



The times they are a-changin’

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Garey De Martini says this fall will be an interesting time for real estate. p. 11



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Jefferson Pinder's "Red Summer" at Fort Mason, picnic food in North Beach, and more.
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The Lemon Twigs’s new album, *Songs for the General Public*, was released Aug. 21 on the 4AD label.
PHOTO: MICHAEL HILI / COURTESY OF 4AD

In search of new sounds

Finding quality in a landscape altered by tech and cultural change

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

“WHERE CAN I FIND OUT about good new music?” A friend recently asked me that question in conjunction with a complaint about having lost

his favorite rock radio station when it changed to an all-sports format, victimized by the vicissitudes of the broadcast business. If you’re of a certain age, spent much of your life relying on radio and trusted DJs to expand your musical horizons, and

are among those simply replaying the favorite artists and tracks of your youth, the digital age and the Balkanization and recalibration of the music industry left you in a bit of a lurch. For adventurous music fans,

SNYDER, continued on 8

REYNOLDS RAP : Opinion

Is saving San Francisco a priority for politicians?

Residents’ request for homeless village met with silence

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

MY JUNE 2020 COLUMN, “IT’S THE DRUGS, STUPID” elicited more responses than anything I’ve written for this newspaper. Not one person disagreed with my thesis: The homeless crisis is mostly a drug crisis, and it’s time for San Francisco to find a sensible, humane solution. Residents from every district wrote, messaged, and called to express their support for a program modeled after the innovative and successful Community First Village in Austin, Tex., which I visited and detailed in a column last summer (“Dignity Through Accountability,” August 2019). Marina resident Mary Hickey was so inspired she and a neighbor actually toured the Cow Palace, which I recommended as a possible site. They even scored a meeting with Senator Scott Wiener, who last year proposed taking over the Cow Palace to develop affordable housing. But Wiener was discouraging, even dismissive. “He told us, ‘Go for it!’ and his assistant Annie was supposed to follow up and nothing happened,” Hickey said. “We heard crickets.”

Even more shocking is that Mayor London Breed and the Board of Supervisors have been nonresponsive,

REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 4

DISTRICT 2 SUPERVISOR

A landmark election

Rating the propositions and candidates on your November ballot

BY CATHERINE STEFANI

FOR MOST OF US, THIS NOVEMBER WILL MARK THE single most important election of our lifetimes. Americans will finally have the chance to reject an administration that has failed to respond to — and indeed has worsened — a public health and economic disaster, and instead elect a ticket that has not only the knowledge and experience to govern, but the compassion, empathy, and character to unite the nation. A ticket that will lead with love of country, not self or party. I am thrilled to support Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, our very own senator and former district attorney, and I am so looking forward to casting my vote this year.

To ensure that San Franciscans can safely exercise their right to vote this fall, all registered voters will receive ballots through the mail in October. If you are unsure of your registration status, you may register to vote (registertovote.ca.gov) or update your information (sfelections.org) online. Having an updated registration is particularly important this year, because the November ballot will also include many local elections that will have long-term effects on our city as we navigate the recovery.

SUPERVISOR, continued on 2

MODERN EATING



A16’s outdoor seating features partitions for private dining. PHOTO: NAOMI ROSE

The Big Pivot

Northside restaurants adopt new strategies to serve their customers and stay in business

BY KAT ANDERSON

TIMES ARE TOUGH FOR RESTAURANTS. Like trying-to-chew-shoe-leather tough. Industry watchers speculate that more than half of San Francisco’s restaurants

may permanently close. I speculate that more than half our Marina restaurants will survive because their owners are the best of the best. Our restaurateurs are finding creative ways to cope. I call it the Big Pivot. Anything goes to attract busi-

ness. Just patrol Chestnut Street and its side streets. The spectacles are everywhere: banners, signs, strings of lights, loud music, rope lines, patio tables, heaters, artificial turf, handsomely painted railings, and clusters of people showing off the latest mask fad. It’s like a safari for humans, and we all want to see what they’re eating.

Thanks to the city’s Shared Spaces program that grants free sidewalk and parking space permits to businesses through the year, restaurants are racing to craft wooden floors and partitions outside. I call these Dining Decks. Christina Tan of Dragon Well captured it best: “We’re building our restaurants all over again, outside.”

SHARING GOOD VIBES

Admittedly, I gravitate toward the most tricked out Dining Decks. They appeal to my childhood love of forts. Who wouldn’t want to conspiratorially sip a margarita in a corner of plywood walls painted with charming colors complete with segregated eating stalls to protect me from invisible harms? I’m the queen of my table. It’s good to be the queen.

MODERN EATING, continued on 6

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Supervisor continued from cover

Of these elections, two ballot measures and the contested Board of Supervisors seats deserve special attention.

