ahlberg
415.321.4232



Marina
Offered at \$1,295,000
Renovated Edwardian Condominium. Charming 2+BD/1BA Edwardian Flat in convenient Marina location. Flexible floor plan, renovated kitchen, period architectural details, parking, laundry and storage.
22Magnolia.com
Barbara Friedman
415.321.4246

The Marina Times Real Estate Market Report: October 2015

By Hill & Co.

SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
COW HOLLOW	2829 Green Street	5BD/5.5BA	\$9,000,000	Below	73
	1864 Greenwich Street	5BD/5.5BA	\$6,995,000	At	20
	2727 Union Street	4BD/3.5BA	\$6,800,000	Above	6
	2730 Broderick Street	4BD/3.5BA	\$5,500,000	Below	0
	2373 Filbert Street	3BD/3.5BA	\$3,600,000	At	9
LAKE	162 27th Avenue	3BD/2BA	\$1,850,000	Above	16
LAUREL HEIGHTS	18 Palm Avenue	4BD/3.5BA	\$4,525,000	Below	48
	160 Collins Street	3BD/2.5BA	\$2,550,000	Above	4
LONE MOUNTAIN	40 Kittredge Terrace	3BD/2BA	\$2,200,000	Above	19
	350 Ewing Terrace	2BD/1BA	\$1,520,000	Above	0
	40 Almaden Court	3BD/3BD	\$1,475,000	At	0
MARINA	465 Marina Boulevard	6BD/5.5BA	\$8,000,888	Above	29
	3600 Scott Street	4BD/2BA	\$2,750,000	Above	3
NOB HILL (no sales)					
NORTH BEACH (no sales)					
PACIFIC HEIGHTS	2317 Webster Street	4BD/2.5BA	\$2,825,000	Above	40
PRESIDIO HEIGHTS	3808 Clay Street	4BD/2.5BA	\$4,200,000	Below	22
	318 Walnut Street	4BD/2.5BA	\$3,750,000	Above	15
RUSSIAN HILL	1210 Lombard Street	4BD/4.5BA	\$4,200,000	At	0
SEA CLIFF (no sales)					
TELEGRAPH HILL	225 Chestnut Street	6BD/7.5BA	\$10,690,000	Below	196

