



Summer food

Michael Snyder pays homage to the quintessential California treat, the lovely avocado. p. 6

A simple tomato sandwich seems like the humblest meal in the world. But a classic Ernest Beyl column reminds us it can be the best meal of all, if it's done right. p. 7



July events

Summer in the city — your chance to take in the Stern Grove Festival, RawDance, or Bernadette Peters with the S.F. Symphony, plus learn from Alice Waters, top wine and cheesemakers, and more. p. 9

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Left to right: Diego Rivera's *Tehuans in the Market*, 1935. PHOTO: MCNAY ART MUSEUM; Diego Rivera's *Retrato de Lupe Marín (Portrait of Lupe Marín)*, 1938. PHOTO: NPL - DEA PICTURE LIBRARY / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES; IMAGES COURTESY SFMOMA

'Diego Rivera's America' comes to SFMOMA

DIEGO RIVERA IS WELL REPRESENTED in San Francisco. His short stint here (1930–31) left the city with three massive murals, including those painted by his proteges inside Coit Tower. One of his murals, "Pan American Unity," currently resides at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art along with its permanent collection of 70 Rivera works, the largest in the world.

Now, the museum will exhibit the most comprehensive examination of Rivera's work in over 20 years beginning July 16. Focusing on his most prolific period from the 1920s to mid-1940s, the exhibition will feature over 150 paintings, frescoes, and drawings, including three galleries that will present large-scale projections of the artist's murals in the U.S. and Mexico.

The museum will celebrate the exhibition opening with a free community day on Sunday, July 17 (admission to the exhibition requires separate ticketing).

"**Diego Rivera's America**": Monday 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Tuesday 10 a.m.–5 p.m. (beginning July 5), Thursday 1–8 p.m., & Fri.–Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m., July 16–Jan. 2; SFMOMA, 151 Third St., 415-357-4000, sfmoma.org

— L. Majer

REYNOLDS RAP :: Opinion

Problems at the port

Attempts to end City Hall corruption are crumbling faster than San Francisco's seawall

BY SUSAN DYER REYNOLDS

This is the introduction to a detailed investigative piece that can be found online at marinatimes.com.

"It is clear from the context that the primary purpose of such a behested payment would have been to secure a commissioner's support for a valuable City contract that should have been awarded through established, merit-based contracting procedures. This incident is a stark example of how behested payments can be used in a pay-to-play scheme if basic ethics rules are not in place."

— San Francisco Ethics Commission, in its recommendation for the prohibition of behested payments, Dec. 9, 2020

THE PHRASE "TONE AT THE TOP" WAS FIRST POPULARIZED in the U.S. Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, which highlighted poor leadership as the primary cause of the biggest corporate failures, including Enron and WorldCom.

REYNOLDS RAP, continued on 4

POLITICS AS USUAL :: Opinion

Centering oneself in spirit and politics

A little political coaching for the mayor

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

It's 6 a.m. in the mayor's office. The lights come on; the mayor enters, sits on her exercise bike, and turns on its screen.

O.K., PEOPLE! LET'S HAVE A GREAT WORKOUT TODAY! We're going to start with a warmup pace. Get psyched!

Wait, you're not my Peloton coach. What is this?

This is Peloton, a completely originally named exercise system that is totally not legally liable for copyright infringement. Now, do you want to get hard abs and a great cardio workout?

Uh, yes. Of course. What do I do?

Did you stretch beforehand? No? Do it now. Keep stretching. Stretch even more. The best success comes from getting outside of your safety zone. We're going to stretch . . . and relax. Stretch . . . and relax. Stretch . . . and pick a district attorney who is both competent and a leader. Aaaaand relax.

This feels goo — wait, what?

POLITICS AS USUAL, continued on 2

MICHAEL SNYDER ON ... POP CULTURE



Theo James in *Mr. Malcolm's List*. PHOTO: ROSS FERGUSON / BLEECKER STREET

Of lists, marvels, and representation

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION have become hallmarks of the entertainment industry. Contrary to what some reactionary

factions might say, it's overdue in some cases, and simply refreshing in others. You can see it in action by watching *Mr. Malcolm's List*, the new U.K. romantic comedy, or *Ms. Marvel*, the latest television series

from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. And they are just two current examples of the changing nature of movies and television programs, making what appears on screen more closely resemble the real world — to a point and sometimes to surprising lengths.

Mr. Malcolm's List, which debuted in theaters on June 1, is a whimsical 1800s period piece about a wealthy nobleman with a considerable number of women who seek to marry him. Though the film could have been adapted from a book by Regency Era author Jane Austen, its main cast is populated by various people of color, including British-Nigerian actor Sope Dirisu (*Gangs of London*) as Mr. Malcolm; Indian actress Freida Pinto (*Slumdog Millionaire*) as kindly minister's daughter Selina Dalton; and Zawe Ashton (*Velvet Buzzsaw*) of English and Ugandan heritage as the scheming rich girl Julia Thistlewaite. Even Korean-American actress Ashley Park (*Emily in Paris*) has a comedic turn in *Mr. Malcolm's List* as scatterbrained aristocrat Gertie Covington.

The characters go through their largely proper social interactions

SNYDER, continued on 8

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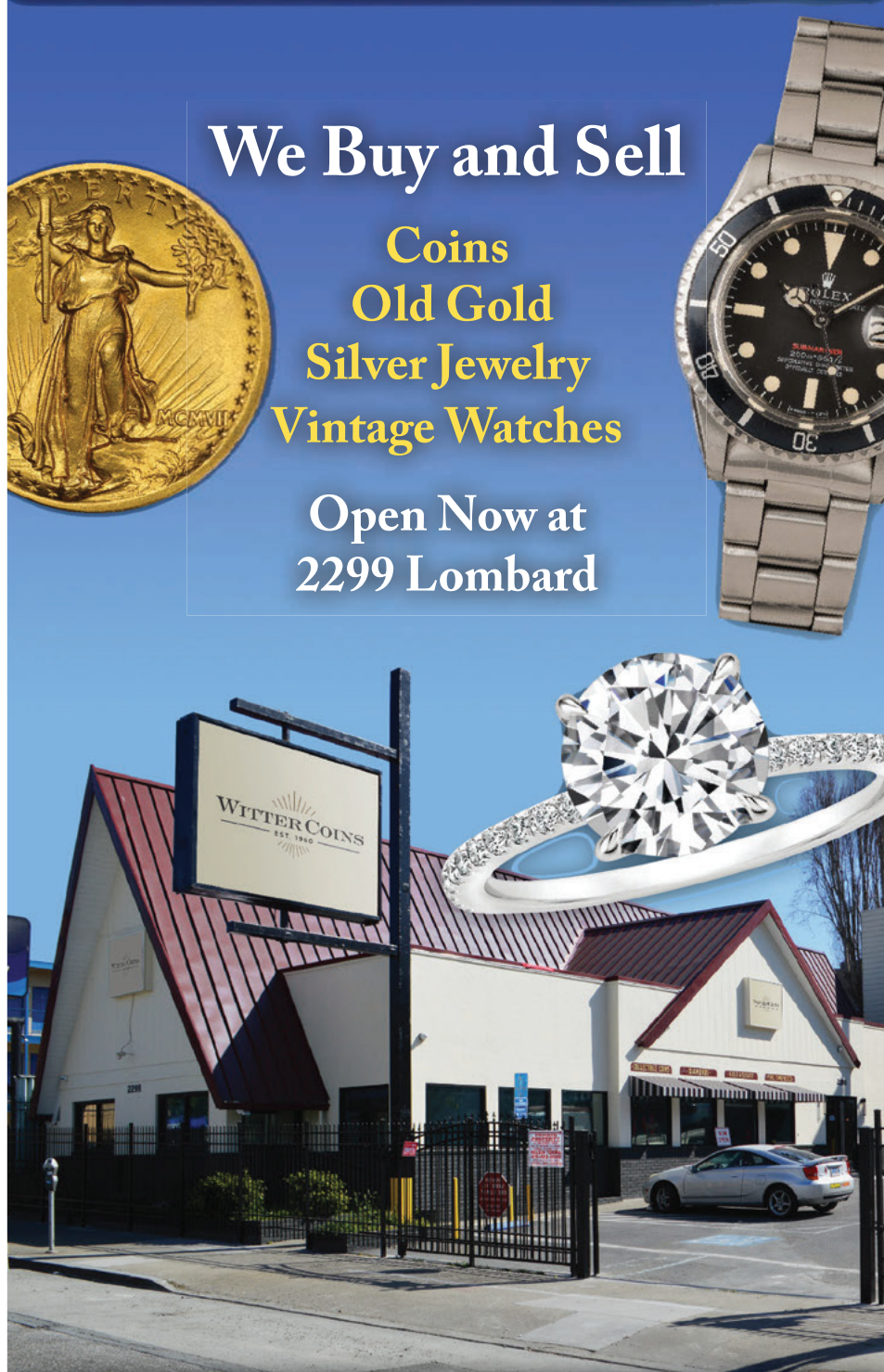
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Politics as Usual

