# MarinaTimes



# What's next?

John Zipperer provides a handy and mostly serious primer for the school board recall this month. p. 3 Sharon Anderson previews SFMOMA's sustainable living exhibition 'Nature x Humanity.' p. 8 Liz Farrell on what kids need as we emerge from the pandemic. p. 10



# Revealed at last

Think all those "all cash" real estate purchases are interest-rate immune? Think again — Garey De Martini explains. p. 11

MARINATIMES.COM : CELEBRATING OUR 38TH YEAR : VOLUME 38 : ISSUE 2 : FEBRUARY 2022 =



Sarah Van Patten and Joseph Walsh in Marston's Mrs. Robinson. PHOTO: COURTESY SAN FRANCISCO BALLET

# A notable season for S.F. Ballet

T'S NOT ONLY A BIG MONTH FOR from one scene in the ballet may be the San Francisco Ballet, but | ▲ 2022 is an important year. The month begins with Program 1 (Feb. 1–12), which includes, after a twoyear postponement, a world premiere of Mrs. Robinson, a reimaging of the classic 1967 film The Graduate from Mrs. Robinson's perspective. (A short film featuring a dance

viewed at sfballet.org.)

This year marks Helgi Tomasson's 37th and final year as artistic director, and each program of the season celebrates his prolific career. Tomasson's Trio, also on Program 1, is set to a score by Tchaikovsky, and is "a visual feast of billowing gowns and velvet jackets against sumptuous sets." George Balanchine's masterpiece Symphony in C, first performed by the ballet in 1961, and featuring over 50 dancers, rounds out Program 1.

Information on Program 2 (Feb. 3-13), Don Quixote (Feb. 26-March 6), and the 2022 Season can be found at sfballet.org.

— L. Majer

# **REYNOLDS RAP** : Opinion

# **Among SFPUC friends** with community benefits, **Dwayne Jones is the bestie**

Despite years of ethical missteps and ties to corruption, the city keeps giving him millions

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

"If you are going to have an operation where you're buying political support in the Southeast part of the town, Dwayne Jones is the guy."

— Chris Daly, former San Francisco supervisor, in 2013

'N MY COLUMN EXPOSING THE SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC Utilities Commission's Community Benefits pay-to-**■** play scheme ("Friends with Community Benefits," July 2020), I predicted a few major players would be hearing from the FBI, including SFPUC then-General Manager-Harlan Kelly Jr., his chief strategy officer, Assistant General Manager of External Affairs (and girlfriend) Juliet Ellis, and their close ally and lobbyist, Dwayne Jones. Since then, Kelly has been arrested. Ellis has only been subpoenaed, but she should still be nervous that the Board of Supervisors is finally paying attention.

At a Jan. 20 hearing on the long-awaited SFPUC audit, supervisors questioned why corruption within the Community Benefits program (CBP) — where contractors are

REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 4

# **SUPERVISOR** : Opinion

# Addiction is a crisis

BY CATHERINE STEFANI

THE ADDICTION CRISIS IN SAN FRANCISCO IS AN unmitigated disaster. Drug overdoses have caused twice as many deaths as Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic, and it continues nearly unabated. When I walk through our city, I don't see thousands of people living on the streets — I see thousands slowly dying, and each of them is someone's father, mother, son, or daughter.

In 2018, there were 259 documented overdose deaths in San Francisco. In 2020, that number nearly tripled to 717 deaths. There were at least 592 overdose deaths in 2021. These tragic numbers could have been a lot worse. In the first six months of last year, Narcan was used to reverse an overdose more than 4,200 times. These numbers are stark indicators that our current response to the overdose epidemic is deeply flawed.

That's why I supported the mayor's emergency declaration for overdose deaths in the Tenderloin. We must earnestly try to address the most serious public health crisis facing our city.

### THE STATUS QUO IS FAILING

San Franciscans voted to allocate more than \$1 billion to address homelessness, and more than \$25 million to address mental health crises and drug overdoses in the 2020 budget. Yet, these linked crises continue to get worse. We have significantly broadened who can access shelter-in-place hotel rooms and temporary housing, we've drastically increased our supply of needles for safe drug

SUPERVISOR, continued on 2

# MICHAEL SNYDER ON ... TELEVISION



Ibrahim Koma, David Tennant and Leonie Benesch star in PBS's Around the World in Eightv Davs. Photo: courtesy of @ slim 80 days / federation entertainment / PEU COMMUNICATIONS / ZDF / BE-FILMS / RTBF (TÉLÉVISION BELGE)- 2021 / PRS ORG

# **Globetrotting adventurers and cold** cases heat up the video hearth

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

E'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF a perfect winter storm when it comes to the entertainment industry. Television viewing habits irrevocably changed with the expansion and prolifera-

tion of streaming services that offer original series and feature film content, plus classics and detritus from studio libraries. When you add the pandemic's negative impact on moviegoing and factor in cold weather, it's easy to stay at home and absorb what's on the box, even if the

types of content delivery have changed.

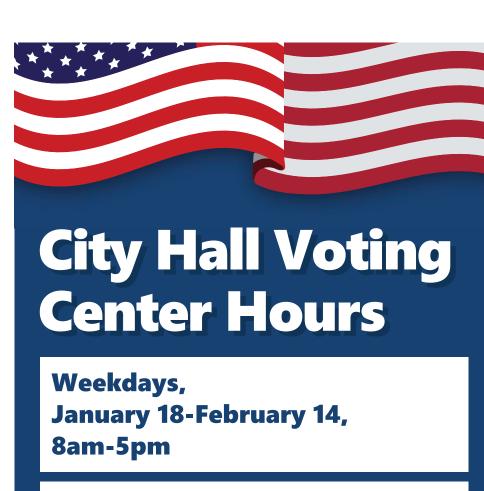
The drip-drip of waiting each week for the latest episode of a favorite on network or cable feels a little last century. Certain digital outlets (Apple TV and HBO Max, for two) have experimented with dropping multiple installments of shows in chunks — sometimes three at a time. Then, there's the full-season binge where you watch 'em if you got 'em. With so much diversity and new programs rolled out on a weekly basis, you can surely find something to capture your attention.

### 'AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS'

Consider these current offerings.

Perhaps no one needed another screen adaptation of Jules Verne's 1873 tale of Victorian era adventurer Phileas Fogg and his quest to circumnavigate the globe. What could match the 70-mm bombast of the 1956 version starring the eversuave David Niven as Fogg and the Mexican superstar comic actor Cantinflas as his valet Passepartout? Certainly not the clumsy 2004 comedy that was barely based on the novel and wasted the usually spot-

SNYDER, continued on 9



Weekends, February 5-6 and February 12-13, **10am-4pm** 

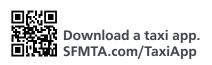
**Election Day, Tuesday, February 15,** 7am-8pm



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# Supervisor

continued from cover

use, and we've gone to great lengths to support harm reduction approaches to the overdose crisis.