CONDOS

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
COW HOLLOW	3025 Broderick	2BD/2.5BA	\$2,500,000	Below	56
LAKE	1040 Lake Street	2BD/2BA	\$1,600,000	At	0
LAUREL HEIGHTS (no sales)					
LONE MOUNTAIN (no sales)					
MARINA	2143 Bay Street	2BD/2BA	\$2,100,000	Above	1
	3011 Van Ness Avenue	2BD/2BA	\$1,625,000	Above	47
	3235 Gough Street #104	2BD/2BA	\$1,360,000	Above	7
	400 Avila Street #202	1BD/1BA	\$825,000	Above	0
	190 Cervantes Blvd #302	1BD/1BA	\$810,000	Above	12
NOB HILL	1333 Jones Street #1608	3BD/2BA	\$2,650,000	Below	25
	1177 California Street #1024	2BD/2BA	\$1,650,000	Above	0
	1120 Clay Street	4BD/2BA	\$1,525,000	Above	37
	1731 Larkin Street #4	2BD/2BA	\$1,495,000	At	42
	1810 Polk Street #509	2BD/2BA	\$1,250,000	Above	16
	1650 Jackson Street #408	2BD/2BA	\$1,220,000	Above	46
	1565 Sacramento Street #4	2BD/2BA	\$1,200,000	Above	32
	1083 Clay Street #302	1BD/1BA	\$1,112,000	Above	13
	74 Lynch Street	2BD/1BA	\$1,100,000	Above	13
	66 Pleasant Street	2BD/1BA	\$1,050,000	Above	40
	1635 California Street #44	2BD/2BA	\$991,000	Above	12
	1177 California Street #1101	1BD/1BA	\$950,000	Above	20
	10 Miller Place #503	1BD/1BA	\$825,000	Above	31
	1440 Broadway Street #306	1BD/1BA	\$758,000	Above	0
	1630 Clay Street #2	1BD/1BA	\$745,000	Above	18
	1155 Leavenworth Street #9	0BD/1BA	\$420,000	Above	22
NORTH BEACH	690 Chestnut Street #408	3BD/2BA	\$1,400,000	Below	37
	582 Chestnut Street	2BD/2BA	\$1,050,000	At	68
	454 Francisco Street #104	1BD/1.5BA	\$897,000	Below	20
	33 Vandewater Street #104	1BD/1BA	\$760,000	Above	12
	2145-2151 Powell St. #2149	0BD/1BA	\$605,000	At	130
PACIFIC HEIGHTS	2226 Green Street	3BD/2.5BA	\$4,500,000	At	0
	2003 Lyon Street	4BA/2BA	\$3,400,000	Above	19
	2829 California Street #4C	2BD/2BA	\$2,455,000	Above	15
	2186 Vallejo Street #1	2BD/2BA	\$2,300,000	Above	21
	2150 Vallejo Street #2	2BD/2BA	\$2,100,000	Below	25
	2201 Sacramento Street #601	2BD/2BA	\$2,000,000	Above	4
	1770 Pacific Avenue #402	2BD/2BA	\$1,775,000	Above	17
	2615 Sacramento St	2BD/2BA	\$1,640,000	Above	9
	2505 Gough St #1	2BD/1BA	\$1,609,400	Below	18
	2016 Pacific Avenue #204	2BD/2.5BA	\$1,495,000	At	31
	2921 Washington Street #6	1BD/1BA	\$1,250,000	Above	4
	1998 Pacific Avenue #203	2BD/2BA	\$1,105,000	Above	55
	1950 Gough Street #402	1BD/1BA	\$1,050,000	Above	16
	2505 Gough Street #3	2BD/1BA	\$977,200	Above	18
	2505 Gough Street #2	1BD/1BA	\$913,400	Above	18
	2040 Franklin Street #604	1BD/1BA	\$890,000	Below	30
	2040 Franklin Street #506	0BD/1BA	\$540,000	Below	23
PRESIDIO HEIGHTS	335 Spruce St	3BD/3.5BA	\$2,700,000	Above	15
	3991 Washington St	3BD/3BA	\$2,327,500	Above	19
	339 Presidio Ave	2BD/BA	\$1,628,829	Above	24
RUSSIAN HILL	44 Macondray Lane #1W	2BD/2BA	\$1,575,000	Above	18
	1471 Green Street	3BD/1.5BA	\$1,350,000	Above	16
	1080 Chestnut Street #4B	1BD/1.5BA	\$995,000	At	0
	1097 Green Street #9	1BD/1BA	\$875,000	Above	11
	1281 Vallejo Street #1	1BD/1BA	\$650,000	At	38
	1000 North Point Street #404	0BD/1BA	\$565,000	Above	3
SEA CLIFF (no sales)					
TELEGRAPH HILL	373 Lombard Street #202	2BD/2BA	\$2,231,000	Above	16

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, hill-co.com.

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP : Sharing, cooling, paying

Airbnb tries to make nice after close call at ballot box

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

AIRBNB UNVEILS ‘COMMUNITY COMPACT’

Just a week after San Francisco voters rejected a ballot measure that would have dramatically increased regulation on home-sharing services such as Airbnb and VRBO, San Francisco-based Airbnb announced the Airbnb Community Compact. The plan would commit Airbnb to greater transparency about its business, pay appropriate tourist or hotel taxes, and try to address displacement of renters by landlords looking to do only short-term rentals.

The company was lambasted for anti-Prop F ads termed tone-deaf and insulting, spending more than \$8 million to eek out a win over proponents who did no advertising. That close call apparently has Airbnb willing to address the greatest criticisms of its platform.

“When we started Airbnb, we couldn’t have anticipated all the ways hosts would use our platform,” Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky wrote on the company’s blog on Nov. 11. “We are proud of almost all of the activity that happens on our platform every day. But it’s become clear that we need to clarify what we will and will not tolerate in our community.”

Under the compact, Airbnb would report annually on its activity in a community, including things like the percentage of Airbnb hosts who are sharing their permanent home, the number of days a typical listing is rented on the service, its safety record, income earned by Airbnb hosts, and more. In addition, it will partner with individual cities to deal with their concerns over tax collection. Finally, the company pledged to work with communities dealing with “a shortage of long-term rental housing as a critical issue ... to prevent short-term rentals from impacting the availability of long-term rental housing by ensuring hosts agree to a policy of listing only permanent homes on a short-term basis.”

LUXURY HOME MARKET COOLS, NOT CRASHES

In October, overall median sales prices for houses and condos in San Francisco recovered from a dip to reach \$1.2 million. But for homes in the luxury market (priced starting at \$2 million for homes and \$1.5 million for condos), “the dynamic between buyers and sellers has fundamentally shifted, at least for the time being,” according to Paragon Real Estate in its November 2015 local market report.

