



Leading the Way to Lifelong Learning

# Conductor

Website: [gentrain.org](http://gentrain.org)

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Gentrain Society  
of MPC

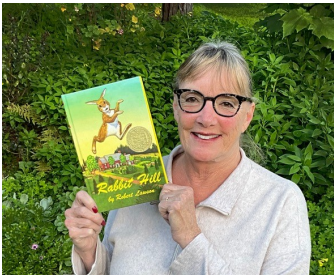
Volume 38 No.2

980 Fremont Street, Monterey, CA 93940

March/April 2024

## President's Corner

*Mary Pendlay, President*



My message to you this Conductor is a positive one based on the fact that many of us are older and we can benefit from senior discounts. Did you know that Amazon offers a Prime Access Membership which can reduce your monthly subscription fee down to \$6.99 - a 50% discount. I know that AAA offers discounts on hotels and car rentals, but less known offers are available. For example, Walgreen's has a Seniors Day, as do Denny's, Kohl's, Ross and Rite Aid. Bubba Gump restaurants, the Chart House and Chili's also offer discounts. HOWEVER, many of these offers are dependent on location and small print.

A good source for "deals" is AARP. Of course you may have received their life insurance offers, but they also offer discounts on qualified wireless plans from AT&T and food delivery services. I recommend that you go to [theseniorlist.com](http://theseniorlist.com) website and check it out. I'm not recommending any particular service or company, but I do love my senior discount at a movie theater or at the Monterey County Fair.

There are good things that come from aging: retirement, grandchildren, travel and more time to smell my roses. The key is to stay healthy and enjoy every minute that you can. Good advice from your president!

## Gentrain Society Board Meetings

The next Gentrain Society Board meeting will be held on campus on **March 20 and April 17** at 2:45 pm in MPC Social Sciences 104. These Meetings are open to all Gentrain Society Members.

## Membership Report

*Merry Nolte, Membership Chair*

Welcome to these new Gentrain members: **Cathryn Chinn, Delpha & Mike Edwards, Margaret Kylander, Wendy Markel, and Andrew McKenna.**

We are eager to expand our membership - please tell your friends about Gentrain, and encourage them to join the Society!

## Special Event

*Rene Kimzey and Mike Sovereign,  
Special Events Co-chairs*

*The King and I* is inspired by the experiences of Anna Leonowens, an English school teacher in Siam during the late 19th century who was assigned to teach the king's many children and wives. A fictionalized version of her story was published as a novel by Margaret Landon in 1944. The novel has inspired several popular stage and film adaptations. The book and movie are still banned in Thailand today.



**This will be a two-part event.**

Stephanie Spoto will deliver a background lecture at 11:00 on March 21 in LF-103 on the MPC campus.

Following the lecture, we will meet again (arrange your own transportation) at the Lighthouse Theater in Pacific Grove, the last local theater on the Monterey Peninsula, for a screening of *The King and I* at 12:45.

This event is open to everyone at a cost of \$10/ person. Please respond to [rsvp@gentrain.org](mailto:rsvp@gentrain.org) if you want to participate. Payments (cash or check) can be made the day of the event.

## Oregon Shakespeare Festival Update

*Allison Porter, Committee Chair*

We are thrilled to announce that the beloved Gentrain trip to Ashland, is ON AGAIN!! Join the Gentrain Society and Dr. Alan Haffa, Director of Gentrain, as we visit Ashland, Oregon, for the annual Shakespeare Festival, July 2 through 7, 2024.



If you have been on the trip before, please note that there are some changes from prior years. Most important, while the festival is working to come back up to full roster, they are going to be doing only five plays during this time. They are presenting *Macbeth*, described as "an ensemble-based showcase for OSF's acting company, *Born With Teeth*, a "razor-sharp encounter between Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, *Jane Eyre*, a "gothic masterpiece," *Lizard Boy*, a San Francisco smash hit, "fresh from its 2023 Off-Broadway run," and finally *Much Ado About Nothing*, a "dazzling music filled production directed by Miriam Laube, a 17-year veteran of the festival."

