



Holiday treats

Julie Mitchell finds neighborhood resources for creating the perfect holiday table. p. 7

Liz Farrell adapts family traditions to ensure a happy holiday season — even during Covid. p. 10



More online

Lou Barberini, Michael Snyder's on ... Pop Culture, event listings, and more.

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Left to right: Orin Carpenter's *Sick and Tired*, 2020; Detail of Roberto Zamora's *Flamenco Fiesta*, 2019.

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Bay Area Artists at 'The de Young Open'

BY SHARON ANDERSON

THE M.H. DE YOUNG HAS long-standing tradition of engaging the talent of artists in the Bay Area, and in celebration of its 125th year in 2020, the museum presents "The de Young Open,"

a juried exhibition of 762 artists with a total of 877 artworks on view through Jan. 3, 2021. The works will also be for sale, and the artists will retain 100 percent of the proceeds. The public can access the museum's online gallery to explore the artworks in the exhibition.

The exhibition title, "On the Edge," was originally derived from the Bay Area's cultural landscape — both its geographic location on the Pacific Rim combined with the region's historical reputation for cutting-edge culture and creativity. As

ART WORLD, continued on 8

POLITICS AS USUAL :: Opinion

All I want for Christmas is 2021

Looking forward to a better new year

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

LIKE CHARLIE BROWN BEING DUPED INTO TRYING to kick a football only to have Lucy take it away every time, I approach January with the optimism that it will herald a much better year than 2020. This past year was so astonishingly awful, 2021 has got to be better. Then again, such sentiments might have prevailed at the beginning of the second year of the Thirty Years' War, so humility and wariness of Lucy are in order.

So let's think about everything we want to be new or improved in 2021.

THE ECONOMY

As this article is being written, new unemployment claims are once again rising. In a normal year, businesses hire lots of extra people to handle the holiday increases in business in the retail, delivery, and mall Santa industries. We're going in the opposite direction as December kicks off. It wasn't too long ago when a study found that most Americans could not handle a \$400 emergency; and then in 2020 they lost their jobs or had their hours

POLITICS AS USUAL, continued on 4

THE COASTAL COMMUTER

Hello to hope Good riddance to 2020

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

IF EVER THERE WAS A YEAR FROM HELL OR, MORE accurately, a year *in* hell, it's 2020. Such a nice round number, too. Even if 2020 suggests the concept of clear vision, most of what the world has seen over the past 12 months has been the dark, cloudy stuff of nightmares. Will the new year bring a mighty wind to blow those clouds away? Perhaps. A fresh start would be welcome, but we still have December to slog through, and all the tinsel, fancy ornaments, bright lights, and requisite cheer of the season can't dispel much of what we've all been experiencing — especially an ongoing health emergency when the heedless have ignored sensible precautions and brought on a coast-to-coast spike in infections.

Everybody is aware of the hardships and madness that have — pardon the expression — plagued us, although the extent of our plight and any solutions to our problems vary depending on one's point of view and cognitive capabilities. No one can deny that a global pandemic has sown illness and death, forcing business closures, causing widespread unemployment, and crippling the economy. There's also that little matter of a nation at war with itself, enflamed by political beliefs that veer into fanaticism and by intolerance that has amped up to full-on bigotry.

There is hope. Despite the efforts of those who tried to undermine democracy, the outcome of the presidential

THE COASTAL COMMUTER, continued on 2

LA VITA DELIZIOSO :: An Italian-American Christmas Eve



New England baked stuffed shrimp. PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

A scaled-down Feast of the Seven Fishes

In a year of small holiday gatherings, here are some of my favorite childhood seafood dishes

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

IN SOUTHERN ITALY, WHERE MY grandfather was born, they celebrate La Vigilia in anticipation of the midnight birth of the baby Jesus.

It was first introduced to America in the late 1800s in New York's Little Italy, where my grandparents lived upon their arrival. Now known as the Feast of the Seven Fishes, it's part of the Italian-American Christmas

Eve, usually a day of abstinence from eating meat. When we celebrated back East, it was a grand day filled with some of my favorite seafood dishes, many common only in New York or New England. Federal Hill, where my grandparents later settled, is the epicenter of Italian American culture in Rhode Island — the smallest state in the country, it also has the largest population of Italians per capita. Because my grandfather was a fisherman, I loved joining him to pull up his lobster traps and go clamming along the shore. Our early morning bounty would lead to stuffed quahogs, baked stuffed lobster, sea urchin with linguini, and cherrystones on the half shell.

As I got older, my family celebrated Christmas more at our home in Sunnyvale, Calif. I was an only child, so Christmas Eve was a small affair with my parents and my boyfriend, Robert, who was Jewish (I would also celebrate Hannukah with his family). My mother would scale down the feast to include three or four of our favorites. This year, as families are sticking to smaller gatherings due to the pandemic, the scaled-down menu seems particularly appropriate.

LA VITA DELIZIOSO, continued on 6

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The Coastal Commuter

continued from cover

election has led to a regime change in the United States that was so welcome it triggered celebrations in the streets here and abroad. Let's not forget that what was roundly hailed as the safest and most secure election in American history was plunged into controversy by laughably false accusations of impropriety from the losing side. Still, barring criminal machinations, treasonous acts, an unexpected catastrophe, or an invasion by extraterrestrial creatures, a new president will be sworn in on Jan. 20.