continued from cover

Here at Petolon, we're more than just an overpriced exercise system, and I'm more than a fitness coach. I'm also a career coach.

O.K., let's start cycling. Start off at a medium pace. Now pick up speed. Pretend you're being chased by Aaron Peskin demanding that parrots be given the right to vote. He's gaining — FASTER!

Aww, he doesn't scare me. I can work with him or not. You're going to have to do better than that.

Think you're really tough, do you? O.K., tough lady; you're now being chased by angry parents who want their kids to attend Lowell High School.

As merit or lottery admittees?

Does it matter? They're mad. They have realized that if the city knows how to run one high-performing school, it should be able to do that at its other schools.

We're making strides, and I just appointed those three rational members of the school board. Give it time.

Yes, but their kids are in school now; it doesn't help them if the schools improve five years from now.

Hey, I spent most of my first years in office facing a hostile Board of Supervisors that wants no police or housing, a nationwide political uprising, a drug epidemic, and every third person in City Hall dragged off by the FBI. It hasn't exactly been the most stable environment.

Cry me a river, Mayor. You wanted the limelight, and you've got it. The progressives on the left aren't going to stop pressing for their plans, and they make up a sizable portion of this city.

I know, and I agree with them on some things, but I'm making it clear where they're wrong, like on police and education. What about the people on my right?

They're even crazier. Total whack jobs. Keep cycling! Faster!

But then — what can I do? Those forces are pressuring me from the left and the right ...

You've got a little less than a year and a half until the next election. Don't give in! Keep it up! You have to hold the line in the center. Or what passes for the center in this city.

It's just that the center — you know, it's so boring. Milquetoast.

Stop! We don't use words like that. "Milquetoast" is a word for losers. What are we? Winners!

Do we use words like "boring"?

No! Well, yes, sometimes. But we don't ever stop pushing. Look to the mayors around you. They're getting a great work-



Running this city requires constant physical and mental conditioning.

PHOTO: SPARTYZAG

out. You think Lori Lightfoot shrinks in the face of criticism from the left? Does Eric Adams care if he's unpopular? No. Now, go! I ... am cycling ... as fast ... as I can.

Pep up!

So apparently ... you do say "pep up."

Shut up! Keep pedaling! I don't take any excuses! Did Angela Merkel make excuses when Europe was falling apart? No! Did Gavin Newsom give up when the supervisors were all against him? No! Keep going! You can do it.

This is really getting annoying. I don't know what I've ever done to suggest I need to be told what to do. I'm the duly elected mayor of the city that half the country can't wait to visit, and that the other half thinks is a Satanic drug cult.

Never play to the extremes! The extreme left is pushing emotional plans that went over really well at their encounter group's drum circle. And the extreme right is pushing plans based on the assumption that Hitler just wasn't tough enough. Only the broad center has plans that include a future without civil war or annihilation of their enemies.

That makes sense. Stay in the center. That could work, even in San Francisco. Hey, how did you get so wise? Are you some sort of professor?

No, I'm a personal trainer from Van Nuys. I make nearly \$500,000 a year as a Peloton instructor.

Wow. Are you hiring?

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Park renaissance continues, court rulings, bar hours, and more

BY JOHN ZIPPERER

TUNNEL TOPS OPENS THIS MONTH

Be there for opening day on Sunday, July 17 for the long-awaited unveiling of the new Tunnel Tops parkland. The Presidio Trust has planned a day of family-friendly events and activities for visitors to the 14-acre site.

There will be live performances including Afro-Latin Dance by The CaliDance, poetry readings, the Ruth Asawa School of the Arts Choir, park rangers campfire talks, and more. A temporary mural installation by artist Faviana Rodriguez will welcome people to the Visitor Center and the nature play area. Food trucks will offer Bay Area cuisine.

The Tunnel Tops features open meadows, the hillside Presidio Steps, the Outpost outdoor play area, the Field Station for children's hands-on arts and science, the Crissy Field Center for education, picnic area, scenic overlooks, the hillside cliff walk, the gas-fired pit in the campfire circle, and the Presidio Plaza.

Learn more at presidiotunneltops.gov.

SUPREME COURT EFFECTS

The conservative-dominated U.S. Supreme Court issued blockbuster rulings in late June on two of the hottest of hot topics — abortion and gun control. The

former has less immediate effect in California, where the procedure remains legal, but Mayor Breed and City Attorney David Chiu responded to the court's expansion of gun-carry rights by "reviewing the ruling and what impact, if any, it has on San Francisco's policies," said Chiu.

Chiu said the city would work with its partners in law enforcement and the state

government to preserve, enforce, and defend lawful gun safety policies. "In the midst of a national reckoning on increasing gun violence, the Supreme Court has made it harder for state and local gov-

ernments to keep our public spaces safe," Chiu said.

LATE NIGHT DATE NIGHT?

The state Assembly Committee on Governmental Organization voted 12-3 to pass legislation that would allow seven pilot cities in the state to extend to 4 a.m. the sale of alcohol at bars, nightclubs, and restaurants. The bill, by San Francisco's Senator Scott Wiener and Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo, would not apply to liquor stores.

It's a goal Wiener has pursued for years without success, and there is no guarantee it will become law this time either. In a news release, Wiener's office stressed limits to the legislation, noting it would

not automatically extend alcohol sale hours in the pilot cities, and those cities could limit the extended hours to specific neighborhoods or streets, or even specific days. The plan would still need to be approved by local governments, and be reviewed by Alcoholic Beverage Control with full public notice. The bill would sunset after five years.

The bill now heads to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

BRIEFLY NOTED

North Beach's Ethiopian restaurant **Massawa** has closed for good, the *San Francisco Business Times* reports. Its 532 Green Street location is believed to be the site for the new Americana Eatery . . . After all of the hubbub over **Mayor London Breed** declining to march in the city's pride parade if uniformed police officers were not allowed to march, a compromise was eventually reached that would include both mayor and officers in the parade. But it was for naught in the end, as Breed contracted Covid and was quarantining on Pride weekend . . . In other mayoral news, Breed has proposed \$500,000 in her next budget to expand services for Asian crime victims who have limited English proficiency. There was a 567 percent increase in reported hate crimes from 2020 to 2021, according to the San Francisco Police Department. The money would be split between trauma recovery clinical services, treatment at community-based mental health service providers, and senior escort services for the severely disabled.

