



Delicious San Francisco
The Tablehopper: It's time for
Salt & Straw, p. 10
Neighborhood Gem: Bistro Aix, p. 11



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Layout artist McLaren Stewart, Walt Disney, and Eyvind Earle at The Walt Disney Studios during production for *Sleeping Beauty*, c. 1959 PHOTO: COURTESY OF EYVIND EARLE PUBLISHING, LLC

The Art of Eyvind Earle at the Walt Disney Family Museum

BY SHARON ANDERSON

FROM MAY 18 THROUGH JAN. 8, 2018, the Walt Disney Family Museum presents *Awakening Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle*. Best known as the lead stylist for Walt Disney’s classic film *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and for concept art that

shaped Disney favorites *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) and *Peter Pan* (1953), this exhibition explores Earle’s traditional fine art, commercial design, and filmmaking endeavors in the first complete retrospective of his life’s work.
Born in New York City in 1916, Earle led an adventurous and pro-

lific artist’s life. At the age of 11, his father challenged him to either read 50 pages of a book or paint a picture every day; Earle chose both. His productivity continued while he traveled with his father through Mexico and France over a period of years during which he developed his trademark
THE ART WORLD, continued on 14

REYNOLDS RAP

Living in la-la land

San Francisco keeps spending while pension disaster looms

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

LAST MONTH, THE SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL BOARD voted unanimously to offer Vincent Matthews a three-year contract paying \$310,000 per year, \$60,000 more than the \$250,000 he made at his previous job as state administrator for the Inglewood school district in Southern California. That’s a nice chunk of change, but the deal is made even sweeter by the fact that San Francisco will also cover all healthcare premiums for Matthews and his family, contribute \$100,000 over the next three years to a retirement account, and make payments into state pension funds totaling around \$140,000. An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* pointed out that these are the same provisions received by his predecessor, Richard Carranza, and are “fairly standard” in school districts across the state. It almost feels like the *Chronicle* is trying to justify what to me are outrageous benefits for a city and state with bleeding, broken pension systems that could at any minute erupt like dormant volcanoes and decimate the towns beneath them.

The San Francisco Unified School District employs nearly 10,000 people — almost double the number from a decade ago — but those in charge don’t seem too concerned about the future, as evidenced by San Fran-
REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 4

BELLINGHAM BY THE BAY

The fast and the spurious

BY BRUCE BELLINGHAM

IT SLAYS ME WHEN PEOPLE SAY “HAPPY” MEMORIAL Day as we approach this country’s most solemn holiday. Believe it or not, I heard a news anchor on MSNBC gush, “Happy Good Friday!” Don’t forget Happy Yom Kippur! as we whoop it up on the Jewish Day of Atonement. It takes the sting out of that pesky sense of deep remorse for all of our past sins. What a drag. ... As for Memorial Day, perhaps we might consider the millions of lives lost over the decades — those who fought for our right to say something stupid. ...
After a 40-day closure (to the chagrin of many Russian Hill denizens) for a mandatory earthquake retrofit, The Crepe House at Polk and Washington Streets has reopened. With a new wooden décor, the place looks both stylish and rustic. And now I know where to find **Herb Gold**, one of San Francisco’s best writers. Herb’s the literary lion of Filbert Street. He turned 93 on March 9, and still has that mad gleam in his eyes. ... **Lawrence Ferlinghetti** celebrated his 98th year in March as well. Staffers at City Lights Books say Lawrence is doing well. Creating mischief through the years must keep one young. Like that poetic dog trotting freely in the street, Lawrence never stopped moving — always moving toward his bliss. That way, he stays a step ahead of the Great Inevitable. ... Speaking of dogs, **Susan Dyer Reyn-**
BELLINGHAM, continued on 4

REAL ESTATE INVESTOR



Sometimes, San Francisco’s population seems to be made up of the protestors and the protested. PHOTO: CHRIS MARTIN (FLICKR.COM/ CJMARTIN)

Real estate culture If the city gets less weird, does it matter?

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

MICHELLE RECENTLY MOVED back into the city after spending years elsewhere in the Bay Area. The one thing she

immediately noticed was the people at the bus stop and in the cafe where she stopped to buy a cup of coffee before heading to work. Where she had lived previously, she usually ran into biotech workers, and she found

them to be generally polite, racially mixed, and nerdy in their own way. But she said that too many of the tech workers she now encountered in her morning commute in San Francisco were rude, rushed, and very, very white.
For years now as the economic boom and the real estate price surge have dominated local news, we have heard about the nonprofits and the artists who have been pushed out of San Francisco due to the high prices. Also pushed out have been more boring “normal” people who just couldn’t afford the price of a San Francisco mortgage or rent. Judging by what one often hears on the streets these days, what has been left is a bunch of complainers, people who are either unhappy about what’s happening to the city, unhappy with the newcomers in the city, or unhappy with the old-timers in the city.
How did this city turn so unhappy? And will legalized marijuana make things better or just make it all worse?
That second question isn’t serious, of course. But the question about why so many people here are displeased with life in the city by the bay these days is an intriguing one.
INVESTOR, continued on 20



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
- Chicago Cut - Chicago, IL
- The Precinct - Cincinnati, OH
- Elway's Cherry Creek - Denver, CO

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News BRIEFS : Senior Center, national parks

City loses energy

APRIL POWER OUTAGE STOKES VULNERABILITY FEARS

Nearly 90,000 customers lost power for much of the day on April 21 after a fire in a PG&E substation. The affected customers were all on the Northside of the city, from the Financial District to the Presidio and even the Richmond District. With no electricity in offices and even BART and Muni services affected, many people were forced to head home from the offices and start their weekend early.

By the end of the day, all power had been restored, but the incident highlighted the fragility of the power supply for big cities. The San Francisco outage occurred on the same day as an outage in Manhattan as well as outages in Los Angeles International Airport and other areas of L.A. The same-day outages across three major U.S. cities led some to wonder about coordinated attacks, but the San Francisco Police Department downplayed such ideas, tweeting that it “understands concerns [regarding] coincidence of outages in other cities. PG&E identified that the #sfpoweroutage is due to equipment failure.” A January 2017 release of the U.S. Energy Department’s second Quadrennial Energy Review identified the electrical grid as a national security vulnerability.

SEVEN DECADES OF SAN FRANCISCO SENIOR CENTER

Congratulations to Fisherman’s Wharf-based San Francisco Senior Center, which this month will celebrate 70 years of existence. Founded in 1947, SFSC is the oldest nonprofit senior center in the United States, and it offers programs for lifelong learning, healthy living, and social activities at its locations: the Aquatic Park Center near Ghirardelli Square, and the Downtown Center, located in the Tenderloin.

Comedian Will Durst will headline the 70th anniversary event on Friday, May 12 at the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center. In addition to Durst, attendees will be able to enjoy a DJ, drinks and food, a raffle and a silent auction. You can



The National Park Service is highlighting the economic impact of visitors to its sites, such as Fort Point in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. PHOTO: SKEEZE

learn details at seniorservervicesnorcal.org/events.

NATIONAL PARKS, NATIONAL BUCKS

With the country’s national parks services on the potential chopping block in Washington, expect to see many defensive reports on the services’ benefits to the economy. The latest comes from a new National Park Service report that claims an infusion of \$823 million from 26 million visitors to Bay Area national parks.

The biggest park in the area garnered the most attention. According to the Park Service, “Nineteen million visitors to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area spent \$590 million in communities near the park in 2016, [which] supported 7,574 jobs.”

50 PERCENT GREEN BY 2020?

In late April, San Francisco committed to a goal of getting 50 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by the year 2020. The commitment, if fulfilled, would mean that the city would pass the state’s 50 percent renewable target 10 years early. Mayor Ed Lee said “By transitioning to at least 50 percent renewable energy, San Francisco will reduce harmful emissions while also creating up to 5,000 jobs that support our renewable energy infrastructure development.” You can learn more at cleanpowersf.org.

Earlier, Lee had announced that San Francisco exceeded its greenhouse gas emission reduction goal a couple years ahead of schedule. Lee pointed out that the city’s emission reduction of 28 percent since 1990 occurred even though the economy grew 78

percent over that same time period.

EVICITION PROTECTION

Citing an NBC Bay Area investigation that claimed that 25 percent of evicted tenants had been wrongfully evicted, District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell introduced legislation in April to force landlords who are evicting tenants to prove they are doing so legally.

According to the proposed law, landlords who push out a tenant so the landlord can occupy the unit would need to “sign a declaration under penalty of perjury” they will follow existing eviction law, and they would need to file proof with the Rent Board showing they or their relative is residing in the residence where the tenant was evicted.

“An eviction can be like a death sentence, especially for elderly tenants,” said Farrell.

TIME FOR A CITY BANK?

Supervisors Malia Cohen and Sandra Fewer are promoting a task force to look into the creation of a city-owned bank. Supporters of the idea see it as a way to help undocumented immigrants who are unable to get accounts at commercial banks, the state’s newly legal marijuana industry that is unable to do certain transactions that would run afoul of federal law, and would give the city control over its banking dollars in a time of issue-driven boycotts and divestment movements.

“I think it’s realistic,” Cohen told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “It will be incredibly difficult, though.”

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Reynolds Rap

continued *from cover*

cisco’s continued hiring spree. City employees make on average around \$109,000 in annual salary and almost \$50,000 in benefits. In 2008, the city had 27,885 total annually funded positions. In 2017, that number has increased to 30,626.

As I’ve mentioned before, City Hall counted on a sales tax increase last November that was resoundingly defeated by voters. The measure would have funded \$50 million in homeless services and \$100 million in transportation improvements. Fiscal projections are now in the red, with a deficit of \$348 million over the next two years that will balloon to \$848 million by 2022. The 2017–18 budget added 277 employees to the payroll, but as reality hit last December, Mayor Lee ordered city departments to cut spending by 3 percent and freeze new positions for the fiscal year starting this July.

The one bright point is a surge of new revenue from the voter-approved Proposition W, which increases taxes on pricey properties. From this pot, along with Medi-Cal waiver funding, the mayor said he would fund half of the new homeless services he had promised, as well as a legal defense fund for undocumented immigrants. Of course, little has been said about the city assuming an annual 7.5 percent rate of return on pension investments, which over the past two years earned less than half that. Liability for the San Francisco Employees’ Retirement System (SFERS) is over \$2 billion, but its chief investment officer William Coaker Jr. is the city’s top earner with a salary over half a million bucks.

Also largely ignored is the big state picture — the California

Public Employees’ Retirement System (Calpers), the largest U.S. pension fund, lowered its annual assumed rate of return to 7 percent from 7.5 percent, which will require workers to contribute more. With \$303 billion in assets, Calpers’ coffers pale in comparison to the estimated \$3.6 trillion in state and local government systems. If these funds reduced their return assumptions by one half percentage point — leaving return rate expectations still unrealistically high — employees would be required to offset the difference by billions of dollars per year.

As it is, California cities and counties will see their required contributions to Calpers nearly double in five years, according to analysis by the California Policy Center, totaling \$5.3 billion in the July 1, 2017 fiscal year and rising to \$9.8 billion in fiscal 2023. Calpers concealed the seriousness of the pension shortfall by using those unrealistic rates of return in its accounting methods, but it was recently forced to cut its projected rate to stay solvent (yes, you read that right ... the largest pension fund in America could have gone under).

So why, you may ask, is it not a requirement for public pensions to be honest with their math? The answer is as simple as it is scary: Cities and states would collapse under the weight of an estimated \$6 trillion in unfunded liabilities — triple the current estimate — if Treasury yields were implemented as the standard.

None of the above takes into consideration what will happen during the next economic downturn, which isn’t a matter of if, but a matter of when.

That’s why San Francisco’s continued dependence on the



If government workers believe a fat pension awaits, the city has a bridge to sell them. PHOTO: NAPHTALINA

tech industry to offset its complete lack of fiscal prudence is so absurd. Companies that have made San Francisco their home like Twitter, Uber, and Yelp will be the first to crumble in a downturn. This is not the Silicon Valley, where heavyweights like Apple and Google can weather a storm with billions in reserves. San Francisco tech firms are trendy, frail, and profitless, often dependent on venture capital, and, like most of the city’s residents, have nothing saved for a rainy day. Twitter and Yelp have already done several rounds of layoffs in arguably the best economic times the city has ever seen. That doesn’t bode well for their employees when things aren’t as rosy.

Even in the good times, the ridiculous cost of living here is already driving companies and workers to look elsewhere. In a February 2017 article in the *Guardian*, tech workers complained they are “barely scraping by” on six-figure salaries.

One Twitter employee in his early 40s who earns a base salary of \$160,000 said his biggest cost is a \$3,000, two-bedroom apartment he shares with his wife and two children. Another woman said she and her partner make over \$1 million a year between them, yet cannot afford to buy a house. And, sick of his 22-mile commute and inability to buy a home anywhere in the Bay Area close to his job, a networking firm employee making \$700,000 recently accepted a 50 percent pay cut to relocate to San Diego. According to one former Facebook executive, engineers asked CEO Mark Zuckerberg whether the company could subsidize their rents — it turns out even those oft-envied members of the 1 percent are paying around 50 percent of their income for housing in a wealth bubble they helped to create. As tech firms and their workers leave San Francisco for more affordable pastures, who will fill those 30,000 lux-

ury condos set to come on the market over the next few years? Perhaps a more important question is who will make up for the tax dollars they take with them?

