



## Time to reopen and revive

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The Sparks are back — in music and on screen. PHOTO: ANNA WEBBER

## California-based Sparks fly again

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

THEY MAY NOT BE SUPERSTARS, and you may not have even heard of them, but Sparks is a remarkably durable and mutable musical act comprised of brothers Ron and Russell Mael — two prodigiously inventive and delightfully

eccentric Los Angeles natives — and whomsoever they choose to play in their ensemble. They’ve been at it for over five decades and show no sign of stopping. In fact, *A Steady Drip, Drip, Drip*, their 24th studio album, was released last year to favorable reviews. And they just issued a hypnotic new track, “Your Fandango,” in

collaboration with an old ally: singer, songwriter, producer, and recent Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Todd Rundgren.

Perhaps you’d recognize the Maels in a photo or on the cover of an album. They’re unmistakable. Singer Russell has frequently sported a

SNYDER, continued on 9

## REYNOLDS RAP :: Opinion

### Why colleagues say D.A. Chesa Boudin must go

Critics point to Boudin’s ideology and soft-on-crime approach, but colleagues say San Francisco’s top cop isn’t qualified for the job

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

ON JAN. 9, 2015, FOUR MEN WERE SHOT AND killed inside a car in the Lower Haight near Laguna and Page streets. Police eventually arrested Lee Farley Jr. for the killings and were investigating several other suspects. Six years later, the case hasn’t gone to trial, and those other suspects have all died as a result of gang-related violence.

Last month, mothers of the victims showed up at Farley’s latest hearing on May 19 as they have for every hearing since he was arrested. The case languished under former San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón and it continues to languish under his successor, Chesa Boudin, with three prosecutors assigned to the case since he took office. Paul Kangas, a criminal defense investigator who spent 44 years as a criminal defense attorney, represents one of the victims’ mothers. “She asked them to file the death penalty. The latest district attorney, Leslie Cogan, rolled her eyes,”

REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 4

## POLITICS AS USUAL :: Opinion

### The face behind the mask

With reopening and unmasking now in full swing, how wisely will we spend our time and money?

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

WE MIGHT ALL HAVE GONE THROUGH THIS pandemic together, but we neither experienced the same things nor will our lives be the same afterward.

On June 15, a month after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said you only had to wear masks at Halloween, California will finally adopt the new guidance. At that point, fully vaccinated people will be able to ditch a face mask when going about their daily activities of shopping, walking, going to the cinemas or to church.

The state’s Covid-19 information resource assures Californians, “You will still have the option to wear a mask if you choose.” Which surely will be music to the ears of people who invested in the booming mask industry in recent months; they might still lose money.

My first job out of college was based in a beautiful old estate on the edges of Indianapolis. The English Gothic mansion had been built more than 100 years ago

POLITICS AS USUAL, continued on 5

## ART WORLD :: Exhibition



Nam June Paik’s *Sistine Chapel*. PHOTO: COURTESY SFMOMA

### Exclusive U.S. retrospective of visionary artist Nam June Paik at SFMOMA

BY SHARON ANDERSON

NAM JUNE PAIK HAS BEEN A ubiquitous cultural presence for decades. If you know the expression “electronic superhighway,”

you already know Paik, who is credited for coining the phrase in 1974 in reference to the future of communication in the Internet age. Now, SFMOMA will host the artist’s first West Coast retrospective through October 2021.

## AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION

Paik was born in Seoul during the Japanese occupation of Korea. Living and working in Japan, Germany, and the United States contributed to his art themes of global connectedness. Studying music theory as a musician and experimenting with performance and telecommunications cemented his multidisciplinary approach.

“Nam June Paik is famous for being the historic father of video art, but his groundbreaking and contemporary influence is even more based on his crossover between all media,” said Rudolf Frieling, curator of media arts at SFMOMA. “Paik’s radical visual and musical aesthetic has a natural home here on the West Coast as a place for global connectivity.”

## THE COLLABORATIVE LIFE

Always a collaborator, Paik worked with a wide range of performers from artists Joseph Beuys to the cellist Charlotte Moorman. In his career he played a key role in Fluxus, an international network of artists, composers, and poets who engaged in experimental art performances. His work has influenced musicians David Bowie, Laurie Anderson and Devo’s Mark Mothershead

ART WORLD, continued on 8



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**POLICE BLOTTER** : From Northern Station SFPD

## On the crime beat

Homicide, burglary, and more

COMPILED BY MARINA TIMES STAFF

**H**ERE'S A SAMPLING OF SOME recent crimes in the districts covered by SFPD's Northern Station.

### INFANT HOMICIDE

*Tuesday, April 20, 12:15 p.m.  
1200 block of Franklin Street*

California Pacific Medical Center staff informed police officers that they had noticed signs of trauma on a 7-month-old boy, who had been brought into the emergency department by an adult male caregiver. The boy had been declared deceased by medical staff.

The city's chief medical examiner, the homicide detail, and Child Protective Services were notified. Homicide investigators developed probable cause to make an arrest for assault of a child under 8 resulting in death, and resisting, obstructing or delaying a peace officer.

### AIN'T NO PARKING GARAGE HIGH ENOUGH

*Tuesday, April 20, no time given  
2000 block of Lombard Street*

Officer Hardy, while on bike patrol, responded to a report of a person parked in a restricted area who appeared to be under the influence of narcotics. Dispatchers provided information about the vehicle, which had been involved in several prior burglary-related calls. Officer Hardy arrived and observed additional vehicle code violations involving the subject's vehicle.

The subject attempted to flee in the vehicle, ignoring Hardy's commands to stop. The subject ran over Hardy's bicycle, as the officer stood in a space between the subject's vehicle and another vehicle. The subject drove to the top floor of a parking garage, exited the vehicle and attempted to flee the scene on foot. Officer Hardy and other officers eventually apprehended the subject, who was arrested for several violations, including aggravated assault on a police officer.

### PROLIFIC AUTO BURGLAR

*Tuesday, April 20, 3:20 p.m.  
1800 block of Post Street*

Street Crimes Unit Officers Reynolds, Coleman, and McBride observed two people chasing a subject into Japantown. As the officers caught up to the group, they saw the subject being detained by others.

The officers determined the subject had just broken into several vehicles, and they interviewed additional victims and witnesses at the scene. The subject was also recognized as a prolific auto burglar in the area. Additionally, the officers were able to recover stolen property and return it to the rightful owners. The subject was arrested for burglary-related charges and booked at County Jail.

### TAKING A HIT AND RUN

*Saturday, April 24, 1:50 p.m.  
1700 block of Lombard Street*

Officers Boccio and Hom responded to a report of a hit-and-run collision. Their investigation revealed that two people had come to San Francisco to sell a large amount of marijuana. During the encounter, the victim exited the suspect's vehicle while at a gas station and drove away with the victim's drugs. The victim was standing by the open door of the vehicle as it was speeding away. The vehicle door struck another vehicle, closing on the victim and causing minor injury.

### SPARKLING CRIME

*Sunday, April 25, 2:20 p.m.  
1500 block of Franklin Street*

A business owner walked into the Northern Police Station to report that his store had been robbed. He said two people entered his store and concealed two bottles of champagne under their coats.

The victim attempted to block the door to prevent them from leaving without paying. One of the subjects dropped the bottle and punched the victim in the face. The subjects picked up the bottle and fled the area on foot. The victim sustained minor injuries.