As we are housed at the local university, we are required to affirm that we are a student group, and you will need to attend a two-session overview and analysis of the plays which will be led by Dr. Haffa in the two weeks before the trip. We also have daily discussions of the plays while we are in Ashland, which many of us consider to be an invaluable adjunct to the experience.

Over the years we have had many requests to extend our stay in Ashland so that people could enjoy this wonderful small town with its exciting stores and beautiful outdoors. Since we are seeing fewer plays, we are going to be able to have a few days without matinees, leaving you free to do just that. There are also many theater-related events and tours which you might want to sign up for.

We are housed at the local university dormitories. We do not have the option of dorm rooms this visit, so you will be housed in their suites, which can accommodate one or two people and have private bathrooms, and usually a mini fridge, and microwave.

Costs include: Transportation from and back to MPC as

well as within Ashland, five nights lodging, tickets to five plays, and gratuities. Meals are not included.

### Costs for this year's trip are as follows:

Suite/single - \$1,295

Suite/double - EACH \$1,170

The trip is limited to 32 participants and spaces are filled on a first-come basis. Your check for the full amount, made out to MPC/Gentrain Society, will secure your reservation. Please send checks to Allison Porter, 1920 Noche Buena St., Seaside, CA 93955. Make sure your name, address, phone number and email address are included. If you plan on having a roommate, please let me know who that is.

All participants must be members of the Gentrain Society. If you are not a member, please include your membership check made out to Gentrain Society/Membership in the amount of \$35 per person or \$50 per couple.

Any questions about registration can be answered by Allison Porter at 831-394-8051, email [arpesq@hotmail.com](mailto:arpesq@hotmail.com).

### UPDATE:

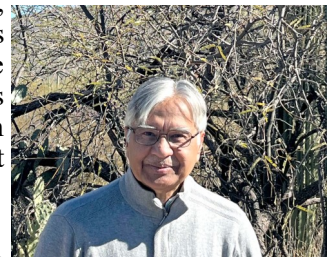
We have had a great response and are almost full. Historically, we have also been able to accommodate almost everyone who ends up on the waiting list, so don't despair! Your checks will not be deposited until we can assure you of a spot on the trip.

**IMPORTANT!** Many of you sent your checks to me without any email or cell phone information. We **MUST** have **BOTH** of these; otherwise we have no way to advise you of important dates, last minute changes, etc. If you have already sent your checks, please forward your email and cell numbers to Allison Porter at [arpesq@hotmail.com](mailto:arpesq@hotmail.com).

## Meet the Gentrainer Muhammad Najm Akbar

*Rene Kimzey*

This issue's Gentrainer, Muhammed Najm Akbar, is the newest addition to the Gentrain faculty. He has lived, studied and worked in places many of us have not even visited.



Najm was born in Multan, Pakistan, his ancestral village. By the time he finished college, a new government university opened in his hometown which allowed him to earn a graduate degree in English Literature. After coming to the US, he obtained two degrees from Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, a Masters in History from Fresno State

University, and an MA in Teaching a Foreign Language from MIIS here in Monterey.

Professionally, he joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1981. After learning French, he served in Paris where he and his wife Alia's two children were born. Later he was stationed in Dakar, Accra, Beirut, and New York. In 2005, he joined the faculty of the Defense Language Institute where he taught Urdu for 13 years. In 2022 Najm became a professor at MPC teaching World History, US History, and History of World Religions. On the recommendation of MPC Chairperson John Finell, he attended a Gentrain session. He was fascinated by the Gentrainers' pursuit of lifelong learning. "I loved the class of my fellow senior citizens, and here I am," he commented.

The Akbars have enjoyed living in multicultural environments which provided a cosmopolitan world view for the whole family. The Akbar children attended college on the East Coast, are now married and working in New York. Days in France remain among the family's special memories and walks along the Pacific coast now provide joy and happiness. "Our greatest delight," he offered, "is our two granddaughters, the eldest nearly four and the younger one about one and a half."

And what are his goals and hopes? "We live in a blessed country where we can fully express our thoughts and opinions. I relish the fact that our voices matter and wish to contribute actively to the diverse, unending, multicultural and multiethnic dialog."

