



Returning to #IRL
Julie Mitchell highlights neighborhood breakfast spots. p. 6
Susan Dyer Reynolds serves up her recipes for making brunch at home. p. 7
Liz Farrell says now is the time to teach your kids good conversational skills. p. 10



Online only
Michael Snyder on postpandemic fitness frenzies, plus our events calendar, and more.
marinatimes.com



Aaron Tveit and Cecily Strong in *Schmigadoon!* now streaming on Apple TV Plus. PHOTO: COURTESY APPLE TV PLUS

Situation comedies meet merry melodies

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

IT'S NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY that we could use some laughs in times like these — in fact, anytime at all. Beyond the ostensible healing power of laughter, there's also the welcome distraction of good comedy as the tedium or

challenges of everyday existence try to grind us down. So forget your troubles for as many half-hours as needed with these fresh, serialized, music-oriented sitcoms, featuring a slew of amusing tunes and various contributions from alumni of TV's long-running sketch fest *Saturday Night Live*.

'SCHMIGADOON!'
Schmigadoon! tips its hand with its title — a nod to the fanciful Broadway classic, *Brigadoon*, wherein two American-as-apple-pie fellows stumble upon and subsequently have their lives changed by a mystical Scottish village that appears once
SNYDER, continued on 9

REYNOLDS RAP : Opinion

Six podcasts, four trials, and a blog

D.A. Chesa Boudin spends more time in the media than in court

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

And this is where Balko announces he's found the villain in this attack. No, not the attackers. Not the SF legal system, which still seems confused about what to do about the attack. Nope, the real culprit in this case is KGO-TV reporter Dion Lim.
— C.W. Nevius, "Washington Post man-splains SF crime," June 22 newsletter

ON DEC. 31, 2021, 45-YEAR-OLD TROY MCALISTER ran a red light in a stolen car, striking and killing 60-year-old Elizabeth Platt and 27-year-old Hanako Abe near Mission and Second Streets. McAlister had been arrested for 73 felonies and 34 misdemeanors in San Francisco alone, and was arrested in November and in December 2020, just 11 days before the fatal hit-and-run. In both cases, no new charges were filed by San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin, even though McAlister was on parole after serving a five-year state prison sentence for robbery in a plea deal brokered by Boudin's office.
Boudin is not one to sit down one-on-one with the media, so it was refreshing to see him do just that with
REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 5

SUPERVISOR : Opinion

Combating corruption

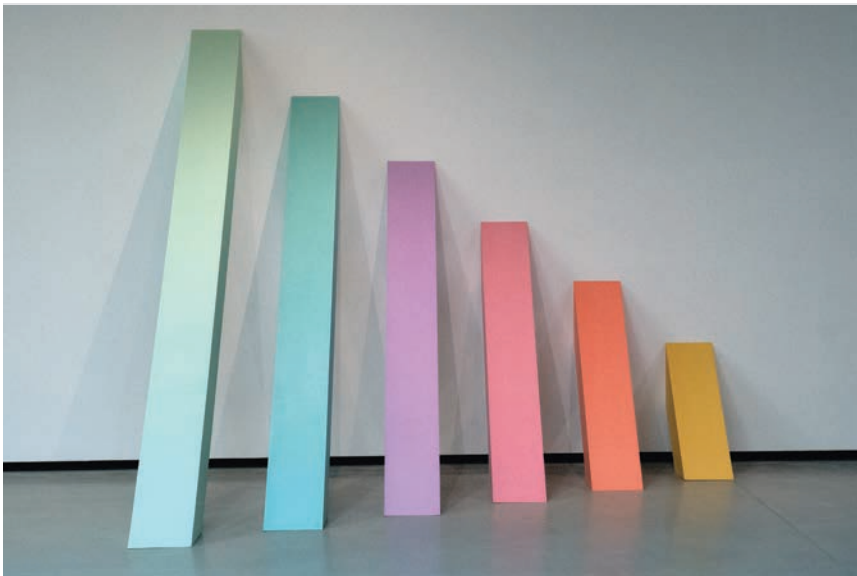
BY CATHERINE STEFANI

OUR CITY HAS BEEN PLAGUED WITH STORIES OF corruption this year: The former Public Works director was arrested for bribery and money laundering, a former Recology executive was fraudulently overcharging customers for personal gain, and multiple FBI investigations have resulted in the charging of several department heads.
Corruption hurts us all. It allows bad actors to enrich themselves, siphons resources away from services we desperately need, and erodes public trust in government.
As elected officials, our first and most important responsibility is to be careful stewards of public resources. It's tragic that the work of so many diligent public servants has been undermined by these bad actors, and it's why I've worked over the last year to pass sweeping anticorruption legislation.

THE NO GRAFT ACT

Last year we discovered that the former director of Public Works was abusing his contracting authority to make awards to the same favored vendors over and over again, often in exchange for money or services on the side. He used a relatively obscure contracting vehicle
SUPERVISOR, continued on 2

ART WORLD : Exhibitions



Judy Chicago, *Rainbow Picket*. COURTESY OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Judy Chicago: A Retrospective at the de Young Museum

BY SHARON ANDERSON

What kind of artist am I? I'm determined to follow my own vision. I'm willing to risk everything. I'm dedicated to making a contribution — art historically, culturally and socially.
— Judy Chicago

ARTIST, AUTHOR, EDUCATOR, and feminist Judy Chicago will have the first retrospective of her legendary career opening Aug. 28 at the de Young museum. Beginning with her Californian Light and Space Movement in the 1960s to her contemporary

offerings, the exhibition will include more than 125 paintings, drawings, ceramic sculptures, prints, and videos. *Judy Chicago: A Retrospective* is presented on the heels of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in the United States.

'THE DINNER PARTY'

Chicago was one of the driving forces behind the 1970's feminist art movement, cementing her reputation as a boundary-defying artist with her installation *The Dinner Party* (1974-79). Each of the 39 dinner place settings in the installation represent women who contributed to history. Artists in many mediums were represented from Emily Dickinson to Georgia O'Keefe, ancient deities such as Ishtar and Kali, and historical figures like Hildegard of Bingen and Sojourner Truth.
The place settings on a triangular table feature a table runner embroidered with each woman's name and images representing her accomplishments. Many of the plates are designed with flower or butterfly imagery to represent a vulva. The work was completed in 1979 after a five-year period and with the help of many collaborators and volunteers.
ART WORLD, continued on 8

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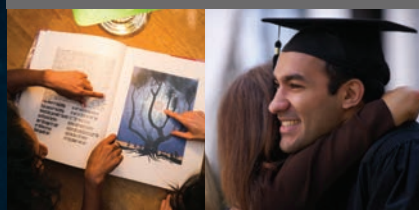
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Supervisor

continued from cover

cle called a "prequalified pool" which allowed him to steer his preferred vendors into those prequalified pools and then select them for award without further public notice or competitive process.

My "No GRAFT Act" closed the loophole that was exploited to award contracts to recipients without open competition, and it created a new uniform set of rules for departments directing contracts to prequalified companies bidding for work. This legislation also requires that bids for city work be submitted publicly, be evaluated using objective criteria, and that documentation be retained for future audits.

Seventy-four percent of the most violent offenders committed new crimes before trial.

GRANT REFORM

Similarly, an audit of Public Works found even more loopholes for corruption in the way the city awards grants. And this isn't just about Public Works; from 2017-20, city departments issued 5,746 grant awards totaling \$5.4 billion. Nearly \$2 billion per year is awarded in grants without any minimum requirements for competition, open solicitation, transparency, fairness, or documentation. In fact, the city auditor found that the former director of Public Works awarded \$24 million in grants in this manner. With my legislation, that ends now.

