

JULY/AUG 2015



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magazine

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Table of Contents

4

Letter from the Editor: Kids and Water

Balancing water fun with water responsibility

Kirsten Pflieger

5

Letter from the Board: Transitions

It's not goodbye, but see you soon

Sarah Soto

6

Out and About

Family Friendly Bay Area Beaches

Stef Tousignant

Fair Weather Fun

Jennifer Hofmann

Family Fun In and Around the Water

Shaheen Bilgrami

Water Babies

Juli Fraga

Li'l Kid, Big City: Marina

Sallie Hess

10

Ask the Expert: Water Safety

Get out and enjoy yourselves, safely

Any Hall

12

Dadlands: Wet Perspective

Water wise through a child's eyes

Joe Penrod

14

Books for Kids: United States of America

A geographical and cultural tour of our country

Laure Latham

16

From Womb to World: From Womb to Water

Water births: not just for supermodels

Anna Gracia

18

California's New Water Wars

How will we divvy up this precious resource?

Jessica Bernstein-Wax

22

Breaking It Down: How You Can Do Your Part to Save Water

New ways to conserve water

Tara Hardesty

24

Time to Dig In For...A 220 Year Drought?

The many pronged approach to tackling the drought

Sarah Lai Stirland

39

I ♥ Mom: Water Play, Yay?!

Embracing children's obsession with water

Gail Cornwall

GGMG at Work

4

Volunteers of the Month

4

Housekeeping

11

Drives & Contest

17

New Arrivals

28

GGMG Events

34

Committee Updates

Cover Photo by Lindsay Lovier Photography;
Cover models: Marsha Bergen, Zoe Bergen (6)

Letter from the Editor: Kids and Water

By Kirsten Pflieger



Kirsten Pflieger lives in the Castro with her husband, Karl, and their two daughters, Serenity (4) and Sierra (2). They are looking forward to a fun summer filled with camping, hiking, and swimming lessons.

My 2-year-old loves water. She loves to jump in puddles, splash in the bath, and dump it from one container to another. We recently spent a week at Camp Mather, where she spent the better part of five days wading in the lagoon or bouncing on the pool steps. As I carried her back to the tent each day for a much needed nap, with her head

nestled in the crook of my neck, she would reach her hand out toward the pool and whimper “Me, wah-wee” (translation: “I want to go in the water”).

It is so hard to explain to a child this age why she needs to turn the water off while washing her hands. The concept of water

My 4-year-old loves maps, but does not understand scale or how extraordinary it is that water travels 160 miles so that she can take a bath.

conservation is hard enough for some adults who can read charts and who have experienced the decreased snowpack first hand. For a child who was born during the drought and so has no

expectation of rain, the fact that there is water every time you turn on the faucet is proof enough that everything is all right.

We planned this issue because while we are all affected by the drought, there is still a lot of joy to be found in water, especially as parents of young children. Our three features focus on putting the drought in perspective. On page 18, Jessica talks about where our water comes from and the balance between residential and agricultural use. Sarah informs us of what is being done about our dwindling reserves on a state and local level on page 24. Practical water conservation tips for your family can be found on page 22. It’s not all doom and gloom, though! Our Dadlands, Ask the Expert, and I <3 Mom columns talk about fostering a respect for water through play on pages 12, 10, and 39, respectively. Check out Out & About on page 6 to see where to get wet in the Bay Area.

While we were at Camp Mather, we visited the O’Shaughnessy Dam and Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. We looked at the map and talked about how that water traveled all of the way to San Francisco. This concept was completely above my 2-year-old’s head, of course. My 4-year-old loves maps, but does not

understand scale or how extraordinary it is that water travels 160 miles so that she can take a bath.

As with so many of the lessons that I try to impart to my children, making sure that they understand why they should not waste water may have to wait. In the meantime, I can model responsible water use and expect that understanding comes with time.

KPflieger

Volunteers of the Month



Congratulations to **Addie Bjornsen** and **Kirsten Pflieger**, our July and August volunteers of the month!

Addie started volunteering with GGMG in April 2014 as the Social Media co-chair and has held that position since. She is a data analyst at the Workers Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau of California and has a three-year-old son named Oliver. **Favorite...Pastimes:** .gif collecting, etsy shopping, watching any iteration of The Real Housewives **Book:** Love in the Time of Cholera **Film:** The English Patient **Destination:** Hawaii **Parenting advice:** Whatever works.

Housekeeping

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Letter from the Board: Transitions

By Sarah Soto

The first half of 2015 has brought many exciting changes to GGMG. We expanded our membership to include mothers of children up to age 11 and mothers who have moved out of San Francisco, introduced a monthly email bulletin, and increased our Board of Directors from nine members to 12.

This increase in board membership has allowed new talent to join the board and experienced leaders to transition into new roles. I will be joining this migration as I transition out of the Board Chair role a few months early into the role of Technology Director. This is a board position that has called to me ever since there was talk of a website redesign. When the previous Technology Director, Jen Morrissey, moved out of state and her spot opened up, I knew that I had to go for it! This transition is very exciting for me because I will stay involved, and in an area that I am most passionate about—prior to joining the board I chaired the web team committee.

I am truly grateful for the experience I have gained as Vice Chair and Chair, and for how often I was pushed out of my comfort zone—I have a lot more grey hairs to prove how much wiser I have become. I am thankful to have served, and that I will continue to serve, GGMG and for all of the volunteer mommies I have come to know along the way.

Last month, we said goodbye to our Editorial Director, Dallas Strömberg, who served beyond her two years. We will soon say goodbye to our Community Outreach Director, Sara Wilson. She is helping to keep the many wheels of Community Support turning

while we search for her replacement. Thank you, Dallas and Sara, for committing so much of your time and heart to GGMG.

Laurel Kellam, the current Vice Chair, will be taking over as Board Chair. I am happy to announce that Cathy Tran, the current Director of Membership, will succeed Laurel as Vice Chair. We are currently interviewing candidates for several openings on the Board, including Director of Membership and Editorial Director, and hope to fill all positions within the next two months. Look for announcements in the September magazine.

I am thankful to have served, and that I will continue to serve, GGMG and for all of the volunteer mommies I have come to know along the way.

While this is my last musing, I am happy it isn’t a goodbye. As with many journeys in life, the path is not always straight or clear, but in the end you get where you need to be.

Have a wonderful summer break!

SSoto



Sarah Soto works full-time for Williams-Sonoma’s information technology department. She has been a GGMG volunteer since 2009. She lives with her sons, Isaac (6) and Gabriel (4) in San Francisco’s Excelsior District.

Kirsten began volunteering in October 2013 as a GGMG Magazine copy editor and has risen through the ranks to become editor-in-chief. **Favorite...Pastimes:** Biking, reading and sleeping **Book:** Ender’s Game **Film:** Love Actually **Restaurant:** AQ **Destination:** Kauai, Hawaii **Parenting advice:** If it is working for you and your family, keep doing it.

Kirsten and Addie will enjoy a 60-minute massage at International Orange Spa (2044 Fillmore St.). Book yourself a massage today at www.internationalorange.com.



THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: camping trips, late night packing, alfajores, play kitchen hacking, snark, apricot and chocolate gelato, early bedtimes, HGTV marathons and late-night cheese.

COMING NEXT: September—Back to School; October—Safety

CONTEST: Congratulations to Marianna Pollak, winner of the May Plexus contest.

Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email editor@gmg.org.

Family Fun In and Around the Water

By Shaheen Bilgrami

We live in a city surrounded by water, but sometimes the day-to-day rigors of life with young children can disconnect us from it. Here are some places in and just outside the city, where you and your family can reconnect with this amazing resource.

The Ferry Building

Enjoy a gourmet treat overlooking the water. Then explore the bay by crossing it—jump on a ferry across to the other side of the bay!

www.ferrybuildingmarketplace.com/

Fitzgerald Marine Reserve

Situated 40 minutes south of the city, this reserve is a great place to explore the flora and fauna of tide pools with your kids. Check the guidelines on the website below to optimize your visit.

www.fitzgeraldreserve.org

Lake Merced

This little oasis of calm in the southwest of the city is perfect for cycling, hiking, and watching birds and ducks with your little ones.

www.sfrecpark.org/destination/lake-merced-park/

Lands End

Feeling energetic? Take in breathtaking and inspiring views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Pacific Ocean as you hike from Lands End to Sutro Baths. The whole hike may be too much for little legs, but even a smaller portion of the route will yield satisfying results.

www.parksconservancy.org/visit/park-sites/lands-end.html



Mason Cummings, Parks Conservancy

Shaheen Bilgrami is a freelance writer and editor and a contributor to blog.littlelane.com. She is also the mom of an energetic preschooler. Contact her through her website, www.shaheenbilgrami.com.

The Marine Mammal Center

This Marin Headlands center is the perfect place for kids of all ages to learn about their marine mammal neighbors, from what they eat to the dangers they face. Kids will also enjoy checking out some of the adorable patients inhabiting the animal pens and learning about how the center helps them to integrate back to the wild.

www.marinemammalcenter.org



Spreckels Lake

Young boat enthusiasts will love checking out model boats whizzing past on this purpose-built lake in Golden Gate Park, which is also the home to the San Francisco Model Yacht club.

www.golden-gate-park.com/spreckels-lake.html

Steinhart Aquarium (at The California Academy of Science)

There are few better places to appreciate water than the Steinhart Aquarium. The exhibits include sea creatures from all over the world as well as closer to home. The Discovery Tidepool is a great way to get close and personal with some of the inhabitants of our local California tidepools! www.calacademy.org/exhibits

Stow Lake

There's so much to do in and around this much-loved lake in the middle of Golden Gate Park. Kids love to check out the turtles, ducks, and geese. You can also rent a boat or paddle boat for on-the-water exploration. www.golden-gate-park.com/stow-lake.html

Water Babies

By Juli Fraga

Babies are aquatic and spend 10 months swimming around in mom's tummy, so it makes sense that many parents are interested in beginning swimming lessons for their children before the age of one. When choosing swimming lessons, there are several different options: individual, semi-private, and group lessons. Each offers something unique. If you are looking for a cost-effective option, semi-private or group lessons might be a good option for your family.