There are many seasonal rises and dips throughout every year, so Paragon’s not calling it a crash; instead it says the market segment, which makes up about 20 percent of the city’s real estate, has cooled. It offers a few suggestions as to why: recent stock market volatility might have pushed high-asset owners to sell before things got worse, and high-asset buyers might have postponed

their purchases until Wall Street stabilizes; pricing might have found its ceiling in the city and incentivized buyers to search neighboring communities for high-end homes; and the supply-and-demand equation is finally being affected by the luxury condos that are coming on-line.

“However, the luxury home market hasn’t ‘crashed,’” Paragon cautions. High-end homes are still “selling very quickly for very high prices amid competitive bidding. But it has markedly cooled, and the number of luxury home listings in San Francisco hit a new high in October. ... It remains to see if this change is just a transitory market blip — such blips are not uncommon in financial or real estate markets — or the beginning of a longer term reality.”

SAN FRANCISCANS PAY UP FOR HOUSING

Residents of San Francisco pay more than 40 percent of their monthly incomes to cover mortgage payments, and they pay a whopping 47 percent of their incomes for rent, according to a November analysis by real estate website Zillow. The national average is 15 percent of monthly income for mortgages and 30 percent for rent, making San Francisco one of the most unaffordable cities for housing in the United States.

It has challengers, however. Renters in the Los Angeles area pay 48.8 percent of their monthly income, for example, and homeowners in San Jose pay 41. 6 percent for their mortgages.

“In general, paying a mortgage is more affordable than renting, and has been for some time. Unfortunately, many current renters aren’t able to realize the savings that come with homeownership because as home values and rents keep rising, it’s getting increasingly difficult to clear the down payment hurdle,” noted Zillow’s chief economist, Dr. Svenja Gudell.

“It’s not uncommon for a 20 percent down payment on even a modest home to represent savings of \$50,000 or more in some areas,” he added. “And that number itself is a moving target, rising as home values escalate and harder to achieve as more money goes to landlords and less goes to savings. ... It’s no wonder that many current renters are waiting longer to buy a home.”

QUOTE UNQUOTE

“The priorities of the city right now [are] not to support middle-class people. It seems to support only millionaires. I think that we could more easily accommodate working professionals and white-collar, middle-class families if we weren’t bending over backwards to accommodate those with enormous sums of money.”

—Sara Shortt, Executive Director, Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco, Aljazeera America

Real estate news tips? E-mail: john@marinatimes.com



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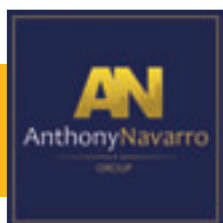
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REAL ESTATE TODAY : Parking and storage

BY CAROLE ISAACS

When I meet new home buyers, one of my first questions is: Do you need parking or storage? If the answer is no, that is fantastic! The buyers will have more choices as they search for a home. But what about the people who need a place to park their car when they are at home or those who need additional storage?

There are parking spots shared in every imaginable way. I found a condo on Lake Street where two owners alternated months using the garage. Indoor parking six months out of the year was better than nothing. In new and old buildings, stacked car parking is no longer a rare solution to the parking problem. Many garage entrances have low overhead clearance and steep driveways, and this may be an issue for SUVs or low sports cars. Without parking your car in the garage, there is no way to know if your car will fit.

Some buyers do not feel comfortable with stacked parking, tandem parking, steep driveways, or low overhead clearance. Others are grateful to find a home with any kind of parking in a location that works for them.

Storage can be anything from a small area that will fit a suitcase or two, to a large cage or designated closet that will fit a bicycle, plus boxes or small pieces of furniture. Or, there is "common storage," where people tend to pile up belongings in a haphazard fashion. And then



Car-stacking systems are growing in popularity in dense cities. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

To deal with these issues in San Francisco, there is a parking and storage disclosure statement that must be included in the seller's disclosure package. The wise seller will include this addendum in a single family home, too. There is no guarantee that a buyer's car will fit into a garage in a single family home or that the storage area meets the buyer's needs or expectations.

and personally check out the storage. Do not blithely sign off on the parking and storage disclosure. Buyers must drive their car into the garage. I have heard agents joke, “The garage was so small the driver got in the garage, but could not get out of the car.” I am not exaggerating! Testing the parking is especially important when many sellers agents ask that buyers sign off on at least the first page of a disclosure, including the parking and storage disclosure, to submit with their offer.