The other day I was talking to a friend in the real estate business, and I asked her what the market would look like after another tech bust or a national financial downturn. “I don’t see that happening,” she said confidently. And she’s not alone. I can’t count the number of people I know in real estate, government, and tech who believe the boom times will go on forever, despite the fact that nearly every decade we have some kind of correction at the least and a crisis at the worst. Do any of them have any idea about the pension volcano? I don’t know about you, but I hear that lava bubbling right about now.

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Bellingham

continued *from cover*

olds tells me that the Trump White House has — for the first time in presidential history — no dog in residence. This does not portend well. ...

Nick Bovis is still looking for a new home for his Lefty O’Doul’s. Plans for another location on Union Square apparently fell through. Now that Lefty’s has shuttered its Geary Street digs amid a bitter legal fight with the landlord, **Jon Handlery**, the hotelier, that leaves Tommy’s Joynt the only hofbrau in town. With a new ownership, Tommy’s is still going great guns — serving mountains of meat and the cheapest drinks in San Francisco. Cheaper, I believe than the bar atop the Marine’s Memorial Club. ...

The radicalization of Nob Hill: A sign in the window of Le Beau, the swanky grocery story on Leavenworth and Clay Streets reads: Love Will Always Trump Hate. ... While I was waiting for the 27-Bryant bus on Bush and Hyde Streets, I started chatting up an amiable lady, about 60 years old. St. Francis Hospital is across the street. She — who asked not to be iden-

tified — explained that she was visiting her daughter in the Burn Unit. ... “My daughter, Erica, is homeless. One night, while she was trying to get some sleep on the sidewalk, a man stopped, poured gasoline or something on her, and set her on fire. She’s still in critical condition.” ... I hear these stories from time to time. Back in the 1970s, there was a movie, *Fuzz*, with **Burt Reynolds** and **Raquel Welch**, who both played Boston police detectives. One of the subplots involves three punks who set fire to homeless men as they slept near the piers on Boston Harbor. ... Why do people hate the homeless, the impoverished? Perhaps they fear them. This phenomenon is described wonderfully well by **George Orwell** in his *Down and Out in Paris and London*. ... Part of this callous bigotry is encouraged by certain elements of the right wing, though it’s been around for a very long time. ... In the 1960s,

Lyndon Johnson declared a war on poverty. **Donald Trump** is waging a war on the poor. ... What qualification did Trump have to become president besides being rich and being on television? It’s not all his fault that Americans embrace a perverse piety — that is, the worship of money and

notoriety. Ah, but I digress. ... With famine about to engulf four African nations by summer, hundreds of thousands of “beautiful babies” face starvation. Perhaps we should drop Hershey bars on these regions instead of cruise missiles. (Bombing a Syrian Air Force base with no real result — quite a publicity stunt.) Through chocolate, we might make some friends. We’ll need all the friends we can get. Where’s **George C. Marshall** now that we need him? ... Some time to cut foreign aid, cut funding to UNICEF — cut the budget for Meals on Wheels? I’m getting too preachy. Knock it off, Bruce. What we don’t need is another pundit. ... **Jody Powell** once told me his definition of a columnist is “someone who hides in the woods during the battle, and when it’s all over, he’ll come down to the battlefield, and finish off the wounded.” ...

I just noticed that there is a private detective agency in the Tenderloin — Wilson & Wilson on Jones Street — appropriately located next to a restored speakeasy. Ah, those were the days. ... **Dashiell Hammett** lived in various places in the Tenderloin. He thought the neighbor-

hood was dreary. He should see it today. Hammett was a Pinkerton Guard, and was among the union-busting thugs who

busted heads during a miners’ strike in Butte, Mont. This experience led Hammett to being a pro-union lefty — even a communist at times. That’s communist, not columnist. His politics got him into trouble at the HUAC hearings during the Red Scare in the 1950s. Big trouble. *The Maltese Falcon* was his ticket out of the Tenderloin. But we have John’s Grill on Ellis Street and the Dash Hammett museum. There’s also a nice collection of his books in the Tenderloin Museum. That’s on Leavenworth and Eddy Streets. Check it out. You’ll find out how the Tenderloin got its name. ... It doesn’t require a private detective. ...

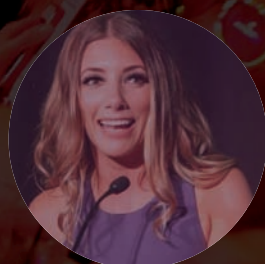
Bruce Bellingham is the author of Bellingham by the Bay (Council Oak Books). Be sure to yell at him for his many iniquities — though yelling never seemed effective. He resides at bruce@marinatimes.com. Don’t forget to follow the Marina Times on Twitter @TheMarinaTimes and like us on Facebook @MarinaTimes.

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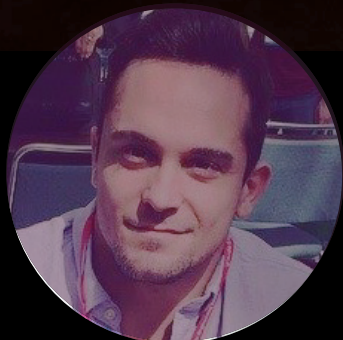


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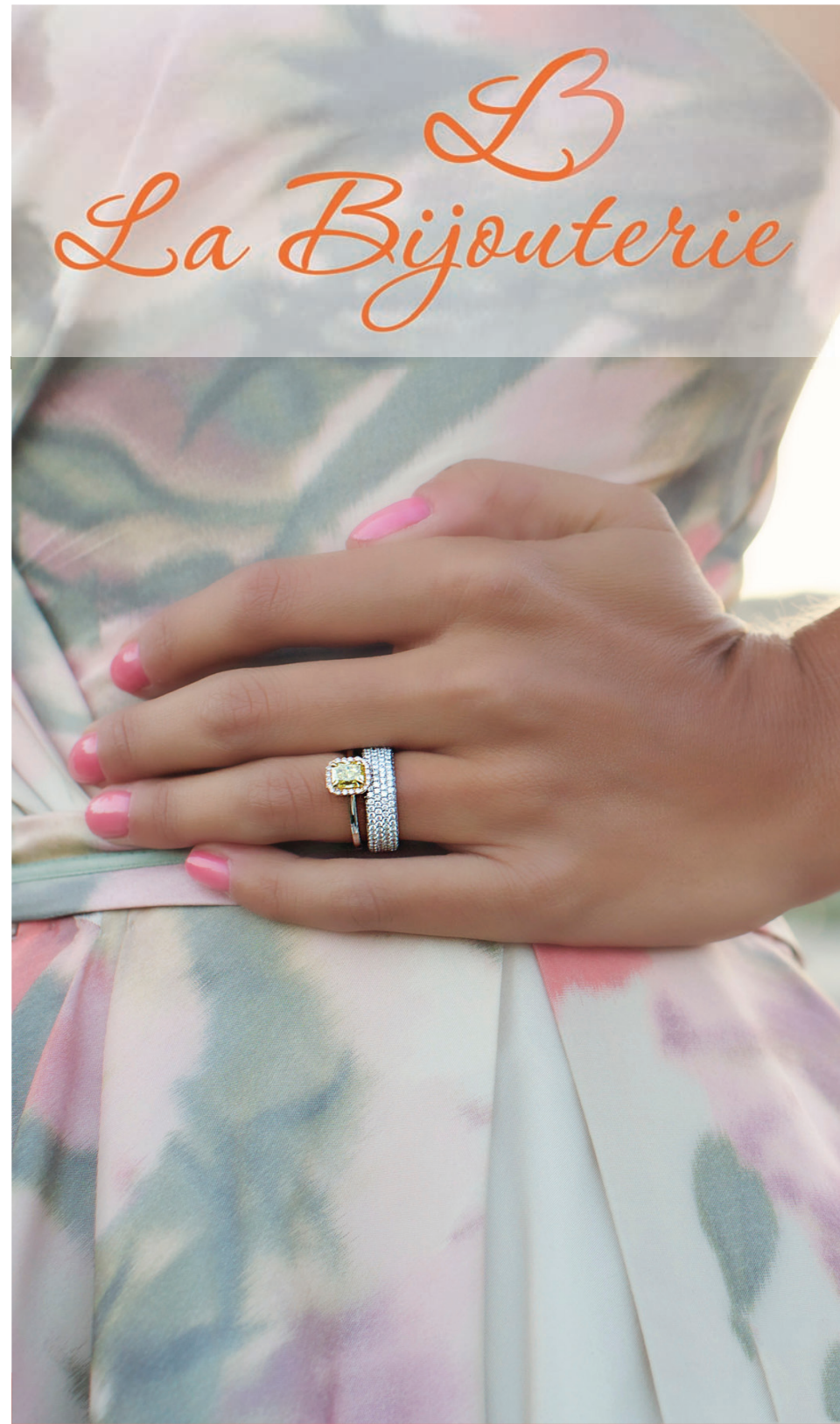
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Police Blotter : From the officers of Central Station

All the window-shattering, flashlight-hurling crime

THE CRIMES DESCRIBED BELOW ARE only a small snapshot of what the police officers of Central Station are doing. For a more comprehensive list, visit sf-police.org; under Compstat, select the link to Crimemaps.

BANZAI!
Feb. 13, 12:30 p.m.
Pier 39

Try, try again. A suspect entered a store and stole a suitcase, but the victim was able to retrieve the suitcase. The victim then followed the suspect into another store, where the suspect stole a sword. The suspect walked out of the store and, when confronted by the victim, unsheathed the sword and held it as if to strike the suitcase victim. But the suspect dropped the sword and was stopped by security. The suspect was arrested for robbery with a weapon.

VALENTINE'S DAY ROAD RAGE
Feb. 14, 8:08 p.m.
1500 block of Clay Street

An unknown suspect cut off another driver, who honked at the suspect. The suspect stopped the vehicle and pointed a gun at the victim. The suspect then took out a tire iron and shattered the front windshield of the victim's vehicle.

EXTRA FLASHLIGHTS
Feb. 15, 2:32 p.m.
300 block of Bay Street

A suspect entered a store and took flashlights, a knife sharpener, and a belt extender without paying. The store's security stopped the suspect outside of the store, but the suspect ignored security and continued walking. When security followed, the suspect threw flashlights at security. The suspect was arrested for robbery with a weapon.

EXTREMISM IN THE DEFENSE OF CROISSANTS
Feb. 17, 12:45 p.m.
100 block of Jackson Street

A suspect entered a store and took some croissants and alcohol without paying. Store security confronted the suspect, who threatened to harm the security officer and became violent. The suspect was arrested for robbery with force.

SHATTERED
Feb. 16-17
From Stockton to Kearny/Bay Streets

A rash of window shattering broke out. At 10 p.m. on the 800 block of Stockton, an unknown suspect shattered a store window. A couple hours later, 12:20 a.m. on the 1100 block of Taylor, someone threw a brick through an apartment window. Several hours after that, at 3:15 a.m. on the 700 block of Sansome, again an unknown suspect shattered a store window. At 4:22 a.m., an unknown suspect threw a brick against the glass door of a store, but the glass did not shatter. A second suspect forced open the door, and the first suspect entered and stole handbags. At 7:45 a.m. on Kearny at Bay, an unidentified

suspect shattered the passenger-side rear window of a vehicle.

SHATTERED, PART II
Feb. 17-20
All over

From the Department of Stop Leaving Stuff Visible in Your Parked Car, no fewer than 21 instances took place over four days in which unknown suspects shattered windows of locked vehicles and stole items from inside. The combined loot included backpacks, batteries, binoculars, calendars, cameras, cell phones, chargers, clothing, credit cards, game systems, laptops, medication, money, passports, purses, suitcases, sunglasses, tablet computers, toiletries, wallets, and watches.

HEY
Feb. 18, 7:50 a.m.
700 Block of Jones Street

A victim heard a noise and saw an unknown suspect pacing outside the apartment. The suspect then stepped onto a window ledge and tried to open the window. As the police reported: The victim yelled "hey" — and the suspect fled away.

TROLLEYBOARDING
Feb. 18, 6:45 p.m.
600 block of Columbus Avenue

A person on the trolley was told to get off. The suspect then got into a verbal argument with the trolley employee and used a skateboard to shatter the front window of the trolley.

FAILURE TO ENGAGE PITBULL
Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m.
100 block of Powell Street

A suspect entered a store and took clothing without paying for it. The store's security officer followed the suspect out of the store where a second suspect unleashed a pitbull toward the security officer, but the pitbull didn't attack. The second suspect then picked up a sign and swung it at the security officer, but instead ended up hitting another victim.

Arrests were made for robbery with force.

MOTHER WARNED YOU ABOUT LYING
Feb. 20, 11:34 a.m.
Unit block of Walter U Lum

The suspect was lying in front of a business. Police officers ran a computer check and learned that the suspect had an outstanding warrant. The suspect stated that he had knives on him, and sure enough, multiple knives were found on him. He was arrested for possession of a weapon.

BAD AIM
Feb. 22, 7:08 a.m.
300 block of Sacramento Street

Another suspect was sleeping at the entrance of a store. The victim asked the suspect to move along, but the suspect mustered up the energy to throw a can and cone at the victim, but he missed.

The suspect was issued a citation for nonaggravated assault.

Budgets, Trump’s budget and its impact on San Francisco

BY MARK FARRELL

GOVERNMENT BUDGETS are moral documents. They are a true reflection of a government’s priorities and values. Budgets detail exactly how government is choosing to spend to address issues that affect everyone.

As chair of the city’s Budget and Finance Committee for four years, I took my fiduciary responsibility extremely seriously. I knew how important it was that the priorities and values that San Franciscans most cared about were reflected in our city budget. I am proud we more than doubled our budget reserves to protect against an economic downturn. We placed strong funding priorities on homelessness, public safety, housing, the cost of living, and improving the quality of life for all residents. And I am proud to have authored and passed Proposition A, which will wipe out our \$4.4 billion retiree healthcare liability in 30 years.