SPECIAL SUMMER COOKOUT FACTS AND FIGURES

11 percent: Amount of increase in the cost of hosting a party of 10 this year than in 2021, according to Karol Aure-Flynn, an agriculture analyst at Wells Fargo, the source for all of these data . . . **Shrinking shrimp:** one of the few protein sources that hasn't risen in price, shrimp is still below its five-year average . . . **The other value meat:** pork prices have risen 3.1 percent over the past year, compared to 12-15 percent for other meats . . . **6 percent:** increase in ice cream prices over the past year . . . **Double:** increase in avocado sales from 2018 to 2021 . . . **1 percent:** increase in prices for fresh tomato, compared to an average 7 percent boost in prices for other produce . . . **12 percent, 15.3 percent, and 6.3 percent:** the increases in prices, respectively, for regular, poultry-based, and all-beef hot dogs or frankfurters . . . **10 percent:** increase in cost of hamburger and frankfurter buns . . . **11.8 percent:** annual increase in price of fresh ground beef, but, as Aure-Flynn notes, "demand for preformed beef patties has fallen off a little this year versus previous years, so look in the frozen section for advantageous pricing" . . . **Choose your poison:** year to date, beer prices are up a whopping 25 percent, but wines are only up an average of 5.8 percent in that same time span; as for boring old water, that'll cost you 9 percent more.

Feedback: letters@marinatimes.com. News tips: john@marinatimes.com

GUEST COLUMN : Opinion

San Francisco needs more police

BY JAY DONDE

SAN FRANCISCO IS AN OVER-POLICED city, sending phalanxes of aggressive officers into communities where cops are deeply unpopular to tackle problems they are ill-equipped to resolve." It's a compelling narrative, especially in a region that is famously nonconfrontational: If only we took a more hands-off approach to law enforcement, we'd have less crime and healthier communities. The only problem? None of it is true.

In late June, the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Appropriations Committee agreed to much of Mayor Breed's proposed police funding in the next city budget, but now the budget goes to the full board for review and approval. The mayor wants to increase spending on police recruitment and retention, while at least two members of the committee three members of the board — Supervisors Dean Preston, Hillary Ronen and Shamann Walton want our police force defunded. Leading up to August 1, when the board sends its approved version of the budget back to the mayor for signature, there will be multiple opportunities for San Franciscans to make themselves heard.

Now, then, is the time to get our facts straight.

San Francisco only has around 260 active duty police officers per 100,000 residents, excluding officers on leave or assigned to the airport. For comparison, the average rate in the E.U. is almost 340

officers per 100,000 residents, and many countries often held up as models of forward-thinking public safety policy by the defund crowd, like Portugal, well exceed that average.

Why is that? Well, for one thing, countries in the E.U. have decided that science matters. As Texas A&M's Jennifer Doleac, one of the leading American scholars of law enforcement, puts it, "There is a strong consensus in the literature that hiring more police reduces crime." It's important to note that the operative mechanism is *deterrence*. Findings from study after study tell us that, especially among the young men lacking impulse control who commit the vast majority of crimes, increasing the severity of punishment is less helpful than ramping up the certainty of apprehension. Put a cop on a corner and it's less likely that someone rolls the dice there on a mugging, a car theft, or a drug sale. In a striking example of this dynamic playing out in the real world, New York University's Morgan Williams found that cities that expanded their police forces not only saw fewer serious crimes, but also fewer serious crime arrests.

This is a key insight for anyone who is concerned about mass incarceration. E.U. countries have hit upon a successful formula that George Mason University's Alex Tabarrok sums up as "more police, fewer prisons, less crime." In the United States, unfortunately, we spend far too much on prisons, and far too little on cops. Although San Francisco's incarcer-

ation rate mirrors the E.U. average more-so than other American cities, if we can responsibly lower that rate further, we should.

We ignore these facts at our own peril — and especially at the peril of minority communities. Young Black men are roughly 15 times more likely to become homicide victims than their white peers in the United States. Williams's study not only found that each additional police officer results in between 0.06 and 0.1 fewer homicides per year, but adding officers saves Black lives at *double* that overall rate. The study warns: "Our estimates suggest that defunding the police could result in more deaths, especially among Black Americans."

None of this is to say that policing reforms, even fundamental ones, aren't needed. Williams's study, for example, found that in some cities adding more officers led to more Black residents being arrested for low-level crimes. Another study found that police are much less likely to solve murders of Black or Hispanic victims than white ones. Activists point to these findings and advocate for police-free zones in minority communities. But if we actually ask these communities what they want, instead of telling

them what they need, the answer isn't all that surprising: They want police in their neighborhoods — but they expect to be protected, not harassed and abused.

All of this should lead us to conclude that funding and reform are equally necessary, not equally moot. American police academies graduate officers in as little as 21 weeks; in many other countries, training lasts up to two years, and some even require officers to obtain a college degree. A more mature, diverse, and educated police force that is better trained and staffed is how we overcome the problem of communities being simultaneously over-policed and under-protected.

Too many questions of policy in America are turned into political wedge issues. We need to stop letting hyper-partisans do that to law enforcement and public safety. This is a technical problem with a proven solution that has already been implemented around the world, saving countless lives in the process.

The stakes are too high for us to continue ignoring the evidence.

Jay Donde is a board member of the San Francisco Briones Society (brionessociety.org), a club promoting bipartisan solutions to urgent problems.

Reynolds Rap
continued from cover

“Painfully, these scandals exposed widespread arrogance, fraud, conflicts-of-interest, preferential treatment, and a collective failure among the gatekeepers charged with oversight and maintaining the public trust,” said management consultant Deloitte in its report, *Tone at the Top: The First Ingredient in a World-Class Ethics and Compliance Program*.

San Francisco’s leaders should heed those words.

In April of 2019, I penned a column about Mohammed Nuru, the head of the city’s Public Works department (“It’s time for Mayor Breed to sweep DPW boss to the curb”) in which I pointed out that, despite ethical missteps, misappropriated taxpayer funds, lawsuits, and incompetence as the leader of street cleaning in one of the world’s filthiest cities, Nuru had thrived under four mayors and numerous boards of supervisors. All of them knew, in one way or another, that Nuru was as crooked as Lombard Street, yet he was promoted to director of DPW, which gave him even more access to shady deals and shady cohorts he had cultivated over the years.

Ten months later, on the morning of Jan. 29, 2020, Nuru was arrested by the FBI. “The complaint alleges corruption pouring into San Francisco from around the world,” said David Anderson, then-U.S. attorney for the Northern District of California, accusing Nuru of “corruption, bribery, kickbacks, and side deals.”

Many other city officials have gone down in the still-active investigation, and the tone at the top, from Mayor London Breed to the current lot of supervisors, has been tepid. Everyone who has been at City Hall for any length of time has skeletons in their own closets, which means — despite legislation and impassioned speeches — corruption continues unfettered.

On Feb. 4, 2020, two weeks following Nuru’s arrest, Mayor Breed declared, “Nothing matters more than restoring the public trust in our government. Our residents deserve it, and the hard-working men and women of our city deserve it. This requires us to not only hold anyone involved in any illegal or unethical actions accountable, but also to do the work to prevent corruption from occurring in our city.”

Then, on Aug. 13, 2021, the San Francisco Ethics Commission fined Breed \$22,792 for four counts of violating city campaign finance, ethics, and gift laws. The violations included sending a letter on her official stationery to then-governor Jerry Brown trying to get her broth-

er, serving life in prison for murder, a reduced sentence. But she also got slapped on the wrist for taking payment for a parade float from Nick Bovis, owner Lefty O’Doul’s restaurant, who was arrested as one of Nuru’s accomplices (both pled guilty to honest services fraud), and for taking nearly \$6,000 from Nuru for “car repairs.” Breed disclosed this after I reported receiving handwritten letters and firsthand accounts from DPW workers about Breed and Nuru having an intimate relationship in my February 2020 column (“Mohammed Nuru finally swept to the curb, but not by Mayor Breed”). She made the announcement in a Medium post on Valentine’s Day (seriously, I can’t make this stuff up).

