

A horizontal banner with a red background. On the left is the Mathnasium logo, which includes the word 'MATH' in a large, stylized font with a vertical line through the 'A', followed by 'NASIUM' in a smaller, sans-serif font, and 'The Math Learning Center' in a small font below. To the right of the logo, the text 'We Make Math Make Sense.' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, 'Contact us for a free assessment!' is written in a smaller, italicized, white, sans-serif font. Further down, 'Mathnasium of Pacific Heights' is written in a white, sans-serif font, followed by '(415) 525-3020 • pacificheightssf@mathnasium.com' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. On the far right is a photograph of two young women sitting at a desk, smiling and looking at each other. The woman on the left has dark hair and glasses, and the woman on the right has blonde hair. They are in a classroom setting with other students visible in the background.

# MarinaTimes

MARINATIMES.COM : CELEBRATING OUR 35TH YEAR : VOLUME 36 : ISSUE 3 : MARCH 2020



Left to right: Stephen Berkman's *Conjoined Twins* and *Remedy for Reverie*. PHOTOS: COURTESY CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM

# 'Predicting the Past: Zohar Studios, The Lost Years' at the Contemporary Jewish Museum

BY SHARON ANDERSON

THE CONTEMPORARY JEWISH Museum presents an immersive photography installation by Los Angeles-based artist Stephen Berkman. Shimmel Zohar was a 19-century Jewish immigrant and photographer who founded Zohar

Studios in New York City. The exhibition is a tribute to Zohar and his studio; the name Zohar also referring to a collection of writings that form the basis of Kabbalistic study. As an esoteric method, the mysticism of the Kabbalah is echoed in Berkman's approach to his subjects and their subtexts, obscurities, and tangents.

# THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PROCESS THROUGH TIME

Raised in the Bay Area, Berkman also creates historical photography for large-scale Hollywood films and documentaries, including *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* and *Cold Mountain*. His

**ART WORLD, continued on 12**

# REYNOLDS RAP

# Mayor London Breed's legacy

Will it be corruption and cronyism  
or cleaning up City Hall?

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

WHEN I WROTE MY APRIL 2019 REYNOLDS Rap column suggesting Mayor London Breed should fire Department of Public Works director Mohammed Nuru after decades of corruption and incompetence, I heard from many city workers who shared similar stories in their departments. In my May 2019 column, I said Breed's reticence to fire Nuru might be because, according to several DPW sources, they had a romantic relationship. I also mentioned an anonymous letter detailing other messy Nuru scandals, including "creating the Fix It Department for current girlfriend Sandra Zuniga after she didn't get a managerial position within DPW . . ."

Ten months later, the FBI arrested Nuru on fraud charges. In last month's column, I wrote for a second time about Breed's reluctance to let Nuru go, again surmising a romantic relationship might be the reason. Just two weeks later, on Valentine's Day (you can't make this stuff up), Breed came clean: She and Nuru had indeed been romantically involved some 20 years ago (though my sources say

## MARINATION

# Simplifying civic engagement in San Francisco

# There's no app for that

BY KEVIN FRAZIER

THERE'S NO CONVENIENT WAY FOR THE AVERAGE San Franciscan to get involved in city politics. Trust me, I've tried. I applied to city boards and commissions only to have the application hearing scheduled over my classes in Berkeley. I engaged with the local Democratic Party only to learn that I was either too young, too new, or too far back in a line of succession that's known only to those near the front. But my barriers — namely, being a student and having a history with mental illness — are tiny hurdles in comparison to the walls facing those with young kids, day and night jobs, and seemingly endless commutes.

## BUREAUCRATIC LABYRINTH

City Hall is too complex, too controlled by cliques, and too inconvenient to provide average San Franciscans with a meaningful chance to make a difference in local politics. The city doesn't need an app to remedy this issue, but it does need to launch some updates to make it easier for San Franciscans of all sorts to get involved.

**MARINATION, continued on 8**

## NIGHTLIFE



After Dark at the Exploratorium. PHOTO: © EXPLORATORIUM, EXPLORATORIUM.EDU

# Thursday night's all right

## Date nights provide smart adult fun

BY JULIE MITCHELL

WHETHER YOU'RE RECONNECTING with a spouse or partner or meeting up for the first time, weeknight dates always feel a little bit special. Often, though, dates after work tend toward drinks and dinner. There's

nothing wrong with that, but on Thursday evenings in San Francisco your postworkday outing can include not only food and drink, but also a visit to a museum or other venue where art, education, and entertainment can be part of the mix, making for a much more memorable evening.

## WINE AND FOOD WITH A VIEW

In February, the **Ferry Building** kicked off Third Thursdays, a free monthly celebration of food, music, and the arts from 6 to 9 p.m. Visitors can sip Champagne and enjoy fresh oysters at a pop-up from Hog Island Oyster Company; munch on pizza specials from Boulette's Larder; sample fresh-baked cookies and chocolates from Recchiuti Confections; try Fort Point Beer or wine from the Brews and Bubbles cart; and other treats. (There are also full dining options in the marketplace and nearby.) Author readings, performances from local entertainers such as breakdancing, piano sets, and live art installations are also featured. The lineup changes each month; visit [ferrybuildingmarketplace.com](http://ferrybuildingmarketplace.com) for details.

## AFTER DARK EXPLORATION

Also on the Embarcadero, the **Exploratorium** presents After Dark every Thursday night from 6 to 10 p.m. This adults-only evening offers the opportunity to immerse yourself in more than 650 interactive exhibits centered around perception, art, and science. Drinks from pop-up bars are available, and special pro-

**NIGHTLIFE, continued on 13**





**Osso STEAKHOUSE** is a romantic hideaway tucked in the landmark Gramercy Towers, near The Fairmont, Mark Hopkins and Huntington Hotels. The stylish Art Deco-inspired design provides an elegant yet relaxed ambiance. The Bone-In Filet Mignon is their signature steak and has a flavor that is nothing short of a revelation.

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News

The Inbox : Reader letters and tweets

NO-NO NURU

I did not realize how really amazing and modest you are until I read your Reynolds Rap in this month’s *Marina Times*. Wow . . . your exposé of the depth and extent of the corruption is so straightforward and staggering — more so now that Breed and Zuniga’s closeness and self-serving work and personal relationships with Nuru are now beginning to be exposed in the mainstream media. Kudos for your once again insightful, fascinating, and resourceful reporting. Not to mention how heroic I think you are on your investigative reports of stories that others either miss or shy away from.

RJ Kamprath

How many more [are] involved? The FBI left me with the impression there’s no shortage.

@ihatethemedia, via Twitter

Bigger question is who [is] not involved?

@GeorgeCipparro2, via Twitter

I had to stop and send an email to tell you much I enjoy and appreciate your columns. You are a breath of fresh air in the absolute insanity of S.F. politics that is our world now. This is certainly not the city that I grew up in, and I am outraged by the decisions being made, the mishandling of our tax money and the disaster of our streets. This looks more like Detroit than the City by the Bay. I have despaired for quite a while of anyone speaking up who might actually be heard . . . but you give me hope that we might still be able to knock sense into the self-serving fools who are destroying our city. Or at least create enough groundswell to get them out of office. Thank you for your efforts!

J. B.

Things are as they seem then. The columnists for the *S.F. Chronicle* have been acting as a P.R. machine for local government. Certainly explains why Heather Knight has always hidden behind the “I am a columnist not a reporter” when she has repeated false claims by government officials.

@eyesonfair Oaks, via Twitter

I’d say just leave Breed in office and watch her like a hawk. Probably less dangerous than bringing in someone new. They’re listening to every phone call and

scrutinizing every deal, and have been for a couple of years.

@robotwalksinbar via Twitter

CRIME SCENE

Reader response to a post about Gov. Gavin Newsom and homelessness.

Because our politicians could care less about doing their job. They care more about what’s in it for them above and beyond their salary which they think is much too low. So much like Mr. Clean, they are probably spending time trying to see how they can somehow benefit first.

@CharlieDonahue4 via Twitter

[Gavin Newsom is] shooting for the presidency. It’ll be interesting if in 2024 he gets the nomination, with his track record in California.

@amanda\_fawkes via Twitter

CITY COLLEGE SCAM?

You really need to focus next on the City College scam! Why the citizens are being asked to fund yet more debt via Prop A when auditors recently issued a warning to their trustees that City College was at risk as a going concern. In the last two years, over \$24 million went out the door; 22 percent went to President Roach and his inner circle. Even the teachers have been overpaid by close to a half a million dollars, which the trustees didn’t approve and don’t understand why.

This institution has been a financial joke for years and has sucked hundreds of millions out of the city’s budget over the years. Everyone’s got their fingers in this pork pie — consultants, 501c(3) organizations, politicians, and city officials. There is absolutely no way these bonds won’t end up costing the city hundreds of millions or billions over the long run.

The real sad thing is their board in general has good intentions but are deer in the headlight when it comes to understanding the situation or solutions to fix the problem. Clearly Roach has zero financial understanding of how to run a junior college other than how to line his pockets. He is a big part of the problem when three quarters of a million dollars in open purchase orders are spent per month and no one can explain why or where the money is going. Shine the spotlight on this sad situation.

Newton Kindlund

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Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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The facade of Made Renovation’s new Chestnut Street showroom. PHOTO: MADE RENOVATION

# Retail scene rejuvenation

Several new openings will reshape the face of our shopping districts on the Northside

### COMINGS & GOINGS

**Made Renovation** has opened its first showroom in the Marina (2108 Chestnut Street); the showroom features vignettes, fixtures, and tile representing popular styles from the company’s design catalog, and customers are invited to touch, feel, and interact with most of the materials that are part of a bathroom renovation . . . After 40 years featuring Inuit sculpture, prints, jewelry, and masks, **Images of the North** art gallery (2036 Union Street) began selling online-only in February (imagesnorth.com) . . . The long-anticipated opening of the new businesses at 3060 Fillmore Street is finally reality: the former Real Foods site now hosts the **Rumble Boxing** fitness studio, Michael Mina’s market and café **Indie Superette**, and the fast casual restaurant **Shake Shack** . . . **Maison Danel**, a French bakery, tea room, and cafe from the owners of Baker Street Bistro in Cow Hollow, has opened at 1030 Polk Street . . . And there’s no more syrup available at the former International House of Pancakes building located at 2299 Lombard Street, which is the new home for 60-year-old **Witter Coin**.

### LUKE’S CONFIRMS NEW COW HOLLOW STORE

Cole Valley-based Luke’s Local looks set to open a new grocery in Cow Hollow. Though the company was rumored to be in discussions to fill the former Osha Thai location at 2033 Union Street, Luke’s is being tight-lipped about it. (“Grocer eyeing Union Street,” News Briefs, June 2019). A spokesperson for Luke’s confirmed for the *Marina Times* that Luke’s is opening another store in the Cow Hollow, but would not confirm the address. An announcement is expected sometime in March. Luke’s only other store opened at 960 Cole Street in 2016.

### UNION STREET GOES ON SPRING BREAK

The popular Union Street Spring Festival and Easter Parade will be taking a break this year, as will the Easter egg hunt in Allyn Park. The event organizers told the *Marina Times*, “We will be taking the time to reorganize, restructure and revamp San Francisco’s biggest little parade in time to resurrect it for spring 2021.”

### JURY DUTY CHANGE COULD DRAW MORE PEOPLE

Under a newly introduced bill, California jury duty would be opened up to more people than are currently in the pool of possible participants. The current system relies on registered voters and holders of

drivers licenses or identification cards. SB 1001, from State Senator Scott Wiener, would expand this to include anyone who files state tax. According to Wiener’s office, the current system results in lists of jurors that “are not demographically representative, and thus the jury pool pulled from these lists tend to skew whiter, wealthier, and overall less diverse than the state actually is.”

### CRIME WATCH

For the week of Jan. 27 through Feb. 2, there were 17 burglaries in the Northern Station district. That brings the year-to-date total for 2020 to 73, down slightly from 76 for the same time period last year. Robberies were also down from 33 to 28.

### TACKLING QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

The Cow Hollow Association is looking to put together a coalition of citizens and organizations to try to address what it calls “San Francisco’s deteriorating quality of life,” citing concerns over blight, addiction, and mental health problems, homelessness, and other issues. This follows the organization’s survey of its members, which returned an overwhelming consensus that something needed to be done. Interested residents can find out more at [info@cowhollowassociation.org](mailto:info@cowhollowassociation.org).