A CHANGE IS GONNA COME

This impending inauguration should be a boost to the national psyche. Make that a little more than half the nation's psyche — which I suppose is a move in the right direction. The voting numbers in November split 51 to 49 percent, and the refusal of so many to accept the accredited count is more than appalling. It suggests we're in the middle of a systemic crisis exacerbated by a broken or incompetent education system that doesn't teach critical thinking, by prejudices passed from generation to generation and from neighbor to neighbor, and by an alarming number of people who have devalued truth, facts, and science. You need only turn on your electronic news outlet of choice to witness the turmoil. Hate and ignorance are so widespread that I fear the divide will not disappear over the course of four years . . . or eight.

So the incoming administration will be tasked with a massive clean-up of all the problems that linger and bedevil us. This

is not simply sweeping away the remains of a pickle jar that broke on aisle four. It's more like the whole damned supermarket is trashed. A widely distributed Covid-19 vaccine should serve as a portal to some degree of vocational and social normalcy, barring viral mutations. An immunization rollout is still in the planning stage as this is being written, but it's a start.

THE COMMON GOOD

As 2020 reaches its merciful end, it might make the most sense for those of us who have survived its challenges to refrain from dwelling on what we endured and instead look forward and see what we can do to make things better in 2021. Living in the state with the largest economy in the United States and the fifth largest economy in the world gives Californians a distinct advantage over many who are stuck elsewhere. Sadly, that doesn't change much of our current dilemma insofar as we remain wedded to the other 49 states and their collective fate.

If we truly want a rosier future, it's going to take patience and determination and a willingness to work side-by-side with our fellow citizens for the betterment of all, regardless of where they dwell. That's a big ask, but if we're not ready to battle for the soul of our country and for the well-being of those who share the land with us, maybe we don't deserve the freedoms we purportedly cherish here.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture on 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

Twilight on Christmas Eve

READERS MAY REMEMBER OUR dear departed columnist Bruce Bellingham, who wrote of his ramblings around the city in *Bellingham by the Bay*. Every December he ended that column with the same short tale of hope and inspiration. This is the last one he wrote in 2016. We hope you enjoy it as we did over the years. A longtime resident of Nob Hill, the "park" he refers to is Huntington Park.

Darkness is descending on an exquisite twilight on Christmas Eve. I wander around the park. What catches my eye is a couple on one of the benches. They seem

to be trying to keep the world away. With my usual nonchalance, I sit at a nearby spot, and shamelessly listen to them murmur to each other.

"Is it going to be a good Christmas?" she asks him quietly, anxiously. "It's been such a terrible year."

"Darling, it's going to be the best," he whispers. "We made it this far. We can carry it further."

She sighs, and rests her head back on his shoulder. . . .

And yes, they are heroes. They brought their love this far. What can be more heroic than love? After all, it's a good time to be in love.

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Cautious good news

Will burglaries continue to decline?

BURGLARIES DOWN

In a recent message to Northsiders, Northern Station Captain Paul Yep addressed some of the quality-of-life matters that have been the source of complaints from many locals in recent months.

Yep said he was happy to report that residential and commercial burglaries finally began to trend downward in the past month. “I know our community has been proactive about securing their property and the officers of Northern Station have made several burglary-related arrests,” he said. “Although we are now trending in the right direction, the year-to-date burglary statistics are still at an unacceptable level. I want to thank Supervisor Catherine Stefani and her office for organizing several community meetings to discuss strategies to further mitigate crime in District 2.”

Problems associated with homelessness are the source of numerous notifications to Northern Station each week. The captain said ongoing efforts to “reimagine policing” means that decisions are still yet to be made about which city department will be responsible for issues of the homeless and mentally ill. “Please continue to hold the police department accountable, but the service we can provide is limited. . . . We must decide who will ultimately be dealing with the homeless, mentally ill, and addicted persons living on the streets.”

PROPOSITION H EXECUTIVE ORDER

Slightly more than 60 percent of city voters passed Proposition H in November’s election, and on Nov. 19, Mayor London Breed issued an executive order to city departments to implement the “Save Our Small Businesses” ballot initiative within 30 days.

The measure streamlines permitting for certain uses, shortening the process to 30 days. It also eases some zoning restrictions, lets nonprofit art organizations operate in more areas, and makes it

easier for businesses to offer a variety of products and services.

OBSERVATION WHEEL CLOSED

A resurgence of Covid-19 cases led San Francisco officials to move the city into the “purple tier” of health-related restrictions in late November. One high-profile response was the temporary closing of the 150-foot SkyStar Observation Wheel in Golden Gate Park on Nov. 29. The wheel is part of the park’s 150th anniversary. Ticket holders can reschedule their rides at skystarwheel.com.


The Asian Art Museum and other institutions issued similar closure announcements. Visit the *San Francisco Chronicle’s* “Reopening California” project at projects.sfchronicle.com/2020/coronavirus-map/california-reopening to learn more about the pandemic tier system and what types of businesses and other organizations can be open.