On July 20, my ordinance to reform the city's process for awarding grants passed with unanimous support at the full board. This law is a critical step forward to safeguard taxpayer dollars by setting enforceable standards for competitive solicitation, fairness in award selection, documentation, and transparency.

PRETRIAL DIVERSION PROJECT

For nearly two years, I've had concerns about how the Pretrial Diversion Project calculates and reports its safety and appearance rates, and whether those metrics adhere to national standards.

This nonprofit is tasked with supervising individuals who are arrested for a crime(s) and are awaiting trial out of custody. As part of their contract, they are required to report on how many of their clients fail to appear for their court

dates or reoffend. The Pretrial Diversion Project routinely reported their clients were reoffending only 5-10 percent of the time.

I have consistently challenged their reporting in private meetings, at public hearings, and in a formal letter of inquiry, because it just didn't add up with what was happening on our streets. This month an independent report was released and showed that 55 percent of those who were arrested and released in San Francisco reoffended before trial, and 74 percent of the most violent offenders committed new crimes before trial.

What I find so alarming is that our public safety agencies had this information and refused to share it. It is unacceptable for a contractor to come to the city and request tens of millions in funding while withholding critical information on performance.

How frequently individuals are rearrested for serious or violent offenses while awaiting trial is not something I take lightly.

We must keep the public safe *and* we must find alternatives to incarceration, which has devastated communities and comes at incredible expense. However, we cannot achieve those goals if we're not honest about what works and what doesn't.

I have voted no on the extension of this contract twice. And, in light of the recent report validating my concerns, I am introducing legislation to reform our pretrial process and adopt the report's recommendations, which will require more accurate reporting and reduce bias. My legislation will also require reporting every time a judge releases someone against the recommendation of our public safety partners.

RESTORING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

The ongoing local and federal investigations reaffirm that we need more accountability from city departments. Trust in one's government is paramount to our democracy, and it is why I have worked tirelessly to push meaningful reforms. San Franciscans' confidence in their government has rightly been shaken, and I fully intend to do everything I can to restore it.

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The new normal

Pandemic-era changes survive, become permanent as the city reopens this summer

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

PERMANENT SHARED SPACES

Local businesses will be able to take advantage of streamlined permitting for a now-permanent right to use sidewalks, curbside space, full-street spaces, and open lots for commercial purposes. The program, dubbed Shared Spaces when it was launched in March 2020, was intended as a temporary measure to let some businesses operate with safe outdoor space at a time when indoor operations of restaurants and some other businesses were barred. In mid-July 2021, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed legislation supported by Mayor London Breed to make the Shared Spaces program permanent.

The new status comes with a streamlined permitting process, with what the mayor's office says will be a "single easy-to-use application portal," a requirement that the city provide approvals within 30 days of the application's submission, and coordinated enforcement.

"Shared Spaces brought back life and excitement to our neighborhoods during an incredibly challenging time," said Breed. "By taking the necessary steps to make Shared Spaces permanent, we are providing another lifeline for local businesses to thrive and creating a clear path forward towards rebuilding our economy as San Francisco recovers from Covid-19."

The city will defer collection of permit fees until June 2022.

MORE LIBRARIES OPEN

The San Francisco Public Library system has continued its reopening in the wake of the pandemic. Some branches, such as the Marina Branch (1890 Chestnut Street) and the Golden Gate Valley Branch (1801 Green Street), are offering "SFPL To Go" services, in which people can pick up requested items and return them when they're finished. Other branches, including the Presidio Branch (3150 Sacramento Street) and Chinatown Branch (1135 Powell Street), are offering full in-person services.

Due to staffing shortages, SFPL says it is continuing to offer limited library services. For more information, visit sfpl.org/sfpl-to-go/reopening-services.

CRIME UPDATE

From June 21-27, there were 69 examples of one of San Francisco's modern plagues, the auto burglary, in just one week on the Northside, according to SFPD's Northern Station. That brought the year-to-date total to 1,586, down 8 percent from the total of 1,715 for the same time in 2020.

General burglaries, however, increased slightly, with the year-to-date total of 689 compared to 659 for the same period in 2020. Robberies in the first six months also bumped up slightly from 163 in 2020 to 168 in 2021.

IS SAN FRANCISCO READY TO SHINE ON?

The local and national opprobrium over well-publicized dirty streets in San Francisco has struck a nerve. A group of

business, civic, and community leaders teamed up with Mayor London Breed on July 14 to unveil Shine On SF, a three-year initiative to enlist residents in an effort to clean up the city's streets and other public environments. The initiative will create opportunities for people to volunteer in cleaning the city (such as with neighborhood cleanups, gardening projects, and more) and will invest in immediate efforts to address graffiti and power wash sidewalks, as well as expand efforts to respond to residents' requests.

If you are interested in learning how to help, check out shineonssf.org.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Over the next 18 months, San Francisco Recreation and Park Department will begin phasing out loud, **gas-powered leaf blowers** in favor of quieter electric blowers. Though the high emissions of the gas blowers was highlighted by Rec and Park in its announcement of the move, locals might appreciate the noise reduction even more . . . **The St. Francis Yacht Club** successfully hosted the 2021 ILCA North American Championship in July, featuring 124 competitors in three different fleets . . . It was a mixed bag for Gov. Gavin Newsom July 23, when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the state's closure of **in-person public school instruction** during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the federal panel said that the order violated parents' rights by closing *private* schools . . . In late July, the city's Office of Economic and Workforce Development announced \$5.4 million available for **financial relief grants** of \$5,000-\$25,000 for small businesses impacted by stay-at-home orders. The city expects to award more than 700 businesses funds that can be used for rent relief, payroll, equipment, utilities and bills, and other expenses needed to operate their business.

FACTS AND FIGURES

153: rank of San Francisco in Wallethub's list of the 182 most stressful cities to live in America . . . **20 percent:** greater amount of land covered by Golden Gate Park than New York's Central Park . . . **1,800:** Mayor London Breed reports that number of unvaccinated people have been hospitalized with Covid-19 in San Francisco since December . . . **6:** number of vaccinated people hospitalized with Covid-19 during that time . . . **140:** number of new treatment beds for people experiencing mental health and substance use issues in San Francisco; it's part of an effort by the city to add more than 400 new treatment beds, a 20 percent expansion . . . **4:** number of bottles of wine you receive in a promotion for a three-month subscription to the streaming Peacock Premium service . . . **50:** In July, for the first time in 50 years the United States failed to win a medal on the first day of the Summer Olympics . . . **1,200:** number of potential names considered by the Cleveland Indians before settling on the final choice: The Cleveland Guardians.

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September 14, 2021

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Vagabonding through a changing America

The modern flirtation with authoritarianism isn't new; Americans have long felt an attraction to the dark side

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

ONE CAN EASILY IMAGINE HARRY A. Franck in San Francisco. I expect he'd have felt right at home hanging out in a North Beach bar, swapping tales — many of them true — with locals while learning about the strange ways of these people called San Franciscans. Franck, a travel writer who died in 1962, made his career writing about his travels around the world, or vagabonding, as he called it. In a strange way, he provides context for our modern travails.

I first heard about him when I happened upon a used book sale in the streets of Manhattan two decades ago and picked up Franck's 1920 book *Vagabonding Through Changing Germany*. It was a fascinating true tale of his journey on foot across post-World War I Germany, and it is filled with insight derived simply by describing daily life and talking to locals — many of whom were still in shock that the United States hadn't supported Germany in the war, because they viewed America as a German country.