TONED-EAF AT THE TOP

You would think Breed would have learned her lesson and changed to a more decisive tone at the top (“I was wrong, and I want to make sure it never happens again”), but instead, on Christmas Eve, 2021, she quietly returned the city’s new Behested Payments Ordinance (BPO) unsigned. The ordinance went into effect 30 days after the Board’s unanimous approval, meaning Breed’s gesture was purely symbolic, but it still spoke volumes.

So did a 14-page letter Breed sent “seeking guidance” on the ordinance from City Attorney David Chiu and the Ethics Commission, where the word “corruption” is never mentioned and “behested” only comes up three times. “Donations” and “philanthropy” appear 18 times each, as Breed worries aloud that enforcement of the BPO could prevent city officials from raising private funds to benefit issues like homelessness and underserved communities.

The drama is unnecessary, of course, as are behested payments — Breed just signed a \$14 billion budget, which should be more than enough to go around.

NURU, BOVIS, JONES, AND THE PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO

The “business as usual” culture at City Hall has infected every department, and the Port of San Francisco, which manages 7.5 miles of city waterfront and reports to the five-member Port Commission, is no exception.

In 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 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 and documents related

to Ellis have been subpoenaed, but Jones is still getting lucrative city contracts, including from the port. In fact, Jones’s company RDJ Enterprises is one of their go-to vendors, inking a deal for community relations related to the Seawall Resiliency Project in 2017. The original fee for Jones’s work was \$198,039; in a 2019 amendment, it was raised to \$278,421 and, as of late 2021 — with the Port Commission well aware of his connection to the SFPUC Community Benefits scandal — it was running at \$398,362, more than double the initial amount.

Jones isn’t the only port contract beneficiary linked to scandal. Lefty O’Doul’s Foundation for Kids, a nonprofit run by Bovis and used by Nuru to launder behested payments, bribes, and kickbacks, had Port Commission Vice President Kimberly Brandon — a Willie Brown appointee who has served on the Port Commission for 25 years — sitting alongside Bovis on its board.

Nuru was also the go-between for Oakland-based construction firm PröVen and the port, where bribery led to a successful bid. Two of the company’s executives, President Alan Varela and Vice President William Gilmartin III, were accused of giving Nuru the infamous \$40,000 tractor in exchange for his help with opening an asphalt plant on the waterfront.

PORT ‘PANEL STACKING’

In the wake of the Nuru and Bovis arrests and in relation to their involvement in a separate bribery scheme at San Francisco International Airport, the San Francisco Office of the Controller Public Integrity Review Unit (CPIR) questioned the Airport Commission regarding the integrity of its contract award process.

According to its Jan. 11, 2021, report, “Ethical Standards for Contract Award Processes of the Airport Commission and Other Commissions and Boards,” CPIR found that airport commissioners were “appropriately excluded from participating in the selection process for evaluation panels.” CPIR then posed the same question to port leadership, who denied its commissioners were “involved in the solicitation process or evaluation panel selection process.”

Evidence suggests otherwise, however, particularly when it comes to “panel stacking” — an agency’s ability to configure evaluation committees and steer contracts to preferred vendors.

On Oct. 22, 2019, during a public Port Commission meeting, Brandon seemed overly interested in the evaluation panel selection for the upcoming Requests for Proposals (RFPs) on the Piers 38–40 and Piers 30–32 redevelopment projects. The evaluation panel scores the

bids for a project that determines the outcome, with the highest-ranked proposal receiving the contract award. At one point, Brandon asked Port Executive Director Elaine Forbes how many people would be on the panel, peppering her with questions. “Is four a good number? Don’t you usually need an odd number? When is that decision going to be made? Who is going to be on the panel? When are you going to let the commission know or have some, any involvement in who’s on the panel?” The Port Commission later chose the panelists for the two pier redevelopment projects behind closed doors.

The Piers 38–40 contract is currently on the Port Commission’s July 12 docket. The developer originally proposed project costs of \$383 million, but those costs have since ballooned an additional 40 percent to \$536 million, likely to cover the inadequate resiliency design of the original proposal. The Port Commission has already signaled its planned acceptance of the additional \$153 million expense.

The panel-stacking development prompted a wider investigation into Port of San Francisco contract awards. The *Marina Times* started with the infamous PröVen bribery scheme, then we drilled down on the Piers 38–40 and Piers 30–32 contracts, and finally, we examined the related Embarcadero Seawall Project. During our months-long investigation, we discovered that the port covertly stacked its evaluation panels for each of the four contract awards.

Most disturbing, the panels scored and ranked all four contract awards out of the public eye. The panel for PröVen — which included two of Nuru’s DPW deputies — overwhelmingly scored the TractorGate firm as the winner, while flunking its three competitors. Other startling findings and patterns emerged, ranging from no-bid contracts to giving away free waterfront office space to friends. Through public documents and videos of commission hearings, we even discovered the port is using the waterfront resiliency design of a developer eliminated during their selection process. Our detailed findings are revealed in the investigative report “San Francisco Shakedown,” available online at marinatimes.com.

With a \$5 billion-plus redevelopment program on the horizon, an unbiased city contracting process is critical for the safety, success, and future of San Francisco’s waterfront. Sadly, the tone at the top is all talk, and plans to root out rampant city Hall corruption continue to crumble, just like the city’s seawall.

Follow Susan and the Marina Times on Twitter: @SusanDReynolds and @TheMarinaTimes.

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An avocado advocate

BY MICHAEL SNYDER

DESPITE THE CURRENT PRICE OF gasoline making my frequent commute from San Francisco to Los Angeles a bank-breaking proposition, living part-time in Southern California has its advantages — one of the least obvious ones being an avocado tree in my backyard. You know the avocado. It's the light or dark green fruit that kind of looks like a pear with a skin condition or an unexploded hand grenade minus the pin. And they appear to be much in demand of late.

These oblong-ish sources of creamy, flavorful goodness have increased in popularity over the past years. Whether a consequence of demand or supply chain issues, a quick price check at the supermarket revealed exactly how expensive avocados are getting. The fact that I have a free source of them may not make up for the amount of money it takes to fill my car's tank and navigate the freeways down south, but it doesn't hurt either. I certainly welcome them to my diet. And why not?

The uses of an avocado are myriad. First and foremost, it's now a designated superfood that provides the right kind of fat to be considered a source of what the docs call good cholesterol. Sliced up or diced, the avocado goes well as part of a salad or a sandwich. Of course, there's the squished and seasoned rendering that is guacamole — the dip of dips for any and all chips. And ... and ... O.K., I'm running

out of ways to use an avocado other than perhaps as a facial mask. I hear the oils are incredibly nutritious for skin.

GETTING TOASTED

"What of avocado toast?" I hear you shout. Yes, it's the gourmet hipster's favorite snack. To be more precise, it's an open-faced sandwich with the avocado rendered into a paste that's usually finished with olive oil, red pepper flakes, and sea salt, then spread over crusty bread. Fad or not, it seems to me to be little more than a different delivery system for guacamole, minus the chopped tomatoes and onions. I see it as an upscale alternative for guac lovers who don't have chips or don't want to dip their digits in the goo.

With the abundance of avocados at my fingertips (well, close enough to pick with help), it was inevitable that I would attempt to create my own version of avocado toast. So I did. Here's my recipe: First, you need access to an avocado tree. You may require a ladder. Gingerly climb the ladder until you can reach a fully matured avocado — one that's preferably at least eight inches in length. Pluck your chosen target off its branch. Descend the ladder, being careful not to fall to your doom.

