



MARCH 2024

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FREE

## Potrero High Schools Have Low Graduation Rates

BY JENNA DUNCAN

Although San Francisco high schools slightly exceeded the state average for students graduating within five years of starting, San Francisco International and Downtown high schools, both in Potrero Hill, had low graduation rates in 2023.

According to the California State School Dashboard website, [www.cascooldashboard.org](http://www.cascooldashboard.org), 88 percent of San Francisco Unified School District students graduated within five years, compared to 86 percent statewide. Of 4,153 high school students, 3,667 graduated in 2023.

In contrast, 57 percent of SF International High School students graduated in 2023. And of its graduating class of 65 students, only 23 percent were “prepared” for college, a rating which placed the school as “low” in the College/Career category. Downtown High School had a graduation rate in the red zone, the worst assessment on the scale.

Both high schools reported suspension rates in the orange zone, second to lowest. Out of 179 students attending Downtown, seven were suspended for at least one day during the academic year. SF International, with 547 students, had

*GRADUATION continues on page 9*

## Parking Reduced to Improve Pedestrian Safety

BY MARK STEENSLAND

As a result of Assembly Bill (AB) 413, as of January 1, 2024 drivers are no longer allowed to park within 20 feet of a crosswalk, marked or unmarked, on the side from which traffic approaches an intersection. In places with curb extensions – wider sidewalks that shorten the length to traverse the street – the distance is reduced to 15 feet, about an average car length.

Restricting parking in this way is called “daylighting,” intended to keep sightlines clear so that pedestrians don’t have to enter an intersection to check for oncoming traffic. Daylighting makes children easier for drivers to spot.

The concept isn’t new. The United States Uniform Vehicle Code, created in the 1920s, included daylighting restrictions. Since most states based their laws on this early code, daylighting was the default; more than 40 states have such rules in place. Up until now California didn’t because its vehicle regulations weren’t based on the UVC.

In 2014, San Francisco adopted “Vision Zero,” with the aim of making streets safer. In the first year of the program, daylighting was implemented at 80 intersections in the Tenderloin, with a 14 percent reduction in collisions. In 2019, following a surge in pedestrian deaths, the majority of which occurred in crosswalks, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution encouraging the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to enact daylighting in areas beyond those originally targeted by Vision Zero, especially in the High Injury Network, the 12 percent of streets, mostly in the vicinity of Market Street between Third and Van

Ness, that account for nearly 70 percent of severe accidents. Hill streets in the HIN include Potrero Avenue between Division and 25th Street, and 18th Street from Missouri past Potrero Avenue to Church Street.

“California’s pedestrian fatality rate is nearly 25 percent higher than the national average,” said Alex Lee, 24th Assembly District member, who represents Alameda and Santa Clara counties. “My office’s conversations with transportation experts inspired me to author AB 413. Intersections are some of the most dangerous sections of our roads, and daylighting is a simple solution that improves visibility of intersections for everyone.”

Supported by Streets for All and the California Bicycle Coalition, AB 413 was approved by the legislature and signed by Governor Newsom last fall.

“I believe daylighting is an effective tool for increasing pedestrian safety,” said District 10 Supervisor Shamann Walton, who supported the bill.

Maxine Siu and Joel Bleskacek, who own Plow, located on 18th and Texas streets, are happy to have the measure in place, citing numerous close calls on their corner.

“The loss of a few parking spaces is a worthy tradeoff for a bit of extra safety for our guests,” Bleskacek said.

Requests for comments from more than a dozen other local merchants didn’t receive a response.

According to Michael Roccaforte, SFMTA Deputy Spokesperson, although the law allows jurisdictions to paint curbs and install signs, most will remain unmarked because there aren’t

*PARKING continues on page 10*



Sequoia Fabrica founders Emeline Brule, Max Omdal and Maggie Frankel in their new makerspace in Potrero Hill. Story on page 4. PHOTO: Vivien Wang

## Green Benefit District Holds Election

BY JESSICA ZIMMER

The Dogpatch and Northwest Potrero Hill Green Benefit District (GBD) has its annual board elections this month, in advance of a year in which the organization will work to convince taxpayers to renew its charter for another 10 years, and launch new projects, including potentially to “clean and green” Dogpatch’s freeway underpasses.

There are five open seats, each with three-year terms. Two seats are set aside for Dogpatch property owners,

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and one each for a Dogpatch tenant or property owner, Northwest Potrero Hill property owner, and Northwest Potrero Hill tenant.

Matt Lewis is the sole candidate for the Northwest Potrero Hill property owner seat. Joyce Lavey is the only contender for the Northwest Potrero Hill tenant slot. Rebecca Groves, Barb Fritz, Michael Joseph Spain, and Katherine Doumani are competing for the two Dogpatch property owner spots. John Litster and Tabita McCallum are vying for the single Dogpatch property owner or tenant seat.

Candidates must own or rent within the Dogpatch or NW Potrero Hill district or be an authorized representative of an owner or renter in these areas. Dogpatch

and NW Potrero Hill property owners who pay the GBD assessment will receive a ballot in the mail providing a code to vote online by March 29. Results will be announced April 2, with the new board expected to convene on April 17. Election turnout has historically been low.