I feel confident and secure that San Francisco is in a much better place financially than four years to go. I wish I could say the same for our federal government and its budgetary outlook.

TRUMP’S BUDGET CLAIM: ‘A BLUEPRINT TO MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN’

In the federal budget process, the president has the first opportunity to drive the narrative around the federal budget. Trump’s budget — referred to, of course, as “A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again” — proposes billions of dollars in spending cuts for the vast majority of federal agencies to pay for extremely large increases in military and homeland security spending. Overall, Trump’s budget results in a 1.2 percent cut in discretionary spending and does not offer any ideas or proposals regarding revenues and taxes.

Long story short, Trump’s proposed budget would bring real negative impacts for San Francisco, our residents, and our businesses. Forget about Trump’s budget threats to sanctuary cities (which has turned out to be more bark than bite); here’s how his federal proposals will affect us locally.

A BLUEPRINT TO INCREASE HOMELESS

One of the local issues front and center in residents’ minds is addressing homelessness. As much time as I’ve spent inside City Hall focusing on the issue for District 2 specifically — as well as relat-

ed issues across San Francisco, including our tent encampments — homelessness is an incredibly expensive problem to tackle. Regardless, it has to be one of our local and national priorities.

Trump’s budget would cut the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) budget by more than 12 percent and would devastate our local efforts to reduce homelessness. San Francisco is one of the largest recipients of HUD funding to help house the homeless in the country — it’s close to 25 percent of our overall homelessness budget. We regularly beat other cities across the country in fiercely competitive funding proposals because of our obvious need, but also because of innovations we continue to make addressing homelessness, like the Navigation Centers. Cutting funding would be a complete disaster for San Francisco.

The proposed budget cuts would also hurt our ability to help the formerly homeless remain housed. It would be devastating for veterans, families, and low-income populations who depend on HUD assistance to secure housing. Investing in housing for the homeless and the low-income helps save the city millions in emergency, health care, and other public services.

A BLUEPRINT TO DECIMATE THE ARTS

I know many in District 2 and across San Francisco care deeply about the arts. Unfortunately, Trump’s budget would be devastating for the arts and art institutions that San Franciscans and the world revere. His budget literally proposes to eliminate the national endowments for the arts and humanities. These are vital departments that support artists, art institutions, and other vital public services throughout the country and here in San Francisco. Under Trump’s budget, our local institutions like the de Young Museum and Museum of Modern Art can forget about planned upgrades or adding more exhibitions. The San Francisco Ballet and the San Francisco Symphony may have to limit the number of shows they perform. And funding for the arts education for our children would be nonexistent.

A RECIPE FOR CLIMATE DISASTER

Perhaps the most devastating areas of Trump’s proposed budget would be to our environment and efforts to mitigate climate change. The Environmental Protection Agency would see a 31 percent reduction. Trump has called cli-

mate change a hoax. His budget treats it as such, even though it is arguably the most serious issue facing humanity. His cuts amount to an environmental nightmare.

San Francisco is a peninsula surrounded by water on three sides. Coastal cities have the most to lose with growing sea level rise caused by climate change; damages to property and infrastructure due to sea level rise is estimated to be in the multibillions. While Trump may have the luxury of being able to stick his head in the sand regarding climate change, San Francisco does not. We will have to redouble our efforts here locally to protect against the devastating impacts of climate change.

Though San Francisco has generally evolved into a one-party political town, we can always have healthy debates about campaigns, policies, and candidates. What we are realizing now every day is the old adage that “elections have consequences” — not only dictating who represents our country in the White House, but the way their budgets outline their personal priorities and that of our federal government. To date, Trump’s budget proposal has been nothing short of a disaster for the quality of life for San Francisco residents and values we share.

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Sketches from a North Beach Journal

Nostalgia all over again

BY ERNEST BEYL

IN A RECENT COLUMN, I GOT ALL weepy for the good old days in North Beach and quoted a passage from a Stanton Delaplane *San Francisco Chronicle* column — his final one before he died in 1988. This month I’m still on the nostalgia kick. So here goes: I’m nostalgic for Joe’s Special, Rainier ale, clam chowder, Chuck Berry, and Harry Connick Jr.

NOSTALGIA STRIKES AGAIN

The other day I was researching Joe’s Special for a book project. What’s so special about Joe’s Special? My buddy and North Beach historian and raconteur Alessandro Baccari Jr. filled me in. Joe’s Special was created by night-shift workers at the old San Francisco produce market, where the Embarcadero Center is now. Hungry for breakfast when they got off work before dawn, they grabbed some spinach and a handful of ground beef, broke an egg into the pan, and scrambled the works. Later, Joe Ingressia, who opened New Joe’s on Broadway around 1930, put it on the menu. Hence: Joe’s Special. This got me musing about what people eat in the morning to start the day. So here’s the breakfast report:

GUMDROPS FOR BREAKFAST

I checked with several North Beach breakfasters and here’s what I found: The other morning a young couple and their dog in Washington Square Park were wolfing down focaccia from nearby Liguria Bakery. A grand idea! Over at Caffe Puccini, my neighbor was having a ham and cheese sandwich and a latte. Sensible! Down the street at Mario’s Bohemian Cigar Store and Cafe, a buddy was warming up to the day with a tumbler of red wine. Sensible too! And a guy at Gino and Carlo was having a shot and a beer. That was *Chronicle* columnist Charles McCabe’s breakfast of champions — a shot and a Rainier ale chaser that we used to call Green Death because it came in a green-tinted bottle. They’re not making columnists like that anymore.

But what about your very own Sketches columnist? My breakfast routine is graham crackers and applesauce with coffee on the side. My breakfast pales by comparison to McCabe’s. But then I could never write (or drink) as well as he could. I checked with my daughter, Laurel. She favors a peanut butter and jelly sandwich augmented by a handful of gumdrop vitamins. But what about eggs over easy? Fug-taboutit!

THE CHOWDER CHRONICLES

At one time, I believed the mother ship for clam chowder to be the hallowed Oyster Bar in New York’s Grand Central Station. Later, I shifted my alle-

giance to Pike Place Market in Seattle. These days I am savoring the clam chowder in North Beach. With white (Boston clam chowder) the question is: to bacon or not to bacon? Both, with and without bacon, are serviceable, and several North Beach restaurants go the bacon route — Original Joe’s, Sotomare, Caffe Puccini, and U.S. Restaurant, for example. All of these chowders are commendable. But the gold standard in white chowder no bacon is Betty Lou’s. Now, if we’re talking red (Manhattan clam chowder) it’s Original Joe’s — but it’s served only on Fridays.

ROLL OVER BEETHOVEN

“And tell Tchaikovsky the news.” The news is Chuck Berry, the poet laureate of rhythm and blues, is gone. So I am nostalgic about Chuck Berry. Here’s a belated homage to the man who developed a guitar lick on which he could bend two strings at once creating that funky, going-around-a-musical-curve sound. Berry even had a swimming pool in the shape of a guitar built on his estate.

I’m sorry this homage to Chuck Berry is so late in coming. When writing a monthly column almost everything is belated. Do yourself a favor and go to YouTube and find Chuck Berry, Eric Clapton, and Keith Richards jamming. It will set you up for the day, or the night if you will. *Hail, Hail Rock ‘n’ Roll!*

RICHIE AND HARRY CONNICK JR.

Richie Azzolino, proprietor of the fine, properly fishy, fish restaurant Sotomare on Green Street, got the call from New York to be on NBC TV’s syndicated *Harry* show with the jazzy Harry Connick Jr. Richie jumped on an airplane with his own pots and pans and headed for the Big Apple. And he got to strut his North Beach stuff on the show in the Martha Stewart TV kitchen. The show aired late April and I missed it. But Richie will redo it for you if you drop in for lunch.

SAN FRANCISCO NOIR

Photographer Fred Lyon is coming out with a new book called “San Francisco Noir.” It’s a compilation of masterful black-and-white photos taken over many years of the moody, edgy, street life of this city. Fred is a flaneur — but a flaneur with a purpose — if I may create a new definition of the word. Fred has wandered the streets, back alleys, and jazz joints of North Beach with his ever-present third eye, his camera, usually with a standard, mid-range lens. He feels that a telescopic lens takes him too far away from his subjects. The striking new book comes out in October, published by Princeton Architectural Press.

E-mail: ernest@marinatimes.com. Follow the Marina Times on Twitter @TheMarinaTimes and like us on Facebook @MarinaTimes.

Do yourself a favor and go to YouTube and find Chuck Berry, Eric Clapton, and Keith Richards jamming.

A public safety investment that rocks — before we get rocked

BY AARON PESKIN

LAST MONTH WE CELEBRATED the 111th anniversary of the Great Earthquake and Fire. Per tradition, city and community leaders gathered at Lotta's Fountain on Market Street (one of the oldest monuments in the city) to remember the lives lost as a result of that tragic quake — and the ones we've lost since then. In fact, our last known survivor, Bill Del Monte, passed two years ago at the age of 109. Though we've lost the last living connection to this seminal event, I hope the fires that raged for days on end will not be forgotten, nor the lessons learned as a result.

Last year, I introduced a hearing on the operations and maintenance status of the city's emergency water supply system — officially known as the Auxiliary Water Supply System (AWSS), consisting of a 135-mile pipeline network, a high-elevation reservoir, large-capacity tanks, pumping stations, fireboats, and underground water tanks. This ambitious project to create an independent emergency water supply for fire-fighting

was started in 1913 in response to the Great Earthquake and Fire. The AWSS has tremendous benefits, including the ability to deliver water at much higher pressures and the ability to use unlimited pumped water from the bay. The system is currently used throughout the year by the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) to fight multiple-alarm fires — some of which you may have even witnessed in the neighborhood.

In 2010, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission took over the ongoing functions of the system from the San Francisco Fire Department, the same year we passed our first Earthquake Safety and Emergency Response (ESER) general obligation bond. That 2010 bond provided \$104.2 million to improve the overall core facilities of the AWSS, and another bond in 2014 allocated \$55 million to continue that public safety effort.

Over the last century, the system has slowly been expanded from the eastern part of the city, including North Beach, Chinatown, and the Marina on westward. San Francisco voters have passed bond initiatives to expand

the system, while newly developed areas of the city, like Mission Bay, have had the foresight to install AWSS.

Large swaths of the west side of the city, including the Outer Sunset and Outer Richmond, still remain unserved. Modeling of various future earthquake and fire scenarios and discussions about the geographic reach of the AWSS at subsequent hearings at the Government Audits and Oversight Committee have revealed this glaring service hole in our seismic and fire safety system. Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer spoke at length at the last hearing about the density of wooden-framed homes that line the Richmond district and her concerns with SFFD's ability to effectively fight the blazes that will inevitably erupt in the wake of the next big quake. Now, 111 years after the Big One, Supervisor Fewer and I are working on a plan to expand ASWW to unserved neighborhoods.

In another role, I also sit on the Seawall Resiliency Project Executive Steering Committee, designed to guide the fortification of our deteriorating seawall and prepare the shoreline for impending

sea-level rise and storm surges. The San Francisco Port commissioned a study last year which revealed that in the event of a major earthquake, our aging and porous seawall could sink and crumble, which would be catastrophic for the buildings and underground utilities along the Embarcadero. As a result, voters will be asked to place a bond for seawall upgrades on the 2018 ballot, and this assumption has been included in the latest version of the city's 10-year capital plan.

The problem is while I recognize this citywide investment is needed to protect our public resources along the Embarcadero, voters want to know public dollars are being spread equitably throughout San Francisco. Supervisor Fewer and I are proposing to allocate some of this bond to expand the AWSS to San Francisco's poorly connected western side.

Recent projections from San Francisco Public Works staff involved with AWSS construction, repair, and design for more than 20 years put reasonable price tags on proposed extensions: \$27 million for a Richmond AWSS extension and \$31






The Lotta Crabtree Fountain on Market Street is a historic touchpoint for the city's remembrance of the 1906 earthquake. PHOTO: SANFRANMAN59

million for a proposed Sunset AWSS extension seem a small price to pay to help aide San Francisco firefighters in combating a neighborhood-wide fire disaster and saving lives. And it makes perfect policy sense to include this purpose within any new seismic safety bond that we put before voters.


Supervisor Fewer and I agree: Public safety dollars should be spread equitably throughout the entire city. From the eastside to the westside, we must prepare for the next great quake. We owe it to our constituents to put together the best possible package to put before voters in 2018.

See you in the neighborhood.

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The Tablehopper :: New in the neighborhood



Artisanal ice cream from Salt & Straw. PHOTO: ©TABLEHOPPER.COM

Portland's Salt & Straw ice cream comes to Fillmore; more room at Blue Barn Gourmet in Marina

BY MARCIA GAGLIARDI

EMBARCADERO

Coming to the Waterfront Plaza this spring is **Norcina** (50 Francisco Street), an Italian cafe and delicatessen from Kaitlynn Bauman of Levi Plaza's Parlor 1255. Breakfast includes frittata, pancetta and cheese cornetti, and bombolini (think Italian doughnut filled with pastry cream), plus coffee service by local Sausalito roaster Cibo. Lunch will have tigelle (a kind of Italian flatbread) sliced and filled with options like prosciutto cotto, stracchino cheese, and artichoke hearts (sounds like something I'd make at home, so yes!), plus salads and house-made gelato. Hours will be Monday–Friday 7 a.m.–5 p.m.