What do we have to show for all that? We have one of the highest overdose death rates in the country. We have to accept that these practices alone are not working.

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. We have thousands of people horrifically addicted to and dying from it in the city, and the individuals selling it face no consequences.

I read about one mother who described how her daughter's drug dealer was arrested three different times; each time he was out within days and selling to her daughter again. I know of another case where a dangerous drug dealer was arrested on drugs and firearms charges and sent to drug court for an eventual dismissal. On Oct. 27, a known Tenderloin drug dealer was in court on four counts of felony possession for sales and only given diversion with the promise that his case would be dismissed if he completed five Narcotics Anonymous meetings. We see cases like this over and over again.

Despite the fact these dealers are coming in from outside our city causing harm to our communities, and doing so with total impunity, the district attorney has vowed *not* to participate in the emergency declaration. In fact, he held a press conference denouncing the mayor and her plan. Meanwhile, his own dashboard shows that the district attorney's office hasn't tried a single drug sales case — even as the death toll from overdoses skyrockets.

### IMPACTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

The epicenter of this crisis is in the Tenderloin. More than 40 percent of the overdose deaths in the city occur in the Tenderloin and nearby SOMA neighborhoods. It is also where a significant number of immigrant and refugee families with children live and work.

In November, more than 400 Tenderloin residents and families signed a letter begging the city to intervene. The brutal reality that they face day after day is abhorrent, and we cannot continue to ignore it.

In November, an 11-year-old girl wearing a hijab was walking her younger sibling to school in the Tenderloin when she was violently assaulted, and had to go to the intensive care unit for her injuries. The attacker was arrested for assault, child endangerment and a hate crime, but is roaming the neighborhood again and contributing to the ongoing fears these

families and children face every single day.

When we talk about public health, we have to think about the whole community, including the children and families in these neighborhoods. We have a public health obligation to them, too, and right now, we are failing them.

Addiction is a terrible disease. It can cause people to do things they don't want to do or commit crimes they don't want to commit. We must get them the treatment they need, but the disease of addiction doesn't give anyone license to use on the streets until they kill themselves or seriously harm someone else. We cannot continue to enable people into oblivion.

### WE NEED CHANGE

We need a combination of law enforcement and social services. We need a combination of consequences and treatment. This is the kind of approach that was used successfully all over Europe, and it is exactly what our mayor is asking for. In my opinion, it is the only humane option, given how dire the emergency has become.

Under the director of emergency management, the city is using its emergency powers to create a linkage center where those suffering from addiction can receive treatment, mental health, and other services. This declaration allows us to circumvent existing bureaucracy to lease new facilities and hire hundreds of vacant behavioral health positions. It also allows us to disrupt the deadly open-air drug market, and expedite street cleaning and infrastructure requests.

The department managing this crisis will be the same one that successfully managed our Covid-19 response. Director of Emergency Management Mary Ellen Carroll has proven herself to be one of the most competent emergency managers in the country, and if anyone can disrupt this vicious cycle, it is she and the people she leads. The task before her is enormous, but I have the utmost faith that she is up for it. The situation in the Tenderloin is untenable, and it deserves a sustained emergency response from the city. This is something that has been begged for and demanded by families in the Tenderloin for years. The alternative seems to be a combination of doing nothing, arguing about what to do, or doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

It's past time we treat this like the emergency it is and demand policies that actually work. I voted in support of this emergency declaration on Dec. 23 and will continue to vote in its support, because the status quo is beyond unacceptable; those perpetuating it must be challenged and called out.

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# POLITICS AS USUAL : Opinion

# A lesson plan for the school board recall

Pay attention when you vote

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

CHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS ARE important, but they're usually of low **J** interest to the general voter, who probably can't remember whom they voted for one week later. But when the elected board members go on to perform as controversially as the San Francisco board has in recent years, it provides an education in elections and citizenship for all of us. For that, if for nothing else, we thank them.

The mid-1970s were when I got my first political experiences, and both cases involved schools.

In one case, my family helped Judith Crain in her reelection campaign for the Green Bay school board. We worked out of the Crain home, stapling campaign placards to sticks so they could be used as yard signs. I don't recall if I also helped deliver the yard signs or if all of us little kids were just shunted off to the kitchen for milk and cookies. The latter is more likely, and it would dovetail nicely with the 1988 Republican National Convention I attended as a member of the press; there, after the day's work was done, everyone was shunted off to various ballrooms to get drunk. Same principle.

In the second case, I was in fourth grade and it was the 1976 election. That year, when two basically centrist and historically bland candidates vied for the White House, seems an unlikely time to get enthralled with politics, but it did the trick for me and my best friend Jenny. Our key campaign tactic involved making up big cards with pro-Ford slogans on them (I think our strongest argument was "Carter is a peanut," demonstrating the level of political discourse at Howe Elementary School in 1976).

Both examples highlight the importance and fun of individual involvement in our democracy. In later years, as I have had the opportunity to talk about politics on the radio and on stage, I have often repeated my exhortation to people to pay attention and vote in all elections — not just the ones where they get all hyped up because someone's trying to overthrow the government or a particular candidate makes you swoon. Elections are about deciding who will legally wield our com-

### LET'S CALL IT A TEACHING MOMENT

Recall elections don't automatically mean the incumbents are likely to be dumped; in fact, it's fairly rare. In Wisconsin's ill-fated attempt to recall far-right Gov. Scott Walker in 2012, there was a reticence to recall any elected official, combined with some performative overreaching by some activists on the left (yelling at Walker's elderly mother in a grocery store and targeting his kids on Facebook). Dianne Feinstein easily defeated a recall attempt in 1983 that was pushed by a fringe party. And the recent attempt to recall California Gov. Gavin Newsom only got on the ballot because the pandemic induced a judge to give the signature collectors more time.

But what makes this year's two recall elections in San Francisco different from those failed recalls is that the performative overreaching activists aren't on the recall side of the school board fight; they literally are the school board members voters will recall. Also, Gavin Newsom has his woke

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	應否能免(撤除)線安·范斯坦 的市長職位? (如投"費成"票,請在第143號打孔) (如投"反對"票,請在第146號打孔)		
Sample Ballot	City and County of San Francisco Special Recall Election April 26, 1983  Cludad y Condado de San Francisco Elección Especial de Destitución 28 de Abril de 1983  一九八三年四月二十六日 舊金山市、縣 特別罷免選舉		

Dianne Feinstein's political career didn't seem to be much hindered by a failed recall attempt in 1983. PHOTO: SFPL/PUBLIC DOMAIN

new-agey side, but he also has his pragmatic small businessman side. We have yet to see a pragmatic side of the city's district attorney, another candidate who never would have gotten into office if voters had been paying attention. It's not impossible for someone with his views to get such a position; longtime San Franciscans might remember Richard Hongisto, the local sheriff whose language about crime and structural racism is echoed strongly in Chesa Boudin's pronouncements. Hongisto served for much of the 1970s before reinventing himself as a supervisor and later a short-lived police chief. So Boudin might have a future in San Francisco politics one day; but if I were a betting man, I'd place my money on his being recalled.