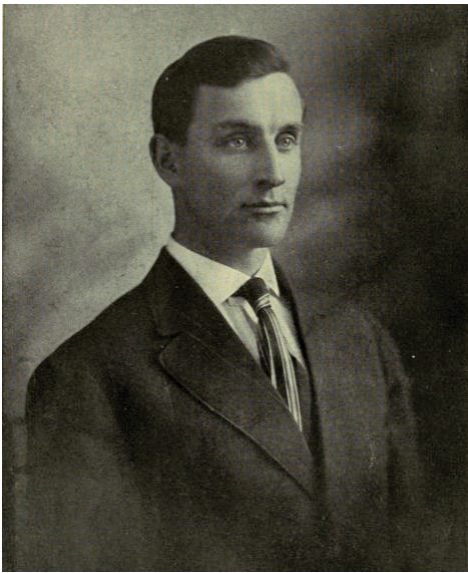
Not all of his books hold up well these many decades later. I couldn't bring myself to finish his tome on travelling through China due to its casual racism. But 15 years after his journey to the Fatherland, Franck visited Mother Russia and published *A Vagabond in Sovietland*, detailing his trip across the land of Stalin, concentration camps, political repression, and massive shortages of every consumer good and comfort. After about 250 pages of reporting on dreary accommodations, bad plumbing, bad food, terrible service, and repression for anyone who didn't dance to Stalin's tune, Franck still wrote rhapsodically about the Soviet system and how it is better than America's system. Even as he's relating the final steps of his journey and by his own account the towns and buildings and people all improve the further his train moved westward and finally crossed the border, Franck can't shake his crush on the dictatorial system in which peril and punishment are an everyday life.

THE AUTHORITARIAN ALLURE

Especially for the past seven months, ever since President Trump's beer hall putsch attempt at the U.S. Capitol, I've been growing more pessimistic about whether Americans even cared enough about democracy to sustain it. As countless national politicians fell into lockstep behind widely debunked election lies, justifying the Capitol riot and threatening more to come, things didn't look good for those of us who think a country performs best when it balances competing forces and avoids eternal zero-sum warfare.

But our democracy just might survive this, because it has done so before.

As the Harry Franck example shows, Americans have flirted with undemocratic and destructive ideologies and regimes before. In the 1930s through arguably the 1960s, millions of Americans were convinced that the Soviets (or Mao or the Viet Cong, or Castro) had a better, fairer system that justified persecutions and authoritarianism. (Even years later, in the late 1980s, I



A 1910 photo of vagabond author Harry A. Franck. PHOTO: UNKNOWN

remember my university's student government president flying off to attend a "peace conference" — in North Korea.)

Today, the undemocratic *drang nach Autoritarismus* is felt mostly, but not exclusively, on the right side of the political spectrum. But the current system has few backers on the left. In April 2020, I interviewed Shahid Buttar, a left-wing challenger to Nancy Pelosi. He of course had no realistic chance of beating the powerhouse incumbent, but for most of the interview I thought he acquitted himself well. Though his politics are not mine, he mostly came across as serious and committed. Then, as the last question, my co-host said that if Joe Biden is the Democratic nominee (instead of Buttar's progressive choice), he'd vote for Biden, right? Well, no; Buttar said Biden would be even *worse* than Trump. Establishment man and all that.

A further five years back, in 2016, political scientists Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk examined the results of surveys of attitudes about democracy and discovered some disturbing news. They found that people born between the world wars were strongly devoted to democracy; 72 percent of them said it was absolutely essential for them "to live in a democracy." But on the same question, only 30 percent of millennials agreed.

Similarly, Foa and Mounk report that 43 percent of older Americans "do not believe it is legitimate in a democracy for the military to take over when the government is incompetent or failing to do its job," but only 19 percent of millennials feel that way.

In short, if you thought millennials were going to save democracy, think again; they're the most likely to bash it on the head with a shovel.

Former George W. Bush speechwriter David Frum wrote in 2018 "Maybe you do not much care about the future of the Republican Party. You should. Conservatives will always be with us. If conservatives become convinced that they cannot win democratically, they will not abandon conservatism. They will reject democracy."

Same story on the left.

Feedback: letters@marinatimes.com; author email: john@marinatimes.com.

Reynolds Rap
continued from cover

ABC7 anchor and reporter Dion Lim, an award-winning journalist named to this year's Gold House A100 list of the most influential Asian and Pacific Islander figures for her coverage of the Stop Asian Hate movement. In the Jan. 4 interview, Boudin said he had filed charges against McAlister including vehicular manslaughter, driving under the influence, and felony possession of a firearm. Lim pushed Boudin on why his spokesperson, in a statement, blamed the state parole office instead of taking "direct accountability." Boudin said she misunderstood — he wasn't blaming parole — then proceeded to blame Daly City police because, two days before, McAlister stole the vehicle from a woman during a date, and she provided his contact information. At that point, Lim interjected: "Chesa, with all due respect, it feels as though you are deflecting just a little bit..." That would be the last time Boudin responded to Lim's questions.

TWITTER TROLLS AND BLOG POSTS

A few days after the interview, a Twitter account called "The Truth On Dion Lim" popped up. The profile claimed to be a high school student named Michaela Lim in Menlo Atherton, though her posts were decidedly adult. "Focus on the crimes and don't race bait," said the pinned Tweet. "Other reporters are tired of her racism, too. Her posts appeal to racists." One of Michaela's followers was none other than Chesa Boudin, on his official government Twitter account. He even retweeted her posts. After reporter Lou Barberini questioned "Michaela" for an article in the *Westside Observer*, the account went private and eventually disappeared. While it seemed suspicious (Barberini surmised the account was run by Boudin himself), it was nothing compared to the strange tale of Radley Balko.

On March 11, 2021, Lim covered the story of three teenaged girls who attempted to carjack a 75-year-old woman in the parking lot of a Richmond District Safeway. They were foiled by a Good Samaritan, and, thanks to witness identifications and videos of the incident, Antioch police arrested a 16-year-old suspect the next day. A 19-year-old named Trejor Barber was also implicated after she used the victim's stolen credit card to send money to her mother. A check of Barber's record shows she had been arrested the month before in Alameda County for grand theft and conspiracy to commit a crime, but Boudin declined to press charges in the attempted carjacking, citing a lack of DNA evidence. Less than a month later, Pittsburg police arrested Barber on new charges of false personation and resisting arrest in Contra Costa County.

In May, Lim heard from a source that the juvenile suspect had been released. She emailed Boudin's communications director Rachel Marshall to confirm. In documents received by an anonymous records requester on Twitter who goes by @journo_anon, Marshall tells Lim, "Pursuant to the California Welfare and Institutions Code, we are legally prohibited from discussing anything related to a juvenile case, and this should not be interpreted as confirming or denying anything about the case status or the claims you made." Lim updated her story, interviewing the hero and the victim about the minor suspect being released.

On June 14, Balko penned an opinion piece for *The Washington Post* titled "The bogus backlash against progressive prosecutors." The Tennessee-based blogger says he contacted Good Samaritan Harry Mulholland, who claimed he felt "pushed" by Lim to say, on camera, "I believe in restorative justice, and I understand Chesa has a model, but his way of going about it is not working." Balko also spoke to the

victim, who said "Lim persisted until she reluctantly provided a quote criticizing the district attorney." So why would both hero and victim want to set the record straight with a blogger 3,000 miles away? To find the answer, I went back to those records obtained by @journo_anon.

THE DION LIM MANIFESTO

At the beginning of June, Kasie Lee, an assistant San Francisco district attorney and interim chief of victim services, reached out to Balko via text: "Just checking in. Were you able to connect with the victim? Is it okay if I share your contact info with Rachel Marshall, our communications director?" Balko replies, "Please do. I spoke with [Mulholland]. I haven't heard back from the victim." Lee proceeds to forward communications between the victim and Lim.

Later, Balko says he still hasn't heard from the victim. "Does she know I'm trying to get in touch? Given that the DA's office can't officially comment, I'm not sure I can write this unless she's up for talking to me..." at which point Lee replies, "Right. I can call her later today."