The obvious next question is: What if my car doesn't fit? The answer is easy. Buy a car that fits the parking space! There are dozens of cars to choose from and very few homes and condos. If you must have a car, and parking is a concern for you, build the cost of switching cars, adding a garage, or improving parking in an existing garage into the price of buying a home.

ket. As far as storage goes, ask yourself how often you need what is in your storage area. There are several places in town to rent storage lockers if you cannot scale down and live with less space.

Today there are so many buyers and so few sellers that only those buyers who are willing to think creatively when it comes to parking and storage will meet with success and buy a home in San Francisco.

To deal with these issues, there is a parking and storage disclosure statement that must be included in the seller's disclosure packet.

The bottom line is that not all cars fit into all garages, and not all storage is the same.

To protect both seller and buyer against disagreement at a later date, the parking and storage disclosure must be signed by the buyer to acknowledge that if they found a discrepancy, it is not material to the purchase.

In San Francisco today, buying a home is almost like speed dating. Buyers have a short window of opportunity to investigate the home. If it is not right for them, they move on to the next open house. But there is still time to drive your car into the garage

Carole Isaacs is a Realtor with McGuire Real Estate, where she is a Top Producer. Follow her on Twitter @CaroleIsaacs or visit her online at caroleisaacs.com or call 415-608-1267.



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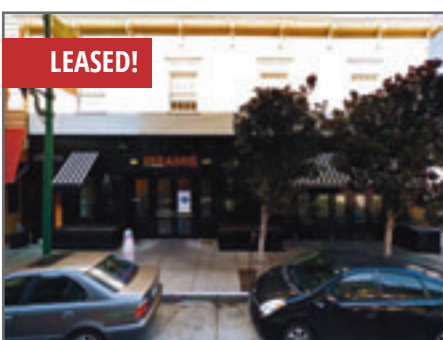
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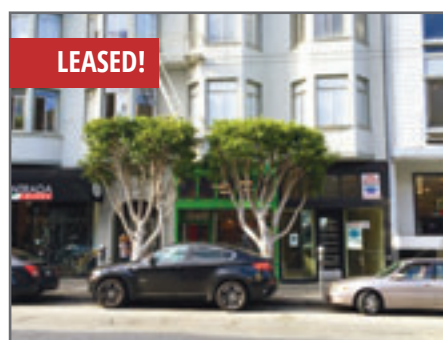
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THE HEALTHFUL LIFE :: Aging gracefully

Preventive health adds up

BY THALIA FARSHCHIAN

AS OUR SOCIETY becomes more health conscious, the common hook is to look and feel younger. In the ultimate quest for the fountain of youth without going under the knife, it is important to understand that preventative health is cumulative. Like a retirement fund, your health builds up over the years so you can enjoy it later in life. When the future is not accounted for, chronic disease and the aging process have the opportunity to take over.

REDUCING SUGAR IN YOUR DIET

There are numerous important reasons to decrease sugar in your diet, like diabetes and heart disease, but the argument that most often leads people to change their habits lies in vanity: Over time, sugar degrades the collagen in the skin, causing skin to prematurely age.

The detoxification of a high sugar diet results in molecules called advanced glycosylated end products (AGEs). This by-product of sugar breakdown converts strong Type III collagen to weak Type I collagen, making the skin increasingly fragile.

In addition to reducing sugar in your diet, incorporating antiaging superfoods like green tea, berries, colorful vegetables, raw dark chocolate, and goji berries help to combat toxic damage.

STRONG, HEALTHY BONES

For both men and women, bone loss can be mitigated by a diet rich in minerals including calcium, magnesium, and zinc and by consistent weight-bearing exercise. Beyond dairy products, calcium is actually better absorbed from spinach, kale, and other dark leafy vegetables. If you choose to supplement with calcium, look for one with a complex of minerals.

For women, the greatest drop in bone mass parallels the drop in estrogen during perimenopause. Many women consider the pros and cons of bio-identical hormone replacement, which can prevent bone loss and other conditions associated with aging.

PRESERVING MUSCLE MASS

Part of maintaining healthy bones is support-

ing them with healthy muscles. As hormones and activity tend to lower with age, muscle mass and tone follows, so exercise plays an essential role. Studies show that men who continue to do weight-bearing exercise and eat low-sugar diets have higher testosterone levels than men their age who do not exercise and follow a healthful diet.