NO ON PROPOSITION B

Proposition B would grow the city bureaucracy by adding layers of new administrators during a time of difficult but necessary budget cuts and possible layoffs. Proposition B asks voters to create a new city department and two new commissions — the Department of Sanitation and Streets, and the Public Works and Sanitation and Streets Commissions — to restructure how San Francisco completes infrastructure projects and cleans up our public spaces. Although the idea may sound good in theory, it comes with a multimillion-dollar price tag, with estimates up to \$6 million annually, not one penny of which would go toward increased street cleaning services. All the while, the city faces a nearly \$2 billion budget deficit.

While I agree that San Franciscans deserve greater oversight over Public Works, Proposition B is the wrong way to achieve that goal. At the Rules Committee, I proposed that we create a Public Works Commission but scrap this proposal's two-department structure and related staffing costs. Unfortunately, my amendment was voted down. After receiving the controller's audit of Public Works' contracting, I introduced legislation — the No

GRAFT (Government Rackets, Abuses, or Fraudulent Transactions) Act — to tighten our procedures and eliminate opportunities for abuse, because San Franciscans should not have to wonder whether their tax dollars are being used for corrupt purposes. During this recession, however, we cannot afford to keep ballooning our local government with no guarantee of improved services. Reject new bureaucracy — vote no on Proposition B.

YES ON PROPOSITION H

By contrast, Proposition H, the Save Our Small Businesses initiative, would extend a vital lifeline to our local economy when we need it most. As we all have seen in our neighborhood merchant corridors, our small businesses are suffering tremendously. According to recent reporting in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the Bay Area experienced the third-most

business closures in the nation, and the second-most per capita, during the first few months of the pandemic. By slashing bureaucracy, Proposition H would alleviate this strain. It would streamline the small business permit approval process, allow different city departments to review applications concurrently, and ensure that the entire review process takes place within 30 days.

For years, we have heard that the city's web of restrictive permits and regulations makes it too difficult to own or operate a small business in San Francisco. Proposition H builds on and incorporates ideas from my Small Business Bill of Rights legislation, and we cannot afford to pass up the opportunity to enact these changes at the ballot box. There is no way to know when the pandemic or recession will end, but Proposition H offers common-sense policies that will shore up our local economy as soon as next year. Save our small businesses — vote yes on Proposition H.

SUPERVISOR SEATS

With the exception of District 9, odd-numbered seats on the Board of Supervisors are also being contested this November. While we may not agree on every issue, I am supporting the following candidates, whose leadership and will-

ingness to work together will help our city navigate the challenging years to come.

In District 1, I am supporting Marjan Philhour, an experienced public servant and small busi-

ness owner who knows what it takes to make our communities clean, safe, and vibrant. I have endorsed my colleague (and fellow *Marina Times* columnist) Supervisor Aaron Peskin in District 3, who has been an incredible partner in protecting our northern waterfront and saving Aquatic Park Pier. In District 5, I am thrilled to support Vallie Brown, a longtime activist and former legislative aide and supervisor. District 7 residents have two great choices: Joel Engardio, a neighborhood advocate who has long worked to prevent crime and hold City Hall accountable, and Myrna Melgar, an economic development expert and former president of the Planning Commission. Finally, I stand with District 11 Supervisor Ahsha Safaí, who has been a leader in the fight to protect labor rights and the environment.

Thank you, and remember to submit your ballots early!

The November ballot will include many local elections that will have long-term effects.

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Street closures take time

Plus exercise in the park and burglaries

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

STEINER STREET CLOSURE ADVANCES

An effort to help local businesses by closing Steiner Street and allowing restaurants to use the streets for properly socially distanced seating has been delayed for weeks, but it should be cleared up around the time you read this. Pending final verification from the city, a portion of Steiner will join parts of Valencia Street, Chinitown, and Japantown in the initiative to let the dining industry flourish again even amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

It's an effort that has taken a very long time, frustrating some of the people involved in it.

"It's going to happen," Patricia Vaughey of the Marina Cow Hollow Neighbors & Merchants Association told the *Marina Times*. She said that more than 90 percent of the merchants have signed off, and a permit was received from the city — sort of. Vaughey says they got the permit,

but it was “ambiguous,” mentioning the parklets (the use of designated parking spaces for commercial expansion space) and it referred to the closure of the street, but there was no explicit approval of the closure. Without that clear-cut approval, the effort can’t go forward without inviting endless legal challenges.

Vaughey is optimistic that the clarification from the city will be forthcoming, and soon. But the ambiguity of the permit was only the latest hurdle after countless discussions with restaurants and retailers, fine-tuning the plan to overcome objections and requests, and adjusting its boundaries (for example, to assist businesses requiring parking lot access).

"You think it's easy, and it's not," Vaughey said.

PARKS ARE THE NEW GYMS

Owners of local gyms and fitness studios have complained in recent months about the dangers to their businesses caused by restrictions on operating during the era of Covid-19. In late July, a group called the S.F. Independent Fitness Studio Coalition demanded that the city reveal Covid-19 data it was using in its decision to keep fitness studios from reopening. The coalition estimated that its members were losing a total of \$9 million a month since shelter in place was established.

In August, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department announced a plan that, if approved, would launch September 13 and allow fitness instructors to hold classes outdoors in San Francisco's parks with licensing costs reduced by more than 90 percent.