YMCA SF EMBARCADERO, 169 Steuart St: The YMCA offers group, semi-private, and private swimming lessons. You can begin group lessons when your little one is just 6 months old. Their *Shrimp* class orients babies and their caregivers to the wonders of the water, emphasizing trust and safety between you and your baby. Semi-private and private lessons are available upon request, and all sessions are 30 minutes in length. You must be a member of the YMCA to sign up. For more information, visit:

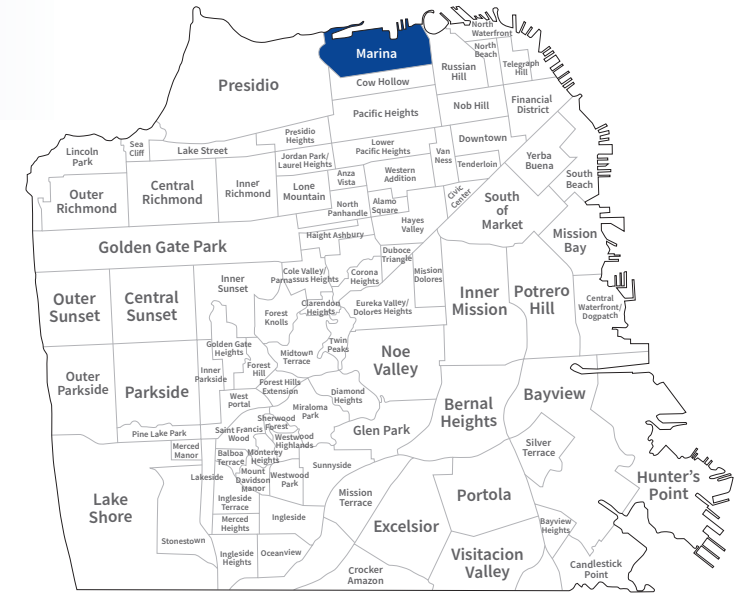
www.ymcasf.org

UCSF MISSION BAY, 1675 Owens St: A youth aquatics program with group, private, and semi-private lessons are all offered here. A 30-minute private lesson costs between \$35 and \$45 for one student, while a semi-private lesson costs between \$50 and \$70 for two. They also offer packages, which reduces the individual cost per lesson. If you have younger children and want your older child to have a semi-private lesson, here's a trick: schedule the lesson during open swim time and take your child and her friend. They can have their lesson with the instructor while you hang or swim with your younger child. For more information, email: aquatics@ucsf.edu

JCCSF, 3200 California St: The JCCSF is a four-time winner of "Best on the Peninsula" Aquatic Concepts Swim School Program. Similar to the other swim schools, lessons begin at 6 months, and they offer a range of group classes. Financial aid is available. For more information, visit: www.jccsf.org

SF AQUATICS: The public swimming pools in San Francisco offer lessons for toddlers and beyond. There is a daily entrance fee and lessons incur an extra cost. For more information, visit: www.tinyurl.com/SF-Aquatics

Juli Fraga is a psychologist, mother and writer living in San Francisco with her husband, daughter and their two cats, Mango & Squirrel.



Lil' Kid, Big City: Marina

By Sallie Hess

You might be thinking, "Oh great, she's going to review **Giggle** next!" Don't touch that dial! Chestnut Street is a wonderland of delicious snacks and small boutiques, where you could happily browse and eat your way through the day.

Bakery **Le Marais** has gained deserved notoriety, but you should also check out **Le Panotiq** for its all-organic menu, including mini pastries. Their small sizes and small prices—one thin dollar!—make them a great choice for little tummies. If allergies are a concern, next door is **Seed + Salt**, a gluten-free restaurant. There are a number of lunch options to make both parents and kids happy, including **Glaze**, **Super Duper**, **Blue Barn**, and **Delarosa**. Skip the soft-serve at Super Duper and go across the street to **Over the Moon** for homemade ice cream in both grown-up and kid flavors, including Earl Grey and Funfetti. If it's too cold for ice cream, **David's Tea** has kid-friendly teas and cute straw cups.

If you're in the mood for shopping, there are some great hidden gems along the way. **Toss** is a preppy outfitter for mom and baby, including monogrammable wine totes and diaper bags in fun colors. **Peek** sells cute graphic tees for all ages, and **Marine Layer** makes cozy wrap-around cardigans that are perfect for breezy summer days. If you want to do some grocery shopping, **Marina Meats** is excellent for the carnivore. The Italophile will find much to love at **Lucca's Delicatessen**, and **Pet Connection** sells hard-to-find brands of natural pet food.

The Marina location of **Books Inc.** does not have a storytime, but it's a big location with a great kids' section. The **Marina Branch Library**, however, has storytime and other fun activities, and is right next to the large and sunny **Moscone Playground**. You could go down to the marina itself and contemplate the beautiful sailboats. While you're there, be sure to take a hard look at the **Marina Safeway**, which is architecturally significant as the first Safeway built in the eponymous "Marina style." As long as you have gone that far, you should check out the businesses in Fort Mason, particularly the **Friends of the Public Library Bookstore**, which has both a great selection of used books and a cozy café. ❖

Sallie Hess lives in Balboa Terrace. She has a 2-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son, and is contemplating her next move from the comfort of her sunroom couch.

Ask the Expert

What We Should Know About Water Safety

By Anya Hall

What are the top five things parents should know about water safety for toddlers?

1. Drowning is the number one cause of accidental death in children under the age of 5.
2. Drowning doesn't just happen in swimming pools; it also happens in fountains, ponds, and even in buckets and dog bowls.
3. According to the CDC, formal swim lessons can decrease the risk of drowning by up to 88 percent.
4. Layers of protection are essential to drowning prevention.
5. Seconds count. All child care providers (including grandparents) should be trained in CPR and first aid.

What can I do to promote water safety?

Drowning claims more victims than car accidents, yet many parents today are obsessed with car seat safety and tend to overlook water safety. To reduce your child's risk of drowning, I promote the message of the "Safer 3":

- **Safer Water:** Identifying where the risks are with any body of water (bathtubs, pools, spas, lakes, rivers, or oceans), and reducing risk by building barriers and isolation fences or safety netting.
- **Safer Kids:** Constant adult supervision in combination with swimming lessons and proper flotation devices as needed (Coast Guard-approved lifejackets, for example).
- **Safer Response:** Caretakers must be trained in CPR and first aid, and ready to identify signs of active and passive drowning.

When should I start swim lessons?

The best age to start swim lessons is before 6 months of age, because infants retain the moro reflex (also known as the "startle reflex"), allowing them to instinctively hold their breath underwater. However, it is never too late to start lessons, nor is there ever a "bad" age to start. At La Petite Baleen we offer a Baby and Me class for ages 2 months to 16 months in which we focus on the foundation of swimming, including breath control, balance, and buoyancy. Our Toddler and Me class is for ages 16 months through 36 months. In this class we focus on the foundation of swimming (above), as well as safety skills, including:

- Back floats
- Holding onto the side of the pool
- Climbing out of the pool
- Falling in and swimming back to the wall

We teach all of these skills using songs, games, and special equipment designed to promote proper swim skills. These



classes are designed to educate the caretaker as well as the student, so that parents, grandparents, and others can continue their skills during our free family swim times, as well as on vacation.

What are some things parents should be aware of during summer vacations, especially when it comes to water safety?

One of the biggest errors parents make when it comes to water safety is vigilance while traveling. For example, planning a trip to grandma's over the summer or booking a VRBO with a pool that has no safety barriers are major oversights. Be sure to ask questions about pools, hot tubs, ponds, etc. while planning and before booking! It's unrealistic to think that you can keep doors closed or locked, watch your child, and/or keep a life jacket on your child/children at all times. Pool alarms and safety bracelets are not 100 percent reliable, so layers of protection are required. For example, use a pool alarm in combination with a safety bracelet and a proper barrier system.

Other important tips:

- Always designate a responsible adult as "water watcher."
- Never rely on lifeguards for drowning prevention. They are there to respond to emergencies, not necessarily to prevent them.
- Put away phones, laptops, magazines, and books when you are the designated "water watcher."
- Lifejackets are a must with all boating activities.
- Don't forget the sunscreen for outdoors.
- Be sure to check for poop and take frequent potty breaks. ♦

Anya Hall is a GGMG mom and Bay Area native. She grew up in Half Moon Bay, where her parents started La Petite Baleen Swim School in their backyard. She graduated from Cal Berkeley, where she swam as an NCAA Division 1 National Champion and All-American. She is the marketing and curriculum manager at La Petite Baleen and continues to swim master's in Burlingame.

GGMG: Helping Others, Treating Yourself

Community Support

Summer Giving Ideas!

As the Community Support Drives Team takes a vacation this summer, we invite you to support some amazing organizations that are in constant need of donations:

Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP)

A GGMG favorite. They appreciate donations of money or in-kind donations. They are always taking donations of diapers, wipes, breast pumps, lightly used kids clothing and maternity clothing. Please visit their website at www.homelessprenatal.org for more information.

La Casa de las Madres

A wonderful organization that supports the needs of women and kids in times of crisis. You can donate funds or products. They will accept household goods, toiletries, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Please visit their website at www.lacasa.org for more information.

St. Anthony's

A San Francisco institution providing services for thousands of people every year for close to 100 years. You can donate funds or products. St. Anthony's will accept children's clothing, backpacks, school supplies, and men's and women's clothing. Please visit www.stanthonyssf.org for more information.

Contest

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NextKids challenges the status quo by creating a workspace for parents and a carespace for children, where both parent and child can thrive, equally, without compromise—in the same location. We invite you to experience a new way of living, working, and caring for your children the way we were always meant to—together.

365 Vermont Street • San Francisco, CA 94103 • 415.484.8434
www.nextspace.us/nextkids

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, SEND AN EMAIL WITH "NEXTKIDS" IN THE SUBJECT LINE TO CONTEST@GGMG.ORG BY AUGUST 31.



DADLANDS

Wet Perspective

By Joe Penrod

“Daddy, I think I want to be a squid.” I turn my head slightly towards the rear passenger seat, trying to get a better angle for my aging ears, and reply: “Did you say a squid? I’m not sure if becoming a squid is the right idea for you. I don’t think you will like what they eat, and besides, I’ll miss you if you’re a squid.”

Finn laughs: “Don’t worry, you can come with me and be the daddy squid.”

Conversations like this one are nothing new for the two of us, for Finn and I are both children of Northern California, raised beside, around, and in the water. Water for drinking, water for surfing, water for cooking, water for skiing, and yes, even water for washing ourselves (perish the thought, Finn).

I have experienced more than one drought cycle here, and sometimes I think that my childhood memories of aphorisms as colorful as the brown-yellow flushing dichotomy are part of what fixed my focus towards the snow-capped mountains and the wide, white-capped ocean. I can remember feeling concerned and anxious that perhaps there wouldn’t be any more water, and despite my barely concealed glee at the prospect of no more baths (like father, like son), I knew that the downside massively outsourced the upside. Having watched the rains return and years of huge snowstorms blow through, I have the benefit of knowing that the drought has broken before.