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Very soon, not wearing a mask will be common. And legal. PHOTO: VIEWAPART

# No more tiers

## The reopening comes June 15

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

### FROM YELLOW TIER TO NO TIERS

On May 20, San Francisco updated its public health direction for the city’s continuation in the yellow tier. This included increased capacity limits at businesses and other gathering places, the dropping of on-site pre-entry health screening, and adjustments to other limits on eating, drinking, and gathering.

Meanwhile, the state is on track for dropping most pandemic restrictions on June 15. Only a few restrictions will remain, such as for very large events, and individual venues and businesses can implement their own restrictions.

### CITY TRIES NEW MID-MARKET SAFETY PLAN

San Francisco will boost police presence and connect people in need with services as part of the city’s latest effort to address safety and quality of life problems in the downtown corridor. With a combination of public and private money, the effort will include community ambassadors on every block for 10–12 hours each day; the ambassadors will help direct people in need of services to the appropriate resources, and will help coordinate responses by city departments to various situations that occur in the area.

In addition, the mayor’s office said “community policing will be the basis of the increased public safety investment in this area, emphasizing community partnerships and proactive problem-solving with mutual respect between the police and the people of San Francisco that they serve.”

“We’re focusing on both addressing the illegal activity that is unacceptable and will not be allowed to continue, while also building up our community presence so that this area is more welcoming, friendly, and accessible to everyone who lives, works, and visits the area,” said Mayor London Breed. “This effort is really a collaboration with support and guidance from the community, especially the many families with children, workers, and senior communities that live and work here. This sustained, focused approach will make a noticeable difference on the street as our city reopens and we continue to move forward with our economic recovery.”

The initiative has a planned June 15, 2021 launch date.

### CRIME SNAPSHOT

For a quick look at crime statistics in the area of the city covered by SFPD’s

Northern Station, look to the week of April 19–25. There were 52 automobile burglaries, bringing the year-to-date total to 869, down 35 percent from the 1,331 recorded in the same time in the previous year. However, burglaries for the first four months of the year were up 48 percent, from 310 in 2020 to 460 in 2021. Robberies were the same, with seven new robberies recorded that week to bring the total to 116 for the first four months, the same as in 2020.

### PROPERTY SNAPSHOT

In April of this year, 752 homes sold in San Francisco, a huge increase over the 228 that sold in April 2020. That’s the latest from real estate site Redfin, which also reports that the median sale price is \$1.45 million, up a slight 0.9 percent over last year.

The median listing price of a residential property in the city is \$1.349 million, according to Movoto. That differs dramatically between single-family homes (with median list prices of \$1.895 million) and condominiums (\$1.149 million).

### FACTS AND FIGURES

**\$11.4 million:** amount needed to fund a new Street Overdose Response Team to respond to and care for opioid overdoses in San Francisco . . . **10:** number of free summer reading books per student to be distributed by the city’s public libraries as part of the Summer Together initiative, which is designed to help San Francisco students catch up after a year of remote learning . . . **7:** the day in June that City Hall will reopen to the public . . . **1:** the Golden Gate Bridge ranks as the best landmark in the world for mobile work sites, according to a study by Uswitch of cellular signal strength and Internet connections; The Great Wall of China ranked last . . . **1,000:** number of homeless people estimated to benefit from new emergency housing vouchers in the city, made possible by the American Rescue Plan . . . **\$420,371.63:** amount Adobe Pictures paid SFPD for off-duty officers to provide security during the filming of the latest *Matrix* film in San Francisco . . . **18:** San Francisco’s place on a list of the “most sung-about cities,” according to OnBuy.com, with 409 songs including the city name in its lyrics; New York City was in first place with 5,470 songs . . . **78:** number of songs including the city of Dusseldorf, Germany; what rhymes with Dusseldorf?

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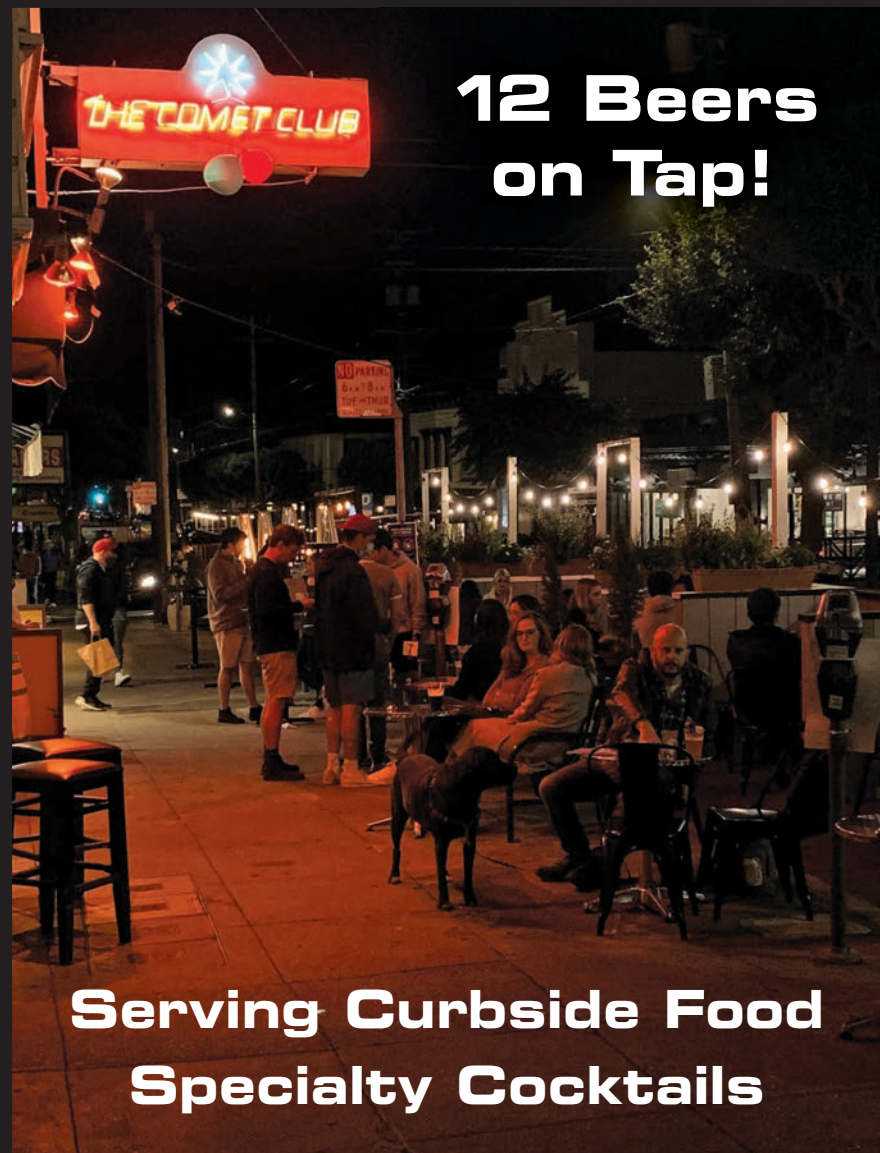
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## Reynolds Rap

continued from cover

Kangas said. As for Boudin, Kangas put it bluntly: "He isn't qualified for the job."