“Like parks themselves, fitness classes promote physical health and mental well-being — something we could all use right now,” said Rec and Park General Manager Phil Ginsburg. “This program would allow fitness providers with closed storefronts an inexpensive way to hold classes again while allocating space in a fair and transparent way.”

The pricing differs depending on the size of classes, but the department hopes the offering can “alleviate some of the economic impact of health closures by operating outdoors in public spaces, as permitted by the current health order.”

FAUCI AND SCHOOLS

Policymakers and parents have spent a lot of time planning and worrying about how to reopen schools and other com-

munal spaces. According to Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, local conditions are critical. “You can have the authorities in the states and the cities do it right and proclaim that we should do it this way, [but] that only works if the citizenry . . . pay attention and do it.”

In a recent online conversation with The Commonwealth Club, Dr. Fauci said schools should reopen if local conditions permit it. “There’s a big difference between a green zone or a green county where there’s very little infection in the community, and you’re dealing with an elementary or middle school — you can’t throw caution to the wind, but you can open with a fair degree of safety.” Yellow zones could open more cautiously and with mitigating actions, such as increased space between desks, split-schedules, and others. “Then you’ve got the red zone, where you’ve got a lot of infection in the community. You really have to think twice before you want to put kids back in school then.”

BURGLARIES RISE

Burglaries are up more than 40 percent from 2019 to 2020 year-to-date, reports new Northern Station Captain Paul Yep. As of mid-August, he said there have been 906 reported burglaries and attempted burglaries in the Northern District.

Yep suggests residents take the time to make sure their homes and businesses are secure — checking locks on doors and windows, reinforcing or upgrading locks, and consider installing kick-proof doors and reinforced glass windows. “Suspects generally go for the easier targets, such as open doors and windows, or ones that have locking mechanisms that can be easily defeated,” Yep wrote in his most recent newsletter. “Alarm systems and lighting are also great deterrents.”

And, of course, report burglaries and attempted burglaries to 415-553-0123 (nonemergencies) and 911 (emergencies).

Meanwhile robberies year-to-date have largely held steady over the past year: 204 in 2020 compared to 205 in 2019; but auto burglaries continued to decline, from 3,461 last year to 2,111 in 2020.

FACTS & FIGURES

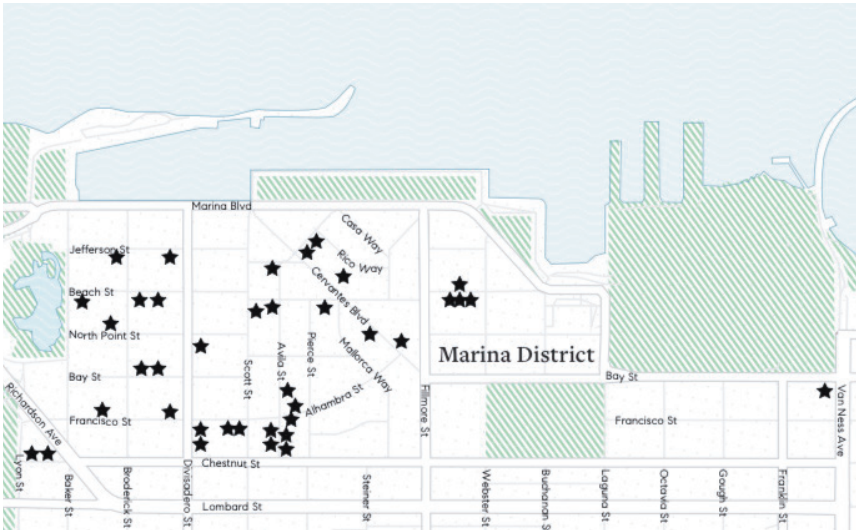
10: ranking of San Francisco in a CommercialCafe study on urban parks and walkability in the United States . . . **2:** San Francisco's rank for its share of walking commuters out of total commuters in the same study . . . **65:** age of Covid-19 victim and Trump voter Mark Anthony Urquiza, whose story was told at the recent Democratic National Convention by his daughter, San Francisco resident Kristin Urquiza . . . **2-1:** ratio of the number of condos to single-family homes on the San Francisco residential property market, as of mid-August . . . **2,200-40,000 square feet:** size of new office leasing spaces just made available on the Presidio's Main Post, some for the first time ever . . . **25.5:** percentage of people aged 18-24 who reported suicidal thoughts during the pandemic, according to a new study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . . . **\$240.6 million:** amount San Francisco contracts with providers of homeless services in fiscal year 2019-20 . . . **19th century:** original installation era of some of the water mains being replaced as part of the massive Van Ness Improvement Project.

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COMPASS

Reynolds Rap
continued from cover

despite attempts by their constituents to create a dialogue. I finally reached out personally to Mayor Breed, District 2 Supervisor Catherine Stefani, District 3 Supervisor Aaron Peskin, and District 6 Supervisor Matt Haney (whose neighborhoods, including the Tenderloin and South of Market, take the brunt of the crisis).