## **Gentrain Webmaster Report**

*Mary Alice Rennick*

Our new website is designed to provide a fresh look and convenient access to all sorts of information about the Gentrain class and other resources and activities. The framework has been in place for about six months and has met many of its goals. But it is still a work in progress. My current emphasis is on implementing procedures to refresh information in a more timely manner.

There are some problems refreshing upcoming events information on non-windows platforms, especially iOS and android devices. The android version of Chrome seems to work better than Edge. I continue to investigate the issue, but rest assured the latest information is available on all platforms. Access it from the menu at the top of the home page. Click the icon to expand the menu if it is not displayed. Then select Wednesday Lectures, Special Events, or MPC Course and Faculty to view the full list of future events.

Some other changes are transparent to users but promote timely and efficient management of the site. Our professors and others are empowered to make changes to their content at will. The President's Note

and links to additional information related to class lectures are updated frequently. Visit them often.

More changes, some subtle, others more substantial are in the works. Please email [webmaster@gentrain.org](mailto:webmaster@gentrain.org) or call the number on the back of the Conductor if you are experiencing difficulties or want to suggest specific changes. I am always happy to hear from our users.

## **Scholarship Report**

*Vikki Logan, Scholarship Chair*

**Each year when we receive a donation from Janet Sedan Hoehn in memory of her parents, she includes a nice note:**

"During these very troubling times, I am encouraged by the kindness and generosity of so many people around us and by the promise of better communities built by the hard-working students supported by the Gentrain Scholarship Program. I am so happy to be able to play a small part in helping students achieve their educational goals and I am grateful to the Gentrain Society for giving me this opportunity. I send my warmest holiday greetings to you and the others whose work makes these scholarships possible. Most Sincerely, Janet Sedan Hoehn."

**Meet Luz Maria Estrada, winner of the Jack and Isaline Sedan Memorial Scholarship:**

This is the second year that the scholarship committee has given Luz Marie a scholarship due to her outstanding grades, her commitment to furthering her education and also to helping others. In addition, she is the mother of twin girls who recently graduated from CSUMB. Luz Marie is a classroom aide to Deanna Frybarger who has this to say about her: " During this time, I have come to know Ms. Estrada as a hardworking, flexible and competent individual. She is a lifelong learner and is passionate about serving others and helping her community. Ms. Estrada deserves an opportunity to pursue her educational goals by receiving a scholarship to help her become a translator and interpreter."

**Recent donations:**

Betty Sproule, in honor of the birthday of Rene Kimzey  
Mary Frazier, in honor of Stephanie Lawrence  
Rene Kimzey, in memory of Chuck Kimzey

## **Continuing and Professional Education Program Update**

*Alexis Bollin, Continuing and Professional Education Interim Director*



**This semester, MPC's Continuing and Professional Education is partnering with Loaves, Fishes, and Computers, a non-profit organization, to provide free computer literacy classes to seniors 60+ years old.** Students interested in participating in this free opportunity will learn about how to use computers and chromebooks, social media,

internet safety, safe online shopping, plus more. Classes will begin some time in April, and we look forward to bringing this much needed service to our senior community.

If you, or someone you know, would like to take part in this program please have them contact me at 831-646-4058 or by email at [abollin@mpc.edu](mailto:abollin@mpc.edu).

## The Gentrain Book Club

*Gerard Kapolka*

The Gentrain Great Books Discussion Group will be finishing our discussion of *Moby Dick* on March 13. After this, we will discuss works by Spinoza and Virginia Woolf. We welcome new participants. Our meetings are on Zoom on Wednesday evenings roughly from 7:00 to 8:00 pm. To be placed on the mailing list and to receive reading lists and invitations to the Zoom discussions, please email me, Gerry Kapolka, at [gtkapolka@gmail.com](mailto:gtkapolka@gmail.com)

## Gentrain Society Program Wednesday Lectures

*Gentrain Wednesday Lectures are held in LF 103 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Visitors are welcome; no charge or registration is required.*

**March 6, 2024 - 1:30 pm**

### Using Aquaculture to Rescue Oysters in Elkhorn Slough



Aquaculture is increasingly being used for conservation purposes throughout California and beyond. Once only considered for food production, aquaculture is now being recognized as a viable method to restore threatened species and ecosystems. Locally, Elkhorn Slough has been the focus of a variety of conservation efforts to restore the estuary. One of those efforts involves aquaculture, which has been used since 2018 to restore the imperiled native Olympia oyster population. Learn about this effort and other ways aquaculture is being used to improve the environment.

