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# MarinaTimes

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Days of glory: 2014's National League Championship Series Game 3. PHOTO: BRYCE EDWARDS / FLICKR

## A fourth Giants World Series in 2016?

BY STEVE HERMANOS

**L**ITTLE KIDS KNOW THE SAN Francisco Giants always win the World Series in even-numbered years, right? The Giants won in 2010, 2012, and 2014. And look, the calendar says 2016, so let's start shredding our wastepaper into ticker tape, and dusting off our ponchos for another joyous, rainy parade!

Well, kids might not recall that drought of 56 championship-less seasons, from 1954 (when the Giants called New York's Harlem home) to 2010. The drought only ended when a group of castoffs and emerging young stars, led by manager Bruce Bochy (the man with the biggest head in the major leagues) bested the Texas Rangers, and brought San Francisco its first World Series trophy. It ain't so easy. Let's be realistic, kids!

The good news for 2016 is that this off-season the Giants smashed their huge piggy bank and threw hundreds of millions of dollars at three players. One is excellent, and two are huge question marks.

### THE EXCELLENT

Johnny Cueto. One of the top pitchers in the major leagues, 30-year-old

*GAME ON, continued on 5*

## REYNOLDS RAP

# My love/hate relationship with Uber

After three years chatting up their drivers, I am not alone

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

**T**HREE YEARS AGO, HEADED DOWN TO THE STUDIOS of radio station KGO to guest host on a Saturday afternoon, I had grown weary of giving up my prime parking space in the Lower Haight and worrying I would be ticketed for overstaying my welcome at a meter while on the air. That was the first time I hopped into an Uber, and I was smitten. Using only my iPhone and my American Express card, a driver named Pete swooped by the front of our apartment building. "Susan?" he asked from his sparkling new Toyota Prius. "Yes," I replied, studying him carefully. "Pete, right?" He nodded, and off we went.

Scooting silently along city streets, I asked Pete how he liked being a driver for Uber. "I love it," he said. "I make my own hours, the money's great, and they paid me a \$5,000 bonus just for signing up." Pete, like many early Uber drivers, was a former cabbie, and he told me horror stories about paying lofty gate fees to get the best

*REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 6*

## BELLINGHAM BY THE BAY

# The uses of uselessness

BY BRUCE BELLINGHAM

**U**SELESS BUT NECESSARY. I'VE ALWAYS BEEN attracted to useless things. Neckties, for example. A brilliant but unsung inventor came up with the idea of the cravat. It has no real practical application. But it remains an essential thing for the respectable dresser. I've had the humiliating experience of the supercilious maître d'hôtel providing me with a tie and an acceptable jacket. It was in one of those downtown private clubs, during the age when refusing proper attire was considered an act of civil disobedience. It may have been the Bohemian Club ... or the Olympic ... or the Metropolitan Club. I really don't remember. And I cannot repeat **Groucho Marx's** famous line about not joining a club that would have someone like me as a member: I was never asked to join. The jacket was, of course, two sizes too big. The tie was ghastly. It was just long enough to reach my navel, and had coffee stains on it that I imagine were left by **Broderick Crawford** in *All the King's Men*. I wore the costume stoically, enduring my punishment at the luncheon table as people stared and smirked at me. Yes, the tie is useless, but it's necessary to comply with acceptable social standards. Sometimes it's just easier to play ball.

*BELLINGHAM, continued on 4*



The Cobb salad at Original Joe's, Ernesto's winner for Best Restaurant, 2016. PHOTO: ORIGINAL JOE'S / DISHERO, INC.

## The fourth annual Ernesto's: Best of North Beach awards

BY ERNEST BEYL

**T**HE BIGGEST NEWS OF THE year in the North Beach restaurant scene has been the reopening of the Original U.S. Restaurant in a new location after being driven out of its premises by water damage and landlord problems.

Also, enthusiastic readers of these Ernesto's awards will note several

first-time winners this year. We dropped a few categories — including Best Cheesesteak, Best Hot Dog, Best Spaghetti and Meatballs, Best Ravioli, and Best Sidewalk Dining because the same establishments were winning them year after year. Here then are my 2016 winners.

**BEST BARTENDER:** Michael Fraser, Original Joe's (601 Union Street)

Michael is the deacon of bartenders in North Beach. He wears the mantle of the imbiber's favorite. And he wears it lightly and with grace.

### BEST BLOODY MARY:

**Gino and Carlo** (548 Green Street)  
Bartender Ron Minolli has a special Bloody Mary recipe. Ask him about it.

### BEST BURGER: Sam's Burgers

(618 Broadway Street)  
Here's a sleeper for you and another first-time winner. Sam's is a hole-in-the-wall with eight counter stools and a couple of shaky, Formica-topped tables. It serves burgers on sesame seed buns, hot dogs, corn dogs, polish sausage, a few pizzas, and other miscellaneous stuff. The burgers are excellent. The fries are good. This is a late-night joint open until 3 a.m. The burgers are juicy and have just the right amount of grease for those late nights when you need a bit of grease. Sam's opens at noon three days a week, other days at 4 p.m.

### BEST CHOPSTICKS JOINT:

**Yuet Lee** (1300 Stockton Street)  
This little Chinese jewel is on the edge of North Beach at the corner of Broadway and Stockton Streets. It's a very Hong Kong-y, hole-in-the-wall establishment. The best meal there for me is boiled shrimp and string beans

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## TOP 10 STEAKS IN AMERICA

Osso Steakhouse - San Francisco, CA  
 Bobo's - San Francisco, CA  
 Peter Luger Steakhouse - Brooklyn, NY  
 Bern's Steakhouse - Tampa, FL  
 CUT - Beverly Hills, CA  
 Emeril's Delmonico - Las Vegas, NV  
 Mario Batali's Carnevino - Las Vegas, NV  
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 The Precinct - Cincinnati, OH  
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NEWS BRIEFS : Dogs, taxes, tax credits

## Dog restrictions coming

### NEW GGNRA RULE COULD MAKE MOST BEACHES OFF LIMITS TO ALL DOGS

In February, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) released its proposal for “dog management” and, despite angry public feedback, it has chosen to move forward with a rule that would drastically restrict not only off-leash but also on-leash dog walking in areas such as Ocean Beach, Fort Funston, Crissy Field, Sutro Heights Park, Lands End, and Baker Beach. If the proposed rule is finalized, about 75 percent of Ocean Beach would be off limits to all dogs.

District 4 Supervisor Katy Tang introduced a resolution March 1 at the Board of Supervisors opposing the proposed rule; supervisors Wiener, Yee, Farrell, Breed, Campos, Avalos, and Cohen co-sponsored it.

In a March newsletter to her constituents, Tang said, “The GGNRA was established with a goal of making open space more available to a broader segment of the public and so that urban-dwelling families would not have to drive far to access open space. Yet, the proposed rule on dog management runs counter to this original mission.”

Critics argue that this proposed rule is extreme and unfair, and it would

have disastrous effects on city parks, where people will end up if they can’t go to GGNRA beaches — including professional dog walkers with 8 to 10 each.

The proposed rule is open for public comment through May 25. The public can provide feedback at regulations.gov (search: RIN 1024-AE16) or by mail: Superintendent, GGNRA, Attn: Dog Management Proposed Rule, Building 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123.

### CITY’S AIRBNB HOSTS TAKE TAX HIT

San Francisco is stepping up its regulatory engagement with the short-term rental industry, letting it be known that short-term rentals must itemize and be subject to tax on all business-related personal property. That would include furniture, sheets, dishes, and other items in the home.

The tax will be a little more than 1 percent of the item’s value, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which quoted Assessor-Recorder Carmen Chu: “We have heard loud and clear from [hosts] that they want to be treated like everybody else and are willing to pay taxes like everybody else. ... They are operating their homes as a business, and so we are treating them as we would any other business.”

Airbnb called it an “invasion of privacy.”

### CALLS FOR CHANGES IN HOUSING FINANCE

The low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program should change to better aid the formerly homeless seeking housing, according to legislation introduced in the Board of Supervisors in February.

District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell called for the LIHTC program to let the formerly homeless attend school full-time without losing their eligibility for LIHTC-funded housing. Though intended to prevent the tax credits from being used to fund dormitories, it has no exception for the homeless, formerly homeless, or veterans.

“It’s beyond belief that the formerly homeless have to choose between a full-time education, or keeping a roof over their head,” said Farrell.

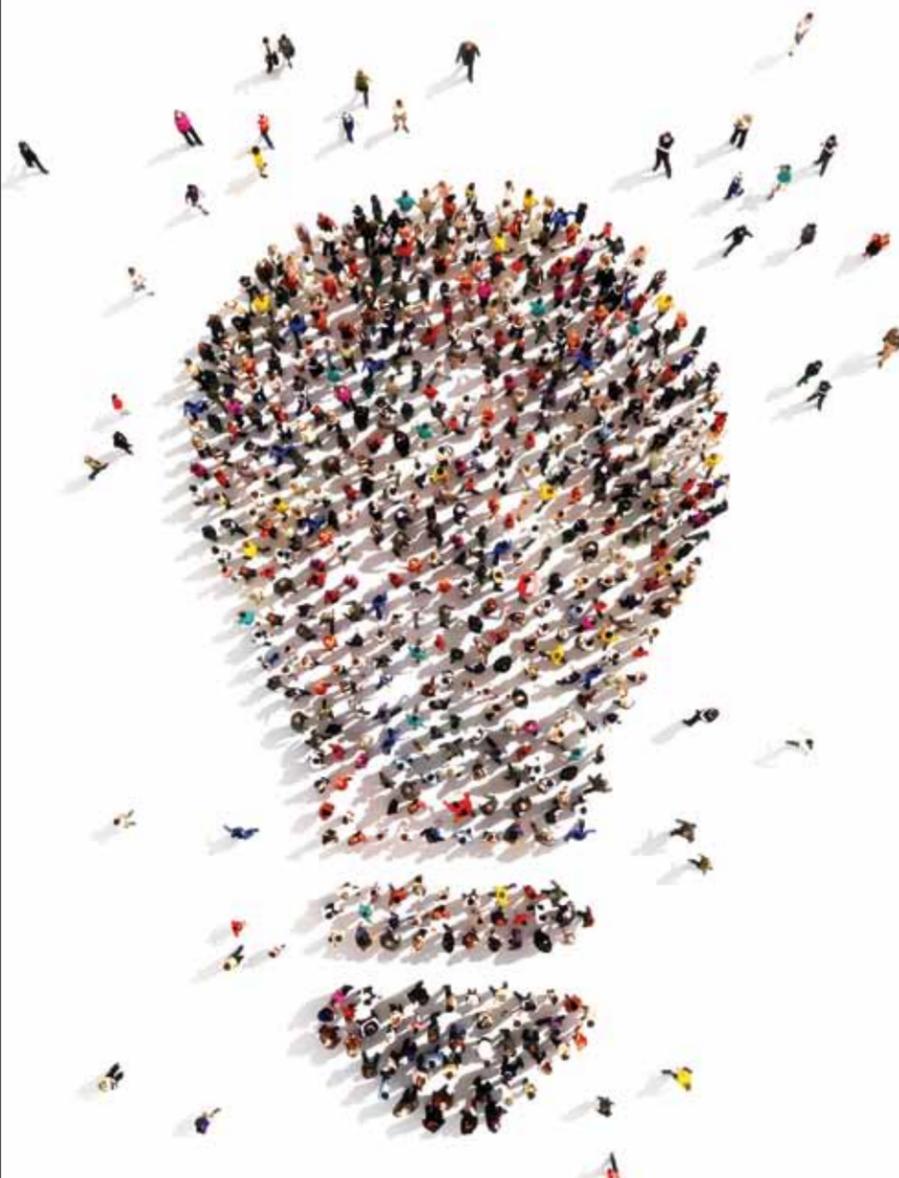
The LIHTC program is a system for financing affordable housing development and preservation that grew up in the wake of the federal government’s exit from public housing. Developers seek the tax credits, which are often sold to commercial businesses and investors in return for dollars for the housing projects. San Francisco has 126 housing sites funded through the LIHTC program.

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## The In-Box: Letters to the Times

### WHOLE FOODS

In response to your March 2016 *Marina Times* News Briefs “Russian Hill Backs Whole Foods”: We wish to clarify Russian Hill Neighbors’ position regarding the proposed WF 365 at Jackson and Polk Streets — Russian Hill Neighbors has not yet taken a position.

RHN and its DZLU (Design, Zoning and Land Use) Committee take pride in researching all sides of an issue before taking a stand. In that pursuit, DZLU has solicited the opinions of our RHN members and other neighbors via a survey; met with the principal opponents of the project, including members of another neighborhood organization and a merchant organization; and will meet with the project sponsors in the latter part of March.

What is clear is that the vast majority of the respondents to our survey feel that Russian Hill is underserved by not having a convenient and appropriate grocery purveyor. What is at stake is the future character of our Polk Street shop-

ping corridor and how it will best serve our community.

After extensive research and deliberation, DZLU will report to our RHN Board, which will consider the information and determine RHN’s position. Whatever that decision is, we look forward to working with our District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin as well as other neighborhood groups and merchants to find solutions, with the goal of enhancing the quality of life of our residents.

Tina Moylan, President  
Richard Cardello, DZLU  
Committee Chair  
Russian Hill Neighbors

### PESKIN’S BOGUS BONUS PROGRAM

[RE: From the District 3 Supervisor, “Density ‘bogus’ program: How we got here,” March 2016] I have been following the case very closely over the years. Please correct the misinformation [that] the plaintiffs were “developers.” They were *farm workers* represented by an *affordable housing champion*.

Donald J. Dewsnup  
San Francisco

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## FROM THE COVER



Sir George Martin working with the Beatles in the studio at Abbey Road in 1965.  
PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

### BELLINGHAM

CONTINUED from page 1

Maybe that's why I wear a tie often these days. ... An inveterate necktie-bearer was Sir George Martin, who at 90 died last month. The first thing that George Harrison said to Martin when he asked if there was anything the Beatles

*Jersey Boys*, who gave up their one night off to perform at the Brava Theater in the Mission to raise money for the Richmond-Ermet AIDS Foundation. ... Broadway star Emily Skinner gave it her all before a sell-out crowd at the Bay Area Cabaret show at the not-open-enough Venetian Room in the Fairmont.

Hollow a couple of years ago. In all fairness to the late Nancy Reagan, she asked Silverman to help with a speech for Ronnie, and reach out to people with AIDS. This was the idea of Nancy's friend, Elizabeth Taylor. "All went well," Silverman told me. "Reagan was going to talk about compassion — even mention

the term, AIDS. But the White House staffers got a hold of the speech, and turned it into a diatribe against people who were suffering from the disease,

## David Bowie 'wanted to do it the best way. His death was not different from his life — a work of Art.'

did not like personally, Harrison quipped, "Well, there's your tie, for a start." They got along famously — literally — after that. Out of respect for the great producer of the Beatles, and scads of other great artists, music producer Tony Visconti wore a tie when he went to the recording studio after he heard the news about Martin. ... You see, wearing a tie can "inspire absolute confidence," a phrase concocted by Oscar Wilde.

Visconti worked with David Bowie for decades. "David always did what he wanted to do," Visconti wrote in *Rolling Stone*. "And he wanted to do it his way, and he wanted to do it the best way. His death was not different from his life — a work of Art." ... Jim Hartley was given one day by the Bowie estate to sell Brian Duffy's photos of Bowie at Jim's San Francisco Art Exchange on Geary Street. The gallery took in \$86,000. The Art Exchange is a great place. Drop in and ask young Matt Ely anything about jazz. He'll have the answer. ... I admire people who give it their all — like Matt, Jim, David Bowie, Sir George Martin, and the cast of

I thought I'd heard "Send in the Clowns" enough to last a lifetime. But Emily's version made me hear it for the first time. Yet the showstopper was her rendition of "My Brother Lived in San Francisco" from a show with the splashy title, *Elegies for Angels, Punks, and Raging Queens* by Janet Hood and Bill Russell. The song will tear your heart out, and reminds us that the AIDS epidemic is not over. ... Yes, Emily gave it her all. She's a class gal in San Francisco's classiest room. ...

saying they should be kept from entering the country, and all that. It turned into a disaster." ... But compassion is thriving at the downtown Senior Center on O'Farrell Street, celebrating 50 years. With the National Park Service — which is 100 years old this year — and the center's sister operation at Aquatic Park, trips are beginning this month for seniors (and family members and friends) to Alcatraz ... the Presidio ... the Marin Headlands ... and Muir Woods. The

## The song will tear your heart out, and reminds us that the AIDS epidemic is not over.

Marilyn Levinson's Bay Area Cabaret brings The Puppini Sisters to the Venetian on Sunday, April 17 at 2 p.m. That's because the 5:30 show is sold out. ...

I had a chat with Dr. Mervyn Silverman, a hero at the vanguard of the fight against AIDS early on. I knew Merv from my KCBS days back in the 1980s. He was the director of public health from 1977 to 1985. I ran into him on Union Street in Cow

Park Service told senior center director Sue Horst ... and her associates, Peggy Gallagher and Ione Ishii that the feds are picking up the bill for the excursions. Who said the government was useless? Before I natter on even more, I must close — or I will outlive my uselessness.

Bruce Bellingham is the author of *Bellingham by the Bay*. Tell him something absolutely useless at [bruce@marinatimes.com](mailto:bruce@marinatimes.com).