As of press time I haven't heard back from the mayor (perhaps she's distracted with so many of her department heads being subpoenaed or indicted by the FBI).

Both Stefani and Haney said they would support the Village.

"As San Francisco faces a nearly \$2 billion budget deficit, we need to be sure that the solutions we're investing in actually work — that they actually improve conditions on our streets. With that in mind, we should absolutely keep an eye on the promising evidence coming out of Community First Village in Austin," Stefani responded.

"I absolutely support models similar to Community First Village in Austin," Haney said. "We need different types of options and solutions, including those that provide community with self-sufficiency and treatment options, and we have to be creative and results-driven. The same thing we've been doing is clearly not enough and isn't working for a lot of people." (Incidentally, Haney was the only person to mention self-sufficiency and treatment options.)

Peskin said San Francisco was "more physically constrained" than Austin (despite the fact I proposed the Village be outside city limits) and pointed to the status quo, saying, "We have supportive housing with wraparound services" (to which I responded, "And how's that working out?"). Peskin did admit it was "spread out all over the place," and he wondered aloud "if there's a concerted effort on the part of other places to dump people on us," pointing to stories he'd heard of "people to the north of us" sending their homeless (I've heard those same stories). "We're getting people off the streets and they just keep coming," Peskin said. He also acknowledged that residents are angrier than he's ever seen them. "When the electorate gets mad, they mostly get mad at the mayor. Now everybody is mad."

That's an understatement.

HEARTLESS HASTINGS

On Aug. 18, the board approved a settlement with UC Hastings that compelled the city to clear the Tenderloin of tents (several groups have filed similar lawsuits in other neighborhoods). Peskin, along with Hillary Ronen, Shammann Walton, and Dean Preston, voted against the settlement.

"I am ashamed of what I think is a heartless lawsuit," Walton said. (To me, heartless is the way he and other supervisors have ignored the pleas of residents to clean up the city.)

Preston, of course, has gone a step further: He actually helped pay for and hand out nearly 1,000 tents in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood he represents — then scurried back to his \$3 million home on Hayes Street in Alamo Square. Ronen has spent over a decade at City Hall whining about homelessness and doing nothing to solve it. But the most interesting vote came from Haney, who voted yes despite opposition from the Coalition on Homelessness, a histrionic "advocacy group" that does nothing to effect real change. For years they had the entire board wrapped around their accusatory little finger, but the Hastings vote — particularly the yes

vote from Haney, who has sided with them in the past — proves their power is waning.

NEEDLES AND NARCAN

One thing that's not working for San Francisco is harboring the homeless in hotels during the pandemic. Many shocking stories have been reported since the program started in April, including police busting a meth lab at the Civic Center Motor Inn. Of the city's 125 homeless deaths thus far in 2020, 17 percent have occurred at the hotels in just five months, where at least one was a suicide and 15 were drug overdoses. Dr. Barry Zevin, medical director of street medicine and shelter health for the Department of Public Health, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* "after a string of deaths and near-fatal overdoses," each hotel now has "Narcana on every floor, along with safe syringe disposal, safe injection kits and test strips that can determine if fentanyl is in a substance."

In other words, the city is providing plenty of tools for using illegal drugs. What seems in short supply are treatment options. Instead, the health department aligns with the Drug Users Union, which, according to their website, seeks "to create a safe environment where people can use & enjoy drugs," and the Harm Reduction Coalition, which is really about harm enabling — meaning the hotels have essentially become city-sanctioned, taxpayer-funded drug dens.

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Besides being unsustainable, the hotel model is outrageously expensive. The *Marina Times* crunched the numbers and found that, based on 2,500 occupants at the city-estimated \$250 per room per night, the annual rate would be \$225 million. The mayor is hoping federal taxpayers will pick up 75 percent of the tab, but what she doesn't mention is that rooms provided to those who don't meet strict criteria (over 65, underlying health conditions) will not qualify for reimbursement, prompting Human Services Agency Director Trent Rhorer to say housing all of the city's homeless in hotels "would not be fiscally prudent."

On the other hand, a scaled-up estimate for the village shows it would cost \$75 million per year for 2,500 people — and that's before residents start contributing. Austin's Community First Village is privately funded, with residents covering 40 percent of the budget through rent and on-site work programs. We certainly have enough billionaires to fund the village (I'm looking at you, Marc and Jack), but the city could also pay for it by getting rid of Mayor Ed Lee's greatest boondoggle, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. Since its inception in 2016, homelessness has risen 30 percent — while their annual budget has risen 80 percent, to a mind-boggling \$364 million.

Next, cancel the contracts of the 59 "nonprofit" organizations that for fiscal year 2019-20 had funding of \$240.6 million. If Tim Cook ran Apple the way they run the homeless industry, he'd be unemployed, too. Let them submit business plans to work at the Village. Those selected will be routinely audited and renewal will be performance based.

Maybe this all sounds daunting to city leaders, but I agree with Supervisor Peskin — everyone is angry. It's time for politicians to stop talking, start listening, and take action.