**Luke Gardner, Ph.D.**, is a California Sea Grant Extension Specialist based at the Moss Landing Marine Laboratories. He is a biologist whose work explores how aquaculture intersects with coastal California's environment, economy and people, and supports the development of sustainable aquaculture activities.



**March 20 - 1:30 pm**

### *The Star, the Saint, and the City*

*The Star, The Saint and The City. How Sam Brannan's Newspaper Heralded the Gold Rush and Created San*

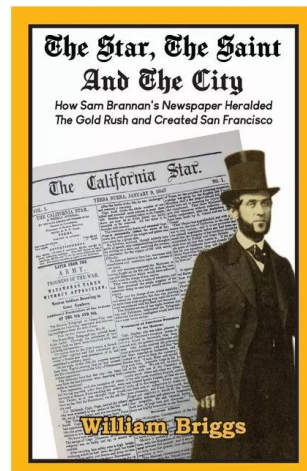
*Francisco.* By William Briggs. Bookstand Publishing (2024), 228 pages. The origins of San Francisco and early California journalism are the focus of a new book by regional historian-author **William Briggs**. From the discovery of the great bay to the arrival of a shipload of the first Yerba Buena immigrants and the subsequent transformation into the City of San Francisco, the book traces this history through the first San Francisco newspaper, *The California Star* and the dramatic life of its publisher Samuel Brannan.



**Samuel Brannan**

According to Briggs, a California State University emeritus dean and retired journalism professor, history has marginalized the importance of Sam Brannan, and the enormous role played by the original Mormon religious refugees he led to California in 1846. Not only did they colonize Yerba Buena, but his fledgling newspaper renamed it San Francisco and two years later broke the news about the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, launching the Gold Rush and transforming California.

"Brannan was the City's biggest promoter, its first entrepreneur and California's first millionaire, but many people are less familiar with that part of the story for any number of reasons," says Briggs. Brannan argued that California should become the Mormon capital instead of Salt Lake, and he traded his religion for everything else California had to offer. "He's an extraordinary historical figure who deserves more attention."



Set against the tapestry of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny leading up to the Gold Rush, *The Star, the Saint and The City* follows Brannan's epic sea pilgrimage from New York around Cape Horn to escape religious persecution in the east, only to arrive mere weeks after California had already been annexed by the United States from Mexico. The book chronicles the contentious relationship between Brannan and

Mormon leader Brigham Young, and studies Brannan's conflicting nature which ultimately resulted in his split from the Latter-Day Saints but freed him to pursue his great dreams. And the book provides a fresh look at the evolution of California journalism through the pages of *The California Star* and the role of its boy-editor, Edward Kemble, Brannan's young assistant.

**April 3 - 1:30 pm**

## **Bats: Misunderstood Creatures of the Night**

Did you know that there are over 1,400 species of bats, and you can find them on every continent but Antarctica? Bats act as pollinators, seed dispersers and natural pest control. Learn about bats, their unique characteristics and their importance to the ecosystem. Kristen Burroughs is a science illustrator who had the opportunity to illustrate bats for *Bat Conservation International*. With her illustrations she encourages education and promotes conservation for this diverse group of misunderstood animals. Dive into the process of illustrating endangered bats, newly discovered bat species and bats from around the world.



**Kristen Burroughs** is a bat enthusiast and science illustrator. She has an undergraduate degree in marine science and a postgraduate certificate in science illustration, both from CSUMB. Kristen promotes animal conservation with her artwork by bringing awareness to the importance of misunderstood creatures. She currently works as a freelance illustrator and “graphic designer (and occasionally photographer).” Kristen also works as a teaching artist for the Western Flyer Foundation, the Lyceum of Monterey County and the Arts Council for Monterey County.