In both cases — the school board and district attorney recalls — voters are paying attention. Certain segments of the population are very engaged. The leftwing activists are of course engaged, but they were already engaged when these candidates first got into office. The incumbents can't get more of their votes, they can only lose the votes of the nonactivists, and they have done their very best to accomplish that.

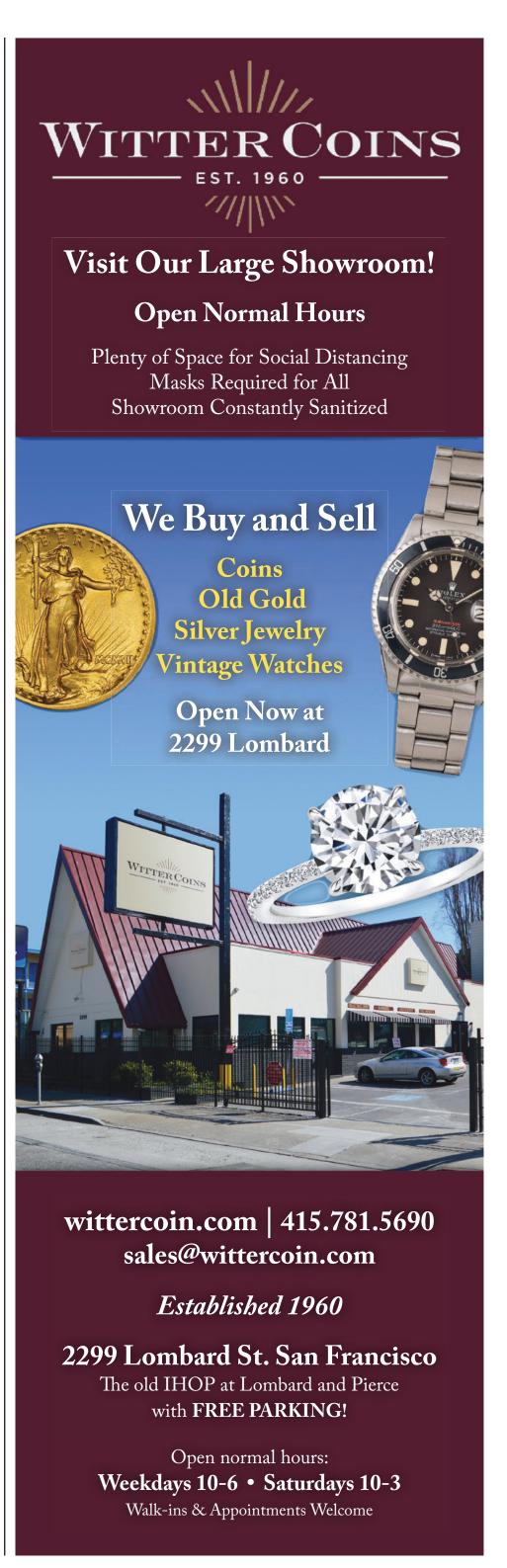
### **NOT EVERYONE'S GIG**

It can be hard keeping yourself informed of all of the candidates for every position. My first election in Chicago, I opened up the ballot and saw hundreds of names for God only knows how many different judgeships — positions I didn't even know would be on the ballot. I didn't know a single one of them. My bad.

This year, voters are aware of the incumbents. Again, I think it's a foregone conclusion that they'll be removed. But voters should bring that level of attention to every election, every year, every office.

With luck (and voter intelligence), the incumbents who are removed from office this year will be replaced by responsible public servants. Judith Crain, by the way, ended up serving on the Green Bay school board for many years, in 1974-81 and again in 1993-02, including as board president from 1997 to 2002. In addition, she has led educational organizations, chaired boards, and even earned a Masters in theology. An all-around impressive public servant, and I wouldn't hesitate to vote for her or staple yard signs for her

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# Reynolds Rap

continued from cover

"asked" to make large donations to favored nonprofits to get jobs — was allowed for so long, and even proposed dismantling it altogether. Audits and Oversight Committee Chair Supervisor Dean Preston suggested that the SFPUC should account for every penny of CBP and Social Impact expenditures to date, as well as the roles of SFPUC staff.

The oversight committee did a good job asking tough questions, but there was one name that never came up: Dwayne Jones. Inside sources say Ron Flynn, chief of staff to the SFPUC's new general manager, Dennis Herrera (who also served as lead attorney on government contracting under Herrera in the city attorney's office), was under "specific orders" not to mention Jones, his nonprofit Southeast Consortium for Equitable Partnerships (SECEP), or discussions that occurred at the joint venture board meetings with the SFPUC.

Despite missteps and ties to corruption, Ellis (a longtime friend who called Jones "her boy" in a 2015 Facebook post) appointed him as a "fiscal agent" for the CBP through SECEP. For years, Jones and his various businesses have made millions from CBP and multiple city agencies. In some ways, Jones reminds me of disgraced San Francisco Department of Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru, whose decades of corruption I detailed in April 2019 ("It's time for Mayor Breed to sweep DPW boss to the curb"). Nuru managed to fly under

the noses of four mayors and numerous boards of supervisors, where he continually got promoted. Jones has done the same, with one notable exception: He hasn't risen to a prominent leadership position — the kind that might bring scrutiny and was ultimately the downfall for Nuru, as well as for Kelly and Ellis. And that may be his shrewdest move of all.

### THE INCESTUOUS CITY FAMILY

Prior to my CBP exposé and a subsequent report by the NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit in December 2020, media mentions of Jones were few and far between, but his escapades went on under the same four mayors as Nuru's, and, also like Nuru, it all started with Willie Brown.

In 2004, then-mayor Gavin Newsom announced the Communities of Opportunity program, intended to help families living in San Francisco's public housing. Newsom ponied up \$370,000 in city funds to cover the cost of Jones, a top mayoral deputy and friend (Newsom officiated at his wedding) to oversee the program. But after two years and nearly \$4 million, the eight programs operated by a dozen non-profits had little to show for it. Instead, the money was spent frivolously, going back into the pockets of Jones and his allies, until it shuttered.

In 2013, an investigation into bid rigging at the San Francisco Housing Authority involving former Executive Director Henry Alvarez focused on possible co-conspirators (including former Mayor Brown). According to a report by then-City Attorney Lou-

ise Renne's office, Alvarez manipulated the competitive process to steer contracts to specific favored individuals. Jones — who served as a Housing Authority commissioner under Alvarez — was one of them, using inside information from Alvarez to lower his original bid and get the job.