Yet, that sense of scarcity has always remained embedded deep inside me. I think it drives the desire to ski until the very last second the lifts are open, to surf until the sun is really and truly

Having watched the rains return and years of huge snowstorms blow through, I have the benefit of knowing that the drought has broken before.

under the horizon, and to sail across the ocean at every available opportunity. Every moment of those experiences is joyful, but undergirded by a sense that water is a limited resource and could be gone before I know it.

For Finn, at his urbane 4 (and one half, he is quick to correct), his whole world has been drought. In the beginning, I doubt he noticed it. Now he can hear the adult conversations, the news, and even if he doesn’t say anything immediately, he is processing it all.

On the one hand, being a child of drought is to learn a long list of procedures: turn off the faucet when you brush your teeth, only

water the plants at night, et cetera. For our society today, it is increasingly a process of “shaming” our neighbors and judging other people’s use of water, stemming perhaps from our own anxiety about not doing quite enough. I know Finn has picked up on this, because in the usual manner of a 4-year-old, he is quick to point out every sprinkler that is on during daylight hours whenever we are out.

But at the the very core of the drought experience, I believe, is the nagging fear that it won’t go away, and that the things we need and love about water won’t be there for us in the future. As we drive towards our favorite Sunday destination, the aquarium, Finn changes gears to ask me piercing questions about the life cycle of salmon. I struggle to answer him (accuracy is beginning to become much more important as his ability to impeach improves), but I am convinced I do a passing job of describing their birth in the mountains, their swim to the delta, their conversion to salt water, their adventures in the Pacific, and their return to their ancestral homes.

Finn gazes out the window at sand dunes and fog. After a while he asks, “What if the salmon can’t find the river when they come back?” I tell them they can always find the river. “What if the river isn’t there?” I am at a loss for words. I try to think of a way to put a positive spin on the concept of a changing climate, extinction.

As adults, we try to think of solutions: desalination, pipelines, extreme conservation techniques, toilet-to-tap. We think of building fish ladders, artificial spawning pools. We think that we have the big, disruptive, organic ideas.

But it is Finn who speaks next: “I think we will just be squid.” ❖

Joe Penrod sails professionally when he isn’t busy serving as a public defender for Alameda County. Likes include long sails on the ocean, short skis in the mountains, and equal justice.



GYMBOREE

PLAY & MUSIC

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For details visit ggmg-gymboree.com

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Books for Kids United States of America

By Laure Latham

What makes the United States of America what they are? This month, we celebrate the USA, covering everything from US classics to funny geography, from pint-sized heroes to Gold Rush ghosts.



American Babies

By The Global Fund for Children

With simple text accompanying 17 portraits of American babies from diverse cultural backgrounds, this book reads like a happy song to young children. With partial proceeds benefitting The Global Fund for Children, this sweet book is a great introduction to what makes America special and the wonderful world of books.

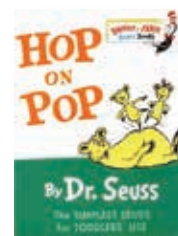
Ages: 0 to 2 years

Hop on Pop (Board Book)

Written and illustrated by Dr. Seuss

This new abridged version of the timeless American classic provides toddlers with their own simplified version of the book with Red, Ed, Ned, and Ted in bed, three fish in a tree or a pup in a cup. Accessible and fun, this book is a terrific way for kids to learn rhyming sounds.

Ages: 18 months to 5 years



The Case of The Missing Donut

Written by Alison McGhee, illustrated by Isabel Roxas

A little boy in a cowboy hat and his canine “deputy” are in charge of bringing back a dozen donuts safely from the bakery. To make sure that the donuts are OK, the young sheriff peeks inside the box and spots a “smushed” one. What should he do, and how does everyone he meets know about the missing donut? A first detective case for the true American hero—the donut sheriff!

Ages: 4 to 7 years

The Scrambled States of America

Written and illustrated by Laurie Keller

One day, Kansas wakes up grumpy. Next door, Nebraska, tired of hearing South and North Dakota bicker, organizes a party for the states. During the evening, Idaho and Virginia suggest that all of the states switch places. Can you imagine the ensuing riot? This hilarious story of what makes each state special is a great way to learn a few bits of geography and to spot a few familiar states. You can even get the board game and play away.

Ages: 5 years and up



The Ghosts of Luckless Gulch

Written by Anne Isaacs, illustrated by Dan Santat

Estrella is a little girl who lives in 1848 California and runs so fast that she leaves a trail of flames in her wake. On her father’s rancho, she is also an animal healer and rescues three unusual creatures. When the Gold Rush takes California by storm, her “pets” are stolen and Estrella tracks them north to a haunted mine at Luckless Gulch. There, she discovers that treacherous ghosts have petrified everything in ice and are viciously using her pets to mine their gold. If your kids like tall tales, this one is an amazing story that they’ll read over and over again at bedtime.

Ages: 5 to 8 years



The Salmon Princess: An Alaska Cinderella Story

By Mindy Dwyer

When the Silver Salmon Festival is announced, everyone can go except Cinder who must clean all of the salmon caught by her step-brothers. With the help of an eagle spirit and a fisherwoman’s boot, her fortune is changed. Don’t expect this Cinderella to be weak and delicate. She is strong and full of spunk! Set in an Alaskan fishing camp, this is a great book to get a glimpse of Alaskan culture and landscapes.

Ages: 3 to 7 years



Cut from the Same Cloth: American Women of Myth, Legend, and Tall Tale

Written by Robert D. San Souci, illustrated by Brian Pinkney, with an introduction by Jane Yolen

This collection of folktales from master storyteller Robert D. San Souci is the ultimate selection of stories about Native American, African American, Mexican American, and Canadian American heroines. Organized by region and moving from east to west, the book can be read chapter by chapter and savored on a long road trip or sitting by the campfire at night.

Ages: 8 to 12 years

Al Capone Does My Shirts

Written by Gennifer Choldenko

When 12-year-old Moose Flanagan moved to Alcatraz Island with his family in 1935, he didn’t expect he’d have to watch his older sister. Autistic and rejected by a special school in San Francisco, Natalie is a handful and needs constant supervision. Unhappy at first, Moose soon befriends the warden’s daughter. The book is a great read for older readers and anybody who’s even dreamt of going “backstage” in the most famous prison of America.

Ages: 8 to 12 years



Laure is the author of the mommy blog Frog Mom (www.frogmom.com), as well as the book Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She writes for several parenting websites and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her husband and two daughters with compulsory cream tea stops. You can reach her at info@frogmom.com.



The Green Glass Sea

Written by Ellen Klages

In 1943, two 10-year-old girls spend a year on an army base in Los Alamos, New Mexico while their parents work on a gadget that could end WW2. Told from a child perspective, the book gradually reveals importance of the parents’ work as well as its deadly consequences. Who knew atomic bomb testing could leave a green glass sea in the desert?

Ages: 9 to 12 years

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From Womb to World

From Womb to Water

By Anna Gracia

San Francisco mom Ellery Cook had her baby in a tub at home. She had already decided on a home birth without the use of pain medication, so when she heard that water births were considered the “midwife’s epidural,” she immediately rented a tub. Water births, a procedure where expectant mothers sit waist-deep in a tub of warm water through labor and delivery with no additional use of pain medications, are making a comeback. Purported to have been around since the time of the Egyptian pharaohs, water is heated to approximately body temperature (no higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit) to simulate a womb-like environment for the baby when it is born. Many believe that the transition from the amniotic fluid to the water is gentler for the baby’s system, and maintain that newborns do not actually take their first breath until they are pulled out of the water. However, the process is still controversial. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics have come out decidedly against it. These organizations accede that laboring in water helps reduce pain, but believe it is ultimately too risky for the baby to actually deliver underwater.



Despite the medical field’s resistance, water birth shot into the spotlight a few years ago when supermodel Gisele Bündchen posted photos from the birth of her son, following a handful of other celebrities, like Jennifer Connelly, Alyson Hannigan, Thandie Newton, and of course, Ricki Lake, whose documentary *The Business of Being Born* inspired Bündchen to deliver at home.

Many water birth moms have extolled the benefits of buoyancy and its ability to relieve the pressure of a heavy body and increasingly intense contractions.

And while the average mom may not necessarily feel like a supermodel while in labor, many water birth moms have extolled the benefits of buoyancy and its ability to relieve the pressure of a heavy body and increasingly intense contractions.

Though some, like Gisele, use their own bathtubs for the birth, experts recommend using a larger, rented tub for both comfort and safety, as medical professionals have more access to the mother in case of an emergency. It also leaves the draining and cleanup of the tub to someone else, which alone makes it worth

the cost. It is estimated that the number of hospitals in the U.S. that permit water births is around 10 percent, but there are currently none that do so within the city of San Francisco. “Comfort and training of the care providers seems to be the main deterrent to hospital water births, as well as liability or engineering issues,” says Bay Area doula Reise Tanner. She adds, “For example, St. Luke’s has tubs but they are not permitted to use them due to engineering issues.” Waterbirth International, an education and advocacy group for women who want to have water births, urges expectant mothers to contact the organization for assistance in gaining hospital approval to use a tub. But, even with Waterbirth International’s optimism and success with individual cases, the vast majority of water births still occur at home, in a rented tub.

There are unexpected benefits to a birthing tub—a personal hot tub in your living room in the weeks leading up to birth, says Dara Crawford, another San Francisco water birth mom. With its large capacity, “you could invite some friends over for a party,” she joked. She too referenced the “midwife’s epidural” as her main reason for choosing to have a water birth. Crawford actually found the tub so relaxing during the labor of her second child that she had to climb out to push because her progress had slowed. Because the water can slow down labor, it’s generally not recommended to enter the tub before active labor begins (or dilation to five centimeters).

Ginny Colbert at Natural Resources, a San Francisco-based pregnancy, birth, and early parenting resource center, recommends doing a trial run of the set-up to ensure all the equipment works properly and to clock how long the tub takes to fill. “It is [also] optimal if the person setting up the tub is also the person who will monitor the tub while in use—though [the tubs] are generally straightforward,” adds Colbert.

Both Cook and Crawford say they didn’t decide to have a water birth until later in their pregnancies, so don’t worry if you don’t have every detail of your birth plan hammered out just yet. And, as the drug commercials say, talk to your medical provider if you think a water birth might be right for you. ❖

Anna has two small kids that were not only not delivered in water, but don’t yet know how to swim. She has actually considered putting a hot tub in her living room. You can read more from her at SnarkyMovieReviews.blogspot.com.