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**4 percent:** decline in the number of people getting married in San Francisco last year compared to the previous year . . . **50:** this year’s Pride celebration and parade will mark five decades of the event that began as Gay Freedom Day . . . **\$500,000:** income that is below the average annual household income in Atherton . . . **286:** number of state-owned properties, ranging from vacant lots to fairgrounds to armories and other state sites, that Gov. Gavin Newsom said would be made available to local governments, free of charge, for “homelessness solutions” . . . **\$1,000:** daily cost of shoplifting at a now-closed Walgreens on Market Street, according to Hoodline . . . **744:** number of new homes coming to 3333 California Street as the result of legislation from Supervisor Catherine Stefani; 186 of the homes will be permanently affordable for seniors . . . **59.5:** percentage of respondents to a Bospar PR survey who admit to using the term “San Fran” . . . **57.6:** percentage of people in that same survey who said that the only appropriate name for the city is “San Francisco.”

Send feedback to [letters@marinatimes.com](mailto:letters@marinatimes.com). News tips? Email: [john@marinatimes.com](mailto:john@marinatimes.com)



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STARK-BIER-ZEIT!

STRONG BEER TIME! – In late February and early March we take time to appreciate what Bavarians call: Starkbiers. ‘Strong’ however, does not just refer to the higher alcohol these Biers contain (at least 7.5%), but to the “original wort” used in their brewing – indicating the volume of dissolved solids the Bier contains. Almost a pound and a half of malt, which for most Doppelbocks amounts to roughly one third of a loaf of bread.

According to records, the story begins in the mid 1600s at Munich’s Neudeck ob der Au monastery with the Paulaner monks and a religious work-around of sorts: During Lent solid foods are forbidden, but liquids are acceptable. Thus, Doppelbock was originally concocted as a life sustaining beverage meant to nourish the monks through the fasting. These special Biers are still referred to as ‘liquid bread’ (Flüssiges Brot).

Today, all over Bavaria there are small Strong Bier festivals celebrating the dark and delicious brews. In fact, in Munich the official Starkbierfest (1751), predates the much larger and much more well known Oktoberfest (1810).

The Doppelbocks tend toward dark red-brown with a thick, creamy butterscotch head. Rich and very malty on the nose. Look for notes of toffee, caramel, toasted bread, brown sugar and molasses with hints of ripe plum and nutmeg. In the best examples of the style the higher alcohol is very well hidden in the overall drinkable balance of sweet roasted malt, earthy floral hops and dark stone fruit flavors that make Doppelbock a good match for the late winter season’s heartier fare. Perfect with aged cheeses, cured sausages, roasted meats, desserts and brunch dishes – or, of course, as the monks drink it – in large quantity, without bread, for weeks at a time.



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How Mayor London Breed uses the powers of her office to deal with corruption could determine how her time in City Hall is remembered. PHOTO: PAX AHIMSA GETHEN

Reynolds Rap  
continued from cover

it was much more recent). She also admitted to taking \$5,600 in “gifts” from Nuru to fix an old car. Suddenly, every reporter in town was on it, many claiming they were long aware Breed and Nuru had dated. “It was an open secret at City Hall,” they said. But the public didn’t know, in effect allowing Breed to remain silent for years — and proving the level of coziness at City Hall extends even to the reporters who cover it.

Though it took 10 months and an FBI investigation, I’m glad to see other journalists join the party, digging into the ties between Breed and Nuru, that \$5,600 “gift,” and the identity of “Girlfriend 1” heard in Nuru’s wiretapped phone calls (likely Nuru’s most recent squeeze, the aforementioned Zuniga). Now in the FBI’s capable hands, these stories are old news — and only a tiny chip of the giant iceberg I’ve been writing about since my September 2014 column “It’s still Willie Brown’s town.” The subtitle, “Personal politics run amuck at City Hall,” foreshadowed the current state of dirty politics in San Francisco, where the titillating stuff always leads to something even more nefarious.

PASS THE TEQUILA AND THE CHEETOS

Not only has Willie Brown played a role in picking every mayor since he left that office, he has called on personal favors to get protégés and pals into lucrative city positions and contracts. The late Mayor Ed Lee and the now disgraced Nuru are just two of the cronies he helped up the ladder. Take, for example, Harlan Kelly Jr., head of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Brown officiated his wedding, and Mayor Lee — a passive bureaucrat who in many ways owed his job to Brown — appointed both Kelly and his wife Naomi, another Brown acolyte, to their current executive roles. In 2018, Harlan Kelly made \$472,737 and his wife, city administrator Naomi Kelly, made \$371,822 in salary and benefits for a mind-blowing combined total of \$844,559.

In 2014, Harlan Kelly stood by his beleaguered deputy, Juliet Ellis, despite pending investigations by the San Francisco District Attorney, the city’s Ethics Commission, and the state Fair Political Practices Commission about her role in awarding a \$200,000 no-bid contract to Green for All, a nonprofit where she served as a paid board member and additionally received \$2,000 per month as the organization’s acting executive director. Kelly said her “critical expertise” trumped those pesky ethics issues — but dig a little deeper into that relationship (and some public records made available by an anonymous SFPUC source) and you’ll see Kelly and Ellis took a three-day trip to Chicago together shortly after those scathing reports. In fact, Kelly and Ellis took 44 trips together at a cost of over \$130,482 between April 2013 and December 2018, an average of eight trips together per year with an average annual price

tag of nearly \$24,000, all billed to SFPUC ratepayers.

On some of those trips, they brazenly (or foolishly) rented only one room; on others, adjoining rooms. There’s a trip to Cancun, a room service bill for tequila and Cheetos, and an apparent affinity for the most expensive hotels. In emails, the SFPUC financial department asks for justification on some of the pair’s requests for reimbursement, including why they continually choose the most expensive accommodations.

Keep reading and you’ll find the Willie Brown connection. It appears SFPUC lobbyists paid some of the expenses on some of those trips, including Brown’s friend Jack Baylis, formerly of AECOM. Baylis got a \$147 million contract on the Central Subway after being spotted dining with late Chinatown power broker Rose Pak, Brown, and then-Mayor Lee. He was also accused of making improper donations to Lee’s mayoral campaign. Chris Gruwell, formerly of Platinum Advisers, also appears. In 2014 Gruwell helped arrange for Brown to lobby against a billion-dollar assessment to cover parks and public amenities around the Transbay Transit Center. Gruwell is also a longtime political associate of another former San Francisco mayor and Brown disciple, current California Gov. Gavin Newsom. In fact, Gruwell served as Newsom’s first mayoral finance director and as chairman of his reelection committee.

A LEGACY IN LIMBO

Can we dig deeper? You bet we can, and that’s what Mayor London Breed needs to do. It’s a tall order — corruption in this town is thicker than a Shamrock Shake, with winding roads leading to her mentor Willie Brown and forks pointing to fellow Brown protégés — many of whom, like Nuru, she considers friends. It will be Herculean, personally grueling, and messier than the streets of San Francisco, but Breed must take on the task, not only to save this once-great metropolis, but to save her own legacy.

District 9 Supervisor Hillary Ronen feigned shock over Breed’s admissions of romance and gifts from Nuru and immediately called for her resignation. Ronen spent six years as an aide to Supervisor David Campos before succeeding him in 2016, so I fail to believe she wasn’t aware of the “open secret.” But I’m not interested in seeing Breed resign over a \$5,600 car repair. If Breed is more deeply involved in the Nuru scandal, the FBI will find out. What I’m focused on right now is where Breed goes from here, and whether she can separate her job as the leader of this city from her personal relationships — even if that means firing friends in high places. She wasn’t able to do it with Nuru, but maybe she learned from that mistake.

Will London Breed be remembered as just another San Francisco mayor who ignored corruption and pandered to cronyism, or will she be remembered as the mayor who bravely cleaned house and cleaned up City Hall? Let’s hope this time she makes the right choice.

E-mail: susan@marinatimes.com



# 2021-2022 BUDGET

# HELP SHAPE OUR BUDGET

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) manages the city's transportation system. Our budget reflects the priorities of our agency and includes potential Muni fare and service changes. We want to know what matters most to you. Here's how you can share your ideas and priorities:

## OPEN HOUSE

March 11 4:00-7:00 PM  
(arrive anytime!)

1 South Van Ness Ave.,  
2nd floor Atrium

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

March 17 & April 7 at 1:00 PM

City Hall, Room 400  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

## CONVERSATION WITH JEFF TUMLIN, DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

April 2 11:30 AM-12:30 PM  
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# The biker, the spitter, the booster, and the bad roommate

The latest crimes in the City by the Bay

HERE’S A SAMPLING OF RECENT crimes in the districts covered by the Central and Northern SFPD stations.

**THE CASE OF THE VEHICLE CASER**  
*Jan. 6, 1:50 p.m.*  
*Franklin Street and Golden Gate Avenue*

Officers on patrol observed a suspect walking and appearing to case vehicles. When they heard glass shatter, they saw the suspect pop his head up from the broken window; he got on his bicycle and fled the scene. The officers pursued him in their patrol vehicle and then got out to pursue him on foot. After losing him in a parking garage, they notified other officers of the suspect. The next day, officers in the area of Golden Gate Ave. and Gough Street saw the subject crouched behind several bags on the sidewalk. They placed him under arrest without incident.

**BRICKED**  
*Jan. 9, 12:59 p.m.*  
*Location not provided*

A victim told officers that he had seen the subject walking around, knocking over various garbage cans. The victim told the subject to leave the area, and the subject responded by first throwing a handful of leaves at the victim. He

then walked over to a tree and attempted to pick up a brick to no avail; he settled for a rock, which he threw at the victim, striking him in the arm. The victim approached the subject but backed away when the subject put his hand in his pocket to simulate a handgun. The subject fled the scene.

Officers responding to a call of an aggravated assault located the subject nearby and noticed that he was vandalizing a building. They approached him and ordered him to drop everything in his hands; he did not comply, so officers removed the items from his hands and placed him in handcuffs. They conducted a pat search and found narcotics paraphernalia. After he was positively identified by the victim, he was placed under arrest. While sitting in the patrol vehicle, he began to scream, and then spat at the officers who leaned toward him.

**WINDOW SHOPPING**  
*Jan. 31, 4:14 p.m.*  
*Palace of Fine Arts*

A surveillance action against auto boosters resulted in the apprehension of at least one suspect recently. A vehicle that had been connected to an auto break-in in Japantown was spotted later that day by plainclothes officers around the Palace of Fine Arts.

The officers followed the vehicle and witnessed suspects in the vehicle casing numerous other autos. Eventually the suspect vehicle parked near another vehicle, suspects exited their vehicle, and the officers heard glass shatter. The police officers then moved in and approached the suspects, ordering them to get on the ground. They managed to grab one subject by the wrist and struggled with him, successfully placing him in handcuffs.

The other suspects got back into their vehicle and fled the scene.

**NEW ROOMMATE WANTED**  
*Feb. 2, 6:24 a.m.*  
*Location not provided*

A physical dispute between roommates led to the arrival of police officers one morning. It began when one roommate entered a bedroom and told the subject to be quiet, then closed the door and walked away. The subject punched a hole through the door and threatened the victim with a knife. The subject then threatened another victim who was preparing to leave and punched him in the face. That victim left the scene.

The subject then went to another roommate, entering his bedroom and approaching him while he was asleep. The subject put a knife to the victim’s neck and demanded his cell phone; the

victim complied and the subject left the building.

Officers were able to identify the subject with his I.D. card that he had left behind, as well as from a mug shot. Other officers familiar with the subject were able to provide information on his frequent hangouts. He was located in the Mission District and arrested.

- BRIEFLY NOTED**
- Feb. 16, 11:59 p.m., 400 block of Geary Street:** Someone entered a hotel room through the window and stole a duffle bag. The duffle bag was later located on the fire escape.
  - Feb. 20, 7:20 a.m., 600 block of Broadway Street:** A suspect was seen inside a closed cafe accessing the safe. More than \$10,000 in cash was stolen.
  - Feb. 17, 11:02 p.m., Vallejo at Sansome Streets:** A woman took a photo of suspects she witnessed breaking into a vehicle. The suspects then attacked her. One suspect slammed her to the ground in an attempt to take her purse and dragged the victim into the street. A second suspect took her phone.
  - Feb. 15, 11:27 p.m., unit block of New Montgomery Street:** The suspect entered a store and began throwing candy at the store’s customers. The suspect then threw a chair at a victim.
- Send feedback to letters@marinatimes.com*

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# Taking stock

## Even in challenging times, progress is being made

BY SUPERVISOR CATHERINE STEFANI

FROM TACKLING CONGESTION AT ONE of our major tourist hotspots, to preparing for the next major disaster, to creating a beautiful new open space for families, we’re addressing some of San Francisco’s greatest needs right here at the neighborhood level.