In 2013, a witness came forward claiming collusion between interim Mayor Ed Lee's campaign and an independent committee that included cash payments and the promise of future jobs for 34 "mostly unemployed men recruited in the Bayview" to promote Lee's campaign. The witness said he received \$150 in cash and a check, which he later provided a copy of. The check came from RDJ Enterprises — a company owned by Jones.

The witness was originally to appear at an earlier press conference for Lee's rival Leland Yee (who in 2015 pleaded guilty to charges related to the infamous "Shrimp Boy" case) but backed out, apparently with good reason. According to Yee, a group of men arrived at his office in vans looking for the witness, "behaving aggressively" and saying they "intended to prevent the witness from speaking to preserve the honor of Jones." In a phone interview, Jones admitted to a reporter with The Epoch Times that he knew about the men arriving at Yee's office during the time the witness was scheduled to appear but claimed "he did not think their presence would be intimidating" and "they just came to see what was going on."

# TANGLED TIES TO NURU AND RECOLOGY

In March 2017, Jones appeared with Nuru at a hearing regarding the proposed Recology rate increase. His role? Ratepayer advocate. But on the website ratepayeradvocatesf.org, Jones and his colleagues at RDJ Enterprises did little to advocate for customers, sugarcoating the increase of \$5.70 a month for an "average single-family home" by leaving out increases over the next three years and the fact that, without rebates, proposed charges would increase by an average of 23 percent the first year. In the end, Recology got most of what they wanted from the Refuse Rate Board, which at the time included Harlan Kelly, City Controller Ben Rosenfield, and City Administrator (and Harlan's wife), Naomi Kelly.

Even more troubling is the tangled City Family web woven by Nuru as DPW's director, which gave Jones the ratepayer advocate contract while, according to the feds, Nuru was being bribed by Recology Group Government & Community Relations Manager Paul Giusti to push the rate increase through with the Refuse Rate Board. Meanwhile, Jones was also paid by the SFPUC, which votes on refuse rates, to run CBP funds to various nonprofits, including those connected to Jones and his associates at RDJ Enterprises, which included his wife.

As city attorney in 2021, Herrera let Recology off the hook with a settlement for ratepayers that Supervisor Aaron Peskin recently suggested may have left another \$100 million on the table. (Jones is still listed on the Recology website as their ratepayer advocate.)

### MILLIONS STILL FLOWING TO JONES

Despite his connection to Kelly, Ellis, and Nuru through the CBP and Recology ratepayer hike scandals, Jones is still getting millions of dollars in contracts. His biggest is the SFPUC where, despite my exposé and the NBC Bay Area follow-up, he has a CBP consulting contract that runs from August 2011 to September 2026. The contract was originally for \$1.3 million, but Jones has charged the SFPUC \$3.7 million to date. Jones also has five other SFPUC contracts or subcontracts totaling \$410,000, for which he has billed \$672,240. Additionally, he has \$101,815 in pending purchase orders related to his construction services contract for the SFPUC's Headworks Facility, led by one of those now infamous joint venture boards.

The San Francisco Port Commission has also been very good to Jones. His first work for the agency was a \$77,000 contract for public outreach in 2017. He inked a second \$225,368 contract that same year for "community relations" related to "Seawall Design." In 2019, RDJ Enterprises secured a \$75,000 as-needed grant for consulting services and another \$317,894 contract for "environmental consulting" related to a youth employment program. And, it seems, Port Director Elaine Forbes is all in on Jones: All but one of the contracts is still open, in some cases for many years to come.

# 'MEET THE NEW BOSS, SAME AS THE OLD BOSS'

Jones also has contracts with SFO for "concessions analysis" and a "community outreach" deal, as well as a contract with the city administrator for \$95,000 dated July 2020 (the same month my CBP expose came out) through June 2021.

When Jones entered his contract with the city administrator, Naomi Kelly was his boss. After Kelly's resignation following her husband Harlan's arrest, his new boss (appointed by the mayor) became Carmen Chu, who re-upped Jones's contract after it expired. According to SF OpenData, Jones and SECEP have received \$1.5 million from the city administrator's office, and Chu has an active \$137,000 contract with Jones for FY 2021-22. In the words of The Who, "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." That's from their classic 1971 song "Won't Get Fooled Again"; however, in 2022, the city administrator is either getting fooled or she is oblivious to what went on before her.

So what does Jones do with all that money? One source says he "drives a Bentley around the East Bay after he was told by Harlan Kelly not to bring it to San Francisco." He also moves money around his various organizations, from which he donates to various political campaigns that presumably benefit him in some way. In a recent filing, his political action committee Californians for a Diverse and Effective Government (CALDEG), run from the same office as SECEP, disclosed a \$11,000 contribution to "Stop the Recall of Faauuga Moliga" while RDJ Enterprises donated another \$21,000. That \$32,000 is noted as "major funding" in advertising literature for Moliga, one of three board of education members facing a recall on Feb. 15. The same filing lists attorney James R. Sutton as CALDEG's treasurer. A longtime political powerhouse, Sutton handled campaign finances for two independent expenditure committees that raised millions in soft money for Willie Brown's 1999 mayoral reelection campaign.

To date, Jones and his firms have received at least 14 contracts and have been paid \$4,525,994 by various agencies, with total contracts valued at more than \$6 million. Interestingly, Jones never billed a dime against his contract with Nuru to serve as Recology's ratepayer advocate. "Dwayne doesn't do anything for free," one insider said. "Did Recology pay him off to help Nuru push through their illegal rate increases?"

Then there's the millions Jones and his organizations have received from the CBP because of his cozy relationships with Kelly and Ellis. At one point, Jones even had an office at SFPUC headquarters so he could be close to Ellis. According to a colleague, Jones was Ellis's favorite middleman: "Dwayne told the contractors what nonprofit donations would help earn the best scores from Juliet, then Juliet would score them accordingly." Of course, Jones and his organizations were frequent recipients of those donations. Evidently, when it comes to friends with community benefits, Dwayne Jones is the bestie.

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





**Community Outreach Public Notice** 

# February 2022 The Redistricting Task Force has begun!

Every ten years, the boundaries of San Francisco's Supervisorial Districts are redrawn to ensure that each district maintains equal numbers of residents. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in the redistricting process.

# The Task Force needs your input!

Tell the **Task Force** where to draw the San Francisco Supervisorial District lines!

As they convene, they will look to **YOU** and collect your opinions, ideas, and concerns around your District lines and the impacts to our communities.

- Please visit the website for the meeting schedule: https://sf.gov/public-body/2020-census-redistricting-task-force
- Create your own map using the Mapping Tool! Please visit the Redistricting website and look under the Mapping Section.
- Don't have internet access? Visit your local Public Library!
  You can find your local library and hours by visiting the
- redistricting website and looking under "Information".
- Patrons can make computer reservations at https://pcbooking. sfpl.org/easybooking/ and entering their library card number and PIN. Bookings are available 120 minutes (2 one-hour sessions)
- The SFPL Web Services Team has added a link to the Redistricting Mapping Tool on their homepage, which will appear on all Library computers for access.