There are 15 people on the GBD board, five elected annually in rotating three-year terms. The board meets monthly in-person on the evening of the third Wednesday, normally at the Dogpatch Hub. Directors are asked to serve on at least one committee or project,

averaging about five hours a month on behalf of the organization. The GBD is usually busier between the spring and fall when it holds events.

“This is an organization that creates a community benefit. We all work together,” said Andrea Bañas, GBD executive director, who was appointed to the position last fall.

Bañas hopes that property owners will recognize the spaces in Dogpatch and Northwest Potrero Hill that were GBD created and/or maintained. For instance, in 2020 the Vermont Greenway, near Interstate 280’s Mariposa Street exit, was awarded a roughly \$150,000 Community Challenge Grant to beautify

*GBD ELECTIONS continues on page 10*



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## PUBLISHER'S VIEW

## Doom

BY STEVEN J. MOSS

Lots of indicators suggest that we Americans are struggling. Twice as many should-be students are missing more than 10 percent of the school year than before the pandemic. Drug overdose deaths rose roughly three percent in 2023, after several years of double-digit increases; well more than 70,000 dead annually. In the first six weeks of 2024 there were 49 mass shootings, more than one a day, in which four or more victims were wounded by bullets or killed. Automobile fatalities are similarly at elevated levels, due in part to distracted driving and simmering post-COVID road rage. According to the *New York Times*, if the U.S. had made as much progress reducing vehicle crashes as other high-income countries over the past two decades about 25,000 fewer Americans would die every year.

Not all of us are doing poorly. A solid swath carefully convey their kids in electric cars to good quality schools on their way to decent-paying jobs they enjoy. But there's an unmistakable swell of anger, depression, and despair

afoot, darker emotions fanned, or taken advantage of, by politicians and social media influencers.

There are myriad reasons for the widespread sense of doom. Whatever the official inflation rate, everything feels more expensive. Many families can't afford a meal out, other than ones that come in a plastic basket or wrapped in paper. Forget about even road trip vacations, unless they involve camping, assuming a site can be secured. We don't share common causes, whether it be to deal with embedded prejudices, climate change, or how to manage our borders. We barely even share common facts about these challenges. Our attention span is flagging, deeply eroded by a cascade of irresistible seconds-long videos. Even our brains may be changing, with higher levels of biochemically induced anxiety, ADHD, and despondency.

Some historians theorize that what's happening reflects broad generational cycles. In *The Fourth Turning Is Here*

PUBLISHER'S VIEW continues on page 10

## SHORT CUTS

## Crime

Last month, **Wok & Go**, located on the corner of 24th Street and Potrero Avenue, received a order for a delivery to Connecticut Street between Wisconsin and 25th streets. When driver **Xiong Zou** arrived three young men, one brandishing a gun, robbed him of the food and \$31 in cash. Zou wasn't injured during the incident. Between this and last February there were 25 robbery incidents in Potrero Hill, up from 15 the previous year. Over the same period between 2019 and 2020 there were 33 robberies in the neighborhood.

## Faux Crime

Parts of *Splash City*, which chronicles the story of two brothers caught on opposite sides of the City's "bipping" epidemic, were filmed last month near the Potrero Hill Recreation Center. San Francisco rapper Berner is co-producing the "urban crime film;" a trailer has already been issued featuring the tagline, "Every 30 seconds in the Bay Area a car is bipped." Berner, a Sunset District native who's made more than 20 albums, was inspired to create

the movie about six years ago, after he was approached by a young man trying to sell stolen products at his Haight Street business. **San Francisco Police Department** data indicate that car break-ins dropped by 12 percent from 2022 to 2023, averaging around 59 car break-ins a day.

## Design Reach

**Design Within Reach** opened its new Potrero Hill showroom last month. The 15,000-square-foot furniture "studio" at 1400 17th Street replaces the former flagship store on Kansas Street. The newly renovated space, once occupied by California Caster & Hand Truck Company, features upscale furniture arrangements and designs, as well as a gallery and exhibition space for temporary art and furniture installations. Amongst other set-piece offerings there's a Steve Jobs-inspired living room, ringed by curved velvet Togo sofas and armchairs reminiscent of curled-up caterpillars, specifically designed with the iconoclastic Apple co-founder in mind. Many visitors' reach may exceed their grasp at the pricey furnishing emporium.

## GETTING INVOLVED

Green Benefit District | [GreenBenefit.org](http://GreenBenefit.org)

GBD Property Owners - Keep an eye out for election communication, voting commences March 1st! Please connect with us at [info@greenbenefit.org](mailto:info@greenbenefit.org) if you have any questions. Subscribe to our newsletter <https://greenbenefit.org/subscribe> for updates.

The Potrero Boosters Neighborhood Association | [potreroboosters.org](http://potreroboosters.org)

The Potrero Boosters Neighborhood Association informs, empowers and represents the residents of the Potrero on issues impacting our community in order to develop and maintain complete, vibrant neighborhoods. We're continuing to **meet via Zoom** on the last Tuesday of each month. Go to [www.potrero boosters.org](http://www.potrero boosters.org) to learn more about how to join us!

The Potrero Dogpatch Merchants Association | [potrero dogpatch.com](http://potrero dogpatch.com)

The Potrero Dogpatch Merchants Association promotes and advocates for independent, locally owned businesses while actively supporting our neighborhood and our wonderful communities.