FACTS AND FIGURES

94 percent: amount of all businesses in San Francisco that are small businesses . . . **8.4 percent:** San Francisco’s unemployment rate . . . **49,000:** number of employees in San Francisco working for nonprofits, or about one out of every 14 employees in the city . . . **460:** number of drug overdose deaths in San Francisco from January through August, 2020; for all of 2019, there were 441 overdose deaths in the city . . . **50:** the number of signatures needed to file appeals against city projects, if newly introduced legislation is passed by the Board of Supervisors; it does not apply to private projects . . . **2:** number of games the 49ers will be unable to play at their home field in Levi’s Stadium after Santa Clara County prohibited games there until Dec. 21, due to a surge in Covid-19 cases . . . **2.3 million:** views of a 2019 video of now-Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris explaining how to brine a turkey.

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Politics as Usual
continued from cover

cut back drastically, and some of them had hideous new health care costs when a loved one caught Covid-19. That pain isn't going to go away until Americans finally get serious about fighting the pandemic. Speaking of which . . .

THE PANDEMIC

Barely a week goes by now without promising new vaccine news, and some of the news is even better than had been hoped. Early projections for vaccine effectiveness were in the range of 50 percent. But at least two major vaccines went through their late trial stages and announced efficacy rates around 95 percent, and more vaccines are reaching the end of their trials.

With efficacy rates that high, it greatly expands the likelihood that the coronavirus plague can be tamped down to a rotten disease that won't require the shutdown of society. Children can return to schools, houses of worship can welcome their flocks, and you will have no excuse to avoid that smothering embrace and kiss from Aunt Edith.

THE PRESIDENT

Whenever we discuss the elected leader of the oldest ongoing democracy on the planet, it is important that we remember that the current president is a fan of a Houston physician who believes that doctors use alien DNA in experiments and that women get sick as a result of having sex with demons while they sleep.

On Jan. 20, Joe Biden will become our 46th president. The cabinet he is assembling is chock full of smart, competent people, refreshingly none of whom has a connection to white supremacist movements.

President Biden is the reason I'm Charlie Browning about 2021. In traditional, boring, fact-based reality politics, elected officials confront problems and try to come up with solutions to them. Germany's Angela Merkel is the epitome of this type of leader. Just by having competent people around him and actually trying to work for the common good, Biden will be able to get things going in the right direction again. He's not a virologist, but a good part of my optimism comes from the fact that when it comes to making recommendations about how to deal with the pandemic, President Biden will not be consulting the My Pillow guy.

CRIME

Here in San Francisco, we're reliving the 1970s, and not in an acid-flashback sort of way. We're seeing some crimes go down, others skyrocket, growing police-resident distrust, and a light-on-crime approach that will create its own backlash at the ballot box.

The optimist in me — Lucy won't really pull away the ball every time, will she? — would like to see us strike a balance in our approaches to fighting crime and to punishing perpetrators. California is a binge state, swinging between three-strikes harshness and bleeding-heart permissiveness. Each creates its own overreaction. I would like to see more reason and less emotion in this debate (and in policy) in 2020. It's unlikely, but Charlie Brown likes football.

EQUALITY

I periodically receive press release emails from a local politician that are fringe-adjacent enough that Trump would probably retweet them. One recent email claimed that left-wing groups like Black Lives Matter and Antifa were planning to come into San Francisco and cause violence. Such an occurrence did not take place, shocking no one.

That's because for the majority of Americans who aren't getting their "news" from low-rent conspiracy outlets, the idea that Black lives should be taken seriously is readily accepted. One doesn't have to agree with all of the lefty ideas espoused by the founders of the BLM movement to believe that we should create a society that is as just as possible. In fact, that's a central idea to most major religions and secular philosophies.

In 2020, this will be an interesting issue to observe. Too many people on the far Left only talk to other people on the far Left, so they don't know how to communicate with people who haven't drunk the same ideological Kool-aid. It's the same problem the Left has complained about for years on the Right.

The longer-term question about whether the center can reestablish itself in this country is still open. But hey, looky here: This country just voted into office for the first time ever a female vice president of Black and Indian descent. Married to a Jewish man. And only its second Roman Catholic president. Just as the election of Barack Obama didn't send the bigots scuttling toward their caves, the election of Kamala Harris won't solve our race problems, either. But it shows that for many tens of millions of people, race and ethnicity is not an impediment to being taken seriously as our leader.

TRUTH

Several years ago, a conservative intellectual named Tom Nichols wrote a book called *The Death of Expertise*. He complained about the way people ignore the real experts and instead rely on people who were objectively nonexperts or even just on their own internet "research." That some people should not trust their own judgment should go without saying, but it doesn't.

Nichols recounted the story of a *Washington Post* map showing the area from the Caspian Sea all the way to the Pacific Ocean. "It's all covered with pink dots, from Australia to Azerbaijan up to Siberia," Nichols said. "Every pink dot represented the guess of an adult American respondent about where North Korea is. . . . What struck me was how many people got it on the Korean peninsula, had a 50/50 chance of putting it on the north side of a line, and got it wrong. And it's in the name: North Korea."