New Arrivals



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Jessica W. | Baby Gianna Charley |
| Corinna L. | Baby Ari Lev |
| Claire SunSpiral | Baby Crimson |
| Karmela R. | Baby Grace Soledad |
| Kimberly K. | Baby Samantha Helen |
| Livier S. | Baby Alexander Seamus |
| Chloe F | Baby Max Kailing |
| Maren Eattock | Baby Emilia Mary |
| Karen D. | Baby Chloe Jay |
| Caitlin Wong | Baby Dylan James |
| Alona J. | Baby Dean Andrew |
| Jeannie Diedisheim | Baby Maxime Paul Jean-Georges |
| Mickey Hubbell | Baby Montgomery Grizzly Baer |
| Cynthia M. | Baby Rose Yumei |

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California’s New Water Wars

By Jessica Bernstein-Wax

Kathryn Phillips spends her days in the state capital advocating for environmental issues, including water conservation. But when the Sierra Club California director leaves the office for her Sacramento home, it’s nearly impossible for her to gauge her personal water use.

“We still don’t have [water] meters in my neighborhood,” Phillips says. “I have no way of knowing whether I’m doing a good job of conserving water or not.”

While water remains one of the hottest political issues in California, the laws and regulations surrounding it are surprisingly complex and uneven. Phillips’ situation is a case in point: despite the current severe drought, some 250,000 California homes

and businesses still lack water meters, according to recent reports. Meanwhile, a dizzying array of agencies distribute water to residents and determine their own rates and rules.

Even accurately tracking the state’s overall water usage continues to pose problems. Experts attribute those monitoring woes in part to a complex, antiquated water rights system, as well as a historic lack of laws regulating the pumping of groundwater, which accumulates underground beneath the earth’s surface.

“California is one of the last states that is really implementing groundwater management—other states have been at the forefront,” says Helen Dahlke, a hydrology professor at the University of California, Davis, who studies both surface and groundwater. “Getting data is one of our most time-consuming steps.”

Where does California’s urban water come from?

For most Californians, the water we drink, bathe in, and use to irrigate our gardens travels hundreds of miles to reach us. Indeed, residential water comes from as far as 1,400 miles away in some parts of Southern California.

A complex web of aqueducts and infrastructure ferries water around the state, with an estimated 3,000 water agencies distributing it.

From the Southern California water wars of the early 1900s to the massive State Water Project and its 600 miles of canals and pipes, California’s water landscape has undergone a stunning transformation over the past century-plus.

According to the 2004 book *Introduction to Water in California*, 75 percent of the state’s water supply originates north of Sacramento, while residents and businesses south of the capital account for 75 percent of water demand. Most of San Francisco’s water comes from the Tuolumne River via the Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct, with local reservoirs and streams supplementing that supply.

After a decades-long struggle, San Francisco received federal approval in 1913 to build a water system in the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park. Construction

began soon after and the first mountain water reached San Francisco in 1934.

The aqueduct now supplies water to more than two million people living in San Francisco and other parts of the Bay Area.

How is the drought affecting residents?

While California’s climate historically has featured droughts and wet periods, we’re currently in the midst of one of the worst droughts on record.

“Droughts aren’t anything new,” says Dietrich Stroeh, who managed the Marin Municipal Water District during a severe drought in the 1970s. “They’ve been going on for years—[scientists] know this from the tree rings.

“The reason this one’s worse is because of the snowpack,” which was at a mere 5 percent of normal levels this spring, Stroeh says.

In April, Governor Jerry Brown issued an executive order requiring cities and towns throughout the state to slash water usage by 25 percent, with the State Water Resources

Control Board approving the new rules in May.

“This historic drought demands unprecedented action,” Brown told reporters in April. “Therefore, I’m issuing an executive order mandating substantial water reductions across our state. As Californians, we must pull together and save water in every way possible.”

Brown’s order also requires local governments to replace some lawns with drought-tolerant landscaping; establishes a consumer-rebate program for energy-efficient appliances; and obligates golf courses, campuses, and cemeteries to cut their water use.

The state water board can issue fines of up to \$10,000 for agencies that fail to comply.

Punitive measures, however, may prove unsuccessful if applied to residents, Stroeh says. During the mid-1970s drought, the Marin Municipal Water District initially fined residents for a variety of wasteful actions, such as washing their cars at home. But

Stroeh later found that allocating a specific quantity of water to each household and letting residents choose how to use that amount resulted in much greater conservation.

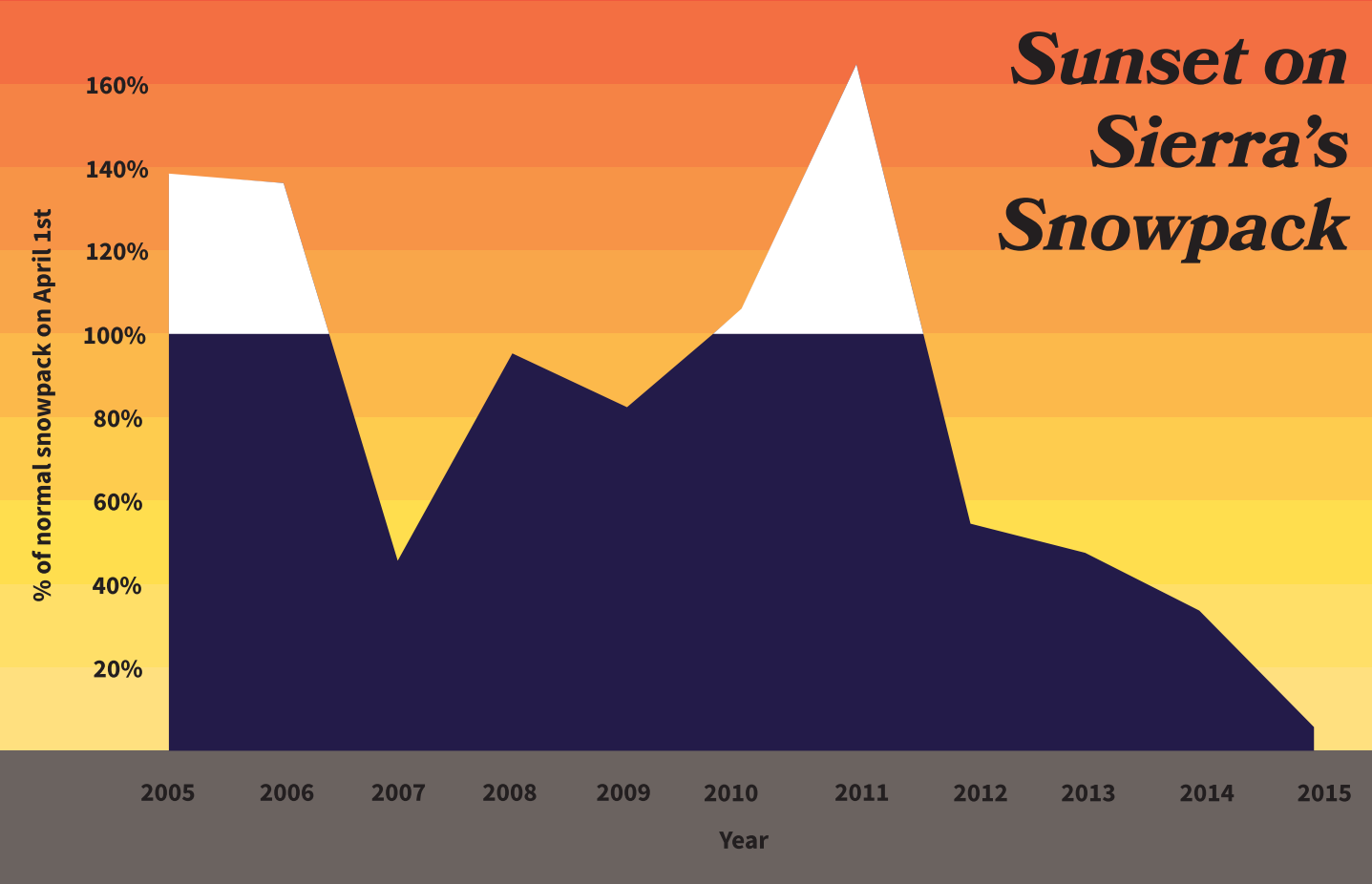
“It was a very democratic approach to water,” Stroeh says. “People don’t have a problem if they know their limits.”

Even with the current cutbacks, Californians on average still use far more water than we need, the Sierra Club’s Phillips says.

In addition to ensuring all homes have meters to track usage accurately, Phillips suggests residents invest in low-flow toilets and trade thirsty lawns for native plants.

“We are nowhere near saving water to the extent that they had to in Australia at the height of their drought,” she says. “We have to cut water usage across the board: in the industrial sector, in the residential sector, in agriculture.

“We don’t have the amount of water we had in the past, and we’re in a very serious situation.”



Infographic by Debby Oh Data provided by the California Data Exchange Center, California Cooperative Snow Surveys

How is the drought affecting farmers?

About 80 percent of California water allocated to humans goes to agriculture, an industry that in 2012 yielded \$44.7 billion, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

While Brown’s recent cutbacks applied to urban water users only, many of the state’s farmers have been feeling the squeeze for some time.

“Farmers and ranchers typically feel the impact of droughts first and most severely,” says Dave Kranz, a spokesman for the California Farm Bureau Federation, a nonprofit federation of 53 local farm bureaus throughout the state.

For example, this year “the Fresno Irrigation District delivered no water to its customers for the first time in its 95-year history,” Kranz says. “In some [agricultural regions], this is the second year in a row that they’ve had severe cutbacks.”

That belt-tightening can spur increased pumping of groundwater, as well as job losses in agricultural communities.

In California, a complex system of rights determines which farmers and water agencies get priority for water, a pecking order that can affect a business profoundly during drought times.

Under state law, landowners with property next to a stream or river have “riparian” rights and get first crack at surface water. For those whose land doesn’t abut a water source, “senior” right-holders with claims dating back to 1913 or earlier take precedence over those with more recent stakes.

As a result, farmers with “junior” rights often rely on water meted out by federal and state officials. However, that water has become largely unavailable to them in the current drought, leading many to supplement with more pumped groundwater, experts say.

Until recently, farmers and others could use groundwater with very little interference from government officials. However, new legislation approved last September aimed at preventing over-pumping will gradually increase oversight over the next 15 years.

While many environmentalists, water agencies, and researchers supported the new law, some feel it doesn’t go far enough, particularly when it comes to making “well



While California’s climate historically has featured droughts and wet periods, we’re currently in the midst of one of the worst droughts on record.

logs” public so scientists and regulators can better track groundwater consumption.

“California has already taken a step in the right direction by passing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act,” UC Davis’ Dahlke says. But “in order to reliably assess the situation of how much overdraft is occurring, we also would need public access to well data.”