In another text, Lee tells Balko, "I think it's best not to quote us, but I can try to steer you towards some juvenile advocacy folks if you want a quote on the importance of juvenile confidentiality." She cites the code restricting discussion of juvenile cases (as Marshall had done to Lim in May). She then encourages Balko to file an "827 petition" and provides him with a PDF of form JV-570 to request disclosure of the juvenile's case file. Balko replies, "I was told that's a pretty involved process... I can maybe write something based on my interview with the witness... But the victim would obviously be preferable. Just maybe check to see she got my email." Lee again ignores her own advice on the illegality of discussing the case: "... to answer your question about whether any other suspects [were] ever identified: police later requested a warrant for an adult... But there was not enough evidence to prove that the suspect was actually the driver so SFDA could not sign off on the warrant."

In perhaps the most disturbing exchange, Lee provides Balko with a Word document titled "Dion Lim Misrepresentations..." — a detailed manifesto of the cases Lim has covered, with talking points and "evidence" of her bias ("Dion Lim makes the inflammatory suggestion that DA Boudin's comments resemble those of an Atlanta sheriff"). After reading the document, it becomes crystal clear that Boudin is obsessed with Lim's coverage of him.

It is also clear from the texts that Lee, an attorney who should know better, fed material to Balko, including victim and witness contact information, the Lim manifesto, and confidential details about a case involving a juvenile. Even more egregious is the abuse of her position as interim chief of victim services — her job is to help victims, not to help a blogger 3,000 miles away write a hit piece on a local reporter. And who is behind the curtain pushing the buttons? Not the Great Oz, but Boudin himself.

Sadly, while Lee is pushing propaganda to discredit a respected journalist, crime victims are getting very little justice. Boudin's staff has tried just four cases so far this year according to the district attorney's own dataset (last updated July 1). Add that to the 23 cases tried in 2020 and you get a grand total of 27 trials since Boudin took office. During the same time period, however, he has completed six episodes of his "Chasing Justice" podcast, season 2. Your tax dollars at work, folks.

To read the Balko/SFDA responsive records, visit muckrock.com/foi/san-francisco-141/boudinradley-balko-article-records-immediate-disclosure-request-114094/#file-956500

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MODERN DINING : Neighborhood spots



Avocado toast options from Toasty. PHOTO: FACEBOOK.COM/TOASTYSF

Get out for a bit o' brekkie

BY JULIE MITCHELL

GOING OUT FOR DINNER IS ALWAYS a special treat, and eating lunch anywhere but in our own kitchens is welcome. Even a quick burrito from a taco truck qualifies as an adventure.

But heading out for breakfast often gets discounted; many of us grab a bagel or pastry, or a piece of fruit, and a cup of coffee, and are on our way. Fortunately, there are a plethora of neighborhood spots ranging from hole-in-the-wall cafes to full-scale restaurants that serve up tasty breakfasts bright and early to help you start your day off right.

MARINA CLASSICS

Homeplate has been a Marina breakfast favorite for years, offering an expanded menu of everything from bacon and eggs, pancakes, oatmeal, frittatas, and more. This cozy spot offers you a complimentary scone baked from scratch every morning before you even order. Specials include chunky corned beef hash with poached eggs (\$17), a chicken-fried steak and waffle with gravy and grilled pineapple (\$18), and avocado toast with two poached eggs on ciabatta toast (\$14); you can add bacon or smoked salmon. Eggs Benedict (\$15–\$19) lovers can delight in six variations on the classic. 2150 Lombard Street, 415-922-4663, homeplate-sf.com

You'll find savory and sweet dishes including eggs, fried chicken and waffles, and shakshouka at **Cracked & Battered**, a warm and welcoming family-run eatery. Specials include fried chicken Benedict with a biscuit base, garlic aioli, fried chicken, an over-easy egg, and hollandaise sauce (\$18) and nasi goreng, sweet Indonesian fried rice with a piece of fried chicken and an egg (\$16). Waffle lovers will swoon over the Belgian waffle (\$14), and of course, chicken and waffles (\$18). 2240 Chestnut Street, 415-638-6022, crackedandbattered.com

Blackwood serves breakfast and brunch daily, and offers a full complement of espresso drinks from lattes to apple-pear hot toddies, boozy cloud coffee with sake copper (bourbon-infused sake), mimosas, and other craft cocktails. Breakfast choices range from a variety of egg dishes, like the BW scramble with chicken-mango sausage, avocado, basil, shallot, tomato, and sharp cheddar (\$19) or a primavera white omelet with roasted tomato, mushrooms, and arugula, served with berries (\$22). Pancakes and French toast (\$15), and a granola parfait (\$14) are also available, as is their popular "millionaire's bacon" (\$11 and \$22). 2150 Chestnut Street, 415-931-9663, blackwoodsfsf.com

POLK GULCH GALORE

Polk Gulch is brimming with breakfast spots. **The New Spot on Polk** evokes an old-fashioned diner, with fairly tightly packed indoor seating and lots of side-

walk tables. Select an omelet or scramble with the same ingredients, all served with toast and house potatoes, (fruit can be subbed). Choices include a traditional Denver omelet (\$15), a veggie omelet (\$13) or the "Hangover" (\$16) with hardwood-smoked, honey-cured bacon, smoked ham, Italian sausage, bell peppers, caramelized onions, and pepper-jack cheese. Breakfast burritos (\$15), chicken-fried steak (\$16), and huevos rancheros (\$14) are other hearty options. Lighter fare includes avocado toast, oatmeal with berries and walnuts, and homemade granola with fruit, berries, and bananas (all \$10). 2401 Polk Street, 415-913-7775, thenewspotonpolk.com

American Split Kitchen serves breakfast and weekend brunch. Its menu includes sweet and savory items including a fried-egg sandwich on a challah bun with cheddar (\$7), buttermilk waffles (\$9), huevos rancheros (\$12), and granola with yogurt (\$8). Design your own scramble with your choice of cheese, veggies, and meat (\$12). 7300 Polk Street, no phone orders, spliteats.com

OTHER OPTIONS

Taking its name from a San Francisco landmark, the **Twisted Street Café** on Lombard Street is the place to go for breakfast sandwiches and more. House favorites include avocado toast with hummus topped with everything-bagel seeds and chili-lime powder (\$6); avocado toast with smoked salmon and hummus (\$10); and molletes: a flavorful Mexican open-faced sandwich with refried beans, chorizo, melted cheese, and pico de gallo (\$9). Other offerings include prosciutto, goat cheese, and fig preserve toast (\$9) and almond butter and cherry preserve on banana bread toast with crushed walnuts (\$5). Bagel and croissant sandwiches (\$4–\$10) are also on the menu as are an assortment of pastries (\$3–\$4). 2320 Lombard Street, 415-579-5950, twistedstcafe.com

Toasty bills itself as the first-ever avocado toast bar in the city. This small spot owned by Sophia Pinzon, a native Colombian who always loved avocados and dreamed about opening an all-things avocado restaurant, serves healthful, light bites that are almost too pretty to eat and definitely Instagram-worthy. Try the toast with smashed avocado, tomato, mozzarella, fresh basil, and balsamic glaze (\$11) or the "Unicorn Toasty," artisan sourdough bread topped with colorful cream cheese and rainbow sprinkles (\$7). Bowls (\$9–\$12), smoothies (\$10), and a children's menu, are also available. 2760 Octavia Street, 415-640-9047, toastysf.com

In short, if you enjoy going out for breakfast, there's no shortage of nearby places to satisfy your appetite, big or small!