### EXCUSES, EXCUSES

On May 15, two men were killed and a third was wounded in separate, back-to-back shootings near Potrero Hill. Police later identified 32-year-old San Francisco resident Robert Newt as the suspect. A check of his record revealed Newt had been arrested just weeks earlier, on April 21, for firearms charges including felon in possession of a firearm, felon in possession of a loaded firearm, felon in possession of a concealed firearm, person prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm, and possession of an assault weapon — an untraceable AR-15-style rifle with no serial number known as a "ghost gun."

Since 2018, Newt has been arrested six times in various counties on multiple charges, nearly all involving firearms; but in the April 21 arrest Boudin declined to file charges, putting the onus back on police to obtain more evidence and setting Newt free. Boudin spokeswoman Rachel Marshall told the *San Francisco Chronicle* prosecutors wanted the police to obtain DNA or fingerprint evidence necessary to prosecute the case. But according to former San Francisco prosecutor Tom Ostly, that's not true. "DNA is not necessary to charge Mr. Newt for being a felon in possession of a firearm, or any of the other crimes he was arrested for," said Ostly, who tried 31 cases under Gascón with a conviction rate of more than 90 percent. "DNA may be helpful in proving the charges beyond a reasonable doubt at jury trial, but it is not necessary for rebooking or [a] preliminary hearing. It is disturbing that the district attorney refuses to acknowledge the truth of his failure and instead is trying to gaslight the public and shift blame. It sends the clear message that incompetence will continue."

Ostly also pointed out that had Newt been charged correctly, he would have been eligible for a variety of services. "Since he was not charged, none of those resources were made available to him, and his destructive behavior continued. The district attorney's incompetence has also failed Mr. Newt."

### 'COMPLETE CHAOS'

Gregory Mendez, a 20-year veteran assistant attorney who retired this past December, says under Boudin the district attorney's office has a backlog of cases and a staff of former public defenders — like Boudin himself. "Conceptually, Boudin and the other 15 public defenders he hired being paid as DAs have one principal goal, and that is to do what they can for the accused. When they joined the DA's office they didn't say, 'Now I want to prosecute these people.' None of them — including Boudin — has ever prosecuted a case. It was bad under Gascón, but Boudin came in and made it worse; the lowest morale I've seen, people leaving, no one to try cases. It's complete chaos."

In a letter supporting the efforts to recall Boudin, Mendez says, "Superior Court judges presiding over plea negotiations have been rejecting DA offers because they are too lenient, and if accepted, would not hold defendants legally responsible. . . ." Mendez also notes Boudin's misuse of Collaborative Court units, which offer the accused clinical treatment rather than plea deals, trials, and potential jail time. "Instead of following long-established guidelines for determining who should participate in these alternative courts, Boudin refers

any and all to these forums and provides those accused of any crime, no matter how violent, the opportunity to side-step accountability under the auspices of putative recovery."

Since taking office, in a city where fentanyl-laced drugs are on track to kill 1,000 people this year, hasn't pursued a single felony drug case, and according to Public Comment SF, individuals booked for felony drug sales in 2020 were released the same day or the next day 84 percent of the time. Mendez says Boudin prefers to send dealers to drug court, where they sit right next to their customers. "The judge will send dealers to counseling, they don't show up, and bench warrants are flying around all the time. ..."

### PROMISES, PROMISES

Another district attorney, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retribution, says when Boudin fired most of the experienced prosecutors early in his term, many of the public defenders he replaced them with were put in policy-making positions. "They're getting close to \$200K a year for doing nothing but cheerleading for him, while the actual prosecutors are short staffed and overworked. He hasn't kept any of his big campaign promises — not even holding bad cops accountable."

In March 2020, Boudin dismissed charges against two Alameda County sheriff's deputies who beat car theft suspect Stanislav Petrov so badly they broke bones in his hands and arms — and it was all caught on surveillance video. Oakland attorney Julia Sherwin, who represented Petrov in a 2016 civil rights lawsuit against Alameda County and won a \$5.5 million settlement, told the *Chronicle* "she was stunned" when she learned Boudin had dismissed the case. "This is about as much a slam dunk of a criminal case against law enforcement as you would hope to find," she said.

In November 2020 Boudin promised to refile charges against the deputies, yet eight months later he hasn't done so. He blames the pandemic, but colleagues say the reason is he lacks qualified attorneys. Under pressure from late public defender Jeff Adachi, in 2018 Gascón assigned the case to top prosecutors Michael Swart and David Ezgar. When Gascón left to run for district attorney in Los Angeles, Boudin entered the race on a platform of holding cops accountable and won. He immediately fired seven attorneys, including Swart. That left Ezgar on the case, but he resigned shortly after. A confidential memo obtained by the *Marina Times* shows Boudin replaced those seasoned prosecutors with former interns, recent law grads, public defenders, and private defense attorneys.

Boudin's colleagues also say poor hiring decisions play a big part as to why murder cases like the 2015 Lower Haight shootings have continued to languish under his leadership. While the prosecutors he fired had tried more than 100 homicides among them, Boudin's only new hire with "homicide" in her resume joined his staff from the New York District Attorney's Office, where "she was most recently promoted to Homicide Cadet as an entry position into homicide prosecutions."

Boudin is fond of blaming the pandemic for a lack of jury trials, but he should be thankful it gave him more than a year's worth of excuses. Now, with courts ramping back up, Boudin will have no one to blame but himself.

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by a local banking scion named Stoughton A. Fletcher, who invested heavily in war machinery production during World War I. However, just as he got his factories ready (and his wallet ready to earn back his investment), the war ended. He lost everything, including his wonderful mansion. Fletcher later moved to California, where he worked as an elevator operator for a time. Let that be a lesson to everyone who tried to corner the markets for face masks or toilet paper during the pandemic.

June 15 will also see the state fully reopen, more or less. Capacity limitations will be lifted for indoor and outdoor gatherings, vaccination verification will only be required for “indoor mega events,” and physical distancing rules will be dropped.

So it currently looks like things are all moving in the right direction, but some caution is advised, lest we end up like Fletcher.

MONEY COUNTS

First, I have a confession to make. I wrote in these pages more than once that local and state governments would come out of this pandemic on fiscal life support. I thought all the spending they had to do to keep things going, and the loss of tax revenue from shuttered businesses, would leave them as budget basket cases. I was wrong. The state of California has a \$79 billion surplus. Keep in mind that \$79 billion is more than the entire actual budget of almost any other state in the union.

But even the City and County of San Francisco had an unexpected \$125 million surplus for its fiscal year.

City leaders said the money would be put to use aiding small businesses, residents, and arts

and cultural organizations impacted by the pandemic. That’s wise. On the state side, Gov. Gavin Newsom gets to play Santa Claus at a time when the GOP-led recall effort is already flailing for attention.

“This is a case where you can very easily overpromise, overperform in the short term and underperform for years after,” Santa Clara University political science professor Dr. Larry Gerston told me in a recent political roundtable. He said California’s volatile economy is propped up by tech and federal pandemic stimulus payments; this \$79 billion is a one-off surplus.

“The governor — wisely, on his part — is going to replenish the rainy day fund, from which he took \$10 billion to get through the [pandemic],” said Gerston. “Remember, he was expecting a \$54 billion deficit. So . . . that was good to pay it back. But as far as the other things go, they’d better be described as one-time investments. For example, he wants to go to a universal four-year pre-K. I think that’s a great idea. I really do. As someone who studies education policy, it’s fabulous. [But] it’s costly. And you can do it this year, and maybe next year, but where is the money going to come from after that? That’s why people are worried about a tax increase downstream. So that’s why I say he ought to do it delicately, carefully, precisely, and bearing in mind that what you see right now is going to be much different from what you see a year from now.”