## GAME ON

CONTINUED from page 1

Cueto is in the prime of his career. He signed a six-year contract for \$130 million, but he can declare himself a free agent after the first two years. It's an odd incentive: If he does well, he departs; if he fails, he stays and collects Barry Zito money; but there's so much money bubbling around baseball that crazy opt-out contracts are sometimes part of the price of landing a top-tier pitcher.

Cueto slots into the pitching rotation right behind 2014's World Series hero and *Sports Illustrated's* Sportsman of the Year, Madison Bumgarner. In his eight seasons of major league ball, Cueto has missed a significant part of only one season, 2013. So Cueto looks like a good bet to make the team significantly better.

### QUESTION 1

Last year, Giants outfielders were torn apart by injuries, most notably to the previously indestructible Hunter Pence and the intense spark plug Angel Pagan. Last year, the Giants tried filling the outfield holes with minor leaguers and a late-season veteran, to sporadic success. Welcome Denard Span, for \$31 million and four seasons.

Well, maybe. Like a writing professor of mine who enjoyed the bottle a bit too much, on whose teacher evaluations I was always tempted to begin, "When sober..." (When sober, Professor X is

a fantastic teacher; When sober, he has command of the topic; When sober, he is brilliant): *When healthy*, Span is a .300 leadoff hitter with above-average power and a knack for getting on base. He doesn't strike out much, doesn't get caught stealing much. He's a centerfielder who pushes the injury-prone Angel Pagan to a bit less-demanding left field (and so helps the team). Span is the type of player any team should love; he is a guy who does lots of little things to win.

However, Span's gone under the knife twice in the past 15 months: sports hernia surgery, and surgery to repair a "core muscle." He'll definitely help the team, *when healthy*. An outfielder of Pagan, Span, and Pence will be a treat to behold. Will we get 120 games of that trio? 100? 80? 60? 40?

### QUESTION 2

Jeff Samardzija. The Giants just plunked down the equivalent of 2.5 tons of gold (\$90 million, for five seasons) for a pitcher who, last year, had the worst ERA in the American League (4.97 for the White Sox), and who hasn't had a winning record since 2011 (8-4 for the Cubs). Eight years of statistics paint a picture of a thoroughly mediocre starting pitcher. However, because the Giants' brain trust has amassed the three World Championships this decade, I'm not going to further disparage this signing; I'm going to don their rosy champion-

ship champagne goggles and tell you what they see in Samardzija.

They see a pitcher who's never been injured in the major leagues, who is going to pitch into the 7th and 8th inning and thereby give the bullpen some rest. They see a pitcher who suffered a lot of homers in the somewhat-tight confines of the White Sox ballpark, and who will benefit from the vast San Francisco outfield, and wonderful Giants infielders Matt Duffy, Brandon Crawford, Joe Panik, and Brandon Belt.

Everybody likes Samardzija, even if they can't spell his name. He was a wide receiver at Notre Dame, and has an intense football mentality when he pitches. But will he be a \$90 million third starting pitcher-hero, or a \$90 million barely hanging fifth starting pitcher? Or left off of postseason rosters à la Barry Zito?

I'm betting that if two of the Cueto-Span-Samardzija trio pan out, the Giants will be happy; it's a decent bet. But if only one out of three lives up to expectations, the Giants might mortar the piggy bank closed for the rest of this decade.

### THE COMPETITION

The Los Angeles Dodgers have the most money and the most talent in the National League. They've won the National League West Division the past three seasons. They scour the world searching for, and purchasing, baseball talent. Their minor league system



Will President Obama honor the Giants with one last World Series victory lap before he leaves office? PHOTO: LAWRENCE JACKSON, OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO

is brimming. Yet for the past three years the Dodgers have led the major leagues in dysfunction and have choked in the playoffs.

Continuing the trend, this off-season the Dodgers failed to retain their second best pitcher, Zack Greinke, whom signed with the Diamondbacks. But in their favor, they jettisoned manager Don Mattingly, whom I suspect was a spy on the Giants' payroll (Mattingly is illogical and timid, and managerial decisions doomed many a Dodgers game). Look for the Dodgers to make more sensible field maneuvers under new manager Dave Roberts. But can Roberts be bought?

Yes, the Diamondbacks signed the best pitcher on the market, Zack Greinke, and have a core of excellent players. But in team sports, it's rare for a historically mediocre organization to suddenly blossom into a contender.

The Diamondbacks? Nah. The San Diego Padres? Nope. The Colorado Rockies? Blech.

In the National League West, it will be a two-team race between the Giants and the Dodgers, between Giants ace Bumgarner and Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw, between three-time champion manager Bruce Bochy and neophyte Dave Roberts, between one of the greatest players of our time, Buster Posey, and the entire Dodgers team.

And quite simply, if very few of their muscles and ligaments twang or pop, if they don't often pull up lame, and if they get a few good bounces in October, as they have in Octobers past, the Giants will win another World Series.

Ask the kids: 2016 is an even year.

*Steve Hermanos is the author of Orange Waves of Giants! The 2012 Championship Season. E-mail: steve@marinatimes.com*

# DAVID BELLINGS

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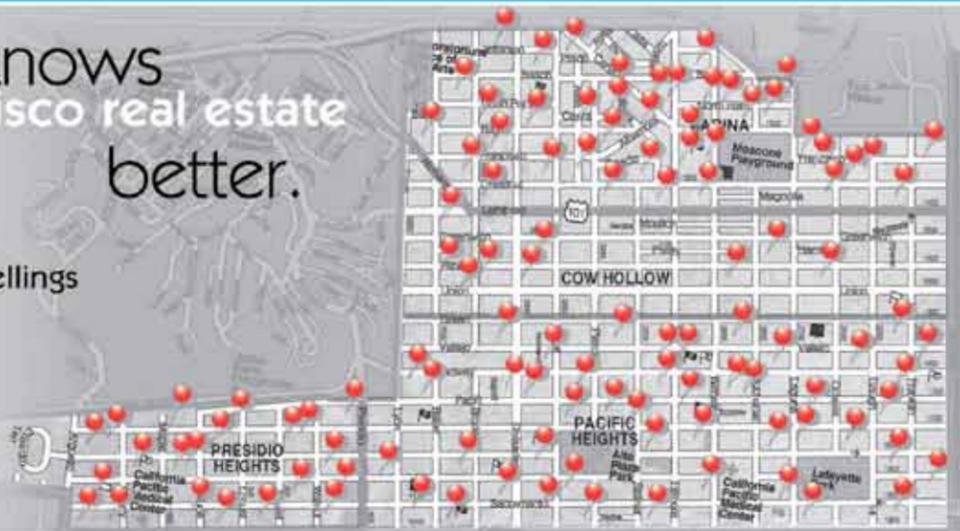
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Looking for the happier driver: Uber versus taxis.

PHOTO: KALW.ORG

## REYNOLDS RAP

CONTINUED from page 1

fares. “If you want to go to the airport, you have to pay up,” he said indignantly. I asked him if there was a down side to Uber. “I can’t think of any,” he said. “I had to buy this car and I pay for my insurance, but I make so much money that it more than covers my expenses.”

Like Pete, I couldn’t see any down side to Uber. Each weekend I would tap the app and watch as a cartoon car wriggled through the cartoon streets showing me exactly where my ride was. “You’re driver is arriving now,” Uber would cheerfully point out just as they pulled up. I had the auto make, model, and license number along with the driver’s name,

passenger reviews, and photo. Unlike cab companies, there was no waiting for rides that never show up; no attitude from the drivers; no messing with cash and tips — there was an app for all that.

Then I had my first bad Uber experience. A young man picked me up, and he didn’t seem to know the city at all. As he fumbled with his phone, I told him that on weekends it was best to avoid downtown. He went downtown anyway, which was worse than usual due to a protest clogging the main thoroughfares. “I go on the air at 4,” I reminded him some 45 minutes into the ride. We ended up by the Embarcadero at 3:45, where a cop flagged us down. “Where are you headed?” he asked. I explained, and he shook his head. “You’re not going to make it. I’d get out and walk if I were you.” I got out and ran, stumbling into the studio just in time to do crosstalk with Michael Finney, sweating and gasping for air. I gave my driver a harsh one-star review, and Uber refunded my money.

Undeterred, I hailed an Uber the following weekend and a message popped up: “Surge Pricing is in effect.” Due to high demand, Uber had to charge me three times the minimum fare. I was running late, so I grudgingly accepted their terms. I asked my driver how she felt about surge pricing. “I hate it,” she said. “The passengers yell at me about it, and Uber makes more money but I don’t make surge-priced tips.” A little bit of hate began seeping into my honeymoon with Uber, and according to my informal poll, drivers were feeling the same way. “How do you like driving for Uber?” I would ask. The drivers would pause, crinkle their noses, and say, “It’s O.K.”

“There aren’t enough fares,” one middle-aged man complained. “I gave up driving a taxi for this. I bought this car. Now I have to work 14 hours a day just to pay my bills.” I asked him what had changed. “They’re hiring too many drivers,” he said. “They say they’ll give me a bonus if I recruit people — why would

I do that? I already don’t have enough fares.” As the drivers became more disenchanted, the number of inexperienced drivers increased. Many of them had never driven professionally; some didn’t live in San Francisco, and had no idea how to navigate urban traffic. “I come up from Monterey on the weekends,” one guy told me as he passed my destination twice. Uber rival Lyft also stepped up its game, and pretty soon the streets were blanketed with people driving their own jalopies emblazoned with fuzzy pink moustaches. The Uber

## As competition for drivers hit a fevered pitch, Uber continued to lower its standards.

app began to look like sharks cruising for chum as cartoon cars nearly bumped into each other seeking fares. One rainy day, a novice driver with a brand-new vehicle got into a minor accident

before I could even buckle my seatbelt.

As competition for drivers hit a fevered pitch, Uber continued to lower its standards. Drivers became less competent, and some were downright dangerous. Stories circulated about sexual assaults on drunken female passengers; one driver hit and killed a child on New Year’s Eve; another driver beat his male customer with a hammer. All of this prompted legislators to question Uber’s background checks. “Are you fingerprinted?” I asked a former cabbie named Bob. “I was because I drive for UberBlack,” he said. UberBlack is the company’s high-end platform. “What about the people driving the lower-end UberX?” I asked. Bob shook his head. “Hell, no.” He said that unlike cab companies, Uber’s background check is little more than a quick questionnaire. “You don’t even meet anybody at Uber. I know guys who signed up and they’re picking up passengers the next day.”

Just when I was thinking of kicking Uber to the curb, they added UberPool, allowing passengers to share rides with strangers anywhere in San Francisco for seven bucks. Often I was the only person in the car. I didn’t care if Uber was losing money — with a \$63 billion valuation, the tech company was the poster colt for unicorns — but the drivers were losing money, too. “They take 30 percent from the \$7 you paid,” one woman told me. “Some days if I only get UberPools I make like \$20.”

It remains to be seen what will happen to Uber when it becomes a public company. Right now it’s blowing through venture capital, with financial statements leaked to the website Gawker showing they lost \$110 million in the second quarter of 2014 alone. That won’t cut it when shareholders are pounding the table for profits. It also remains to be seen what will happen to Uber’s drivers, many already living fare to fare as they struggle for survival in the gig economy. I’d bet a unicorn that once Uber is pressured to produce, the love/hate relationship with its drivers will continue speeding precipitously downhill.

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# Pursuing low-cost citywide gigabit-speed Internet for everyone

BY MARK E. FARRELL

**W**HEN YOU TURN ON THE FAUCET, clean water comes out. When you turn on the light switch, the lights come on. And when you open your laptop, desktop, tablet, or phone, everyone should have access to a fast Internet connection — whether you live in Pacific Heights or the Bayview.

More than any other invention in recent memory, the Internet has completely revolutionized the way we communicate, work, share information, and live our everyday lives. Access to fast and affordable Internet is no longer a luxury; it is an absolute necessity in today's world.

Over time, the Internet has shifted from a useful amenity to what should now be viewed as a core utility just like we view water and power.

How can we expect our children to compete and thrive in the 21st century if they are not even able to do their homework or research for a project at home? Unfortunately, that is the current reality for thousands of public school students across San Francisco.

How can we expect our residents, in particular those who are having challenges breaking into the workforce, to compete for San Francisco jobs if they can't even access the Internet at home? Unfortunately, that is the current reality for more than 100,000

San Franciscans. Approximately one in eight San Franciscans does not have access to the Internet at home.

How can we expect seniors to acquire digital literacy skills and to stay socially connected without access to the Internet at home? Currently, only 69 percent of San Francisco residents over the age of 65 have access to the Internet at home.

The human cost and toll of the digital divide in San Francisco is real and damaging. Residents who need the Internet the most are being sold short and left behind in the 21st century. In San Francisco, the innovation capital of the world, this is simply unacceptable.

## A MISSION FOR GOVERNMENT

If you believe that it is in the government's best interest to ensure equal access and opportunity to advance the public good, then closing the digital divide and providing fast and affordable Internet for everyone in San Francisco must be a top priority for our policymakers.

It is for me.

That is why I first requested almost nine months ago that we as a city for the

first time in San Francisco's history publicly analyze different options, including financial estimates, to develop a citywide gigabit-speed fiber network. I specifically asked the city to examine and provide the financial estimates necessary to construct, own, and operate a municipal fiber network that could provide at least gigabit speeds to everyone in San Francisco. The report was released earlier this month and provides recommendations about different approaches and models the city could use to deliver low-cost citywide

gigabit-speed Internet for everyone in San Francisco.

With the data and costs in hand, in March I established a Municipal Fiber Advisory Panel co-chaired by Miguel Gamino, current head of our city's Department of Technology, and with Jay Nath, head of our mayor's Office of Civic Innovation, to lead the panel. The panel will also be composed of broadband experts from inside and outside of City Hall and will advise the mayor and Board of Supervisors on future fiber network expansion and the best paths forward.

My goals for the fiber network include ensuring that the public owns the net-

work from day one, providing a baseline of Internet service for all San Francisco residents, exploring subsidies for low-income households in need, permanently closing the digital divide, and ultimately choosing the most cost-effective option possible to meet all these goals.

I am not interested in any options that still leave 100,000 San Francisco residents without Internet access at home. This entire effort is about building our 21st-century infrastructure and making sure everybody in San Francisco benefits. At one point in our history people stopped digging individual wells and built pipes to modernize our water infrastructure. The time has come for our city to do the same when it comes to our Internet infrastructure.

Clearly there are challenges ahead, but the challenges are not insurmountable. And, after this analysis, I am more committed than ever to bringing low-cost citywide gigabit Internet to everyone in San Francisco.

If any city can tackle the digital divide and bring gigabit Internet to everyone, it is San Francisco. Our city has the chance to create a replicable model that other communities can use to solve the same digital divide that exists in every community across the country, and I look forward to leading the charge.

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**I am not interested in any options that still leave 100,000 San Franciscans without Internet access.**



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FROM THE DISTRICT 3 SUPERVISOR ∴ Taking on the Bay Area Renters Federation

# Exposing special interests in the room and at the ballot box

BY SUPERVISOR AARON PESKIN

## CLARIFICATION FOR MY MARCH COLUMN

I love that this column is actually stirring up conversation in neighborhood meetings, cafes, and online chat rooms. Print journalism is one of my favorite mediums, so I'm grateful that the *Marina Times* is still independent, alive, and kickin' in an age of media consolidation. Thanks to those of you who have written to me or to the editors with your thoughts and questions — keep it coming! I also want to respond to some inaccuracies disseminated by the BARFers (an affectionate acronym for the San Francisco Bay Area Renters Federation) regarding my last column.

The main point of contention was who benefited from a 2013 court ruling in *Latinos Unidos del Valle de Napa y Solano v. County of Napa*, where the First District Court of Appeal overturned a portion of Napa County's local housing density bonus ordinance. The central issue in my column was not the legal particulars, but that the court's decision had unintended consequences: affordable inclusionary housing requirements now "count" toward city density bonus concessions statewide. In San Francisco, this decision essentially became a sweet developer freebie, allowing them to *not build* additional affordable housing units in return for significant benefits conferred upon them like height or den-

sity increases. My analysis stressed the broader implications of the court decision, which has led Mayor Lee and the Planning Department to introduce legislation for a local Affordable Housing Density Program.

BARFers also had questions about the out-migration data from the American Community Survey (ACS), which our own city economist compiled for the Planning Department. This official census data shows a one-year in-migration of 63,991 people, with an out-migration of 62,757 residents — a net

population increase of 1,234. Not an epic growth spurt, and certainly not justification to blindly expedite poor planning process to the rally cry of "Build, baby, build!" The ACS analysis also doesn't consider critical factors like race and ethnicity, income, length of residence for out-migrants, origin and destination ZIP codes, etc. — in other words, the "growth" is likely a "replacement population." There is a clear race, class, and neighborhood dimension to the story, and one that the city economist's summary is not capturing. To make informed policy decisions about whom we are building for, it's important to know who is leaving and why.

## BEHAVIOR TO BARF OVER

I am delighted that at the beginning of March, after months of deliberations and negotiations, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to put the Inclusionary Affordable Housing Charter Amendment (Prop. C) on the June ballot, which, if passed, will allow the board to require more affordable housing in new construction projects. Ironically, the only opposition to this measure has come from SFBARF.

Which brings me to some questions of my own: who is SFBARF and who is funding their efforts? Founder and West Oakland resident Sonja Trauss was fea-

tured in a *San Francisco Examiner* story last year where she confirmed that her organization had a simple strategy: to ally itself with the wealthiest interests in the room to push a "Build whatever!" vision for San Francisco. And wealthy interests they are, as reported by the *San Francisco Business Times*. Trauss raised \$10,000 from the Political Action Committee San Francisco Moderates and other private sources she refuses to disclose, and another \$10,000 from Yelp CEO Jeremy Stoppelman. She has no experience in land use or planning, so one wonders what the donor appeal is for a tech millionaire and a conservative political group.