Take your prize to the kitchen, where you should realize that the avocado you harvested is as hard as a rock. That's because avocados do not ripen on the vine. Which means you have to wait before you can eat them. Don't get frustrated. Just place it on the window sill and



Avocado toast — the gourmet hipster's favorite snack. PHOTO: FLICKR/AVLXYZ

wait a week. Better yet, get a paper bag and a banana. Place the avocado and the banana in the bag, where the gases from the ripening banana will help the avocado to soften within a few days.

PATIENCE LEADS TO A DELICIOUS PRIZE

Finally, your avocado is soft enough to eat. Get a Trader Joe's bagel from the freezer, defrost it in the microwave, slice it into two halves, and put them in the toaster. When the bagel is fully toasted and warm, get your now-ripe avocado, cut it in half, and remove the pit (which you then try to sprout in a glass of water if you're feeling in need of a new avocado tree at some point in the distant future).

Spooning out the meat of the avocado, place an equal portion of it on each half of the bagel. Season the avocado to taste. I simply smear some Sriracha sauce or chili

paste onto it. You can combine the two sides into an avocado bagel sandwich — or not — and chow down. Strictly speaking, that's not avocado toast as it has come to be known. Hey! It's my recipe. If you don't like it, come up with a recipe of your own.

All in all and regardless of preparation, the California avocados are a treat when you can find them. I guess I have the benefit of the avocado tree. However you get your hands on these goodies, I encourage you to enjoy them. Whether you consume them as an addition to a spring mix, rock the guac, or go the toasty route, I advocate the avocado!

Michael Snyder is a print and broadcast journalist who covers pop culture on KGO Radio's Mark Thompson Show and on Michael Snyder's Culture Blast, via GAB-Net.net, Roku, iTunes, and YouTube. You can follow Michael on Twitter: @cultureblaster.

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The world's best sandwich

Enjoy summer with a freshly made tomato sandwich — and a t-shirt

BY ERNEST "JOE POMODORO" BEYL

Nothing says summer like a fat, juicy, ripe tomato, and the abundance of varieties now available in our local farmers' markets. And almost everyone seems to have a tomato story of some kind, or their favorite preparation of this summer fruit. I like to keep a bowl of small varieties — Tiny Tims; red, yellow, and green grape; or red pear — on the counter and pop them as snacks throughout the day. My husband has such fond memories of his dad's backyard-grown beefsteak tomatoes, against which he has pitted every other tomato he's had since.

And then there's the heralded tomato sandwich. In our family, it's a thick slice of Bay Area artisan bread (I like Acme walnut or olive), toasted, and slathered (important operative verb here) with mayonnaise (and being the food snob I can be, I like my homemade version). Sometimes I add avocado, but it's never imperative, but (fancy) salt (pink, flakey, or truffle) is, along with freshly cracked pepper. For my never-food-picky husband, it's just salt (Morton's would be fine).

I even caught a scene recently on Prime's new Reacher series, where the local barber provides tomato sandwiches to the crew investigating homicides. When one asks instead for a salad, the barber quips something along the lines of "you've got one there with lettuce and tomato in

between two slices of white bread" — a good introduction to the sandwich below by our former contributor Ernest Beyl, whose absence is felt every month as we put this paper together.

— L. Majer

WHEN I WAS A KID, I CREATED a sandwich that I believed then to be the best in the world. After all these years I still stick to that assessment.

This is not a fancy sandwich; not a flakey croissant perhaps, stuffed with foie gras, baby lettuces and maybe a dash of balsamic vinegar, nor a mile high Dagwood for those of you who remember the *Blondie* comic strip.

This is a no-nonsense sandwich. I think the British statesman, Lord John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, who is credited with inventing the concept in the 1700s, would like this one.

So here it is — The world's best sandwich.

First, get two slices of white, foamy commercial bread. As a kid, I discovered that the popular baker's brand, Wonder Bread, was best for my sandwich.

Now, smear one side of both slices of that bread with mayonnaise right from the jar. You don't have to get fancy and

make your own mayonnaise for this. Best Foods or Hellman's or whatever works for you is just fine.

Now you need a large, ripe tomato. I mean large and I mean ripe. Avoid those pale pink, hard-as-a-rock bocci balls frequently being passed off as tomatoes. Get your tomatoes from a good farmers' market or from your mother's garden. That's what I did when I was a hungry youth.

Slice that big red baby into four, maybe six, round hunks. Now put half the sliced tomato on one side of the bread and half on the other, right over the mayonnaise. Salt and pepper the tomato, and be lavish about it.

Now you are ready for the onion.

Use a large, white or yellow or purple onion — a good, heavy one that will make a thick slice about the same size as the bread and tomato slices. The onion slice should be about one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch thick.

Place that onion slice on top of one of the tomato-topped pieces of bread, then put the two halves together so you have a slice of bread, slice of tomato, slice of onion, slice of tomato and finally a slice

of bread. Place this sandwich on a large round plate. A platter works even better. Handle the sandwich carefully. You don't want a lot of your mayonnaise to squirt out.

Now get a stool from your kitchen, a thick towel, and a roll of paper towels — an entire roll, please. You're going to need it.

Take all of the above out into your backyard or your driveway. Sit on the stool. Spread the towel over your lap. Place the roll of paper towels at your feet. Place the plate or platter with your tomato-onion sandwich across your towel-covered knees. Pick up your sand-

wich gently in both hands. Prop your elbows on your spread knees. Lean forward and open your mouth as wide as you can. Insert the sandwich and bite. That's all there is to it.

You will find that mayonnaise and tomato juice will drip down your arms. That's O.K. Enough of this will get into your mouth. I should have reminded you to wear a t-shirt.

Visit marinatimes.com and northsidesf.com for more columns by Ernest Beyl.

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Snyder
continued from cover

and silly mix-em-ups with zero reference to their ethnic differences. Historical veracity isn't the point here. And the cavalier approach works, helped along by the light touch of director Emma Holly Jones and the immense charm of the players who voice Suzanne Allain's lively script amid posh, plush settings. Whatever was intended by bringing in this particular group of actors, they inject energy into what might have been a pedestrian knock-off of a Merchant Ivory production in the wrong hands.

A 'BRIDGERTON' FAR ENOUGH

There is already an obvious precedent for *Mr. Malcolm's List* that served as proof of concept and execution. With two seasons already running on Netflix and proving wildly popular, the sexed-up soap opera *Bridgerton* also has a sumptuous Regency Era setting and features a handsome multiracial cast, launching the career of at least one starry leading man in Regé-Jean Page. Regardless of their respective melanin quotients, the lords, ladies, dukes, duchesses, counts, countesses, barons, and baronesses of *Bridgerton* have enchanted millions. Their counterparts in *Mr. Malcolm's List* are just as appealing, if not more so. To some, the casting in both may seem more preposterous than the over-wrought storylines, but all of it is narrative fiction that's as much in the realm of fantasy as your standard issue Harlequin romance. Speaking of fantasy ...

Ms. Marvel, streaming on Disney Plus, is the first mainstream television or film project to feature a Muslim-American superheroine: Kamala Khan, a typical teenager from Jersey City with most of the usual adolescent angst. She and her two best friends are considered weirdoes by the cool kids at school. Her Pakistani-born parents expect academic excellence from her, restrict her comings and goings, and, in a thoroughly understandable aspect of the situation, would



Left to right: Zenobia Shroff, Matt Lintz, Yasmeen Fletcher, Saagar Shaikh, and Travina Springer in Marvel Studios' *Ms. Marvel*. PHOTO BY DANIEL MCFADDEN; ©MARVEL STUDIOS 2022

like her to eventually marry a good Muslim boy. Because this exists in the aforementioned Marvel Cinematic Universe and is based on Marvel Comics, Kamala is obsessed with the superhero group the Avengers and one specific member, quantum-powered Carol Danvers a.k.a. Captain Marvel. Of course, Kamala's mother, father, and her devout, mosque-going, yet unmistakably American brother don't get her fascination with the Avengers. Then, the girl — assembling a Captain Marvel costume for a cosplay contest at the first AvengerCon fan gathering — adds a strange bracelet that she found in a package sent to her family by her aunt, and the bauble changes her life.