PREFund | [prefund.org](http://prefund.org)

PREFund brings neighbors together to support education and build community. Learn more and get connected at [prefund.org](http://prefund.org)

Starr King Open Space | [StarrKingOpenSpace.org](http://StarrKingOpenSpace.org)

Please join our **monthly volunteer days** on the second Saturday of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This month it is March 9th.

If you can, please donate to help keep Starr King Open Space open, accessible, and well-maintained for our neighbors.  
[StarrKingOpenSpace.org](http://StarrKingOpenSpace.org)

For a \$200 annual fee your organization can be listed in Getting Involved.  
[Contact production@potrero view.net](mailto:production@potrero view.net)

## HANDY NUMBERS

District 10 Supervisor	415.554.7670
Shamann Walton	<a href="mailto:waltonstaff@sfgov.org">waltonstaff@sfgov.org</a>
Recology	415.330.1300
San Francisco Animal Care and Control	415.554.6364
San Francisco Fire Department (non-emergency)	415.558.3200
San Francisco Police Department	671-2300; tip line, 415.822.8147 <a href="mailto:SFPDBayviewStation@sfgov.org">SFPDBayviewStation@sfgov.org</a>
SFHOT/Homeless Outreach Team	311 or 415.734.4233
State Senator Scott Weiner	415.557.1300

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THE VIEW IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED NEWSPRINT WITH SOY-BASED INK.

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# Farley's: 35 Years of Brewing Community in Potrero Hill

BY VISHAKHA PATEL

In the heart of Potrero Hill, where the city's pulse beats a little differently, Farley's is celebrating a remarkable milestone: 35 years of serving up not just java, but a sense of community, warmth, and connection. The shop has woven itself into the fabric of Potrero Hill, evolving from a coffee accessory store into a thriving coffeehouse that's a testament to the resilience and spirit of this eclectic neighborhood.

Roger Hillyard first opened Farley's in March 1989. He named the place after his grandfather - Jack Farley - who disappeared in the early 1920s, leaving behind only one picture, represented in the café's logo.

The physical space, previously housing a prisoners' rights union headquarters. Hillyard saw the potential to fulfill a community need; a place where individuals could elevate their at-home coffee experience. Farley's was created initially as a haven for coffee enthusiasts seeking quality accessories to enhance their daily brew at home with a small space to drink beverages.

In October 1989 the Loma Prieta earthquake rocked San Francisco, leaving many neighborhoods in darkness and chaos. Potrero Hill was one of the few areas with power, drawing those seeking resources and a safe haven. In this time of need Farley's

became a sanctuary for those seeking a warm beverage and a sense of community.

"I let it become what it wanted to be," Hillyard said.

In 2009, after decades of success in Potrero Hill, Farley's East was established in Oakland.

In 2012, the business was passed to Hillyard's son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Amy. Under their stewardship, Farley's has remained faithful to the simplicity that defines its charm. Offering the same menu, they focus on cultivating a sense of community, showcasing local art on the walls, and hosting events like the annual Halloween pet parade.

For Chris, Farley's isn't just a family business; it's a source of pride and a legacy he's helped sustain. He spoke about the joy of having his daughter and nieces work shifts at the coffeehouse, emphasizing the multi-generational connection that Farley's has fostered. The magic that bloomed in 1989 continues to thrive.

Farley's will celebrate its 35th anniversary with a St Patrick's Day party on March 17th, featuring bagpipes, Irish stew, soda bread and a few surprises. When asked what message he wanted to share with the community Hillyard's response was immediate.

"Thank you."



**Come celebrate 35 years of coffee, community and the best neighborhood in SF!**

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY | BAGPIPES @ 9ish  
SODA BREAD & IRISH STEW TIL IT'S GONE**

# Intergenerational Makerspace Opens in Potrero Hill

BY VIVIEN WANG

the last decade and plans to teach classes in machine knitting and sewing.

"Makerspaces have traditionally been made for adults and teenagers," said Frankel, Fabrica's secretary, who's a youth services librarian at the Mission Bay branch. "Very few have spaces inclusive of families. At Sequoia Fabrica, parents can bring their kids, do things together and find community here. We will have classes for adults and young people."

"Few of us are experts at what we're doing; we're just passionate about sharing what we're doing and contributing to the community and our learning process," Omdal said.

"We care about building things that might not otherwise come to be, so that includes a focus on restoration, repair, working with scrap materials, and sustainability. We want to foster a community that knows how to care and make things for each other," said Frankel.

After Sequoia Fabrica incorporated as a nonprofit last fall it hosted events at a community gallery, Wave Collective, in lower Haight. SF Made, a not-for-profit organization that works with small manufacturers, helped find the Hill space late last year.