The bottom line is that far from being advocates for renters, SFBARF leaders are pro development-funded advocates who have invested

significant capital trying to infiltrate esteemed organizations like the Sierra Club, as reported in *Vice* magazine, because the club's environmental model was at odds with SFBARF's "build at any cost" agenda. In fact, a few months ago SFBARF posted an agenda of its methods, including a plan to "disrupt the alliance between rent control advocates and affordable housing advocates." SFBARF's divide and conquer strategy is pretty clear, as is its disingenuous claim to represent San Francisco renters.

## THIS JUNE: SLATED FOR REFORM

If you are a renter in need of support, information, or legal counsel, get connected to the San Francisco Tenants Union, Housing Rights Committee, or Eviction Defense Collaborative. They are longstanding and respected advocacy groups with trained and committed staff that have been working in the trenches as community organizers for years.

SFBARF's deceptive charade is just one of the many reasons I have joined the good company of former Congressman John Burton, former Assemblyman Tom Ammiano, and fellow Supervisors Jane Kim, David Campos, Eric Mar, and Norman Yee, among others, in a bid to represent a return to some pragmatic progressive values and to restore balance and integrity to the Democratic County Central Committee. This June 7 we have an opportunity to take our Democratic Party back from special interests and return it to the hands of our communities.

E-mail: [aaron.peskin@sfgov.org](mailto:aaron.peskin@sfgov.org)

## Who is San Francisco Bay Area Renters Federation and who is funding them?

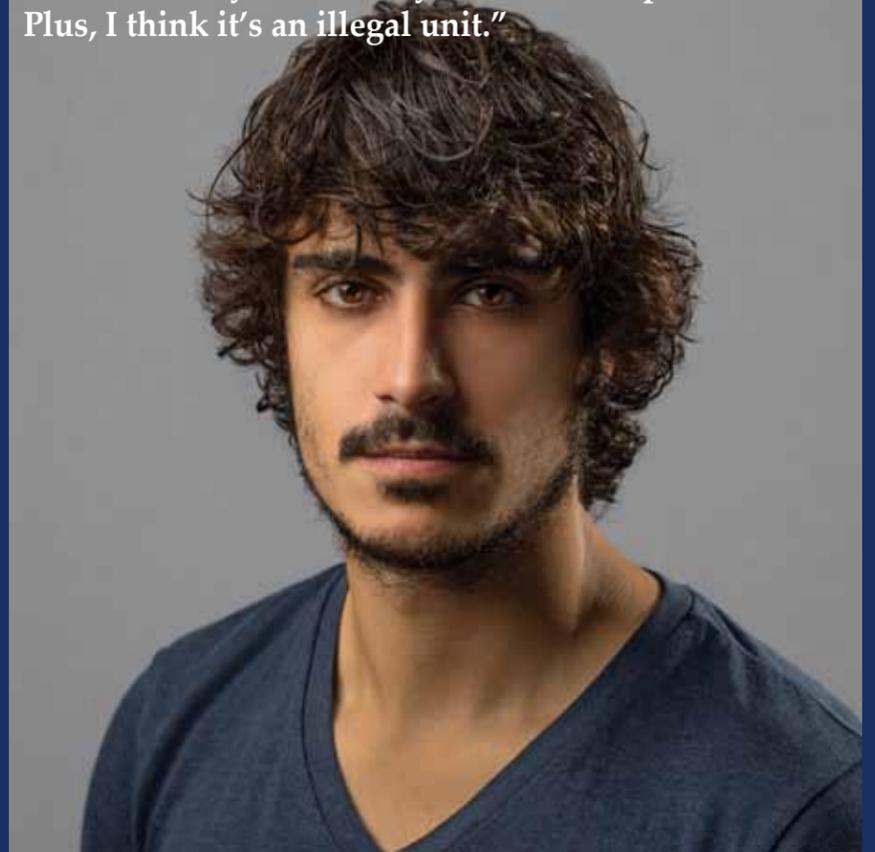
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# Dump Trump or make him king

## For once, San Francisco Republicans have a voice in the choice

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

USUALLY WHEN THE CALIFORNIA presidential primary rolls around, it is a meaningless exercise because the frontrunners in both parties have clinched the nominations already. That will likely be the case again this year on the Democratic side (sorry, Bernie Bros.). But the Republican Party is having a race like no one expected, and with (at press time) Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, and John Kasich still in the running, there is a very good chance that they will still be battling it out when California's June 7 primary election day arrives.

Not only will California matter, but specifically San Francisco will matter. To get insight into why this is so, we spoke with Melissa Caen, a political analyst for CBS San Francisco and a practicing attorney.



Political analyst Melissa Caen.  
PHOTO: KURTY WONG, KURTY PHOTOGRAPHY

**Usually, when the presidential primaries come around to California, it's snoozeville.**

True. In 2012, by April, Mitt Romney had all of the votes he needed to wrap up the nomination. So California literally meant zero when we went to the polls.

**This year, it could very well be a live thing, especially for the Republicans. How does the GOP run its primaries in California?**

Each state decides its own system. In California, the reason things are the way they are is that the Republican Party has determined that that's how things are going to be run. In California, each candidate for the presidential nomination has to submit a list of 172 names of people who would [be their delegates]. This has already happened at the end of last year. Say I'm Ben Carson; I have submitted a list of 172 people who would serve as delegates if I were to win all 172 delegates.

In California, there are 10 statewide delegates. Whoever gets the most votes gets all of those statewide delegates. The rest of them are broken out by congressional district. Each congressional district is also a winner-take-all. So I've got my Ben Carson list of three names for District 12, which is where San Francisco is; if he got the most votes, all three of those people would go [to the Republican National Convention].

**So if you're a Republican candidate, to win the delegates, do you go to the most conservative districts?**

The smarter money is to go to the less-conservative districts. If you look at District 12, San Francisco, we have very few Republicans. So to win here, you don't have to win as many votes. You only need to win over a couple thousand people to get the most votes in a Republican primary in a liberal district. In a more conservative district, you've got to convince larger numbers of people. So the smarter money — and I understand Ted Cruz is

one of the few people to have picked up on this — is campaigning and aiming at the Republicans in the blue districts.

**Can only Republicans vote in the Republican primary? It's a closed primary?**

That's right. For Republicans, only Republicans can vote in their primary. Non-affiliated voters can vote in the Democratic primary. So if you're a decline-to-state voter, as I am, you have a choice of either not voting at all or voting in the Democratic primary. I can't vote in the Republican primary.

So, for your readers who want to get involved — maybe they have a burning desire to vote against or for certain folks in the Republican race — they would need to register as Republicans before the primary so they can get that ballot.

How do you get involved? You can't be a delegate; that's already done. But if you want to participate, then for those independent people or decline-to-state people, they need to quickly get in there and register as a Republican.

**That means they can vote. I assume that means Ted Cruz, John Kasich, and Donald Trump will be courting them with events. Will that be happening? Will Republicans in the Marina be holding soirées with these people?**

Yes, I think we will actually see some campaigning. Now, in a blue district like ours, you're probably not going to see big media buys. In a blue district where there are few Republicans, it's going to be more targeted; more mailers, more events. They're cheaper ways to get at this small group. The big media buys you're going to see in Orange County, Central Valley, places like that.

But in places like here, there will be people calling, there will be mailers. That's something I think a lot of people are excited about. Republicans especially. Republicans in San Francisco just feel like they're in Siberia. To finally get some love from a potential presidential candidate would be exciting for them.

**Is this really the last chance for Bay Area Republicans to have much of a say in the election other than giving money, because in the general election the state will go pretty solidly blue, yes?**

Oh, there's no chance of a Republican winning in California in a presidential election, at this point in time.

**So this is their chance to genuinely have an impact?**

That's right. This is their time to shine, to make conversation, to go to the parties, to contribute the money, to be active for their candidate. Because when it comes to the general election, if [the Democratic nominee] is Hillary or even if it's Bernie, it's pretty clear that California's going to go [blue].

E-mail: [john@marinatimes.com](mailto:john@marinatimes.com)

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## THE MARINA-COW HOLLOW INSIDER



Lou Seal will make a special appearance at the April 15 screening of *The Sandlot* for Family Movie Nights in the Presidio. PHOTO: BRYCE EDWARDS / FLICKR

## Movie nights are a hit

BY LYNETTE MAJER

### SPRINGTIME FUN

Kudos to District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell, who partnered with the Presidio Trust to bring us **Family Movie Nights** ([presidio.gov](http://presidio.gov)), which debuted last October. After showing the first two films outdoors, when the weather cooled, the event moved indoors to the Presidio YMCA gymnasium. Kids brought their sleeping bags and cozied up for one big pajama party to watch *Home Alone* in December, followed by *McFarland USA* in January.

Beginning Saturday, April 15, Movie Nights move back outdoors to the Main Post Civil War Parade Ground lawn with *The Sandlot*, about a group of baseball-playing kids — especially fitting given the Giants play their season opener this month. To celebrate further, the Giant's mascot, Lou Seal, will make a special appearance, and San Francisco Baseball Academy will conduct a pitching-and-hitting clinic. Come early to enjoy the fun! Food trucks arrive at 6 p.m., cartoons begin at 6:30 p.m., and the film at 7 p.m. Best of all, Movie Night is free, including popcorn, snacks, It's-Its, water, and juice.

Each month's film is listed in the Child's Play section of the *Marina Times's* calendar; additionally, subscribe to Supervisor Farrell's newsletter ([sfbos.gov](http://sfbos.gov)), and you'll receive an e-mail announcing the film several days before the show. Upcoming films are *The Good Dinosaur* (May 6) and *The Incredibles* (June 10).

More Presidio family fun starts this month with the return of the **Presidio Picnic** ([presidio.gov](http://presidio.gov)) on Sundays beginning April 3, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., in its fourth year, and also on the Parade Ground lawn. The popular event features 30 Off the Grid food trucks, music, games, and more, including yoga classes, nature-based arts and crafts activities, and a photo booth for selfies (which we know you won't want to miss).

**Off-the-Grid** ([offthegridsf.com](http://offthegridsf.com)) food trucks also return to Fort Mason for a sixth season. Look for 11 new vendors (including A16, Izzy's Cheesesteak, Bacon Mania, and Flambé) for a total of 31, including three cocktail bars. Check it out every Friday 5–10 p.m.

### SO LONG, FAREWELL

The charming **The Chestnut Bakery** (2359 Chestnut Street) sadly closed its doors Feb. 16. For the last 14 years, mother-daughter team Catherlina and Kelly Tang successfully owned and operated their family business, turning out delicately delicious scones, beautifully decorated cakes, and other scrumptious bakery items. In a posted "special letter to our customers," Kelly wrote that while costs of business rose over the years, she strove to keep them down, and that the landlord had "absolutely no intention" of allowing them to continue after their lease. Adieu, my pear-ginger scone.

**Espresso Roma Café** (3130 Fillmore Street), has also lost their lease as of May. Staff tell us the landlord is seeking to raise the rent thousands of dollars beyond what the cafe is currently paying. We'll miss their laid-back attitude, free Wi-Fi, and of course, their coffee and snacks.

Neighborhood stalwart, the cozy pub **Liverpool Lil's** (2942 Lyon Street) has shuttered for good. Several months after a fire in their kitchen last April, the landlord reportedly stopped direct conversation about reopening — after over 40 years in the building. We've been crying in our beer at co-owner Eddie Savino's other Cow Hollow outpost, **The Brazen Head** (3166 Buchanan Street, [brazenheads.com](http://brazenheads.com)), certainly no less cozy and pub like.

### DUE CONGRATULATIONS

After a little more than a year, life has been good for **West Coast Wine-Cheese** (2165 Union Street, [westcoastsf.com](http://westcoastsf.com)). Owners Lindsey and Chris Wanner, long-term Cow Hollow residents, successfully filled the need for a quality neighborhood wine establishment. Their regularly scheduled Winery Nights showcase tastings from select vintners (Hall Wines is featured April 29, 4–10 p.m.). The couple recently revamped the kitchen to "provide our customers with an even better culinary experience," said Chris. They are especially excited about their new executive chef, Michael Ocampo (Boxing Room, Zero Zero, Bourbon Steak, and Bar Crudo), who began serving his new menu last month. Stop in for some fine food and wine, delivered with friendly service in an unpretentious environment.

Taylor Jenkins of her eponymous **Taylor Fit Studio** (2159 Filbert Street, [taylorfitstudio.com](http://taylorfitstudio.com)) was the recent recipient of San Francisco's ClassPass "Most Moving Instructor" award. Jenkins, who opened Taylor Fit in 2013 after years in the fitness industry, renovated the former S Factor dance studio with natural light, ballet barres, and mirrors, to create a fun cardio-barre all-body "kick-ass workout" that has a loyal following.

A group of merchants (*Blue Barn, Catnip and Bones, Causwells, Dress San Francisco, Kara's Cupcakes, Kobani Mediterranean Grill, Mamacita, Marina Deli, Reed & Greenough, Scotland Yard, Spaghetti Bros., TeedHaze Lifestyle Real Estate Store, and The Tippy Pig*) recently organized a coat drive and collected 70 coats in one day, which were then delivered to Episcopal Community Services for distribution to the homeless. Supervisor Mark Farrell and the Marina Community Association sponsored the coat drive and Paul Owens of Reed & Greenough hosted.

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# The town hall brawl, the gold Ferrari, and an ode to grappa

BY ERNEST BEYL

## THE DISTRICT THREE DUDE

Aaron Peskin is one cool dude — the big progressive Lebowski of District 3. He demonstrated his cool dudeness last month when more than 200 people showed up in North Beach for a Department of Public Works “community workshop” on the Lawrence Ferlinghetti project, Piazza St. Francis, Poets’ Plaza, planned for the 600 block of Vallejo Street between Columbus and Grant Avenues. As District 3 supervisor, Peskin quieted the crowd and set the stage for what turned out to be a contentious evening. After reviewing the project history, which Ferlinghetti first proposed almost 20 years ago, Peskin said to the already fractious group, “We want to hear your thoughts and concerns and consider possible alternatives, and we have asked organizers of the project and representatives of the police and fire departments and members of various city departments to address this subject.” It was a good beginning for what became a bruising town hall brawl.

## THE TOWN HALL BRAWL

There were genuine concerns expressed by neighbors and others. These included: the future of Cafe Trieste (which anchors the piazza-plaza at one end); the

necessary loss of parking spaces; the ability of emergency vehicles to navigate the already crowded area; and responsibility for the project’s maintenance. Among those speaking in favor of the project was Fabio Giotto, CEO and president of Caffè Trieste, Inc. “I would like to see this completed in my 96-year-old father’s lifetime and in the lifetime of the 97-year-old Lawrence Ferlinghetti.” Giotto came across as a strong voice of reason. But in attendance also was a vocal minority that set about to disrupt the proceedings and therefore disrupt the project. As presentations were made by architects, landscape designers, traffic experts, and others, the yea-sayers approved by clapping. When various voices rose to condemn the project, the naysayers yelled, hooted, booed, and stamped their feet.

## AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN

Amidst this example of democracy in action — presumably learned responses from TV — an articulate and thoughtful Don Raichle, a freelance city planning consultant, whose experience includes work on the tearing down of the Embarcadero Freeway,

presented what was termed “The Vallejo Street Alternative to the Piazza.” Partisans cheered. Organizers of the Ferlinghetti plan appeared attentive but doubtful.

## THE POET AND THE PIAZZA

Ferlinghetti was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Nevertheless, he was the elephant

**Ferlinghetti was unable to attend due to illness. Nevertheless, he was the elephant in the room.**

in the room. His associate, architect Dennis Q. Sullivan, who designed the concept for Ferlinghetti, read a statement by the absent poet. It included these words:

“San Francisco today is Boom Town USA. It’s a boom bigger than that of the 1860s after the Gold Rush. Building construction, electronics, medical, financial, tourism, all are booming. In 10 or 15 years we may not even recognize our city. The construction boom hasn’t hit North Beach yet, and we now have a window of opportunity. This window is closing fast, and this is probably our last chance to create a pedestrian oasis in the heart and soul of North Beach. The Piazza St., Francis, Poets’ Plaza will do just that!”

But the dance goes on. There will be more meetings and presumably more contention. Nevertheless, Ferlinghetti’s vision is on the right side of history.

## THE SAGA OF THE GOLD FERRARI

Recently, as I was standing in front of Original Joe’s waiting for the 39 Muni to take me up Telegraph Hill, a gold Ferrari pulled up and parked in the white zone. The guy who parks cars for the restaurant went over and offered his help. No! The driver wanted to leave the Ferrari just where it was. Soon his seatmate, wearing a Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance jacket, got out, opened the boot and took out a Segway, painted exactly the same gold color as the car. Then the driver got out, mounted the Segway, rode it to the curb and over to an outdoor table. He sat down for lunch — all the while eyeballing his gold Ferrari.

No, I’m not making this up. I’m an investigative reporter. That’s what the *Marina Times* is paying me the big bucks for.