In keeping with the inclusionary aspects of the series, the ethnicity of the performers appears appropriate to their characters. They are, for the most part, immensely likable — none more so than Pakistani-Canadian newcomer Iman Velani whose youth, guilelessness, and genuine enthusiasm as Kamala ground the science-fictional (or is that mystical?) aspects of the property. Mohan Kapur

and Zenobia Shroff, both born in India, play Kamala's parents and could very well be her father and mother, lending authenticity to a property with extraordinary elements that require some suspension of disbelief.

EMPOWERMENT OR THREAT

Those who follow the Marvel movies and television shows will be on board with the action and the quips from an expectedly put-upon heroine and her sidekicks. At the same time, *Ms. Marvel* features an elegant balancing act as it addresses serious issues of cultural identity and assimilation (including the conflict between tradition and modernity that faces a segment of the faithful) without being heavy-handed or undercutting the super-powered flash. And it delivers down-to-earth coming-of-age antics with Kamala and her peers. There are even cute bits of animation that look like comic book art imbedded into scenes as visual commentary on the plot. By any standards, the series is a winner.

Representation, whether it embraces the racial, ethnic, or gender spectrum, is empowering to so many and, sad to say, threatening to a certain segment of the population. The protagonist in the globally adored BBC sci-fi series *Doctor Who*, which has been in existence for almost 60 years, is an alien time-and-space traveler known as the Doctor. A do-gooder from a distant planet, he looks like a human and can regenerate into another body when dealt an otherwise fatal blow. This has enabled a relatively seamless change in lead actors when contracts expire, performers decide to move on, or health issues come up. That aside, the Doctor had been male and played by a white man for more than 50 years — until 2017 when British actress Jodie Whittaker took on the role and set off a firestorm of thinly disguised misogyny from a shockingly large and vocal contingent on social media. The show went on, as usual, and though saddled with uneven writing, Whittaker did a fine job as the first female Doctor.

This year, Whittaker is ready to depart the role for fresh acting challenges, and she's being replaced by a young Scottish actor named Ncuti Gatwa, best known for his funny and endearing stint on the sitcom *Sex Education*. That should appease the naysayers, except that Gatwa is a Black man of Rwandan descent and makes no bones about being gay. Will anyone bitch about the first Black, gay Doctor — even though the character's sexuality won't necessarily be a part of his journey? Count on it. The rest of us who enjoy the series will hope that Gatwa brings passion and humanity to the role of this wondrous, wandering alien. When it comes to storytelling, that's what matters.

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

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

The Marina Books Inc. best-seller list

COMPILED BY CHRIS HSIANG

HARDCOVER FICTION

1. **One Italian Summer:** A Novel, by Rebecca Serle
2. **Magpie: A Novel**, by Elizabeth Day
3. **Sparring Partners**, by John Grisham

HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. **Happy-Go-Lucky**, by David Sedaris
2. **CEO Excellence: The Six Mindsets That Distinguish the Best Leaders from the Rest**, by Carolyn Dewar, Scott Keller, and Vikram Malhotra
3. **The Baseball 100**, by Joe Posnanski

PAPERBACK FICTION

1. **Verity**, by Colleen Hoover
2. **Book Lovers**, by Emily Henry
3. **The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo: A Novel**, by Taylor Jenkins

PAPERBACK NONFICTION

1. **Shape: The Hidden Geometry of Information, Biology, Strategy, Democracy, and Everything Else**, by Jordan Ellenberg
2. **The Premonition: A Pandemic Story**, by Michael Lewis
3. **The Bomber Mafia: A Dream, a Temptation, and the Longest Night of the Second World War**, by Malcom Gladwell

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

1. **The Summer I Turned Pretty**, by Jenny Han
2. **My Little Golden Book about San Francisco**, by Toyo Tyler and Courtney Dawson
3. **Remarkably Ruby**, by Terri Libenson

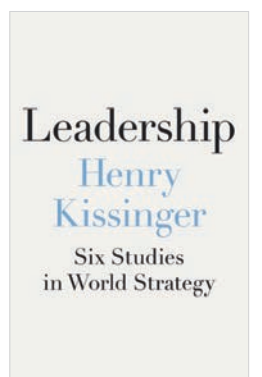
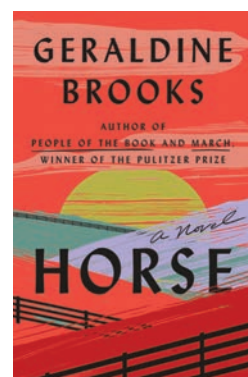
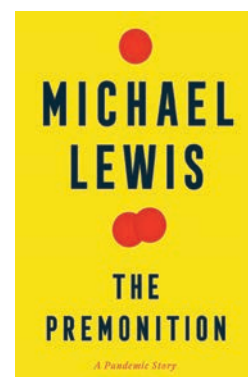
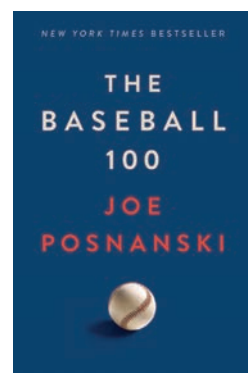
NEW AND NOTABLE RELEASES

Horse: A Novel, by Geraldine Brooks
In this powerful story from the Pulitzer Prize-winning Brooks,

an enslaved groom named Jarratt leads the bay foal he's bonded with to record-shattering racing victories across the 1850s South. During the Civil War, the two meet up dangerously with an itinerant artist who's won fame with his many paintings of the stunning racehorse. A gallery owner in 1950s New York becomes fascinated with the paintings, but it's not until 2019 that a Nigerian American art historian uncovers the true story of the horse and groom and links up with a Smithsonian scientist who's studying the horse's bones to learn the secret of its extraordinary endurance. Based on the true story of a racehorse named Lexington and sure to attract a wide range of readers.

The It Girl: A Novel, by Ruth Ware

When she arrived at Oxford, Hannah was quickly pulled into the circle surrounding glittery April Coutts-Cliveden, who was shockingly murdered at the end of second term. A decade later,



with the Oxford porter convicted of the crime dead in prison, Hannah is beginning to rethink April's murder — and believes that one of their friends has been hiding something. From number one *New York Times* best-selling author.

Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy, by Henry Kissinger
Kissinger's *Leadership* plumbs

modern statecraft, putting forth Charles de Gaulle, Konrad Adenauer, Margaret Thatcher, Richard Nixon, Lee Kuan Yew, and Anwar Sadat as game-changing leaders who helped create a new world order.

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Installation view of *Ai Weiwei: Everyday Monuments* at the Haines Gallery, San Francisco. PHOTO: ROBERT DIVERS HERRICK

Ai Weiwei returns to San Francisco with 'Everyday Monuments' at the Haines Gallery

BY SHARON ANDERSON

AI WEIWEI'S SOCIOPOLITICAL inspired art is on view at the Haines Fort Mason Gallery through Aug. 27. "Everyday Monuments" is Ai's first exhibition in San Francisco since 2016, and it shines a light on people, places, and events that might otherwise be forgotten. The exhibition consists of 18 works in materials such as Legos, marble, and wood, each a synthesis of complex historical, cultural, and political references.