Well, those people are still allowed to vote, to drive, to comment on Facebook, to share Twitter outrages, and all around bring down the quality of any conversation they're in. I would like to nominate them as the poster children of 2020. This was the year in which millions of people believed that the coronavirus was a hoax (even as hospitals filled to overflowing with Covid-19 patients), or that Democrats somehow rigged the presidential election (but apparently forgot to rig the votes for those House and Senate races they needed — how embarrassing!).

The big social media companies Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter finally, belatedly began annotating some of the worst of the lies and misinformation or even banning people who shared them. They still haven't come to grips with their role as enablers of the death of expertise and the rise of mass manipulation via social media, but one hopes this is the first step of a long walk to maturity they are beginning.

We will still be challenged in 2021 by many of the things that confronted us in 2020, but there is reason to hope that better leadership from above and wiser choices from below will result in a much better year all around.

Tee it up, Lucy.

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Rhode Island clear broth 'clam chowda'. PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

La Vita Delizioso
continued *from cover*

Baked stuffed shrimp is a New England staple rarely seen anywhere else, but it's a simple dish I make often. My mom's "clam chowda" is Rhode Island-style, thickened with potatoes rather than flour in a clear broth that allows the clams to shine in all their briny glory. For my mom's delicious crab arancini recipe — crunchy outside, creamy inside rice and crab balls — visit our website at marinatimes.com.

NEW ENGLAND BAKED STUFFED SHRIMP

- 1 pound fresh jumbo shrimp (U-12 or largest you can find)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ¼ cup sherry or dry white wine
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 small shallot (or ¼ small onion), minced
- 35 Ritz crackers (1 sleeve), crushed into crumbs
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 4–5 chives (or green onion tops), minced
- ¼ cup minced fresh Italian parsley
- Dash of celery salt (optional)
- Melted butter for dipping

Position oven rack to the middle position and preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and lightly spray with nonstick cooking spray.

First, pull the legs off from the shrimp and then peel off the shell, leaving the tail. Butterfly the shrimp by running the knife down the back but not all the way through the flesh, cleaning it as you go, then press the opened shrimp flat on the baking sheet with the tail pointing upward.

In a small skillet melt butter over medium heat. Add sherry, garlic, and shallot; stir constantly for 3–4 minutes. In a bowl, add the shallot mixture to the crushed Ritz crackers and stir until combined. Salt and pepper to taste. The mixture should not be wet but should stick together when pressed between your fingers. Use a tablespoon to scoop the stuffing into a mound on the flat part of the shrimp. Repeat with the remaining shrimp.

Bake for 20 minutes, or until the shrimp are pink and the stuffing is golden brown. Top with a sprinkle of fresh chives and fresh parsley, and a dash of celery salt. Serve with melted butter for dipping.

RHODE ISLAND CLEAR BROTH 'CLAM CHOWDA'

- 12–20 littleneck or cherrystone clams in the shell (get more if clams are small or you like a lot of clams like I do)
- 3 6½-ounce cans good quality chopped

- clams, drained, juice reserved
- 1 bottle good quality clam juice
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- ½ cup Spanish (yellow) onions, diced into ¼-inch pieces
- ½ cup celery, diced into ¼-inch pieces
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- ¼ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning (optional)
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 bay leaf
- 4–5 medium russet potatoes, peeled and chopped into 1-inch pieces
- ½ cup half-and-half or whole milk (optional)
- ¼ cup minced fresh Italian parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

Scrub fresh clams and rinse under cold running water to remove remaining sand or grit. Discard any that are not tightly closed.

Drain canned clam juice into a large measuring cup and reserve clams in a large bowl. Put fresh clams, juice from canned clams, and bottled clam juice in a large pot and cover with 4 cups of water. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Cover the pot and cook just until the clams open, about 5 minutes. Remove clams to a bowl and set aside to cool.

Strain the broth infusion through a fine mesh sieve or cheesecloth to remove any sand that settles at the bottom. Return broth to the pot, cover, and place over low heat.

Add 2 tablespoons butter to a medium skillet over medium-low heat. When butter sizzles, add onion and celery, and sauté until soft, about 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add white pepper, Old Bay, Worcestershire sauce, and bay leaf.

Meanwhile, peel and cut the potatoes.

When the onions and celery are cooked, scrape into the clam broth. Bring the broth to a gentle boil over medium-high heat and add the potatoes. Cover and simmer until *very* tender, about 15–20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, remove fresh clams from shells and roughly chop. Add to bowl with reserved canned chopped clams.

Turn off heat and add half-and-half (if using). Add clams, fresh parsley (reserve a bit for garnish), and remaining 2 tablespoons of butter; stir until butter is melted and top of chowder has a golden sheen. Add salt and pepper. Ladle into soup bowls, sprinkle with remaining fresh parsley, and serve. Refrigerate remainder — like most chowders, it's better the next day!

Email: recipes@marinatimes.com

Create a sparkling holiday table for a smaller celebration

BY JULIE MITCHELL

THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND IT; our holidays will look different this year. Celebrations will be smaller and gatherings more intimate — if they happen at all. But regardless of whether you're planning a dinner for two or for a few more, there's no reason why it can't be special. Maybe this year you'll add a few extra flourishes to make your holiday table shine, because now more than ever, we could use some good cheer.