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NOVEMBER 3, 2020 ELECTION TAXPAYER RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSITION A - NO - \$487 million for MORE homeless, streets, and patronage parks money. This isn't the time with declining tax revenue to incur more debt.

PROPOSITION B - NO - To fight City Hall corruption, the Supervisors propose TWO CITY DEPARTMENTS. MORE growth in government and more political commission to do the job we already pay City employees to do.

PROPOSITION C - NO - This rewards illegal immigration, removing citizenship as a requirement for appointments to City Boards and Commissions.

PROPOSITION D - NO - More bureaucracy to an elected officials' duties under state law plus another Commission to the present 123 existing ones at a Controller estimated \$10 million dollars annually.

PROPOSITION E - NO - Police staffing doesn't belong in our City Charter. Vote NO.

PROPOSITION G - NO - It's a flawed and flagrant attempt by the Supervisors to fatten voter rolls with impressionable adolescents. VOTE NO.

PROPOSITION I - NO - *Real Estate Transfer Tax* - Selling real estate and recording the deed takes about 10 minutes, even at City Hall. Recordation of a deed is required by state law. The transfer tax has been illogical since enactment by a non-unanimous Board of Supervisors before state constitutional law required voter approval. Prop I should eliminate the transfer tax not double it! Eliminate Prop I by voting NO!

PROPOSITION J - NO - *Parcel Tax* - Treating multi-billion-dollar property corporations the same as cottage owner in the outer Sunset with a "parcel" tax which is the same for each separate parcel in San Francisco debases striving homeowners. While this lowers the 2018 tax by \$22 per parcel, it doesn't erase the inequity of taxing billion-dollar downtown buildings the same as a widow's house.

PROPOSITION L - NO - *CEO Tax* - Our Socialist Board of Supervisors wants to redistribute wealth. Unless of course, it's their favorite celebrities or sports stars - they can keep their money. But if you're a business CEO, educated, confirmed by a Board of Directors, often times with SEC oversight hand over your money! This is their sad attempt at revenue rather than fairness or fiscal discipline. Vote No on this volatile, unreliable tax.

STATE BALLOT TAXPAYER RECOMMENDATIONS

NO ON PROPOSITION 15 - In 1978, San Francisco and California revolted high property taxes by establishing a baseline for real estate value and changing tax assessment to an inflation rate. City and counties were forced to improve effectiveness. Tax and spending legislators have moaned ever since and are now trying to set precedent by changing assessment of commercial and industrial property, assuring voters they would never do so with residential property. Landlords and tenants can't believe them. Proposition 15 is a Trojan Horse and a warm up for doing the same in two years to homeowners and tenants. Vote NO ON PROP 15!

NO ON PROPOSITION 16 - This reinstates discrimination on account of race, sex, national origin in California which we prohibited in 1996. Voters banned preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, national origin in public employment, public education or public contracting. The Legislature now wants to restore reverse discrimination and quotas. That's reactionary in critical times in California and elsewhere. Reject Proposition 16!

YES ON PROPOSITION 19 - This constitutional amendment enables homeowners aged 55 and over to keep lower property tax rates if they move to new homes because of wildfires and other disasters. A fair, straightforward measure - VOTE YES!

NO ON PROPOSITION 21 - Reject Prop 21, another example of politicians trying to control the private market on residential rentals. Their interference will not lower rents, and may very well raise them! Preserve private property rights, Vote NO!

NO ON PROPOSITION 25 - Public safety undermining legislation passed the Legislature last year, eliminating money bail, a state and federal constitutional right with a system based on technology in the form of algorithms. Instead of allowing lawyers for those accused of crimes to present testimony and other evidence to a Superior Court Judge on a client's predictable appearance for Court hearings and low risk of criminal conduct before trial, the Legislature forced judges to use an algorithm eliminating personal sworn testimony from family, friends, and employers. Prop 25 says "NO" by repealing that fanciful law with a restoration of money bail and constitutional rights before trial.

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Modern Eating continued from cover

The two eateries to adapt most swiftly post-shutdown were **Tacolicious** and **Delarosa**. Tacolicious staffers grabbed towels and sanitizer and cleaned the windows until they sparkled. Then they set out bins and boxes of beautiful avocados, onions, mushrooms, cilantro bunches, and cups of seasoned meats. Everything was freely given. It was just going to waste because the kitchen was closed, I was told, so why not share with our beloved locals?

Back home, as I ate a Tacolicious avocado, I felt the kind of gratitude like that for a kind neighbor. No amount of money can buy goodwill like that. Thereafter, Tacolicious was the first restaurant from which I ordered takeout. They created a DIY Taco Kit for two. Each \$45 kit includes seasoned meats, beans, rice, all sorts of side veggies and sauces, and their house-made corn tortillas. Of course, their chips and salsa are the best around. Now they have outdoor dining that includes tables of all heights and beautiful palms. It's a great place to eat their signature Marina Girl Salad (which they named after me. So I say).