Using the unexpected proceeds from the pandemic to deal with the negative effects of the pandemic sounds both

smart and compassionate. It could also help to offset the disruptive effects of closed schools. Also in that political discussion were former *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Debra J. Saunders (fresh off her four-year stint as a White House correspondent) and USC professor Dan Schnur, who both suggested investing in summer school as a way to help students, especially disadvantaged students, catch up with their wealthier cohorts who were able to rely on tutors and other resources during a year of online learning.

COUNTING ON BUSINESS

I no longer work in a gothic mansion in Indianapolis. Now, I work in a modern building on San Francisco’s waterfront. On a recent trek to my downtown office — my first visit there in weeks — there were exactly four other people in my BART train car, leading me to suspect that the reports of widespread returns to the workplace had been overblown. But when I took a Muni bus home, the bus was standing-room-only packed.

Business people will be watching closely to see if and how people’s patterns change post-pandemic. Most people probably will return to their offices. But however many who will now work from home instead (10 percent? 20 percent? 30 percent?) will have impacts on public and private transportation and on stores and restaurants across this city.

Some employees want to avoid public transportation for the time being and are asking for their employers to subsidize parking near their workplace. And there might be fewer people at busy Financial District eateries, but neighborhood

restaurants could then experience an uptick from people who escape their home offices for an occasional lunch.

Having already admitted that I was wrong about government budgets, I don’t claim to know how things will pan

out in the end. But I do think we are now in a period in which we will all be navigating uncertainties. Should I expand or shrink my business? Hire or layoff? Work from home or go to the office? Go back to that job that laid me off last year or wait for a better one? Will my cat even care if I go back to the office and am no longer home 24/7?

There are also questions that business people will have to deal with just as much as nonbusiness people. Should the business have a mask rule? Some businesses no doubt are eager to get rid of anything that makes people hesitant to shop or eat there. But others might have immunocompromised people in their families or among their employees (or their employees’ families).

The fact is, we won’t know for certain if strangers are vaccinated. People lie. (How many of you had fake I.D.s when you were under 21? Now there’s a brisk business in fake vaccination cards.)

We will just have to accept that we are in a new world in which some people will pretend to be vaccinated but aren’t, some people will be vaccinated but will wish to continue wearing masks, some people will continue to think that masks represent a black helicopter conspiracy by the lizard people to control our lives.

And our best guesses and thought-out plans could still come back to haunt us if a vaccine-resistant variant sweeps around the world, in which case we’ll be little better off than Stoughton A. Fletcher, politely asking patrons what floor they want to get off on.

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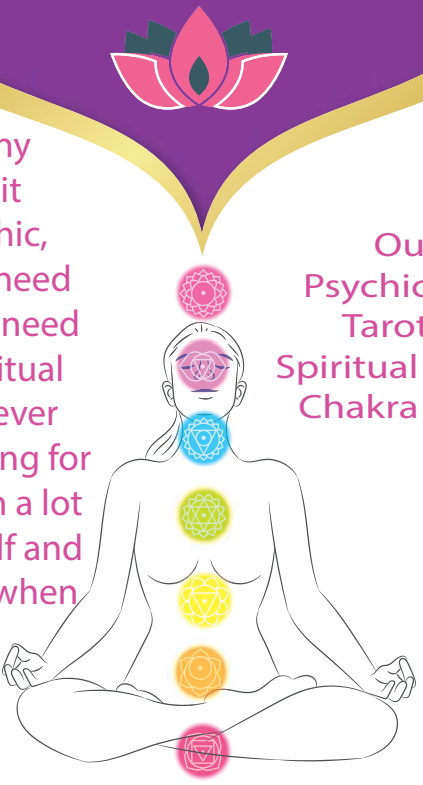
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## THE COASTAL CONNOISSEUR :: Flavors



There are a multitude of flavors available for those who love ice cream, gelato, and frozen yogurt. PHOTO: UDRA

## The guilt and the glory of ice cream

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

I SCREAM. YOU SCREAM. WE ALL scream for ... low-fat yogurt. Well, some of us go for the 'gurt, because ice cream is filled with loads of artery-congesting butterfat, and no one wants to have a coronary occlusion. Nonetheless, hordes of brave souls — vegan friends excluded — dare to risk their health (and enhance their spiritual and emotional well-being) and consume one or more delicious scoops of ice cream. And I'm certain that every lover of the cold comfort food has a favorite brand, shop, and flavor. Make that a multitude of favorites.

As tasty as a pint of Ben & Jerry's or Häagen-Dazs might be, nothing compares to what one finds at a beloved ice cream parlor. Ice cream shops can be like shrines to the chilled sweetness promised within. As such, they will inspire pilgrimages. Hearing about a trip to Italy I was planning in the early 2000s, my friend Hugh directed me to make sure to visit Florence with the intention of going to one specific gelateria, Vivoli, which has been in business since 1929. You can get excellent gelato — the super-smooth Italian take on the frozen cow-juice treat — at countless cafes in public squares throughout Italy. But Florence is said to be the birthplace of gelato and a global destination for those who love the creamy delight. It's known that President Dwight D. Eisenhower was so enamored of Vivoli's gelato that he had drums of his favorite flavors flown to the White House for state dinners and personal consumption.

### HAVING GELATO FUN

To my good fortune, I made it to Florence and dropped by Vivoli, located in the center of the city. Vivoli blew me away with a menu that featured genuine surprises alongside more common choices. My traveling companion went for a melon and prosciutto gelato that brought the sweetness of fresh cantaloupe together with bits of salty cured ham. Not kosher, but fantastic. I went for the chocolate orange gelato with chocolate-covered candied orange peel. As for the many other Florentine gelaterias, they sell a shocking range of flavors, among them ricotta with figs, chocolate with hot chili and pistachio, rose and gorgonzola, and one called "Mona Lisa" that's made with apple, orange blossom, walnuts, and raisins steeped in cognac. That sort of wild creativity has found its way to the United States and is a feature at a number of gourmet ice cream chains. One of them is Humphry Slocombe, a locally founded company with four shops in the Bay Area (two in San Francisco proper), as

well as a growing pint distribution network to stores in California and other states. The Slocombe brain trust will apparently try any ingredient to mount a memorable assault on your tongue. Their list of past and current flavors is currently at more than 130 decidedly different ones — some of which might inspire fear and trepidation in the meek. Beyond their slant on the familiar candies and fruits, consider the following examples: Apple Coded Bacon, Government Cheese, Jalapeno Cornbread, Foie Gras, and a variety of frankly intriguing beer and wine-infused confabulations. I'm more likely to go for their take on Blue Bottle Vietnamese Coffee.