Please check with the Office of the Clerk of the Board for information regarding window flyers.

### HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETINGS:

- **Attend meetings** Please see the website for specific directions. https://sf.gov/public-body/2020-census-redistricting-task-force
- **Submit comments** by emailing rdtf@sfgov.org or calling (415) 554-4445
- Join the email list to receive updates issued by the Redistricting Task Force. To sign up, go to sfelections.org/rdtf
- Follow the Redistricting Task Force on Facebook and Twitter: @ RedistrictSF

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# **NEWS BRIEFS** : Happenings

# Portsmouth Square revamp OK'd

The garlic kings stage a comeback

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

### **CHINATOWN PARK TO GET REDO**

The Recreation and Park Commission approved plans for a major transformation of Chinatown's Portsmouth Square park. The \$66 million effort will totally overhaul the park's appearance and introduce new spaces for shared use.

The Portsmouth Square Improvement Project will include the removal of a pedestrian bridge over Kearny Street, creation of a custom play structure, adult exercise space, outdoor event area, and a two-story, 8,000-square-foot clubhouse with community programs. There will also be changes designed to improve accessibility, and new seating, lighting, landscaping, fencing, and gathering areas will be added.

The Recreation and Park Department said the design is the culmination of more than 100 meetings and six workshops. "There was a lot of enthusiasm

from the community for taking down the bridge to create more space for recreation," said Rec and Park General Manager Phil Ginsburg. "We are thrilled to be able to move forward with this project and give Chinatown residents the

town residents the modern oasis they deserve"

The location has historic significance. It is the site of the state's first public school, was a refugee camp after the 1906 earthquake, and has been a neighborhood park for the Chinatown community for more than a century. The revamp will break ground in 2023 and be completed in 2025.

### GARLIC LOVERS REJOICE

San Francisco's iconic restaurant The Stinking Rose, home of the "Forty Clove Garlic Chicken," reopened on Jan. 24 in a new location, 430 Columbus Avenue. The location at 325 Columbus Avenue has been closed since the pandemic struck in March 2020. Though there was a fear that it would be gone for good, the restaurant is reopening in the former Calzone's Restaurant location. An additional outlet of The Stinking Rose in Beverly Hills remains temporarily closed.

The news about the San Francisco rebirth was posted on the restaurant's website: "We are excited to announce we will be reopening in a new location — 430 Columbus Ave. We look forward to serving you."

Bring your after-dinner breath mints.

# PRESIDIO TO GET TWO NEW RESTAURANTS

In late January, the Presidio Trust announced it had signed leases with two new restaurants from the Presmex Group, founded by investor and entrepreneur Eduardo Rallo. One of the new restaurants will be in the Presidio Officers' Club; the other will be in the Presidio Transit Center at the new Presidio Tunnel Tops location.

"The number one wish we've heard from our visitors is that they would like to see more restaurants in the park, and we know people will be thrilled to have two new options," said Daryl Ansel, the Presidio Trust's director of hospitality. "This marks a turning point for the agency's food strategy. The Trust is no longer an owner of restaurants but is actively pursuing leases with world-class operators like Eduardo Rallo." An opening date was not disclosed for either of the new restaurants.

The Presidio Trust says it is seeking additional food service companies to lease space in the park.

### **BRIEFLY NOTED**

The \$66 million

effort will totally

overhaul the park's

appearance.

Groups called The Open the Great Highway Alliance and Concerned Residents of the Sunset have called for Mayor London Breed to fire Phil Ginsburg, general manager of the city's Recreation and Park Department, for his actions in **closing the Upper Great Highway** to vehicle traffic. The alliance says its petition has

nearly 16,000 signatures demanding the Great Highway be reopened ... Though much of the wildfire activity in California has been on federal land, a state assemblyman from Kern County is pushing a bill to spur pri-

vate landowners to "proceed with critical vegetation management on private land" according to Assemblyman Vince Fong's office. "One effective measure is to remove excess fuel, including overgrown brush and shrubs, deadwood, and debris," said Fong . . . Mayor Breed plans to introduce legislation to improve the usefulness of cameras in crime fighting, for example by changing the inability of police to use real-time video footage even while crime is taking place — such as the recent organized retail raids in Union Square. If the Board of Supervisors won't approve the bill, she plans to bring a ballot measure before voters.

# FACTS AND FIGURES

Mister Rogers says: San Francisco is the eighth most "neighborly city" in the country, according to StorageCafe; cities were graded on survey responses about such things as satisfaction with neighbors, sense of community, involvement in community activities, and willingness to recommend their neighborhood to others . . . 3.45: number of dog parks per 100,000 people in San Francisco, a statistic that lands our city in fourth place on OneVet's list of the Best and Worst U.S. Cities for Healthy Dogs . . . Zero: amount of surprise everyone feels upon learning that San Francisco does not appear anywhere in the top 10 list of "Best U.S. Cities for Businesses in 2022," according to TollFreeForwarding's survey ... 20 m.p.h.: the new, lower speed limit the city began implementing in January in seven "business activity districts," with additional streets to be added in

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**ART WORLD** : Coming soon

# 'Nature x Humanity: Oxman Architects' at SFMOMA

# Exhibition focuses on sustainable living

BY SHARON ANDERSON

FMOMA'S NEW EXHIBITION FEAtures sustainable architectural ideas for the 21st century. Oxman Architects addresses what it means to build, house, inform, and inspire eco-friendly models of living via 40 thought-provoking artworks and installations. The exhibition rethinks lifestyle and design models with the primary objective of moving toward a focus on environmental health and away from a focus on human material wealth. With never-before-seen largescale projects, the presentation combines knowledge, principles, and tools from four disciplines — art, architecture and design, engineering, and science - to celebrate Oxman's pioneering approach to the future.

### SUSTAINABILITY AND STYLE

Oxman Architects create the essential objects that house and design humanity through a lens of environmental responsibility. Wearables, construction, and fabrication are reinvented using materials that can decay naturally when no longer needed. On display will be the rarely seen *Aguahoja* pavilions made from discarded shells of ocean crustaceans, fallen leaves, and apple skins as building material — one in pristine, newborn condition, and another undergoing programmed decomposition. The richly colored fluid shapes of the pavilions gradually decay, thereby enriching the soil with nutrients for new growth.

The Wanderers series is a collection of wearables for outer space. The designs, including the Otaared wearable for Mercury and the Quamar wearable for the

moon, bring a physical and visual fascination that could be straight out of a science-fiction film. Each is designed to meet the wearer's need by responding to extreme conditions on specific planets, such as 200-degree temperature fluctuations, high meteor activity, or changes from extreme brightness to darkness that affect visibility.