FILLMORE

Ice cream fanatics, your time to enjoy Portland's **Salt & Straw** (2201 Fillmore Street) ice cream is now. Their Fillmore shop, the first in San Francisco, is now open. Founded by Kim Malek with her cousin, Tyler, their ice cream is known for its artisanal, handmade approach — they are also working with local makers and purveyors for flavor inspiration. Their flavors fall into three categories: San Francisco classics (available only in San Francisco); San Francisco seasonals (available only in San Francisco for a limited time); and crossover classics (available at all locations, which are also in Los Angeles). You can start pining for flavors like cinnamon ancho and cajeta or olive oil and lemon custard (yum). Trust me: The roasted strawberry and tres leches is so good. Hours are 11 a.m.–11 p.m. They will also be at Off the Grid Fort Mason on Fridays. Their second location in Hayes Valley (580 Hayes Street) will open in the summer.

The spendy (I'll just say it: crazily overpriced at \$195 for the odd experience) **Mosu** (1552 Fillmore Street, 415-735-7303) closed at the end of April. Eater writes that it's not for financial reasons, but because chef-owner Sung Anh is moving back to Korea to be with his wife and children and to open Mosu Seoul in the fall; however, it sounds like he does hope to return to San Francisco at some point.

LOWER NOB HILL

If you have ever had the opportunity to sit at chef Ryo Sakai's counter while he was making sushi at the now-closed Pink Zebra or at Domo in Hayes Valley, you'll

be happy to hear he has partnered with longtime friend Cory Jackson to open a restaurant for the first time together (they started working together years ago at Blowfish): **Kuma Sushi + Sake** (1040 Polk Street).

Kuma will be opening this month in a former Western Union space, and they want it to be a neighborhood sushi restaurant that can work for all kinds of budgets. Guests can order à la carte or omakase (4, 8, or 12 courses), and they will even offer vegetarian selections. There will be a strong focus on local seafood (from TwoXSea), with some fish sourced from Japan as well. Dishes will be creative and feature some fun touches, like ochazuke (tea-infused dashi stock poured over rice and kombu-cured fluke) and a spin on chawanmushi with smoked goat cheese. House-fermented pickles will also play a part.

The 25-seat space is pretty intimate — they'll actually just start with 18 seats, and it will be walk-in only (no reservations). The spacious bar has 11–12 seats, so guests will be able to enjoy a lot of interaction with the two chefs. There will be both local and Japanese beers, plus wine and a frequently changing list of sakes.

MARINA

Blue Barn Gourmet (3344 Steiner Street, 415-896-4866) has moved from its former Chestnut Street space to a larger location. It's now in the former Barney's, which means there's more room and a patio where you can enjoy your salad. Open Monday–Friday 11 a.m.–8:30 p.m., Saturday–Sunday 11 a.m.–8 p.m.

RUSSIAN HILL

There's a project called **Berber** (1516 Broadway Street) coming to the short-lived Killer Shrimp (and previous Taps) space. Here's a little teaser I found: "Berber is an exotic North African fine dining establishment and opulent nightlife venue that offers world-class cuisine, blending the traditions of the Mediterranean with the best and brightest of California." The executive chef is Ali Dey Daly from Tunisia, and it sounds like there will be quite the lineup of entertainment. I'll fill you in with more soon.

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. Follow @tablehopper on Twitter and Instagram for more culinary finds!

Seasonal, local Bistro Aix

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

THIS MONTH WE’RE INTRODUCING a new column dedicated to neighborhood gems: those rare spots that have not only survived but thrived in a restaurant scene rife with high costs, staffing issues and, frankly, saturation. While new hotspots open almost daily, more than half will close within the first year. It’s easy to attract customers when you’re the new kid on the block, not so much when you’re on last month’s Eater heat map.

EXPERIENCED CHEF-OWNER

What does it take to keep your doors open for 10, 15, or even 25 years? It’s an elusive cocktail of luck, location, timing, and, of course, food. At most restaurants, the person who cooks the food can make the difference between short-lived hype and neighborhood gem. Chef-owner Jonathan Beard trained over a decade before opening Bistro Aix in 1996, receiving a Grand Diplome from the Cordon Bleu in Paris, a graduate degree in hospitality from Cornell University, and a degree from ICIF, an

Italian cooking program from Torino, Italy. He cooked his way through Los Angeles, Washington D.C., Paris, Rome, and New York.

COZY BACK PATIO

Bistro Aix closed for nine months in 2009 for a major remodeling that made a wood-fired grill the star of the partly open kitchen.

The back enclosed patio houses a nearly 100-year-old olive tree that stretches elegantly toward a skylight, which adds some brightness to the cozy space. Tables are made from one felled tree with rippled edges and smooth, roomy tops. Smartly upholstered panels along the walls keep the noise down so you can actually converse.

When visiting recently, we arrived early enough to enjoy the sun filtering across the space and stayed late enough to take in the candlelit elegance. Seats were filled with a nice mix of families with small children, young professionals, and mature couples who knew the wait staff well. The front of the house has an exuberant brasserie-type style with a long bar and large windows overlooking Steiner Street. Even if

you just stop in for a glass of wine or beer, chances are you won’t be able to resist the scents of chicken skin and pizza crust crisping in that focal oak-burning oven.

MEDITERRANEAN-INSPIRED MENU

Named after Aix-en-Provence in the South of France, the menu is Mediterranean-inspired, featuring seasonal ingredients from local farmers and fishermen. While “seasonal, local” has become ubiquitous, Bistro Aix was an early adopter back in 1996.

My friend and I each selected a starter to share. Her pick: a salad of crisp asparagus and fennel with goat cheese and mint aioli (\$10). I’m not a fan of raw fennel, or goat cheese, or mint, so I never would have chosen this salad, but I enjoyed it (except for the fennel, which I nudged to her side of the plate). Because asparagus is just coming into season, I stuck with the theme and ordered the Zuckerman Farm asparagus soup (\$8), which was leafy green in color with grassy notes and a lightness that belied its velvety texture.

For my entrée, I chose perhaps my favorite pasta of all time,



Zuckerman Farms asparagus soup. PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

spaghetti pomodoro, a deceptively simple dish easily ruined by imbalanced ingredients or improper noodle preparation. At Bistro Aix, the spaghetti with San Marzano tomatoes, Genovese basil, and garlic (\$13) is sublime, a perfect mélange of al dente pasta, sweet yet bright tomato flavor, and just the right amount of basil and garlic (both which, if not used judiciously, can be overwhelming) topped with freshly grated Parmesan. My friend also chose pasta — angel hair with Dungeness crab, hedgehog mushrooms, garlic, and chili (\$23). The delicate crab shined through, the mushrooms added texture and earthiness, and the chili provided a little kick.

We saw the cracker thin-crust pizzas delivered to a neighboring table, one with tomato,

mozzarella, fontina, and Parmesan (\$13), the other with garlic, broccoli rabe, and burrata (\$16), and we both agreed to try them next visit. If you’re really hungry, they offer the omnipresent \$15 burger as well as heartier steak, chicken, fish, and lamb dishes accompanied by sides like potato gratin, baby spinach or kale, and French fries.

The wine list reflects the chef’s love of grower/producer, naturally made product with an emphasis on France and California. They also have an excellent rosé selection, which they proudly served long before rosé became all the rage.

Bistro Aix: 3340 Steiner St. (at Chestnut), 415-202-0100, bistroaix.com; Mon.-Thu. 5:30–10 p.m., Fri.-Sat. 5:30–11 p.m.



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Eyvind Earle, Concept painting of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), gouache on paperboard.
ILLUSTRATION: COLLECTION OF THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY FOUNDATION, © DISNEY, 2009.31.1

The Art World continued from cover

simplicity and directness in his art. Earle began regularly exhibiting his paintings, influenced by Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cezanne, Norman Rockwell, and Georgia O'Keeffe, at the Charles Morgan Gallery in New York City. During the Great Depression, Earle worked as a sketch artist for United Artists. He also bicycled across the country from Hollywood to New York in 1937, selling his watercolors along the way. After repeatedly applying to work at Walt Disney Studios, Earle finally joined the Disney crew in 1951 as an assistant background painter, ultimately advancing to color stylist for *Sleeping Beauty*. Reflecting on his time at the Walt Disney Studios,

Earle once said, "I consider my six or seven years at Disney the greatest art school in the whole world, because I worked hard and fast with the very, very best men in the industry." Earle started his own animation company in 1961, Eyvind Earle Productions, Inc., which developed a reputation for its distinctive trademarks and logos, film trailers, advertisements, and television commercials. He returned in 1966 to painting his alluring, dreamlike canvases full time. Most recently, in 2015, the Walt Disney Company gave the artist a posthumous award, the prestigious Disney Legend Award, for his work on *Sleeping Beauty* and his contributions to animation. "Eyvind was an honest and humble man,

yet he was constantly challenging himself to push the boundaries of his own artistry with this enduring passion to explore, create, and innovate," said one of the show's curators Ioan Szasz, who began working with the artist in 1988. "Whether it was through a modest snowy landscape for a Christmas card or a more intricate background concept for films like *Sleeping Beauty*, Earle brought magic to everything he touched." **The Art of Eyvind Earle:** 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Thu.–Tue. through Jan. 8, 2018, \$35, Walt Disney Family Museum, 104 Montgomery St. (the Presidio), 415-345-6800, waltdisney.org Sharon Anderson is an artist and writer living in Southern California. She can be reached at mindtheimage.com.

The Best of Books : Flying off the shelves

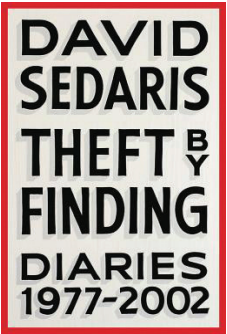
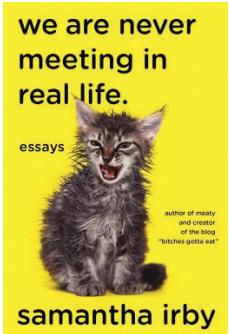
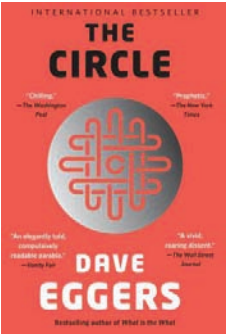
The Marina Books Inc. best-seller list

COMPILED BY BRIAN PETTUS

1. **A Really Big Lunch: Meditations on Food and Life from the Roving Gourmand**, by Jim Harrison (hardcover)
2. **The North Water: A Novel**, by Ian McGuire (paperback)
3. **All the Light We Cannot See**, by Anthony Doerr (paperback)
4. **The Sense of an Ending**, by Julian Barnes (paperback)
5. **Buddha Walks Into a Bar ...: A Guide to Life for a New Generation**, by Lodro Rinzler (paperback)
6. **When Breath Becomes Air**, by Paul Kalanithi (hardcover)
7. **97 Ways to Make a Cat Like You**, by Carol Kaufmann (paperback)
8. **Big Little Lies**, by Liane Moriarty (paperback)
9. **The Circle**, by Dave Eggers (paperback)
10. **The Sympathizer: A Novel**, by Viet Thanh Nguyen (paperback)

NEW RELEASES FOR MAY

We Are Never Meeting in Real Life, by **Samantha Irby**: Blogger and comedian Irby turns the seriocomic essay into an art form. Whether talking about how her difficult childhood has led to a problem in making "adult" budgets, detailing a disastrous pilgrimage/romantic vacation to scatter her estranged father's ashes, sharing awkward sexual encounters, or dispensing advice on how to navigate friendships with former drinking buddies who are now suburban moms, she's as deft at poking fun at the ghosts of her past self as she is at capturing powerful emotional truths.



Theft by Finding (Diaries 1977-2002), by **David Sedaris**: It's no coincidence that the world's best writers tend to keep diaries, and Sedaris has kept a diary for 40 years. Written with a sharp eye and ear for the bizarre, the beautiful, and the uncomfortable, and with a generosity of spirit that even a misanthropic sense of humor can't fully disguise, *Theft by Finding* proves that Sedaris is one of our great modern observers. It's a potent reminder that there's no such thing as a boring day — when you're as perceptive and curious as Sedaris, adventure waits around every corner.

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



Charlize Theron stars as an indestructible British spy in the espionage thriller *Atomic Blonde*. PHOTO: JONATHAN PRIME; UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Busting out the big summer movies

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

SUMMER IS OFFICIALLY UPON US JUNE 20, but the summer movie season starts in early May. It's a time of big-budget franchise films and family oriented crowd-pleasers, despite the occasional unexpected indie, documentary, or foreign treat. And that's how it goes this year with nothing less than the highly anticipated sequel to Marvel Studios' rollicking sci-fi comedy *Guardians of the Galaxy* kicking off the parade of diversions the first weekend of May.

Here's an informal guide to some of those major releases due in theaters over the next few months — visual extravaganzas which, regardless of intrinsic quality, should probably be seen on wide screens for the best possible experience.

The aforementioned *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2* (May 5) should be a lot of fun, as jocular space-faring hero Peter "Star-Lord" Quill (Chris Pratt) and his merry band of interstellar misfits and brigands continue their swashbuckling escapades, finding in the process Quill's long-absent father (Kurt Russell).

Directed by Guy Ritchie, *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* (May 12) doesn't look quite so promising despite a cast featuring Charlie Hunnam as Arthur and Elizabeth Olsen as his Guinevere, as well as Idris Elba and Jude Law. It appears to be a somewhat anachronistic mean-streets retelling of the Excalibur legend, in line with Ritchie's previous tough-guy movies.