### FLAVOR TO THE EXTREME

Whether by the bay or in various West Coast locations from Seattle to San Diego, the outposts of Portland, Oregon's Salt & Straw scoop shop have elegant variations on the traditional, led by Chocolate Goovey Brownie and Double-Fold Vanilla. I've been to the one on Fillmore Street and can attest that the more likely lures are the custom ice creams like Jasmine Milk Tea and Chocolate, Rhubarb Crumble with Toasted Anise, Sea Salt with Caramel Ribbons, Cold Brew Coffee Cashew Praline, or the more provocative Arbequina Olive Oil and Pear and Blue Cheese. Of course, not all of the mash-ups that they've developed in their culinary labs will work for everyone. For instance, their Berries, Beans, and BBQ Sauce is a taste too far — at least, that's what my palette tells me. All that fancy-schmancy stuff has its place, yet I tend to patronize more venerable purveyors, starting with the original Swenson's on Hyde at Union Street, near the crest of Russian Hill, where I'm more likely than not to order a scoop of their Turkish coffee ice cream. And there's the oldest creamery in the Los Angeles area, Fosselman's. Despite its longevity, Fosselman's makes some of the finest ice cream I've ever eaten, providing the usual fare, plus unconventional flavors such as Brown Butter Toffee, Real Mexican Chocolate, Red Velvet, and the Pan-Asian options Taro, Macapuno, and Ube. The last time I was there, I went for the Chocolate-Dipped Strawberry — strawberry ice cream with a hint of white chocolate, studded with Guitard milk chocolate flakes. It's not foie gras, but it was still pretty decadent.

Visit [marinatimes.com](http://marinatimes.com) for a longer version of this article.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist. Follow Michael on Twitter: @cultureblaster.



# Escape San Francisco’s foggy summer in sunny Tiburon at the Caviar & Champagne Tasting Room

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

ON A RECENT GREY, WINDY SAN Francisco morning my friend and I decided to take a 30-minute trip over the Golden Gate Bridge into Tiburon, a warm, sunny enclave in Marin County located on the Tiburon Peninsula, which reaches south to the San Francisco Bay. Both of us love caviar, so the new venture by Petra Bergstein Higby — co-founder of The Caviar Co. at 1954 Union Street in Cow Hollow — was calling our names. Petra and her sister Saskia opened their San Francisco shop to make caviar more approachable, and the newest venture goes to another level.

### ABOUT CAVIAR

Caviar comes from sturgeon, ancient fish tracing back to the Triassic period over 200 million years ago. Like sharks, their physiology is mostly unchanged from their dinosaur days. A type of anadromous fish, sturgeon travel upstream to spawn. It takes 15 to 20 years for sturgeon to mature, which is why overfishing has become a crisis. Black Sea sturgeon are on the verge of extinction because they produce beluga, the king of caviar. Poaching in the Caspian Sea alone has been 10 times over legal limits. Farming has become the sustainable way to raise sturgeon for caviar, and breakthroughs in conservation have led to ways of harvesting roe without killing the fish,

making it even more sustainable. While farmed fish sometimes comes with a stigma, farmed caviar is every bit as good as wild, but sustainable and less costly. Currently most caviar in the world is produced in China, but the sisters wanted to highlight the farms in the United States, particularly Northern California. The Caviar & Champagne Tasting Room at The Caviar Co. in Tiburon offers another platform for them to share their passion for this delicacy and to show people it isn’t just for kings and czars.

### CAVIAR FLIGHTS

Now offering inside and outside dining in the heart of Tiburon’s quaint downtown, the large patio is the way to go on a warm, sunny day, but the interior also provides a welcoming, light-filled space. There is a retail section to purchase caviar, accessories, servers, and champagne (including a custom champagne vending machine). They offer caviar flights hand-selected by the expert team or you can build your own flight, which comes with crème fraîche and house-made blini. Selections range in price per ounce from \$15 for trout or whitefish roe to \$170 for the prized Golden Imperial Osetra. You can also “choose your vessel” from traditional blini, brioche toast points, house-made potato chips, and even Ritz crackers.

The menu presents six dishes carefully crafted to show off the caviar, from Hog

Island Oysters on the half-shell (\$18) to an upscale riff on chips and dip (\$19), one of my favorite menu items. The creamy herb dip is redolent with lemon, shallot, chives, and a “secret herb blend,” topped with smoked trout roe. With the light, crispy, salty potato chips, it’s as addictive a treat as you’ll find.

### NOT-TO-MISS DISH

If you want to go traditional, try the smoked salmon with house-made blinis, crème fraîche, and briny, creamy Siberian sturgeon caviar (\$60), which was my favorite caviar of the day.

I grew up eating burrata, and I’m still always excited to see it on a menu. Here, it arrives with brioche, toasted pistachios, and paper-thin prosciutto (\$20). You can add Kaluga hybrid caviar, a large, firm pearl with a delicate, buttery finish (\$28).

The not-to-miss dish is the black truffle grilled cheese (\$37), brioche toast sandwiching the award-winning Point Reyes Toma (which in Italian means “wheel of cheese made by the farmer herself”) Toma melts like a dream and is aged for 90 days to give it a grassy tang. Truffle carpaccio, Italian black truffles at the peak of flavor, thinly sliced and preserved in extra virgin olive oil from San Francisco’s Truffle Shuffle, adds that earthiness. The sandwich comes with a dollop of classic California white sturgeon caviar to scoop on top, adding a briny, nutty finish. While it sounds



Blini with smoked salmon.  
PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

rich, somehow it manages not to be. Every ingredient stands on its own, making for the best gourmet grilled cheese I’ve ever had. The Champagne list features 10 bubbles by the glass and roughly 20 bottles and half bottles, as well as several mostly local wines and craft brewed beers. Pro tip: Ask about the Truffle Shuffle black truffle kettle corn sprinkled with Balinese truffle salt and white cheddar, a sweet and savory snack that pairs amazingly well with those bubbles. **Caviar & Champagne Tasting Room at The Caviar Co.:** 46A Main Street, Tiburon, CA 94920, 415-889-5168, [thecaviarco.com](http://thecaviarco.com), Wednesday–Sunday noon–7 p.m. Follow Susan and the Marina Times on Twitter: @SusanDReynolds and @TheMarinaTimes, [susan@marinatimes.com](mailto:susan@marinatimes.com).

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Art World

continued from cover

baugh, among others. Two robots in this presentation represent key collaborators, one dedicated to composer John Cage via *John Cage Robot II* (1995) and choreographer Merce Cunningham via *Merce/Digital* (1988). Televisions stacked and connected to resemble human forms reflect imagery from the artist's work and lives.

THEMES OF TECHNOLOGY

Bringing together more than 200 works across all media spanning a five-decade career, the exhibition is organized thematically, uniting many of Paik's most iconic and provocative works. Technology meets nature in *TV Garden* (1974-77/2002), a futuristic landscape in which television sets seemingly grow like blossoming flowers amidst foliage. An 18th-century wooden Buddha watches itself on a television, a nod to Paik's Buddhist faith in *TV Buddha* (1974). The stillness of meditation mirrors back from the television like a reflection in a pool of water.

*Sistine Chapel* (1993) is the crown jewel of this retrospective. Presented in a larger scale than it has been at any other venue, *Sistine Chapel* at the SFMOMA is a hypnotic experience of tonality and images shown from multiple projectors. Originally winning the Golden Lion award at the Venice Biennale in 1993, the installation creates an immersive audiovisual experience — a bath of sound and color remixing Paik's past videos and collaborations.

SFMOMA will also partially restage the artist's legendary 1963 solo exhibition *Exposition of Music — Electronic Television*, and his notion of "action music" demonstrated via musical interfaces and Paik's earliest manipulated televisions.