While the larger grocery store chains offer plenty in the way of holiday fare and decor, the smaller neighborhood shops are where you'll find unique items from centerpieces to special wines, cheeses, desserts, and more to jazz up your celebration.

SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

Flowers, either a simple bouquet or an elegant centerpiece, are the perfect way to dress up your table. **Fiori** (2314 Chestnut Street, 415-346-1100, fiori.com) offers beautiful fresh, seasonal, and tasteful wrapped flowers that you can order online for curbside pickup, and if desired, work directly with their personal design consultant to develop an original floral arrangement to suit your tastes.

The Bud Stop (2200 Union Street, 415-931-1835, thebudstoponline.com), reminiscent of a Parisian sidewalk stand, sells fresh, premium flowers at affordable

prices. Its florists will help you select or create a bouquet or centerpiece that you'll be proud to display as part of our holiday decor.

SAY CHEESE

If you plan to serve cheese, some of the city's finest specialty cheese purveyors are nearby. **Cheese Plus** (2001 Polk Street, 415-921-2001, cheeseplus.com) has expert cheesemongers to help you create a cheese or charcuterie platter with a complement of smoked and cured meats. You'll also find specialty items including Tuscan extra-virgin olive, local honey, culinary condiments and spices, imported truffles, fruit preserves, and craft beers. A wine specialist can help navigate their impressive selection of wines.

The Cheese School of San Francisco (900 North Point Street, 415-346-7530, thecheeseschool.com) is another great resource for the best domestic and imported cheeses as well as fine wine and cheese and charcuterie platters. To really jazz up your table, order a multitiered cheese "cake" made from whole wheels of handmade, artisan cheese stacked to resemble a traditional layer cake. Set up, delivery, and decoration are also available.

GOURMAND GO-TOS

If you are planning to cook, local choices abound for meat, fish, produce, and

other treats. **Marina Meats** (2395 Chestnut Street, 415-673-6700) is a reliable source of high-end meat, chicken, and fresh fish. Its expert butchers are happy to explain different cuts of meat and to offer preparation tips.

At **Luke's Local** (2190 Union Street, orders@lukeslocal.com, lukeslocal.com), you'll also find a personal touch for sweets like Baci Perugina chocolates or entrées like fresh or smoked turkeys, prepared foods, and seasonal produce. On Luke's app, you can choose from any of the market's products including complete prepared meals and pick them up or have them delivered.

Real Food Company (2140 Polk Street, 415-673-7420, realfoodco.com), another full-service market, is stocked with specialty foods, fresh meat and fish, organic, seasonal produce, natural health and wellness products, and more, many sourced from local farmers and producers. Place your holiday special orders in advance.

The iconic **Little City Market** (1400 Stockton Street, 415-986-2601) is an old-school butcher shop run by father-and-son Mike and Ron Spinali. You'll find more than 30 types of sausage, a full meat case, house-made meatballs, and other Italian specialties.

For unique artisan products, look to **The Epicurean Trader** (1909 Union Street, 888-504-8118, theepicureantrader.com). Devoted entirely to small-batch

products with natural ingredients like craft spirits, organic and sustainable wines, farmstead cheeses and charcuterie, unique chocolates, coffees, and teas, you'll also find unusual spices and oils.

DELECTABLE DESSERTS

When it comes to dessert, round out your meal without a lot of fuss. **Le Marais Bakery** (2066 Chestnut Street, 415-359-9801, lemaraisbakery.com) crafts luscious pastries and desserts with both local and French butters and other organic, locally sourced ingredients. Special holiday desserts include Parisian vanilla flan, apple tarte Normande, and more.

For cupcakes, cookies, holiday cakes, and other sweets, check out **Susie-Cakes** (2109 Chestnut Street, 415-474-2253, susiecakes.com) or **Kara's Cupcakes** (3249 Scott Street, 415-563-2253, karascupcakes.com). Colorful treats will definitely please the younger members of your crew and lend just the right touch of color and whimsy to your feast.

The year is almost over, and everyone is eagerly looking forward to a better 2021. But for now, stay close to home, mask up, and take advantage of convenient neighborhood shops to provide everything you need to make this holiday season both savory and sweet.

Email: julie@marinatimes.com



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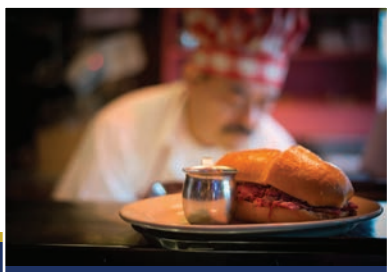
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Art World

continued *from cover*

time passed, this motif came to include the overall disruption and unease that has become a hallmark of life in 2020.

PROTEST AND ISOLATION

The exhibition includes artists responding to the Black Lives Matter movement as a point of departure to discuss injustice and police brutality. Orin Carpenter's *Sick and Tired 2020* gives voice to the zeitgeist of unrest. A face screaming into a megaphone hovers above scenes of street demonstrations and symbols of racial struggle throughout history. Many artists have used their medium of choice as a form of protest to address issues relating to politics, patriarchy, feminism, and LGBTQ rights.