Totem presents another exploration related to light and darkness. Melanin, a naturally occurring pigment, can be added to a transparent building material to provide shade when the sun is at its brightest, and then fade back to transparent when the sun sets. The Biodiversity Pavilion for Table Mountain National Park in Cape Town, South Africa is a pavilion design made of such responsive material, which reduces the need for additional cladding.

The topic of death and burial, and the methods societies use to remember departed loved ones are depicted in the *Vespers* masks. Designs consider new ways to memorialize the departed, from mapping their external features to capturing their final breath and retaining it as a dynamic visualization. Using 21st-century technology, these jewel-like organic shapes as symbolic artifacts challenge us to embrace alternate methods for honoring the deceased in ways that have minimal impact on the Earth.

### LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The Future of Mannahatta imagines Manhattan in 2100 and 2200, respectively, as the rising tides and heat hazards from climate change influence the precarious state of urban landscapes, specifically where developed land meets surrounding



Aguahoja Pavilion by Neri Oxman and The Mediated Matter Group, 2018. Photo: courtesy san francisco museum of modern art / the mediated matter group

water. In this plan, existing structures are replaced with urban design, which reestablishes a healthy ecosystem. The new structures restore the balance between nature and humanity in an attempt to adapt to and correct aspects of global warming.

"While human material wealth stakes claim to land and resources, environmental health restores and advances natural balance to mutually benefit all. Oxman's radical perspective lies in its ability to envision an alternative architectural legacy upending a human-centered built environment to reprioritize nature," said Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher, SFMOMA's Helen Hilton Raiser curator of architecture and design.

### **ABOUT OXMAN**

Founder and CEO of Oxman, Neri Oxman, was born in 1976 in Haifa, Israel and is based in New York City. She was a tenured professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she founded and directed The Mediated Matter Group, a lab that conducted research at the intersection of computational design, digital fabrication, materials science and synthetic biology. While at MIT she pioneered the field of material ecology,

which studies relationships and interactions between designed objects, their structures and environs. The approaches are intended for the future of architecture, product design, and biotechnology as well as the design of new tools for digital fabrication and construction.

### ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

SFMOMA will co-present, along with the Long Now Foundation, an evening of conversation with the architect and artist Neri Oxman on Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. in the Herbst Theater. Working at the intersection of technology and biology, Oxman calls for a fundamental shift in design. She will discuss her projects with Oxman, a design practice uniting science and engineering, art, design, and history where she continues to construct environments in better alignment with principles of ecology.

Nature x Humanity: Oxman Architects: Monday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursday 1-9 p.m. & Fri.-Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Feb. 19-May 15, \$25, SFMOMA, 151 Third St., 415-357-4000, sfmoma.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 CHRIS HSIANG

### HARDCOVER FICTION

- **1. To Paradise: A Novel**, by Hanya Yanagihara
- 2. The Lincoln Highway: A Novel, by Amor Towles
- 3. Call Us What We Carry: Poems, by Amanda Gorman

### HARDCOVER NONFICTION

- 1. Atlas of the Heart:
  Mapping Meaningful
  Connection and the
  Language of Human
  Experience, by Brené Brown
- 2. Crying in H-Mart:
  A Memoir, by
  Michelle Zauner
- 3. Unthinkable: Trauma, Truth, and the Trials of American Democracy, by Jamie Raskin

# PAPERBACK FICTION

- The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo, by Taylor Jenkins
- 2. Circe, by Madeline Miller

**3. Ugly Love: A Novel**, by Coleen Hoover

### PAPERBACK NONFICTION

- 1. House of Gucci: A
  Sensational Story of
  Murder, Madness,
  Glamour, and Greed, by
  Sara Gay Forden
- 2. You're Not Listening: What You're Missing and Why It Matters, by Kate Murphy
- **3.** A Very Punchable Face: A Memoir, by Colin Jost

# NEW AND NOTABLE RELEASES

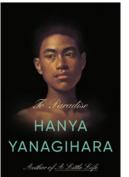
# The Torqued Man, by Peter Mann

What was the truth about German spy handler Adrian de Groot and his Irish agent, friend, and sometimes lover Frank Pike during World War II? With two very different manuscripts dug out of the rubble of 1945 Berlin, it's hard to tell. One shows de

Groot wresting IRA fighter Pike from prison in Spain to facilitate a German invasion of Ireland, while another shows Pike assuming the mantle of Celtic hero Finn McCool and planning the assassination of bigwig Nazi doctors. An intriguing debut from Whiting Fellowship winner Mann.

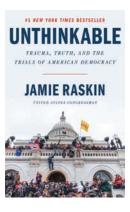
### George V: Never a Dull Moment, by Jane Ridley

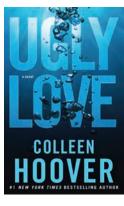
Biographer of Queen Victoria and Edward VII, the Duff Cooper Award-winning Ridley turns to King George V, Edward's son, who ruled the British Empire from 1910 to 1936. Though he was considered dull as a young man, especially in comparison with the rascally Edward, George's era encompassed constitutional crisis, World War I, the fall of 13 European monarchies, the first Labor Party government, the rise of Bolshevism, and George's refusal to grant asylum to his cousin Tsar Nicholas II. Ridley argues that his was













a pivotal reign that shaped the modern monarchy.

# Violeta, by Isabel Allende

Violeta is born into a family of five boys when the 1918 influenza hits her South American homeland. Formatted as a letter to someone for whom Violeta cared deeply, the narrative carries her through 100 years to a new pandemic, encompassing the Great Depression, the fight for women's rights, the rise of dictators, and more.

Chris Hsiang can help you find your next book at Books Inc., 2251 Chestnut Street, 415-931-3633, booksinc.net.

### Snyder

continued from cover

on comedian Steve Coogan as Fogg, the deft master of martial arts and slapstick Jackie Chan as Passepartout, and an impressive supporting cast. Still, the BBC and PBS have delivered a very entertaining and somewhat tweaked take on Verne's story with the always engaging David Tennant (*Broadchurch*, *Doctor Who*), a rather perfect choice to play the proper, aristocratic Fogg whose humdrum wastrel life is secretly haunted by a past failure.

Marshalling his courage when challenged by his peers at a stuffy London gentleman's club, Fogg makes a wager that he can do what would have been unthinkable in pre-Industrial Age times: go around the world in 80 days. And thus begins a lushly produced, well cast, and nicely paced eight-episode journey to exotic and danger-fraught locales, enhanced by a scintillating theme and score from Hans Zimmer and Christian Lundberg. It wouldn't be as much fun if Fogg didn't encounter all manner of obstacles — natural and human, accidental and premeditated. Fear not. He does. Fogg's trek to beat the clock requires every ounce of his determination and stamina, as well as the support of his newly hired valet, Passepartout, a black French national with a checkered history and a certain set of skills, and Abigail Fix, a plucky female journalist along to chronicle the perilous pursuit.