The name "Sequoia" was chosen because of the founders' love for the iconic California sequoia tree, and its association with longevity and growth;

**SEQUOIA FABRICA** continues on page 10



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*Proposed project at 700 Indiana Street*

2 sat

**Art: MakeArt Family Day & 20-Year Birthday Party**

The Museum of Craft and Design celebrates 20 years with MakeArt Family Day. Revisit favorite activities like Maia Scott's soap sculpture and Chris Myers' buildable ArtBots project, then create audible stitched stories with Liz Hernández and Charlene Lu's Interactive Embroidery. Free with admission; 12 and under always gratis. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. \$10. MCD, 2569 Third Street. For more information and to preregister (encouraged): <https://bit.ly/3I07jDd>

3 sun

**Dance: Smuin's 30th Anniversary Gala**

Celebrate Smuin Contemporary Ballet's 30th season with dinner and cocktails, live auction, and specially curated dance performance. Attendees will receive premium seating at the March 3rd performance of Celebrating Michael Smuin in San Francisco. 5 to 10 p.m. Cocktail Attire. St. Regis Hotel, 125 Third Street. Performance: Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA, 700 Howard Street. For more information: Alicia Tos, Development Director, 415.556.5000, extension 100 or [atos@smuinballet.org](mailto:atos@smuinballet.org) To purchase tickets: <https://bit.ly/3Ta3jXr>

4 mon

**Women's History Month: HERstory**

An evening of singing to celebrate Women's History Month, with powerful voices of talented female, femme, and nonbinary artists who will pay tribute to women's incredible achievements throughout history. 7 p.m. \$20 to \$30. Oasis, 298 11th Street. For more information: <https://bit.ly/49fbZkx>

5 tues

**Date Night: Trivia Night at Harmonic Brewery at Thrive City**

With a wide range of categories — sports, history, pop culture, science, and more — there's something for everyone to enjoy. Show off your intellectual prowess as you compete against other teams in a friendly and engaging environment. 6 to 8 p.m. Free. Harmonic Brewery, 1050 26th Street. For more information: <https://bit.ly/4bGaCNK>

**COMMUNITY | MARCH**

8 fri

**3/8 Friday****Film: Julie & Julia**

Julie Powell (Amy Adams) is a young Manhattanite looking to shake up her life. She decides to cook every recipe in Julia Child's mammoth *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* while blogging about it. *Julie & Julia* artfully cuts between present day and flashbacks, from Powell to Child, who is seen developing the skills that'd turn her into an internationally renowned chef. This month CinemaLit features five films written and directed by women, focusing on female lives with an emphasis on displacement, geographic and emotional. 6 p.m. \$10; free for Mechanics' Institute members. Mechanics' Institute, 57 Post Street. For more information: <https://bit.ly/3wt1Jqk>

9 sat

**Baseball: San Francisco Giants FanFest**

The Giants and KNBR FanFest Tour is a new, reimagined experience that transforms the traditional one-day San Francisco-based event into a series of proceedings across Northern California, concluding with an Open House at Oracle Park. Fans will have access to oft restricted ballpark locations, including the field, clubhouse, broadcast booth and dugout. Meet-and-greets and autograph opportunities with Giants alumni and Lou Seal and photo opportunities with the trophies will be offered. The Giants Spring Training game in Scottsdale will be broadcast on the scoreboard during the event. Fans in San Francisco will be able to interact with players in Scottsdale. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. For more information: <https://bit.ly/3OMVKTl>

14 thur

**Math: Pi Day Celebration at Exploratorium**

It's the 37th annual celebration of Exploratorium's homegrown holiday that commemorates the irrational, transcendent, and never-ending ratio that helps describe circles of all sizes. Explore math-inspired activities and

presentations, then join the Pi parade and eat a free piece of pie. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free with admission; \$29.95 to \$39.95. Exploratorium, Pier 15, Embarcadero at Green Street. For more information: <https://bit.ly/3UIgRdJ>

**3/16 Saturday through 7/21 Sunday****Photography: Irving Penn Retrospective**

Irving Penn is widely regarded as one of the 20th century's greatest photographers, renowned for his pared-down aesthetic, exemplary printmaking, and artistic experimentation. A regular contributor to *Vogue* for more than six decades, he revolutionized fashion photography in the post-war period, positioning models against neutral backdrops to emphasize gesture and expression. Penn was also a prolific artist whose career spanned 70 years and a wide array of interests. Organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in collaboration with The Irving Penn Foundation, and in association with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, this major retrospective of one of the 20th century's leading photographers features San Francisco's 1967 Summer of Love. \$18 to \$38. The de Young, Golden Gate Park, 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive. For more information: <https://bit.ly/48hwY1B>

**3/29 Friday through 3/31 Sunday****Art: International Ceramics Exchange**

Kim YoungSoo, Kim InTae, Kim JaeBeom, Shin YoungTaek, Lee SangHun, and Lee JinWook unveil the secrets behind their renowned ceramic creations. Discover the diversity of Korean ceramics as the artists showcase specialties such as Naked Raku, Buncheong, Traditional Coil & Throw, Porcelainware, Cobalt Painting,

Sanggam, and Korean Traditional woodfire techniques. Through demonstrations and presentations, guests will gain an intimate understanding of the artists' processes, bringing to life the intricacies of this ancient art form. Artists' work will be offered for sale. \$50 to \$1,000. Reception on Friday 3/29 is free. SOMArts, 934 Brannan Street. For more information: <https://bit.ly/48jnZ3a>

31 sun

**Easter: "Bikes, Trikes, and Bagels"**

Bring your bikes, trikes, and smiles to hunt for eggs and enjoy coffee and bagels. Celebrate the holiday with neighbors. 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; egg hunt starts at 11:30 a.m. Free. Daniel Webster Elementary School, 465 Missouri Street. For more information, and to reserve your space: <https://bit.ly/3uCbEtc> or email [info@prefund.org](mailto:info@prefund.org)

**APRIL**

7 sun

**Athletics: Play Bocce in the Dogpatch Spring Season**

Bocce League starts on April 7, with six weeks of officiated play culminating in a tournament among the top teams. Matches are on Sundays, beginning at 9 a.m. Each team is composed of at least two players in regular season matches; tournament teams must have a minimum of four players. The two teams slated to play at the top of the hour practice for the first 15 minutes. Games are timed to 45 minutes or first team to score 13 points. Tournament trophies are custom -costing \$100 to \$200 each season - and the winning team keeps the trophy. Cost per team, per season is \$125. To register: <https://instagram.com/dogpatchbocce/> For more information: send Instagram direct message.