## AN ODE TO GRAPPA

For me a life without grappa would indeed be a dreary one. Grappa — usually 80 or 100 proof

and distilled from grape skins, pulp, and seeds — is a popular drink in North Beach. So when I get a yen for grappa, which is frequent, I get myself to the North Beach Restaurant, which is grappa headquarters. I find a snifter of grappa makes a perfect wind-up to a fine meal. But at North Beach Restaurant, one just doesn’t order a grappa after dinner. One asks for the grappa menu. For it is here at the bar that one can peruse more than 20 grappas of different styles and flavors. All are served in warm brandy snifters. They range from about \$10 an ounce upward. One grappa at North Beach Restaurant goes for \$4,500 for a 10-liter bottle. It’s grappa di Refosco dal Peduncola, distilled by the Refosco family of northeast Italy and is said to be a complex and intense elixir fit for the gods. I haven’t had occasion to acquire a taste for it as yet.

## THANK YOU, JULIE

And by the way, the new Joe DiMaggio Playground is spectacular — thanks to former District 3 supervisor Julie Christensen, who spearheaded the project. She still needs a few bucks to complete it. Contact the playground, and find out how you can get your name on an on-site tile plaque.

E-mail: [ernest@marinatimes.com](mailto:ernest@marinatimes.com)

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Be sure to visit the Lookout Cafe at the Lands End visitor center. Operated by the Cliff House team, the cafe serves a delicious selection of locally sourced grab-and-go items including the famous *It's It* originally for sale at *Playland at the Beach*.

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**THE TABLEHOPPER** :: Brunch time



Sobel Bros. pastrami, fried egg, latke, everything bagel. PHOTO: ADAM SOBEL

**Brunches, sandwiches, and fine dining, oh my**

BY MARCIA GAGLIARDI

**MARINA/COW HOLLOW**

Looking for some great brunch options? **Tacolicious** (2031 Chestnut Street, 415-694-6077) has a new brunch, starting with the Lone Star taco, made with scrambled eggs, bacon, potato, roasted poblano, and salsa macha (an oil-based salsa with fried chilies and garlic), all wrapped up in a La Palma flour tortilla. You'll also find huevos divorciados (refritos, Telmo's orange sauce, salsa verde, cotija cheese) — both \$9.95. Chilaquiles made with La Palma tortilla chips, chili de arbol and tomato salsa, Oaxaca cheese, avocado, radish, and two eggs are \$10.95. And you know there are some great cocktails, like their Bloody Maria, to go with. 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Saturday–Sunday (all locations).

The **Mina Test Kitchen** (2120 Greenwich Street, 415-310-8371) scored a liquor license and have launched Diane's Bloody Mary Brunch, named in honor of Mina's wife and her famous Bloody Mary Bar (featuring hand-milled heirloom garden tomatoes blended with a light dashi broth, then infused with herbaceous lovage). Other classic cocktails are also available to pair with chef Adam Sobel's brunch menu. Options include bagel breakfast sandwiches (like the Sobel Bros. pastrami, fried egg, latke, everything bagel, pictured), strawberry challah French toast, jelly doughnuts, local asparagus scramble with black truffle Camembert and polenta croutons, and the MTK double cheeseburger with caramelized onions, pickle, and mustard-griddled bun. Sunday 10:30 a.m.–3 p.m. (Saturdays are in the future), reservations and walk-ins accepted.

**NORTH BEACH**

Pete Mrabe of Don Pisto's can't stop, won't stop. Not only is **Pete's** open in the former Amante (1310 Grant Avenue) space, he's opened **Central Station Deli** (728 Vallejo Street, 415-658-7310) just down the street. The menu has six well-thought-out specialty sandwiches, including The Captain, with double Dutch crunch, mesquite-smoked turkey, bacon, avocado, Swiss, lettuce, onion, tomato. All sandwiches are \$11, and you can also make your own combo. Daily 10:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m. (currently), cash only.

A well-known face and character, Mahmoud "Mo" Khossoussi, owner of Maykadeh and Mo's Grill, wasn't too keen on his retirement after 53 years in the restaurant biz. The 70-something self-made man explained, "I got bored." So now he's collaborating with his daughter, Haleh Cunningham (who will be working on the creative direction), to open his next restaurant **Dip** (1318 Grant Avenue).

Khossoussi has quite the compelling history: He moved to the United States from Tehran when he was 17. He didn't speak English, but look who went to Cal Poly and Cal State Hayward and studied accounting and economics. He opened his first restaurant in Castro Valley in 1969, while he was in college, because he needed to support himself. He went to school during the day and worked at the restaurant at night. Turns out, you can't just tell a hard worker to retire and take it easy.

It ends up his family (including his granddaughters) are all in love with dip sandwiches, like a French dip, so he decided to finally pursue this idea that he's had for a long time. Dip will be a sandwich shop, serving au jus sandwiches made with organic meats and Acme bread. There will be grass-fed beef (a cross between Tuscan beef and Angus), lamb, nicely marbled pork (sourced from Salmon Creek), and a pork belly sandwich, too, all served au jus. There will be pickles and Dip's own mustard on the side, plus the option to order potato gratin and other vegetable dishes. Delivery will also be available.

The space will have a butcher shop look, with white subway tile, wood, and brass details. It was formerly a clothing store, and after going through all the change-of-use permits, they are finally under construction and hope to open in May. Way to go, Mo!

**FILLMORE**

**Mosu** (1552 Fillmore Street, 415-735-7303) is now open across the street from State Bird Provisions. The fine dining restaurant has posted a sample of its kaiseki-style tasting menu online (mosusf.com), which will clock in at 10 to 12 courses, and feature Asian influences. The menu is \$195 per person, tax and tip not included (pretty strong way to come out of the gates there, whoosh). It has 18 seats, and the chef is South Korea native Sung Anh, who was the chef de cuisine at Aziza, and has worked for chef Corey Lee at both The French Laundry and Benu, and at Urasawa in Beverly Hills. The wine list was assembled by master sommelier Kevin Reilly, who was at Cyrus and Quince. Tuesday–Saturday 5:30 p.m.–9 p.m., reservations only.

Marcia Gagliardi writes a popular insider weekly e-column, *Tablehopper*, about the San Francisco dining and imbibing scene, get all the latest news at [tablehopper.com](http://tablehopper.com). Follow @tablehopper on Twitter and Instagram for more culinary finds!

## ERNESTO'S

CONTINUED from page 1

with chopped garlic all shuffled around in a hot wok. This with a bottle of Tsingtao beer constitutes my favorite meal right now. When you order, the waitress nets a bunch of shrimp from a tank by the door, and the cook plunges them into boiling water for about two or three minutes max. It's your job to shell them without burning your fingers, dip them into a dish of soy sauce and hot chili peppers, and gobble them. I gobble them frequently. That tank by the door is also the brief home of live crab and other beautiful swimmers, and the tiny kitchen turns out a variety of Chinese seafood dishes as well as Singapore rice noodles, won ton soup, and the requisite barbecued pork.

### BEST CIOPPINO:

**Gigi's Sotto Mare** (552 Green Street)

Broad and full-flavored, this cioppino is loaded with crab. Gigi's insists on putting a layer of penne pasta in the bottom of the bowl. I would hold up on this idea. Nevertheless, it gets my endorsement — this time.

### BEST CLAM CHOWDER:

**Caffe Puccini** (411 Columbus Avenue)

Thick and full of chopped clams, this chowder tastes like clams. Too many restaurants serve clam chowder that is too bacony, too flourey, or with scant flavor of clams — as though one, obligatory, and tired clam was tied to a lengthy piece of

string and then dipped repeatedly in the watery liquid.

### BEST CRAB LOUIE:

**The Franciscan Crab Restaurant** (Pier 43½ Fisherman's Wharf)

What makes The Franciscan's Crab Louie the best in the neighborhood? It's the crab. Always fresh, and plenty of it, never bland and watery, and with a proper and authoritative Louie dressing. And let's not quibble because The Franciscan Crab Restaurant is not in North Beach. What you're looking for is a good Crab Louie, right?

### BEST DESSERT: Stella's

(446 Columbus Avenue)

Originally known as Stella's Pasticceria e Café when it opened many years ago, this is the place to get a slice of sacripantina. And if you don't know about sacripantina, you are cake-deprived. The original owners, named Santucci, brought the recipe for this multilayer sponge cake back from Genoa. I checked the meaning of sacripantina with Lucia D'Alessandro, who keeps me straight when I occasionally am forced to lapse into an Italian word or phrase. She advises me that sacripantina means "sacred bread." Some bread!

### BEST ESPRESSO: SOX Truffles

(754 Columbus Avenue)

A variety of coffees are served in this hole in the wall. Order any coffee and you receive a free chocolate truffle — made on the premises and delicious.

### BEST FISH RESTAURANT:

**Gigi's Sotto Mare** (552 Green Street)

There's a lot of atmosphere here along with lots of fresh fish choices, grilled simply or with an accompanying sauce.

### BEST HANG-OUT JOINT IN NORTH BEACH:

**Mario's Bohemian Cigar Store Cafe** (566 Columbus Avenue)

A hipster crowd of young folks that serves wine, beer, espresso, latte and so forth along with sandwiches, soups, and some surprisingly good pizzas. You can't tell the servers from the customers.

### BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT:

**Original U.S. Restaurant**

(414 Columbus Avenue)

The food in this classic establishment is better than it was at its old location on Columbus. Gaspare Giudice and his crew have kicked it up a notch or two. As in the old place, there are daily specials — roast lamb shoulder and lima beans, tripe, calamari fritti, and calves' liver and onions, for example. And there are a number of Sicilian special dishes, all with assertive flavors.

### BEST ITALIAN TAKEOUT:

**Italian Homemade**

(716 Columbus Avenue)

Most restaurants in North Beach provide takeout service. Italian Homemade is the best one.

### BEST-LOOKING RESTAURANT:

**Calzone's** (430 Columbus Avenue)

I always expect to see Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg

sitting outside under the heat lamps at Calzone's. The black façade and the red neon lighting suggests this reverie. Of course, I would jaywalk across Columbus on Columbus Day just to sit with Ekberg.

### BEST MINISTRONE:

**Caffe Puccini**

(411 Columbus Avenue)

There's lots of body to this traditional soup. It begins life as a bean soup with a ham hock thrown in, and winds up with a variety of vegetables including carrots, chard, and string beans. All of this is laced liberally with grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

### BEST NEW RESTAURANT:

**Piccolo Forno**

(725 Columbus Avenue)

Good pastas and an anti-pasto plate — prosciutto, baby artichokes in olive oil, salami, olives and such — that's pleasing and ample. One day I had cacio e pepe, only three ingredients: pecorino Romano cheese, black pepper, and pasta. As I said, only three ingredients. It doesn't even need salt as a fourth. Pecorino Romano is salty enough.

### BEST PIZZA:

**Il Casaro Pizzeria & Mozzarella Bar**

(398 Columbus Avenue)

This first-time winner is a nice addition to the neighborhood without being fussy. Il Casaro serves exemplary pizza and a nice cross section of other Italian specialties. Runner up in this pizza category is **Sodini's** (510 Green Street.)

### BEST RESTAURANT:

**Original Joe's** (601 Union Street)

O.J.'s has assumed the coveted mantle of the original Washington Square Bar & Grill. It is the place to be and to be seen; an anchor North Beach restaurant on an anchor corner across from Washington Square Park. For my taste you can't go wrong. Try the hamburger steak with a side of ravioli. Everything is exemplary. And the bar has become the social club of North Beach.

### BEST SALOON: Gino and Carlo

(548 Green Street)

I am partial to Gino and Carlo, a no-nonsense saloon that opens at 6 a.m.

### BEST SANDWICH: Molinari

(373 Columbus Avenue)

Molinari makes sensational sandwiches to eat on the premises or to take away.

### BEST SERVER:

**Renee Gammon**

**Original U.S. Restaurant**

(414 Columbus Avenue)

Renee is the classic, old-school server — she knows the food, and after serving you a time or two, she knows what you like.

### BEST WINE BAR:

**Belle Cora** (565 Green Street)

Find a good selection of wines by the glass and bottle, craft beers, and small plates. The host is the estimable Conor Howard.

E-mail: [ernest@marinatimes.com](mailto:ernest@marinatimes.com)



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MICHAEL SNYDER ON ... FILM

# Envisioning music-makers

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

IF THE CURRENT SCHEDULE OF RELEASES is any indication, the movie industry can't get enough of on-screen biographies about notable musicians — especially ones with checkered careers, addiction problems, romantic travails and, to put it delicately, dramatic last acts. This month on the big screen, you'll be able to catch films about cool-jazz innovator Chet Baker, country-western legend Hank Williams, and multifaceted jazz giant Miles Davis.

The sudden preponderance of music-oriented biopics might be surprising, but this is no new wrinkle. The genre resulted in Oscars for stars of recent motion pictures including *Ray*, on the life of supreme soul singer and pianist Ray Charles; *Walk the Line*, about the relationship between country music royals Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash; and *La Vie en Rose*, the story of beloved French chanteuse Edith Piaf.

Going a little further back in film history, there have been more than a few celebrated features focusing on legendary performers: *What's Love Got to Do with It?* (Tina Turner), *La Bamba* (Richie Valens), *Sweet Dreams* (Patsy Cline), *Bird* (Charlie Parker), *Great Balls of Fire* (Jerry Lee Lewis), *Lady Sings the Blues* (Billie Holiday), *Coal Miner's Daughter* (Loretta Lynn), and so forth. We shouldn't forget well-made, albeit less renowned fare such as *Nowhere Boy* (concerning the teenage John Lennon) and *Control* (investigating the tragic circumstances that befell Joy Division lead singer Ian Curtis).

Selena, Woody Guthrie, and Glenn Miller all received memorable and treasured onscreen treatment. It's doubtful that the 2016 filmic portrayals of Baker, Williams, and Davis will be so esteemed down the line. If nothing else, these three remarkable talents and the music they made are getting well-deserved exposure.

**'BORN TO BE BLUE'**

Though Chet Baker isn't a household name today, the trumpet player's economical phrasing and laconic, intimate vocal delivery were integral to the rise of the West Coast school of

cool jazz. He recorded a number of critically acclaimed albums in the 1950s, and was even moving into the Hollywood scene with a part in a 1955 film titled *Hell's Horizon* when his career and life began to go off the rails due to drug addiction.

*Born to Be Blue* is a strangely constructed, willfully theatrical, almost surreal account of Baker's life by Canadian screenwriter and director Robert Budreau that seems to have taken some liberties with the facts and the actual people involved. It may fictionalize some elements, but it generally works. Baker is passionately portrayed by Ethan Hawke as a white man struggling for recognition and respect from his African-American peers in the jazz world led by notoriously critical and haughty fellow trumpeter Miles Davis. In *Born to Be Blue* (as in reality), Baker is a victim of self-destructive behavior, earning jail time for his drug habit and encountering violence that threatens his ability to play his instrument. Even the love of a good woman in the form of an actress (Carmen Ejogo) who becomes his lover can't save him from himself. A late-in-career comeback doesn't really change the downbeat vibe of *Born to Be Blue*, which is given an ideal soundtrack by Baker's moody, hurt-infused recordings. If you watch and listen, prepare to be bummed out.

*Born to Be Blue* is currently playing in San Francisco theaters.

**'I SAW THE LIGHT'**

The rise and final years of Hank Williams, a true country music icon, are covered in *I Saw the Light*, a dutifully executed, somewhat flat trip to the cultural heart of the American South during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In this instance, the template suffers from a bit of fatigue. As Williams finds success on his journey from bandleader on a rural Alabama radio station to universally appreciated singer and songwriter on the starry stage of Nashville's Grand Ole Opry, he must also confront marital strife and wrestle with alcoholism and pill dependency.

Williams is convincingly embodied in presence and voice by U.K. actor Tom Hiddleston, best known as the villainous



Left to right: Tom Hiddleston in *I Saw the Light*; Don Cheadle in *Miles Ahead*.  
PHOTOS: © SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Norse god Loki in Marvel's superhero blockbusters *Thor* and *The Avengers*. In an unexpected turn, Hiddleston sings ole Hank's familiar material with skill and heart, and he's no slouch when it comes to showing the pain and desperation that Williams must have felt as he tried to deal with the needs of his wife, Audrey. The latter, played in more than competent fashion by Elizabeth Olsen, insisted on singing with her husband as he rose to acclaim, regardless of her vocal shortcomings. Audrey is a thankless role for Olsen, and though the viewer may feel for the character, her ongoing and unrealistic aspirations become wearisome and contribute to a lack of impact in the climax wherein, as expected, a major popular artist meets his demise way before his time. The movie's shortcomings aside, Hiddleston's performance as Williams is reason enough to see *I Saw the Light*.

*I Saw the Light* is currently playing at the Clay Theater (2261 Fillmore Street).

**'MILES AHEAD'**

There aren't many figures in the panoply of music that inspire more adoration and controversy than Miles Davis. As a result, director and actor Don Cheadle may have bitten off more than he could chew with *Miles Ahead*, his ambitious, episodic look at the protean, game-changing virtuoso. In a fashion similar to *Born to Be Blue*, *Miles Ahead* toys with the truth, specifics of events, and the behavior or identity of certain people significant to the master of the jazz trumpet. Narrative isn't as important as the impression one gets from the entirety, perhaps as a nod to the feeling one can get from an improvised solo.

Cheadle, who co-authored the script and plays Davis, chooses to make the musician's self-imposed, pain-fraught, drug-addled five-year hiatus in the 1970s as the centerpiece of his look at the thin line between genius and madness. A conniving journalist (Ewan McGregor) latches onto Davis to get an exclusive interview and tags along on a quest for a missing master tape. Meanwhile, Davis has fevered flashbacks suggesting that the main catalyst for his astonishing creativity as a composer and instrumentalist, as well as his unpredictable behavior and radical emotional swings, was his stormy and ultimately broken relationship with dancer Frances Taylor (Emayatzy Corinealdi), the woman who served as his muse at a significant and fruitful point in his career.