Email: julie@marinatimes.com

Have brunch in your pajamas with easy lemon ricotta pancakes and skillet-fried potatoes

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

ONE OF MY MOM’S GO-TO WEEK-end dishes was her lemon ricotta pancakes: fluffy and light with just a touch of sweetness offset by lemon zest. I make them about once a month, especially if we have company. They have restaurant panache and are sure to impress, but they’re very easy to make. I like to add fresh blueberries to the batter (frozen berries will do in a pinch) and, for those who want added sweetness, I serve a blueberry compote on the side (recipe below).

After my mom passed away, my dad met a woman named Kickie, a red-haired southern spitfire born and raised in the hills of Kentucky. Suddenly a whole new culinary world opened. One of my favorite recipes, “Kickie fried taters,” goes against everything you’ve learned about frying potatoes (“do crowd the pan,” “do cover them tightly with a lid”), but results in the best fried potatoes you’ve ever had — soft and creamy in the center with a golden-brown exterior and crispy edges. Whereas California-style potatoes are usually skin-on, cubed, and sautéed with bell peppers and onions, southern fried potatoes are no frills — peeled, sliced into thin rounds, and served with sour cream on the side. You can sprinkle some sweet paprika and finely minced chives over the top if you wish.

LEMON RICOTTA PANCAKES

Serves 4

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- Zest of 3 lemons, juice reserved
- ½ cup whole or part skim milk ricotta
- ½ cup fresh blueberries (optional)

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, and baking powder. In a smaller bowl, beat the egg, then whisk in milk and lemon zest. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients, stirring until just combined. Using a spatula, gently fold in the ricotta until evenly incorporated.

Preheat a large nonstick griddle or skillet over medium heat. Using a paper towel, coat the pan lightly and evenly with butter or vegetable oil. Add drops of batter (2 to 4 tablespoons each, depending on how large you like your pancakes), making sure to leave enough room to allow them to spread and so the edges get crisp. Just when bubbles start to form on top, dot each pancake with blueberries (optional). When bubbles reach the edges and are even across the entire pancake, flip over and cook another 1 to 2 minutes. Serve with warm blueberry compote (recipe follows).

SIMPLE BLUEBERRY COMPOTE

- 2 cups fresh blueberries, divided
- 3 tablespoons water
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

Combine 1 cup of the blueberries with water, sugar, and lemon juice in a 1-quart saucepan. Simmer, uncovered, over a low-medium heat for about 10 minutes.



Lemon ricotta pancake with simple blueberry compote. PHOTO: SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

Add the remainder of the blueberries and cook for 8–10 minutes more, stirring occasionally. Serve warm on the side or drizzled over pancakes tableside.

KICKIE FRIED TATERS

Serves 4

- 4 to 6 medium or large russet potatoes (about one potato per person)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or avocado oil
- Sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste
- Sweet paprika (optional)
- Finely minced chives or green onions (optional)
- Sour cream for serving

Place several cotton kitchen towels next to a chopping board, spreading one out flat on the countertop. Peel the potatoes one at a time. Using a mandolin or a sharp chef’s knife, slice each potato into uniform rounds (about half an inch thick), spread them in a single layer on the kitchen towel, then cover with another towel and pat dry. Do this until all the potato slices are pressed between the cotton towels.

Add oil and butter to a heavy 10-inch nonstick skillet or a well-seasoned cast-iron pan and turn the heat to medium high. When the oil and butter are sizzling, carefully add the potatoes to the pan one towel-full at a time. Using a thin spatula, gently flip the potatoes so they are evenly coated and spread into even layers. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and reduce heat to medium, occasionally lifting the lid to shake the condensation into the potatoes.

Cook covered until tender, occasionally flipping potatoes to give each layer a chance to brown (15–20 minutes). Remove lid, raise heat to medium high, and cook for another 5–10 minutes, turning frequently until edges are crisp and most potatoes are golden (the ones that aren’t browned will add moisture and a gooey texture to offset the crispier slices). Toss with salt and pepper to taste and serve with sour cream on the side.

Email: susan@marinatimes.com. Follow Susan and the Marina Times on Twitter @SusanDReynolds and @TheMarinaTimes.

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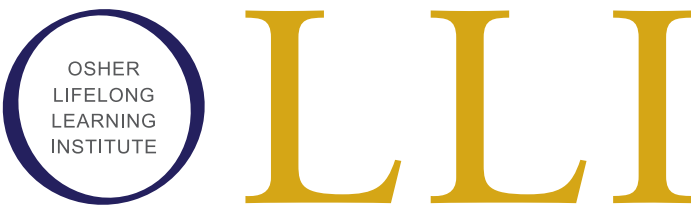
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Art World
continued from cover

Some segments of the art world criticized *The Dinner Party* for its use of vaginal imagery and embrace of feminine craft such as textiles and ceramics; however, *The Dinner Party* is now regarded as one of the most iconic artworks in the history of feminist art.

Though it is permanently installed in the Brooklyn Museum’s Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, *The Dinner Party* will be represented in the de Young exhibition by preparatory studies, including test plates, archival materials, and preliminary drawings. Additionally, the film *Right Out of History: The Making of Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party* will be on view to provide visitors additional insights to the process of making this colossal work.

BIRTH AND GENDER

The Birth Project (1980–85) takes on the absence of birth imagery and birthing as a fundamental feminine — and human — experience. Conceived from her research for *The Dinner Party*, Chicago created 80-plus works with female volunteers and produced paintings and needle-worked images such as *Earth Birth* which vividly illustrates the process of creation and birth through powerful female forms. *The Crowning 4* (1984) combines needlepoint and painting to represent a brightly colored stylized image of a woman giving birth and including, in the perimeters, the names of women and number of births for each.

Chicago examines gender roles in works like *Driving the World to Destruction* (1985) in her work *Power Play* (1982–87). Lush colors depict a male torso gripping a steering wheel surrounded by flames, suggesting masculinity’s struggle with femininity.

VIOLENCE AND MORTALITY

The work *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light* (1985-93) is the result



Judy Chicago *Driving the World to Destruction*, from the series *PowerPlay*, 1985. COURTESY OF THE FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO

of a highly personal exploration of Chicago’s Jewish roots and heritage, which ultimately led to an exploration of genocides around the world. In *The Fall*, a modified Aubusson tapestry including weaving by Audrey Cowan, abuses of power are shown through time. Violence is depicted through slavery, crucifixion, torture, and the Holocaust, as bodies are tortured then placed in ovens under a rack of slaughtered pigs.

Chicago’s latest project, *The End: A Meditation on Death and Extinction* (2015–19) confronts visitors with issues relating to mortality and the environment.

Stranded, created from kiln-fired glass paint on black glass, illustrates a polar bear on a small raft of ice, a cautionary tale of climate change and the death and destruction left in its wake. Words captioning the image leave a glimmer of hope that “... our time of awakening comes soon.”

“*Judy Chicago: A Retrospective* will reveal the continued radicality of Chicago’s practice, both in her choice of subject matter and embrace of media traditionally excluded from the art historical canon,” said Claudia Schmuckli, curator in charge of contemporary art and programming at

the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. “To this day, her art is activist in its foundations. It is driven by the need and desire for social justice and an insistence on aesthetic strategies that don’t require knowledge of art history or critical theory to be legible, while being informed by both.”