Work influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and its unprecedented impact on the daily lives of citizens across the globe is also a theme. These new realities — sheltering in place, mortality, online meetings, and face coverings — serve as ongoing themes. Samira Akbari Hozmahi's *Quarantine Diary on tea bag paper, 2020* depicts a collection of rectangular images that mark out the days in a grid collection of introspective moments. One of these panels, "Day 49 My Universe," shows a painting of bare feet crossed in front of a pastel wash background. Monica Tiulescu's *Zoom 2020*, is a montage of brightly painted faces suggesting a computer screen, faces that appear both together and alone, some blank, others smiling and some with contorted facial distortions.

THE CITY MANY CALL HOME

The city's iconic landmarks are depicted in some artworks while highlighting

the issues that continue to challenge the daily lives of San Franciscans including homelessness, gentrification, income disparities, and the shrinking diversity of the population.

Various forms of abstraction including color field images, geometric work, surreal imagery and works inspired by cartoons and graffiti are also included. *American Homes 6, 2019* by Francis Baker reveals a tent city rendered in a blue wash overlaid with a ghostly white outline — suggestive of an architect's blueprint — of a home in planning. *Rehabilitation of the Abandoned Metropolis 2020* by R.L. Butterfield hearkens back to painting of the early 20th century with vibrant blocks of color mapping out a futurism-inspired vision of the San Francisco cityscape.

MULTIMEDIA ART

Video artists represented in the exhibition have used animation, documentary, computer-generated imagery, montage, and narration to communicate themes relating to identity, community, climate change, and ideas about the nature and meaning of art.

The de Young welcomed submissions by artists from nine Bay Area counties to curate this exhibition. Amid great uncertainty, this showcase is, as Thomas P. Campbell, Director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco states, "... a celebratory sign of our community's strength and resilience."

The de Young Open: On the Edge:
415-750-3600, famsf.org.

Sharon Anderson is an artist and writer in Southern California. She can be reached at mindtheimage.com.

The Best of Books :: Flying off the shelves

The Marina Books Inc. best-seller list

COMPILED BY KEVIN MCCARTHY

HARDCOVER FICTION

1. **The Law of Innocence**, by Michael Connelly
2. **The Moonflower Murders: A Novel**, Anthony Horowitz
3. **Snow: A Novel**, John Banville

HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. **A Promised Land**, by Barack Obama
2. **Spirits of San Francisco: Voyages through the Unknown City**, by Gary Kamiya and Paul Madonna
3. **The Best of Me**, by David Sedaris

PAPERBACK FICTION

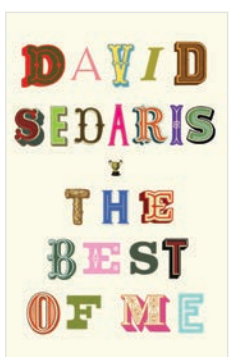
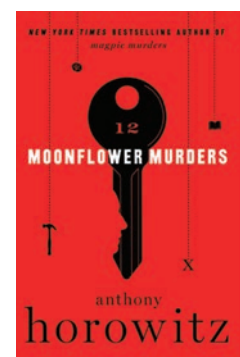
1. **Shuggie Bain: A Novel**, by Douglas Stuart
2. **Overstory: A Novel**, by Richard Powers
3. **My Year of Rest and Relaxation: A Novel**, by Ottessa Moshfegh

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

1. **Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Explain Everything About the World (Politics of Place)**, by Tim Marshall
2. **Life Undercover: Coming of Age in the CIA**, by Amaryllis Fox
3. **Sapiens: A Graphic History (The Birth of Humankind)**, by Yuval Harari

CHILDREN'S

1. **Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Deep End**, by Jeff Kinney
2. **Two Many Birds**, by Cindy Derby



3. **Hollowpox: The Hunt for Morrigan Crow**, by Jessica Townsend

NEW AND NOTABLE RELEASES

Rhythm of War, Brandon Sanderson

The Stormlight Archive saga continues in *Rhythm of War*, the eagerly awaited sequel to Sanderson's number one *New York Times* best-selling *Oathbringer*, from an epic fantasy writer at the top of his game.

The Silence: A Novel, by Don DeLillo

A dazzling and profoundly moving conversation about what makes us human. Never has the art of fiction been such an immediate guide to our navigation of a bewildering world. Never have DeLillo's prescience, imagination, and language been more illuminating and essential.

A full list of new releases can be found at marinatimes.com

Find Kevin McCarthy at Books Inc. in the Marina (2251 Chestnut Street, 415-931-3633, booksinc.net/sfmarina).

MARINA TIMES :: MARINATIMES.COM

SEASON'S GREETINGS

2020-2021 Recology Holiday Collection Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
DEC. 21 Regular service	DEC. 22 Regular service	DEC. 23 Regular service	DEC. 24 Regular service	DEC. 25 No service	DEC. 26 Christmas service for Friday customers
DEC. 28 Regular service	DEC. 29 Regular service	DEC. 30 Regular service	DEC. 31 Regular service	JAN. 1 No service	JAN. 2 New Year's service for Friday customers

FRIDAY CUSTOMERS ONLY:

- Both Christmas Day, Dec. 25, and New Year's Day, Jan. 1, fall on Fridays.
- There will be no collection service on Christmas and New Year's days to allow Recology workers to be with their families.
- During the holidays crews will empty your bins on two Saturdays: Dec. 26 and Jan. 2.
- **During these two weeks please put your bins out the Friday night before Saturday collection.**
- Regular Friday service resumes Jan. 8.