A key nutrient that supports muscle mass maintenance, healthy bones, a strong immune system, and healthy skin is vitamin D. We absorb vitamin D from the sun and utilize it in multiple body systems; our skin naturally becomes tan to block excess absorption. When living in areas with more time spent indoors, most people require oral supplementation. Because our bodies store vitamin D, it is important to consult a doctor regarding supplementation to prevent possible overdosing.

HEALTHY DIGESTION FOR NUTRIENT ABSORPTION

Naturally as we age, hydrochloric acid, our natural digestive aid created in our stomach, reduces. Low hydrochloric acid can cause symptoms of indigestion, acid reflux, bloating, change in bowel movements, and reduction of nutrient absorption.

Acid reflux symptoms often lead doctors to give patients proton pump inhibitors, but this can further reduce nutrient absorption and contribute to conditions like osteoporosis.

HYDRATION

Maintaining a healthy level of hydration supports all systems in the body, including bone health, digestion, and youthful skin. The discs of the back include a sponge-like center, and under physical stress, this spongy center can bulge causing a herniated disc. Disc herniation is considered a normal aging process, but by using caution when lifting heavy objects and staying adequately hydrated, any associated pain can be prevented or minimized.

Adequate hydration varies from person to person depending on body size and activity level. One guideline is to ensure that your urine maintains a light straw color. Another option is to divide your body weight in half. The resulting number is the number of ounces you

require per day without added activity.

CARING FOR YOUR SKIN FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

Again, preventative skin care is a cumulative process that starts at an early age. By maintaining a healthful skincare regimen, you can support cell regeneration and mitigate sun damage. Applying sunscreen daily is the single most important thing you can do. Even when it is overcast, the sun's rays still penetrate to reach your skin.

A few additional products can also be beneficial. Vitamin C is a potent antioxidant, and though it has numerous benefits within the body, studies have shown that oral consumption of vitamin C does not support skin collagen. To reduce the effects of sun damage and support skin integrity, applying a vitamin C serum every morning can be a great addition.

For skin regeneration, it is helpful to lightly remove the dead skin cells with a retinol cream at night. While dermatologists commonly prescribe Retin-A, it is often too harsh and causes irritation. There are retinol creams specifically created for antiaging purposes that can also reduce acne. When using retinol, it is important to also apply sunscreen daily. Retinol should also be avoided if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. If you have questions, consult your dermatologist or aesthetician.

INTELLECTUAL GROWTH

You are only as young as you feel, and my patients who feel the youngest are those who are forever students. These people keep up with the times and new technologies, learn languages, read avidly, and travel to experience cultures. Many utilize local programs like the University of San Francisco Fromm Institute, where courses in various topics are offered specifically for those 50 and older. Staying sharp mentally is the compass for all of the areas listed above and for enhanced quality of life.

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

CARING FOR OUR KIDS



“Fun with Flight” sample crate from Kiwi Crate. PHOTO: KIWICRATES.COM

Giving the gift of experiences

BY LIZ FARRELL

I RECENTLY WENT ON A CLEANING FRENZY leaving no closet or drawer untouched. This yearly occurrence usually happens mid-fall after our children’s birthdays. They are blessed to have such generous family and friends, but every birthday brings an influx of new toys, games, and clothes. By the time the holidays roll around, I am always at a loss for gift ideas because they don’t “need” anything.

This got me rethinking how to do gifts this holiday season. I want to give our children presents that will be memorable, that they will cherish, and that won’t end up under the bed or in the back of the closet. So this year we plan to focus on giving our children gifts of experiences. Don’t get me wrong: There will still be a few wrapped gifts — a new book, a game, and some socks — under the tree, but I am hoping that the gifts they will be most excited about won’t require batteries or hours of assembly.

GIFTS OF TIME

Our lives are very hectic, and with three busy children, it can be difficult to get special time with each child individually. This year we plan to give them each a night out with us that they would plan. This would give us great quality time and some fascinating insights about them from what they choose to do. It is easy to forget that sometimes our undivided attention is the greatest gift we can give. These gifts don’t have to be expensive — they can be the gift of a hike or bike ride of their choice. These types of gifts are also great suggestions for grandparents, family, or friends — my children love a baking day with Oma or a movie night with Grammy. They also would treasure a sleepover with a cousin or a special play date.