HEROES AND MONSTERS

There's considerable buzz around the latest prequel to the chilling *Alien* sci-fi series, *Alien: Covenant* (May 19). It is actually the sequel to the first prequel, *Prometheus*, which purported to show the roots of the scary, bloodthirsty creatures we've come to know and fear. This chapter has a pretty good pedigree with Ridley Scott, director of the original *Alien*, back in charge, plus Michael Fassbender and Noomi Rapace returning from *Prometheus*.

A franchise that may very well have worn out its wacky welcome would be Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* cycle, but here comes yet another installment. Subtitled *Dead Men Tell No Tales* (May 26), yet the tale of Johnny Depp's fey, indolent, indestructible Captain Jack Sparrow character continues to be told when the concept appeared to have died a couple of episodes ago.

Wonder Woman (June 2) spins out of DC Comics' 2016 *Batman v. Superman* movie with Gal Gadot reprising the Amazon warrior princess. Chris Pine stars as her comic book love interest Steve Trevor in a World War I setting.

Tom Cruise takes the lead in *The Mummy* (June 9), the planned start to

Universal Studios' rebooted, interrelated monster universe. Sofia Boutella stars as a dead Egyptian princess who comes back to life and terrorizes Cruise's character and the rest of the world. Also on board: Russell Crowe as Dr. Henry Jekyll, leading to all sorts of speculation about the rest of what Universal is developing.

When it comes to Hollywood sound and fury signifying very little, few producer-directors can hold a bazooka to Michael Bay and his *Transformers* series, based on the Hasbro toys that can change from vehicles to robot warriors. The scripts are as silly and shoddy as the computer-generated effects are over the top. The fifth exercise in elaborate toy marketing is *Transformers: The Last Knight* (June 23), wherein humans are at war with the giant robots and only working-class hero Mark Wahlberg can save the world along with an English aristocrat (Anthony Hopkins).

SPIDERS, VULTURES, AND APES

A more intriguing approach to a familiar property is Sony Pictures' team-up with Marvel Studios to relaunch Spider-Man as part of Marvel's cinematic superhero universe rather than in a stand-alone narrative. First, this new version of Spider-Man appeared in Marvel's *Captain America: Civil War*. Now, we have *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (July 7). This is a Spidey-centric effort starring Tom Holland as the teen-aged wall-crawler, but featuring a crossover with good old Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) and the villain Vulture (Michael Keaton).

War for the Planet of the Apes (July 14) continues the technically deft prequel revision of the classic *Planet of the Apes* movies with a third chapter about the rise of intelligent apes and their conflict with a plague-ridden humanity. Andy Serkis returns as ape leader Caesar with Woody Harrelson as his merciless human nemesis, a U.S. Army colonel.

Amid these continuing sagas and reimaginings, two fresh items will come our way: French filmmaker Luc Besson adapts an entry in a highly respected set of graphic novels with his grandiose space opera *Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets* (July 21). And Oscar-winning actress Charlize Theron stars as an indestructible British spy in the espionage thriller *Atomic Blonde* (July 28), based on yet another graphic novel.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture on KPFK/Pacifica 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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MAY EVENTS

WHAT NOT TO MISS THIS MONTH

MAJOR EVENTS

12th Annual Uncorked Ghirardelli Square Wine Festival
Saturday, May 13, noon–5 p.m.
Ghirardelli Square
Taste, learn, and experience wine from throughout Northern California while enjoying entertainment, food vendors, and other exhibitors. Partial proceeds benefit a local to-be-determined nonprofit. \$50–\$60, [eventbrite.com](#)

6th Annual Mr. Marina Competition
Wednesday, May 17, 7–10 p.m.
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre
In this competition, which pokes fun at Marina stereotypes, 12 contestants are scored for swimwear, Marina wear, and talent, while raising funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. \$25–\$150, 619-665-6755, [mrmarina.com](#)

105th Annual Bay to Breakers 12K & Expo
Expo: Fri.–Sat., May 19–20, Pier 35
Race: Sunday, May 21, 8 a.m.
Starts: Main & Howard Streets
The city’s best-known spectacle returns with world-class runners leading a pack of jogging centipedes, jiggling Elvises (and other body parts) over the treacherous Hayes Street hill to the finish at the Ocean Beach parking lot. *Free (expo), \$64.99–\$139.99 (race; discounts for children and groups), 415-864-3432, [baytobreakers.com](#)*



S.F. International Arts Festival

Thu.–Sun., May 25–28
Wed.–Sun., May 31–June 4
Fort Mason Center
This festival features 100 performances in theater, dance, music, and more from over 65 ensembles and individual artists from the U.S. and 15 countries. *Visit website for pricing, 415-399-9554, [sfiaf.org](#)*
PHOTO: SFIAF.ORG

39th Annual Carnaval San Francisco Festival: Sat.–Sun., May 27–28, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Harrison St. (btw. 16th & 24th Sts.)
Parade: Sunday, May 28 9:30 a.m.
Starts: 24th & Bryant Sts.
Experience the best of Latin American and Caribbean cultures with food, music, dance, arts, crafts, and more, including the king and queen competition. This year’s theme is El Corazón de San Pancho/The Heart of San Francisco, celebrating the city’s sense of unity, inclusion, and multicultural pride. *Free, 415-206-0577, [carnavalsf.com](#)*

LAST CHANCE

S.F. Playhouse: Noises Off
Tue.–Sun. through May 13
450 Post St. (in the Kensington Park Hotel)
A comedy about putting on a comedy, this rollicking backstage farce about a second-rate theatrical troupe combines slapstick, a British sex comedy, and nonstop humor from a manic menagerie of itinerant actors rehearsing a flop called Nothing On. \$20–\$100, 415-677-9596, [sfplayhouse.org](#)

Tomb Treasures: New Discoveries from China’s Han Dynasty
Tue.–Sun. through May 28, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Asian Art Museum (200 Larkin St.)
On view for the first time in the U.S., 160 rare selections from recent excavations reveal the extravagance, artistry, and elegance of the Han royal clan, which achieved profound cultural and artistic influence, technological advancements, and military might 2,000 years ago. \$20–\$25, 415-581-3500, [asianart.com](#)

Monet: The Early Years
Tue.–Sun. through May 29, 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m.
Legion of Honor (100 34th Ave.)
Through approximately 60 paintings gathered from international collections, this exhibition demonstrates the radical invention that marked the artist’s development of his unique visual language and technique during his formative years of 1858 to 1872. \$35, 415-760-3600, [famsf.org](#)

Matisse/Diebenkorn
Thu.–Tue. through May 29, 10 a.m.
SFMOMA (151 Third St.)
This exhibition brings together 100 extraordinary paintings and drawings — 40 by Matisse and 60 by Diebenkorn — that reveal the connections between the two artists in subject, style, color, and technique. \$31, 415-357-4000, [sfmoma.org](#)

JUST FOR MOM

Mother’s Day 5K & Kids’ Run
Sunday, May 14
5K: 9–9:45 a.m.
½ mile kids’ run: 9:45 a.m.
Little Marina Green, Yacht Harbor Parking Lot
Start Mother’s Day with this flat-course run that circles the Marina Green and Crissy Field/Golden Gate Promenade. *Free–\$5, 415- 978-0837, [dserunners.com](#)*

Mommy & Me: Baking Together Cooking Class
Sunday, May 14, 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Sur la Table (2224 Union St.)
Share your baking passion with your little loved ones in this hands-on class where you will make three spring-inspired treats. \$49, 800-243-0852, [surlatable.com](#)

Mother’s Day Brunch Cruise
Sunday, May 14, 11 a.m., & 7 p.m.
Hornblower Yacht & S.F. Belle (Pier 3)
Give Mom a special day she won’t forget with a brunch cruise around the bay. Buffet brunch includes free-flowing champagne, live entertainment, and more. \$92 & \$127, 888-467-6256, [hornblower.com](#)

76th Annual Mother’s Day Rose Show
Sunday, May 14, 12:30–4 p.m.
County Fair Bldg., Golden Gate Park (1199 9th Ave.)
Bring your moms, cameras, questions, and love of beautiful flowers to see a variety of miniatures, grandiflora, floribunda, and hybrid tea roses. A variety of roses will be available after the show. *Free, 415-656-4356, [sfrosesociety.org](#)*

COMMUNITY CORNER

Presidio Tunnel Tops Project Site Tour
Friday, May 5 & 19, 3–4 p.m.
Presidio Trust (103 Montgomery St.)
Learn about and tour the site of the planned 14-acre landscape atop the Presidio Parkway tunnels linking the Presidio to the waterfront. *Free, registration required, 415-561-5300, [presidio.gov/events/presidio-tunnel-tops-project-site-tour](#)*

Cow Hollow Assoc. Annual Mtg.
Wednesday, May 3, 6:30 p.m.
Starting Line Room, St. Francis Yacht Club
Meeting includes board elections; guest speakers Supervisor Mark Farrell and Presidio Trust CEO Jean Fraser; complimentary appetizers, wine, beer, and soft drinks; and an overview of major issues and developments in Cow Hollow. \$35 (includes yearly membership), 415-749-1841, [cowhollowassociation.org](#)

23rd Annual Bike to Work Day
Thursday, May 11
Citywide
May is National Bike Month, so leave your car at home and join thousands of others in this premier event. Stop by an Energizer Station, and enjoy free beverages/snacks and receive a free canvas tote bag and biking information. Visit website for locations/details. *Free, [youcanbikethere.com](#), [sfbike.org/bike-to-work-day/](#)*

Veterans Memorial Cruise
Saturday, May 20, noon–4 p.m.
S.S. Jeremiah O’Brien (Pier 45)
This annual tradition commemorates the gallantry of all veterans who have served in defense of America’s freedom. Live entertainment, complimentary beverages and food. *Free (World War II and Korean War veterans)—\$125 (special pricing for children and groups), 415-544-0100, [ssjeremiahobrien.org](#)*

Presidio Memorial Day Commemoration
Monday, May 29, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
Officers’ Club (50 Moraga Ave. & S.F. National Cemetery (1 Lincoln Blvd.)
Join veterans, families, and your community for a parade and program to honor those who died in service of the United States. Community picnic follows. Visit website for schedule. *Free, 415-561-4323, [presidio.gov/events/memorial-day-commemoration](#)*

GALAS & BENEFITS



30th Annual Star Chefs & Vintners Gala

Sunday, May 21, 5–11 p.m.
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center
This epicurean extravaganza benefiting Meals on Wheels features over 100 chefs, vintners, bartenders, and beverage purveyors; 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](#)

ARTS & CULTURE

13th Annual Cinco de Mayo Festival
Saturday, May 5, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.
Valencia St. (btw. 21st & 24th)
The celebration will showcase the best of Mexican and Latin American cultures with a diverse array of Mexican and Latino foods, music, dance, and artistry for the entire family. *Free, 415-206-7752, [mnscsf.org](#)*

13th Annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration
Saturday, May 20, 11 a.m.–6 p.m.
U.N. Plaza & Fulton St. (btw. Larkin & Hyde)
A showcase of all Asian and Pacific Islander cultures, this celebration is the largest gathering of Asians in the country and features music, arts, crafts, food, a kids’ area, and more. Cultural attire welcomed. *Free, [asianfairsf.com](#)*

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Sponsored



Art Exhibition:
John DiPaolo & Jerry Carniglia

Tue.–Sun., May 12–Aug. 13, noon–4 p.m.
Museo Italo Americano, Fort Mason Center, Bldg. C
The works of two acclaimed Italian American abstract painters will be on display in *John DiPaolo: Four Decades of Painting* and *Jerry Carniglia: A Tribute*. *Free, 415-673- 2200, [www.sfmuseo.org](#)*
PHOTO: INCA #12 (DETAIL), JOHN DIPAOLO, 2016, OIL ON CANVAS

20th Annual Artists Gallery Warehouse Sale
Wed.–Sun., May 8–12
SFMOMA Artists Gallery, Fort Mason Center
Find extraordinary art by 300 artists at incredible savings. Proceeds benefit the participating artists, the SFMOMA Artists Gallery, and SFMOMA. *Free, [sfmoma.org](#)*

THEATER

ACT: Battlefield
Tue.–Sun. through May 21
405 Geary St.
Inspired by the ancient Indian epic The Mahabharata, this magical story about the awesome responsibility that comes with winning a war — and the grace and wisdom required to lead a nation after victory — has striking connections to modern times, and features the master director at his finest. \$19–\$115, 415-749-2228, [act-sf.org](#)

Roman Holiday: The Cole Porter Musical
Tue.–Sun., May 23–June 18
SHN Golden Gate Theatre (1 Taylor St.)
Based on the Academy Award-winning film about a young princess who yearns to escape her world of royal obligations and an American reporter who makes it happen, this pre-Broadway premiere is sure to steal your heart. \$55–\$275, 888-746-1799, [shnsf.com](#)

DANCE

S.F. Ballet: Cinderella
Tue.–Thu. May 2–4 & Sat.–Sun., May 6–7
War Memorial Opera House
This imaginative, humorous, and romantic production features a powerful Prokofiev score, spectacular sets and costumes, and breathtaking puppetry. \$35–\$398, 415-865-2000, [sfballet.org](#)

Ruth Aswana S.F. School for the Arts Annual Dance Concert
Thu.–Sun., May 11–14
Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center
The program, Launch, features original works by students, artists in residence, and guest choreographers. \$15–\$25, 415-695-5700, [sfsota.org](#)