Judy Chicago: A Retrospective: Tue.–Sun., 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m. Aug. 28–Jan. 9, 2022, \$15, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, 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 ∴ What’s flying off the shelves

The Marina Books Inc. best-seller list

COMPILED BY KEVIN MCCARTHY

HARDCOVER FICTION

1. **Malibu Rising: A Novel**, by Taylor Reid
2. **The Last Thing He Told Me: A Novel**, by Laura Dave
3. **Paper Palace: A Novel**, by Miranda Cowley Heller

HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. **Madhouse at the End of the Earth: The Belgica’s Journey into the Dark Antarctic Night**, by Julian Sancton
2. **Bomber Mafia: A Dream, a Temptation, and the Longest Night of the Second World War**, by Malcolm Gladwell
3. **Unwinding Anxiety: New Science Shows How to Break the Cycles of Worry and Fear to Heal Your Mind**, by Judson Brewer

PAPERBACK FICTION

1. **People We Meet on Vacation**, by Emily Henry
2. **Where the Crawdads Sing**, by Delia Owens
3. **Anxious People: A Novel**, by Fredrik Bacman

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

1. **The End of the Golden**

- Gate: Writers on Loving and (Sometimes) Leaving San Francisco**, by Gary Kamiya
2. **Numbers Don’t Lie: 71 Stories to Help Us Understand the Modern World**, by Vaclav Smil
 3. **Why We’re Polarized**, by Ezra Klein

CHILDREN’S BEST SELLERS

1. **They Both Die at the End**, by Adam Silvera
2. **Truly Tyler**, by Terri Libenson
3. **Please Don’t Read This Book**, by Deanna Kizis

NEW AND NOTABLE RELEASES

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood: A Novel, by Quentin Tarantino

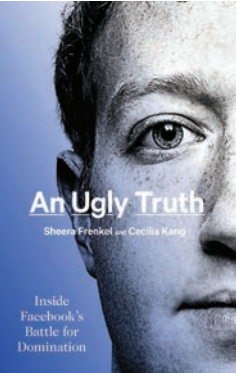
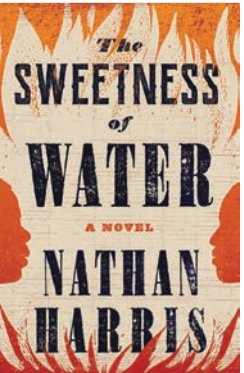
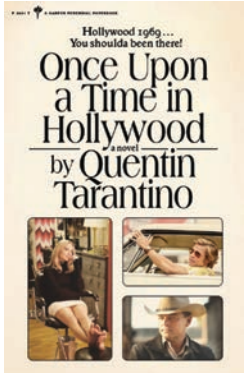
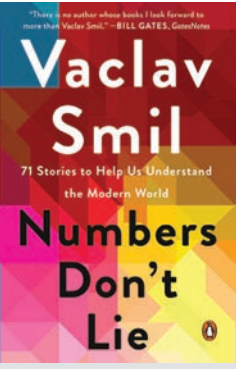
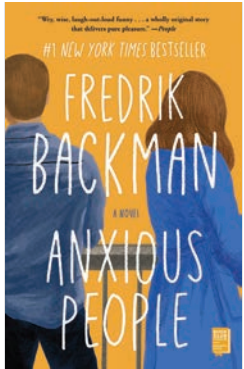
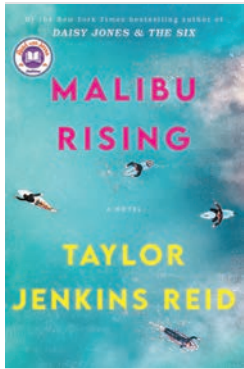
Quentin Tarantino’s long-awaited first work of fiction — at once hilarious, delicious, and brutal — is the always surprising, sometimes shocking new novel based on his Academy Award-winning film. A singular reading experience that illuminates the movie while remaining decidedly distinct from it.

The Sweetness of Water: A Novel, by Nathan Harris

In the waning days of the Civil War, brothers Prentiss and Landry, freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, seek refuge on the homestead of George Walker and his wife, Isabelle. The Walkers, wracked by the loss of their only son to the war, hire the brothers to work their farm, hoping through an unexpected friendship to stanch their grief. The brothers meanwhile plan to save money for the journey north and a chance to reunite with their mother, who was sold when they were boys. Equal parts beauty and terror, as gripping as it is moving, *The Sweetness of Water* is an epic whose grandeur locates humanity and love amid the most harrowing circumstances.

An Ugly Truth: Inside Facebook’s Battle for Domination, by Sheera Frenkel and Cecilia Kang

Drawing on their unrivaled sources, Sheera Frenkel and Cecilia Kang take readers inside the complex court politics, alliances, and rivalries within the company to shine a light on the fatal cracks in the architecture of the tech behemoth. Their



explosive, exclusive reporting led them to a shocking conclusion: The missteps of the last five years were not an anomaly but an inevitability — this is how Facebook was built to perform.

Universal Human: Creating Authentic Power and the New Consciousness, by Gary Zukav

Universal Human gives us new tools to grow spiritually and shows us how to transform everyday experiences of hopelessness, emptiness, and pain into fulfillment, meaning,

and joy. It points us toward a startling new destination — a species that is beyond culture, religion, nation, ethnic group, and gender, a species whose allegiance is to Life first and all else second — and shows us how to get there.

For additional new releases, visit marinatimes.com.

Kevin McCarthy can help you find your next book at Books Inc. in the Marina (2251 Chestnut Street, 415-931-3633, booksinc.net).

Snyder
continued from cover

every 100 years for a single day. Evidently inspired by that plot, *Schmigadoon!* features a pair of normal modern folks, doctors-in-love Melissa and Josh, finding themselves in a magical town (named, yes, Schmigadoon) while on a woodland retreat to repair their ailing relationship. Our troubled twosome, played with verve and offhand sarcasm by *Saturday Night Live*'s Cecily Strong and *Key & Peele*'s Keegan-Michael Key, can't find a way out of this strange enclave where the trees are plastic, the vistas look like they were painted on a scrim, and the townsfolk are an all-singing, all-dancing, all-over-emoting stereotypical throwback to a good old-fashioned musical.

By going beyond traditional situation comedy structure and premises and doing its own thing, *Schmigadoon!* treads a path similar to that of *The Good Place*, the splendidly witty and genuinely sincere series about the afterlife. The smug and snarky aspects of *Schmigadoon!* suggest that the emotional resonance of *The Good Place* isn't the goal here. Instead, the focus appears to be on humor derived from a pair of neurotic 21st century professionals clashing with the hoary attitudes and artificiality of the Schmigadoon locals who spontaneously burst into song-and-dance routines, present grandiose, melodramatic behavior, and espouse dated usually sexist mores.

The conceit here is that Melissa and Josh are trapped in Schmigadoon like it's *The Twilight Zone* and can't return to the ordinary world until they find that prize idealized in countless fairytale narratives (and musicals) — true love. This

info-dump is courtesy of a leprechaun who explains why there appears to be no way back for the duo. The leprechaun is portrayed by no less than comic actor Martin Short who has put in time on the Great White Way with a starring role in *The Goodbye Girl* and did a season of *SNL* in the 1980s. Short is just one of the theater vets in the cast, alongside Alan Cumming (*Cabaret*) as the closeted Mayor Menlove and Kristin Chenoweth (*Wicked*) as a prudish scold married to the town's preacher, plus Jane Krakowski (*Nine*) and Ariana DeBose (the upcoming film remake of *West Side Story*). They each bring that Tony Award sheen to the material, which embeds wryly relevant lyrics into song structures that recall the likes of *Oklahoma*, *The Music Man*, *Finian's Rainbow*, and of course, *Brigadoon*.

With ex-Disney Channel ingénue Dove Cameron playing a teen temptress, former *SNL* cast member and *Portlandia* star Fred Armisen as the preacher, and a crew of less familiar but reliable supporting players, the six episodes of *Schmigadoon!* deliver a canny takedown of archaic and contemporary romantic notions, wrapped in a takeoff of Broadway musicals. Strong has a strong voice, Key can certainly stay in key, and they handle their singing duties with as much aplomb as they navigate their characters' banter. *Schmigadoon!* was created by Cinco Paul and Ken Daurio, the writers behind the wildly popular *Despicable Me* animated features, and directed by Barry Sonnenfeld, best-known for helming *Get Shorty* and the *Men in Black* movies. And *SNL* head honcho Lorne Michaels is one of the executive producers. It's a parody, and it's a rom-com. But mostly, *Schmigadoon!* is a lot of fun.