Phillips agreed, adding, “Water is a common good, and we need to be able to know who’s using it and how.”

The California Farm Bureau Federation opposed the 2014 legislation, in part because many farmers rely on groundwater during

droughts, Kranz says. Instead, it would like to see more water storage projects that collect rain flow rather than snowpack, as well as better water recycling and desalination.

“All of those things are going to be required to support an ever-growing population and to supply food to that population,” Kranz says. “Food requires water to grow, and the people of California want locally grown, high-quality food.”

Will California adjust to more severe droughts, climate change?

In addition to the ongoing drought, scientists

predict climate change will reduce snowpack in our state dramatically in coming years, while boosting temperatures in key growing regions like the San Joaquin Valley.

A recent report painted a bleak picture of California’s economic future should we stay the course.

“Our findings show that if we stay on our current global emissions pathway, California will likely face multiple and significant economic risks from climate change,” risk-analysis nonprofit the Risky Business Project said in an April report.

Among those risks are climate-driven damage to California’s agricultural industry and increased drought and flooding.

“There’s going to be more pressure for people to live in cooler parts of the state—there will be a shifting of where the population lives,” the Sierra Club’s Phillips says. “It’s not limited as much by water as it is limited by the cost of energy and the cost of keeping a house or business cool.”

Even while state, national, and global climate policies remain in flux, simple local

changes can have a positive effect on water conservation.

Dahlke and her colleagues at UC Davis, for example, are working to improve irrigation and water storage technology for farmers, as well as create more drought-tolerant crops.

“California plays such a large role for the nation in producing all kinds of fruits and vegetables,” Dahlke says. “The state alone ranks in the top 10 most important agronomic economies [in the world].

“We have to find a way to sustain that and to make it more efficient...so we can increase our yield and save resources as well.”

On the residential side, measures as basic

as installing low-flow toilets and eliminating lawns can have a profound impact, Stroeh says.

“When we put together all our water conservation programs in the 70s, people back East criticized us for doing that because you want to sell more water,” Stroeh says. “At one point in time 30, 40 years ago, water was considered a commodity. Nowadays it’s a resource, and that’s a huge difference.”

Jessica Bernstein-Wax is a former newspaper reporter who works as a Web editor for UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital. She grew up in the Richmond District but defected across the park to the Sunset, where she lives with her husband and son.



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Breaking It Down:

How You Can Do Your Part to Save Water

By Tara Hardesty

The drought is on everyone’s mind these days, and chances are you are being bombarded with news about conservation and how to save water. As busy moms, it’s hard to find the time to adopt new routines or to research and put into practice conservation efforts, so we are breaking it down for you. We’ve compiled a practical list of efforts you can roll into your family’s routine, room by room.

GENERAL IN THE KITCHEN IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM IN THE BATHROOM

Tara is a freelance writer and marketing professional who specializes in commercial real estate ventures. At TheDailyWrites.com, she blogs about the hairy underbelly of life, urban mommyhood and entrepreneurship in downtown San Francisco.

Turn off the water when washing your hands.

If dishes will be left sitting in the dishwasher overnight, using the rinse feature on the machine will prevent stuck-on food and use less water than rinsing by hand.

Check your faucets and showerheads for leaks. One drip every second adds up to five gallons per day.

Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator.

Plug the sink instead of running water when shaving and save up to 300 gallons a month.

Buy water-efficient appliances.

a.) If you have a dishwasher built before 1994, you could be wasting more than 10 gallons of water per cycle. A new ENERGY STAR certified dishwasher could save an average of 1,600 gallons of water over its lifetime.

b.) A full-sized standard washing machine uses around 23 gallons of water. An ENERGY STAR certified washer uses only 13 gallons of water per load, for a possible savings of over 3,000 gallons of water per year.

c.) When shopping for a washing machine, use the Consortium for Energy Efficiency website (library.cee1.org) to compare water usage between models.

d.) You can reduce indoor water use by about 30 percent with high-efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances, resulting in savings not only on your water bill, but also your sewer and energy bills.

If you have an older washing machine, make sure you match the water level to the size of the load and consider reusing your greywater (gently used water) for watering trees and plants in your home or garden.

Monitor your water bill.

If you use a strainer or salad spinner, save the water and reuse it to water plants or to cook or clean with.

Wash fruits and veggies in a pan instead of under running water.

Shower with your partner or your kids.

Children learn by example: model water conservation.

If you drop an ice cube on the floor, use it to water a plant instead of throwing it into the sink.

Showering uses less water than baths. The average bath uses 35 to 50 gallons of water, whereas a ten minute shower with a low-flow showerhead only uses 25 gallons.

If possible, turn water off before taking a vacation.

If you can fill a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace your showerhead with one labeled WaterSense®.

Drop tissues in the trash instead of flushing them.

With many new dishwashers, pre-rinsing is unnecessary. Make it a practice to scrape food waste into your compost bin and put the dishes in the dishwasher without rinsing.

Turn off the water when you brush your teeth and save up to four gallons a minute.

If it’s yellow, let it mellow—minimize the number of times you flush the toilet.

When running water to warm it up, catch it in a bucket for reuse.

Cut your shower by one or two minutes and save up to 150 gallons a month.

Have one designated bottle or glass for water each day to cut down on the number of glasses that need washing.

Let your neighbor or community know if you see leaking water or inefficient watering practices.

Consider a thermostatic shut-off valve, designed to be installed behind your shower head. The device lets cold water flow out when the shower is first turned on, but then tamps down on any more flow when water hotter than 95 degrees arrives. So when water stops flowing in the shower, you know hot water has arrived, and then you can get in and pull a cord to manually turn the flow back on.

Try to run a fully loaded dishwasher to minimize the number of loads.

Close the drain in the bathtub before running bath water; adjust the temperature as the tub fills.

Dishwashers use less water than washing dishes by hand, so use a dishwasher whenever possible.

Use the correct amount of detergent for the load size. Overuse of laundry detergent can mean more rinse cycles which wastes water.

Test your toilet for leaks: Put food coloring in your toilet tank; if it seeps into the bowl without flushing, there is a leak.

Compost food waste instead of using the garbage disposal.

Visit the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission website (www.sfwater.org) for tips and checklists on conservation or to report water waste.



Time to Dig In For...A 220-Year Drought?

By Sarah Lai Stirland

Photographs by Allison Busch Photography

When GGMG member Connie Chan takes her two-year-old son Edo out to the park in San Francisco, she’s resigned to the fact that the water features in the city’s playgrounds are off for the foreseeable future, and that some of the lawns are turning a shade of brown.

Twenty miles away in Hillsborough, retired businessman Jim Felker frets over the impact that the state’s mandatory drought cutbacks will have on the value of his property. A thousand plants and shrubs live on just over half an acre of his garden. He says that they need more than five hours of watering per week, and fears a “wholesale slaughter” were he to cut back his water use by 36 percent from his 2013

(and current) level. The cost of replacing all those plants, he estimates, would range from \$30,000 to \$40,000.

At the same time, farmers and agricultural companies, long criticized for guzzling between 40 and 62 percent of the state’s usable water supply, have faced dramatic cutbacks of their own in the past two years. Last January, the agricultural industry’s prime



source of water, the California State Water Project, a 701-mile long water transportation system which travels from the Sierra Nevada down to San Diego, stopped delivering water for the first time in its history (later in the year, it started to deliver a trickle). Similarly, the Central Valley Project, another large water delivery system run by the federal government, also stopped delivering water to its agricultural customers, and still does not have water. The farming industry has been forced to pump water from the ground. Additionally, it fallowed half a million acres (out of a total of nine million), cut 3.8 percent, or 17,100, jobs, and lost an estimated \$2 billion, according to the Center for Watershed Sciences at University of California at Davis. For a sense of context, in 2012, it sold a total of \$48 billion of produce. In late May, the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) approved a plan for further cutbacks: Farmers with first dibs on water rights that voluntarily cut back their water use by a further 25 percent would not be asked to cut back again in the future.

Unfortunately, it’s not clear how long the groundwater pumping can go on. Excessive groundwater pumping, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, degrades the environment because it eventually sucks water away from streams, lakes, and the

surrounding wildlife habitat. In time, it also causes the remaining water to become salty. In other words, left unchecked, using groundwater is unsustainable. To mitigate these effects, the California State Legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act in 2014, which forces the agricultural industry to prove that their activities are sustainable.

As California’s four-year drought drags on—as many expect it to—it’s clear that more of the state’s 39 million residents and communities will have to start making increasingly dramatic changes to become more efficient consumers of water. Policymakers and water utilities will have to continue to calibrate the balance of hardships suffered by different kinds of communities as we conserve for an uncertain future. Already, in response to an outcry from its customers, for example, the San Jose Water Company amended its new drought rules this May to allow heads of households of more than four residents to apply for two extra units of water for each additional permanent resident.

Families in the Bay Area will also notice the cutbacks at waterparks, many of which have closed. And if they hadn’t been paying attention to the news, and washed their driveway with water straight from their supply from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), an enforcement officer

might have dropped by with a friendly reminder that it is now illegal to do so. Instead, water users are expected to use recycled or “gray” water for such tasks, or not do it at all (according to April statistics compiled by the SWRCB, the SFPUC received 113 complaints about water wastage for the month. The commission followed up on all of those complaints, and issued 83 warnings).

Cutting back—it’s an order

California Governor Jerry Brown issued an executive order this April, mandating that urban areas reduce their water usage by 25 percent between June 2015 and February 2016, from the comparable period in 2013. The order came after households continued to fail to significantly cut back on their usage this February, despite the fact that at least 56 cities, counties, and special districts declared drought emergencies and water shortages. The state’s drought rules aim squarely at families and businesses that use large amounts of drinkable water to keep their properties lush during the hot summer months. About half of urban water usage is dedicated to outside irrigation, according to California’s Department of Water Resources, the agency that’s in charge of running the state’s water infrastructure. To achieve the goal, the Water Resources Control Board has assigned nine different water reduction targets to various communities based on their past water conservation efforts. The reduction tiers range from 8 percent to 36 percent. It has, however, left it up to local water agencies to decide how they would implement the cutbacks, and what will work for their communities.

For its part, the SFPUC was still mulling over new rules as we went to press, but the commission said in a mid-May public notice that it planned to update its mandatory “excess use” charges for “excessive use of water on ornamental landscaping and turf.”

Tyron Jue, a SFPUC spokesman, did not respond to GGMG’s request for more detailed information about its conservation efforts, other than engaging in an initial phone conversation about the SFPUC’s general school education efforts.