Liss Fain Dance: Known Once

Thu.–Sun., May 18–21
Z Space (450 Florida St.)
This immersive performance installation is based on personal stories collected in partnership with 826 Valencia, a S.F.-based organization that supports writing and literacy in young people, and The Redwoods, a mixed-income residential community for seniors in Mill Valley. \$20 & \$30, 800-838-3006, [zspace.org](#)

Smuin Ballet: Dance Series Two
Fri.–Sun., May 19–28
YBCA Theater (700 Howard St.)
The program features a world premiere by internationally acclaimed choreographer Trey McIntyre, which pays tribute to the 50th anniversary of the Summer of Love, a new work by Smuin dancer Nicole Haskins, and choreographer Amy Seiwert’s Broken Open. \$32–\$75, 415-912-1899, [smuinballet.org](#)

MUSIC: CLASSICAL

Chamber Music S.F.: Brandenburg Concertos
Sunday, May 14, 3 p.m.
Herbst Theatre (401 Van Ness Ave.)
Few musical works are as beloved as Bach’s six concertos, which became the benchmark of Baroque music and still have the power to move people almost three centuries later. \$30–\$48, 415-392-4400, [chambermusicssf.org](#)

S.F. Symphony: Immortal Vivaldi: The Four Seasons
Wed.–Thu., May 31–June 1
Davies Symphony Hall
Dream your way through a year of flowering meadows, merciless summer sun, bountiful harvests, and slippery ice, led by S.F. Symphony Concertmaster Alexander Barantschik. \$39–\$185, 415-864-6000, sfsymphony.org

MUSIC: CONTEMPORARY

Clarinet Thing
Friday, May 5, 8 p.m.
Old First Church (1751 Sacramento St.)
Founded in 1989 the quartet has delighted audiences for decades with their original compositions and arrangements of unusual and standard jazz works, all performed on the clarinet family. \$23, 415-474-1508, oldfirstchurch.org

Bernadette Peters
Saturday, May 13, 8 p.m.
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre
The critically acclaimed, Tony Award-winning actress and singer performs in concert. \$95–\$145, 415-563-6504, palaceoffinearts.org

Robin Trower with Strange Vine
Friday, May 26, 8 p.m.
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre
The English rock guitarist and vocalist who achieved success with Procol Harum during the 1960s, and then again as the bandleader of his own trio shares the stage with a duo from Fresno. \$35–\$60, 415-563-6504, palaceoffinearts.org

NIGHTLIFE

Freqo De Mayo
Friday, May 12, 9:20 p.m.–2 a.m.
Public Works (161 Erie St.)
The 12th annual Freqo De Mayo features Bachelors of Science, Janaka Selekt, Flytrap, and more in a benefit for the Janky Barge. Ages 21 & up, \$21–\$30, 415-496-6738, hushconcerts.com

New Wave City
Saturday, May 20, 9 p.m.–3 a.m.
Cat Club (1190 Folsom St.)
Your choice of multiple D.J.s to help you dance the night away to New Romantic and alternative dance music. \$7–\$12, 415-993-4692, newwavacity.com

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Humankind: How Biology and Geography Shape Human Diversity
Tuesday, May 9, 7 p.m.
African Hall, California Academy of Sciences
UC Davis anthropology professor Dr. Alexander Harcourt discusses the spread of diversity in the human race in its worldwide expansion. \$12–\$15, 415-379-8000, calacademy.org

The Importance of Diversity in the Environmental Movement for the 21st Century
Thursday, May 11, 6 p.m.
The Commonwealth Club (555 Post St.)
Distinguished Natural Resources Defense Council experts will discuss the roles of people throughout the world in the effort to build safe and healthy environments, and how the current political leadership could affect the involvement of women, racial minorities, and others. \$20, 415-597-6715, commonwealthclub.org

FILMS & LECTURES

3 Generations
Opens Friday, May 5
Presidio Theatre (2340 Chestnut St.)
A sure-to-be-controversial film about a transgender youth (Elle Fanning), his lesbian grandmother (Susan Sarandon), and absent father (Tate Donovan). \$12, 415-776-2988, lntsf.com

Bill Moyers: Screening and Discussion of Rikers: An American Jail
Friday, May 19, 12 p.m.
The Commonwealth Club (555 Post St.)
Join legendary journalist Bill Moyers and a panel of experts to discuss Moyers’s new documentary, Rikers: An American Jail. \$18–\$40, 415-597-6715, commonwealthclub.org

Outdoor Movie Night: The Princess Diaries
Friday, May 26, 8:30 p.m.
Pier 39
Don’t miss the classic San Francisco-filmed comedy starring Anne Hathaway and Julie Andrews as part of Pier 39’s anniversary celebration. Free, pier39.com

POTABLES & EDIBLES

Rosé Day
Thursday, May 4, 4–7 p.m.
Americano Restaurant & Bar (Hotel Vitale, 8 Mission St.)
Sip a glass or flights from France, Italy, and California. A portion of the proceeds from the Cocktail for a Cause, Frosé, will be donated to breast cancer research. Check in on Facebook or Yelp and receive 50 percent discount on all rosés. \$10 & up, 415-278-3777, jdvhoteles.com

7th Annual Taste of Potrero
Thursday, May 4, 7–10 p.m.
Pier 70 (436 22nd St.)
Enjoy bites and libations by chefs and bartenders from top S.F. establishments, including Liholiho, Starbelly, Lolinda, Beretta, The Alembic, and more. Proceeds benefit Daniel Webster Elementary School. \$100–\$225, tasteofpotrero.com

S.F.’s Filipino Food Movement
Tuesday, May 16, 7 p.m.
JCCSF (3200 California St.)
Join local chefs and experts as they trace Filipino cuisine from its native and colonized roots to the shores of California. The Filipino Food Movement (FFM) has gained national attention for its work building community around Filipino cuisine. \$18, 415-292-1200, jccsf.org

SPORTS & HEALTH

Memory Loss, Dementia, and Alzheimer’s Disease
Friday, May 12, 2–3:30 p.m.
S.F. Public Library, Marina Branch
Learn about the differences between normal aging and dementia, the basics of Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders, the diagnostic process, and management of the disease, including resources offered by the Alzheimer’s Association, keys for planning for the future, and how family members and caregivers can help the person with dementia. Free, 415-355-2823, sfpl.org

S.F. Giants vs. Cincinnati Reds
Sunday, May 14, 1:05 p.m.
AT&T Park
Take mom to cheer for her favorite team. The first 20,000 fans will receive an expandable logo tote. \$24.75–\$270, 415-972-2298, sfgiants.com

FAMILY FUN

DancEsteem Performance
Sat.–Sun., May 6–7
Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center
Presented by MoBu Dance Studio, AYUMI: Past, Now, and Future celebrates in two programs the talents of students sixth grade and older and preschool through fifth grade. \$15, 415-602-8557, mobudancestudio.com

The Frog Prince
Sat.–Sun., May 6–21
Young Performers Theatre, Fort Mason Center
Meet a grumpy frog who used to be a prince. Only a princess’s kiss can restore him to his true self. Enjoy this fun musical version filled with lots of songs and laughter. \$12, ypt.org, 415-346-5550

S.F. Symphony Youth Orchestra
Sunday, May 14, 2 p.m.
Davies Symphony Hall
This concert features more than 100 of the Bay Area’s most talented young instrumentalists; together the ensemble has earned international recognition. Ages 12 & up. \$15–\$55, 415-864-6000, sfsymphony.org

E-mail: calendar@marinatimes.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 for additional calendar listings. For sponsored listings, call 415-815-8081.

Decorator Showcase Celebrates 40th Year

THE SITE OF THE 40TH SAN Francisco Decorator Showcase, 2698 Pacific Avenue (at Scott), is a 1904 Classical Revival, although Italian Renaissance-inspired, mansion. Beyond the colonnaded temple entry portico is an ornately detailed foyer revealing a single staircase, which splits dramatically to a double staircase highlighted by a stained-glass skylight on the next level landing.

Although many of the home’s classical details remain, such as decorative ceiling treatments and carved wood moldings and doors, many have been embellished to reflect a more modern esthetic, while still paying homage to the home’s original classical design. Designer Chloe Warner’s dining room features a playful assortment of paper lanterns from a coffered ceiling; in his living room, Jonathan Rachman chose modern furnishings and hand-painted and hand-embroidered silk wallpaper to complement the intricate detailing of the original fireplace and ceiling. Molie Malone’s contemporary guest bath pays historic due with a classical motif wallpaper, and Stephen Stout and David Bjørngaard’s powder room evokes a Roman bath, yet with state-of-the art fixtures.

All showcase homes boast bridge-to-bridge bay views, and Cecile Starin has preserved a glimpse of that coveted view from the master bath by ingeniously installing a pair of oval faceted gold mirrors that slide to the side when not in use.



“A Muse’ing April in Paris” living room by Jonathan Rachman Design, 2017 San Francisco Decorator Showcase. PHOTO: COURTESY OF JONATHAN RACHMAN DESIGN

For the past 39 years, the Decorator Showcase has supported University High School’s financial aid program and has raised over \$15 million for deserving students.

Editor’s Note: For expanded coverage and additional photos, please visit marinatimes.com

San Francisco Decorator’s Showcase: 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Tue.–Thu. & Saturday, 10 a.m.–7 p.m. Friday through May 31, \$40, 2698 Pacific Ave, decoratorshowcase.org

— L. Majer

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Urban Home and Garden : Flora

If you want butterflies in your garden, make your garden caterpillar friendly.
PHOTO: SUSANNP4

Garden tasks

BY JULIA STRZESIESKI

THOUGH SPRING officially began in March, the month of May is when we can truly enjoy the blossoming of springtime. Gardening in the evening after work is possible now with the later sunsets and can be stress-relieving after a long day at the office. Here's what to do this month to enjoy your garden in the upcoming summer months.

Summer bulbs: These should be planted right away if they haven't been already. Plant dahlias, gladiolus, lilies, and begonias for summer color and a cutting garden.

Slugs: Take steps to control slugs, as they will be out in full force. It is best to control them before they have a chance to reproduce and wreak havoc on your garden. Sluggo takes care of both snails and slugs and is safe to use around pets and wildlife.

Mulch: Now is a good time to mulch your garden in preparation for the warm and dry months ahead. Mulch conserves water, keeps soil temperatures even, and prevents weeds from germinating. It also improves the organic content and texture of soil.

Aphids: Aphids may be problematic by now. Combat them with the hose (a strong spray, but you'll have to do this every few days) or with ladybugs. For a more aggressive approach, try an organic insecticidal soap or neem oil.

Soaker hoses: Watering your roses with soaker hoses will help to reduce the spread of black spot disease. Soaker hoses prevent soil erosion, conserve water, and are ideal for shrubs.

Rotate crops: Keep soil in good shape and control pests by rotating your vegetable crops annually.

Vines: Annual vines work well in small vertical spaces and are ideal to cover up an eyesore of a wall or fence. Morning glories and nasturtium are two varieties that will work, also creating privacy and shade. Both are available in several colors.

Bee butterfly friendly: ... and kind to all of our pollinators, including insects, butterflies, and moths, too. Many special seed blends are available to attract these creatures to your garden. Nectar is the key to attracting adult butterflies to your garden — the more nectar in a flower, the more popular the plant will be. For butterflies to feel safe, create a sheltered, organic haven for them in a sunny, low-wind area. Provide a birdbath or a shallow saucer of water for quenching their thirst. (Be sure to keep it clean and fresh. You do not want a mosquito breeding area.) Year-round blooms will supply a continuous source of nectar. Flowers with flat-topped or clustered blossoms with short flower tubes allow the butterflies to reach the nectar more easily. To truly provide a home for butterflies rather than just a visiting area for adults, you will need to include plants that are preferred by the caterpillar. You might see some chewed foliage, but usually there will be no permanent plant damage. A completely organic garden is recommended, which means no spraying of pesticides or fungicides at all. These will kill butterflies in both their larval and adult phases.

Annuals: Buy your annuals without blooms so that they will bloom after you transplant them.

Weed: Weeds steal both water and nutrients from plants. Be sure to give plants a fighting chance by clearing away any weeds—easiest after a light rain,

should we be lucky enough to have some so late in the season.

Window and container gardens: If you don't have a yard, or your outdoor space is limited, a container garden is a great way for you to enjoy the pleasures of gardening. A large number of pots and planters are available that are perfect for a windowsill garden — the perfect spot for herbs and flowers. If you have a deck or small patio, you can even choose a larger container with plenty of space to grow your favorite vegetables.

Mosquito abatement: Arguably one of the most annoying pests, mosquitoes are poised to make a comeback this year after years of drought. Make sure that there is no standing water lurking around your garden or yard, as this is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Larvae develop in standing water. Around urban and suburban homes, small containers such as birdbaths, barrels, wading pools, and anything else that traps water are great nurseries for larvae. Remove all unneeded standing water around your home to avoid attracting these pests.

Mosquito dunks: These kill mosquito larvae before they mature and are environmentally safe to use. Simply place the mosquito dunks in a pond, water garden, or standing water. They work for more than 30 days! Each dunk will treat up to 100 square feet of surface area regardless of depth. An EPA registered insecticide that is safe around animals, dunks contain a natural biological control (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) that kills mosquito larvae.

See you in the garden!

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

16 : MAY 2017

MARINA TIMES : MARINATIMES.COM

Unlock the mysteries of HOAs

BY CAROLE ISAACS

AS CONDOS CONTINUE TO MULTIPLY and the prices of single-family homes rise, more buyers are thinking about condo living as a long-term option. For the most part, these buyers have lived their lives in single-family homes before moving to San Francisco or are downsizing. Buyers all ask questions about homeowner associations (known as HOAs).