GIFTS TO GO

Some of the best gifts are the ones we can look forward to. This probably works best for older children who have a better sense of time and maybe a bit more patience. Tickets to a Disney or Nickelodeon live show are great gifts for younger ones while those tweens and teens may be more excited about Justin Bieber or Maroon 5 (both with scheduled tours in 2016).

Another hot-ticket item could be a membership to the zoo, the Discovery Museum,

or Academy of Sciences. Memberships make great gifts because the whole family can enjoy them for an entire year. We are lucky in San Francisco to have many wonderful places to visit, but yearly memberships can get expensive and are often difficult to keep up, so pick one your family is eager to visit or would use most.

GIFTS THAT KEEP GIVING

For fun all year long, try subscription gifts for favorite magazines. Children’s book-of-the-month clubs are also great because for every holiday or month, depending on how you set it up, the child will receive a new book. I love this idea because if you use the Lollipop Book Club (lollipopbookclub.com) or Giftlit (giftlit.com), the monthly selections are handpicked by experts who look for books beyond what is most popular, like the Dr. Seuss or Harry Potter series, and they cater to the child’s age, interests, and reading level. With each club you can easily substitute or exchange.

Another subscription gift we have recently tried, which has been a big hit, is Kiwi Crate (kiwirate.com) and Tinker Crate (tinker.kiwirate.com). This monthly package of arts, crafts, and science activities arrives at

your door with all the materials included. The Tinker Crate is geared toward older children with a focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). They are great

for both boys and girls as they learn about problem-solving skills and creativity, gain confidence, and have fun. The Kiwi Crate is geared toward younger children, but even your older ones may want to jump in on the fun, too. The projects aren’t super messy (a big bonus in our house) but are always a lot of fun and make perfect activities for play dates.

These gifts might take a little more thought and planning, but the excitement of leading up to the event and the actual experience will make it all worthwhile. Planning a fun family trip or taking an art class together can be great ways to spend time as a family — isn’t that what the holidays are all about? I wish each of you a happy holiday and many fun adventures together in the new year!

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

These gifts might take a little more thought and planning, but the excitement of leading up to the event and the experience will make it all worthwhile.

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Enrolling in WIC early in your pregnancy will give your baby a healthy start. Also, WIC staff can show you how you and your family can eat healthier meals and snacks. Migrants are welcome to apply as well.

San Francisco WIC has six offices throughout the City. For more information, call (415) 575-5788.

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Assessment Appeals Board (AAB)

Notice is hereby given of 7 vacancies on the AAB. Applicants must have at least 5 years of experience as one of the following: Certified Public Accountant or Public Accountant; licensed Real Estate Broker; Property Appraiser accredited by a nationally recognized organization, or Property Appraiser certified by the California Office of Real Estate Appraisers. For additional information or to obtain an application, please call (415) 554-6778.

Board of Supervisors Regularly Scheduled Board Meetings December 2015 Meetings

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC –Tuesdays, 2:00pm, City Hall Chamber, Room 250.

- **December 1**
- **December 8**
- **December 15 - Last Full Board Meeting**

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#2819698

MEWS BRIEFS

Proponents fight for grooming legislation; S.F. shelter waives pit bull adoption fees for December; Bay Area Pet Fair sets adoption record

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

GROOMING LEGISLATION

The national headlines are horrifying: “Dog bakes to death in dryer,” “Fourth dog death at Happy Tails Pet Spa,” “Animal hanged to death at Petco.” An Internet search for “dog grooming death” brings up page after page of similar stories. Marina resident **Hannah Hartman** says she feels lucky in comparison — her 7-year-old Shih Tzu, Joey, escaped a routine grooming at a Novato-based Petco with a dislocated hip — but Hartman has become a tireless advocate for regulating the industry, because she doesn’t want other dogs injured or killed.

Senate Bill 969, also called Lucy’s Law for a dog badly maimed by a groomer, would have made California the first state to require vocational licenses for pet groomers, but lawmakers voted it down in August 2012. Now Hartman is crusading to revive the bill and says she’s angry at the lack of interest from her senator, **Mark Leno**. “It’s heartbreaking that nothing has progressed since my single phone conversation with Leno’s legislative assistant, **Sunday Balalis**, on Sept. 16. Not only was I never given the opportunity to speak with Senator Leno, but I was also told that I should seek other legislators,” Hartman says. “It’s disheartening to know that our local representative, a man who publicly claims to love animals, apparently doesn’t care about the well being of our beloved family members.”