ONLINE PARTICIPATORY ART

In conjunction with this exhibition, SFMOMA will present Paik's *Video Com-*



Left to right: Nam June Paik's *Magnet TV* and *Merce Digital*. PHOTO: COURTESY SFMOMA

*mune* online. Originally broadcast in 1970, *Video Commune* was an improvisational montage of scrambled television images accompanied by the music of the Beatles. During the original performance, Paik invited random passersby into the studio, allowing them to remix imagery as it was aired. The gallery presentation is a condensed videotape of the broadcast filmed from a television screen.

*Video Commune* is reborn in this retrospective as a participatory work on the exhibition webpage. Visitors can watch the silent video and create their own soundtrack of their choice using a selection of Beatles songs. *Electronic Opera #1*, a second video, invites the audience to close and open their

eyes while viewing a series of abstract electronic patterns.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Through August, SFMOMA will present the online film series *Dances for Camera: Nam June Paik, Merce Cunningham, Charles Atlas* on the museum's website. Representing the dance film genre, *Dances for Camera* brings together three key works from 1960s San Francisco, 1970s New York, and 1980s London. Also, SFMOMA will host a virtual public performance and streaming program in collaboration with the National Gallery Singapore on Sept. 24.

Be prepared to utilize all of your senses. Nam June Paik predicted the future of

communication in the Internet age, and expanded the boundaries of what art can be. Perhaps most important, Nam June Paik invited us to join him.

**Nam June Paik:** Monday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Thursday 1–8 p.m., and Friday–Sunday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. through Oct. 3, \$25, masks and social distancing required, exhibition is subject to capacity limits. Visitors must check in at exhibition entrance to reserve spot; admission not guaranteed. SFMOMA, 151 Third Street, 415-357-4000, [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org)

Sharon Anderson is an artist and writer in Southern California. She can be reached at [mindtheimage.com](mailto:mindtheimage.com)

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

The Marina Books Inc. best-seller list

COMPILED BY KEVIN MCCARTHY

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1. **Klara and the Sun: A Novel**, by Kazuo Ishiguro
2. **The Last Thing He Told Me: A Novel**, by Laura Dave
3. **2034: A Novel of the Next World War**, by Elliot Ackerman

HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. **World Travel: An Irreverent Guide**, by Anthony Bourdain and Laurie Woolever
2. **The Premonition: A Pandemic Story**, by Michael Lewis
3. **What Happened To You?: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing**, by Bruce D. Perry and Oprah Winfrey

PAPERBACK FICTION

1. **Such a Fun Age**, by Kiley Reid
2. **In Five Years: A Novel**, by Rebecca Serle
3. **People We Meet On Vacation**, by Emily Henry

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

1. **No One Is too Small to Make a Difference**, by Greta Thunberg

2. **Quit Like a Woman: The Radical Choice to Not Drink in a Culture Obsessed with Alcohol**, by Holly Whitaker
3. **The Inner Life of Animals: Love, Grief, and Compassion — Surprising Observations of a Hidden World**, by Peter Wohlleben

CHILDREN'S BEST SELLERS

1. **Rule of Wolves**, by Leigh Bardugo
2. **Wings of Fire: The Dangerous Gift**, by Tui T. Sutherland
3. **Secret, Secret Agent Guy**, by Kira Bigwood and Celia Krampien

NEW AND NOTABLE RELEASES

**The Bomber Mafia**, by Malcolm Gladwell

Gladwell weaves together the stories of a Dutch genius and his homemade computer, a band of brothers in Alabama, a British psychopath, and pyromaniacal chemists at Harvard to examine one of the greatest moral challenges in modern American history. Most military thinkers prior to World War II saw the airplane

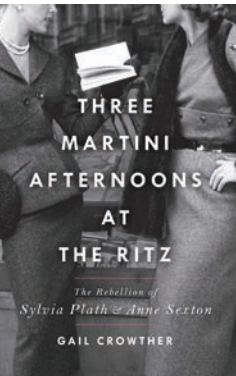
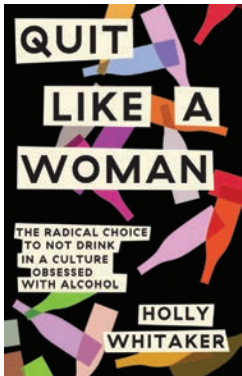
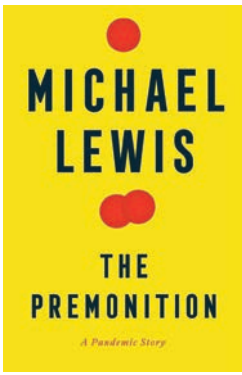
as an afterthought. But a small band of idealistic strategists asked: What if precision bombing could cripple the enemy and make war far less lethal? *The Bomber Mafia* is a riveting tale of persistence, innovation, and the incalculable wages of war.

**The Hard Crowd**, by Rachel Kushner

In 19 razor-sharp essays, *The Hard Crowd* spans literary journalism, memoir, cultural criticism, and art and literature, including pieces on Jeff Koons, Denis Johnson, and Marguerite Duras. Kushner takes us on a journey through a Palestinian refugee camp, 1970s wildcat strikes in Fiat factories, her love of classic cars, and her young life in the music scene of her hometown, San Francisco. The closing, eponymous essay is her manifesto on nostalgia, doom, and writing.

**Three Martini Afternoons at the Ritz: The Rebellion of Sylvia Plath & Anne Sexton**, by Gail Crowther

Introduced at a workshop in Boston University led by the acclaimed poet Robert Lowell, Plath and Sexton formed a friendship that would soon evolve into



a fierce rivalry, colored by jealousy and respect in equal terms. *Three-Martini Afternoons at the Ritz* is a remarkable and unforgettable look at two legendary poets and how their work has turned them into lasting and beloved cultural figures.

**While Justice Sleeps**, by Stacey Abrams

Avery Keene, a brilliant young law clerk for the legendary Justice Howard Wynn, is excelling in an arduous job with the court while also dealing with a troubled family. When the shocking

news breaks that Justice Wynn, the cantankerous swing vote on many current high-profile cases, has slipped into a coma, Avery's life turns upside down. This cunningly crafted, sophisticated novel is layered with myriad twists and a vibrant cast of characters. Abrams shows herself to be not only a force for good in politics and voter fairness but also a major new talent in suspense fiction.

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Snyder  
continued from cover

curly 'do and glam duds that befit his androgynous air and frontman status. Keyboardist and chief Sparks composer Ron's image has been one of slicked-back hair and vintage businessman's attire with a severe demeanor enhanced by a moustache that evolved from a provocative Chaplin/Hitler-type lip brush to a less controversial pencil-thin one.

Regardless of their popularity ebbing and flowing over time, they're now the subject of a detailed documentary, *The Sparks Brothers*, scheduled for theatrical release on June 18. There are copious interviews with the brothers and some of their famous fans (e.g., Beck, Patton Oswalt, members of the Go-Go's, Depeche Mode, Erasure, Sex Pistols, Franz Ferdinand, and Visage), archival studio and performance footage, and whimsical animation to illustrate the breadth and longevity of the Mael's career. *The Sparks Brothers* was directed by Edgar Wright — the distinctively droll British filmmaker who made *Baby Driver*, *Shaun of the Dead*, and *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World*.

And Sparks will be on the big screen in another project this year. *Annette*, a feature film directed by France's Leos Carax with screenplay and music by Ron and Russell, will have its premiere on July 6 as the opening-night offering at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival. The movie stars Adam Driver and Marion Cotillard as a stand-up comedian and an internationally renowned opera singer who fall in love, marry, and find their lives changed by the birth of their daughter, whom they name Annette.