The next restaurant to grab me by the eyeballs and eardrums in the first days of sheltering in place was Delarosa. Staff threw open all the windows, pumped up the music volume, assembled Leaning-Tower-of-Pisa stacks of pizza boxes, and hustled around the restaurant creating good vibes. Combine all that with huge banners and signs showcasing pasta, pizza, and wine deals, and a plethora of posted instructions on lining up, ordering, and handling pens safely, and



Restaurants have been creative with their new outdoor dining areas. PHOTO: NAOMI ROSE

Delarosa impressed folks that Covid-19 precautions were being taken seriously. As general manager Charlie Viaud described it, Delarosa "created new regulars," with all those visuals, playful noise, and a readily apparent dedication to safety.

CHANNELING YOUR INNER CHILD

Early on, **Blackwood** stood out in a different way. Staff set up long tables in their tiny terra cotta courtyard and displayed possibly every single bottle of alcohol they had. I saw glass bottles filled with liquids the colors of Otter Pops. These called to my inner child. While I

usually keep my drinking to colors that occur in nature, I was drawn in like everyone else. The place now hops with patrons of every age group. You must order the Millionaire's Way appetizer if you love bacon and maple syrup — two of my favorite food groups — and plenty of their "tipsy drinks," like the lychee dragon fruit cocktail in a jar. Blackwood is such a draw that you might have to run a gauntlet of small groups waiting for seats, so don your mask upon the approach.

Tipsy Pig built my first favorite Dining Deck. In a fortress of pine two-by-sixes with a crown of lights, you can enjoy

chili verde enchiladas and smoky mezcal cocktails completely buffered from street traffic. I recommend the eastern corner table. Fort dining at Tipsy Pig helps me forget that San Francisco is practically a ghost town everywhere else.

PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ

Be sure also to treat yourself to elegant Dining Deck experiences at **A16**, **Causwells**, and **Ristobar**. A16's deck features elegant lighting, partitions between tables for private dining, and a thick grass-like turf. Their wood-fired oven continues to produce their much-loved

MODERN EATING, continued on 7



DRAGON WELL



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Modern Eating
continued from pg. 6

artisan pizzas. If you order to go, get their Bottle & Box because it comes with Edaphos Sonoma Valley Barbera, which strikes just the right balance of spicy and sweet.

Bring your sketchbook when you eat at Causwells, because you'll be sitting on an art piece. Note the curved cement benches crafted in similar Art Deco style as the building that houses the restaurant. Order the smash-style Americana cheeseburger — possibly the ultimate comfort food — and you will have eaten one of the best burgers in the country. Causwells offered bags of Bayview Pasta flour when it was difficult to find during the first weeks of sheltering in place, and you can still get the flour as well as Bayview Pasta's bread. Causwells also uses Bayview's cornmeal and pastas — try the cornbread or the rigatoni pasta with Cajun cream sauce.

Finally, location means everything and Ristobar now has it all. Their Dining Decks are painted the same midnight blue as the façade of the building. And patio seating under an ample awning on the Scott Street side. And lovely sidewalk dining sets against the front entrance. Ristobar suffered some challenges the past two years related to mandatory earthquake retrofitting and the reality of a too-large dining room. It finally reopened in December. Then, the pandemic shutdown in March. Gary Rulli, a San Francisco native, sighed, "Yeah, I'm not really sure why I'm still doing this. I just really love my city." The other person who really loves San Francisco is his chef, Francesco Brevetti, who will stand

outside in a crisp white chef's smock and toque and tantalize you with descriptions of his rustic Italian creations. Be sure to enjoy Ristobar's daily happy hours from 3–5 p.m. You can start early, too, with Italian pastries (Rulli is an acclaimed baker) and espresso drinks.

GOING EURO

My favorite part of the Big Pivot has been watching bistros create outdoor dining rooms on the street. Many roll out turf or carpeting, and decorate with delicate furniture, planters filled with colorful flowers, handsome patio heaters, and intricate metal holders for strings of lights. These are the masters of al fresco dining — the restaurateurs and chefs that hail from France and Italy. I call this Going Euro. Allow yourself to be pampered at Boho on Steiner Street and Roma Antica on Scott Street (and check out their new dining deck). These eateries offer that special brand of hospitality you'd expect from Paris or Rome — every detail has been anticipated, and is brought to you with a flourish. They have the corner on upscale comfort food. Roma Antica's eggplant parmigiana melts in your mouth. And Boho's restyled menu includes a chicken dumpling soup and the creamiest mashed potatoes I've ever found in the city. But you might want to head right to dessert at Boho. Their cakes and pastries are heavenly.

If you're looking for a wine-forward Euro experience, stroll over to Cultivar on Chestnut Street. If you play your cards right, you can grab a table on their back patio, maybe even next to the fireplace. Then check out one of their two new Pinot Noirs: the Cultivar Santa Lucia Highland (2018) and the Cultivar Ander-

son Valley (2017). Pair either with an appetizer and entrée of your choice. And if you join their wine club, you can get 20 percent off select items. How civilized!