Christmas tree collection in S.F. will take place Jan. 4–15, 2021

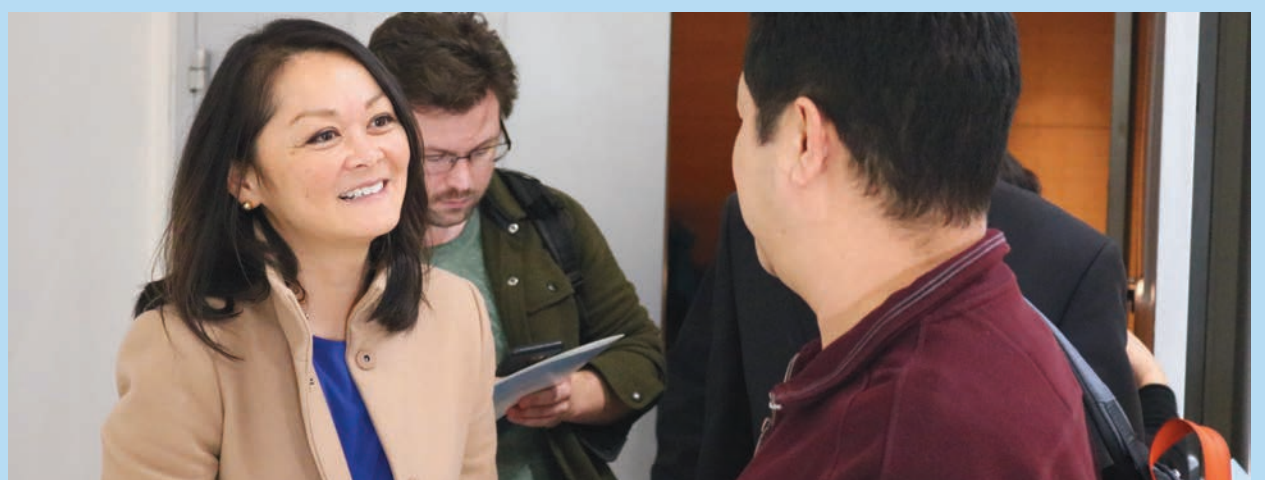


Please place trees curbside the night before your collection day. Christmas trees will be collected by a dedicated truck on your regular service day.

Please remove all plastic bags, lights, decorations, tinsel, and stands. If your tree is more than 6 feet tall, it must be cut in half.



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MomSense :: Pandemic life

Rendering of *Entwined*, coming Dec. 10 to Golden Gate Park's Peacock Meadow.
PHOTO: COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO RECREATION AND PARKS / SFRECPARK.ORG

Adapting holiday traditions during Covid

BY LIZ FARRELL

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT back in March that we would be heading into December with another surge of coronavirus cases and planning for a Covid Christmas? I certainly did not, and at the end of what has been a long and challenging year, nothing sounds better than gathering with friends and family or traveling to a warm exotic place; however, it is likely none of those things will be happening. We have dealt with birthdays, graduations, summer, Halloween, Thanksgiving. Now the holidays are here and once again we will be asking ourselves and our children to “pivot,” reimagine, and get creative so we can still have a memorable, safe, and healthy holiday season. It won't be easy; this is one of my favorite times of year filled with traditions that include lots of gatherings, but I do have a few ideas that I hope will help make this year a little easier yet still memorable.

With a little creativity and technology, we can still do some of our favorite things.

MAKE A FAMILY PLAN

This is the year to get everyone on board, so a family plan is essential to get creative and come up with some fun ideas. Start with a family meeting to talk about the holiday traditions each person values most. Figure out those that can still be done, and those that need to be modified. It is best to do this early on so expectations are managed and it is acknowledged that certain activities will look a little different this year. Be open to it as a different year so it might be a good time to try new things. My daughter's school celebrates Pasko, a Christmas celebration of Filipino food and dancing we have never been able to attend, but this year it will be virtual, and you can order the meal to eat at home, so we are excited we finally can experience it. Remember, a change in plans may be disappointing, but also it is a great opportunity to help our children learn to adapt and grow.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO

I have tried to instill this motto at every crossroads where a celebration might look different. Gatherings will be limited, social distancing and masks are still essential, and outdoors is better than indoors; but knowing all that, there is still a lot we can do to celebrate. Drive-in movies are showing holiday favorites, which makes for a

great family night. For those who want to make sure to put a good word in with Santa, check out JingleRing, which allows you to schedule a live or prerecorded virtual call with Santa. For something outdoors, I highly recommend a night in Golden Gate Park, where you can experience the new light exhibition “Entwined.” My son's class is doing “secret Santas,” so the kids can look forward to surprises dropped at their doorstep. These can be as simple as a drawing, a homemade craft, or baked goods. One thing I enjoy is shopping with my mom and sisters, and because that might

be tough this year, we are going to set a night aside to Facetime while we do some online shopping and sip wine. With a little bit of creativity and the help of technology, we can reimagine ways to still do some of our favorite things. Who knows? Maybe we'll discover a new way of celebrating that will become a family tradition post-virus.