Ultimately, *Miles Ahead* is as erratic as its subject, zigzagging here and there in time and space, and never coalescing into a cogent portrait of Davis — Cheadle's fine and fevered acting notwithstanding. And it never unearths the true roots of this influential innovator's brilliance. A bizarre coda with Miles, back from the dead and jamming with a group of current jazz luminaries, just clouds the picture even more.

*Miles Ahead* opens April 8 at the Embarcadero Center Cinema (1 Embarcadero Center).

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

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COMPILED BY BRIAN PETTUS

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- 3. City of Thieves**, by David Benioff (paperback)
- 4. 111 Places in San Francisco That You Must Not Miss**, by Floriana Peterson (paperback)
- 5. Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice**, by Bill Browder (paperback)
- 6. The Sense of an Ending**, by Julian Barnes (paperback)
- 7. Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics**, by Daniel James Brown (paperback)
- 8. The Tender Bar: A Memoir**, by J.R. Moehringer (paperback)
- 9. Sunny's Nights: Lost and Found at a Bar on the Edge**

- of the World**, by Tim Sultan (hardcover)
- 10. Mindfulness Coloring Book: Anti-Stress Art Therapy for Busy People**, by Emma Farrarons (paperback)

**NEW RELEASES: NONFICTION**

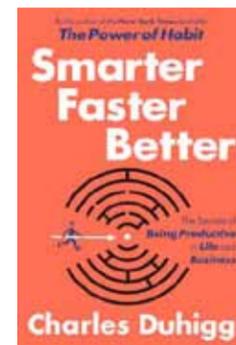
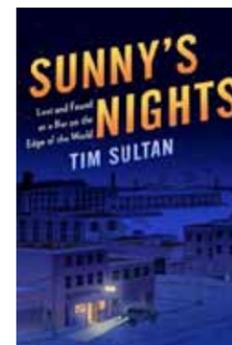
**Smarter, Faster, Better: The Secrets of Being Productive in Life and Business**, by Charles Duhigg (hardcover)

From the author of *The Power of Habit*, this new book will change how you live your life with eight key concepts from motivation and goal setting to focus and decision-making that explain why some people and companies get so much done. Drawing on the latest findings in neuroscience, psychology, and behavioral economics as well as the experiences of CEOs, educational reformers, four-star generals, FBI agents, airplane pilots, and Broadway songwriters, this painstakingly researched book explains that the most productive

people, companies, and organizations don't merely act differently: They view the world, and their choices, in profoundly different ways.

**Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City**, by Mathew Desmond (hardcover)

This brilliant, heartbreaking book takes us into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee to tell the story of eight families on the edge. Desmond provides a ground-level view of one of the most urgent issues facing America today. As we see families forced into shelters, squalid apartments, or more dangerous neighborhoods, we bear witness to the human cost of America's vast inequality and to people's determination and intelligence in the face of hardship. Based on years of embedded fieldwork and carefully gathered data, this masterful book transforms our understanding of extreme poverty



and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving a devastating, uniquely American problem.

**NEW RELEASES: FICTION**

**The Nest**, by Cynthia D'Apris Sweeney (hardcover)

This is a story about the power of family, the possibilities of friendship, the ways we depend on one another, and the ways we let one another down. In this tender, entertaining, and deftly written debut, Sweeney brings a remarkable cast of characters to life to illuminate what money does to relationships, what happens to our ambitions over the course of time, and the fraught yet unbreakable ties we share with those we love.

**At the Edge of the Orchard**, by Tracy Chevalier (hardcover)

The newest novel by the author of *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, this book tells the story of a pioneer family struggling to survive in Ohio and California. A richly imagined story of family, deeply detailed with historical nuance, this is Chevalier at her best. "Sometimes, a book comes along that somehow ticks all the boxes. This is one of those books: The voices are rich and individual; the attention to detail impressive; the scent of apples, damp earth, and pines runs potently through the whole. A joy." — Joanne Harris, author of *Chocolat*

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

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# APRIL EVENTS

## WHAT NOT TO MISS THIS MONTH

### MAJOR EVENTS



Women: New Portraits

**Daily through April 17, 10 a.m.**  
**649 Old Mason St. (Presidio, Crissy Field)**

The only West Coast appearance of Annie Leibovitz's latest internationally touring exhibition is a project that began more than 15 years ago, and it remains her most enduringly popular series of photographs reflecting the changing roles of women today. *Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov*

PHOTO: ANNE LEIBOVITZ COURTESY PRESIDIO TRUST

### Bouquets to Art

**Tue.–Sun., April 5–10, 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m.**  
**de Young Museum**

Innovative floral designers choose a piece of art from the museum's collection and create a floral work of art to complement it in this popular week-long exhibition. *\$25, 415-750-3504, famsf.org*

### Earth Day 46th Anniversary

**Saturday, April 23, 10 a.m.–7 p.m.**  
**22nd St. (btw. Mission & Valencia)**

This unique street festival celebration combines green sustainability discussions, activism, workshops, and solutions into a day of fun and excitement for the whole family with celebrity chefs, a fashion show, DIY workshops, and more. *Donations encouraged, earthdaysf.org*

### 99th Annual Opening Day on the Bay

**Sunday, April 24, noon**  
**Crissy Field to Pier 39**

Boating season kicks off with the blessing of the fleet and a festive parade featuring over 100 historic workboats, fireboats, towboats, classic, and contemporary craft decorated to the theme Heroes on the Bay. *Free, 925-451-4621, picya.org*



S.F. Decorator Showcase

**Tue.–Sun., April 30–May 29 & Monday, May 30**  
**298 Chestnut St. (near Grant)**

This year's home to be transformed by a team of designers is the 1929 Villa de Martini, featuring a panoramic bay view, European-style gardens, and unique architectural details. Proceeds benefit S.F. University High School's financial aid program. *\$35, 415-447-5830, decoratorshowcase.org*

PHOTO: MATT MCCOURTNEY

### LAST CHANCE

#### Macy's 70th Annual Flower Show: America the Beautiful

**Daily through April 3**  
**Macy's Union Square**

Join the celebration of America's vast and varied landscapes and the beautiful indigenous flora "from purple mountain majesties," "across the wilderness," and "from sea to shining sea." Visit website for event information. *415-397-3333, social.macys.com/flowershow*

#### 42nd Street Moon: The Boys from Syracuse

**Wed.–Sun. through April 17**

**The Eureka Theatre (215 Jackson St.)**  
 This musical adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Lorenz Hart, and book by George Abbott) is set in ancient Ephesus, and features two sets of twins facing mistaken identities, fast-paced chases, magic spells, wily courtesans, and a mysterious seer in a madcap farce. *\$25–\$75, 415-255-8207, 42ndstreetmoon.org*

### COMMUNITY CORNER

#### Public Open House

**Tuesday, April 5, 5:30–7:30 p.m.**  
**Presidio Theatre (99 Moraga Ave.)**

The Presidio Trust will host an open house for the public to visit the theater and learn about and comment on the proposed rehabilitation project as a multipurpose community facility for live performance, educational programs, and events. *Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov*

#### Marina Community Association Spring Community Public Meeting

**Thursday, April 14, 6:30 p.m.**  
**General's Residence, Fort Mason**

Join the MCA for topics affecting the Marina (crime, homelessness, GGNRA's dog management plan, proposals for the Palace of Fine Arts, and more). Guest speakers are District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell and Lt. John Jaimesena from SFPD's Northern Station. *Free, sfmca.org*

#### Presidio Trust Public Board of Directors' Meeting

**Thursday, April 21, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Observation Post (211 Lincoln Blvd.)**

Learn about the latest updates on the Presidio and share your feedback. E-mail questions to *presidio@presidiotrust.gov*. *Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov*

### GALAS & BENEFITS

#### 6th Annual Spring Big Book Sale

**Daily through April 3, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.**  
**Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center**

The largest used book sale on the West Coast supports the S.F. Public Library and features over 250,000 books and other media, all for \$3 or less. On Sunday prices drop to \$1. *Free, 415-626-7500, friendsfpl.org*

#### 29th Annual Star Chefs & Vintners Gala

**Sunday, April 17, 5–11 p.m.**  
**Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center**

This epicurean extravaganza benefiting Meals on Wheels features an hors d'oeuvre and wine reception; a sit-down, three-course dinner; a lavish dessert reception; and live and silent auctions. *\$1,500/couple, 415-343-1283, mowsf.org*

#### Big Bang Gala

**Thursday, April 28, 6 p.m.–midnight**  
**California Academy of Sciences**

Explore the tastes, sounds, and creatures of the night in an evening benefiting the academy and featuring dinner, speakers, live music, late-night bites, and an open bar. *\$2,500, 415-379-5411, calacademy.org/big-bang-gala-2016*

### ARTS & CULTURE

#### Annual Art Explosion Spring Open Studios

**Sat.–Sun., April 1–3, noon–5 p.m.**  
**2425 17th St. & 744 Alabama St.**

Support local artists, expand your art collection, and find great deals among over 100 painters, sculptors, photographers, fashion designers, and jewelers from the city's largest artists' collective. *Free admission & refreshments, 415-323-3020, artexplosionstudios.com*



Spring Open Studios

**Sat.–Sun., April 23–24, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.**  
**Hunter's Point Shipyard & Islais Creek Studios**

Meet over 100 featured artists offering a variety of artwork, including painting, sculpture, printmaking, jewelry, and photography, while enjoying food and music. Kids and dogs welcome. *Free, 415-822-9675, shipyardartists.com*

PHOTO: SHIPYARDARTISTS.COM

### SFUSD Arts Festival

**Daily, April 28–May 6, 9:45 a.m.–5 p.m.**  
**Asian Art Museum**

This annual celebration of student creativity includes a visual art exhibition featuring artwork by 2,000 students, live musical and dance performances, screenings of student films and videos, poetry readings, and hands-on art activities. *Free, 415-695-2441, sfusdartsfestival.org*

#### 2nd Annual Parking Lot Art Fair

**Saturday, April 30, 8 a.m.**  
**Fort Mason Center**

Local, independent artists, and artist-run galleries will use cars, rental trucks, temporary pseudo-parklets, the space around the vehicles, and more, to transform the concrete lot into a loosely curated art fair. *Free, 415-345-7500, fortmason.org*

### MUSEUMS & GALLERIES



Gregg Wilensky: Hovering at the Boundaries of Nature

**Wed.–Sun. through May 12, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.**  
**Dryansky Gallery (2120 Union St.)**

This exhibition of large-scale works by theoretical physicist Wilensky features a celebration of spring in a selection of abstract landscape tableaux derived from photographs taken in California and Paris. *Free, 415-932-9302, thedryansky.com*

PHOTO: GREGG WILENSKY / THEDRYANSKY.COM

#### Pierre Bonnard: Painting Arcadia

**Tue.–Sun. through May 15, 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m.**  
**Legion of Honor**

Featuring more than 70 works spanning the artist's complete career, this is the first major international presentation of Bonnard's works on the West Coast in 50 years. *\$20, 415-750-3600, famsf.org*

#### Oscar de la Renta: The Retrospective

**Tue.–Sun. through May 30, 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m.**  
**de Young Museum**

This world premiere retrospective celebrates the life and career of one of fashion's most influential designers and includes more than 130 pieces produced over five decades. *\$30, 415-750-3600, famsf.org*

### THEATER

#### Atlas Theatre: Dominion

**Fri.–Sat., April 1–2 (preview)**  
**Thu.–Sat. through April 23**

**Young Performers Theatre, Fort Mason Center**

This premiere production presents the interwoven stories of women living in strict religious households, and features an original score performed live by a string trio. *\$30, 415-728-1111, atlas theatre.com*

#### Magic Theatre: Sojourners

**Various days April 12–16**  
**Bldg. D, Fort Mason Center**

Newlywed Abasiama plans to go to America with her husband to get an education, and then return home to join in Nigeria's rebirth after the Civil War, however her loyalties are soon tested in an impossible choice. *\$20–\$60, 415-441-8822, magictheatre.org*

#### S.F. Playhouse: Colossal

**Tue.–Sun. through April 30**  
**Kensington Park Hotel (450 Post St.)**

This epic event impossibly merges the worlds of football and dance, loss and recovery, and the toughest act of all: being yourself. *\$15–\$125, 415-677-9596, sfplayhouse.org*

#### ACT: The Lion

**Tue.–Sun., April 19–May 1**  
**The Strand Theater (1127 Market St.)**

In this wholly original musical experience, award-winning songwriter Benjamin Scheuer uses his guitar (actually, six) to tell a gripping rock 'n' roll coming-of-age story with wit and emotional depth to discover the redemptive power of music. *\$20–\$55, 415-749-2228, act-sf.org*

### DANCE

#### When We Were Small

**Thu.–Sun. through April 10, 8 p.m.**  
**Gallery 308, Bldg. A, Fort Mason Center**

Capacitor takes audience members through the exploration of early sensory discovery in this surreal reflection of childhood in the form of a performance installation where dancers and contortionists escort the audience back to a time before memory, when simple tasks were strange and ordinary activities were fantastic. *\$35–\$42, 415-345-7575, capacitor.org*

#### Lines Ballet: Spring Home Season

**Thu.–Sun., April 21–24 & Wed.–Sun, April 27–30**  
**YBCA Theatre (701 Mission St.)**

Tenor saxophonist Charles Lloyd and jazz pianist Jason Moran bring their acclaimed musical partnership to dance in the first four performances. Additionally, King's acclaimed Shostakovich returns, set to four of the composer's string quartets. *\$30–\$70, 415-863-3040, linesballet.org*

#### 18th Annual Bay Area Dance Week

**Daily, April 22–May 1**  
**Various S.F. venues**

Featuring 600 events, BADW provides a grand tour of dance styles, including Argentine tango, classical Indian, jazz, hip hop, ballet, traditional hula, and more. *Free, 415-920-9181, bayareandw.org*

### MUSIC/CLASSICAL

#### Harp recital: Julia Kay Jamieson

**Sunday, April 10, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Congregation Beth Shalom (301 14th Ave.)**

The award-winning harpist, composer, arranger, and teacher performs a special program of Renié, de Falla, Ellington, A-ha, Tournier, Piazzolla, Mercury, Leonard Cohen, and more, including a more traditional harp repertoire paired with Jamieson's own transcriptions of popular and jazz works. *A prerecital workshop for harpists and observers begins at 1:30 p.m. \$10–\$60, universe.com*

#### Concerts at the Presidio: Così Fan Tutte

**Thu.–Fri., April 14–15, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Golden Gate Club (135 Fisher Loop, the Presidio)**

Soaring arias and luminous ensemble pieces are presented by six operatic voices in a compact, fully narrated adaptation of Mozart's enduring masterpiece. *Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov*

### MUSIC/ CONTEMPORARY

#### Tuck & Patti

**Thursday, April 14, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Miner Auditorium, SFJazz Center (201 Franklin St.)**

With their signature guitar and vocals that combine jazz, folk, and R&B, this Bay Area-based husband and wife team is one of the most enduring duos in modern music. *\$25–\$50, 866-920-5299, sfjazz.org*

#### Rudy Colombini & The Unauthorized Rolling Stones

**Saturday, April 30, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Great American Music Hall (859 O'Farrell St.)**

Since their founding in 2001, the group has brought the excitement, energy, and hits of a live Rolling Stones show to stages across the country. *\$20–\$25 (\$44.95 includes dinner), 415-885-0750, slimpresents.com*

### NIGHTLIFE



Janiva Magness CD Release Show

**Saturday, April 16, 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.**  
**Biscuits & Blues (401 Mason St.)**

The soulful and classic voice of Janiva Magness comes to S.F. to celebrate the release of her 10th album. *\$30, 415-292-2583, biscuitsandblues.com*

PHOTO: JANIVAMAGNESS.COM

## Sophie

Thursday, April 21, 10 p.m.–2 a.m.  
1015 Folsom St.

If you're ready for a weeknight of a "precise sonic assault of pop hooks, hyperreal sound design and club rhythms, synthesized and sculpted live" — then you know how you're spending this Thursday night. \$15–\$17.50, 415-991-1015, 1015.com

## FILMS & LECTURES

### Beyond Prisons: A Conversation about Criminal Justice Reform

Wednesday, April 13, 6:30 p.m.  
Castro Theatre (429 Castro St.)

About one out of every 100 Americans is currently in prison. Van Jones and Shaka Senghor discuss their new program, #cut50, aimed at reducing the prison population by 50 percent over the next 10 years. \$10–\$75, 415-597-6705, commonwealthclub.org

### San Francisco Green Film Festival

Thursday–Wednesday, April 14–20

Castro Theatre  
This year's theme is "Keep it wild," and 70 new films and discussions will be featured exploring environmental issues. See website for tickets, 415-7671977, greenfilmfest.org



### San Francisco International Film Festival

April 21–May 5

Various Bay Area venues

Twenty-three countries are represented in the 59th annual festival. Competitors include Czech Republic's Slávek Horák (*Home Care*), Israel and Denmark's Yaelle Kayam (*Mountain*), Lebanon and Qatar's Mir-Jean Bou Chaaya (*Very Big Shot*), and many more. Visit website for tickets, sffs.org

PHOTO: AARDMAN ANIMATION / SFFS.ORG

## SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

### Walk to Work Day

Thursday, April 7, 7–10 a.m.  
Citywide

You might walk to work every day, but today you can get free Clipper cards, tote bags, coffee, or breakfast snacks at hubs across the city. Free, 415-431-9255, walksf.org

### Stargazing Party

Thursday, April 14, 7–9:30 p.m.