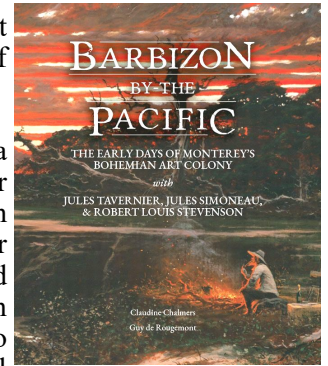
**April 17 - 1:30 pm**

## ***Barbizon by the Pacific***

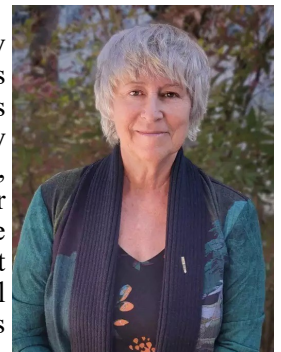
Historian Claudine Chalmers, co-author of the captivating book *Barbizon by the Pacific*, will take center stage to recount her personal odyssey, exploring the lives of remarkable figures like Jules Tavernier, Jules Simoneau, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Through Claudine's words, you'll gain an intimate insight into the early days of the Monterey Bohemian Art Colony and

the French artistry that flourished on the shores of Monterey Bay.

Claudine Chalmers, a passionate historian, is your guide to an era that has been shrouded in mystery for far too long. With vivid storytelling and an unwavering dedication to historical accuracy, she'll transport you back in time to experience the birth of a cultural movement that shaped California's artistic landscape. *Barbizon by the Pacific* is more than just a book; it's an immersive journey into history, art, and the people who made it all happen.



This book is an engaging journey through the late 1800s documenting the creative lives and experiences of early Monterey's artists, shop keepers, tavern managers and their relationships that led to the influential French Bohemian art colony in Monterey still influencing California and artists today.



## **MPC Spring Gentrain Program**

**February 20, 22, 27, 29 - March 5, 7, 12, 14**

### **Gentrain 13/413 THE END OF INNOCENCE (1870-1918 AD)**

The course gives a portrait of Europe leading up to and including World War I. It is also the age of “isms”: impressionism, realism, naturalism, cubism, futurism, Marxism, and Freudianism. It culminates with World War I and the Russian Revolution.



**\*\*Spring Break - March 18 to March 22\*\***

March 26, 28 - April 2, 4, 9, 11, 16, 18

**Gentrain 14/414: BETWEEN THE WARS (1918 - 1945)**

The course is a look at the period between, leading up to, and including World War II. It examines such topics as Communism and Stalinism and the rise of Fascism, the impact of the Great Depression, and cultural responses to the challenges of the period, including radical new kinds of art, literature and philosophy.



April 23, 25, 30 - May 2, 7, 9, 14, 16

**Gentrain 15/415 WORLD WAR II TO THE PRESENT (1945-PRESENT)**

The course examines selected aspects of the Western World in the past half century, including such topics as the Cold War and the succession of wars that followed World War II, and the rapid development of movements in art, literature, and philosophy in response to a changing world.



February 15, 2024 Dialogue

**VIRTUAL EVENTS**

In person Special Events have been limited because of Covid-19, and many organizations are filling in the gap locally and at a distance with an amazing array of creative online presentations, both live and recorded. **We will be using the Special Events space to share some "events" we have found that will be available in 2024.** Some are direct links and some are links to websites with information of interest.

**Monterey County Theatre Alliance**  
Monterey County Theatre Alliance (MCTA) website: [theatremonterey.org](http://theatremonterey.org) has regular updates on local live theatre events, primarily virtually. Here are the MCTA Virtual Live Theatre presentations created and presented by Howard Burnham and Carol Marquart. **For more information about these shows, go to [TheatreMonterey.org](http://TheatreMonterey.org)** or email Andrea McDonald at [admin@TheatreMonterey.org](mailto:admin@TheatreMonterey.org)

**You may register to attend any or all of these presentations at [theatremonterey.org](http://theatremonterey.org).** Once registered you will be sent a Zoom link to a live webinar of the presentation. No fee for each performance, but a link to an optional shared donation to the presenter and the MCTA (to help pay for tech and presentation costs) will be available at the conclusion of each presentation.