THE MOM AND POPS

Before the pandemic, restaurants already were experiencing ever decreasing profit margins. Only the most facile operations were keeping the doors open, and most of the survivors are owned by restaurant groups. That is why I want to give a special plug to mom-and-pop operations — the stalwarts of our neighborhood. Maybe they aren't as flashy as some of the other places already mentioned, but they've mastered something over time that is irreplaceable: a long-term, cohesive community of owners, servers, and local patrons. In other words, the San Francisco definition of family. When that's gone, there is a deep sadness you may carry with you for a long time. For example, I still miss E'Angelo Italian Restaurant. Remember that place at 2234 Chestnut Street? Where else could you sit on the bench against the wall and chat with the entire kitchen staff while eating pasta and sauces that had been refined over decades, possibly coming from an owner's Nonna? I miss the owner, Claudio Marchesan, who would sing bits of arias while we sipped chianti and chatted with the Italian servers.

Here are two family operations I urge you to visit often — Dragon Well and Parma. Dragon Well opened in 1998 and was the best place for me to bring my toddler son and infant daughter. No one there minded that my tykes managed to get rice all over every piece of furniture. Christina Tan and Gary Tan, as Christina Tan explained, wanted to break out of

the typical Chinese food mode, challenging notions of price and quality. Their food is made with high-quality ingredients and their space is clean, warm, and inviting. They already had a durable takeout business before the pandemic, so their Big Pivot has been quite stable. The Tans are enjoying creating a festive mood with their Dining Deck, and they use cute puns on their message board to let you know what's happening. Tan says she's working on revising the menu a bit. Be sure you order the walnut prawns.

And finally, Parma Restaurant on Steiner Street, which opened in 1981, is still offering time-honored recipes that include house-made lasagna — from its noodles to its béchamel sauce — a two-breasted chicken parmigiana, and its legendary garlic dip, served free with warm bread. Owner-operator Angela Elia, who took over from her father, Pietro, is flexing with the times, too. She's increased the restaurant's Instagram presence and is revamping their website. Her delivery business is growing, but she really loves to see her customers eat on-site, so she's excited about the prospect of expanding her seating capacity outside. Rumor has it that Steiner Street will be closed to through traffic after 4 p.m. most days, which will be a real game-changer for the Steiner Street businesses.

Mangia, mangia!

Kat Anderson is a 25-year Marina resident and co-owner and operator of Word. A Cafe in the Bayview District. She's a reformed lawyer, S.F. Recreation and Park commissioner, and lover of foods that can be eaten without forks. E-mail: kat@marinatimes.com

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Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture at Michael Snyder's Culture Blast, via GABnet.net, Roku, Spotify, and YouTube, and The Mark Thompson Show on KGO radio. You can follow Michael on Twitter: @cultureblaster

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Keeping calm and carrying on. PHOTO: GEM PHOTOGRAPHY

I tested positive for Covid . . . I think
The virus can defeat even the best defenses

BY LIZ FARRELL

IT'S A DISTINCT FEELING, ONE OF SHOCK where your heart stops, it feels impossible to catch your breath, and the whole room goes blurry. Only a few times have I experienced this, and they are moments not easily forgotten. I had one on a recent morning when I received a phone alert my Covid test results were ready, and after opening the app saw I had tested positive. In an abundance of caution, my husband and I had decided to get tested before spending some extended time with my in-laws. We thought this would make us all feel better, and we had been careful and extremely cautious since the beginning of the pandemic, so never did I expect to test positive. The only silver lining was it had already been 10 days when I got the results and I did not have any symptoms, so I did not need to isolate or self-quarantine.

TESTING PROBLEMS

I immediately arranged a video call with my doctor to answer the hundreds of questions swirling in my head of how and why and what now. I had been washing my hands, wearing a mask, socially distancing, and sheltering in place, so how could this happen? The lab sheet indicated the date the swab was taken was four days after my appointment, so there was a moment of hope this was a terrible mistake. Although the doctor confirmed the date had been inputted incorrectly, there was less than a one percent chance the results were a mistake — there are no false positives for Covid tests, only for antibody tests.

I was tested in downtown San Francisco and my swab was sent to North Carolina with a date that was four days off. This wasn't instilling a lot of confidence in my results. Daily I hear or read a story about lab errors and testing problems. My sister's friend received an email with a positive result without having taken the test. Clearly, our testing is problematic, and it shouldn't be in a country with our technological advances.

TELLING OUR POD

I thought it was bad when my kids had lice and I had to tell their friends and the school. It was embarrassing and a bit shameful. This felt worse. The doctor suggested I encourage everyone I had been in contact with in the past 10 days when not wearing a mask or socially distanced to get

tested as soon as possible. Luckily, because of our caution, this list wasn't long: my parents, in-laws, sisters, and a few close friends. I am grateful everyone was understanding and equally shocked. For many I was the first person they knew personally who had tested positive, so for everyone the virus and its effects were hitting closer to home.

My stomach was in knots awaiting the results of our loved ones' tests. Adding to the anxiety was we still had not received my husband's results, although we both tested at the same time and place. We had conversations I never imagined about what if he developed symptoms or what if one of us had to quarantine with one of the kids away from everyone else.