Given the challenges our city faces, it’s easy to lose sight of our progress. But in spite of those who say that the politics make solving our challenges too hard to even attempt, we must remember we can achieve great things when we work together as a community. That’s why, in this month’s column, I’d like to highlight the progress we’re making together.

### LOMBARD STREET

On Monday, March 16, we’re launching the Lombard Street Site Management Plan to provide much needed relief to the Crooked Street. Ballooning tourism at the site over the past two decades has led to increased congestion and, unfortunately, property crime targeting both tourists and residents. Although our community was dealt a big setback in October with the veto of AB 1605, which would have allowed for the creation of a pricing and reservation system for the Crooked Street, we were undeterred.

Our new plan, which I funded in the most recent city budget, will provide

increased staffing, training, and coordination to the street — all without requiring state approval.

Beginning this month, we’re adding mobile staff to the eastern and western halves of the street, where crowd control, auto burglary, and quality-of-life concerns are most acute. In addition, we’re placing stationary staff on Hyde and Leavenworth Streets to usher visitors out of areas unsafe for enjoying our iconic views and taking photographs. And, in response to heightened calls for service during long weekends, staffing is set to double around Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, and Labor Day.

I’ve worked for years with community stakeholders to address ongoing issues and develop the new plan, and we’re all looking forward to alleviating the growing stress on this neighborhood.

### RESILIENCY

On a broader scale, one of my top priorities is to make sure that our community remains a safe place to live, from raising a family to retirement, so — on the 30th anniversary of Loma Prieta — I announced my Resilient District 2 initiative.

The images and videos from Australia’s wildfires shocked us all, and large earthquakes in Puerto Rico have reminded us how important it is for San Francisco to be prepared for the next major natu-

ral disaster, whether that’s a wildfire, an earthquake, or even a PG&E power shut-off. That’s why I’ve been working with the Neighborhood Empowerment Network to make sure that all of District 2 — from the Marina to Cathedral Hill, Russian Hill to Seacliff — is ready.

I have always believed that the best way to achieve change is to work with the community. Since last fall, I’ve been convening groups of neighbors, community-serving organizations, and subject-matter experts to build cohesion and resilience in our neighborhoods. The most resilient communities are places where people know and care about their neighbors, and I know our early investments will pay dividends in the next disaster.

### FRANCISCO PARK

Finally, after more than a decade of work, I’m thrilled that later this year we will celebrate the opening of the brand-new Francisco Park on the site of the former Francisco Reservoir.

The reservoir was constructed in 1859 to serve San Francisco’s growing population in the wake of the Gold Rush. Nearly two centuries later, we’re experiencing another population boom, and it has never been more important to invest in our public open spaces.

In 2008, as a legislative aide to former Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier, I wrote a resolution preserving the former Fran-

cisco Reservoir property for public recreation and open space. Over the following 11 years, and with the leadership of former Mayor Mark Farrell, our community pulled together and raised over \$20 million to fund the park, and we finally broke ground in 2019.

When Francisco Park opens later this year, we will have transformed nearly five acres of unutilized space into a beautiful neighborhood amenity for all to enjoy, in one of the most densely populated parts of San Francisco. I’m so excited about what we’ve accomplished together, and I can’t wait to bring my kids to Francisco Park!

### SOLUTIONS

All of this is not to suggest that we don’t face incredible challenges when it comes to property crime, homelessness, drug abuse, and the skyrocketing cost of living. We do, and facing these challenges requires our intense cooperation. I remain laser-focused on the fact that our criminal justice system is in disarray, the fact that our Police Department is under-staffed, and the fact that we all deserve better.

But we must also be sure to take stock of our progress, the power of community, and the achievements we have realized by working together. By ignoring the negativity and divisiveness at City Hall and insisting on change necessary to live in a city we can all be proud of, there’s nothing we can’t accomplish when we work together.

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Marination

continued from cover

It's probably easier to explain Harry Potter to someone than to detail the ins and outs and who's who of City Hall. Given this complexity, it's easy to see why people opt to give their undivided attention elsewhere. More residents can likely name every past and present Democratic candidate for president (including Tim Ryan) before they can name their supervisor.

It's not that residents don't care about the state of the city — everyone is fired up about something within the city's authority to change, from parking to public safety; it's just that residents don't feel they can change anything.

In a city as complex as the wizarding world, residents find it simpler to sit on the sidelines.

Finding out when, where, and how to get involved in city affairs presents search costs that stop people from even considering applying to a board or commission or showing up at a Board of Supervisors meeting. That's why more city meetings and engagement opportunities should occur on a rotating basis in different districts. There are few substantive reasons why Board of Supervisors meetings could not alternate their meeting location and alter their starting time to give working individuals a real shot at making their voices heard. In the same way, city initiatives could solicit much more feedback by hosting joint community sessions that make it easier for residents to interact with a wide range of city actors and agencies at once. These are small logistical changes that could make a huge difference for people right on the edge of participation.

THE PEOPLE'S FORUM

The city should also follow the lead of communities around the world in more proactively soliciting resident feedback.

For example, Madrid empowers residents to crowdsource ideas to improve the city on the digital Decide Madrid platform. Once a certain number of residents have backed a specific idea, it goes to the government for consideration. The same process is used to provide residents with a greater say over the allocation of tax dollars. The Governance Lab at New York University refers to these sorts of platforms as CrowdLaw, "the practice of using technology to tap the intelligence and expertise of the public in order to improve the quality of lawmaking."

For a domestic example, look to Utah, where Politicopia provides residents with a wiki-based source of information on bills before the state legislature as well as a way to directly provide feedback for their legislators to consider.

These tools don't have to be fancy, just

Madrid empowers residents to crowdsource ideas to improve the city on the digital Decide Madrid platform.

functional. If they can cut the time it takes to understand an issue and get involved in its resolution, then it's a step forward from the status quo. It's true that these tools come with costs, but the

benefits of having an engaged public are far more important. For the many San Franciscans who like to complain about their tax bills, the chance to get meaningfully involved in the city will help them realize that taxes aren't penalties but investment in the city they call home.

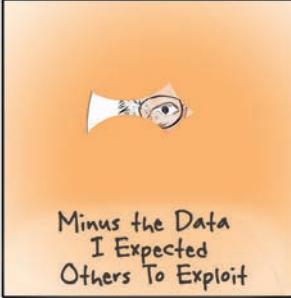
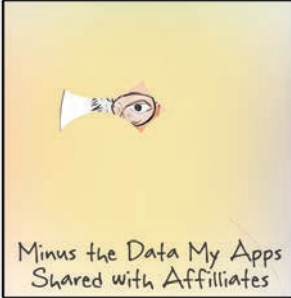
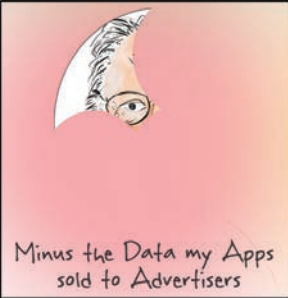
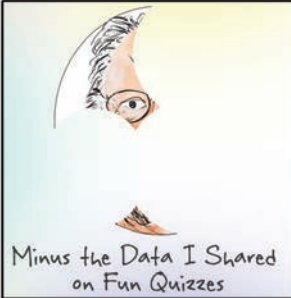
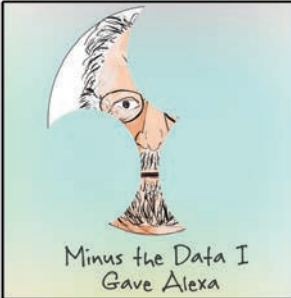
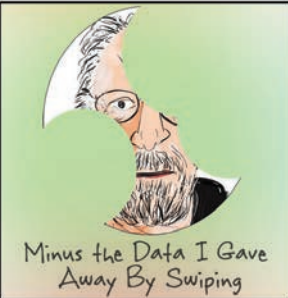
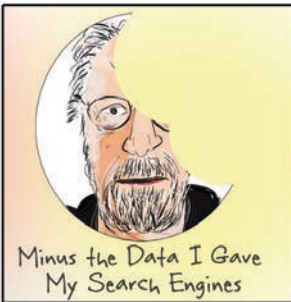
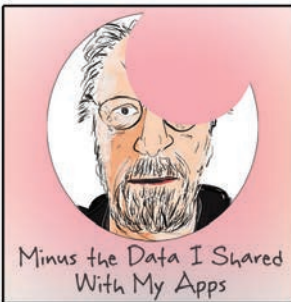
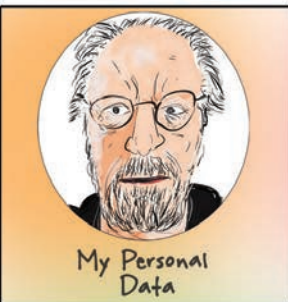
THE GOAL

Navigating City Hall should not feel like getting through a magical maze with ever-changing hoops and hurdles. Officials should recognize that their job isn't to reinforce their own power but to devise new ways to share it with residents. By lowering barriers and increasing participation, city government can become more than just something people complain about.

Send feedback to letters@marinatimes.com. Follow Kevin Frazier on Twitter @KevinTFrazier



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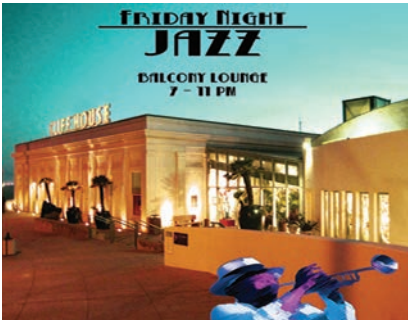
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## At the Table :: Where's the beef?



Wagyu flight at Niku Steakhouse. PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

## Know where your food comes from

### The Butcher Shop and Niku Steakhouse

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

FOR YEARS AS A FOOD WRITER I'VE stressed the importance of knowing where your food comes from, particularly meat. In today's world, where many deadly viruses are traced to poor treatment of animals, I believe it's still the most important thing to know when you buy meat or eat it in a restaurant. Nowhere is this knowledge clearer than at The Butcher Shop by Niku and at Niku Steakhouse next door.

Guy Crims, head butcher at The Butcher Shop, is a whirlwind of brilliance and passion when it comes to his craft and his product. He started working as a butcher at 14 and never looked back. Like a museum curator, Crims lines the sparkling glass case with stunningly white marbled Japanese A5 Wagyu beef, the finest in the world. The Butcher Shop, he proudly explains, is the exclusive retailer of A5 Wagyu from Ono Farms in Central Japan and the only certified Kobe retailer in San Francisco.

Most people know Japanese A5 Wagyu as Kobe beef; but while all Kobe beef is Wagyu, not all Wagyu is Kobe. Like French wine, Japan produces beef by region, or prefecture. Kobe was known as Tajima in ancient times (some still refer to it as Tajima beef) and the cattle are descendants of "kuoge Waygu," or black-haired Japanese cattle.

### SOMMELIER OF PROTEIN

For Crims, it's important that customers not only be able to learn the lineage of the A5 Wagyu beef from multiple prefectures in Japan (each of the cattle can be traced from birth) but also to feel comfortable asking questions about cooking techniques and cuts (standard cuts are available daily, but aficionados can request custom thickness or quantity). Along with A5, dry-aged domestic USDA Prime beef and Reserve grade Imperial Wagyu beef from Nebraska, domestic Heritage Kurobuta pork from Iowa, and lamb sourced from a fourth-generation Basque farm, Superior Lamb Company, are also available for purchase.

In the bookcase, you'll find Crims's personal copy of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, which he read in 1994 ("It had a profound effect on me") alongside *Clean Meat*. His father was a biker and his mother a hippie, which Crims says helped form his sensibilities. He and his apprentices use every part of the animal and keep a Shinto shrine in front of the meat, just as they do at each processing facility in Japan. "It's about love, respect, and care," Crims says. Last year The

Butcher Shop did seven of the 200 metric tons of Wagyu brought to the United States. They had the first and only bone-in Wagyu product in the Western Hemisphere. Crims is so serious about wagyu that he has a tattoo of the A5 symbol. He also sent his apprentices to learn butchery in Japan, and entrusts their creativity and vision when doing intimate "invite only" dinners at the shop.

### TRY IT ALL AT NIKU STEAKHOUSE

If you're not lucky enough to score one of those invites, check out dinner at Niku Steakhouse. You'll find meat from The Butcher Shop cooked to perfection by young chefs, under the tutelage of executive chef Dustin Falcon, who are just as passionate about wagyu as the butchers next door.