This particular Passepartout's race and back story and Fix's gender and relationship to one of Fogg's lifelong friends are deviations from the source material that offer subtext with a contemporary slant. As it happens, the Fix character in Verne's



Eddie Izzard and Cush Jumbo in Stay Close. PHOTO: COURTESY NETFLIX

book was a male detective pursuing Fogg in a case of mistaken identity. Depending on how the alterations were handled, they could have felt gratuitous or like pandering, except that Ibrahim Koma as Passepartout and Leonie Benesch (*Babylon Berlin*) as Fix bring verve and affability to the roles and serve as wonderful foils to Tennant's initially repressed and cautious Fogg. Ultimately, it's a first-class trip with travelers you might want to accompany on another go-round — which may be in the works, despite Verne never having written a sequel to Fogg's folly.

*Around the World in 80 Days* is airing as part of the PBS series *Masterpiece*.

### 'STAY CLOSE'

A couple years back, the prolific American mystery writer Harlan Coban struck a deal with Netflix to adapt a num-

ber of his novels into the TV miniseries format. Having already adored the ace French movie based on his chilling novel Tell No One, I eagerly tuned into last year's Coban dramatization, The Stranger, and was rewarded with an addictive and constantly surprising plunge into secrets, lies, and murder among a group of seemingly ordinary people. Starring Richard Armitage as a husband whose life is turned sideways by shocking revelations after his wife's mysterious disappearance, The Stranger was produced and primarily written by Danny Brocklehurst and shifted the setting of Coban's novel from America to England. Stay Close, the latest Coban/Netflix series, is also helmed by Brocklehurst, set in a Northwestern England town near the sea rather than Atlantic City, features a performance by Armitage, and involves cover-ups, disappearances, and death. But the eight-part *Stay Close* is much more of a police procedural with considerably more killing and somewhat less punch and originality than *The Stranger*.

Megan is the central figure in Stay Close — a woman who appears to have it all. She lives happily in a comfortable home with the devoted father of their three teenage kids. She also has a past that she's tried to bury. Megan's previous life is at risk of being revealed to her loved ones when the feckless son of a well-todo man drops out of sight after a night at a strip club, and the subsequent police investigation starts to establish a connection to a long stretch of unsolved cases involving missing persons. With James Nesbitt (Jekyll, The Missing) as the lead detective, Cush Jumbo as Megan, Eddie Izzard as a sleazy lawyer, and Armitage as a photojournalist who's been on the skids since losing his girlfriend many years ago, Stay Close has a reliable cast that encourages an investment in the well-being of the characters they play as the shocks and cliffhangers pile up. There are some tonal misfires with an overly theatrical pair of psychopaths that seem to have escaped from a 1970s James Bond movie, and certain plot contrivances veer into the overheated and implausible. Otherwise, Stay Close offers enough of that Coban bait-switch-and-startle to recommend.

*Stay Close* is available for streaming via Netflix.

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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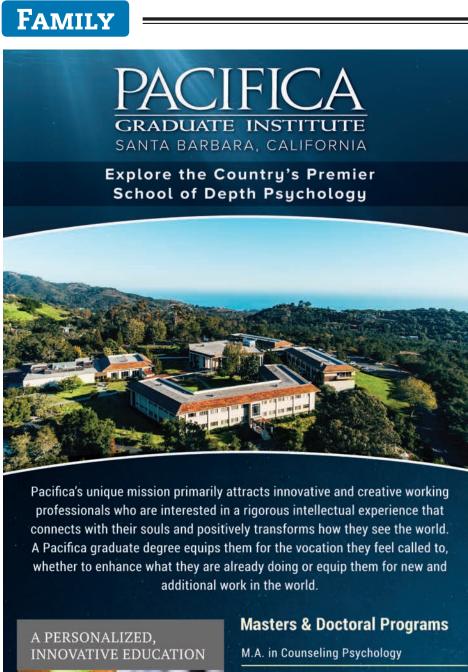
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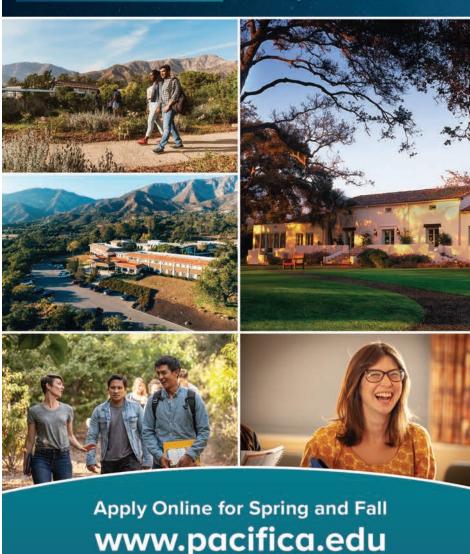
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# MomSense Parenting



The pandemic has taken a toll on our children. PHOTO: PROSTOCK-STUDIO

# The side effects of the pandemic on our children

Academic, social, and mental challenges continue

BY LIZ FARRELL

E ARE A MONTH INTO THE NEW year and already 2022 feels like Groundhog Day. While I am trying to stay positive and optimistic, it is the kids whose patience and resiliency seem to be waning most. The vaccines brought us hope and the promise of a return to normal life, and that did happen to an extent, but then the variants arrived and left even the vaccinated and boosted vulnerable. This rollercoaster ride of a pandemic has taken a toll on all of us in different ways. For children, it has taken an academic and mental toll. They are exhausted from the uncertainty, the isolation, and the disruptions. Long term, the "side effects" of Covid may be worse than the virus for many children.

Here are some tips to identify those effects and how to help your child.

# **BEHAVIOR CHANGES**

In talking with many teachers and school counselors, I don't think they were quite prepared for the onslaught of behavioral issues they would see returning to in-person learning. There has been an increase in disruptive behavior, playground violence, and stronger emotional responses like crying or meltdowns over small issues.

We recently realized that some of our frustrations with our 9-year-old's behavior were due to sports being postponed or canceled for another season, having to wear masks again at recess, and a general fear that at any moment he would be back to Zoom learning. It affected his sleep, his home behavior, and his overall mood. As a result, we have started a nightly checkin where he can rate how he is feeling about different life aspects— school, family, sports, Covid, and so on. We all participate in this check-in, and it has helped us all identify what is causing us the most stress or anxiety and to talk more openly as a family about how we are feeling. Being self-aware of how your mood or mental health is affecting your behavior and others around you can be a powerful tool to instill in our children.

### **INCREASED SCREEN TIME**

It would be tough to find a parent who wouldn't say their child's screen time increased during Covid. This was partly a result of most schools moving to online instruction. There also was a long period of time without school, sports, and other activities, so children turned to their screens and social media. Research shows large amounts of time swiping and scrolling can lead to feelings of self-doubt, worthlessness, anxiety, and depression.