THAT FIRST SPARK

The Maels started making music in the late 1960s, they're still at it, and remain as unique and vital as they've been since they began. They have a loyal following, and their influence has been profound on a number of renowned musicians, such as those who provided testimonials for *The Sparks Brothers*, despite stylistic jumps that literally put them all over the map with legitimate hit records in England, France, and Germany over the course of their career.

Like many who would pursue acclaim in pop music, they were a couple of middle-class kids who wanted to be in a band. The group they formed with like-minded pals, first dubbed Halfnelson, managed to score a recording contract and a name producer, the aforementioned Todd Rundgren. The Halfnelson debut album was released in 1971 to little fanfare or success. Shortly thereafter, the record label demanded a name change for easier marketing purposes. After some minor squabbling, they settled on Sparks. Their music was influenced by British Invasion rock and the sound of the hits they listened to on Los Angeles radio while growing up, but their lyrics, even then, were infused with self-deprecating wit and an off-kilter world view that would be their trademark to this day.

It was the third Sparks album, *Kimono My House*, which gave them their first taste of success and a considerable audience in Europe. "This Town Ain't Big Enough for

the Both of Us," the confrontational glam-rock call-to-arms that served as the debut single from the record, reached the top 10 in the Netherlands and Switzerland and hit number two on the British charts. Even then, Sparks was eager to apply a variety of styles to their sound: hard-edged rock, progressive chamber pop, Tin Pan Alley crooning, and cabaret-ready torch songs. From album to album, they'd change it up to the shock or delight — or both — of listeners.

HEAVENLY INFLUENCE

For their eighth album, they were ready to toss a massive curve ball at their audience. They made that record, *No. 1 in Heaven*,

with Italian producer Giorgio Moroder, whose electronic-pulsed disco hit "I Feel Love" was rhythm-and-blues diva Donna Summer's big breakthrough. As if a rebuke to their previous

records, Sparks and Moroder fashioned *No. 1 in Heaven* into a crucial piece of early techno-pop that influenced the dance-club-ready sounds forged by a generation of synth-rockers. But over the next few albums, the Maels gathered together a new band to reinvent themselves as new wavers. Alternative rock stations and the newly forged MTV gave hit status to Sparks's jubilant nightlife anthem "Cool Places," sung by Russell as a duet with the Go-Go's Jane Wiedlin. Sparks would presage EDM, then eventually embrace it with the tongue-in-cheeky "Music That You Can Dance To." And so it went for the Maels, with a

hit song in Europe every few years and a devoted cult following in the United States.

By the mid-2000s, some of Ron's compositions, such as the dreamlike "My Baby's Taking Me Home," began to reflect the minimalism of neo-classicists Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Musical genres aside, the subject matter of their ever-witty lyrics has seemed limitless. Topics have included the lifestyles of the rich and feckless ("Something for the Girl with Everything"), doom-saying prognosticators ("I Predict"), the pressures of daily life ("Beat the Clock"), crippling anxiety ("Angst in My Pants"), the afterlife ("Here in Heaven"), self-loathing ("I Wish I Looked a Little Better"), the price of love ("When I'm with You"), carnal pursuits in various places ("Singing in the Shower"), and odes to Mickey Mouse, Edith Piaf, and Charlie Parker, and much more. They even recorded a brilliantly funny, damnably infectious narrative song about the inevitable tragedy of marrying someone from another planet, "I Married a Martian." As Russell sings in conclusion, "I married a Martian / They're good in the movies / Dramatic potential / But they're not so hot in real life."

Russell's tremulous tenor vocals that suddenly swoop into a falsetto register and the parody of dark menace occasionally implied in Ron's stage persona might be daunting for some. Whatever your tastes might be, these guys are prolific, amusing, and idiosyncratic, making Sparks more than simply a fascinating subject for a documentary. They are an enduring creative force.

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist. Follow Michael on Twitter: @cultureblaster.

Their lyrics were infused with an off-kilter world view that would be their trademark to this day.



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MomSense ∴ Back to #IRL

# Helping kids navigate reentry into normal life

After months of remote schooling, resuming activities can be challenging

BY LIZ FARRELL

THERE ARE HOPEFUL SIGNS ALL around us of a more normal summer. Vaccination numbers continue to rise while cases of Covid decrease. There is also hope for the opportunity for those in the 12–15 age group to be vaccinated. Summer camp enrollments are in full swing, and you may even be contemplating traveling. This all sounds promising, but after almost 15 months of remote school, limited sports and after-school activities, masks, and social distancing, we must ask, are our children ready? Many of us have let screen time limits slide and bent the rules on video games and social media to provide some form of connection for our kids, but now as we begin to emerge from the pandemic, how do we help our children reenter a more normal world?

## MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE

I recently listened to a great parenting podcast that gave sound advice to meet your children where they are, especially as it relates to this. Don't force them back into life if they aren't ready. I like the visual of holding their hands and slowly walking into the water instead of pushing them off the high dive. Many of us have had to deal with new emotions or feelings in our children — fear, anxiousness, and even depression. Living

through a pandemic is scary, add to that being inundated with death tolls, outbreaks, and having to distance from the people they love most — family and friends. Some children may be ready to dive in and are looking to summer as a chance to reconnect, so camp may be just the right call.

## CONNECTING IN PERSON

Between remote learning and using screens to connect with their friends safely, the amount of screen time drastically increased for children this past year — in our house it went through the roof. While they have gotten comfortable “playing with friends” this way, as the world begins to open again, we need to encourage, gently nudge, and help them figure out how to connect again in person. We know much more than we did a year ago, so navigating outside play dates or activities can be done. Technology provided us many valuable resources during the pandemic, but we also came to value how important in-person connection, is and no screen can emulate that.

We also have some catching up to do. Our children have lost over a year of social emotional growth. While they have learned to be resilient, they also must relearn how to read body language that they couldn't see on a screen or facial expressions that have been covered



Be sure your children are ready to return to their in-person social life.

PHOTO: MONKEYBUSINESSIMAGES

by masks. They need to collaborate and work together without the fear of touching one another or getting too close.

## KEEP COMMUNICATION OPEN

Long after we have the virus under control, we will still be dealing with the educational and mental health fallouts from this past year. I have had several conversations with well-respected pediatricians and family psychologists, and each has said that mental health issues are being seen at much younger ages, and there is simply too much demand and not enough professionals to help struggling children and families.

So we need to keep checking in with our children and practicing our own self-care. Take a moment to play a board game, do a puzzle, or take a hike, where we can dive a little deeper and they can feel a safe, calm place to open up. For older kids, especially tweens and teens, I find a car ride is the best place for these moments — if you tell them to put their phones away. It feels less threatening if they don't have to look at you, and you aren't staring at them with peppering

questions. There is a part of me that feels like teens, especially those who see light at the end of the tunnel, will throw it into overdrive trying to race to catch up on everything they may have missed out on. This could be drinking, drugs, or dating/relationships. Listen and be present. They will make mistakes, but keep the communication open and as honest as possible.

As we reenter the outside world and help our children navigate this, remember to be patient. Not everyone in your family or outside your family may be moving at the same pace. Also, be kind, give yourself and others grace after a year filled with stress and anxiety. Last, when safe, hug those loved ones a little longer or smile at a stranger on the street. We all learned how quickly these simple things can be taken away, so let's enjoy them and not take them for granted ever again.