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# Daniel Webster Grapples with Educational Equity

BY CHAITANYA TONDEPU

Founded in 1909 on a lot presently occupied by the Potrero Hill Public Library, for a time Daniel Webster (DW) Elementary School was one of the Hill's three main schools, along with Irving Scott and Patrick Henry. DW relocated to Missouri and 20th streets in 1917. Its building was remodeled for seismic safety in the 1960s.

Irving Scott was open from 1865 to 1974; its former campus now houses the Alive & Free/Omega Boys Club. Patrick Henry closed its doors in 1969, ultimately becoming the site for Downtown High School.

In 2005, when declining enrollment put Webster in jeopardy of being closed, neighborhood families rallied to save it.

"The school's numbers were dwindling to almost nothing and they couldn't justify continuing the school with no students," said Edward Hatter, Potrero Hill Neighborhood House executive director. "Of course, the school district was looking for the path of least resistance by forming an alternative school, but these kinds of schools were more for students with behavioral or learning issues. When families on the northeast side of the Hill got wind of the news, that's the last thing they wanted to deal with."

An ardent group of affluent parents and community activists developed an innovative proposal to increase Webster's enrollment, which was accepted by the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and Board of Education (BoE). The school's appearance, curricula, and teaching staff were enhanced. Following Starr King Elementary School's success with offering a Chinese language immersion program, Webster added a Spanish immersion option. In 2006, Potrero Residents Education Fund (PREFund) was established to support the effort.

"Since the origin of PREFund, they were able to not only keep the school going and introduce the Spanish immersion program to attract more people; the

school has been growing and thriving," commented Mariangela Mistretta, a DW parent of two kids. "The common effort and intention has always been for the greater good, to make sure the community grows and all the kids are taken care of. This has been the goal, year after year, principals change, teachers change, but the purpose remains the same."

In collaboration with Mission Neighborhood Centers, PreFUND established Potrero Kids at Daniel Webster (PKDW) in 2008. In 2012 Potrero Kids Third (PK3), catering to two to three-year-olds, was established in Dogpatch. Collectively, the two campuses accommodate around 100 children, one-third of whom receive tuition assistance. Most families reside in Dogpatch or Potrero Hill, some live in the Mission or Mission Bay, a few are from Bayview or Bernal Heights. The majority of Potrero Kids graduates enter SFUSD schools, an average of 10 to 15 percent enroll at Daniel Webster, while five to 10 percent pursue private education.

"There is a common effort to celebrate minorities and a variety of voices which have been really touching and inspiring," Mistretta emphasized. "Among other programs, the school has an African American Student Affinity Group, and an English learner Advisory Committee. The staff is really committed to bringing all the cultural aspects of the community into the conversation. Every month the school celebrates a different culture or tradition, such as Indigenous history, Diwali, Dia de Los Muertos, African American history, or the LGBTQ+ community. Daniel Webster also has a Wellness Center led by Jen Caldwell and Ms. Susi, which has been amazing at offering socio-emotional learning, counseling, and support to the kids."

"I started developing my own mindfulness practice in 2013, and I was inspired to bring my practice into my work in schools by teaching mindfulness," said Susanne Brennan, affectionately referred to as "Ms. Susi" by her

DANIEL WEBSTER continues on page 9

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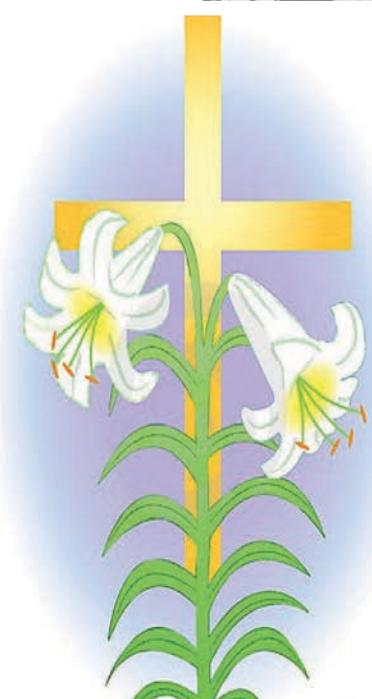
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**GRADUATION** from front page

16 suspensions for one or more days last year.

According to California School Discipline Laws & Regulations, grounds for suspension or expulsion include brandishing a knife or other weapon, physical violence, sexual assault, selling drugs, or possessing an explosive.

In other bad news, the number of California schools with high—missing between 20 and 29 percent—and extreme—30 percent or more—chronic absenteeism jumped from 22 percent to 78 percent between the 2017/2018 and 2021/2022 school years, according to Attendance Works, a nonprofit education advocacy group. Since 2020, the rate of chronically absent students in the U.S. – missing 10 percent of the year or more, or in excess of 18 days – has more than doubled. In 2023, 14.7 million out of 49.4 million American students were chronically absent.

