

LEAH GARCHIK

# Bay Area culturati cheer for great old men

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CCA President Steve Beal (left), event chairs Stanlee Gatti and Cathy Podell, and honoree Wayne Thiebaud.

Photo: Drew Altizer

Spring 2019 will be remembered as a good time for (let's not insult them by using a euphemism) old men. First, there was **Lawrence Ferlinghetti's** 100th birthday on Sunday, March 24; then there was 98-year-old **Wayne Thiebaud** being honored by the California College of the Arts on Monday, March 25. Next week, there'll be festivities at the Berkeley Art Museum for the 100th birthday of art curator and former museum director **Peter Selz**.

Perhaps it's daily exercise and a diet of antioxidants and probiotics, with kale for dessert. But maybe it's art that is a nutrient.

Thiebaud is, of course, one of America's greatest living artists. It's crass to define value by money, but at the party, a page said to be torn from his sketchbook fetched \$42,000 at a lively auction conducted by **Liam Mayclem**. (The whole event raised \$1.2 million.) Tables were decorated with paint cans, homage to the painter's images of paint cans, and dinner (by **Paula LeDuc**) ended with lemon meringue pie, homage to a painting of pieces that was among those projected on giant screens.

Fittingly, the event was about raising money for scholarships, as the honoree had spent years as an educator. In a video interview with **Michael Krasny**, he shared the philosophy he imparts to students: "Well, they just have to fall in love and go to work and that's enough." As to more specific professional goals: "You want to be an artist? I can't help you with that. I can maybe help you be a better painter."

## Bay Briefing

JUNE 12, 2020

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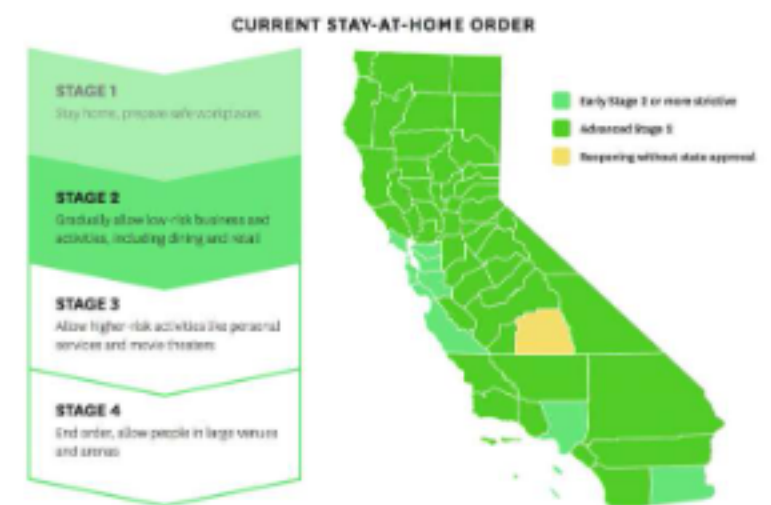
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## Trends

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- Hiking
- Warriors
- MLB Draft
- Police Violence

## California's Reopening

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The painter's "acceptance" speech reflected his personality. Noting that there were about 400 people present, Thiebaud said that he was puzzled that organizers had decided to honor him. He guessed they "were looking for people to come to an event. ... What kind of person would they look for? ... An astrophysicist? A Nobel laureate? ... How did they ever settle on a 98-year-old art professor? I'd like to know how many refusals you got."

P.S.: Leaving the party at around 9:30 p.m., we encountered CCA freshman **Arturo Gomez**, holder of a Kalmanovitz Charitable Foundation Scholarship, who had spoken after dinner of emigrating from Mexico to study architecture. My inquiry about where he was headed was intended to refer to his education, but I didn't make that clear enough, and he mistook its meaning.

"I'm meeting my father," he said, "at a construction site," where the two of them would work deep into the night. That's how one family's ends meet.

And that's why it was a good thing that someone could reach into their pocket and pay \$42,000 for a page from Thiebaud's notebook.

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## More Information

### PUBLIC EAVESDROPPING

"If I died and went straight to hell, it would take me a week to figure out that I wasn't at work." [Read More](#)

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More art: The route to Rubens is a hard road to travel. Looking at promotional materials he received promoting the "Early Rubens" show at the Legion of Honor, **Ben Bayol** was struck by the notice prominently displayed: "Please note that El Camino Del Mar will be closed to vehicle traffic Monday to Friday throughout the run of the exhibition."

Bayol is wondering about "the relationship between Rubens and this beautiful way to reach the equally beautiful museum."

Looking at a sampling of the paintings on the museum's [website](#), I found it hard to make a connection. Was it a stretch to imagine that "The Massacre of the Innocents" depicted the results of road rage when would-be museumgoers, redirected away from El Camino Del Mar, found themselves in a Clement Street traffic jam?

- Another Nextdoor listing from Marin County: The headline is “People are so oblivious.” The specific complaint is, “Not a single person at my office has noticed I had my chakras aligned yesterday. C’mon people. Wake up!”

- **Bertie Brouhard**, a friendly woman who always sees the good in life, was joined in the elevator of her house the other day by neighbors she describes as a “techie Millennial couple.” She exchanged smiles with them, and when they reached the ground floor, turned to them and said, “On my behalf and other 70 million or so Boomers getting Social Security payments, I’d like to say, ‘Thank you for your support!’”

They looked completely confused.

- Punctuation seems to be a topic that never goes away. After the suggestion, reported herein, that people drop the parenthesis from phone numbers and use dashes only, **Jeff Parrott** says it’s already “behind the times. The new trend is ‘dots,’” as in 415.777.8426.

## **PUBLIC EAVESDROPPING**

“If I died and went straight to hell, it would take me a week to figure out that I wasn’t at work.”

Man to man, overheard on the 33-Ashbury bus by Joe Mac

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**Leah Garchik**

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Leah Garchik washed up on the shores of Fifth and Mission in 1972, began her duties as a part-time temporary steno clerk, and has done everything around The Chronicle including washing the dishes (her coffee cup). Over the years, she has served as writer, reviewer, editor and columnist. She is the author of two books, “San Francisco: Its Sights and Secrets” and “Real Life Romance.”

She is an avid knitter, a terrible accordion player, a sporadic tweeter and a pretty good speller.