Mar 9 *Losing my head!* - Sir Flinders Petrie, the Father of Modern Egyptology - Howard Burnham & 2024 MCTA Hybrid Theatre.

Apr 13 *Thomas Cole and the Hudson Valley School of artists* - Howard Burnham & 2024 MCTA Hybrid Theatre.

Jul 13 *Hons, Rebels and Sewers* - Lord Redesdale on his daughters, the Mitford sisters - Howard Burnham & 2024 MCTA Hybrid Theatre.

Aug 10 *Let me not be mad!* - John Ruskin, art critic and prophet - Howard Burnham & 2024 MCTA Hybrid Theatre.

Sept 14 *The World in a grain of sand* - Thomas Cosway on the art of the miniature - Howard Burnham & 2024 MCTA Hybrid Theatre.



Hanging with Louis the Lobo

March 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5 unit13	6 lect1	7 unit13	8	9
10	11	12 unit13	13	14 unit13	15	16
17	18	19	20 lect2 meet	21 event	22	23
24	25	26 unit14	27	28 unit14	29	30
31						

April 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2 unit14	3 lect3	4 unit14	5	6
7	8	9 unit14	10	11 unit14	12	13
14	15	16 unit14	17 lect4 meet	18 unit14	19	20
21	22	23 unit15	24	25 unit15	26	27
28	29	30 unit15	31			

### Key to Calendar

event = SPECIAL EVENT - KING AND I

lect1 = LECTURE - USING  
AQUACULTURE TO RESCUE  
OYSTERS IN ELKHORN SLOUGH

lect2 = LECTURE - THE STAR, THE  
SAINT, AND THE CITY

lect3 = LECTURE - BATS:  
MISUNDERSTOOD CREATURES OF  
THE NIGHT

lect4 = LECTURE - *BARBIZON BY THE  
PACIFIC*

meet = GENTRAIN SOCIETY BOARD  
MEETING

UNIT13 = GENT 13: THE END OF  
INNOCENCE (1870-1918 AD)

unit14 = GENTRAIN 14 BETWEEN THE  
WARS (1918 - 1945)

unit15 = GENTRAIN 15 WORLD WAR II  
TO THE PRESENT (1945-PRESENT)

**Yes, I would like to contribute to the  
Gentrain Society Scholarship Fund**

**980 Fremont Street, Monterey CA 93940**

*(Please make your checks payable to MPC/Gentrain Society)*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount enclosed: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Invitation to Join**

Dues: \$35 per year, \$50 Couples  
Send your check payable to the *MPC/Gentrain  
Society*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Membership, *Gentrain Society* - MPC  
980 Fremont St., Monterey CA 93940

**The Gentrain Society of MPC  
2023 - 2024  
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Member-at-Large: Star Reiersen (831) 372-5725  
Member-at-Large: Linda Leum (360) 961-2269  
Imm. Past President: Peter Purdue (831) 646-9216  
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Michael Sovereign (831) 646-1912  
Oregon Shakespeare Festival:  
Allison Porter (831) 394-8051  
Webmaster: Mary Alice Rennick (831) 375-0702

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## GENTRAIN SOCIETY MARCH/APRIL

**March 6, 2024 - 1:30 pm - USING AQUACULTURE TO RESCUE OYSTERS IN ELKHORN SLOUGH -** Aquaculture is increasingly being used for conservation purposes throughout California and beyond. Once only considered for food production, aquaculture is now being recognized as a viable method to restore threatened species and ecosystems. Locally, Elkhorn Slough has been the focus of a variety of conservation efforts to restore the estuary. One of those efforts involves aquaculture, which has been used since 2018 to restore the imperiled native Olympia oyster population.

**March 20, 2024 1:30 pm - THE STAR, THE SAINT, AND THE CITY -** Regional historian-author William Briggs talk about how the origins of San Francisco and early California journalism are the focus of his new book. From the discovery of the great bay to the arrival of a shipload of the first Yerba Buena immigrants and the subsequent transformation into the City of San Francisco, the book traces this history through the first San Francisco newspaper, The California Star and the dramatic life of its publisher Samuel Brannan.

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