Main Parade Ground, the Presidio

The S.F. Amateur Astronomers bring telescopes and help guests see the night sky's most interesting astronomical beauties. All ages; reservations appreciated. Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov

### Learning Green and Earning Green

Saturday, April 23, 11 a.m.

Commonwealth Club (555 Post St.)

An Earth Day exploration of how students, doctors, teachers, and more can play a role in addressing climate change. Lunch will be served. \$7–\$20, 415-597-6705, commonwealthclub.org

### Opening Day on the Bay

Saturday, April 30, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

Treasure Island Sailing Center (698 California Ave.)

Celebrate opening day and learn simple water safety practices at the Treasure Island Sailing Center and get free sailboat rides, kayaking, and stand-up paddle boarding. Food available for purchase. Free, 415-421-2225, tisailing.org

## POTABLES & EDIBLES

### Presidio Picnic

Sunday, April 3–Oct. 9, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

Main Post Lawn

Back for its fourth season, the city's favorite picnic features a culinary extravaganza of food trucks offering local and artisanal fare, wine/beer, music, games, retail opportunities, and more. Free, 415-561-5300, presidio.gov

### Mexican-American Vintners Assoc. Spring Wine Tasting

Tuesday, April 19, 5–7 p.m.

Gallery 308, Bldg. A, Fort Mason Center

Taste and purchase wines from 15 Mexican-American Vintners Association wineries. Includes food pairings of cheeses, charcuterie, and more. \$35–\$75, 707-266-1296, nsmava.org

## Scotch Tasting

Wednesday, April 20

Presidio Café (300 Finley Rd.)

Hosted by sommelier Michael Perry, learn why this spirit deserves its protected status and taste the wide variety of styles in a fun and informal setting. \$25, reservations required at mperry94131@yahoo.com, 415-561-4600, presidio.gov

### S.F. Craft Beer Festival Spring Seasonal Tasting

Saturday, April 23, 1–4:30 p.m. & 6–9:30 p.m.

Herbst Pavilion, Fort Mason Center

Sample artisan beers from upwards of 75 breweries from across the U.S. with a special focus on those from San Francisco. \$35–\$55, 415-345-7575, sfcraftbeerfestival.com

### Fizz & Pop: Spring Cocktails of the Farmers' Market

Wednesday, April 27, 5:30–8 p.m.

Ferry Plaza

Enjoy an evening of fizzy craft cocktails inspired by spring and pop music from the Beatles to Beyoncé with the Bay Area's best bartenders and chefs — in costume. \$59.02–\$69.57, 415-291-3276, cuesa.org

## SPORTS & HEALTH

### Health and Nutrition Lectures

Mondays in April, 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.

Presidio YMCA

Topics include meal planning (April 4); vitamin D — the new mighty nutrient (April 11); blood sugar regulation (April 18); and how to detox and the benefits (April 5). Free, 415-447-9693, ymca.org

### YMCA 4th Annual Presidio Trail Run

Sunday, April 24, 8–11 a.m.

Starts: Behind Presidio YMCA on Barnard Ave.

With spectacular views of the bay and the Pacific, this unique and challenging trail run winds its way through the Presidio. Choose a 10K, 5K, or 1.5-mile course. Proceeds support the Presidio Y's community programs. \$25–\$55, 415-447-9693, ymca.org

## CHILD'S PLAY

### Family Movie Night: 'The Sandlot'

Friday, April 15, 7 p.m.

Civil War Parade Ground Lawn, Main Post

Join host Supervisor Mark Farrell and come early for the food trucks at 6 p.m. and cartoons at 6:30 p.m. before the movie about a group of kids who play baseball at the sandlot. Special appearance by the Giants mascot Lou Seal plus a pitching-and-hitting clinic with the S.F. Baseball Academy. Free (including snacks and popcorn), 415-561-5300, presidio.org

### 8th Annual Goat Festival

Saturday, April 16, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market

Join the celebration of all things goat, including adorable baby goats! Visit website for details. Free, 415-291-3276, cuesa.org

## JUST FOR FUN

### Trail Mixer

Thursday, April 7, 2–2:45 p.m.

Fort Point National Historic Site

Meet new friends, sip on local beer from Fort Point Beer Company, and learn how to make the best camp coffee with sponsor REI. Includes small eats and fresh air. Ages 21 & up, \$15, 415-355-5626, sfppl.org

### St. Stupid's Parade

April 1, noon

Starts: Somewhere around foot of Market St.

Wear a costume and show irreverence for the business of religion and the religion of business by tossing old lottery tickets at the Federal Reserve, socks at the Stock Exchange, and pennies at the Bankers Heart sculpture. Or just watch. Free, 510-841-1898, bishopj@saintstupid.com, saintstupid.com

### Calendar listings

Send your event listings to calendar@marinatimes.com with succinct specifics about your event, location, dates, times, prices, and contact information (telephone and Internet).

Visit [marinatimes.com](http://marinatimes.com) for additional calendar listings.



## Parallel 37 cheese happy hours at the Ritz-Carlton

CHEESE AND WINE HAPPY HOURS continue at Parallel 37 every Friday in April. Come taste and learn about artisanal cheeses from global regions known for their cheese. In addition, on the first Friday of each month, the series will feature acclaimed Bay Area cheese makers. Chef de cuisine Michael Rotondo will pair special house-made accouterments inspired by each region, and wines will be poured from the JCB by Jean-Charles Boisset limited collection.

Here's what's on the menu for April:

### Nicasio Valley

Friday, April 1, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Experience the prize-winning cheeses of Nicasio Valley Cheese Company like their Foggy Morning, Loma Alta, and Nicasio Square made with 100 percent organic farmstead cow's milk. Chef Rotondo will pair with bites such as regional organic jams and preserves, lavash bread, brioche, charcuterie, and pâte de fruit.

### Sicily

Friday, April 8, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Experience sumptuous Sicilian cheeses like pecorino Siciliano, piacentinu Ennese, primo sale, Ragusano, and calcagno paired with Castelvetro capers and olives, focaccia bread, Trapani salt, caponata, arancini, and house-dried fruit.

### Neal's Yard Dairy

Friday, April 15, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Parallel 37 showcases the celebrated cheeses of Neal's Yard Dairy from the U.K. and Ireland, including their Cornish yarg, Stinking Bishop, Shropshire blue, Lincolnshire Poacher, and Duckett's Caerphilly. Savor with chef Rotondo's specially crafted accompaniments, including pickled onions, a variety of pickles, oat biscuits, granary bread, and apples.

### Homage to Catalonia

Friday, April 22, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Experience rare artisanal cheeses of Spain's Catalonia region, including Garrotxa, Serrat Gros, tou del til·lers, and Urgelia. Pair with chef Rotondo's light fare, including tomato bread and salbitxada with spring onion.

### Southern France

Friday, April 29, 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Cheeses featured will include Roquefort, reblochon, brocciu, and brebis du Haut-Béarn paired with savory macarons, sauternes pâte de fruit, and honeycomb-brûléed figs.

### Cheese Happy Hours at Parallel 37:

600 Stockton Street, 415-773-6168, [parallel37sf.com](http://parallel37sf.com); Fridays, 5:30–7:30 p.m.; \$35 (exclusive of tax and gratuity).

PHOTO: NICASIO VALLEY RESERVE



## 2016 Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival

THE 2016 NORTHERN CALIFORNIA Cherry Blossom Festival will celebrate its 49th year on two weekends in April (April 9–10 and April 16–17). As one of California's most prominent celebrations of Asian traditions, it highlights the color and grace of the Japanese culture and the diversity of the Japanese American Community. Held in San Francisco's Japantown, one of three remaining Japantowns in the United States, it is said to be the second largest festival outside of Washington, D.C.

This culturally rich festival draws over 200,000 visitors yearly, and will include an exhibition and demonstration of the ancient art of paper folding, origami; displays of the centuries-old art of bonsai and ikebana flower arrangement; and two types of Japanese doll making, both with origins from Japan's Edo period (1603-1868). The tea ceremony, Chanoyu, one of the most refined Japanese traditional arts, which has influenced landscape gardening, architecture, and social etiquette, will also be represented. Visitors can also enjoy martial arts and taiko drum presentations, a Mikoshi

purification ceremony, live music, food, and more. Most events are free.

A highlight is the annual Queen Program (pictured), which is dedicated to mentoring young women to develop leadership skills and the community connections necessary to promote not just stronger individuals, but also a stronger community.

The Kayo Parade is another highlight, popular locally as well as in Japan. It features performers from throughout the Bay Area and Washington as well as a Japanese classical dance performance. Special recording artist Eiji Natsuki from Japan will also perform. The parade starts at noon on Sunday, April 10 at the Civic Center (McAllister and Polk Streets) and concludes at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas (Post and Fillmore Streets). Suggested donation is \$30 with tickets available from Taniguchi Music Production at 707-448-3199.

**49th Annual Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival:** Post Street (between Laguna and Fillmore), Sat.–Sun., April 9–10 and April 16–17, [sfcherryblossom.org](http://sfcherryblossom.org)

PHOTO: NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

# CONCERTS AT THE PRESIDIO COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Offering much more than mere light-hearted diversion, Mozart's *Così fan tutte* provides a vehicle for the soaring arias and luminous duets and ensemble pieces forming the heart and soul of an engaging and durable masterpiece that raises piquant social issues as well as filling our concert hall with magnificent music. Our compact, narrated and semi-staged *Così* melodically recounts the connivings of Guglielmo and Ferrando as they test the fidelity of fiancées Fiordiligi and Dorabella amidst the machinations of Despina and the cynical Don Alfonso. Sopranos **Erin McOmber** and **Ashten Smith** are joined by mezzo-soprano **Michelle Rice**, tenor **Michael Desnoyers** and baritones **Igor Vieira** and **Michael Orlinsky**. Pianist **Efrat Levy** accompanies.



7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, April 14 and 15, 2016  
at the historic Golden Gate Club  
135 Fisher Loop, Presidio of San Francisco

Free to the Public Limited seating Reservations recommended  
Call (415) 447-6274



## URBAN HOME AND GARDEN :: Do it yourself



A fresh coat of paint can really spruce up your kitchen cabinets. PHOTO: AMORMINO & PUCCI / WIKIPEDIA

# Spring spruce up

BY JULIA STRZESIESKI

**S**PRING IS A GREAT TIME TO TAKE ON a home improvement project that you can do yourself. Painting a room, an accent wall, a piece of furniture, or cabinets is inexpensive but makes a big impact, giving you a lot of bang for your buck. For accent walls, choose a fun color or get creative and experiment with your own artistic faux finishing.

If you have a lot of mismatched furniture that you love, but the pieces don't exactly work together, a quick paint job in a uniform color will yield a cohesive look instead of a collegiate aesthetic. Who doesn't have a cool piece of furniture that was scored on the street when a neighbor was moving? This is how you can make it your own.

### CHALK PAINT

Popular now for its ease of application is chalk paint, a water-based paint that adheres to most any surface. Paint directly on old wood finishes, concrete, iron, stone, Formica, and more. This furniture paint can transform an old dresser or cabinetry without stripping, sanding, or priming — simply paint it right on. As another plus, chalk paint dries so quickly that you can usually start and finish a project in a couple of hours. For an authentic vintage look, finish your furniture piece with wax and dusting powders.

### LACQUER/GLOSS FINISH SPRAY PAINTS

In addition to the chalk paint, lacquer or gloss finish spray paints are also an easy upgrade that you can complete in a day. Just make sure you are undertaking this project in a well-ventilated area, and wear a mask. Paints are available in a wide array of hues, allowing you to go subtle or step out of your comfort zone with something a bit more daring.

Pretty much anything can be refinished with a can of spray paint. Depending on your treasure, you may need a base coat. Spray base coats are widely available, making spray painting on many surfaces extremely simple.

### GIVE YOUR CABINETS A FRESH LOOK WITH PAINT

Have you grown tired of your kitchen cabinets? Give them a fresh new look

without the expense of refacing (or replacing) by painting them. Painting cabinets is one of the least expensive ways to update your kitchen — and it's not as difficult as you may think.

**Proper surface preparation:** First, remove all doors, drawers, handles, and hardware. Wipe all surfaces with a clean rag saturated with mineral spirits to remove any surface contamination. You may need to do this twice if there is a heavy buildup of dirt or grease. Change

ags frequently to avoid depositing dirt and grime back onto the cabinets.

**Clean the surface:** Wash the surface with equal parts household ammonia and

water and rinse well with clean water. Allow the clean surface to dry completely.

**Prime and paint:** Prime the clean, dry surfaces. Choose a primer-sealer that will adhere to all cabinet surfaces — painted, polyurethaned, unfinished, Formica, plastic, metal, and glass — to form a sound base for the topcoat. Seal porous surfaces, such as new wood, and seal off any knots and sappy streaks so they won't bleed through and ruin the paint job. Let the primer-sealer dry for about an hour, then apply two coats of finish paint. Hint: If you tint the primer toward the color of your finish paint, you can eliminate the second finish coat. Consider choosing an oil-base over a water-base finish paint for a harder, more stain-resistant, washable, and durable finish.

**More paint options:** Want to give your cabinets a little added pizzazz? Try a faux finish, antique finish, or stencil to create a unique and personalized look that is well worth the extra effort. Replacing cabinet hardware is another inexpensive way to give your freshly painted kitchen cabinets an extra-special look.

Painting is an inexpensive method of refreshing your living surroundings, so it is easy to "correct" your experiment. For the price of a can of paint you can transform your world — or fix an experiment gone bad. It's a lot less expensive than therapy!

*Julia Strzesieski is the marketing coordinator at Cole Hardware and can be reached at [julia@marinatimes.com](mailto:julia@marinatimes.com).*



## HARDWARE HAPPY HOUR!

Wednesday, April 27, 5 pm–8 pm

# \$10 OFF A \$20 PURCHASE!\*

Join us for a glass of our Cutting Edge wine and a great deal! Bring this ad or just ask for the offer when you are shopping!



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REAL ESTATE TODAY ∴ Measure for measure

# Let's talk square foot in San Francisco real estate

BY CAROLE ISAACS

SPRING IS OFF TO A WILD START, and buyers are out in droves, especially in the under \$1.5 million market segment. I know buyers are in for trouble finding a home when the first thing they ask after saying hello is: "How many square feet is this house?" If you are one of these buyers, you will be in for shocking news to face on several levels.

The first thing you need to keep in mind is that when you look at a listing, the square foot number has about a 50-50 chance of being accurate. Unfortunately, square footage is often overstated in the listing information. Agents do not intentionally include inaccurate square footage in their listings. In fact, they do their best to be accurate and sometimes do not include square footage at all, because it can mislead buyers. Generally this will mean one of three things: One, the price per square foot (PPSF) is so high the agent is afraid it will keep buyers away; two, the square footage listed in the tax record is obviously inaccurate; or three, the agent wants buyers to visit the home and discuss the square foot and PPSF in person.

In the multiple listing service, there are nine ways to explain where the agent found the square foot information: per appraiser, architect, builder, condo map, measured by agent, owner, graphic artist, tax record, and "not available." It is easy to see why square foot inaccuracy is common in San Francisco.

In a listing on the MLS, I found the following information in the "Agent Remarks" section: "All square footages are approximate and are measured from the exterior wall per land surveyor. Price determined on each unit is not based on the measurement accuracy of the square footage."

## If square foot and PPSF cannot be trusted, what can?

This agent was serious about avoiding any discussion about price per square foot.

In San Francisco, comparing properties by PPSF is difficult for buyers. Many homes have been changed over the years. Even in the Sunset District, where there are

blocks of homes that look similar on the outside, once you step inside there may be a world of difference.

In large multiunit buildings, PPSF will have more meaning than in single family homes. This is especially true in newer construction where condos have a greater chance of being the same. Still, you will need to take into consideration things such as location in the building and views or lack of them. PPSF will be higher on higher floors. You might find that the original buyer opted for upgrades that also will affect the PPSF.

If square foot and PPSF cannot be trusted, what can? My vote is with "everything else." Most agents would answer "location." I think of a home's location as the center of a wheel, and the rest of life — whether it is going to work, neighborhood restaurants and bars, grocery shopping, or taking children to school — radiates from the hub. In San Francisco, location sometimes feels like a moving target. New buildings seem to spring up overnight, and neighborhoods are rapidly changing. Still, location is the single most important factor in determining the price of a home.



How important to you is the accurate measurement of square footage?

PHOTO: DOUGLAS PERKINS

Once you solve the location question, it is time to make a list of everything else you want in a home. To figure this out, you will have to ask yourself what is important. Be sure to include PPSF in your list. The next step is to arrange your list, starting with what is most important and ending with what is least important. You will find that home buyers in San Francisco, even those with unlimited budgets, do not get everything they want.

Often the most important step in buying a home can be accepting that you will not get it all. As buyers search for a home and narrow their focus, it is not unusual for their list of "must haves" to be smaller than at the beginning of their search.

Once you find a home, there are still a few questions to ask. First, does the home feel big enough? A large

dark home can feel small in comparison to a smaller bright home with many windows and natural light. Second, will I be happy here? And third, can I afford the home?

Searching for a home is a learning experience. Certainly considering the square footage and the PPSF is important. However, if this is singled out as the number one most important must have, your home choices in San Francisco will become very limited. It is important to remember home inventory is low. Getting everything else in a home and closing escrow is a good deal in today's real estate market.

*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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# The Marina Times Real Estate Market Report: February 2016

By Hill & Co.

## SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow	2130 Filbert Street	3BD/3.5BA	\$3,280,000	Above	2
Lake	10 22nd Avenue	5BD/4BA	\$4,888,000	Below	1
Laurel Heights (no sales)					
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina (no sales)					
Nob Hill (no sales)					
North Beach	643 Greenwich Street	5BD/4.5BA	\$4,000,000	Below	18
Pacific Heights (no sales)					
Presidio Heights (no sales)					
Russian Hill (no sales)					
Sea Cliff	555 El Camino Del Mar 246 28th Avenue	4BD/5.5BA 4BD/3BA	\$6,375,000 \$2,600,000	Below Above	154 2
Telegraph Hill (no sales)					

## CONDOS

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow (no sales)					
Lake	6324 California Street #3	2BD/2BA	\$1,230,000	Above	12
Laurel Heights (no sales)					
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina	1251 Francisco Street 1890 Jefferson Street #302	2BD/1.5BA 2BD/1BA	\$1,330,000 \$1,070,000	Above Above	3 18
Nob Hill	1536 Pacific #1 3 Dawson Place 1610 Sacramento Street #5 1731 Larkin Street #3 1525 Jones Street 1440 Broadway #204 1530 Jones Street #3 1245 Broadway #3	3BD/2BA 3BD/2.5BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/1BA 1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA	\$2,500,000 \$1,700,000 \$1,450,000 \$1,295,000 \$895,000 \$795,000 \$785,000 \$650,000	Above Above Above At At Above Below Below	8 11 13 105 63 25 17 213
North Beach (no sales)					
Pacific Heights	2190 Broadway Street #2E 2304 Divisadero Street 2243 Franklin Street 2105 Buchanan Street #6 2919 Pacific Avenue #6	3BD/3.5BA 3BD/2.5BA 2BD/2BA 3BD/2BA 2BD/2BA	\$4,000,000 \$2,175,000 \$1,950,000 \$1,770,000 \$1,457,000	Above Below Above Above Above	0 131 11 5 8
Presidio Heights	3993 Washington Street 325 Locust Street	2BD/2.5BA 3BD/2BA	\$2,700,000 \$1,925,000	Above Below	14 13
Russian Hill	999 Green Street #3005 999 Green Street #1101 1058 Chestnut Street 1128 Chestnut Street	0BD/1BA 2BD/2BA 1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA	\$3,500,000 \$2,280,000 \$1,525,000 \$1,025,000	At Above Above Above	0 11 15 12
Sea Cliff (no sales)					
Telegraph Hill	537 Greenwich Street 11 Kenneth Rexroth Place 371 Union Street	2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/1BA	\$1,700,000 \$1,165,000 \$1,130,000	Above Below At	8 30 0

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 :: Condos, crisis, and more

# A fight for space

## City grapples with plans

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

### FOCUS ON CONDOS

Condo units in every neighborhood of San Francisco have risen significantly in value between 2014 and 2015. And quite a few neighborhoods have seen their condo sale prices nearly double since 2011, according to a new report from Paragon Real Estate Group.

Currently the priciest condos are in Russian Hill, where the median condo price is \$1,650,000, up from \$1,400,000 in 2014 and \$872,500 in 2011. The Marina is in second place, with \$1,500,000 (2015), \$1,325,000 (2014), and \$987,500 (2011), according to Paragon. The real estate company says the least-expensive condos over the past half-decade have been in Diamond Heights in central San Francisco, where the 2015 median price is \$680,000 and was only \$352,000 in 2011.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR FORMER CANDLESTICK LOTS

The city is looking for developers to create 290 new, permanently affordable homes on the former Candlestick Park site. The units, to be built on two separate lots, will target household incomes at or lower than 60 percent of the local median income; 58 of the units will be set aside for formerly homeless families, 10 of which will be for young parents transitioning out of foster care or other services.

Mara Rosales, the chair of San Francisco's Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, which has released a request for proposals from developers, said the residents will be helped by the affordable housing along with supportive services and amenities. "On-site robust supportive services, 24-hour desk staff, and access to transportation, childcare, and shopping will help ensure people integrate back into our communities," she said.

Funding was made possible by Senate Bill 107, which resulted in half a billion dollars for affordable housing in San Francisco.

### ZONING, LACK OF BUILDING FAULTED

In a roundup of resources and commentary on San Francisco's real estate crunch, Kriston Capps of *The Atlantic* faults the city's zoning, powerful NIMBY forces, and overall lack of construction for causing the displacement of lower-income residential housing.

"Since the residents of high-cost, high-demand neighborhoods tend to have mobility, money, and access to information and power, they are hugely successful in leveraging land-use policies to exclude newcomers," Capps wrote in "Blame Zoning, Not Tech, for

San Francisco's Housing Crisis. "They protect what is theirs and shut the gate behind them. ... So the high-margin development that really should go into the high-end neighborhood winds up replacing cheaper, older, and abandoned housing in low-end neighborhoods."

Capp also cites an article on Shelterforce.com by Rick Jacobus, part of Street Level Urban Impact Advisors,

**The city is looking to developers to create 290 new, permanently affordable homes on the former Candlestick Park site.**

who argued that cities can't build their way out of the housing crisis, "but we won't get out without building." Jacobus wrote that on a "citywide scale, it seems likely that while development in SoMa

may have contributed to displacement, it may have slowed displacement in the Mission as young, high-income tech workers moving to the city for its amazing job market had somewhere else to go when all of their friends were competing for increasingly scarce units in the district."

Construction Dive's Kim Slowey says this is not just a boom-time problem. Slowey notes that a report from Curbed "found that new home construction in the San Francisco area in particular has lagged behind job growth so much that in 2015, even though the Bay Area added 64,000 new jobs, housing only increased by 5,000 units. Add rising home prices and stagnant wages for most workers, and experts warn that the area is ripe for a ready-to-pop housing bubble."

### S.F. OFFICE ALSO NEAR HIGH

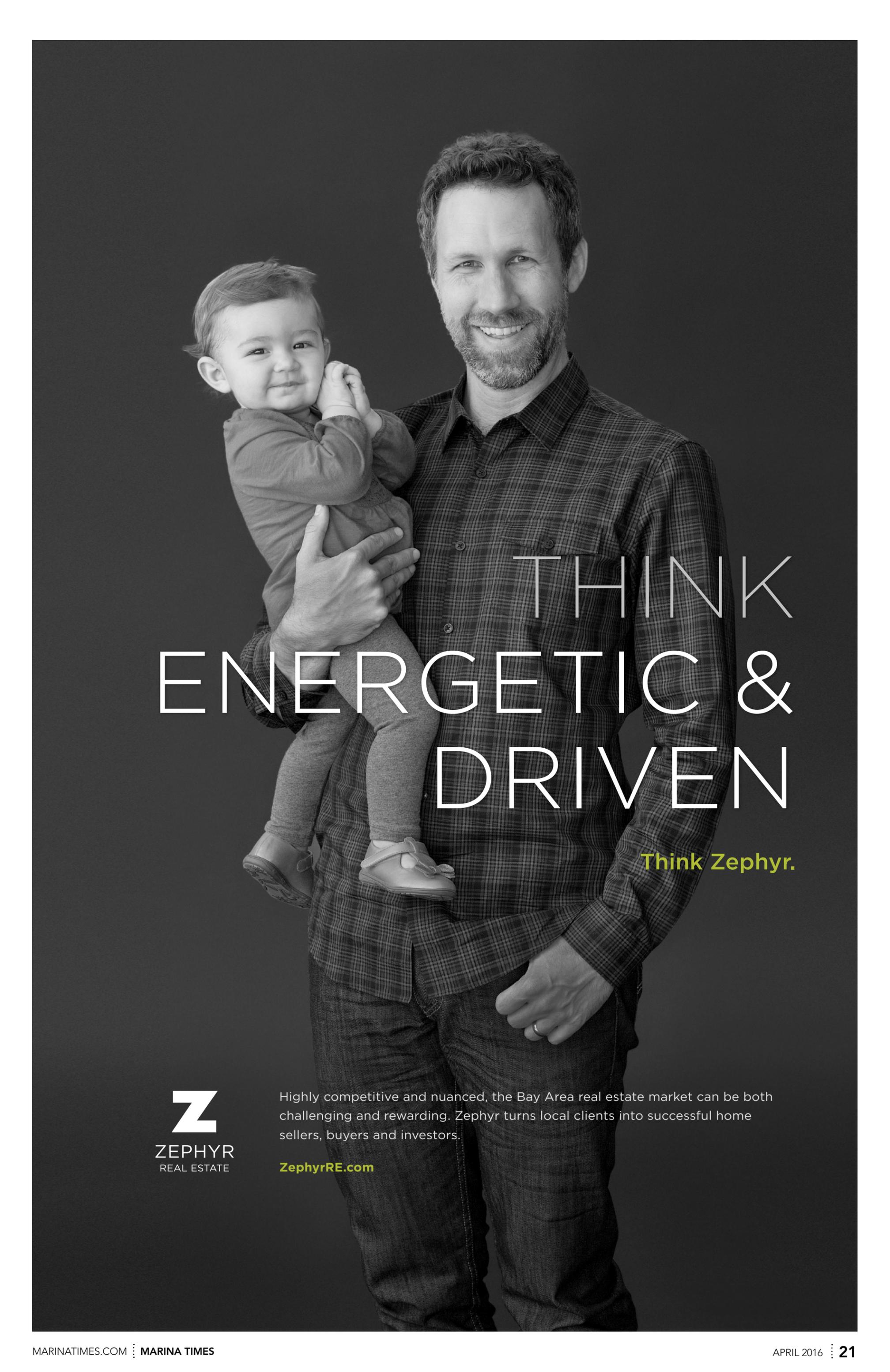
Office leasing continued at a furious pace, despite a slight pause in occupancy growth, in the final quarter of 2015. The city had "a record-breaking 22nd consecutive quarter of positive net absorption," reports Colliers International, with SoMa West and SoMa East being particularly strong.

Tenants looking for office space found Class A rents higher than what they'd pay in Manhattan, reaching \$75.90 per square foot. But Class B rents have also risen significantly, up more than 53 percent in the past two years, from \$47.80 to \$73.26 per square foot. Colliers says that office rents continue to increase in San Francisco, but "the rate of increase slowed slightly" in 2015.

### BLIND ITEM

A friend of the Roundup shares the story of a tech tenant who complained to his San Francisco office landlord that a recent rent increase would require him to make an unacceptable cut: He would no longer be able to supply snacks to his employees — only breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

E-mail: john@marinatimes.com



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REAL ESTATE INVESTOR :: Development dilemma



San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee has looked for new ways to respond to the lack of affordable housing in the city. PHOTO: ZBORALSKI

# Density bonuses and high-in-the-sky housing

So you say you want affordable housing?

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

IT'S NOT ALWAYS FUN BEING THE TOP DOG. In early March, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf issued a statement acknowledging that "Oakland is the fourth most expensive housing market in the country, just behind San Francisco, New York, and Boston. With the rise in rents in our city outpacing the increase in incomes faster than any other place in the country, protecting our residents from displacement is my top priority."

That didn't stop her from suffering the indignity of having to watch as a Chamber of Commerce summit held in her city was derailed by protestors demanding more affordable housing. According to her office, she tried to meet with the protestors, but when they refused, she left the conference.

So it's not just us. It's not just San Francisco.

In fact, in the past year, protests about insufficient affordable housing have taken place in Boston, Chicago, New York, San Jose, Seattle, and elsewhere. Whether it's boomtown-crazy city San Francisco or places with far less of a tech invasion and far more available land on which to build, affordable housing is a challenge that has got political leaders, activists, and developers flummoxed and increasingly at loggerheads.

How do you create and preserve affordable housing when incomes for most people have stagnated or declined over the past few decades, yet building costs have risen dramatically and the government has largely stopped being an engine of housing production?

In an already densely populated city such as San Francisco, it's a challenge for multiple reasons. Land is scarce, obviously. Costs are high, thanks to big-city expenses and to costly delays engendered by bureaucracy and a very generous community-input policy. And affordable housing is expensive in any case, requiring layers of subsidies, regulatory compliance, and paperwork.

Can enough be done here to eliminate the affordable housing crisis, or is the best we can do just amelioration?

**GOVERNMENT HELP**

Allow me to interject a personal comment. When I was in grade school, my family moved from the grand metropolis of Green Bay, Wisconsin, to Manitowoc, a 45 minute drive away. There, we lived not far

from Custerdale, a neighborhood in which my mother had lived in the 1930s and 1940s. It was an area of hundreds of neat but small ranch houses, nearly all of them the same design and size, merely customized differently over the years as new owners added awnings, new porches, or aluminum siding.

The story of Custerdale, as I heard it from my newspaper-editor mother, was that it was a government project to provide affordable housing during the Depression. The government was building all sorts of housing projects in an attempt to support families coping with the swingeing effects of the economic collapse. Unfortunately for the folks of Manitowoc, they were accidentally sent the housing intended for a Florida development, and those undeserving Floridians received the well-insulated housing intended for the cold winters of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. That might or might not be a true story, but

it reflected the locals' belief that they had been saddled with sub-standard housing.

But ask someone sleeping on a friend's couch in San Francisco if they'd rather have a cookie-cutter Custerdale house, and

they'd be crazy if they didn't jump at the chance. In February 2015, Al Jazeera reported that San Francisco's affordable housing was unaffordable to the people who needed it. Even if they could afford it, the news service said, there wasn't enough of it. "As of mid-January [2015], San Francisco, a growing city of nearly 900,000, had just 16 below-market-rate units available for purchase, with one-bedroom condos going for well over \$300,000," Al Jazeera's Toshio Meronek reported. "There was only one listing for the rental program."

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee's administration set itself the goal of creating or rehabilitating 30,000 units in the city by 2020. Paragon Real Estate Group estimates that in 2014, affordable housing — including family, senior, individual/SRO, and homeowner housing — made up 21 percent of the new units in the city. (This did not include units acquired and rehabbed by nonprofits.) In addition, Paragon notes, that year San Francisco collected about \$30 million from developers "as partial payments of in-lieu fees for projects" to help fund off-site affordable housing elsewhere in the city.

That 30,000 is still insufficient to support the city's population growth. Just since 2010, the city has gained more than 60,000

INVESTOR, continued on 23



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## INVESTOR

CONTINUED from page 22

new residents, and its population is expected to continue growing, nearing 1 million by 2030. In fact, San Francisco's population has grown by tens of thousands of people every decade since 1980. The current U.S. Census estimate for 2015 is 865,000, nearly 200,000 more than in 1980. But housing production at all price levels is still below what it was in the 1970s, when the city's population actually shrank by about 36,000, according to Paragon.

### BONUS TIME?

One proposal is a plan to introduce a bonus to developers of housing on certain lands, giving them incentives to make 30 percent or more of the on-site units affordable. They will be able to build up to two additional levels higher than current zoning regulations allow; if they make 100 percent of the units affordable, they will be able to build up to three levels higher than current zoning allows.

According to the city, the density bonus would apply to about 30,000 parcels in mixed-use and commercial corridors. But it says that only about 240 sites in the city are likely to be candidates for this program, because the others already have functioning buildings providing revenue that is "more valuable than any of the development benefits offered under this program." Still, it estimates that the use of the density bonus could increase the maximum number of affordable units on those sites from 900 (under current rules) to at least 4,000.

The city's defense of its proposed density program is available for anyone to read ([sfplanning.org/index.aspx?page=4233](http://sfplanning.org/index.aspx?page=4233)), and it takes on the common criticisms of the effort, such as that it will spawn more sky-

scrapers or take away rent-controlled units (the city rejects both claims, and in particular cites an amendment to the proposal that would protect rent-controlled units from such danger). The city didn't need to adopt its own density bonus program; there is a statewide one. However, the Planning Department argues that the proposed San Francisco density bonus program will facilitate the creation of more affordable units than the state program.

If the density bonus plan becomes law and does what its supporters claim it could do, then 4,000 new units of affordable housing will be a large jump over the 2,782 that S.F. Planning reports were built in 2010-14. That was out of a total of 9,480 units at all price levels. Over that same time period, the percentage of total units that were affordable has dropped from 40 percent to 21 percent, despite the increase from 582 to 757 affordable units produced; the numbers of market-rate units being created grew even faster, making the affordable numbers appear even smaller by comparison.

### OTHER ARROWS IN THE QUIVER

The city has other tools at its disposal to encourage housing for low- and moderate-income residents.

Under its inclusionary housing policy, new developments with at least 10 units need to set aside at least 12 percent of the units as affordable. In addition, San Francisco offers down payment assistance, improvements to city-owned public housing units, and the city is working to rehabilitate and thereby preserve existing affordable at-risk units.

One of the most contentious aspects of current policy is the encouragement of market-rate housing. It has spawned criticism that low- and middle-income

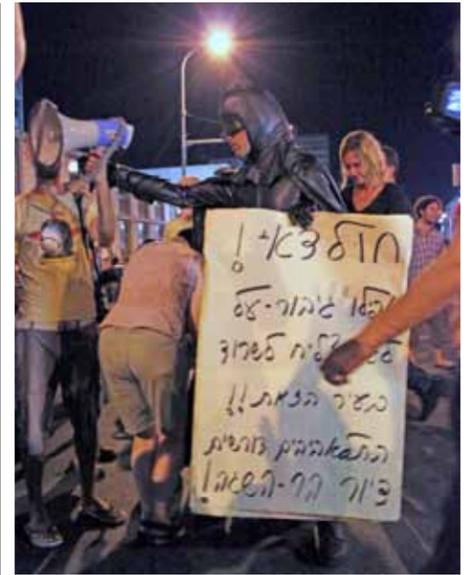
residents are being forced out of their apartments to make way for luxury condominiums. But Mayor Lee argues that it is necessary to build such units to redress the decades-long failure to build sufficient housing in the city. That lack of available market-rate housing has pushed well-heeled buyers and renters into less-expensive housing, driving up the cost in a classic supply-and-demand reaction.