She also points out that groomers are now regulated in a number of cities, including Miami and New York. States such as Connecticut and Colorado (which has some of

the toughest grooming oversight in the nation) have also begun regulating the largely unregulated industry.

Yet California, considered one of the most pet-friendly states in the country, doesn’t require licensing, training, or oversight.

Let Senator Mark Leno know that you would like him to sponsor Lucy’s Law: senator.leno@senate.ca.gov or 415-557-1300.



Lola is one of many sweet pittie mixes waiting to go home for the holidays.

PHOTO: SAN FRANCISCO ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL

ACC is overflowing with pretty pitties, so they’re waiving adoption fees this December.

ADOPTION FEES WAIVED FOR PERFECT PITTIES

San Francisco Animal Care and Control (ACC) is overflowing with pit bull mixes this holiday season, so they’re waiving adoption fees throughout December. As a lifelong pit bull advocate and parent (to my beloved Jazzy, and now to my dear Skylar, whom I adopted from ACC), I know how sweet, loyal, smart, and funny pitties are when given loving homes. “Pit bull” is not actually a breed but rather a type of dog that falls under the “bully breed” category. Bully breeds include all bulldogs (English, French, American, etc.), Ameri-

can and English Staffordshire terriers, bull terriers, bullmastiffs, and Boston terriers, among others. Many pit bulls are mixes of different bully breeds or other breeds (Labrador retriever/Staffordshire terrier is one of the most common).

At ACC’s “Forever-Home for the Holidays” promotion, every pittie comes with the shelter’s seal of approval and free training certificates from Pawsitive Solutions. Plus, each adopter receives a wrapped present of supplies (sweater, toys, treats, collar, leash, and other gifts) with each dog to make their holidays as bright as can be. It’s no fun being stuck in a lonely kennel, so head down to ACC and bring a pittie home for the holidays — you may just meet your very own Jazzy or Skylar!

SF/ACC Rescue Row: 1200 15th St. (at Harrison), 415-554-6364, sfgov.org/ACC.

BAY AREA PET FAIR 2015

The largest animal adoption fair in California, **Bay Area Pet Fair 2015**, sponsored by **Pet Food Express**, set new records during the two-day free event held Oct. 10 and 11 at the Marin Center in San Rafael. More than 25,000 people attended, many with their furry family members, and 1,158 pets were adopted. Pet Food Express Founder **Michael Levy** says he is most proud of the number of animals who found loving forever homes: “Over the past five years, we’ve helped nearly 4,000 pets find homes, including dogs, puppies, cats, kittens, guinea pigs, bunnies, and even a pigeon.”

For information on next year’s event (Oct. 15-16), visit bayareapetfair.org.

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com

THE ADVENTURES OF SKYLAR GREY :: Chapter 28



Kickie celebrated her 85th birthday at the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco in a newly renovated suite with fog-inspired hues of blue and grey. PHOTO: RITZCARLTON.COM

Kickin’ at the Ritz

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

IN 2009, I wrote a cover story for *Northside San Francisco* titled, “Where to shop, stay, play, and dine with your dog.” The premise was that the higher end of the hotel, the more likely they were to pamper your pet. My trusty pit bull mix Jasmine Blue helped me with the research. Over a six-month period, we stayed in dozens of fantastic five-star hotels. The first time Jazzy saw an elevator at the aptly named Diva Hotel, she refused to get into it, so the bellman had to pick her up (no easy feat with 80 pounds of frightened, wiggling pittie). By our final stay, she was riding a glass elevator up 30 stories and running to the window of our room to check out her views.

While all of the stays were wonderful, only one earned a coveted full page — the penthouse suite at the San Francisco Ritz-Carlton. Titled, “From death row to penthouse pet of the year,” it featured a white-gloved, top-hatted valet holding the door open as Jazzy made her entrance. Greeted with a glass of Champagne for me (and a Champagne-shaped biscuit for Jazzy), we used our special key card to access the penthouse floor. The suite was spectacular, with a baby grand piano, dining room for twelve, European antique-style furniture, complimentary caviar service, and breathtaking city views. It remains one of my favorite memories in my much-too-short journey with Jazzy.

A DESERVED BIRTHDAY TREAT

When my stepmother, Kickie, recovered from successful breast cancer surgery, and her 85th birthday was near, I wanted to take her to the Ritz. The eldest girl of 11 children, Kickie grew up in the hills of Kentucky where they lived off the land through the Great Depression. “We had everything but money,” she recalls, and that depression upbringing created a frugal woman. Though her life has been full of adventure (including a British husband who took her to stay in London with his family), Kickie continues to watch her pennies and rarely splurges.