Sit at the counter in front of the grilling station and watch the care that goes into every dish. We started with briny Miyagi oysters nestled in Asian pear, horseradish "pearls" and crème fraîche; salmon tartare "tom kha" served with rice toasted and blackened with squid ink and dehydrated into thin crisps; and A5 and imperial wagyu meatballs beside a bowl with sesame seeds and an egg yolk floating in a tore soy dipping sauce.

The showstoppers are the imperial wagyu tomahawk (a Flintstone-sized bone that takes 45 minutes to cook) and the 38-ounce bone-in, dry-aged rib eye — slices of glistening ruby-hued beef encased in a caramelized crust that melts in your mouth. But for the true wagyu experience, order the A5 flight: six medium rare, two-ounce lollipops, the ideal amount for the richness of the unicorn meat, as the butchers call it (and you'll know why when you try it). Beautifully charred broccoli with chili fish caramel and a confit of maitake mushroom with pickled ramps were ideal sides. For dessert, I was hesitant about the sunchoke crème brûlée, but it turned out to be the best version I've ever had — earthy and not-too-sweet.

There are 120 West Coast wines by the glass and 180 French wines by the bottle. From Napa Valley's Keenan 2005 Cabernet Franc to the Clos Cibonne from Côtes de Provence, they're impeccably chosen to pair with the mind-blowing meal.

**The Butcher Shop by Niku Steakhouse:** 57 Division Street, 415-829-2306, 415-829-2306, [nikubutchershop.com](http://nikubutchershop.com)

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# Women in wine: Jamie Benziger of Imagery Estate Winery

BY KENNETH MAJER

IF THE NAME SOUNDS FAMILIAR, IT should. Jamie Benziger hails from the esteemed Benziger Family Winery, notable for its biodynamic, organic, and sustainable farming practices in addition to its award-winning wines. Growing up in the family business, Jaimie Benziger leapfrogged from the tutelage of her wine-maker father, Joe Benziger, and became the winemaker of Imagery Estate Winery.

Before taking over the top winemaking job at Imagery, Jamie Benziger and Joe Benziger created 35 different wines, from Malbec to Muscat. Imagery has now received numerous awards praising their unique portfolio of wines. Jamie Benziger was featured recently in *Wine Enthusiast* as one of the Top 40 under 40 Tastemakers of 2019. The annual list represents some of the best talent in the country working to push the boundaries of what’s possible in winemaking. This is just one of the achievements we can look forward to in her remarkable young career.

## GROWING UP

Energy-filled as a youngster, when Jamie Benziger wasn’t playing soccer, she was riding her pony. She always knew she wanted to join the family wine business, and as a kid she worked selling tour tickets at the Benziger Family Winery in Glen Ellen. She studied marketing at Loyola

Marymount in Los Angeles, but longed to be back in the Wine Country, and completed her wine industry studies at Sonoma State University. After interning at Gundlach Bundschu and learning more about the chemistry of wine at St. Francis and Bogle, she worked harvest in Villa Maria in New Zealand. From there it was back to the family business in Sonoma County and working side by side with her dad.

## MAKING HER MARK

As the winemaker at Imagery, Jamie Benziger is clearly not sitting on family laurels. She recently launched Imagery California, a “New Collection for the Next Generation” carrying on the Imagery tradition of going beyond the normal conceptions of what makes a high-quality wine experience. Her vision for crafting these new wines is to “add a little twist” and create something a little different from the expected. Each of the new Imagery California wines takes a traditional varietal and adds something a little out of the ordinary, like Sauvignon Blanc with a hint of Muscat.

Her approach complements the artistic legacy of Imagery: like a painting that seizes the imagination with a quirk that captures the eye. (The original artwork for the Imagery labels by the many international artists who have created them are displayed in the tasting room’s gal-



Jamie Benziger of Imagery Estate Winery. PHOTO: ERIKA COLE, COURTESY BENZIGER FAMILY WINERY

lery.) The legacy of artistry is not only the creative imagination reflected in the artwork, it’s also reflected in the artistry of the wine in the bottle.

## ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Jamie is as interested in helping other young wine professionals as she is in advancing her own career. Once asked how she would counsel women who want to enter the wine world, she offered this advice: “In the wine world, it is important to always work hard and keep driven, especially as a woman. Even though I came from a well-known wine family, it was very important for me ... that I deserved any position I held and that I was the best person for that job ... I did not want anything handed to me. It was

essential that I worked hard and earned it.”

Spoken like a real professional who understands that the core values of work and dedication are the keys to success in any endeavor. What a treat to know that young pros like Jamie go beyond their personal desires to serve as models to those who wish to follow.

Nothing more needs to be said about this remarkable young woman winemaker. Just try her wines.

**Imagery Estate Winery:** Monday–Friday 11 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Saturday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m., 14335 Sonoma Highway, Glen Ellen, 877-550-4278

*Kenneth Majer is a consultant to the wine industry. Email: ken@kenmajer.com*

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Art World  
continued from cover

obsession with Victorian culture has made him an expert at the extremely difficult chemical photographic process known as wet collodion. Invented in 1851, the process was respected for the level of detail captured in the final photo. One side of a glass plate is coated with ether, grain alcohol and nitrate cellulose, at which point the plate is dipped in silver nitrate. Exposed to light while still wet, the image must be developed and fixed immediately after making the exposure. A later alteration to the process in which an underexposed negative backed with black paper or fabric — an abrotype — became popular as did the same process backed with lacquered metal, known as a tintype.

THE PAST AS PRESENT

Berkman, who has worked with the wet collodion process since 1997, has also been working on the Zohar Studio project for more than 20 years. “I appreciate the visual code of the nineteenth century, the formality of it, the way things looked, and the mix between art and science,” says Berkman. “What intrigues me is getting inside the minds of people from another time and feeling that their time, what we now consider the past, was at one time contemporary. We are both the beneficiaries and victims of history.” This exhibition presents more than 30 intriguing photographs addressing both Jewish life and the state of scientific understanding over 150 years ago. Richly hued and dynamic in their precision and execu-



Left to right: Stephen Berkman’s *Wandering Jewess* and *Obscura Object*. PHOTOS: COURTESY CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM

tion, the photos characterize a range of dreamers, eccentrics, and malcontents embellishing upon the conventions of 19th-century studio photography. The titles of the work, steeped in ambiguity, create the idea of a broader story and mystery. *A Wandering Jewess* depicts a stern-faced woman carrying an umbrella, sitting on a chair strapped to the back of a man embarking on a journey down a winding road toward what looks to be an active volcano. *Conjoined Twins* shows identical twins linked only by a shared handlebar mustache stretching between them.

The *Absent-minded Soothsayer* squints with one eye looking forward, and as a soothsayer, possibly into the future. We are left to wonder why he is absent minded as he clutches a bugle and points a finger heavenward. In a lush jungle setting, *The Songbird and the Sharpshooter* has in its center a hirsute hunter staring into the middle distance, a bird perched on his index finger. The grandiose background and costuming hearkens back to a time when a photographic portrait was an event in which the setting and presentation was meticulously orchestrated in advance.

Nods to Surrealism emerge in photos like *Obscura Object* as a Victorian model poses in front of a painted backdrop, her head seemingly decapitated and replaced by a diminutive mechanical prop. The narratives become more arcane in works like *Remedy for Reverie*, revealing a female figure trapped in a formless black fabric gown, mechanized by her connection to a moody backdrop via a tubing attached to a kettle. The exhibition is accompanied by a 368-page catalog created by the artist and containing annotations for each photograph, a chapter on the studio, and a specially commissioned

afterword by acclaimed writer Lawrence Weschler. “Berkman’s work falls into the tradition of the artist-made museum, much like the famous Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles by the artist David Wilson,” says Lori Starr, executive director, the Contemporary Jewish Museum. “It’s a fascinating art practice that moves beyond binary questions of a fact and fiction. We are so pleased to be presenting Stephen’s first exhibition in a museum setting.” Sharon Anderson is an artist and writer in Southern California. She can be reached at [mindtheimage.com](mailto:mindtheimage.com)

The Best of Books :: What’s flying off the shelves

The Marina Books Inc. best-seller list

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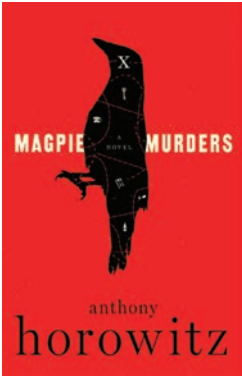
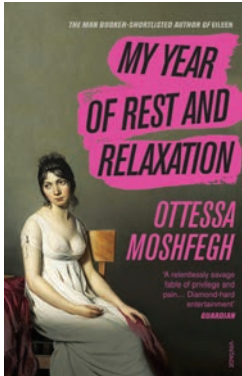
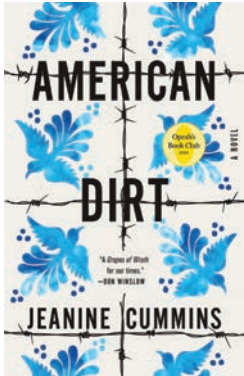
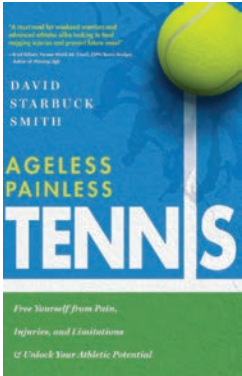
1. **Ageless Painless Tennis: Free Yourself from Pain, Injuries, and Limitations and Unlock Your Athletic Potential**, by David Starbuck Smith (paperback)
2. **Little Fires Everywhere: A Novel**, by Celeste Ng (paperback)
3. **Metropolitan Stories: A Novel**, by Christine Coulson (hardcover)
4. **American Dirt: A Novel**, by Jeanine Cummins (hardcover)
5. **My Year of Rest and Relaxation: A Novel**, by Ottessa Moshfegh (paperback)
6. **Gentleman in Moscow: A Novel**, by Amor Towles (paperback)
7. **On Grand Strategy**, by John Lewis Gaddis (paperback)
8. **North Water**, by Ian McGuire (paperback)
9. **Sapiens: A Brief History**

- of Humankind, by Yuval Noah Hariri (paperback)
10. **Magpie Murders: A Novel**, by Anthony Horowitz (paperback)

MARCH NEW RELEASES

**Writers and Lovers:** A Novel, by Lily King (March 3): Casey, a former child golf prodigy, now waits tables in the last days of a long youth, at a time when every element of her life comes to a crisis. Written with King’s trademark humor, heart, and intelligence, this transfixing novel explores the terrifying and exhilarating leap between the end of one phase of life and the beginning of another. **The Mirror and the Light**, by Hilary Mantel (March 10): Mantel brings to a triumphant close the trilogy she began with her Booker Prize-winning novels, *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*. This is the story of Thomas Cromwell, the boy from nowhere who climbs to the heights of power, offering a portrait of predator and prey,

of a contest between present and past, between royal will and a common man’s vision of a modern nation making itself through conflict, passion, and courage. **The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir**, by John Bolton (March 17): John Bolton served as National Security Advisor to President Donald Trump for 519 days. A seasoned public servant who had previously worked for former President Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush, Bolton brought to the administration 30 years of experience in international issues and a reputation for tough, blunt talk. In his memoir, he offers a substantive and factual account of his time in the room where it happened. **Our House Is on Fire: Scenes of a Family and a Planet in Crisis**, by Greta Thunberg (March 17): When climate activist Greta Thunberg was 11, her family was facing a crisis in their own home. Thunberg had stopped



eating and speaking, and her parents had reconfigured their lives to care for her. Desperate and searching for answers, her parents discovered what was at the heart of Thunberg’s distress: her imperiled future on a rapidly heating planet. Written by a remarkable family and told through the voice of an iconoclastic mother, *Our House Is*

*on Fire* is the story of how they fought their problems at home by taking global action. And it is the story of how Greta decided to go on strike from school, igniting a worldwide rebellion. Brian Pettus is the manager of Books Inc. in the Marina (2251 Chestnut Street, 415-931-3633, [booksinc.net/sfmarina](http://booksinc.net/sfmarina)).



Must-stream video

From showbiz comedy to crime drama

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

It's no longer a surprise to learn that a friend who you think might have ghosted you, fallen off the grid, or — oh no! — been kidnapped has instead become entranced by some TV series and is spending every available waking moment plowing through scores of easily accessed episodes. Binge syndrome is a real and ever-present danger in the era of digital streaming. Signs and symptoms include glassy eyes, atrophied muscles, and reliance on catch-phrases, vintage and recent.