The good news for San Franciscans is that we’re already doing a pretty good job at water

conservation compared to our peers across the state. The SFPUC has spent the past 13 years and \$4.6 billion upgrading its water infrastructure. Additionally, the SFPUC is diversifying its sources of water, investing in conservation, and providing free home water use assessment and public education programs. It has gone further than many other water agencies by installing modern smart meters for San Francisco’s 178,000 water accounts. These meters wirelessly transmit water usage to the agency’s databanks every hour, which means that residents can examine their usage online, and compare their use to their peers. (In a day and age when everything is quantified, other water agencies around the state in general are surprisingly behind the ball.) The SFPUC has also worked with city departments like the Parks and Recreation Department to use recycled water to irrigate its parks and golf courses. Over the years, it has also implemented a two-tiered water structure to incentivize people to use as little water as possible. All this, combined with San Francisco’s cooler coastal location and relatively small outdoor lot sizes, has helped its residents hold down water consumption.

San Francisco’s 836,620 household water consumers average 49 gallons a day per person between 2013 and 2014. That’s less than half of the average of the 100 gallons a day that the rest of Californians guzzled. “San Francisco probably has the lowest per capita water use of any of the large cities of California,” noted Peter Brostrom, chief of water efficiency at the California Department of Water Resources.

San Franciscans—efficient, but not efficient enough

The bad news is that all this conservation is not enough. Under the State Water Resources Control Board’s May order, San Francisco households must reduce their water consumption by an additional 8 percent between June 2015 and February 2016 over the comparable period between 2013 and 2014. For a summary of the SFPUC’s rebate programs, educational materials, and incentives to become more efficient water users, visit www.bitly.com/SFWaterRebates and www.bitly.com/SFRainWater

For many communities in California, most people fall within a similar band of water usage, and respond to incentives and pricing changes in their water rates. However, there are a small group of deep-pocketed outliers who use extraordinary amounts of water, and who do not respond to fines and penalties. In Hillsborough, the Department of Public Works has identified 800 households that need to dramatically rein in their usage.

Felker, with his thousand plants, might be one of them. During the city council meeting,

California’s hydrological history, however, suggests that people should start adapting their gardens and lifestyles to the reality of living in a dry climate.

he said that he’d prefer the town to pay the state fines and levy a fee on residents rather than letting his plants die.

In an effort to contribute to the conservation effort, many suppliers around the rest of California have started rationing their water. They are offering many carrots, such as rebates and incentives to install water-efficient appliances and fixtures, and free inspections to check for leaks. But they are also getting out the sticks. Many have updated their rules to implement punitive rates for households exceeding their allocations. For example, in May, San Jose Water Company proposed to charge its household customers an additional \$3.56 per unit if they exceed their allocated 13 units a month, beginning in July. This fee would be on top of its usual rate of \$3.20 to \$3.91 per unit (each unit is 100 cubic feet, or 748 gallons). Many other municipalities will have implemented similar rate structures.

Some of the agencies have even threatened to fine their customers up to \$500 a day for repeat violations. Others have threatened to install flow-restricting devices inside repeat offenders’ homes. The Calaveras County Water District, in Northeastern California, said it would charge repeat scofflaws with a misdemeanor, meaning that they could end up in jail for a month and/or pay a \$600 fine. Down in San Luis Obispo, the seaside Cambria Community Services District levies a 500 percent surcharge for first violations of its

emergency drought rules, a 1,000 percent fine for the second, and cuts off water supply for the third. Santa Cruz, which is rationing its water, has implemented a two-hour “water school” session for people who exceed their allocation and want to reduce their fines. As part of the “water school,” the offenders will, for example, learn how to read their water meters.

Water agencies are also exploring alternatives such as desalination plants and treating wastewater, among other things.

But capital-intensive options like desalination are expensive. Longtime policy experts are resolute that urban water conservation—persuading utility customers to use efficient appliances, reusing laundry water for the garden, and swapping out their thirsty plants for drought-tolerant species—is the most effective strategy.

Cynthia Koehler, executive director and co-founder of WaterNow, a non-profit that promotes sustainable water use strategies, points to the idea of raising the Shasta Dam as an example to illustrate the point. Proponents had wanted to spend \$1.1 billion to raise its height of 521 feet by 18.5 feet. That would have increased its capacity to hold 14 percent more water to a total of 113,000 acre feet. In contrast, if Californians manage to cut back 25 percent of their water use between April and February, as ordered by the Governor, they would save 1.3 million acre feet—or the contents of Lake Oroville, the second largest reservoir in California.

“It’s similar to voting,” observes Brostrom, the Department of Water Resources’ efficiency chief, in regards to each individual’s water-saving efforts. “Even though it’s a big group of people, each individual’s vote and action adds up and makes a cumulative difference, especially San Francisco, where often water there is not reused. Each one of us that takes a small action can result in a large amount of savings.”

To encourage conservation efforts, and to bolster the state’s water supply, voters last November approved Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. California will borrow \$7.5 billion to fortify its water supply system with more water conservation programs, and to help utilities create more sources of water through programs like recycled water. The money will also help utilities build more water storage facilities.

California’s hydrological history, however, suggests that people should start adapting their gardens and lifestyles to the reality of living in a dry climate, suggests Elizabeth Dougherty, founder and director of Wholly H2O, another nonprofit that promotes sustainable water use.

Dougherty notes that California had experienced drought for 37 of the past 100 years, and that research has shown at two points in the state’s history, its droughts lasted for 220 and 140 years. October 1, 2011 through to September 30, 2014 was the driest three-year period on record. As the climate warms in the state, some climatologists wonder whether we’re at the beginning of another extended drought—in which case, homeowners like Felker won’t have the opportunity to replace their plants.

In a February blog post, Wholly H2O’s Dougherty wrote: “California’s best strategy is to plan for drought as an increasing norm and turn its eye toward water conservation and reuse, not as ‘conservation,’ but as standard practice, so that, even in the years when rain is falling more steadily, we continue our normal practices of appropriate water use.” ♦

Sarah Lai Stirland is a writer, reporter and Mom living in Los Gatos. She can be reached at: stirland@gmail.com.

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Oral motor and feeding disorders

Stuttering disorders

Reading disorders

26 | GGMG MAGAZINE | JULY/AUG 2015

JULY/AUG 2015 | GGMG MAGAZINE | 27

About GGMG Events: Events listed on these pages are either exclusive to GGMG members or are offered to GGMG members at a discount. Generally, registration is required and can be completed by following the REGISTRATION instructions listed under the event details or at www.ggmg.org/events.html (BigTent). Rules and policies vary. GGMG members and their families only.

GGMG volunteers may occasionally take photos during our events for use in this publication or on the GGMG/BigTent website. Please understand these photographs may include images of all attendees (including children).

Vendors who would like to partner with GGMG, please contact the appropriate committee. Email addresses are listed on page 3.

 Indicates events appropriate for infants (0 to 12 months). Many also welcome toddlers and preschoolers (see registration rules for more details).

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Unless otherwise noted, parent participation is required for all Kids Activities events.

 **Mazel Tots, Bagels, and Babies at Congregation Emanu-El**

A weekly playdate to enjoy music, stories, and puppets as we prepare to welcome Shabbat on Fridays and celebrate Havdalah on Mondays.

DATE: Mondays and Fridays in July
TIME: 9:30 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: 2 Lake St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Drop in. All ages are welcome.

 **Weekly Playgroup at Calvary Presbyterian Church**

A weekly playdate to enjoy mommy and baby camaraderie, music, stories, and more.

DATE: Wednesdays
TIME: 10 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 2515 Fillmore St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Drop in. All ages and caregivers are welcome.

 **Little Bundles class at MyGym**

Baby exercises, songs, dances, infant-safe rides, unique swings, and many other adventures await the infant-parent team! This fun movement class also includes a brief parent discussion.

DATE: Fridays
TIME: 2:15 to 3 p.m.
PLACE: 901 Minnesota St.
COST: First class is free with membership, MyGym membership will be waived for GGMG members

REGISTRATION: Contact Marci Briskin at mygym_sf@sbcglobal.net.

Caterpillar Puppets at the Yerba Buena Gardens Festival

Joe Leon’s Caterpillar Puppets don’t just entertain kids and parents. His eccentric menagerie draws audiences of all ages into seemingly familiar stories that take unexpected turns. A master puppeteer with a sly sense of humor, Leon keeps everyone entertained.

DATE: Friday, July 3
TIME: 11 to 11:30 a.m. or 12:15 to 12:45p.m.
PLACE: 799 Howard St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.ybgfestival.org/event/caterpillar-puppets-2

 **Mixed Ages Music Class at SF Music Together**

Quality, fun, research-based, and award winning Music Together classes. Jamming, dancing, singing, and community!

DATE: Friday, July 3
TIME: 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: 1350 Waller St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to 5 years. Register either by going to www.sfmusictogether.com and clicking on the free trial link or on the class schedule where it says “Free GGMG trial class,” or email info@sfmusictogether.com with your contact info.

Women’s World Cup Final Outdoor Watch Party & Soccer Festival at the Civic Center

On giant screens, watch women soccer teams battle it out for the title of best in the world. Fans will be able to get their faces painted in team colors, scrimmage on mini soccer courts, and take part in soccer skills activities provided by Soccer in Slow Motion. Gourmet food trucks from Off the Grid and more.

DATE: Sunday, July 5
TIME: 4 p.m.
PLACE: Fulton and Larkin streets
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.sfrecpark.org/womens-world-cup-2015

 **Babies Music Class at SF Music Together**

Quality, fun, research-based and award winning Music Together classes. Jamming, dancing, singing, and community! For ages newborns to 9 months.

DATE: Monday, July 6
TIME: 3 p.m.
PLACE: 1350 Waller St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Register either by going to www.sfmusictogether.com and clicking on the free trial link or on the class schedule where it says “Free GGMG trial class,” or email info@sfmusictogether.com with your contact info.

Parent Tot Music & Movement at JAMaROO Kids

Parents and children will dance and sing to music from around the world and play with a variety of simple instruments.

DATE: Thursday, July 9
TIME: 9 to 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: 388 4th Ave.
COST: \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages infant to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

Introduction to Baby Sign Language at Carmel Blue

Stop guessing what your baby is trying to tell you. Baby Sign Language gives babies, age newborn to 24 months the opportunity to communicate long before they can verbalize their wants and needs.

DATE: Friday, July 10
TIME: 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: GGMG Special: \$35 for one parent \$65 for both

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2876

 **Music Jiggle Jam Drop-in Music Class at Carmel Blue**

Bring your babies and toddlers and join in the music making fun! With a background in early childhood development teacher Rado brings music and movement to life through playful songs, games and activities. For babies and toddlers ages 6 to 18 months.