A week before her birthday, I told Kickie the plan and booked a room on the Ritz Club Level. I could hear her on the phone with friends and family excitedly telling them about her impending trip. “I’ve never stayed in a really fancy hotel,” she would say. “I’ve always heard so much about the Ritz that I know it must be fabulous.”

FIRST STOP FISHERMEN’S GROTTTO

After arriving in San Francisco, we stopped at Steve’s house to drop off Skylar for a slumber party with Blue, and Steve joined us for lunch at No. 9 Fishermen’s Grotto, where I’ve been eating since I was a toddler. Opened in 1935 as the first restaurant on Fisherman’s Wharf, it’s run by four generations of the Gerald family, who have been friends of my family for nearly as long. We shared our favorite crab Louie over avocado (I always say it’s the only crab Louie in town where you have to dig through the crab to find the lettuce) and their award-winning clam chowder. After Kickie had fun catching up with owner Mike Gerald, it was time to check in at the Ritz.

RITZ ROYAL TREATMENT

When we pulled up, the valets were there to open Kickie’s door and see us inside the lobby. Kickie’s eyes were as wide as a child’s on Christmas morning. Dressed in a black beaded sweater with perfectly coordinated jewelry, she followed Steve to a comfy sofa. The general manager approached. “Are you Kickie?” he asked. “Yes,” Kickie said, a bit surprised. Then he got down on one knee and sang “Happy Birthday,” which brought tears to her eyes.

Once we reached the Club Level, we checked into our room, and Kickie beamed at the city views and elegant decor. “It suits you perfectly,” Steve said. Then we headed for the Club Lounge, where the club concierge greeted us and pointed us to the complimentary food and beverage presentations. “Would you like a cocktail?” she asked. I ordered a vodka martini and Steve grabbed a sparkling water from the fridge. Kickie, who rarely drinks, wasn’t sure what to order, so the concierge brought her a Kir Royale (Champagne, Chambord liqueur, and fresh raspberries).

Later that evening the Ritz had one of their drivers take us to our dinner destination, Osso Steakhouse, where I chose fresh abalone, and Kickie ordered the bone-in filet mignon, which I consider the best steak in the city.

Back at the Ritz, Kickie changed into one of her signature pastel satin gowns, slipped into the 400-thread-count sheets, and pulled the fluffy down comforter up to her chin. “Such luxury,” she said. “Thank you for such a beautiful day.” I leaned over and kissed her forehead. “You deserve it,” I said. “Happy birthday, Kickie.”

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Maddie was adopted from & photographed at Animal Care & Control.
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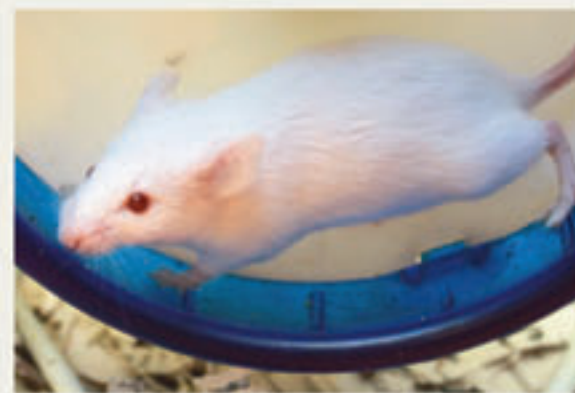
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Bubbles (A379252) is a 7 mo girl bursting with personality & charm. She loves to cuddle & is happy about being out & about.



Mr Chips (A371848) is a friendly, affectionate & playful 6 mo kitten. He is also a very sweet & loves lap time. He is also a super cutie.



Mice . . . so nice! ACC has a bundle of sweet & friendly mice ready for homes. Boys & girls & many color options! OPT TO ADOPT smalls!!



Benji (378125) is a great bun. He is friendly & curious. He is also nice, easy to handle & perfect for a 1st time rabbit person. Hop in soon!



Onyx (A376203) is an 8 mo wiggly, playful bundle of youthful fun: he's a puppy delight! He already knows "sit" & can't wait to learn more.



Jake (A379256) is a super nice 7 yo fellow. He is friendly & affectionate -- a big handsome boy with tons of love to give. Come meet Jake.

Giving Tree

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petfoodexpress.com/holidays