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

Fitness First ∴ Losing your Covid 19

# Get buff without bulk: The benefits of strength training

BY JULIE MITCHELL

WHETHER IT'S DUE TO gaining the “Covid-19 19,” or you just want to get in shape for the summer, many of us are eager to get back to our workout routines. That can be as simple as heading out the door for a walk, a run, or hopping on your bike.

But cardio workouts alone are not enough to get truly fit. Trainers and sports medicine doctors agree: Some form of strength or resistance training is an important part of every fitness routine. If you're picturing lifting heavy dumbbells or pushing equipment around at a gym, or you're afraid of bulking up by using weights, rest assured. There are many kinds of strength training, and some require neither a gym membership nor any equipment. And strength properly builds muscle without bulk.

Why is resistance training so important? We all start to lose muscle mass after age 30, and the number of muscle fibers declines with age, too. Strength training can slow the aging process and also prevent osteoporosis,

a bone mineral loss that can lead to fractures. Resistance training can help to lower blood pressure, and it raises metabolic rate, which can help maintain a healthy weight. Getting stronger through exercise can also maintain flexibility and balance, leading to fewer falls. Other benefits include:

- Reduction or prevention of cognitive decline in older people;
- Improvement in overall stamina;
- Prevention of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, back pain, and depression;
- Improved posture;
- Decreased risk of injury;
- Improved sleep; and
- Improved sense of wellbeing, higher self-confidence, and better mood.

## GYM OR HOME GYM?

The benefits of a gym strength workout offer a choice between machines and free weights like dumbbells and kettlebells. Exercising on machines is simple once you learn how to use them, and they're relatively safe. But because each machine works

one muscle group, you need to use many of them to get a complete workout.

Using free weights requires training, and there is a risk of injury if you drop a bar or dumbbell. Still, many people like the freedom of using different free weights, and they can increase coordination because it takes skill to move and control the dumbbells. You often recruit more than one muscle group, meaning one exercise like a front raise uses your shoulders and your abdominals to hold your body steady.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

Other types of resistance training include working out with exercise bands, using your own body weight for strength training. Resistance bands look like giant rubber bands (some have handles) and come in different colors that denote different levels of tension. These bands can stand in for free weights and provide continuous resistance throughout a movement, and they are lightweight, inexpensive, and portable.

Bodyweight exercises are a simple, convenient way to

strength train. These are movements like push-ups, lunges, or squats that offer resistance provided by your body's weight and gravity. These can be done anywhere and require no equipment.

## ASK AN EXPERT

If you belong to a gym, meeting with a trainer can help you assess your fitness goals and show you how to properly lift weights, use a machine, or resistance tubing. Alternatively, there are many private personal trainers who can develop a plan for you. And while there are plenty of workout videos on YouTube, the best way to learn how to incorporate resistance training into your fitness program is by having someone show you the ropes. If you have an injury or special health condition, always speak with your physician before starting a new exercise program.

## GROWING STRONGER

A typical beginner's strength training routine involves eight-to-ten exercises that work each major muscle group in the body (chest, back, shoulders, arms,

abs, and legs) starting with one set of each exercise and increasing the number of repetitions (reps) as you progress. If you're doing a bodyweight workout, such as sit-ups, push-ups, squats, and lunges, slowly increase the number of reps you do in each set as you grow stronger. This is called the progressive overload principle, which means to continue to gain benefits from a resistance training program, the exercises need to be done to the point where it is difficult for you to do another repetition.

How much resistance exercise should you do? The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that resistance training should be done two to three days per week.

## SET AND REPEAT

So the next time you're about to go for a run or a bike ride, think about following it up with some push-ups and squats, or grab your resistance band or free weights for a few sets. You'll be well on your way to a fitter, stronger body just in time for summer.

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There's hope for buyers, even if they've lost out on homes before. PHOTO: GAREY DE MARTINI

# A buyer in sellerland

## Buying a home in San Francisco's red-hot real estate market

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

SINCE THE START OF 2020, CALIFORNIA has experienced one of its hottest housing markets in recent history. Not only are many homes across the state selling at well above the asking price, according to ABC7News.com, they're also selling at record speeds.

"The recovery has been heavy on housing, because our homes are more important to us than ever before. We're working out of them. We're living out of them, etc., and that has created this perfect storm," said Jordan Levine, vice president and chief economist at the California Association of Realtors.

Levine believes the strength of the housing market is a testament to the state's robust economy. It also signals a steady desire by aspiring home buyers to live in California, despite the high cost of living and the state's varied issues.

### BUY LOCAL

The same thing has been happening in San Francisco, of course. And while this is good news for sellers, it can make buying a home difficult.

"Right now, both condos and single-family homes are selling well, often in multiple-offer scenarios," said Marcus Miller, founder and broker at Helm Real Estate. "It's not unusual to see three to 10 offers on any given property, often over asking, and sometimes well above comparable home sale prices. Also, contingency-free offers are more common now — though brokers will tell you it's best to always do your due diligence."

CBS News reported in May that across the country, buying a home is beyond crazy and frustrating. A shortage of places for sale has pushed prices up across the nation by double-digits — and it is pushing house hunters to go to extremes to win bids.

All across the nation, bidding above the asking price is simply the first step in formulating a winning offer. With growing frequency, buyers are offering additional enticements, like waiving inspections for hidden structural problems, or allowing sellers to remain in the home between one to six months after closing — free of rental charges.

Naturally, this surge in prices and demand is bringing back memories of the housing bubble prior to 2006. The painful bursting of that boom, which fed into the Great Recession of 2008, is raising concerns about whether the market is repeating history.

But lending standards are much tighter than they were prior to 2006, according to the CBS News report. Buyers are required to provide tax data, paychecks, and other information to confirm that they can afford a mortgage — all of which decreases the likelihood of a repeat housing crisis.

### HOMEBUYING STRATEGIES

Buying a home in San Francisco is even more challenging than elsewhere in the country because the stakes are so high. Homes cost more to begin with, and then on top of that, buyers can suddenly find themselves in fierce bidding wars with wealthy, determined, and anonymous others. For many buyers, this happens over and over again. They make offers on different properties, but never manage to submit the winning bid.

Miller has some strategies for home buyers who want to purchase in the city but also want to avoid this real estate quagmire.

"Look for properties that need work — that require some TLC, or that are being presented so poorly that they are not being looked at by other buyers," he said. "Sometimes, the marketing and presentation are so bad that buyers who now typically shop for homes first online won't even come out to see the property. If it goes past 18 days on the market, that may be a good opportunity for you to take a closer look."

In fact, if a property has been on the market for 21 days or more, Miller suggests buyers have their agents talk with the selling agent to see if there is room in the price — if they are taking "offers as they come." If yes, tour the property and if the home looks like a good fit, be prepared to write an offer right away.

Last, Miller says if a buyer just loves a specific property and it looks like it's going to be a competitive situation, try making a preemptive offer — submit an offer prior to the official offer date. While most sellers will want to wait for other offers to be received and reviewed, Miller says a surprising number of sellers don't want to go through that hassle. He says many preemptive offers are in fact accepted even in this extremely hot market.

Buying a home in the city has never been for the faint of heart. Ironically, a pandemic that once looked like it might soften demand for residential real estate seems instead to have had the opposite effect — across the country, throughout the state, and here in San Francisco.

Send feedback to [letters@marinatimes.com](mailto:letters@marinatimes.com).

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