Dashboard data indicates that 33 percent of Daniel Webster elementary students have chronically not appeared on campus, with 29 percent of Starr King elementary students chronically absent. Chronic absenteeism can lead to students falling behind academically, being held back a grade, or not finishing the school year.

“Chronic absence is correlated with not meeting reading proficiency at the end of third grade, not performing well in middle school—including higher rates of suspension—and not making it to high school graduation,” said Hedy Chang, executive director of Attendance Works. “Ninth grade chronic absence is often a really big challenge, because so much pivots on ninth grade.”

Analysts predict that 2024 might see even fewer high school graduations. It’s the scheduled graduation year for students who, as freshmen in 2020, faced the greatest disruption in learning due to shelter-in-place requirements.

Daniel Webster serves 346 kindergarteners through fifth graders, with 93 percent of the student body from minority communities. About 60 percent of Webster pupils receive free or reduced-price lunches. The school has a 24 to one student-teacher ratio.

Starr King has 348 kindergarteners through fifth graders, 92 percent of whom identify as nonwhite, with at least 35 percent qualifying for free or low-cost lunch. The school has a 17:1 student-teacher ratio.

SFUSD enrollment has been declining by one to three percent a year since 2020. There were 48,785 scholars enrolled in public schools in 2023, down from 52,778 in 2020. Lower high school enrollment is partially the result of families shifting away from public schools, according to Rebecca Kee, Daniel Webster parent-teacher association president.

“You end up with lower enrollment in middle and high schools,” Kee said. “Less family involvement. Less general investment in those schools. It hurts all the schools at certain levels.”

An estimated 40 percent of primary and secondary school students in San Francisco attend private schools.

“San Francisco may be one of the cities in the United States with the highest rate of students enrolled in private schools,” Kee said. “It’s a self-perpetuating cycle.”

“San Francisco also has another challenge; we have a declining kid population,” Chang said. “It’s really expensive to live in San Francisco, and it’s really expensive to have a kid in San Francisco.”

Low teacher salaries and a high cost of living limits SFUSD’s ability to attract and retain teachers.

Enrollment in Oakland Unified School District schools is down by about a third since 2020, prompting the closure of two schools last years. OUSD plans to merge or close more schools over the next two years.

**DANIEL WEBSTER** from page 7

students. “However, schools at the time were not hiring mindfulness coaches. A position opened in DW in 2014 called an instructional reform facilitator, so I started doing that part-time, while my children were students at DW. I used grant money outside of school that first year to start the mindfulness program. It was loved by teachers, students, and parents, so then the PTA decided to devote some funds to support the mindfulness program the second and third years. I was really intentional about teaching the students but also inviting the teachers to learn these skills, because I knew if a teacher’s nervous system is not grounded, then the school would not be grounded. I was able to get grant funding through Mindful Schools from 2017-21 to continue to implement whole school mindfulness and then was hired as a full-time Social Emotional Learning coach and teacher in 2021 until the present.”

In 2015, Brennan initiated the Mosaic project at DW, an acronym for Mutual respect, Open mindedness, Self-respect, Attitude, Individuality, Community. Mosaic was founded in 2000 by Lara Mendel and Margaret Hodder in Oakland to nurture community building skills in the context of diversity. Its main program is the Outdoor Project, in which fourth and fifth graders from an array of socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds engage in a week-long experiential camp. As a spinoff of the Mosaic project, Brennan launched the Peace Ambassador Program, in which she’d meet with students who attended the camp over eight weeks to continue discussions on creating community and appreciating differences.

The Wellness Center is a component of Webster’s Care Team, a collaborative effort by school staff to encourage student success. Anita Parameswaran serves as a reading support specialist and works with the school social worker, Jen Caldwell, and Brennan to engage with pupils who may not be progressing academically.

“If a child is not yet at grade level in reading the teacher will refer them to me for reading intervention,” said Parameswaran. “If, after a couple cycles, the student still hasn’t improved and we are seeing specific issues such as processing, signs of dyslexia...we will then refer the student to the Care Team for a student success meeting with the family to discuss further options, one of them being psychological testing to see if there is a deeper issue. Depending on the results, a student will either qualify for an IEP, 504 plan...or they will deem that the student doesn’t qualify for services at this time. However, this helps the family as well as the teachers understand how to better serve the student.”

Webster also offers the After School Enrichment Program (ASEP), which uses a blended funding model, with scaled tuition for those who can afford it, scholarships for families who rely on free or reduced-priced lunches. The program is offered for four hours after school to provide academic support and enrichment classes.

“We began in McKinley in 1999 and we moved into Daniel Webster twelve years ago through a connection of a parent who felt there was a need at DW as well,” said an ASEP employee, who declined to give his name. “We build our curriculum to mirror grade by grade curricula in the school day, so students are being reinforced with similar concepts after school as they are learning during the day, and that varies grade by grade. The program is built to also equitably include students who are of high need who are struggling with certain subjects or behavioral challenges, since we have our office in the school site, we leverage resources in the school to help cater our support to help a student be successful.”