DATE: Friday, July 10
TIME: 4:30 or 5:15 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: GGMG special: \$10 for one parent/ one child, \$5 for second parent

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2636

Parent Tot Music & Movement at JAMaROO Kids

Parents and children will dance and sing to music from around the world and play with a variety of simple instruments.

DATE: Wednesday, July 13
TIME: 4:45 to 5:15 p.m.
PLACE: 388 4th Ave.
COST: \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages 3 to 5 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

 **Baby Boot Camp at Noe Basketball Courts**

Try this innovative stroller fitness program to help regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels.

DATE: Wednesday, July 15
TIME: 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.
PLACE: 24th and Douglass streets
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@babybootcamp.com.

Kidshop: Just How Long Can a Long String Be?! at Peekadoodle Kidsclub

Based on the book *Just How Long Can a Long String Be?!* by Keith Baker, this class is sure to be fun by the yard!

DATE: Monday, July 20
TIME: 3 to 3:45 p.m.
PLACE: 900 North Point St., Suite F100
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 3 to 5 years. Call 415.440.7335 to reserve your spot. Space is limited. Drop-off class; no parent participation.

JAMaROO Music & Movement at Pacific Heights Health Club

Parents and children will dance and sing to music from around the world and play with a variety of simple instruments.

DATE: Tuesday, July 21
TIME: 11:15 to 11:45 a.m.
PLACE: 2356 Pine St.
COST: \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages infant to 2 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

 **Mixed-Age Class at My Gym**

Come have fun at this one hour mixed age class.

DATE: Tuesday, July 21
TIME: 11:35 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

PLACE: 901 Minnesota St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 5 years. Register by contacting Marci Briskin at mygym_sf@sbcglobal.net.

 **Baby Boot Camp at Crissy Field**

This innovative stroller fitness program helps moms regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels (meet at the landing to the west of the parking lot).

DATE: Wednesday, July 22
TIME: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: 99 Yacht Rd.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@babybootcamp.com.

Ichi Ni San Music at seesaw

Children will sing, dance, and play a variety of musical instruments. Taught in Japanese and English.

DATE: Thursday, July 23
TIME: 11 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

Le You You Mandarin Music at seesaw

Children will sing songs in Mandarin and enjoy music and movement.

DATE: Tuesday, July 28
TIME: 11 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

JAMaROO Music & Movement at Pacific Heights Health Club

Parents and children will dance and sing to music from around the world and play with a variety of simple instruments.

DATE: Wednesday, July 29
TIME: 10 to 10:30 a.m.
PLACE: 2356 Pine St.
COST: \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

JAMaROO Yoga at Pacific Heights Health Club

Children will work on strengthening their growing bodies and stretching their little muscles, while improving their balance, coordination, and concentration.

DATE: Tuesday, August 4
TIME: 9:30 to 10 a.m.
PLACE: 2356 Pine St.
COST: \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

 **Baby Boot Camp at Noe Basketball Courts**

Try this innovative stroller fitness program to help regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels.

DATE: Wednesday, August 5
TIME: 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.
PLACE: 24th and Douglass streets
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@babybootcamp.com.

 **Yoga, Baby + Massage at It’s Yoga Kids**

Enrich your baby’s development with songs, yoga, and infant massage.

DATE: Friday, August 7
TIME: 11 to 11:50 a.m.
PLACE: 569 Ruger St.
COST: \$15 cash; \$18 credit card

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to pre-crawlers. Introductory rate. Register by emailing info@itsyogakids.com.

\$1 Book Sale at SF Library Treat Avenue Donation Center

The San Francisco Public Library hosts \$1 book sales every second Saturday of the month. All books are just \$1 or less each and all proceeds benefit the San Francisco Public Library.

DATE: Saturday, August 8
TIME: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
PLACE: 438 Treat Ave.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Drop-in or call 415.522.8600

JAMaROO Storytime Music at Sprout

This class combines the joys of reading and music.

DATE: Monday, August 10
TIME: 5 to 5:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1828 Union St.
COST: \$5

REGISTRATION: Ages infant to 2 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

Le You You Mandarin Music at seesaw

Children will sing songs in Mandarin and enjoy music and movement.

DATE: Tuesday, August 11
TIME: 11 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

Baby Boot Camp at Crissy Field

This innovative stroller fitness program helps moms regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels (meet at the landing to the west of the parking lot).

DATE: Wednesday, August 12
TIME: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: 99 Yacht Rd.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@babybootcamp.com.

Totshop: “Little Blue and Little Yellow” at Peekadoodle Kidsclub

Every toddler loves to mix paint, so this Totshop should be right up their alley! The morning will be topped off with mixing together their own color of frosting for a cupcake they can take home. Everyone else will be “green” with envy!

DATE: Wednesday, August 12
TIME: 11:15 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 900 North Point St., Suite F100
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 3 years. Call 415.440.7335 to reserve your spot. Space is limited. Parent participation required.

ChouChou French at seesaw

Join experienced French teacher Françoise for a multi-sensory exploration of numbers, colors, feelings, animals, foods, shapes, and more.

DATE: Thursday, August 13
TIME: 10 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

It’s Yoga, Movers at It’s Yoga Kids

Developmentally appropriate yoga movement with song and play for young movers with adult participation.

DATE: Friday, August 14
TIME: 9:30 to 10 a.m. or noon to 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: 569 Ruger St.
COST: \$15 cash; \$18 credit card

REGISTRATION: Ages crawlers to 2 years. Introductory rate. Register by emailing info@itsyogakids.com.

Parent Tot Storytime Art at JAMaROO Kids

This class combines the joys of reading and art.

DATE: Wednesday, August 19
TIME: 12:30 to 1 p.m.
PLACE: 388 4th Ave.
COST: \$10

REGISTRATION: Ages 3 to 5 years. Introductory rate. Register at www.Jamarookids.com or call 415.614.2001.

Music Jiggle Jam - drop-in music class at Carmel Blue

Bring you babies and toddlers and join in the music making fun! With a background in early childhood development teacher Rado brings music and movement to life through playful songs, games and activities. For ages 6 to 18 months.

DATE: Friday, August 21
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: GGMG special: \$10 for one parent/one child, \$5 for second parent

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2642

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

SF Food Bank Project at San Francisco Food Bank

Back by popular demand! Join GGMG moms and their little ones (ages 4 and up) in a morning of fun at the SF Marin Food Bank. We'll be sorting food and cans and enabling the food bank to give back to countless organizations that serve people in need throughout the Bay Area. ***This event is currently full but often spots open-up so please check back for openings, and look for this opportunity throughout the year.*

DATE: Sunday, July 12
TIME: 9 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: 900 Pennsylvania Ave.

JUST FOR MOMS

Buds with Buds: Try a New Brewery with New Friends at Sunset Reservoir Brewing Company

This new brew pub has Russian River brewing pedigree and was built with families in mind. Meet friends new and old to catch up on life, relax, and enjoy a night out. GGMG is treating members to free apps and pitchers of beer. Attendees pay for any entrées or additional items they order.

DATE: Tuesday, July 22
TIME: 7 p.m.
PLACE: 1735 Noriega St.
COST: \$10 deposit goes toward your share of the tab.

REGISTRATION: Register at BigTent

ED SERIES

Mommy/Baby Group at Carmel Blue

Join this special new moms group for parents of babies 0 to 6 mos. Advice and support on common questions of “redesigning” your life (sleep, eat, partnership, and everything in between) with your new baby will be offered.

DATE: Wednesday, July 8
TIME: 1 to 2:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2967

Babyproofing Your Relationship at Natural Resources

A class focused on identifying relationship struggles common to new parents. Topics include parenting roles, in-law relationships, sex after baby, and bonding activities.

DATE: Saturday, July 11
TIME: 2 to 4:00 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: \$10 (Use code NRGGMG10 for additional 10% discount)

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Babyproofing-Your-Relationship

Toddler Sleep Solutions with Angelique Millette at Carmel Blue

Now that your baby is not a baby anymore, you have a whole new set of sleep challenges. Join San Francisco's favorite baby sleep expert for a talk about your toddler's sleep.

DATE: Tuesday, July 21
TIME: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: \$35

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2559

Your Willful 3-Year-Old with Early Childhood Matters St Agnes Ignatian Spiritual Life Center

Join Judith Young of Early Childhood Matters to find out why 3 can be more difficult than 2 from a developmental perspective, and learn helpful strategies to meet the 3-year-old challenge heart open and head on!

DATE: Thursday, July 23
TIME: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1611 Oak St.
COST: \$28 single/\$48 couple

REGISTRATION: <http://tinyurl.com/willful3yo>

Meet the Doula Night at Carmel Blue

After a short presentation about birth and postpartum doula services, during which you can ask any questions, there will be an opportunity to mingle and talk to doulas and other expecting families on an individual basis. This is a family-friendly event, so bring partners and/or friends who might be at your baby's birth. Facilitated by the SF Doula group (sfdoulagroup.com).

DATE: Thursday, August 6
TIME: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2597

Mommy/Baby Group at Carmel Blue

Join us for this special new moms group for parents of babies 0 to 6 mos. Share the highs and lows of becoming a new parent. We offer advice and support on common questions of “redesigning” your life (sleep, eat, partnership, and everything in between) with your new baby.

DATE: Wednesday, August 5
TIME: 1 to 2:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2971

Breastfeeding Essentials at Carmel Blue

This 2.5-hour course is designed to support and educate expectant moms and their partners about getting breastfeeding off to the right start.

DATE: Saturday, August 9
TIME: 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: \$85 for both parents

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2570

Intro to Baby Sign Language for Parents, Caregivers, and Siblings at Recess

This workshop introduces beginning baby signs that are based on American Sign Language (ASL).

DATE: Thursday, August 13
TIME: 10:30 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 470 Carolina St.
COST: \$38 individual / \$58 couple (SAVE \$5 with promo code GGMG15)

RSVP: recess-sf.com/workshops

Mothering in the Moment at Natural Resources

During this workshop, mothers will learn mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques, practice gentle restorative yoga postures to regenerate vitality, and engage in thoughtful discussion with other mothers to foster ongoing support and community.

DATE: Sunday, August 16
TIME: 1:30 to 4 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: \$60 (use code NRGGMG10 for additional 10% discount)

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Mothering-in-the-Moment

Potty Training 101 at Recess

Think your little one is ready for potty training? Come to this informative talk led by Aki Raymer of Parenting Paths to find out how to make the transition to diaper-free living.