Why doesn't the government step in and develop affordable housing itself? To put it bluntly, that's just not what governments do anymore in the United States. Two years ago, I interviewed in these pages Andre Shashaty, an affordable housing expert and advocate and president of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. He noted that America had "written off" federal involvement in affordable housing, and that meant slashing and eliminating federal subsidies to localities for doing the same. "The long-term trend is that we have retreated from an activist government role in providing public housing," said Shashaty.

It is telling that even a self-avowed socialist like Senator Bernie Sanders, who has championed affordable housing in his career, does not include the housing crisis among the 26 topics that are listed on his presidential campaign website's "Issues" page.

Aside from limited development assistance from state and federal bonds and tax credits, provision of affordable housing is not a national concern. There are no new Custerdales being built. Cities such as San Francisco are left to grapple with this problem largely on their own, and the Libby Schaafs and Edwin Lees of the world will continue to be the target of ire.

The debate over the density bonus program will continue. Another 4,000 affordable units isn't a solution; but it's part of



It's not just San Francisco: A Batman impersonator demands affordable housing during a protest in Tel Aviv. His sign notes that "even a superhero can't survive in this city!"

PHOTO: OREN ROSEN

a response to the problem. And after that program either becomes active or is defeated by opponents, another program will become the target of controversy. There is no escaping that, because none of these initiatives will solve the problem. Even with inevitable economic downturns, followed by inevitable economic upturns, the population pressure will continue, and this city will remain an expensive place to develop, redevelop, buy, rent, and live.

There are 140,000 or so more people coming to the city in the medium-term future, and we're not ready for any of them.

*John Zipperer is a former senior editor of Affordable Housing Finance and Apartment Finance Today, and former new media editor at the CCIM Institute. E-mail: [john@marinatimes.com](mailto:john@marinatimes.com).*

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## PERSONAL FINANCE :: Documentation



Know how long you need to hold onto tax documents and when you can put them into the shredder to protect yourself. PHOTO: MANUEL SCHMALSTIEG

## Get your tax papers in order

It is important to know what to keep, when to get rid of it, and how to do both

BY JESUS GUEVARA

**T**HE DEADLINE TO FILE TAXES THIS year is coming up soon, but you don't want to wait to file.

Something you may not know is that even those who owe the IRS can finish and file their returns early as long as payment is sent in by the tax deadline.

Another question you might have regarding your taxes is: How long should you keep tax documents? Here is some good guidance.

With 3 million Americans annually reporting tax identity theft and an estimated \$5 billion paid out in fraudulent returns, security is a hot issue. While cyber attacks pose a major threat, not all attackers are found online. They sift through trash and recycling bins to hunt for personal information such as your name, address, Social Security number, or documents that compromise your identity and use what they've found to file fraudulent tax returns.

In all reality, dumpster divers are not just looking for second-hand household items. They seek your personal information that could affect your financial credibility down the line.

### WHAT TO KEEP

During tax season, you probably have questioned what tax and financial documents you should shred, discard, or keep. Here are some common documents and the recommended length of time you should hang on to them.

#### Indefinitely:

- Records of business expenses and property sales that resulted in net operating losses or capital losses
- Records of home improvements or other expenditures that establish basis

#### Three years:

- Previous tax returns
- Proof of charitable contributions and receipts related to business expenses
- Bank statements
- Printed pay stubs
- Utility bills
- Brokerage statements
- Medical and dental expense receipts
- Supporting documents for your taxes:
  - W2s
  - 1099s
  - Tax-reporting statements

- HUD and closing disclosure forms
- Mortgage statements
- 1095s and certificates of exemptions
- W4s
- Retirement savings annual reports
- Annual brokerage statements

### HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Tax records and any supporting financial documents should be kept in secure storage — in a password-protected electronic file and a safe. There are a few best practices for protecting your personal information to which you should adhere.

- When you do decide to discard of financial documents, always use a paper shredder.

- Play it safe. Keep tax documents locked in a safe so that they're not easily available if your home is ever broken into.

- Identity shield products guarantee to protect your identity, so in the instance of fraudulent tax activity, you are protected. Consider using one of these products.

- Never leave your receipts in a public place. Even if they only display the last few

digits of a credit card, hackers still attempt to use this information.

- Duplicate important documents. Store a hard copy and online copy of important documents in a safe area. And make sure the copies are securely stored on your home computer. Update your security software frequently.

Use the same IRS-issued guidelines for hard-copy document storage of tax records as electronic. It should be:

- Secure
- Legible and readable
- Organized or indexed so the material can be easily located

Thankfully there are safeguards to learn how to discard or keep tax documents. But, here is the best option: Connect with a tax professional to find a year-round partner to answer every question you may have on this issue and more.

*Jesus Guevara is a Tax Professional with H&R Block, the world's largest tax services provider. Jesus provides expert tax advice and service in San Francisco and can be reached at 415-268-0756, or at the office on 2151 Lombard St., San Francisco.*

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The Healthful Life ∴ Plan of action

# Depression: Our modern epidemic

BY THALIA FARSHCHIAN

**T**HREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY million people suffer from depression, and with depression comes a common feeling of isolation. Depression can also be associated with many physical conditions, including headaches, chronic pain, ADHD, sleep disorders, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), fibromyalgia, and more.

Sadly, depression is growing rapidly — 10 times more people are affected by major depression now than in 1945. Depression can be linked with changes in brain chemistry and genetics, but societal changes impact it as well. With significant progress in society in general, such as reduced prejudice, acceptance of gender and sexual orientation, increases in average wealth, and more medical interventions, it would seem we would be less depressed rather than more.

Our modern fast-paced lifestyles have enabled us to become more self-focused and isolated. Our concerns and problems are solely ours and not shared with our community. In non-Westernized societies, individual concerns become group concerns.

The way we perceive the world

has also changed, according to psychological studies since the 1950s. Instead of feeling like we have control over what happens to us, we are now more likely to believe we have little control over

## Depression is also associated with physical conditions.

our lives. The rise in this shift of perspective mimics the rising rate of depression. People who believe they are in control of their fate, however, are more likely to take care of their health, advance their careers, and engage in community roles.

### FUEL YOUR MOOD

Research has shown that a healthful diet can minimize risk of severe depression. A whole-foods diet including vegetables, whole grains, meat, and liver can supply the nutrients like B12, folate, B6, and magnesium needed for healthier brain chemistry. Though liver may be hard to stomach for some, it is a powerhouse of energy-supporting nutrients.

Unfortunately, in the United States, processed foods make up 60 percent of grocery store purchases. Foods associated with a higher likelihood of

depression include processed meats, sugar-containing foods and drinks, white bread, white potatoes, and alcohol.

Many processed foods contain sugar, which temporarily elevates the happy brain chemical, serotonin. This makes a lifestyle shift particularly challenging for those affected by depression because sugar perpetuates cravings and emotional eating. This is where the support of medical professionals and loved ones is very helpful. Using dietary interventions can be empowering as people discover that they do indeed have control over their lives.

### MOVE YOUR BODY

Exercise is an incredible tool to get your endorphins flowing so you feel better, and it can be as simple as taking a leisurely walk. Especially helpful in reducing anxiety symptoms, exercise allows your body to detox excessive energy. When traveling to Cuba for a medical excursion, it was inspiring to see that people affected by depression were prescribed music and dance as a part of their treatment.

Subjects in studies who were on and off antidepressant medications experienced more long-term

improvement when they implemented a regular exercise regimen. This can be challenging for many affected by depression because they are also affected by chronic pain. Again, in these instances, it is important to incorporate health professionals who can provide guidance on safe movements.

### SETTLE YOUR MIND

In our modern world, we are potentially surrounded by stimuli from the moment we wake until we fall asleep. And, because we are in the habit of being busy, we have to be conscientious about taking breaks to create space for being quiet. The Western world is trying to regain a handle on this by popularizing yoga, tai chi, meditation, and spirituality.

It takes time to make these tools habits, but many find by taking a moment to clear their minds, they actually become

further reinforces a feeling of being empowered and in control of your life.

### CONNECT AND ENGAGE

Despite having more virtual connectivity, we are more isolated than ever. It's important to remember that social activities can also be tools for supporting engagement and connecting with those we care about. Exercising with a group or a friend and making time for family or friend dinners provide a healthful outlet both mentally and physically.

For those in situational or chronic depression, taking these steps may seem overwhelming. It's helpful to take small, achievable steps with those activities that are easiest to begin with that will enable the other more difficult steps to follow. By assembling family, friends, and health professionals, we can share our concerns with a trusted community and create a healthful plan of action.

## Exercise is an incredible tool to get endorphins flowing.

more productive. Being mindful about taking time can also help you assess what is simply keeping you busy and what is actually making you happy. This practice

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

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Anne Peled, MD  
April 6, 2016

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Robert J. Purchase, MD  
April 20, 2016

All classes begin at 5:30 p.m. and are located at Saint Francis Memorial Hospital. Food and beverage will be served and parking is validated. To learn more or to reserve your seat, visit [dignityhealth.org/saintfrancis](http://dignityhealth.org/saintfrancis), call 415.353.6755 or email [robin.oconnor@dignityhealth.org](mailto:robin.oconnor@dignityhealth.org).

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## Caring for Our Kids :: Under one roof



Clockwise: The rock-climbing wall at Play Haven is great for developing problem-solving skills; San Francisco Baseball Academy coaches instruct a group of children on the fundamentals of the game; A child enjoys the cozy reading corner at Play Haven. PHOTOS: LIZ FARRELL

# New options for indoor family fun

BY LIZ FARRELL

THE CALENDAR MAY say spring, but it sure hasn't felt like it with the recent rains. El Niño has not disappointed, and though I am grateful for the rain, wet weather can leave both parents and children feeling a bit stir crazy. If April showers deliver, there are several new great options for indoor family fun:

### PLAY HAVEN

For parents with younger children, Play Haven is a great new indoor option on any day. Opened last fall, it is owned by Sheryl Tecso, who worked as a preschool teacher at the Jewish Community Center for many years, and is a mother of two children herself.

I was impressed with this space — it is clean, fun, and they have literally thought of everything. There is a nursing lounge, diapers and wipes in the bathroom, and a kitchenette stocked with fresh-cut fruit and snacks for \$1. My son's favorite part was the rock-climbing wall and the cozy armchairs in the reading corner. The space also has areas for art, fine motor skills, dramatic play, and infants only, as well as a large room for parties or lunch.

Play Haven is open seven days a week and can get quite busy, but there is a magic moment when it tends to clear out for naptime. The cost is \$12 per child and \$6 for siblings. You can also buy multiday passes or a monthly membership.

Another plus: There is a free parking lot right next door (254 Laguna Honda Boulevard, 415-702-6555, [playhavensf.com](http://playhavensf.com)).

### SAN FRANCISCO BASEBALL ACADEMY

The arrival of spring means baseball season should be in full swing, but practices and games are regularly canceled with rain. In those cases, the just-opened San Francisco Baseball Academy (SFBA) on Geary Boulevard in the old Bridge Theater is the place to go.

Owner Michael Aicardi is a native San Franciscan who has been playing baseball his whole life. Michael and his team of coaches are great with kids of all ages — they are patient, great teachers, and your kids will not only learn the fundamentals of batting, pitching, and playing but also life skills like respect and sportsmanship. SFBA offers one-on-one lessons, group lessons for teams, or batting cage practice without a machine where you will actually have a coach pitching to you.

The cost is very reasonable, and this is a great option for those young baseball and softball players to practice and get some wiggles out. Parents, it is also a great stress reliever even for us. I had a great time taking a few swings at bat myself (3010 Geary Boulevard, 415-742-4890, [sfbaseballacademy.com](http://sfbaseballacademy.com)).

### MV CODE

It is always a challenge to keep those screens out of our children's hands.

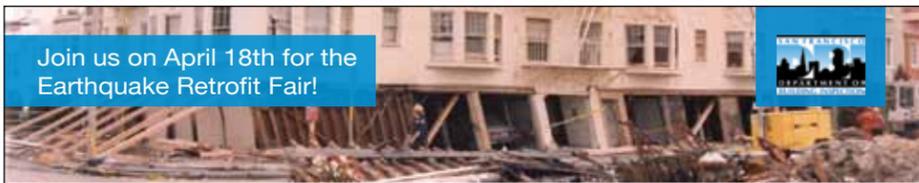
So instead of having them veg out with a video game on a blustery day, check out MV Code and have your kids create their own game. MV Code recently opened its San Francisco location and teaches an introduction to coding, video game development, and robotics. The classes are small so there is a lot of individualized attention.

My two older children did a trial class, and it was fun to see them so excited about what they had created. This is the wave of the future, but it is a whole new unfamiliar world for me, so I enjoyed having my children teach me a thing or two (most of the programs can also be worked on at home).

One of the things I like most about MV Code is they offer girls-only classes. It is wonderful to walk in and see just as many girls learning to code as boys. There are school classes and summer camps for children ages 7 through 13, and weekend open lab hours when you can just drop in (MV Code, 3236 Geary Boulevard, 415-569-2112, [mvcodeclub.com](http://mvcodeclub.com)).

Discovering a new place to enjoy an afternoon can be fun regardless of the age of your child. These options are great places to bring friends or meet as a group, and can be enjoyed in any kind of weather.

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



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THE ADVENTURES OF SKYLAR GREY : Chapter 31



Skylar makes herself at home on Kickie's couch.

# Back to where I'm from

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

*You're on the side of the road  
You don't know which way is down  
Your head is spinning out of control  
Since you left that little town*

*You told them all you'd be fine  
You said just wait and see  
You packed your bags as a little girl  
And couldn't wait to leave*

*But then you said with a foot full of lead  
Here I come  
Back to where I'm from*

— "Back to Where I'm From"  
by Joshua Radin

KICKIE WAS NERVOUS AS SHE fastened her clip earrings. "They match my top *and* my shoes," she said. "You look beautiful," I said, straightening her scarf. "You're going to be fine." It was time for her mammogram — her first in a decade, and the first test since she had a malignant tumor removed from her right breast.

I held onto her arm as we walked toward the entrance of Kaiser Hospital. I could feel her shaking as I handed her off to the nurse. Half an hour later, she returned, smiling. "She thinks everything looks good."

On the way home, I brought up the topic of moving. "Now that you're in remission and Skylar's elbows have healed, I need to start looking for a place in San Francisco."

"I thought you liked living down here," Kickie said. "And Skylar loves it here."

"I know she does ... and I do, too, but my business and my friends are in the city, and I can't keep staying at Steve's every time I'm up there."

"Steve told me that he loves having you and Skylar there," Kickie said. "And I love having you and Skylar here with me."

When I sold my condo, the plan had always been to stay in San Jose until I bought again in the city. As much as I loved my condo, it had too many bad memories: I was burglarized there, my father passed away there, Jazzy got cancer there. Plus, the neighbors were nuts. Then Skylar needed elbow dysplasia surgery, and soon after Kickie had breast cancer, so I put my plans on hold. But with my prolonged stay, Kickie had become more and more dependent on me. And Skylar. I think she was even more dependent on Skylar, with whom she had developed a deep emotional bond. It was Skylar's odd behavior that led to the discovery of Kickie's tumor, and it was Kickie who cuddled with her on the couch while I was working or running errands.

"I wish you would stay here," Kickie said. "I know after your dad passed we talked about me moving to San Francisco with you, but I really don't want to leave my house."

Kickie and her husband, Byron, had bought the house 42 years ago, but Byron died suddenly of an inherited heart condition at just 55. Kickie was left to care for his three teenaged children from a previous marriage, all of whom eventually moved out of California. Only one, Sara, even bothered to call anymore. When Kickie met my recently widowed father, she had been alone for a long time. Their relationship spanned over two decades, until my father passed away in 2008.

Kickie and I had grown incredibly close, and I considered her a second mother, especially after losing mine so young. Kickie had been there through boyfriend breakups, career confusion, and the deaths of my dad and Jazzy. There were laughs too, like when I came down for a weekend and we drank the only wine she had — a bottle of white zinfandel — while she made the finest fried chicken I've ever eaten. (Kickie rarely drinks, so when she does, it's a hoot.)

Home has always been important to me, so I understood why Kickie didn't want to leave hers.

"It's hard, Suzie, to get old," Kickie said, her voice cracking slightly. "It's hard to feel like you're losing control and losing your independence. It's hard to think about giving up something you love because you can't take care of it, or yourself, like you used to."

"I'll stay," I blurted.

Kickie's hazel eyes lit up and she grabbed my hand. "I want to leave you the house," she said.

I shook my head. "You don't have to do that ..."

"I want to," Kickie said. "You're the only person who is always there for me ... you were there before I had the cancer removed, and you were waiting when I got out. I want you to have the house."

"I don't know what to say ... thank you. I love the house. It's home to me, too, and it's home to Skylar."

When we walked through the door, Skylar was waiting, her beloved stuffed toy Benji the Tiger in her mouth, her big butt wiggling and her tail whipping from side to side. "Grammy loves you, Skylar," Kickie said. "Come here and let me kiss your little blockhead."

I took Kickie's arm. "Let's go call Steve ... *you* get to break the news that he's stuck with me and Skylar whenever we're in the city."

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com



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