There are three types of group ownership in San Francisco: condos, TICs (tenancy in common), and stock cooperatives. All have HOAs and all have dues paid to the HOA.

Here are some things to consider if you are thinking about buying a condo, TIC, or stock cooperative.

DUES

How much are the HOA dues? The amount will be between a few hundred dollars to more than \$1,000. Typically, TIC dues are the lowest, covering minimal expenses.

What expenses do the dues cover? Keep in mind that there are always exceptions to the rule. For the most part, HOA dues cover common water, garbage, and building insurance. From here expenses will be added to cover the salaries of a doorman, management companies, and building amenities such as a gym or swimming pool. An additional cost might be a monthly contribution to the building reserves.

Why are the dues so high? When buyers ask this question, they usually are looking at a building with a doorman, gym, and

swimming pool, or possibly all three plus a management company. A building with a 24-hour doorman will always have dues at the high end. Some buildings have valet parking to maximize the number of cars that can be parked in the building. Also there is often a monthly contribution to the building reserves.

I always tell buyers when it comes to maintaining a property that there is a choice: Pay now monthly or pay later with an assessment. Putting off work may be appealing to a buyer who is planning to move on in a few years. Still, there is no downside to paying monthly toward future repairs on a building. Buyers look for buildings that have a healthy reserve. No reserve funds in the bank or a low reserve can be a red flag for buyers. Lenders all ask how much money is in the building reserve fund. I have sold condos where the lender required the buyer to contribute to the reserve fund in order to qualify for a loan. This may be the case where the monthly HOA dues are low and only covered water, garbage, and building insurance.

Is there a special assessment for work needed on the building? This is always a good question, but not a common expense to find in a property. A special assessment is an amount of money billed to homeowners for specific work needed on a building. The assessment is often — but not always — divided by square foot of ownership. In San Francisco, this work may be an unexpected soft story reinforcement or more typically a new roof, exterior painting, or dry rot and foundation repair.

RENTING

Until the birth of Airbnb, it was common to find a 30-day minimum allowed for renting. Stock cooperatives typically do not allow renting, or if they do there is a minimum of a one-year lease. Airbnb caused a homeowners' revolt. Residents found their peaceful buildings inhabited by short-term renters who were not respectful of their neighbors. The end result has been that many buildings have changed their rules to limit renting to a six-month or one-year minimum. Also it is not unusual to find that a building has limited the number of rentals in the building. Some buildings have a wait list to rent, and it may be many years before it is possible to rent.

PARKING

Every day, finding a parking space on the streets of San Francisco becomes more difficult. Parking is a valuable asset and can add as much as \$50,000 to \$100,000 to the sale price. There are many forms of parking. Parking can be deeded (the most desirable), assigned, shared/rotational, tandem, valet, leased off site, or nonexistent. New construction parking spots are typically smaller than those found in existing buildings. Some HOAs charge a separate monthly fee for parking even if the garage is in the building. If you are driving a large car and find a condo, TIC, or stock coop apartment with a small space, I strongly recommend buying a smaller car.

PETS

Not all buildings allow all pets. Many buildings limit size by weight or have spe-

cific breeds that are not allowed. If your dog is under 20 pounds, you will have a good chance of finding a home. A dog over 50 pounds is a hard sell, and the majority of multiunit buildings in San Francisco are off limits to large dogs.

HOA BOARD

San Francisco is awash with a population of educated professionals. HOA boards are frequently made up of retired lawyers, accountants, and managers who want to protect their homes and their investments. Elections are held to select the board. Terms of office can be anywhere from one year to three years.

The simple fact is that to live in a multiunit building with others, there are compromises. These are offset by the pluses. There may be a view, amenities like a doorman, gym, or swimming pool, or a more interesting lifestyle than you could afford in a single-family home in the same neighborhood.

Everyone will agree that the bylaws, CCRs (covenants, conditions, and restrictions), and house rules of a multiunit building are not fun reading. Still it is necessary to understand the rules of a building. You cannot ask your agent or the listing agent too many questions before you make an offer; I am also here to help.

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

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51Ord.com
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415.939.5764



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North of Lake Street Home. Steps to Sea Cliff. Offering 4 bedrooms plus a pent room (currently being used as an additional bedroom) and split bathroom. Walk out deck and large garden. Spacious garage can accommodate 2 or 3 cars.
136-27thAvenue.com
Julie Ray
415.706.2069



Pacific Heights
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Stephanie Ahlberg
415.321.4232



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REAL ESTATE

The Marina Times Real Estate Market Report: February 2017

By Hill & Co. Real Estate

SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow (no sales)					
Lake	175 8th Avenue 196 25th Avenue	3BD/2BA 4BD/3.75BA	\$2,415,000 \$3,371,000	Above Below	8 11
Laurel Heights	132 Collins Street	2BD/1BA	\$1,125,000	Above	4
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina (no sales)					
Nob Hill	11 Shepard Place	4BD/2BA	\$1,475,000	Below	5
North Beach (no sales)					
Pacific Heights	2407 Sacramento Street 2637 Pierce Street 2106 Baker Street	3BD/2BA 5BD/3.5BA 4BD/3.5BA	\$3,200,000 \$4,100,000 \$5,300,000	Above Below Below	8 14 114
Presidio Heights	100 Locust Street 3383 Pacific Avenue 3515 Pacific Avenue	5BD/4.5BA 7BD/8BA 6BD/6.5BA	\$8,255,000 \$10,225,000 \$10,350,000	Above Below Above	18 134 13
Russian Hill	15 North View Court 1365 Union Street	4BD/3BA 5BD/4.5BA	\$2,635,000 \$6,995,000	Above At	23 16
Sea Cliff (no sales)					
Telegraph Hill (no sales)					

CONDOS

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow	2415 Van Ness Ave. #602 2728 Gough Street #1 2382 Union Street 1755 Filbert Street #1S	0BD/1BA 2BD/1BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA	\$585,000 \$1,185,000 \$1,280,000 \$1,388,000	Above Above Above At	51 14 8 5
Lake (no sales)					
Laurel Heights	324 Arguello Boulevard #2	2BD/2BA	\$1,275,000	Above	8
Lone Mountain	2202 Golden Gate Avenue 20 Parsons Street	2BD/1.5BA 3BD/1.5BA	\$1,200,000 \$1,400,000	Above Above	3 13
Marina	190 Cervantes Blvd. #101 1961 Beach Street 3053 Franklin Street 212 Mallorca Way 2023 Jefferson Street	1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA 2BD/1.5BA 2BD/1.5BA 2BD/2BA	\$775,000 \$1,200,000 \$1,375,000 \$1,825,000 \$1,920,000	Below Above Below Above Above	32 24 13 11 4
Nob Hill	1155 Leavenworth St. #10 1155 Leavenworth St. #21 1155 Leavenworth St. #18 1635 California Street #26 1505 Taylor Street 1565 Sacramento St. #2 1242 Sacramento St. #5 1340 Broadway 1308 California Street 1200 California #8D 1100 Sacramento St. #802	0BD/1BA 0BD/1BA 0BD/1BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 1BD/1BA 3BD/2BA 3BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 3BD/3BA	\$400,000 \$425,000 \$426,000 \$1,140,000 \$1,199,000 \$1,325,000 \$1,380,000 \$1,790,000 \$2,150,000 \$3,055,000 \$5,550,000	At Above Above Above At Above Below Above Above Above Below	16 30 20 13 28 14 148 12 7 127 58
North Beach (no sales)					
Pacific Heights	2999 California Street #50S 2299 Sacramento #1 2101 Baker Street #12 2947 Washington Street 2315 Divisadero Street #C 1895 Pacific Avenue #301 1970 Sacramento St. #101 1966 Pacific Avenue #303 2919 Pacific Avenue #5 2001 Sacramento #5 3186 Clay Street 2632 Laguna Street 2257 Washington Street 2115 Baker Street 1650 Broadway Street #601	1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA 1BD/1BA 2BD/2BA 1BD/1BA 2BD/1BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/1BA 3BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2.5BA 3BD/2BA 3BD/2BA 3BD/2.5BA	\$655,000 \$741,000 \$5805,000 \$900,000 \$1,250,000 \$1,275,000 \$1,301,000 \$1,351,000 \$1,440,000 \$1,835,000 \$2,200,000 \$2,235,000 \$2,550,000 \$3,050,000 \$3,700,000	Above Above Above Above Above Below Above Above Above Above Above Below Above Above Below	11 13 62 4 21 14 19 14 35 48 12 42 17 23 23
Presidio Heights (no sales)					
Russian Hill	1463 Green Street 838 Bay Street 2934 Larkin Street 1050 North Point St. #1201 909 Union Street 1169 Filbert Street 900 North Point #409 999 Green Street #1504 870 North Point #202 999 Green Street #2404 999 Green Street #1704 1150 Lombard Street #26 999 Green Street #2801	3BD/1.5BA 3BD/2BA 2BD/1BA 2BD/2BA 3BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 3BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/2BA 2BD/3BA	\$1,080,000 \$1,430,000 \$1,450,000 \$1,775,000 \$1,825,000 \$1,875,000 \$2,000,000 \$2,100,000 \$2,118,000 \$2,350,000 \$2,595,000 \$2,663,000 \$6,847,900	Above Above Above Below Above Above At Below Above At Below Above Below	38 45 13 119 18 14 35 0 15 0 28 6 38
Sea Cliff (no sales)					
Telegraph Hill (no sales)					

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 : Price drops, and more

The pricey city

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

DROPPING PRICES? ‘WE ARE NOT SEEING IT’

Paragon Real Estate Group is throwing some cold water on expectations of a rapidly cooling residential real estate market. The firm reports in its review of the first quarter of 2017 that sales prices might fluctuate but there isn’t yet evidence of a looming plummet in the market. Month-to-month comparisons can be tricky, because different seasons in the year always tend to be higher or lower in sales volume, and different property types can also have different experiences in the market.

“Generally speaking, in higher-priced areas, median house prices have been plateauing or dropping a little, while the more affordable neighborhoods have continued to appreciate: This is a relatively common dynamic around the Bay Area,” Paragon reports.

Paragon then uses the Marina district as a case study, comparing it to other major sections of the city. Of those, “the Marina has by far the fewest house sales and the widest range of individual home sales prices, so it is most susceptible to median price fluctuations caused by other factors besides changes in value — for example, a substantial change in the listings available to purchase in a given year. We do not believe that the same Marina house selling in 2015 would have sold for 15 percent less in 2016: something less, perhaps; 15 percent less, very unlikely. This is a good illustration of the dangers of making too much of median sales price changes.”

Other sources have also reported that sales prices are being supported by a drop in inventory of available properties for sale. Additional condominium units coming online in San Francisco have helped moderate condo pricing, but appetite for those units has still reportedly been strong — helped, no doubt, by the decline in the already-tight inventory of single-family homes.

SAN FRANCISCO RENTS UNAFFORDABLE FOR TEACHERS

Teachers who have been on the job for five years have to spend almost 70 percent of their incomes to rent a one-bedroom apartment, helping to make the city one of the least affordable places to be a teacher, according to a study from Apartment List. Also, unlike many expensive cities where teachers could find affordable rentals in nearby suburbs, San Francisco is surrounded by increasingly pricey suburbs and cities.

Apartment List reports that in the entire Bay Area, only Pittsburg and San Pablo offer teachers the ability to live without paying more than 30 percent of their income for rent.

Out of 50 cities across the country ranked on their affordability for teachers, San Francisco ranked dead last; New York and Seattle were only slightly better in the next two slots.

MILLENNIUM TOWERS HOA SEEKS \$200 MILLION

The homeowners association for tenants of the sinking-but-costly Millennium Towers has filed a lawsuit seeking \$200 million in damages. The HOA is suing the property’s developer, architects, contractor, and others, including the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA). The *San Francisco Business Times* reports that Millennium Partners is blaming the TJPA, saying it’s “reckless behavior caused excessive settlement at 301 Mission.” TJPA, like others being sued, denies responsibility.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND

San Francisco residents want to move somewhere else. Residents from somewhere else want to move to San Francisco. Wait, what?

Real estate website Zillow has been crunching the numbers of its property listings, and it says that you get a sense of whether people want to leave their city (or move into another one) by tracking where people are viewing property listings. Are they looking at homes outside their current city?

Late last year, Zillow found that homes in San Francisco ranked among

the top 10 areas nationally in terms of the number of page views from outsiders. But the city also ranked among the top 10 for the percentage of its current residents searching for homes elsewhere.

MORE OF ALL TYPES

California State Senator Scott Wiener wrote an article on medium.com showing that he hasn’t backed down one iota from his commitment to building more units of all levels of housing, including the much-hated-in-San-Francisco market-rate housing.

“Subsidized units clearly play a critical role, particularly for our lowest income residents, and we need many more of them. But ... we simply do not and will not have the massive resources we would need to shift to a dominant public-subsidy-based housing approach,” Wiener wrote.

“Which means: In addition to expanding the supply of subsidized income-based affordable units, we must increase the overall supply of housing, and that means — you guessed it — market-rate housing. Some describe all new market-rate housing as ‘luxury housing, because it’s expensive,” Wiener continued. “Well, of course it’s expensive, since for decades we haven’t built enough of it. According to California’s Legislative Analyst, the state needs to produce about 180,000 units of housing a year to keep up with growth. In practice, we produce less than half that number. And, let’s be real. While the new apartment or condo project down the street is expensive, so is the 75-year-old house or apartment you’re trying to buy or rent. It’s *all* expensive, and that’s not because it’s ‘luxury.’”