Schmigadoon! is available for streaming on Apple TV Plus.

'GIRLS5EVA'

The *Saturday Night Live* connection to *Girls5eva* is primarily on the development side —it's coproduced by *SNL* mainstay Tina Fey, who created and starred in *30 Rock*, the brilliant burlesque of the TV business. Now, Fey and her partner Robert Carlock are overseeing creator Meredith Scardino's *Girls5eva*, an astute, dependably funny, occasionally profane series about show business, especially the pop end of the music industry, women's relationships, aging, and adapting.

Presumably, *Girls5eva* was a girl group in the late 1990s that had a single hit song then broke up, sending its five members in vastly different directions: Dawn became a wife and mother who worked in her brother's Queens restaurant; Summer married a doofus from a boy band and tried to live the high life as a social media star; Wickie set out on a solo career that imploded; Gloria became a dentist, married her girlfriend, and ended up having the first same-sex divorce in New York; and Ashley died. *Girls5eva* adopted their unique name, because, as their theme song goes, they planned to be "famous 5 eva" because "4 ever's too short." It wasn't to be until the four surviving *Girls* reconnected after a hip-hop star used a sample from their only successful record on his latest release. The *Girls* decide to revive the group after they're asked to vocalize the sample in person for the rapper's appearance on Jimmy Fallon's late-night talk show.

Inspired by their moment back in the spotlight, they contend that the only way they can be stars again is to record new music and wangle an invitation to perform

at the high-profile Jingle Ball concert. That means dealing with their predatory one-time manager, an eccentric best-selling songwriter, beleaguered or unsupportive spouses, pranksters, and others. Along the way, *Girls5eva* offers clever shots at youth culture, contemporary parenting, urban classism, and the daunting generation gap that former pop stars have to traverse decades after their heyday. The fake vintage footage from *MTV's TRL* with Carson Daly and *CNN's Larry King Live* is a hoot, as are the words to *Girls5eva* tracks such as "Dream Girlfriend."

The program's biggest assets are the four lead actresses, two of whom — Sara Bareilles and Renée Elise Goldsberry — are acclaimed singers. Bareilles (Dawn) composed the music and lyrics for the musical *Waitress* and is set to star in an upcoming Broadway run of the show, and Goldsberry (Wickie) was in the original casts of *Hamilton* and *The Color Purple*. They bring legitimacy and pizzazz to the droll *Girls5eva* songs, while having the comedic chops to work well with more accomplished jokers Busy Philipps (Summer) and Paula Pell (Gloria). Although guest shots by Fey, Stephen Colbert, and Vanessa Williams provide added value, the pop culture savvy dialogue, unexpectedly surreal gags, and the *Girls* themselves make this the fictional comeback we never knew we wanted and needed.

Girls5eva is available for streaming on Peacock.

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.



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Jas Charanjiva in front of *Don't Mess With Me*. Photograph © Asian Art Museum.

Social skills 101

Casual conversation not only builds confidence but also boosts our mood

BY LIZ FARRELL

HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT SINCE THE world began to reopen, our social skills have needed a tune up? I think we all got used to talking to the same people and not doing much. We also got used to hiding our facial expressions behind masks and following strict social distancing protocols, and reentry is proving to be a little more work than expected. These were necessary tools during a pandemic but as we begin to reemerge we might find ourselves needing to go back to the basics.

This could be said for our children, too. As they begin to think about the upcoming school year and going back full time and in person, now might be a good time to think about sharpening their social skills. Many will be entering new schools or seeing classmates for the first time, so understandably they may need a little help — possibly even a social skills crash course to help them make a smooth transition. There will be much academically to contend with as we are still yet to fully understand the effects of remote learning for a year and a half; however, if they are confident socially and armed with some simple tools, it might make this transition easier.

SMALL TALK

One thing we overlooked the importance of prepandemic was the mini-conversations or chitchat we had with different

people throughout the day. Whether about sports or the weather, these conversations have been proven to boost our mood, help us feel heard or understood, and can decrease loneliness.

Our family loves baseball, so recently I was explaining to our kids that conversations should be like a game of catch — it should go back and forth. One way I try to help them understand this is when someone asks a question, don't just respond with yes or no but elaborate a bit. This additional information may lead to great things like making a good impression, learning something new, or possibly even a new friend — all great friendships start with some sort of small talk.

MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

One of my favorite authors is Kelly Corrigan, a *New York Times* bestselling author and host of the podcast “Kelly Corrigan Wonders.” In May, she gave the commencement speech at a high school in Atlanta. Her advice to the graduates was simple and profound: If you want to have a happy and meaningful life, ask questions. It seems so simple and easy, but most of us don't do it — we may have even forgotten over the past 18 months how to do it well. Corrigan also said the only thing better than a question is a follow-up question. There is more to every person — it's just whether we take the time and effort to uncover it. From the Uber driver to the coffee barista to the new



Learning the art and science of conversation is important. PHOTO: DAISY-DAISY

student sitting next to you, every person has a story to tell and something we can learn. So instead of asking the same old boring questions like, “How was your summer?” or “What classes are you taking?” encourage your child to try some of these instead: “What apps on your phone can you not live without?” “Who is your favorite person to follow on Instagram?” or “What's your favorite thing to do on the weekends?” By asking questions and really listening to one another, we can find meaningful connections, which are scientifically proven to make us healthier and happier.

PRACTICE

Getting our social skills back up to speed doesn't have to be stressful. It can be fun and interesting, but it will require some time and effort. And as with most things, in the beginning it can be challenging, but don't give up. One of the easiest ways to start is by putting down our devices. This is a great area where parents can model for their children the behavior they hope to

see. Having a conversation with a stranger, a good friend, or a parent requires eye contact, body language that portrays interest, and active listening. For our children who are used to and maybe even more comfortable communicating via text, tweet, or snap, this can be challenging, but these are important and lifelong skills.

With a few weeks left of summer this is a great time to get some practice before heading back to school. Encourage your child to try it with you, then maybe with a new child at camp, or even while waiting for an elevator. Continue to look for safe ways to engage with new people, and not only will this help strengthen social skills but you may even see it become a simple and easy way to boost your mood.

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.

SPONSORED ARTICLE

Cruise joins environmental, labor leaders in calling for zero-emission AVs

BY ROB GRANT
Senior Vice President of Government Affairs & Social Impact at Cruise

California is experiencing extreme drought with record-breaking temperatures up and down the state. The skies over the Marina have yet to turn blood-orange again; however, national forecasts predict that this year's fire season could be the worst one yet.

Climate change is here now. One of the biggest emissions culprits? Gasoline-powered transportation.

At Cruise, we recognize the unequivocal reality of climate change. Our commitment to sustainability and the environment is why our self-driving fleet has been zero emission from the start, and powered by 100% renewable energy. Earlier this year, we urged our colleagues in the autonomous vehicle industry to follow suit in being zero emission by issuing a Clean Mile Challenge, because real innovation is zero emission.

Now, elected leaders in Sacramento can take early action to ensure the AV industry does the right and necessary thing to help move the state closer to a zero-emission future — while creating good-paying jobs and badly needed new infrastructure to support electric vehicles.

SB 500, a bill before the California State Legislature, would set a zero-emission requirement for autonomous vehicles. The bill, introduced by Senator Dave Min,

was overwhelmingly approved by the Senate and recently passed out of the Assembly Committee on Communications and Conveyance.