So what can we do? Screens and social media aren't going away, so parents must remember to check in - how much time are they spending on what apps or websites, and is it affecting their mood, sleep, or other activities they enjoy? It's also always good to engage with them as much as you can, so make that TikTok with them, watch a movie together, or ask for a tutorial on the latest Snapchat filters.

# LEARNING GAPS

Many students are still struggling to catch up from the massive learning loss that occurred during the first year of the pandemic; however, it is still unclear how or even if they will catch up. We all want life to return to "normal," but not to acknowledge the losses kids have experienced academically and personally would be shortsighted for parents and

We are at a time where we can fix problems that have been broken in our schools for years, such as inadequate resources for counseling. Our kids are just trying to be normal kids, so it is important to acknowledge the toll that fear, anxiousness, constant Covid testing, and the ever-changing Covid rules have taken on them. As parents, we need to rethink the expectations we have of our kids, because they are managing a lot. I think schools would benefit from doing the same. We need to make sure our teachers are supported and that the school district is prioritizing the issues that matter most to students and parents right now. Unfortunately, in San Francisco this has not been the case, but we have a chance in February to make our voices heard at the ballot box with the recall of three school board members.

Since the holidays, the number of Covid cases in kids has skyrocketed. For those who were vaccinated, the virus was mild, others tested positive with no symptoms. However, the emotional strain of Covid reemerged for many of our children. If you saw it in your children, you are not alone. We saw it manifest in different ways with all three of our children. We can't ignore it; we need to acknowledge it and help them. My 9-year-old said it best when he recently declared at dinner, "I am so over Covid!" Aren't we all?

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# The Observer : When cash isn't just cash



December and the new year have been busy times for real estate buyers and sellers. PHOTO: MARY BETTINI BLANK/PIXABAY

# One big real estate mystery solved

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

THE FACT THAT DEMAND FOR SAN Francisco real estate remains high is not a mystery. The city is surrounded by water on three sides, so geography alone limits the number of homes that can be built here. What's more, San Francisco is a beautiful, international city with an economy that is supercharged by a robust tech sector — you can easily see why demand exceeds supply.

"December was the busiest December I've ever seen," said David Cohen, founder of City Real Estate. "Inventory was very low, the lowest I think in 15 years, but the demand was so high that properties sold very quickly. Buyers were anticipating that it was going to get even more competitive in January and February. And so far that has proven to be the case. In my 17 years, I've never seen demand as strong as it is right now."

### **GOTTA HAVE IT**

In 2021, the demand for homes was insatiable, according to Anna Marie Erwert, writing for sfgate.com. The typical U.S. home sold for nearly \$400,000, up 24.4

percent year-overyear. Meanwhile, in the city, that price was \$1.5 million.

Inventory was down in San Francisco last year, though historically, inventory has always been tight in the seven-by-seven

square mile city. In San Francisco, homes sold on average in 16 days—and 72.9 percent of those homes sold above their list price.

"You almost have to give away your first born," Cohen said, with a smile and a wink. "It's become understood in this market your offer has to be non-contingent, 15, 20, or even 30 percent over asking. Everything is related to supply and demand. Supply is so limited, and demand is increasing. Whatever you think a place is worth, as a buyer you add another 10 to 15 percent to that."

Cohen expects the first half of 2022 will remain strong, but believes the second half of the year may be more of a wild card depending on interest rates. They are expected to rise quite a bit in the coming year, and that will further impair affordability.

This leads to one big mystery, finally solved. Why would interest rates have an impact on a real estate market where so many winning bids are all-cash offers?

Turns out, all-cash sales are somewhat in name only. Buyers pay with cash because sellers would of course prefer that kind of offer — it eliminates the possibility of loan issues blocking the sale. It's a cleaner

offer. But once the sale is complete, buyers then have a window of opportunity to get a home loan to cover their expenditures. Many choose to do so.

A lot of tech people can get an equity line of credit against their stock holdings. Once they buy a home using this cash, they can then get a home loan, and if they do it within 60 days, it counts as a purchase loan, and not as a refi. As a result, they wield the purchasing power of cash, and subsequently enjoy the lower interest rates that home loans offer.

But because ultimately a home loan is involved, rising interest rates will have an impact on affordability and buyer purchase

"A lot of people made a lot of money over the last two years," Cohen said. "There is so much money in San Francisco that people are wanting to upgrade their living situation. And when people are spending more time at home, there is more incentive and reason to upgrade."

### **CITY LURES**

The first half of 2022

will remain strong, but

the second half may be

more of a wild card.

Cohen thinks the exodus from San Francisco was a bit blown out of proportion.

> He also believes some of the people who left are coming back, partly because even when people are allowed to work out of the office three days a week, they still need to come in the other two days,

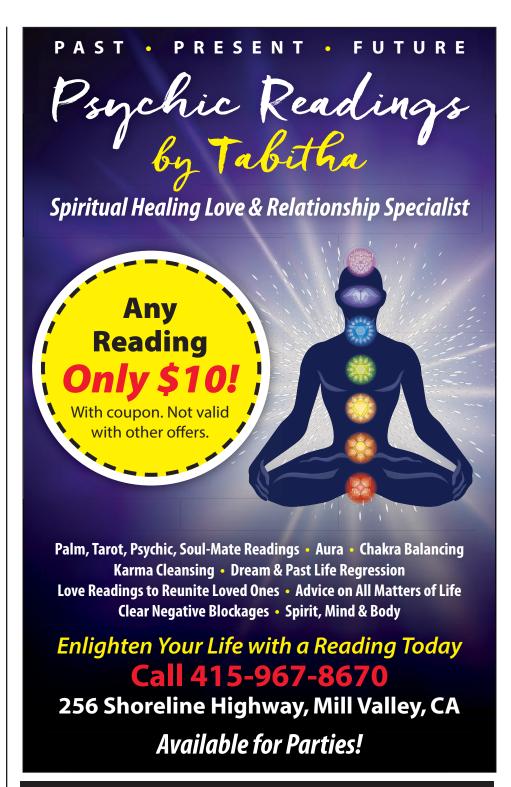
so they can't live too far away.

Cohen says you hear a lot about crime and the homelessness crisis, and they are real factors, and yes, you might lose a couple of buyers. But the reality is San Francisco is still one of the most beautiful places in the world. He says that basic truth can outweigh a lot of concerns.

In December, based on one month of activity, the median price of a single-family home was \$1,677,000, up 8.2 percent year-over-year, but down from November's \$1,894,444 median price. In December the median price for a condo was \$1,300,000, up 18.5 percent over last year, and very close to the all-time high median price for condos recorded in October 2019 — \$1,320,000.

In December, there were just 59 single family home new listings in San Francisco, down 60.1 percent from 2020 — the lowest number recorded in the last 10 years. At the same time, there were only 111 condo new listings, down 47.6 percent year-overyear, but not the lowest number recorded in the last 10 years — that would have been 82 new listings in December 2011.

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