With tight SFUSD budgets, funding for support programs and other needs are largely dependent on the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

“We worked in partnership with the principal and the School Site Council to fill in the gaps based on the SFUSD budget,” said former PTA president, Julie Shumate. “There was really good communication between the principal and PTA. Our fundraising ended in March/April in time to finalize next year’s budget alongside the school, to complement their finalized budget. I thought we were ambitious, raising about \$200,000 a year with about \$150,000 coming from Taste of Potrero. It was an amazing, fun and huge party. The participating bars and restaurants donated the food, booze and labor so the PTA could maximize profits from the ticket sales. Additionally, the PTA had members who were familiar with education to help with the decision making about how to spend the money, but the final budget required a vote by the General Assembly. Our biggest ticket items were salaries, primarily the Visual Arts teacher, lunch monitors, part of the librarian’s salary, and part of one of the paraprofessional’s salary.”

“Our goal has always been around \$250,000 and when we weren’t as highly resourced Taste of Potrero helped us leverage the community to raise funds. We learned to run a professional quality event and it was great,” mentioned Rebecca Kee, current PTA president. “The event sort of ended with the pandemic

and we were also having discussions about not continuing fundraising on that scale anymore, since it was all being run by a majority of working moms with full time jobs. We shifted into a direct-ask campaign with the principle of asking for donations from the more affluent families of DW during small fundraising events like a dinner, which has resulted in us raising almost the same amount.”

With declining budgets, many SFUSD schools are struggling to maintain their school’s appearance and structural soundness, or even have enough classroom teachers. Daniel Webster and Starr King have been able to fill funding gaps through the efforts of their PTAs, with families who have resources and organizing capacity.

“At the end of the day many of our white families have the means for their kids to be tutored at home, but so many of our other families don’t have that opportunity so we do our best to serve the students’ needs of the kids who need it most. It’s the understanding that if our highest needs kids rise, then everyone rises,” said Parameswaran. “It would be incredible if we had two teachers in every room, especially in the GE track, as there tends to be higher burnout compared to the SIP strand, this way, teachers have the ability to divide and conquer, one person can be pulling small groups while another person can be teaching the whole class.”

“I just wish that there would have been more resources for the students; more in classroom support for the students that need it,” said Shumate.

“The PTA is not well-representative of the school or community’s demographics,” said Kee. “I think this is true across the board, not just at our school, but all of SFUSD. Although there have been people-of-color on our team, the vast majority of people in the executive team is all white, which is historically consistent. We have tried to trim some of the obstacles away and we’ve done that very successfully to connect different communities and demographics but at the end of the day, people who are better resourced are just at a different starting line and have more ability to be involved intimately, and this is a systemic problem.”

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### GBD ELECTIONS from front page

the 400 block of Vermont Street. The GBD is working with nearby residents, the Yerba Buena chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and Field Collective, a women-owned, San Francisco-based landscape architecture firm to select native plants for a 1,000-square foot sidewalk garden that'll showcase vegetation that grows well in local backyards and urban spaces.

"This area was built by the GBD in summer and fall 2023. Potrero Hill neighbors and Field Collective helped design and plant an "Eco patch" of native plants in the space. We are taking steps to prepare the area for planting in the fall. We'd like to develop programs for it, for example speakers to explain the importance of having a "checker" site to encourage butterfly reproduction," said Bañas.

Last year the GBD continued the Dogpatch Music Series, a four-event program at Woods Yard Park that took place August through October, drawing upwards of 250 attendees. The concerts were funded by an Avenue Greenlight grant. Numerous businesses, including Bar Piccino and Longbridge Pizza, sold food and drinks, PREFund and Potrero Kids held a kid's sing-along, the Museum of Craft Design brought a mobile MakeArt van, and the View distributed free sand art to children.

Property owners will vote on whether or not to continue to be taxed to support the GBD in March 2025. An endorsement by more than two-thirds of sowers is needed to extend the district for another 10 years. The GBD is working with a consultant to determine if it'll propose to raise assessments.

The GBD assessment appears as a separate line item on annual property tax bills, with monies collected by the San Francisco Treasurer and Tax Col-

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lector and transferred to the nonprofit corporation that manages the GBD. Assessments are based on property size and use, collected twice a year on the same schedule as property taxes. The GBD also receives monies through grants and donations.

"These projects, the renovation of Esprit Park and the development of the Potrero Gateway and Vermont Greenway Park, will allow people to see that the GBD is capable of truly transforming our community," said Donovan Lacy GBD board president, who holds a Dogpatch property owner seat.

San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department expects to complete Esprit Park's renovation by this summer, with the GBD finishing the Potrero Gateway Park, beautifying space under and adjacent to Highway 101, this month.

According to Lacy incoming board members can help the GBD identify and initiate new projects, like sidewalk gardens, small parks, and volunteer plantings.

"We're creating a strong foundation by putting the right processes in place. We are now an established entity, with an eight-year track record of starting and maintaining green spaces and parks," said Lacy.

J.R. Eppler, Potrero Boosters president, agreed that the GBD was at a "wonderful place" in its development. "It would be excellent to see improvements in the freeway overpasses that connect Potrero Hill and Dogpatch and the areas around and underneath them. Then these could be open for community programs, when possible."

"I've learned so much from being a part of the board. Now I can talk about how the City's processes work. I've met more locals and learned more about the history of Dogpatch," said Shawn Troedson, board secretary and Dogpatch property owner seat holder.