Environmental leaders, labor unions, and AV companies — including Cruise, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), Environment California, the California State Association of Electrical Workers, the Coalition of California Utility Employees, and Nuro — are urging lawmakers to approve the bill and further accelerate our state's transition to a zero-emission future.

At Cruise, we know AVs are building the future of transportation. To ensure that our future is environmentally sustainable, AV companies must electrify their fleets as they come into widespread use. California legislators can set an example and lead the way for the nation by passing this bill, moving us closer to the



clean transportation system our communities and our planet need.

AV companies have a unique opportunity now to implement zero-emission technology that both reduces our carbon footprint and creates and supports jobs that will help build-out the electric charging infrastructure our state needs.

We're always searching for opportunities to engage with the community, so that we can learn about different ways that we can support you. So don't be shy — please reach out to us anytime at: community@getcruise.com.



Rents appear to be heading upward and concessions downward in San Francisco.
PHOTO: GAREY DE MARTINI

Rents less of a bargain

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

RENTS ARE SOARING ACROSS AMERICA, and climbing slowly in San Francisco. Nationwide, residential rents are up 7.5 percent so far this year, three times higher than normal, according to Heather Long with *The Washington Post*, quoting data from Apartments.com. Parts of the country that used to be considered affordable are suddenly experiencing the kind of rent frenzy with bidding wars and surging prices that had previously been found only in mega-cities like San Francisco and New York City.

Phoenix is among more than a dozen cities that have seen a 10 percent or higher spike in rents in the past year, according to Zillow. The top cities for soaring rents include Boise, Idaho; Riverside, Calif.; Spokane, Wash.; Tucson, Ariz.; Stockton, Calif.; and Las Vegas, Nev. — what real estate agents have dubbed the “Inland West.” According to Long, real estate agents in these places say they have been inundated with calls from young people and families who want to relocate from pricier parts of California and Washington state.

San Francisco and New York City are among only a handful of cities where the typical rent price is still below prepandemic levels, according to Zillow. However, even in these two cities, there are signs of a rebound. So-called “rent concessions” where landlords offer a month or two of free rent or waive the deposit have dropped sharply in recent weeks. In November, 60 percent of downtown urban listings on Apartments.com offered concessions. In June, just 35 percent did.

TRENDING

The trend of small and midsize cities seeing surging rents is different from the past. According to Zillow, the last time rent increases nationwide were jumping this much was 2015, when San Francisco and San Jose topped the list of highest rent increases, along with Denver, Honolulu, and Portland, Ore. So far in 2021, none of those cities appear in the top 80 for rent increases, according to Zillow data through May.

It is not clear yet what all of these trends will mean, but most economists and investors predict high demand for rentals for months to come. According to Long, that is likely to push up inflation, because rent makes up about 40 percent of the consumer price index that the U.S. government calculates each month.

Inflation data from May showed a modest 1.8 percent increase in rents for main residences, but experts think that could rise this summer and fall, especially given what they are seeing from sites like Apartments.com and Zillow. The fact that wages are rising at one of the fastest

paces since the early 1980s also gives landlords confidence to hike rents.

In the Bay Area, the steep discounts in rents triggered by the pandemic are beginning to disappear, according to Louis Hansen with the Bay Area News Group.

As California made reopening plans over the last three months, average prices for one-bedroom apartments climbed throughout the region, up 5.3 percent in San Francisco, 3.6 percent in Oakland, and 2.9 percent in San Jose, according to the listing site Zumper.

The increase in rent signals a turn toward prepandemic conditions, but according to Hansen, San Francisco and the Bay Area have been slower to rebound than other major metro areas, including New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C. Even as renters begin to return to Bay Area cities and offices, rents remain below prepandemic levels throughout the region.

RESETTLING

Zumper CEO Anth Georgiades said the gradual price growth in California reflected the state’s cautious reopening schedule. But he believes Bay Area residential rents may not fully recover to early 2020 levels because some people who left will settle outside the area.

During the pandemic, the region’s rents fell faster and deeper than any other market in the country, according to Apartment List researchers. Rental prices remain well under prepandemic levels in San Francisco (down 14 percent), Oakland (off 12.4 percent), and San Jose (down 8 percent). At their lowest point, prices for apartments in these cities fell between 15 and 25 percent, among the largest drops in the country.

Still, these three Bay Area cities remain among the top six most expensive places to rent in the United States — and rents are beginning to creep even higher. For example, according to Zumper data, the median price in June for a two-bedroom rental in San Francisco increased 2.5 percent from the previous month to \$3,690, grew 1.2 percent in Oakland to \$2,530, and stayed flat in San Jose at \$2,700.

Apartment List researcher Rob Warnock said the Bay Area market began to turn in January, and prices have steadily risen since.

A significant driving factor in apartment prices inching back up in San Francisco and the Bay Area has of course been tech firms starting to call workers back into the office. According to Hansen, as workers begin to reconnect to their offices, the demand for apartments near business hubs is expected to grow.

Feedback: letters@marinatimes.com

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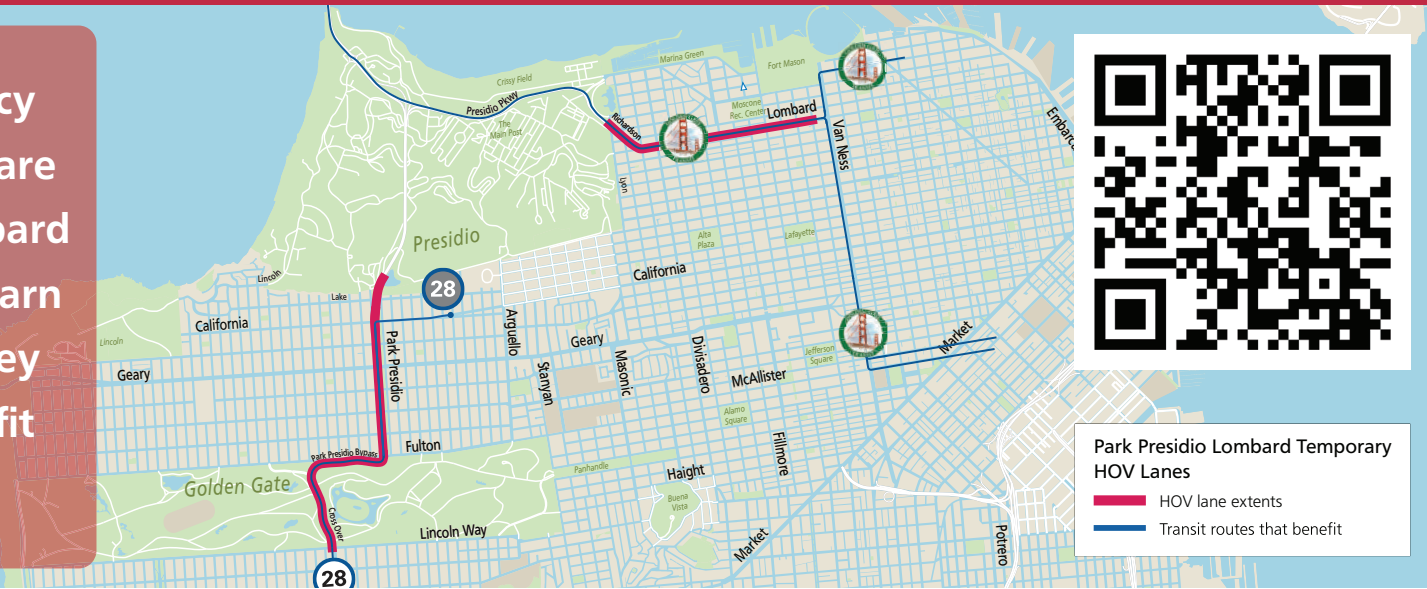
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