As the bandwidths widen and more video services flood that marketplace, the need for content has exploded: Old classics are recycled, more recent shows are repurposed on new delivery platforms, fresh prestige programs are in production, and top-grade series from overseas are finding American audiences. I can't wait for the upcoming seasons of the ultra-complex, time-bending sci-fi thriller *Dark* and the dreamy, noirish Weimar Republic drama *Babylon Berlin*, both from Germany.

Meanwhile, the following three shows, all quite different and all available on Netflix, have distracted me with high-value viewing. If they appeal to you, you might lose touch with everyone in your life for an unspecified period of time. And maybe that's not a bad thing.

'CALL MY AGENT!'

The French TV series *Dix pour cent* (*Call My Agent!*) is a real find: a blithe, smart inside-showbiz comedy about the professional and personal goings-on at a high-end Parisian talent agency in constant upheaval. To sweeten the deal, genuine, internationally renowned French

stars including Isabelle Huppert, Juliette Binoche, Fabrice Luchini, Jean Dujardin, Monica Bellucci, and Isabelle Adjani are on board as fictionalized versions of themselves. The big-name guests are generally depicted as clients of the agency, former clients, or prospective clients, and they are all happy to make fun of themselves, even to the point of embarrassment, in the service of humor.

Although that could be enough to generate interest in the series, what really makes *Call My Agent!* sparkle is the ensemble cast that portrays the executives and staff of the agency. These characters are recognizable to anyone with a passing knowledge of the entertainment world and are so three-dimensional that caring about them is a fait accompli. With the blend of fictional creations and actual celebrities, there are similarities to *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Entourage*, and *Extras*, and the off-kilter workplace dynamics bring a dash of *The Office* to the proceedings. Fans of those other shows could easily find a lot to enjoy in *Call My Agent!*, which has been on the air in France since 2015. There are now 18 hours ready to watch, and Series 4 is in production with plans to release it later this year. Allons-y!

'GIRI/HAJI'

Having debuted in Britain last October, *Giri/Haji* is a thoroughly compelling, multinational mix of action, mystery, and morality play. The title is comprised of two Japanese words that translate as Duty/Shame and get to the heart of the conflicts



Call my Agent! features top French talent. PHOTO: COURTESY OF NETFLIX

that drive the series. It's an eight-episode corker starring Scottish actress Kelly Macdonald (*Boardwalk Empire*, *Trainspotting*) and a terrific but previously unknown-to-me Japanese actor named Takehiro Hira as detectives from two different worlds and cultures. Hira's Kenzo Mori travels from

Tokyo to London to look into the disappearance of his brother who had gotten himself in trouble with Yakuza mobsters. Reaching England, Mori meets Macdonald's Sarah Weitzmann, a constable with the Metropolitan

Police, and they become uneasy allies. Things ramp up from there, courtesy of various underworld adversaries who have unsavory objectives of their own.

It's smart, exciting, and surprisingly droll in spots, but doesn't stint on the drama and character development as in a more conventional crime series. *Giri/Haji* expands and enhances the genre. It's one of the coolest and most captivating procedurals I've seen since *Line of Duty*,

the excellent ongoing British series about a police anticorruption unit — and that's a sterling recommendation.

'TOAST OF LONDON'

Until I saw *Toast of London*, I didn't know how much the world needed a half-hour TV comedy about a pompous hack actor and his loony peers. *Toast of London* — the uproarious misadventures of the titular twit of a thespian Steven Toast as he flails, fumbles, and fulminates over his less-than-stellar fortunes — launched with a pilot episode in Britain back in 2012. That was followed by three six-episode seasons of the show, co-created by and starring Matt Berry. He's probably best-known in the United States for playing a porn-obsessed nobleman-turned-vampire on the FX horror-comedy series *What We Do in the Shadows*. But *Toast of London* — finally on schedule for a fourth season after a five-year break — is the surreal, sneakily savvy riot that truly and deservedly marked Berry as a BAFTA-winning comedic force.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture. Follow him on Twitter @cultureblaster

I didn't know how much the world needed a half-hour comedy about a pompous hack actor and his loony peers.

Nightlife

continued from cover

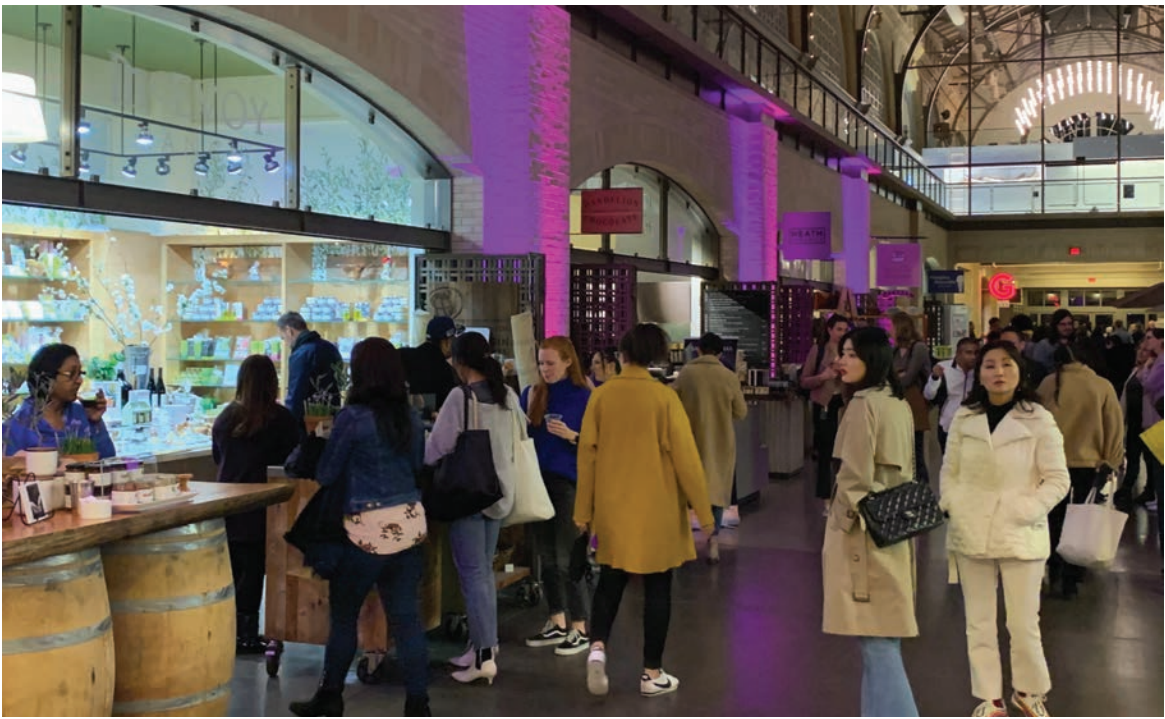
gramming includes guest speakers, music, specialty films, and unique activities like the Exploratorium's famous pitch-black tactile dome and large-scale kaleidoscope.

On March 12, the featured topic is fungi and its role in our ecosystem both as a source of food and through the fascinating benefits of psilocybin. To top off your evening you can dine at the Exploratorium's Seaglass Restaurant with waterside views featuring multicultural, locally sourced menus that showcase small producers.

After Dark Thursday tickets are \$20 (\$15 for regular daytime members); memberships are \$45 and include free admission to all Thursday night events, special bar access, and a 10 percent discount at the museum store for one year. For more information visit exploratorium.edu.

A CULTURAL FEAST

From January through September you can visit Thursday Nights until 9 p.m. at the **Asian Art Museum** offering an eclectic array of events, including dance performances, author readings, cooking demonstrations and



Guests enjoy a Third Thursday at the Ferry Building. PHOTO: NAOMI ROSE

tastings with local chefs, film screenings, and live music. Your \$10 ticket includes access to the museum's collections (special exhibitions are an additional \$10).

On Thursday, March 12, celebrate the Persian New Year with Aisan Hoss and Mehdi Parnia of Oyna Natural Foods. Arrive by 6:30 to enjoy tea and sweets. Music, dance, and storytelling will round out the evening.

Sunday at the Museum — the museum's newly renovated cafe — offers happy hour (4–6 p.m.) and dinner (4–8 p.m.) on Thursdays. For more information, visit asianart.org.

ROCK YOUR INNER SCIENCE GEEK

Over at the **California Academy of Sciences** in Golden Gate Park, you can visit NightLife from 6–9:30 p.m. on Thursdays

and enjoy seasonal craft cocktails from multiple bars throughout the museum and noshes from the Academy Food Cart in the front lobby accompanied by live music. Each Thursday has a different theme — on March 5, NightLife celebrates International Women's Day, honoring women in science. All science exhibitions are on view, including free admission to the Morrison Planetarium (passes

required and tend to sell out) and the Rainforest Dome.

Advance tickets average \$15 and admission to programs and lectures is first-come, first served. For a casual dinner, the Academy Cafe, featuring local, seasonal, and sustainable fare, is open during NightLife. For additional information, visit calacademy.org.

LATE HOURS FOR ART BUFFS

If you're south of Market, check out the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's** late hours on Thursdays — until 9 p.m. — providing a chance to linger in the museum's spacious galleries or to check out a new exhibition; films are often shown on Thursday evenings and private, guided tours are available. Michelin-starred In Situ with star chef Corey Lee at the helm offers a unique dining experience in a spare, minimalist space with a gourmet menu, a welcome respite from a hectic day. General admission is \$25, exclusive of special exhibitions. Visit sfmoma.org for additional information.

Why wait for the weekend to plan a night on the town in the city by the bay?

Email: julie@marinatimes.com



# MARCH EVENTS

## NOT TO MISS THIS MONTH

### MAJOR EVENTS

**S.F. Ballet: A Midsummer Night's Dream**  
Various days, March 6–15  
S.F. Ballet (War Memorial Opera House)  
George Balanchine's first full-length ballet, this Shakespearean favorite returns triumphantly to San Francisco after a nearly 35-year absence and features music by Felix Mendelssohn. \$35–\$399, 415-865-2000, [sfballet.org](http://sfballet.org)

**American Tulip Day**  
Saturday, March 7, 1–4:30 p.m.  
Union Square  
The public is invited to enjoy over 100,000 tulips on display and to pick their very own bunch. Free, [flowerbulbday.com](http://flowerbulbday.com)

**169th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival**  
Saturday, March 14  
Parade: Market St. (at 2nd) to Grove St., 11: 30 a.m.  
Festival: Civic Center, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Join the revelry with visitors from near and far all the way to City Hall where the celebration continues. Free, [stpattricksday-sf.org](http://stpattricksday-sf.org)

**14th Annual S.F. International Chocolate Salon**  
Saturday, March 21, 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.  
S.F. County Fair Building  
Indulge in chocolatey concoctions from dozens of chocolatiers, attend demos and presentations, chef and author talks, and more. \$20–\$30, 415-345-7575, [sfchocolatesalon.com](http://sfchocolatesalon.com)

**74th Annual Macy's Flower Show**  
Daily, March 22–April 5, 10 a.m.–9 p.m.  
Macy's Union Square  
In this year's theme, Voyage to Oceanum: A Sea of Inspiration, visitors will embark on an exciting under-the-ocean odyssey, discovering long-lost treasures and aquatic beauty along the way. Visit website for details. Free, 415-397-3333, [social.macys.com/flower-show/](http://social.macys.com/flower-show/)



**8th Annual Presidio Picnic**  
Sundays, March 29–Oct. 25, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Main parade ground, the Presidio  
Enjoy food from a rotating lineup of 30-plus international mobile food vendors, yoga lessons, learn-to-ride bike lessons for kids, and cultural dance performances. Visit website for schedule. Free (food for purchase), 415-561-4323, [presidio.gov](http://presidio.gov)  
PHOTO: ROBIN EAGAN

### COMMUNITY CORNER

**Many Voices, One Art**  
Saturday, March 7, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Calvary Presbyterian Church (2125 Fillmore St.)  
The S.F. Bach Choir hosts this exciting day of singing, learning, making friends, and finding community through music with a variety of workshops. All are welcome — no music reading or vocal training necessary. Free, 855-473-2224, [sfbach.org](http://sfbach.org)

**Wonder Women of S.F. Walking Tour**  
Saturday, March 7, 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m.  
Washington Square, NE corner  
Walk almost two miles through North Beach to honor the many women who have contributed to San Francisco's legacy. RSVP required at [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com)

**Sunday Streets: Mission**  
Sunday, March 8, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.  
Valencia St. (Duboce to 26th)  
Come celebrate the kickoff of the 2020 season and experience the car-free stretch designed to get you out and active in our diverse neighborhoods. Free, [sundaystreetssf.com](http://sundaystreetssf.com)