MINDSET MATTERS

It is perfectly normal to feel bummed about the changes we will have to make to our holiday celebrations this year. This is not how any of us want it to be, and it is O.K. to recognize there are lots of disappointments right now for everyone. However, mindset matters, so let's look to the changes that the pandemic is imposing on us to focus on what is most important. We want to help our kids look at not what has been lost but what we have learned during this time. Maybe that is slowing down, scaling down, or a new focus on health. Many have endured hardships this year due to Covid or its affects. What if instead of putting an “elf on the shelf” this year we taught our kids to be the elves? Wouldn't it be great if we used this season to inspire hope, kindness, and joy in our kids by teaching them to share it with others? Help them think of small ways they can do this, such as writing thank-you notes to first responders, making someone else's bed, cleaning up a mess they didn't make, or picking up trash in the neighborhood.

We might be surprised that this may be the year we understand and value the true reason for the season more than any other.

Email: liz@marinatimes.com

10 :: DECEMBER 2020

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Locally and nationally, real estate has been a bright spot in an otherwise disastrous economy. PHOTO: PAULBR75

The big surprise

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

IN SPITE OF ALL THE TURMOIL surrounding Covid-19, the economy, and our recent election, the housing market in San Francisco remains remarkably unchanged. Indeed, housing is a bright spot for the economy across the nation.

“The easy story has been to say ‘real estate plunges as everyone flees cities,’ but the reality is nuanced,” said Matt Fuller, co-founder of Jackson Fuller Real Estate and a past president of the San Francisco Association of Realtors. But “2020 has been the year of getting off the fence and procrastinating no more.”

MARKET STRENGTHS

According to Fuller, in San Francisco sellers who may have previously thought about leaving have listed their homes and are making the move. Buyers who had long wanted to own in the city see an opportunity and have transitioned from renting to buying.

The ultra-wealthy will continue to live wherever they choose, but San Francisco’s low Covid-19 transmission and death rates, in combination with wildfires elsewhere in the state, have maintained San Francisco’s desirability in the minds of the “modest millionaires” in the market for a home purchase.

Market segmentation continues to exist across the city. Demand for single-family homes remains strongest, but buyers are also cautiously interested in condos located in smaller buildings and boutique developments. Condos in large full-amenity high-rise developments are receiving the least interest.

Inventory remains high. According to Fuller, in October the number of sales across the city was up slightly year-over-year (550 sales in 2019, 608 in 2020) but the big change for buyers was that the number of active homes for sale during the same month went from 739 in 2019 to 1,097 in 2020 — a massive increase.

The median price for a single-family home in October was \$1,637,550, down 0.8 percent from last year, and the median price for a condo or loft during the same period was \$1,177,000, down 12.5 percent from 2019.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Meanwhile, according to mortgage newsdaily.com, across the nation home purchase activity remained strong in the late summer, reversing the usual seasonal slowdown. Record low mortgages rates continue to bring out buyers, including first timers and those looking to trade up or buy a second home.

“Housing continues to be a bright spot during an otherwise challenging economic time for many U.S. households,”

said Frank Martell, president and CEO of CoreLogic. “Those in sectors that weathered the transition to remote work successfully are now able to take advantage of low mortgage rates to purchase a home for the first time or to trade up to a larger home.”

According to a recent realtor.com report, home prices across the nation continued to defy expectations as they sharply headed up — even as the turmoil over a hotly contested presidential election, the coronavirus pandemic, and high unemployment persisted.

During the last fiscal crisis — the Great Recession of 2007 through 2009 — there were many more homes for sale than qualified buyers. The reverse is true this time around. The country is in the clutches of a significant housing shortage at the same time that buyers are clamoring for more spacious houses. Buyers are looking for larger properties to more comfortably work from home, educate their children, and maintain social distance from others.

As a result, prices increased by double digits in roughly two thirds, or 65 percent, of the 181 metropolitan areas studied in the report.

LOCAL FUTURE

What can we expect going forward in San Francisco? Fuller offers some insight.

“In the past, a strong rental market virtually guaranteed a seller could always rent their home at a profit if they couldn’t get their desired sales price,” he said. “But with rents down, will the inability to cover costs with market-based rents encourage sellers to reduce prices? Or will sellers take a long-term view and a short-term loss, banking on San Francisco’s historic trend of underbuilding homes and overbuilding jobs?”

Unfortunately, there are no easy answers. San Francisco is nearing the end of real estate’s fall listing season, and the city’s inventory of homes — particularly condos — remains high.

Historically, most homes for sale toward the end of the calendar year are taken off the market. Doing this for at least 30 days enables the seller to reset the active-days-on-market count, and then relist in January with a new price, and possibly a new agent.

Will sellers reprice for less or return at the same asking price, based on expectations of more stimulus spending and a Covid-19 vaccine? Only time will tell.

The good news, however, is that in about four weeks 2020 will at last be behind us. This New Year’s Eve may be celebrated with even more enthusiasm than usual, even if in still Covid-safe surroundings.

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