DATE: Tuesday, August 18
TIME: 7:30 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: 470 Carolina St.
COST: \$38 individual/\$58 couple (SAVE \$5 with promo code GGMG15)

RSVP: recess-sf.com/workshops



GGMG Cooking Class

In May, a group of GGMG moms came together with Y.U.M. Chefs to learn how to whip up easy, healthy meals that both kids and adults will appreciate. Then we enjoyed the fruits of our labor around a communal dining table. This popular cooking series fills quickly. The next event is expected to take place in September, so keep your eyes on the BigTent calendar and GGMG Magazine so you don't miss out.



NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS

GGMG sponsors Neighborhood Meetups as a gateway for moms to build a community with other moms in their neighborhood. In addition to special events, each neighborhood hosts weekly playdates for moms and kids as well as mommy-only events such as wine nights and book clubs at local venues. Meetups are usually free to attend and always open to all members. Below is a sampling of events in July and August.

To join your local Neighborhood Meetup group, log into www.BigTent.com and select the “Subgroups” tab to find your neighborhood. Then for a complete and up-to-date list of all your local Meetups, including play dates, check the “Events” tab on your Neighborhood Meetups group homepage.

RSVPs are required for moms’ night out gatherings and special/themed play dates. For regularly scheduled play dates, simply show up and look for the person wearing a GGMG branded visor.

Bernal Heights/Glen Park

Summer Playdate at John McLaren Park

Come enjoy SF summer by blackberry picking in John McLaren Park. GGMG will provide snacks. Bring a picnic blanket and food to share if you desire.

DATE: Sunday, July 12
TIME: 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: RSVP for address
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/92327266

July Moms’ Night Out at the Old Clam House

Get to know other moms in the area over food and drinks. GGMG will cover appetizers/dessert! Amy will be there with an orange GGMG lanyard/name tag.

DATE: Friday, July 17
TIME: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
PLACE: 299 Bayshore Blvd.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/home/calendar/event/92322267

August Moms’ Night Out at Champa Garden

Get to know other moms in the area over food and drinks. GGMG will cover appetizers/dessert! Christine will be there with an orange GGMG lanyard/name tag.

DATE: Friday, August 28
TIME: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
PLACE: 613 Faxon Ave.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/92339560

The Heights

Summer Weekend Brunch Playdate at Presidio Heights Playground

Come enjoy SF summer with a weekend brunch playdate. GGMG will provide drinks and light brunch fare. Bring a blanket and food to share if you like.

DATE: Sunday, July 19
TIME: 10 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: Clay and Walnut streets
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/92431300

Mission/Castro

July Moms’ Night Out at West of Pecos

Join our fab group of moms for chatting in complete sentences! We love meeting new people over appetizers (subsidized by GGMG) and margaritas.

DATE: Tuesday, July 21
TIME: 6 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 550 Valencia St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/92462187

August Moms’ Night Out at West of Pecos

Join our fab group of moms for chatting in complete sentences! We love meeting new people over appetizers (on GGMG) and margaritas.

DATE: Tuesday, August 11
TIME: 6 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 550 Valencia St.
COST: FREE

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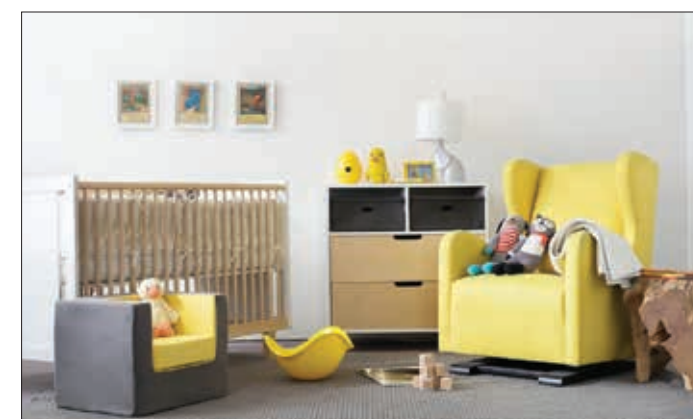
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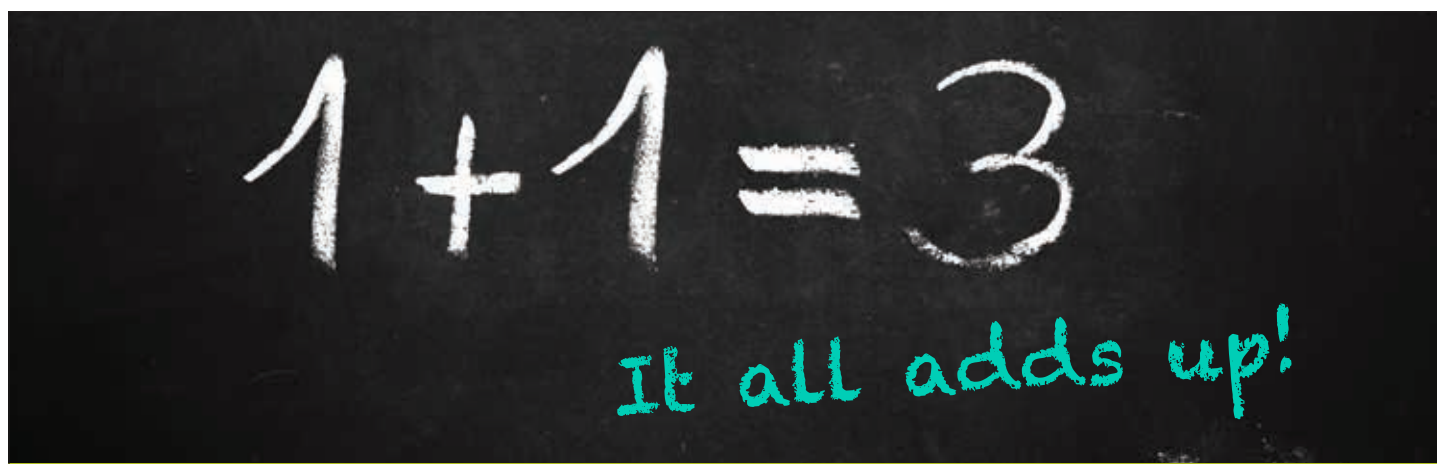
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I ♥ Mom

Water Play, Yay?!

By Gail Cornwall

After I delivered my third baby, a hospital nurse carefully, almost reverently, passed me a “sitz bath,” a plastic tub that sits on top of a standard toilet seat with a bag of water connected to it by a tube. You know, so that a new mama can submerge her beleaguered lady parts in warm water without hoisting herself into the bathtub. Since the gravity-powered nether regions soaker didn’t float my boat the first two times around, I tossed it aside. “Wait!” my husband cried, “Stuart will love that.”

Sure enough, 9 months later my 3-year-old still plays with it, gleefully spraying his dad with the hose in the shower every morning and, thankfully less often, spinning in a circle, squirting water across the bathroom. Both he and his 5-year-old sister are also obsessed with camelbaks and water bottles, love to pour liquid back and forth between cups, go into paroxysms of delight when handed a hose, and can think of nothing more exciting than covering portions of the bath spout with random parts of their bodies in order to send the remainder of the flow spraying in unforeseen directions.

For me, each of these activities, of course, totally blows goats. I’m not a huge fan of wool carpets that smell like sheep and bathroom mirrors covered in water spots. I like crawling around on my hands and knees mopping up liquids off our floor about as much as accidentally swallowing a bug or wearing a bra that cuts off my circulation. But I suck it up in the name of building neural pathways and motor skills.

That’s not all. As with pretty much any kind of independent activity, water play supports language acquisition, problem-solving, logical reasoning, and imaginative exploration (which in turn leads to increases in sustained attention, memory, impulse-inhibition, and more).

Water provides a medium for psychological growth as well. “Schemas,” otherwise known as compulsions, drive much of kids’ play behavior. The urge to fill containers with water is known as the “enclosure” schema, playing with running water fulfills the “trajectory” schema, carrying it around in buckets satisfies the “transporting” schema, and mixing it with dirt to create mud helps meet the “transformation” schema.

Not to mention the chance to build math and science skills through experimentation with volume, gravity, force, displacement, and causation. With a bit of parental assistance, the possibilities are endless. We play a game called “hot, warm, cold” that introduces the concept of “change in state” (i.e., solid, liquid, and gas) without any explicit instruction. I just fill three

bowls with water, one hot enough to produce steam. I ask the kids to close their eyes, hold their hands over the bowls, and guess which is which. We also put an ice cube in each bowl and watch what happens. Once we even tossed in some oatmeal to see how it would fare. I would try dirt, but I’m afraid the hot bowl will end up looking too much like brownie batter for anyone’s good.

Throughout all this learning, they’re amped up, thoroughly enjoying themselves while accomplishing something. Sort of like me getting a pedicure before a big event.

So each time I want to scream about the actual or potential mess, I bite my tongue and tolerate their wet exploration. I set boundaries, of course, mandating that water remain in the bathroom, kitchen, or deck area. I also draw the line on my son experimenting with the wonder that is his God-given hose. Any developmental benefits that result in our home smelling like a BART elevator will just have to go unclaimed.

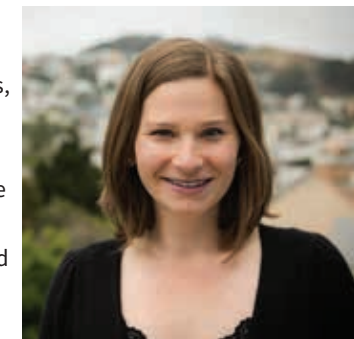
We talk about wasting water, both in the context of the drought and in terms of the concept of “enough.” Knowing when we have enough water to play happily—and understanding that is truly all

As with pretty much any kind of independent activity, water play supports language acquisition, problem-solving, logical reasoning, and imaginative exploration.

we need, regardless of how much we might want—helps us maintain an “attitude of gratitude.” A sense of “enough” when it comes to water leads to a better ability to discern when we have enough ketchup, M&Ms, and, down the line, Manolo Blahniks.

In this way, water play is really just a microcosm of parenting in general: I challenge myself to let go a little and not sweat the small stuff so that I can produce considerate, grateful people with healthy curiosity about the world and the ability to refrain from peeing on things. ❖

Gail Cornwall is a former public school teacher and recovering lawyer who now works as a stay-at-home mom of three and writes about parenthood. Born in St. Louis and raised in the Bay Area, she’s a serial monogamist of urban living who resided in Berkeley, New York, D.C., Boston, and Seattle before committing to San Francisco. You can read more at joideviv.wordpress.com (musings), readymommy.wordpress.com (book reviews), and parentingwrite.wordpress.com (more serious fare).





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