### GALAS & BENEFITS

**Evening of Wishes: Wishes in Bloom**  
Friday, March 6, 6:30–10 p.m.  
Ritz-Carlton (600 Stockton St.)  
Join Make-a-Wish Foundation's spring gala and create an opportunity for every eligible child to experience the joy of life beyond illness. Enjoy a cocktail reception, silent auction, three-course dinner and local wine, entertainment, and a live auction. \$500, 415-982-9474, [sf.wish.org](http://sf.wish.org)

**25th Annual Art Inspiring Hope Gala: Atlantis**  
Saturday, March 14, 5 p.m.  
Festival Pavilion, Fort Mason Center  
Adorn yourself in a sparkling sea treasure and dine and dance amid images of dolphins and sea turtles to support Camp Okizu, a summer program for Bay Area children with cancer and their families at this gala featuring gourmet food, specialty cocktails, headline entertainment, and more. \$375 & up, 415-382-1503, [okizu.org](http://okizu.org)

**26th Annual Red Cross Gala**  
Saturday, March 21, 5:45 p.m.–midnight  
City Hall  
Dedicated to recognizing local heroes and supporting the Red Cross mission to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies, this event will feature a cocktail reception, three-course dinner, live auction, entertainment, and an after-party. \$135 & up, [redcross.org](http://redcross.org)

**Legacy Benefit for La Cocina**  
Saturday, March 28, 6–10 p.m.  
Swig Suite, Fairmont S.F. (950 Mason St.)  
Join Spinsters of S.F. in this elegant affair featuring wine tasting, an open bar, appetizers, silent auction, and more. \$200 & up, [sfspinsters.com](http://sfspinsters.com)

### ARTS & CULTURE

**17th Annual Crossroads Irish-American Festival**  
Various days March 1–April 4  
Various Bay Area venues  
This literary, musical, and cultural event invites the public to come together around inspired, creative, and relevant events regarding Irish and Irish-American history and culture. Visit website for pricing, 415-810-3774, [irishamericancrossroads.org](http://irishamericancrossroads.org)

**Come to Your Census: Who Counts in America**  
Tue.–Sun., March 27–July 31, 11 a.m.  
Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission St.)  
Over 25 artists working across a range of disciplines (paintings, films, photographs, and more) will offer art-based explorations of identity, visibility, and citizenship. The public is invited to touch, respond to, or co-create work on a daily basis. Free, 415-978-2700, [ybca.org](http://ybca.org)

### MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

**The Chronicles of San Francisco**  
Thu.–Tue. through May 31, 10 a.m. (tour 1 p.m.)  
Roberts Family Gallery, SFMOMA  
This soaring digital mural by internationally recognized artist JR depicts a cross-section of the daily life of nearly 1,200 people in the city, created from films and interviews. Visit website for closing hours. Free, 415-357-4000, [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org)

**Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving**  
Tue.–Sun. March 21–July 26, 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m.  
de Young Museum (50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr.)  
This exhibition examines how politics, gender, disability, and national identity influenced Kahlo's diverse modes of creativity and features personal items including photographs, paintings, drawings, and more. \$28, 415-760-3600, [famsf.org](http://famsf.org)



**Healing in Color**  
Wed.–Mon., March 25–Aug. 24, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.  
Lower Lobby Gallery, Walt Disney Family Museum  
This exhibition showcases artworks created by children receiving cancer treatment who have been encouraged to explore the intersection of fantasy and reality. Free, 415-345-6800, [waltdisney.org](http://waltdisney.org)  
PHOTO: COURTESY WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM

### THEATER

**42nd Street Moon: A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder**  
Wed.–Sun. through March 15  
Gateway Theatre (215 Jackson St.)  
When a commoner finds he's eighth in line for an earldom, he begins fiendishly plotting to move to the top of the heap. Part comedy of manners and part music hall romp — you'll be dying of laughter. \$31–\$72, 415-255-8207, [42ndstmoon.org](http://42ndstmoon.org)

**Magic Theatre: Don't Eat the Mangos**  
Tue.–Sun. through March 22  
Landmark Bldg. E, Fort Mason Center  
A hurricane wreaks havoc on the beautiful island as sisters struggle to care for their ailing father. Secrets and ugly truths are revealed that cause them to confront their legacy, wrestle with betrayal, stay true to their familia and homeland, and seek a satisfying revenge. \$15–\$75, 415-441-8822, [magictheatre.org](http://magictheatre.org)

**ACT: Toni Stone**  
Tue.–Sun., March 5–29  
Geary Theater (405 Geary St.)  
Enjoy the real-life story of a Bay Area athlete, the first woman to play professional baseball. \$11–\$175, 415-749-2228, [act-sf.org](http://act-sf.org)

**S.F. Playhouse: Real Women Have Curves**  
Tue.–Sun., March 17–April 25  
Kensington Park Hotel (450 Post St.)  
Set in a tiny factory in East L.A., five full-figured Latina employees work to deliver an impossible order amid the threat of deportation in this microcosm of the Latina immigrant experience that celebrates real women's bodies, the power of women, and the incredible bond that happens when women work together. \$35–\$125, 415-677-9596, [sfplayhouse.org](http://sfplayhouse.org)

**Broadway S.F.: Men are From Mars; Women are From Venus**  
Fri.–Sat., March 20–21  
Marines' Memorial Theatre  
This one-man fusion of theatrical comedy based on the best-selling book of the 1990s by John Gray moves swiftly through a series of vignettes, and covers everything from dating and marriage to the bedroom. \$38–\$75, 888-746-1799, [broadwaysf.com](http://broadwaysf.com)

### MUSIC: CONTEMPORARY

**The Fab Four: Ultimate Beatles Tribute**  
Saturday, March 7, 8p.m.  
Palace of Fine Arts Theatre  
The Emmy Award-winning Fab Four has amazed audiences around the world and is elevated above every other Beatles Tribute due to their precise attention to detail including three costume changes representing every era of the Beatles ever-changing career. \$45–\$65, 800-653-8000, [palaceoffinearts.org](http://palaceoffinearts.org)

**An Evening with Bernadette Peters**  
Friday, March 27, 8 p.m.  
Davies Symphony Hall  
One of Broadway's brightest stars presents an evening of music from her Broadway shows and Grammy award-winning albums with standards from Rodgers & Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, and many more. \$32–\$129, 415-864-6000, [sfsymphony.org](http://sfsymphony.org)

### MUSIC: CLASSICAL

**Beet250Ven Anniversary Festival**  
Sunday, March 15, 2 p.m.  
Old First Church (1751 Sacramento St.)  
Enjoy a special three-hour concert evocative of gatherings from Beethoven's time with movements from piano sonatas, arias, and short instrumental works performed by some of the Bay Area's leading performers, followed by a Brats and Biergarten reception. \$25, 415-474-1608, [oldfirstconcerts.org](http://oldfirstconcerts.org)

**Telegraph Quartet**  
Tuesday, March 17, noon  
St. Mary's Cathedral (660 California St.)  
The quartet joins with soprano Abigail Fischer to present the world premiere of composer Robert Sirota's Contrapassos for Soprano and String Quartet with libretto by Stevan Cavalier. Free, [telegraphquartet.com](http://telegraphquartet.com)

### DANCE

**Huma(N)ature**  
Friday, March 6, Thu.–Sat., March 12–14  
Dance Mission Theater (3316 24th St.)  
This dance, theater, and circus production will investigate humanity's relationship to nature — our dominion over it, our influence upon it, our reliance on its systems, and our place within it. A different show is performed each night. \$15–\$40, 415-826-4441, [dancemissiontheater.org](http://dancemissiontheater.org)

**Drupadi**  
Sat.–Sun., March 14–15  
Presidio Theatre (99 Moraga Ave.)  
This woman-centered retelling of the Mahabharata's central arc is presented in cinematic shadow as Drupadi tells her own story — the men's world of the epic through the eyes of a powerful woman, who takes all five Pandawa brothers as her husbands and equals, transcends unspeakable humiliation at the hands of the Kurawas, and bears witness to the devastation of cataclysmic war. \$30 & \$100, 415-392-4400, [presidiotheatre.org](http://presidiotheatre.org)

**ODC: Dance Downtown**  
Thu.–Sun., March 26–29  
YBCA Theater (700 Howard St.)  
The program features Grassland, by Brenda Way and KT Nelson, a nod to nature's diversity, where beauty is found in both variety and oddities set to a score by Marcelo Zarvos and Speaking Volumes, about building: a facility, a dance company, and a community, set to a score by Joy Cloldt. \$40–\$80, 415-978-2787, [odcdance.org](http://odcdance.org)

### NIGHTLIFE

**Jim Brickman**  
Fri.–Sat., March 6–7  
Feinstein's at the Nikko (222 Mason St.)  
Don't miss this hit-making songwriter, best-selling solo pianist, and multiple award-winner on his 25th Anniversary "Greatest Hits" tour. \$50 & \$70, 415-403-1800, [feinsteinsf.com](http://feinsteinsf.com)

**Ásgeir**  
Monday, March 9, 8 p.m.  
Great American Music Hall (859 O'Farrell St.)  
Deriving from folk roots and a scope of other personal influences, Icelandic singer-songwriter Ásgeir approaches emotional expression with sincerity and vulnerability. \$22–\$47, 415-885-0750, [slimspresents.com](http://slimspresents.com)

**The Real Irish Comedy Fest**  
Wednesday, March 11, 8 p.m.  
The Independent (628 Divisadero St.)  
Come get a blast of blarney and Irish laughter just in time for St. Paddy's Day with the best blend of Irish comedic talent, accents included. \$25, 415-771-1421, [theindependentsf.com](http://theindependentsf.com)

**Frances Cone**  
Monday, Mar. 25, 8 p.m.  
The Independent (628 Divisadero St.)  
The band will perform music from their new album, Late Riser. The evening will also feature the rock-rooted music of Susto. \$13–24, 415-771-1421, [theindependentsf.com](http://theindependentsf.com)



FILMS & LECTURES



Ai Weiwei: Yours Truly

**Wednesday, March 11, 7–9 p.m.**  
**Presidio Theatre (99 Moraga Ave.)**  
This documentary reveals the stories behind the postcards generated by thousands of visitors to @Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz exhibition and sent to prisoners of conscience around the globe, capturing the tremendous impact these messages had on their recipients and their causes. A Q. and A. follows with film director, Cheryl Haines, founder of the For-Site Foundation. *Free*, 415-561-5300, *RSVP at eventbrite.com*.  
PHOTO: JAN STÜRMANN

**Suffrage 100: A centennial celebration — Women’s Right to Vote: How the West Was Won**  
**Thursday, March 12, 6:30–8:30 p.m.**  
**Mechanics’ Institute (57 Post St.)**  
Journalist and award-winning author Elaine Elinson, who has written extensively about women’s suffrage, will be in conversation with Professor Jennifer Helton, whose scholarship includes a broad history of the Suffrage Movement. \$15, *eventbrite.com*

**17th Annual International Ocean Film Festival**  
**Daily, March 12–15**  
**Cowell Theater, Fort Mason, Roxie Theater, and San Rafael Film Center**  
View all things aquatic in the film fest and be inspired to become a better ocean steward to help to protect our oceans. \$20–\$250, 415-561-6251, *oceanfilmfest.org*

**Robert Reich**  
**Monday, March 23, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Sidney Goldstein Theater (275 Hayes St.)**  
The former Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration, Reich has written 15 books; in The System, he shows how wealth and power have interacted to install an elite oligarchy, eviscerate the middle class, and undermine democracy; in conversation with Astra Taylor. \$29 & \$45, 415-392-4400, *cityarts.net*

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

**33rd Annual Pi Day**  
**Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.**  
**Exploratorium**  
Enjoy pi-themed activities to honor the never-ending number 3.14159 ... including a procession (1:59 p.m.) with live music to the Pi Shrine — followed by, of course, pie. \$30. 415-528-4444, *exploratorium.edu*

**How Many People Can Earth Support?**  
**Tuesday, March 24, 6 p.m.**  
**Commonwealth Club (110 The Embarcadero)**  
What if the Earth’s carrying capacity is limited to three billion humans and humanity’s century-long binge has caused an unsustainable ecological debt that must be paid down promptly or else cataclysm awaits? Hear what Christopher K. Tucker of the American Geographic Society has to say. \$20, 415-597-6705, *commonwealthclub.org*

POTABLES & EDIBLES

**St. Patrick’s Day**  
**Tuesday, March 17, 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.**  
**Sur la Table (2224 Union St.)**  
Forget green beer — celebrate with an Irish-inspired feast: Irish cheddar and spring onion soda bread and mustard and honey-glazed corned beef. You’ll get plenty of hands-on practice braising cabbage, mashing potatoes, and baking a bittersweet chocolate cake infused with Irish whiskey. \$79, 800-243-0852, *surlatable.com*