After 10 days and many restless nights, we learned my husband, the kids, and everyone around us tested negative and no one had symptoms. We are fortunate; this pandemic has not been as kind to many other families. This is not lost on us, and we continue to count our blessings.

OVERCOMING FEAR

When I shared with a friend feelings of having failed after doing everything right — avoiding large groups, not traveling, and always wearing a mask — he offered a different perspective: "I think you got the Willy Wonka golden ticket." It sure didn't feel that way for the first 48 hours, but this comment forced me to think about the situation differently.

From the beginning, many have felt a lot of fear and anxiousness about this virus. Getting it is what I had been most afraid of. In a strange way the positive result allowed me a sense of relief — I had it but I was O.K., feeling good, actually stronger and healthier than I have felt in a long time — and my pod had tested negative and wasn't showing any symptoms. This was possibly the best-case scenario.

There will still probably always be a little doubt about the testing and whether there was a lab error, but because everyone around me tested negative it doesn't change my behavior. It has just made me that much more sympathetic to those who test positive and what they are going through, many with severe symptoms. This is a terrible, ugly virus, one we still know so little about. I hope we are able to improve our testing capabilities and quickly find a vaccine.

Email: liz@marinatimes.com



Houses and condos are faring differently in this recession. PHOTO: PIXABAY

The calm before the storm

So this is what a buyer’s market feels like

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

BUCKLE YOUR SEAT BELTS. THE NEXT two and a half months promise to be a wild ride, given the upcoming presidential election and the surging then subsiding then surging again pandemic.

San Francisco’s real estate market has enjoyed to this point something of a calm before the storm — all things considered, performing remarkably well. Nevertheless, Compass Real Estate cautioned in mid-August that “supply and demand conditions have diverged dramatically between house and condo markets, with the latter being far weaker and rapidly climbing into ‘buyer’s market’ territory.”

Inventory is higher for both condos and single-family homes, but condos are much more plentiful, with six months of inventory. Typically a buyer’s market exists at eight or more months of inventory, a scenario we could reach in just a few months if these trends continue.

According to Socketsite.com, the number of homes on the market in San Francisco, net of new sales and contract activity, at one point in August hit 1,490, representing nearly three times more homes on the market when compared to the same time last year, and surpassing the recession-era inventory levels that were driving the market back in August 2008 and 2009. It’s important to note that nearly 74 percent of these recent 1,490 listings were condos.

STABILITY AMONG THE STORM

All of this said, home prices continue to be high. In fact, based on a rolling three months of activity, according to the San Francisco Association of Realtors, the median price for a single-family home reached an all-time high in July of \$1,700,000. The median price for a condo and loft that same month was \$1,250,000 — down from its all-time high of \$1,310,000, recorded in October 2019.

Now there have been price reductions to be sure, especially in the condo market. Indeed, there were nearly 400 price reductions in July, with condos making up more than two-thirds of those reductions. But prices remain high, and in spite of a devastating hit to employment and the economy, prices have not dropped as precipitously as some might have expected.

Zillow founder Rich Martin explains why home prices keep going up in a recent article on Inc.com, calling it “The Great Reshuffling.” He believes the current pandemic has permanently reshaped the way people live and work across the country, and that’s having a profound effect on the residential real estate industry. Residential real estate he says is most-

ly a seller’s market. Meanwhile, commercial real estate is hurting for customers.

According to the article, 70 percent of Americans report working from home at least some of the time, and all Americans are spending an average nine hours more at home per day than they did before the pandemic. That means people have new priorities about where they want to live. A bigger backyard and room for a home office are more important these days than a short commute or proximity to a bustling downtown.

This would explain why single family home values in San Francisco remain so high, while the condo market is softening.

Meanwhile, Katherine Bindley, writing in *The Wall Street Journal* in mid-August, reports now that tech companies are giving their employees more freedom to work from anywhere, employees are taking them up on the option to relocate.

TYPICALLY ATYPICAL

It’s early yet, and information about who’s leaving and where they’re heading is just starting to come in. But in a recent internal survey, around 40 percent of Facebook’s employees said they were interested in permanent remote work, and three quarters of those employees indicated they might move to another place.

While it’s too soon to measure the total net outflow of tech workers from the Bay Area, it’s already affecting the real estate market. Rents have started falling for the first time in years. In fact, according to the story, rents have fallen in San Francisco for the first time since 2014, when Zillow began tracking them.

September is typically an enormous month for San Francisco real estate. With the summer behind them, owners put their homes on the market and buyers become more active. Listings swell, sales jump, and in recent years, prices climb. Momentum typically carries into October, and then sales slow in November and then really decline in December and January.

Of course, 2020 is proving to be utterly unpredictable. The next 70 days or so will tell a remarkable tale, no matter what the outcome of November’s presidential election. Still, the purchase or sale of a home is always motivated by intensely personal things — a growing or shrinking family, a growing or shrinking income, a new set of priorities, new opportunities, or unanticipated obstacles.

Even during these turbulent times, life goes on. Fortunately for us, San Francisco has always endured, even during some of the nation’s ugliest chapters.

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