Ai was born in China in 1957. As an outspoken champion of human rights, his cultural criticism and activism have made him a natural target for Chinese authorities who attempt to censor the artist and his output. Not to be discouraged, Ai continues to turn activism and adversity into art.

'ZODIAC'

This exhibition marks the San Francisco debut of Ai's *Zodiac* (2018). Twelve panels made of thousands of brightly colored Lego bricks depict the mythical animals of the traditional Chinese Zodiac, a system ascribing personality traits to birth years. Appearing in the gallery in astrological order, the body of work is inspired by the Zodiac Fountain in Yuanmingyuan, Beijing's Old Summer Palace. This epic water clock consisting of 12 monumental bronze animal heads was looted by Anglo-French troops who took part in the destruction of Yuanmingyuan in 1860 during the Second Opium War.

Reclamation of cultural relics from the colonial past is an ongoing global talking point in the art world, and occasionally these bronze heads resurface in the marketplace. Though they have appeared for sale — most famously at Christie's 2009 auction of the Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Berge Collection — only seven of the Zodiac heads have been recovered to date. Presenting the Chinese Zodiac using a children's toy, Ai's zodiac heads in Lego recreate monuments out of everyday materials and, because of their shape, the artworks are reminiscent of the geometry of computerized images consisting of pixels.

'REBAR'

Rebar (2014) casts everyday objects in marble, creating a memorial. *Rebar* emerged from the aftermath of a massive earthquake that struck Sichuan Province on May 12, 2008, killing nearly 90,000 people, among them thousands of school children. The children's deaths were caused, in part, by faulty school construction. Bereaved parents, outraged by the

needless deaths of their children, were met with swift retribution and were silenced by Chinese authorities.

Ai worked with other activists to investigate the cover-up by the Chinese government. His work yielded the names and details of 5,335 schoolchildren who had perished in the earthquake and whose identities had disappeared from the public record. Each twisted rod of carved marble is placed on top of wooden frames shaped like tiny coffins as monuments to lives lost.

POLITICAL CORRUPTION

After a massive public outcry for his freedom, Ai was released in the summer of 2011 after a 81-day imprisonment. He was brutally beaten by police and disappeared into custody for his human rights activism, although the official reason was "economic crimes." Subsequently, Ai was freed, but his passport was confiscated and he was surveilled by video cameras, which once surrounded his Beijing studio. The *Lantern* (2014) is Ai's mocking response to the video cameras, which he decorated with red paper lanterns associated with festivals. Beautifully carved in marble, they exist as an ornamental testament to what the artist endured.

Ceiling Lamp with Stars (2014) is a reproduction of a light fixture commonly found in Communist China during the 1950s and 1960s. The marble sculpture is covered in five pointed stars, a symbol of the Communist party, and speaks to the bygone age of Soviet-inspired design.

Ai's activities postimprisonment continue to spark meaningful dialogue as his observations about justice continue to reach wider audiences. After his passport was returned in 2015, Ai has lived in Berlin, Cambridge, and now resides in Portugal.

Ai Weiwei presents art as an opportunity to deconstruct the values of society and encourages his viewers to do one small thing every day to prove the existence of justice. The role of the individual is a role of power. Ai explains: "I call on people to be 'obsessed citizens,' forever questioning and asking for accountability. That's the only chance we have today of a healthy and happy life."

Ai Weiwei | Everyday Monuments: Tuesday–Saturday 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. through Aug. 27, free, Haines Gallery, Building C, Fort Mason Center, 415-397-8114, hainesgallery.com

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

JULY EVENTS

NOT TO MISS THIS MONTH

Editor's note: Covid protocols vary by event; visit individual websites for up-to-date information.

MAJOR EVENTS

4th of July Celebration

Saturday, July 4, 9:30 p.m.

Fisherman's Wharf

See the city's annual display of fireworks launched from two barges, weather permitting. Free, 415-705-5500, fishermanswharf.org

85th Annual Stern Grove Festival

Sundays through Aug. 29, 2 p.m.

19th Ave. at Sloat

Scheduled for July is Leann Rimes, the S.F. Symphony, and more. Reservations required. Free, 415-252-6252, sterngrove.org

Presidio Tunnel Tops Opening Day

Sunday, July 17, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

Presidio Tunnel Tops

Bring the family and explore the paths, gardens, meadows, and scenic overlooks. Live events include music and dance performances. Bring a picnic or purchase from your favorite food trucks. Free, presidiotunneltops.org

COMMUNITY CORNER

AIDS Walk San Francisco

Sunday, July 17, 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Golden Gate Park

Walk this 10K to remember those lost, help those affected, and continue the fight to end AIDS. Benefits Bay Area HIV/AIDS organizations. Free (general walkers), 415-615-9255, aidswalk.net

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Legion of Honor Museum | Guo Pei: Couture Fantasy

Tue.–Sun. 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m. through Sept. 5

100 34th Ave., Lincoln Park

This exhibition celebrates the extraordinary designs of Guo Pei — hailed as China's first couturier — and includes more than 80 works from the past two decades highlighting her most important collections. \$30, 888-901-6645, famsf.org

THEATER

Magic Theatre | Deal with the Dragon

Fri.–Sun., July 22–Aug. 14

Bldg. D, Fort Mason Center

This one-man performance of the critically acclaimed grown-up fairy tale/camp comedy is about the bargains we make with ourselves and others to survive. \$20–\$70, 415-441-8822, magictheatre.org

DANCE

RawDance | 5th Annual YBG ChoreoFest

Saturday, July, 23 & 30, 7 p.m.

Verba Buena Gardens

See stellar local dance companies activating and enlivening the gardens with special site-specific performances. Free, 415-729-3959, rawdance.org

MUSIC

Bastille Day Concert with Le Jazz Hot

Thursday, July 14, 7 p.m.

Mechanics' Institute (57 Post St.)

Dress up or down, or in tri-color for this festive night of French gypsy jazz. French wines and cuisine will be available throughout the evening for one *bonne soiree*! \$20, 415-393-0116, milibrary.com

S.F. Symphony | An Evening with Bernadette Peters

Saturday, July 30, 7:30 p.m.

Davies Symphony Hall

One of Broadway's brightest stars presents an evening of music from her Broadway shows and Grammy Award-winning albums, featuring standards from Rodgers & Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, and more. \$45–\$200, 415-864-6000, sfsymphony.com

NIGHTLIFE

NightLife | Islas

Thursday, July 7, 15, & 22, 6–10 p.m.

California Academy of Sciences

Calling all kaibigan: tropic like it's hot for a night dedicated to Filipino arts, culture, and science. Enjoy live D.J.s, outdoor bars, ambient lighting, and nearly 40,000 live animals. Ages 21 & up. \$19, 415-379-8000, calacademy.org

FILMS AND LECTURES

Tim Miller: Inside the New Republican Party

Monday, July 11, 6 p.m.

The Commonwealth Club (110 The Embarcadero) "Why did normal people go along with the worst of Trumpism?" Join author-activist-consultant Miller as he seeks to answer this question and more in a discussion of his new book, *Why We Did It*. \$10–\$50, 415-597-6705, commonwealthclub.org

42nd Annual S.F. Jewish Film Festival Daily, July 21–Aug. 7

Castro Theatre, various Bay Area venues, & online The largest and longest-running festival of its kind presents films, events, and conversations that explore the complexity of Jewish life around the world. \$425/festival pass, 415-621-0556, jfi.org

POTABLES AND EDIBLES

California Dreamin' Cheese & Wine Class

Thursday, July 7, 6 p.m.

The Cheese School of S.F. (Ghirardelli Square) Learn about the rich history of California dairy farming and cheesemaking while tasting cheeses and enjoying perfectly paired wines. \$125, eventbrite.com



Alice Waters: We Are What We Eat

Tuesday, July 12, 12:30 p.m.