**14th Annual California Artisan Cheese Festival**  
**Fri.–Sun., March 27–29**  
**Sonoma County Event Center (1350 Bennett Valley Rd.), Santa Rosa**  
Experience chef demonstrations and pairings, farm tours, and more in this weekend all about cheese. \$25–\$150, 707-837-1928, *artisancheesefestival.com*

**7th Annual BrewFest**  
**Saturday, March 28, 1 p.m.**  
**Sports Basement Presidio (610 Old Mason St.)**  
Enjoy unlimited tastings from local breweries, games, music, food (for purchase) from The Grilled Cheese Guy, and more. Proceeds benefit Habitat for Humanity Greater S.F. \$10 & 15, 415-934-2900, *sportsbasement.com*

**21st Annual Whiskies of the World Expo**  
**Saturday, March 28, 6–9 p.m.**  
**Hornblower yacht S.F. Belle (Pier 3)**  
Sample over 200 whiskies and meet the distillers who make them in this event featuring pairings, seminars, buffet, and more. Proceeds benefit Casa Circulo Cultural. \$140, 408 225-0446, *whiskiesoftheworld.com*

SPORTS, HEALTH & WELLNESS

**Soulflow Yoga @ the Palace**  
**Wednesday, March 4, 6:15–9 p.m.**  
**Palace of Fine Arts**  
Join this evening slow vinyasa-style sensory experience to move your body, soothe your eyes with stunning visuals, and experience sonic sounds and dope beats. \$26 & \$30, *eventbrite.com*

**8th Annual Nutrition & Wellness Fair**  
**Thursday, March 19, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.**  
**Lobby, CPMC (2100 Webster St.)**  
Celebrate National Nutrition Month and enjoy food demos, healthful recipes, local health and wellness resources, free health screenings, raffle prizes, and more. *Free*, 415-923-3155, *chrccsf.org*

**Flow Piano Sound Bath**  
**Friday, March 27, 8–9:30 p.m.**  
**Grace Cathedral (1100 California St.)**  
This one-of-a-kind live musical performance and meditation experience is led by award-winning composer and pianist Ravé Mehta to celebrate the Spring Equinox. Meditation experience not required; bring a yoga mat and/or something to keep you warm and comfortable. \$25–\$95, *eventbrite.com*

CHILD’S PLAY

**A Tradition of Making: California Native Basketry**  
**Tues.–Sat. through August, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.**  
**Randall Museum (199 Museum Way)**  
This interactive exhibition explores the history and art of baskets and basket making by Native Californians and includes weaving stations for hands-on learning of basic basket making techniques. *Free*, 415-554-9600, *randallmuseum.org*

**S.F. Sea Scouts Open House**  
**Saturday, March 14, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.**  
**Aquatic Park (3500 Van Ness Ave.)**  
Sea Scouts leadership-based sailing club invites all local youth and their families to attend a special day of sailing, rowing, free food, and knot tying. No previous boating experience required, dress warmly. *Free*, *RSVP at seascout.family/openhouse*

**Mark Foehringer’s Alice in Wonderland**  
**Sat.–Sun., March 21–22, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.**  
**Cowell Theater, Fort Mason Center**  
This 50-minute dance theatre version based on the Lewis Carroll’s classic casts Alice as a heroine who faces and solves challenges, and is set to a musical score by Camille Saint-Saëns. \$21–\$43, 415-345-7575, *mfdpsf.org*

JUST FOR FUN

**The Great S.F. Crystal Fair**  
**Sat.–Sun., March 7–8, 10 a.m.**  
**S.F. County Fair Bldg. (1199 Ninth Ave.)**  
This magical mix of crystals, minerals, beads, jewelry, and the healing arts features over 50 vendors. \$12, 415-383-7837, *crystalfair.com*

E-mail: *calendar@marinatimes.com*

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**Art & History Talks** -Artists, Scholars, & Authors: Painting with Light, Utopian Architecture, Transcendent Landscapes, Stained Glass, more.  
**Obi Kaufman** - naturalist, author, painter of California’s natural treasures.

**Robert Salazar**, NASA, on origami and harmony.  
**Lila Higgins**, Natural History Museum, LA: “A Love Letter to Nature in the City”  
“Bioblitz” walk led by Calif. Academy of Sciences  
**Nature and Art Engagement for all ages:** nature rubbings, treasure hunts, rock painting, nature sunprints, and more.  
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LudoSport instructors Michael Christopher (left) and Michael Masangkay (right) demonstrate proper lightsaber sparring. PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

## LudoSport: A tough workout

### The art of lightsaber combat

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

**G**YMS HAVE ALWAYS BORED ME because I grew up as the only child of a high school sports coach who instilled a love of sports in me at a young age. I played catcher on softball teams and did Muay Thai kickboxing with a private trainer. When I developed anxiety disorder, a psychiatrist prescribed drugs that had weight gain side effects (a career in food writing didn't help). I gave my stepsister a subscription to Nutrisystem for Christmas which we're doing together, and as of press time I've lost 14 pounds. I hike regularly with my pit bulls Skylar and Blue (a combined 150 pounds of muscle), but still wanted something more intense, so when my friend Kin told me about LudoSport I was intrigued.

Founded nearly 14 years ago in Italy, LudoSport began at a party when three friends, all martial artists, started play fighting with model lightsabers like the ones seen in the Star Wars series. They quickly realized it could be a real sport, so after three years studying all things Star Wars, they created LudoSport in Milan. The academy now has around 40 "halls" throughout the United States and Europe. The first in America and sole West Coast branch is in San Francisco, where members gather for two to four hours on Saturdays to learn techniques and spar with real lightsabers (Polaris sabers, manufactured by the Italian company Lodicule, are the weapon of choice and start at nearly \$400). With my background in softball and kickboxing, I thought, how tough can it be to learn how to use a lightsaber?

#### SATURDAYS WITH THE SABERS

Upon arrival, we are greeted by dean of the San Francisco academy, Michael Masangkay, the 2018 U.S. style champion. He also represented the United States in the International Champions Area that same year. An instructor teaching Form I and the more advanced Course Y, he is an all-around athlete who has completed a 70.3 Ironman and triathlons. He takes the more advanced students to the other side of the room.

Our instructor is Michael Christopher, rector of the academy and certified in Form I and II (he represented the United States at the International Champions

Arena in 2017 and 2019). He studied dance and martial arts as a teen, and that focus on body movement proved perfect for LudoSport. We start with a light warmup and then learn to turn on the lightsabers (it's more complicated than you might imagine). Because LudoSport was founded in Italy, commands are in Italian and the techniques are called "forms" (so as not to conflict with any Star Wars copyrights). The first is "Guardia" ("guard") — one foot slightly in front, a bit like fencing. The lightsaber handle, or hilt, is held close to the pelvis at a 45-degree angle. "This is not a sword," Christopher says. Scoring rules, he explains, mean aiming beneath the neck, and above the

**With my background  
in softball and  
kickboxing, I thought,  
how tough can this be?**

knees. When he shouts, "fendente!" ("slash") we tap our sparring partners lightly on the head. Next we learn "destra" (right) and "sinistra" (left) attack moves and how to block them. Suddenly I realize that softball and kickboxing won't help me in LudoSport as the motions are dancelike, precise, and complex, made up of various coordinated arm and leg movements as you try to strike your partners or block their attempts to strike you.

After nearly two hours, I still feel like a klutz, especially when the two Michaels engage in a combat demo of ethereal, elegant forms. At the end of class, each newbie must spar with Christopher (he's gentle on us). The familiar sound of the lightsabers clashing (even if you've only seen one Star Wars film you know it) is exhilarating, and I began to see why people enjoy LudoSport. Still, I feel deflated at my lack of prowess. As the daughter of a high school sports coach, I expect to "get it" from the start. But Christopher has some soothing words of wisdom: "What you learned here today takes a year or more to master." In other words — or better yet in the words of Yoda — to master LudoSport, "Patience you must have my young Padawan."

**LudoSport:** Form I class Saturday 2:30-4:30 p.m., \$40-\$80, Studiomix SF, 1000 Van Ness Ave., 415-910-5545, [usa.ludosport.net](http://usa.ludosport.net).

E-mail: [susan@marinatimes.com](mailto:susan@marinatimes.com). Follow the Marina Times on Twitter @TheMarinaTimes and like us on Facebook @MarinaTimes





It's not all about you, even when it is. PHOTO: ANTONIO GUILLEM

# It takes a village

## An injury results in an important lesson

BY LIZ FARRELL

OVER THE HOLIDAYS OUR FAMILY ventured across the world for an unforgettable and life-changing experience in South Africa. We went on safari and saw so many animals up close in their natural habitat, we explored wine country, and saw all the sights in Cape Town. One of the most memorable experiences was a day in a nearby village. The villagers had to walk to get fresh water, had three-room schoolhouses, and often lived with extended family. We saw first-hand where the African proverb “it takes a village” comes from. Many parents work on the nature reserves or safari camps and spend several weeks at a time there, so child raising is done by grandparents or extended family.

At the end of our trip I took a bad fall sand boarding and had emergency surgery for a fractured collar bone. I had no idea that the impactful experience I had in the village was a sort of foreshadowing to what the next month would hold for me. I learned a lot about myself and the true meaning of it takes a village.

### IT'S O.K. TO ASK FOR HELP

I came home in a considerable amount of pain, was not able to drive or do much, and needed to rest and allow my body to heal. This sounds like an easy recovery plan but with three active children, a dog, and an upcoming move, it was anything but. My husband went above and beyond to help and take care of me but with a busy full-time job he couldn't do it all. I realized I enjoy helping others but have a hard time asking for help. I tend to think I can do it all and anything less is a sign of weakness. Sometimes it takes a drastic experience to make me realize there is no weakness in asking for or needing help. My village, which includes extended family, rallied around us with meals, dog walks, laundry, carpools, and help getting us packed and prepped to move. When we can't do it on our own either physically or emotionally, it is invaluable to have a village to lean on.

### ACCEPT THE HELP

Another part of having an amazing village is when that village knows what you need before you even ask. By the time we arrived home, we had meals set up several times a week for the following three

weeks. We had an outpouring of help and support, but I'll admit there came a point where I thought I couldn't ask one more person to do something. I was tired of asking, I was tired of being needy, and I just wanted to get in my car and drive to the grocery store myself.

One of my friends ran into my sister and told her she wanted to help but didn't know how. My sister told her, “She won't ask for help but if you show up and offer it, she won't turn you down.” This was true. Whether it was a ride to physical therapy or help cleaning out closets for the move, I needed help because I couldn't do any lifting or move my arm much. Friends came to help pack and take things to Goodwill. I learned to accept the help and in turn became a good delegator.

### GRATITUDE

I am now more than a month out from the accident, and have been cleared to drive and have resumed a lot of normal activities. If there is one thing this experience taught me, it was gratitude. Gratitude for health, and that this was what I called a “fixable problem.” Gratitude for the countless family and friends for their help and support. I always try to look for silver linings in tough situations, and the one here was the number of friends who came to visit and help keep my spirits up — many whom I don't often see.

I can truly say without a doubt our family would not have been able to get through

January without our village. I am thankful for the African village that allowed me to see and experience how important it is to have a village, to lean on your village when you need it, and in

turn to help and support others to keep the village thriving and strong. I had no idea that day how important those lessons would be in my own life, and I am grateful for the life lessons the accident has taught me. No matter whether it is a new baby, death of a family member, an injury or a major life-altering event, look to your village — they are there and willing to help.

*Liz Farrell is the mother of three young children and the founder of TechTalks, a consulting group to help schools and families have productive and healthful conversations around social media and technology. Email: liz@marinatimes.com*

I realized I enjoy helping others but have a hard time asking for help.



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### March Outreach 2020

Child support matters can be complicated, stressful, and confusing. The Department of Child Support Services helps parents understand the process so they know their rights and options for making and receiving support payments. Call us today at (866) 901-3212 or visit our office at 617 Mission Street to learn how we can help. Information is also available online at [www.sfgov.org/dcsc](http://www.sfgov.org/dcsc).

### GET FREE, TRUSTED HELP WITH YOUR CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION!

The San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship Initiative provides free legal help from community immigration service providers at free workshops. Resources for the citizenship application fee are available onsite. Learn more at [sfcitizenship.org](http://sfcitizenship.org)

When: Saturday, March 14, 2020. Registration open from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm. No appointment needed!