"Those experiences helped me understand how to relate the funds that the GBD collects to its impacts on the community," said Sarah Miers, board vice president and holder of a Dogpatch property owner seat, who previously worked in international development and is presently in venture capital. "The GBD Board is composed of members who hold very different skill sets. One of the great things about serving on the board is you will learn from others with expertise in a wide range of industries."

Barb Fritz, another Dogpatch property owner seat holder, said becoming a member has taught her about the composition and costs of materials used in parks, including plants. She's now familiar with what flora grow well in the area. knows which vegetation is drought-resistant and understands the pros and cons of growing native and introduced plants.

"I have been living in Dogpatch since 2014. This is my first term on the

GBD board. Being a part of the GBD helped me see more of what the area has to offer, in terms of these beautiful green spaces and the benefits of being outside with neighbors. I've made many friends from the board through our community involvement together," said Fritz.

Keith Goldstein, Potrero Dogpatch Merchants Association president, said the GBD has been beneficial for businesses, created "gorgeous new green spaces" and improving existing ones. "These spaces have improved our neighborhoods on many levels, including making (them) more attractive to visit and to shop. On any given day, one can see numerous visitors strolling around Dogpatch and enjoying these open spaces, and at the same time perhaps dropping into a local business."

### PARKING from front page

enough resources to dye the affected curbs. Compliance will be the driver's responsibility, in the same way 25 miles per hour is the speed limit in residential areas, whether it's posted or not. Unless the violation occurs in an area currently marked with paint or a sign, such as existing red curbs and other "No Parking" zones, jurisdictions aren't allowed to issue citations for violations until after January 1, 2025. Only warning notices can be given before that date.

Only the vehicle approach side is affected, resulting in up to four parking spots being eliminated from any intersection. Roccaforte was unable to provide an exact total of lost spaces, which requires a detailed analysis of parking on all the City's intersections. He estimates that the legislation reduced available on-street parking by about five percent.

### PUBLISHER'S VIEW from page 3

Neil Howe proposes a recurring scheme of societal rise and subsequent disintegration based on a "wealth pump," whereby elites get richer and ever more entrenched. Inequality, if left unchecked, shatters the system, like a social big bang, with the need to rebuild from the ground up. Such, he asserts, is the situation in America, where oligarchy has become sufficiently extreme that a huge redistribution of power needs to occur.

Catastrophe followed by rebirth is a religious trope, deeply embedded in our collective psyche, and a sign of the periodic reality of disaster. The scriptural flood is an act of recreation, the world restored on somewhat altered terms. An apocalypse will usher in Christ's second coming. Hinduism has Kali, the Goddess of Destruction and Dissolution.

The tang of demise is reinforced

by the near biblical age of our national leadership, with individuals who are largely within a decade and a half of their deaths. President Biden is 81, Trump 77, the average age of a U.S. Senator 64, in a country where the expected lifespan is 79. No matter who we elect this November someone, probably more than one, is going to pass.

Religion and science agree that things must die so that other things can live. But not everything that expires merits mourning. Kali, perhaps acting through a myriad of empirical means, destroys ignorance. Buddhists aspire to ego-death, the "great-death," ending unconscious quests to understand the sense-of-self as a thing, instead of a process. Destruction of ego and ignorance would go a long way towards a society reborn from despair.

Depression, personal and perhaps societal, can be triggered by the sense that bad things just won't change, that the present condition is forever. This is a delusion. Things always change. Nothing remains static. Time makes sure of that. No doubt circumstances can get worse, but they can also get better, or at least different.

San Franciscans are well familiar with the power of terrible transformation. In 1894, 12 years before the Great Earthquake, A. Page Brown, who designed the Ferry Building, declared that disaster was just what San Francisco needed to become a world class metropolis. "Phoenix-like," he wrote, "there would arise, perhaps, a city which would eclipse any American seaport." And it did.

Democracy is the belief that the world will get better. A lack of confidence in egalitarianism feeds on our sense of doom. Yet it's exactly the representative system that enables us to create the structures we live in, which in turn shape us. No one is fully powerless. Kids need help getting to school, addicts require the same to get straight, and we all should pay better attention, to the road, to one another, to what's around us. We can be helpers or helped, it doesn't really matter, so long as we forgive one another for our roles, respect our fellow citizens, and fight the curiously attractive pull of catastrophe.

### SEQUOIA FABRICA from page 4

"fabrica" is Latin, meaning factory or workshop. The initials are "SF."

According to Frankel, Potrero Hill is an ideal location.

"As a neighborhood, it's an interesting mix of design and creativity, and there's a broad swath of communities and families. It's a great match for what we want to do," she said. "We're at the 'getting our feet off the ground' stage. We hope to get some grant funding so we can do things like offer more affordable membership models, free youth programming, and summer internships for middle and high schoolers."

Base membership is \$150 a month; for an additional \$50 monthly a sponsor affiliation helps provide scholarships for those who can't afford classes or full membership dues. A discounted membership is available on a sliding scale of \$100 to \$149 a month for those unable to afford full dues. Members have access to tools, equipment, workspace, and a collaborative community dedicated to sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas.

An open house will be held March 9, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., with button-making, crafts, and tours. Check <https://sequoia-fabrica.org/> for upcoming classes and workshops.



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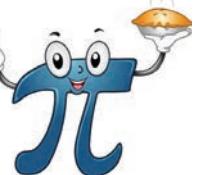
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