The Commonwealth Club (110 The Embarcadero) & Livestream

In her recent book *We Are What We Eat*, Chez Pannisse founder Waters urges us to take up the mantle of slow food culture and to act against fast food values. \$10–\$45, 415-597-6705, commonwealthclub.org

PHOTO: ALICE WATERS BY AMANDA MARSALIS

FAMILY FUN

Sundown Cinema | Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2

Friday, July 29, 6:30–10 p.m.

Marina Green

Enjoy this screening with special performances from the S.F. Symphony and the Curran Theater's *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Reserved seating available. Free, sfsparkalliance.org

Visit marinatimes.com for additional July events. Email: calendar@marinatimes.com

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MomSense :: Children and books



Help children find the time and the place to pick up a book. PHOTO: PATAT

How to encourage summer reading

BY LIZ FARRELL

ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF SUMMER is getting a break from the constant nagging about homework and having to stick to a rigid nightly routine. However, research shows we can't let it all slide — there are real benefits to spending a little bit of time everyday reading and practicing math. So how do we as parents give our children much-needed downtime while also keeping their skills sharp? Here are some tips to help find this balance and to make summer reading fun and interesting:

HAVE BOOKS ON HAND

One of the easiest ways to keep summer reading fun is to always have books available for reading. Summer days are perfect to head to the library and check out books. Libraries also have summer reading programs where kids can read for prizes, which does work for some children who may need that extra push. If they are excited about a book or an author, it will be easier to get them to read. My son recently discovered David Walliams's books, and now is begging me to buy more books Walliams has written.

While on vacation, look for a local bookstore to peruse and for long plane or car rides try audio books. Our whole family enjoyed a box set of Roald Dahl's most popular books to the point we didn't want to get out of the car without hearing the end of the story. The key is to always have books available for your children to read.

MAKE IT FUN

Now that you have the books, how do you make it fun? Encourage your children to do a book swap with their friends or relatives. This summer my children decided to form a book club with their cousins and they all paired up and picked books for their reading level then planned a fun day to meet up and chat about the books.

Another way to make it fun is to create a family reading challenge. If everyone decides on the challenge whether it be number of books, hours read, or chapters read, you can all do something fun together to celebrate.

Last, find books that become movies. Some of our favorites include *Charlotte's Web*, *Wonder*, and *Harry Potter*. Try to get your children to read the book before they watch the movie.

BE AN EXAMPLE

Make sure your children see you reading and preferably not on a phone or tablet. Show them that you really enjoy a good book and not just at bedtime but as leisure time by the beach or curled up on a blanket on a nice summer day. I recently realized that usually the only time I can find time to read is right before bed, which is great but I realized my kids never see that.

One of the best gifts we can give our kids is our time and attention, and what better way to do that than to make a concerted effort to read with them or to them every day. I love doing this, because it provides great opportunities for discussion. It also helps to know what kind of books they are interested in so I can help them be on the lookout for their next read.

MAKE TIME FOR IT

Try to keep up some of the same routines you have during the year when it comes to reading. If your children read for a certain amount of time during the year, help them find the time to keep that up. Carving out time for this will help prevent

them from falling into bad habits and patterns such as always reaching for a device instead of a book. If your days are full of camps and activities, then try to make time before bed for them to read. Or

As parents, anything we can do to make reading cool and interesting helps.

maybe your days start later in the summer and it is easier for them to read in the morning when they are fresh. Varying the routine also helps, so some days maybe they read quietly to themselves and some days you read together. The most important thing is setting aside the time to read.

I would love for my children to develop the same love of books that I have. This can happen, but these days books are competing with iPads, iPhones, video game consoles, and computers, which can make it tough. As parents, anything we can do to make reading cool and interesting helps. Ideally, after a few weeks your children will be in a routine and hopefully enjoying it so much that they will forget all the benefits their brain is getting from reading over the summer.

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The Observer :: Buyer opportunity time



More homes are on the market, but the number of sellers accepting offers was down by double digits year-over-year. PHOTO: GAREY DE MARTINI

The sky isn't falling, but ...

BY GAREY DE MARTINI

OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS, we've been reporting that while San Francisco's residential real estate market has been extremely hot, there were some early signs that things might be cooling off a bit. Now we have some proof. The sky isn't falling, but for the first time in years, buyers have the upper hand in some transactions.

"We are definitely moving into a more balanced, equal footing between buyers and sellers. Especially when it comes to condos, where there's a buyer's advantage or market," said Marcus Miller, founder and broker at Helm Real Estate.

"We're seeing more units coming to market, both single family homes and condos. Meanwhile, the stock market is being hammered, inflation and the cost of living are impacting consumer confidence, and the cost of real estate financing has increased significantly — all of which has cooled activity in our marketplace," he said.

OFFERINGS

Ted Andersen, with the *San Francisco Business Times*, reported in mid-June that active residential inventory in San Francisco is rising, but the number of listings accepting offers was down by double digits year-over-year, with condos most affected.

Comparing May 2022 with May 2021, the number of listings accepting offers was down 22 percent, with houses down roughly 19 percent and condos, co-ops, and TICs down 24 percent.

According to Andersen, it's important to note that market changes are often uneven in the early months of a transition, with one home selling in days at well over list price, while next door, the seller has to reduce the price to get an offer.

He added that the high appreciation rates of the last two years will almost certainly start to decline this year.

Make no mistake; single family homes are still in demand. According to Miller, properties that are unique, staged, and well priced, always do well and sell in line with their offer dates. Less appealing single family homes, however, are having more trouble selling, and offer dates can easily come and go.

This same trend is being seen throughout the country. According to Dana Anderson with Redfin News, nationwide homebuyer budgets have flattened, posting the slowest annual growth rate in nearly two years.

Declining budgets are a leading indicator that home-price growth has passed its peak and will slow in the coming months.

The dip is also a sign that high mortgage rates are having a major impact on how much money buyers can spend on homes, with more of their budgets going toward interest payments.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

The real estate companies Compass and Redfin see the handwriting on the wall. Both cut staff in the middle of June. Compass cut 10 percent of its employees, or roughly 450 positions, as mortgage rates rose sharply and home sales dropped. At the same time, Redfin announced an 8 percent staff cut of about 470 employees.

If nothing else, all of this should tell buyers in San Francisco that opportunities are now out there, especially in the condo market. Miller said that many buyers have given up searching for a home, assuming a "wait-and-see" position.

He described one condo listing that languished on the market, even though it would have sold immediately just a few months ago. It remained unsold even after two price reductions.

If we have learned nothing else over the years, it's that these windows of opportunity can be remarkably short. A condo is a perfectly good path to building equity, and if a San Francisco condo is within reach, it's probably worth purchasing.

SFGate published a great piece recently, entitled, "The Hater's Guide to the Bay Area real estate market" (bit.ly/TheHatersGuide). Drew Magary, a writer from the East Coast, visited the city for a week to tour houses and talk with market analysts and agents.

He writes, "I wanted to figure out whether it's possible to live in San Francisco if your income is less than that of Klay Thompson's, and what your home will look like if you do manage to find a place."

The piece is funny, irreverent, candid, and insightful. His conclusion?

"There is the upside of San Francisco itself. There is no better city in America to be f—ed in than this one. If you live here, you know that innately. If you don't live here, and I do not, you'll grasp it very quickly," he writes. "This is the second-most densely populated city in America for a reason: because its citizens decided that San Francisco is worth any price, even if their apartment only has enough room for a f—ing daybed."

Feedback: letters@marinatimes.com

Muni Alert



Muni Bus Routes Return July 9

In response to public feedback, Muni is bringing back the 2 Sutter, 6 Haight-Parnassus, 21 Hayes with some route changes, and making changes to other routes to improve access and connections.

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