Where: City College of San Francisco, Cafeteria, 50 Frida Kahlo Way, San Francisco, CA 94112

### APPLY TO BECOME A CENSUS TAKER!

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau is responsible for conducting the nationwide census. The Census Bureau is recruiting to fill important temporary positions with great pay (\$30/hour) and flexible hours for Spring-Summer 2020. Be a Census Taker and make a difference in your community! Apply online NOW at [2020census.gov/jobs](http://2020census.gov/jobs).

### Make a Difference, Become a Literacy Volunteer

Half of San Francisco's 3rd and 4th graders are not reading at grade level. By volunteering to tutor through the Library's award-winning FOG Readers program, you can help students in grades 1-4 increase their confidence and gain half a grade level within the first three months. Currently, there are more than 300 children waiting for a volunteer to help change their lives. For more information, visit [sfpl.org/fog](http://sfpl.org/fog). To get started, email [readers@sfpl.org](mailto:readers@sfpl.org).

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### Sunshine Ordinance Task Force

The Task Force advises the Board of Supervisors and provides information to City departments on appropriate ways in which to implement the Sunshine Ordinance; to ensure that deliberations of commissions, boards, councils and other agencies of the City and County are conducted before the people and that City operations are open to the people's review.

Visit <https://sfbos.org/sunshine-ordinance-task-force> for upcoming term expirations or vacancies.

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

CNS-3344573#



# The Marina Times Real Estate Market Report: January 2020

By Compass

## SINGLE FAMILY HOME SALES

NEIGHBORHOOD	ADDRESS	BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS	SALE PRICE	ABOVE/AT/BELOW ASKING PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Cow Hollow (no sales)					
Lake St.	191-93 21st Avenue	3BR/3BA	\$1,885,000	Below	49
	1740 Lake Street	3BR/2+BA	\$2,850,000	At	55
Laurel Heights (no sales)					
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina	134 Alhambra	3BR/3BA	\$3,100,000	Below	82
Nob Hill (no sales)					
North Beach (no sales)					
Pacific Heights	1819 Baker Street	5BR/4BA	\$2,250,000	At	1
	1942 Pacific Avenue	6BR/4+BA	\$5,650,000	Below	83
Presidio Heights	3305 Washington Street	3BR/3BA	\$3,700,000	At	0
	3530 Washington Street	5BR/4+BA	\$8,300,000	Below	0
Russian Hill	1110 Green Street	4BR/5+BA	\$9,950,000	Below	83
	2626 Larkin Street	6BR/6+BA	\$20,000,000	Below	60
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	2122 Union Street	1BR/1BA	\$922,500	Below	84
	44 Service	2BR/2BA	\$1,220,000	Above	16
	2820 Greenwich Street #3	3BR/2BA	\$2,072,500	Below	92
Lake St.	225 26th Avenue #2	4BR/3BA	\$1,590,000	Below	117
	153 23rd Avenue	3BR/3+BA	\$1,775,000	Above	57
	124 9th Avenue	3BR/3BA	\$2,825,000	Above	6
Laurel Heights (no sales)					
Lone Mountain (no sales)					
Marina	2243 Francisco Street	2BR/1BA	\$1,725,000	Below	67
	1456 Chestnut Street #1	3BR/2BA	\$2,150,000	Above	12
Nob Hill	1177 California Street #333	1BR/1BA	\$749,000	At	74
	1177 California St. #1616	3BR/3+BA	\$2,750,000	Above	15
	1333 Jones Street #805	2BR/2BA	\$2,887,500	Below	398
	1200 California Street #27D	2BR/2BA	\$3,850,000	At	0
North Beach	600 Chestnut Street #102	2BR/2BA	\$1,205,000	Above	9
Pacific Heights	1817 California Street #207	1BR/1BA	\$750,000	Above	37
	2999 California Street #42	1BR/1BA	\$949,000	At	55
	2201 Sacramento St. #404	1BR/1BA	\$1,125,000	At	6
	1790 Green Street	2BR/1BA	\$1,190,000	Below	0
	1800 Washington St. #619	2BR/2BA	\$1,350,000	Above	23
	2205 Sacramento St. #301	2BR/1+BA	\$1,620,000	Below	50
	1999 Broadway #21	3BR/3BA	\$2,150,000	Above	0
	2528 California Street	3BR/3BA	\$2,250,000	Below	99
	1999 Broadway #51	3BR/3BA	\$2,280,000	Below	73
	3135 Sacramento Street	3BR/3BA	\$2,525,000	Above	0
	2000 Baker Street	4BR/3+BA	\$2,925,000	Below	99
Presidio Heights (no sales)					
Russian Hill	900 Filbert Street	2BR/2+BA	\$1,875,000	Below	38
	2390 Hyde Street #1A	3BR/2BA	\$2,500,000	Above	4
	2222 Hyde Street #6	3BR/3BA	\$3,195,000	At	95
Sea Cliff (no sales)					
Telegraph Hill	33 Midway Street #301	2BR/1+BA	\$1,100,000	Above	22

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 Jay Costello, Manager, Compass Real Estate, 1880 Lombard Street, 415.321.4274, jay.costello@compass.com, www.compass.com

## Real Estate Reporter ∷ Industry changes



This is not your grandparents’ real estate world anymore. PHOTO: PAULBR75

# Buyers — and sellers? — beware

## As Zillow and others change the home-buying landscape, it is unclear who wins

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

THIS MONTH, LET’S CHECK IN ON A few trends that are impacting the real estate market.

### CAN I BUY AND SELL YOUR HOUSE?

If you are looking through home listings in an effort to buy a home, or perhaps to find an agent to help you sell your home, you have probably noticed quite a few changes in recent years. Some longstanding companies have gone away, closed or merged with larger firms. You might have noticed that Zephyr is now part of Corcoran Global Living, or that Compass has successfully grown into a huge market presence in the Bay Area. Your favorite agent might now be with another company, or might have struck out on his or her own.

Meanwhile, there have been some new entrants into the market, signaling a change not just in the competitive Realtor-on-Realtor business but in the inventory of available housing on the market.

In a recent political roundtable I moderate at The Commonwealth Club, investigative reporter Molly E. McCluskey noted a significant development. “Platforms like Zillow and Trulia and other platforms that used to be brokers, facilitators, are now buying houses directly from people who want to sell their houses. Once they start to control housing stock, once they start to be able to take things off the market and release them to the market at the prices that benefit them, that is incredibly concerning.”

This began in 2018 when Zillow launched an effort to buy homes, make necessary fixes, and resell the houses. According to a CNN report in late February, “So far, the company is losing millions every month on the new initiative. But [Zillow CEO Rich] Barton believes the big bet will pay off.”

Time will tell if Zillow will succeed at being your virtual MLS, agent, buyer, rehabber, and seller. But deep pockets can ensure they give it a good try.

### CATCH 22

I recently interviewed a candidate for a state legislative seat. Doesn’t matter which one; that’s not terribly important for the point I’m making. But I noticed a disconnect from reality that is worth sharing.

The candidate was clearly smart, young, and quite progressive. When we discussed housing matters, she said she supported a significantly large state investment in

affordable housing. O.K., plenty of people can get behind that.

But, I asked, if you don’t address local resistance to new housing — especially affordable housing — what good does it do to have a large planned expenditure? You can put \$44 trillion a year in your budget exclusively for new affordable housing, but if locals refuse to let you build it, then all you have is a campaign promise that makes you look like you care about a problem when in fact you’re not really doing anything to fix it.

I thought of that a little while later at that political roundtable I mentioned above. One of my panelists was Carson Bruno, a young academic who has focused on the state’s housing crisis for years.

He said everyone in Sacramento is talking about solving the housing crisis, but no one is willing to do the dramatic policy changes needed to make that happen, “which is actually taking more power away from localities. Let’s just put it out there. Local control has caused this problem.”

I assured him that our security staff was available to escort him from the venue.

Of note to those people who love to hate SB 50, the struggling legislation that aims to increase housing density and speed up housing production, is Bruno’s additional comment that in his opinion, SB 50 has been watered down and compromised so much that he doesn’t think it would actually do much of anything even if it somehow manages to survive the gauntlet of NIMBY legislators, pressure groups, and a governor he says is more interested with press releases than in exercising his political power to address housing.

So once again, everybody loses.

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

“This state does not have a future economically if people can’t afford to purchase houses here of any sort — a one-bedroom condo to a single-family home. This state does not have an economic future if people cannot afford to rent here. And we’re on a current path that puts us in that position. We currently *are* [there] in many parts — places like San Francisco, Los Angeles where I reside, and other parts of the state. And every single year, more and moreso as we creep inland, it becomes less affordable as well. Dramatic action has to take place.”

— Carson Bruno, policy analyst

Send feedback to letters@marinatimes.com. Real estate news tips? Email: john@marinatimes.com





A desire to limit Chinese lodgers led to San Francisco's first restrictive housing legislation. PHOTO: WATERS NICKEL SERIES, THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UC BERKELEY

# It's no accident

The not-so-pretty history of our housing crisis

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

THE PROJECT SEEMED SIMPLE ENOUGH. I set out to examine San Francisco housing — what the city envisioned in the 1970s and '80s, what it envisions today, and what it may envision in 20 years.

Having worked in San Francisco real estate for 15 years as a marketing executive — promoting brokerages, agents, and properties — I have tracked, predicted, and written about our local real estate trends for well over a decade.

And yet, as it turns out, I was completely unprepared for what I discovered.

## FROM THE BEGINNING

San Francisco's housing situation is extremely complicated. I had always heard that was the case, but until now, I had never understood why.

According to a number of sources, racism and class issues have been a big part of the city's housing policies right from its earliest days. According to Hunter Oatman-Stanford, writing for *Collectors Weekly*, in 1870, during a time of rampant real-estate speculation in a boomtown renowned for its lawlessness, a new law required boarding houses to offer a minimum amount of space per tenant.

Oatman-Stanford says, "Officials claimed this would promote safer housing and improve residents' quality of life, a noble cause for government intervention. But the law's true purpose — to criminalize Chinese renters and landlords so their jobs and living space could be reclaimed for San Francisco's white residents — set an ominous precedent."

More than 100 years ago, San Francisco was one of the first cities in the nation to introduce the idea of "local control" via land use zoning.

I've always been a fan of zoning — on the surface it seems to make sense. For example, in the early days, zoning helped push slaughterhouses and industry well south of Market Street, away from San Francisco's residential and business districts.

## ZONED OUT

Zoning however, is not as simple as it would appear.

"In theory, zoning was designed to protect the interests of all citizens by limiting land speculation and congestion," Kenneth T. Jackson writes in *Crabgrass Frontier*. "In actuality, zoning was a device to keep poor people and obnoxious industries out of affluent areas. And in time, it also became a cudgel used by suburban areas to whack the central city." Jackson points out that the most strident advocates of stronger land-

use restrictions lived in suburban districts on the city's fringe, a tradition that continues to this day. "They sought minimum lot and setback requirements [regulations that drive up the cost of housing] to ensure that only members of acceptable social classes could settle in their privileged sanctuaries."

And so it goes. Year after year, decade after decade. Redevelopment programs, some perhaps well intentioned and others deeply rooted in structural racism, are initiated and implemented and often result in the displacement of residents and significant unforeseen consequences.

Space in the city is limited, and so supply and demand will always play an important part in the price of San Francisco properties. Owners love the fact that their homes go up in value, and buyers take comfort in thinking that their investment will likewise gain value over the years.

The thing is, as we have all seen, this kind of hyper-appreciation in the price of real estate can be detrimental to communities. Workers flee for more affordable locales. Restaurants and shops close. Businesses relocate to other cities.

## NOT NEAT OR CLEAN

What's to be done?

A number of government leaders believe requiring cities and counties to change local zoning laws to allow for new, denser housing near job centers and public transportation is the answer. Yet State Senator Scott Wiener's polarizing housing bill SB 50, which would have done just that, failed to pass in the state senate in late January.

After the vote, Senator Holly Mitchell, D-Los Angeles, said, "Housing policy is not neat or clean." She was referring to historic racism and class issues baked into policies. "The issue of gentrification is a core fear," she said, adding that she was heeding her constituents' wishes.

So what does the future hold? San Francisco's elite and poorest residents seem (ironically) to share a dislike for potential redevelopment in their respective neighborhoods. Everyone agrees something needs to be done, just not where they live.

San Francisco is gorgeous. The neighborhoods are distinct, one from the next, each with its own special appeal. In my experience, on a micro level, every time a house is put up for sale it is revitalized and becomes even more beautiful than it was. In this way, house by house, block by block, the city is new again.

But in terms of a vision for San Francisco housing now and in the next 20 years, it appears there is no consensus, and I for one don't have a clue as to where it's headed.

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