QUOTE UNQUOTE

“Job growth has slowed, and that leads to a lessening in demand to live in the Bay Area. But it’s not like we’re having outright job losses or increasing unemployment. That’s not happening.”

—Hans Johnson, senior fellow, Public Policy Institute of California, quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle*

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condos for sale continues to be very low, despite some increases in condos in San Francisco the past few years with new projects reaching completion and going to market. Paragon Real Estate Group notes that “year over year, the supply of house listings for sale declined in Q1 2017, while sales increased.” Therefore it is still a seller’s market, which will continue to make it

In a densely populated city with a desperate need for housing for low-income and middle-income residents, it is probably impossible not to upset some number of people with any development, no matter how necessary it is. The mix of high demand for housing and a shortage of available housing is not a San Francisco or even a Bay Area phenomenon. People looking to escape it all would have to move to another state. The California Association of

ed his plan. In his 2017 budget proposal, which he released in January, Brown cut out that \$400 million and said he remains open to working with lawmakers to deal with the housing shortage, as long as the plan has a heavy emphasis on reducing local regulatory barriers. Brown was very clear that the state was not going to pump more money into affordable housing production.

REALTY REALITY CHECK

Former *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist C.W. Nevius is fond of mocking the Chicken Littles by quoting the line “San Francisco was perfect the day I arrived, but it’s been downhill ever since.” Were things really much better in the past? Were the people really that much better or worse before “the day I arrived”?

When we look around at the city — any city, not just San Francisco — we find artists and free spirits and conformists and criminals and saints. One person’s oddball behavior is another person’s manifestation of untreated mental illness. One person’s exercise of personal freedom through public drug use is another person’s danger to children and public health. One person’s brusqueness is another person’s efficiency.

Cities aren’t families; they are collections of largely unconnected people and organizations that happen to be in the same place. Families entail a certain degree of control and judgment; cities are famously the place where each new generation can escape to and discover or reinvent themselves. San Franciscans will have to figure out if they want to change with their city, if they want to change their city, or if they want to plant their feet on the ground and try to ensure

Brown cut out that \$400 million, and he was very clear that the state was not going to pump more money into affordable housing production.

difficult for newcomers to get a toehold here.

If you’re looking for a way to turn San Francisco’s frown upside down, don’t look to its real estate.

STATE OF DENIAL

Late last year, a member of the Board of Supervisors bragged to the *Marina Times* that the board “just got rid of conditional use authorization for 100 percent affordable housing projects.” That was actually a compromise; the board could not agree on changing the rules for market-rate housing, so benefits for 100 percent affordable housing projects was passed, and it was left until some point in 2017 to address how to incentivize developers of market-rate housing to get them to increase the number of affordable units in their projects.

But even 100 percent affordable developments are not immune from neighborhood resistance. In October, CurbedSF’s Adam Brinklow reported on a fully affordable development in the Mission District that was designed to help seniors and has two nonprofit developers. “The only way a new building could possibly score more PR points is by giving away free ice cream and kittens,” he wrote. Yet the nine-story building on Shotwell Street was the target of complaints that it was too tall. A shorter market-rate housing development nearby was also the target of neighbor opposition, which could be troublesome for supervisors who are arguing for giving market-rate developers incentives in the form of increased height limits in return for producing additional affordable units in their new buildings.

Realtors (CAR) reported that sales across the state in March were strong, and prices were still nudging upward. “The economic and market fundamentals remain solid for the most part,” said CAR Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Leslie Appleton-Young. “However, higher interest rates, a dearth of housing inventory, and slow wage growth will continue to have an adverse effect on housing affordability that is putting upward pressure on home prices, and is sure to hamper the market throughout the year.”

So the pressures will continue, and nothing is likely to happen to solve the problem and get people to calm down in this city. The statewide stalemate between the NIMBY and pro-development crowds has pushed Governor Jerry Brown to twice now attempt to push through legislators to fast-track housing development throughout the state.

After California legislators killed his plan in

After legislators killed his plan to streamline housing production by lifting local development roadblocks, the governor renewed his push.

August to streamline housing production by lifting local development roadblocks as long as the projects met certain requirements, such as affordable housing inclusion, the governor renewed his push. He had agreed over the summer to spend \$400 million on low-income housing if the legislature support-

that nothing changes in their city. Either of the first two options is possible; the latter is a recipe for failure that will hurt other people in the process.

As George Burns said, “Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.”

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Cherish the "surprise" breakfasts in bed. PHOTO: LEON HARRIS

Celebrating Mother's Day

BY LIZ FARRELL

MOTHER'S DAY IS right around the corner, and with a little preparation and planning, this can be an amazing day for the special mother in your life. Whether this is your first Mother's Day as a mom or you are fortunate to celebrate multiple generations of mothers, take time to enjoy the day. It may be spending time with the people who made you a mother or it may be a little quiet time to escape the hustle and bustle of motherhood. Here are a few suggestions that are sure to make any mother in your life feel special.

A DIFFERENT DAY

One of the simplest ways to make a mom feel special is to make the day feel different than a normal day. This could be planning an activity you know she would enjoy and taking care of all the details. One suggestion, which is right in our own backyard, is a hike in the Presidio and ending at the Presidio Picnic on the parade grounds. If it is a nice day, it gets crowded quickly so plan to arrive early to set up your spot. There are all different types of food trucks and activities but you can also bring your own food to avoid the lines. Don't forget the sunscreen and an umbrella, especially if it is a sunny day.

Another way to make the day feel different for mom is to pitch in and take over the things she usually does. This could be anything from making breakfast, helping with the laundry, packing lunches, or cooking dinner. For me, a day off from any of these things is a great gift.

ALONE TIME

Often as mothers we tend to put everyone else in our

lives before ourselves, so Mother's Day may be the perfect excuse to spoil yourself for a few hours guilt-free. If this is how you want to spend the day, make sure you ask for this in advance — no one can read your mind, so let your family know what you would like so they can arrange the details. It could be something as simple as sleeping in, time to exercise, or time

Whether this is your first Mother's Day as a mom or you celebrate multiple generations of mothers, take time to enjoy the day.

to read that new novel you can't put down. It could also mean going to the spa for a massage or a manicure — just be sure to book early because Mother's Day weekend tends to be a popular time for spa services.

Another idea is time to go shopping. Whether to just browse or to buy, doing it without any little people tugging at your leg is a gift.

GIFT OF GIVING

If you have planned the perfect day but are stumped about what to give that special mom in your life, especially the one who has everything, consider honoring her with a donation to a nonprofit. Try to choose a cause the mom cares about, such as the SPCA, an environmental group, or families. For me, I realize Mother's Day can be a tough day for a lot of people, especially the moms in our community who are most in need. Two organizations that do wonderful work to help them are Project Glimmer (projectglimmer.org) and the Homeless Prenatal Program (homelessprenatal.org). For every \$5 donated

to Project Glimmer, they will make sure an underserved mother receives a beautiful Mother's Day gift like beauty products, jewelry, and accessories.

The Homeless Prenatal Program is never short for ways they can use donations, but one of my favorites, especially for Mother's Day, is to help sponsor a baby shower for the moms in their program. Every month the organization throws a baby shower for moms with upcoming due dates and together with their families they enjoy food and games, and each mom receives a new diaper bag full of diapers, clothes, and other baby items.

However, you choose to celebrate the day, do not forget to take a moment to hug the ones that made you a mother. Cherish the handmade cards or the "surprise" breakfast in bed or the attempt to help with extra chores. Sometimes it is the small, simple things that are most special and most appreciated.

Remember also to take time to honor your own mother. It may not be breakfast in bed anymore, but find a way to say, "I love you" and make sure she knows just how much she is appreciated. If your mom has passed, take a quiet moment for a favorite memory. Finally, take a moment for yourself to reflect on your own blessings. Sometimes between homework and activities, it is easy to forget just how truly lucky we are.

Happy Mother's Day!

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

The Adventures of Skylar Grey

Of wirehaired vizlas, TPLOs, and that certain je ne sais quoi

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

je ne sais quoi
noun, French.

An indefinable, elusive quality, especially a pleasing one: *She has a certain je ne sais quoi that charms everybody.*

JUST WEEKS BEFORE KICKIE PASSED away, I made an appointment for Skylar to see Dr. Andrew Sams, one of the best canine orthopedic surgeons in the country, at his eponymous clinic in Mill Valley. I was certain she needed surgery — TPLO to be exact, or tibial-plateau-leveling osteotomy, a procedure performed on dogs to stabilize the stifle joint after ruptures of the cranial cruciate ligament, similar to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in humans. At the same time, I made a surgical appointment for a week later. Let's just say this isn't my first rodeo — Jazzy had two TPLOs, and this would be Skylar's second, not to mention the elbow dysplasia surgeries done at once on both her front legs. Unfortunately, bully breeds are susceptible to ruptures, as are Bernese mountain dogs, Rottweilers, golden retrievers, and Labrador retrievers, among others.

Like with Jazzy, I did a DNA test when I adopted Skylar. The results for Jazzy — 60 percent American Staffordshire terrier, 20 percent Rottweiler, and 20 percent bull mastiff, with a smidge of Glen of Imaal terrier — were somewhat surprising, as I wrote in a chapter of *Jasmine Blue's Tails of the Dog Park* called "There's a Glen of Imaal terrier in the woodpile." Skylar's DNA isn't as mixed — she's a whopping 75 percent American Staffordshire terrier and 25 percent wirehaired vizsla.

While Skylar looks pure pit bull, some of her personality traits scream wirehaired vizsla, which are known to be gentle mannered, shy with strangers, affectionate, sensitive, expert swimmers, and "possessed of a well-developed protective instinct." When I was burglarized in 2010, Jazzy was home. Fortunately, the thieves didn't hurt her, but they did take all my stuff, leading to a chapter called "The pit bull showed them the silverware." Fact: Pit bulls make terrible watch-dogs because they love humans far too much. While Skylar is three-quarters pit bull via the Am-Staff, she's all wirehaired vizsla when it comes to protecting the house, as I found out when she cornered the gardener in the backyard after I let her out not knowing he was still there.

Back in Mill Valley, Dr. Sams confirmed my fears, and Skylar had TPLO surgery on her left knee the following week. She did great, and after a couple days' rest in Mill Valley with Steve and Blue, we headed back to San Jose to start the long recovery. Entering the house after two weeks away felt so strange. We had planned for Skylar to sleep on the floor of Kickie's room on her dog bed like she had for the first TPLO, something Kickie was looking so forward to. Instead, I helped Sky up the sturdy steps to my bed, the same steps Jazzy



Kickie and Skylar in the garden.

had used before her. The back patio was filled with bamboo leaves — the bane of Kickie's existence — and I felt her firm presence while I swept every last one of them away.

As I stood in the kitchen preparing Sky's pills in gobs of peanut butter, I heard her barking, and then there was a knock at the door. It was an older gentleman with a walker and his slightly embarrassed adult daughter. "My dad says he used to know the woman here and he insisted on visiting," she said. I told them that Kickie was my stepmother and that she had passed away on Feb. 6. We were all silent for a moment. "My mom passed last year," the daughter finally said. "My dad hasn't been out much since, but today he wanted to take a walk, and he wanted to visit your stepmom."

I remembered Kickie talking often about an older Japanese neighbor who would visit and bring things from his garden. "Are you the man who used to bring Kickie cucumbers?" I asked.

His eyes lit up. "Yes! Japanese cucumbers!"

"Well, Kickie said they were the best cucumbers she ever had, and she talked about them all the time," I told him, and his eyes lit up again.

"She used to do yard work in these thin nightgowns," he said, his smile growing even broader. "That was really something."

His daughter grabbed his arm. "Dad!" We all laughed, albeit a little awkwardly.

"She said you used to flirt with her," I teased.

He nodded earnestly. "Who wouldn't?"

Mind you, this happened when Kickie was well into her seventies. She had that

She had that certain something, that je ne sais quoi, as they say — indefinable, undeniable, unforgettable charisma.

certain something, that je ne sais quoi, as they say — indefinable, undeniable, unforgettable charisma, confidence and charm, a beauty, inside and out. I don't know any other seventy-something-year-old woman, quite frankly, who could wear a thin nightie while raking the yard and have a man remember her a decade later.

When I went back inside the house, bamboo leaves were already flitting along the patio in the cool breeze. I looked up, smiling. "You were something else, Kickie," I said out loud. Then I grabbed the broom and started sweeping.

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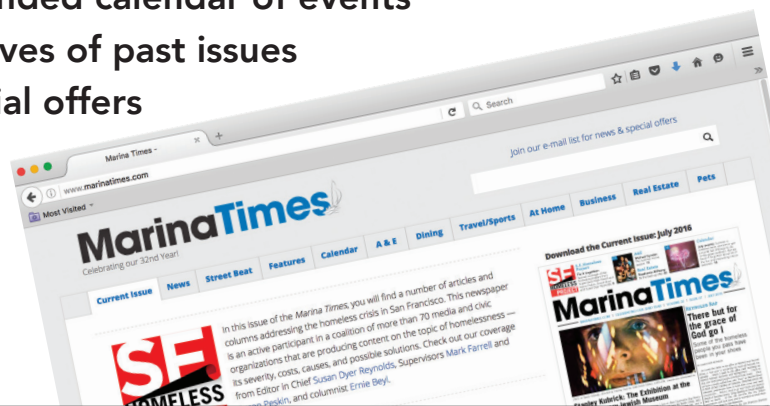
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