

Upcoming Events at Michaan's!

**Free Appraisal Event**  
Wednesday, September 23rd; 9 am - 12 pm  
Wednesday, October 7th; 9 am - 12 pm

**October Gallery Auction**  
Friday, October 16th; 10 am  
**Preview:**  
Sunday, October 11th; 10 am - 5 pm  
Thursday, October 15th; noon - 5 pm  
Friday, October 16th; 9 am - end of auction

**October Annex Auction**  
Mon., Oct. 12th; Tues., Oct. 13th; Wed., Oct. 14th | 9 am  
**Preview:**  
Sun., Oct. 11th; 10 am - 5 pm  
Mon., Oct. 12th & Tues., Oct. 13th; 9 am - 5 pm  
Wed., Oct. 14th; 9 am - end of auction



Empire Gilt Bronze and Porcelain Figural Clock



**Estate of Daniel M. Mitchell**  
Circle of John Singleton Copley (American, 1738-1815)  
18th Century Portrait of Governor Thomas Pownall (1722-1805)



The Watt Cigar Double Sided Five Cents Printed Tin Sign



Conoco Minute Man Gasoline Painted Tin Sign



Large Nesbitt of California Lithographed Tin Advertising Sign



Two Nepalese Swords



MICHAAN'S AUCTIONS

Auctioneers & Appraisers

MICHAANS.COM • (800) 380-9822 • (510) 740-0220  
2701 Monarch Street, Alameda, CA 94501

Board #71393954

San Francisco Chronicle

SFCHRONICLE.COM

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

2026 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER

\$3.00



Vineyards fighting fungus with robots

Tool against pervasive pest could represent agriculture's future



Photos by Preston Gannaway/For the S.F. Chronicle

**ABOVE:** Operator Emily Hooper holds a device that can start or stop the Thorvald robot on its path between vines. Hypothetically, if regulations allowed, the machinery could run fully autonomously.

**TOP:** The Thorvald uses ultraviolet rays to disrupt fungal DNA, and it can be used to counter the botrytis and sour rot that plague grapevines.

**By Lucy Hodgman**  
STAFF WRITER

After the sun sets on Wilson Winery's vineyard in Sonoma, the 51-acre farm's newest piece of equipment blinks to life. The self-driving Thorvald robot trundles through the dirt like a covered wagon, its canopy arching over the row of grape vines. As it rolls down each row, it blasts the vines with concentrated ultraviolet light to kill powdery mildew, a white fungus that can scar and shrivel grapes and make wine taste bitter or musty.

The Napa-based Walsh Vineyard Management, which farms about 4,500 acres of vines for dozens of clients, began testing Thorvald robots this spring. The experiment hasn't been entirely painless: In May, one of *Robots continues on A16*

Claims not likely to sway tax voters

Leader disavowed, but support for billionaire measure holds

**By Hannah Wiley**  
STAFF WRITER

The leader of the healthcare union behind California's controversial billionaire tax initiative faced at least 15 years of misconduct allegations before bombshell reports last week substantiated allegations of physical intimidation, extortion and assault against him.

One investigation substantiated allegations that Dave Regan, president of SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West and the chief architect of Proposition 40, attempted to extort endorsements from fellow labor unions during his campaign to build support for the tax last year. Both probes substantiated a claim that Regan assaulted a former SEIU California State Council leader in 2009, while one substantiated a claim that he physically intimidated another State Council staffer during an event this year.

Both reports detailed an internal culture *Prop 40 continues on A18*

Voter ID ballot measure draws heavy interest

**By Sara Libby and Raheem Hosseini**  
STAFF WRITERS

Just four days after taking office for a second time, President Donald Trump made an unprecedented demand. As Los Angeles County reeled from some of the most devastating wildfires in U.S. history, Trump said he would withhold critical recovery aid unless California agreed to two conditions.

"Voter ID, so that the people have a chance to vote," Trump said when asked what he'd require. "And I want to see the water be released and come down into Los Angeles and throughout the state."

Proposition 39, which is on the November ballot, would deliver the voter ID approach Trump demanded. Trump and congressional *Voting continues on A19*

As El Niño builds, odds growing for wet winter

**By Greg Porter**  
SENIOR NEWSROOM  
METEOROLOGIST

California's winter prospects are unusually wet as the potentially historic El Niño looms, and the latest forecasts are starting to put numbers on what that could mean.

Along parts of the California coast, federal forecasters now put the odds of a top-third precipitation season as high as 50% to 60%. One of Europe's leading seasonal models goes considerably further, projecting January *El Niño continues on A12*

State to see major overhaul of smoke damage coverage



Stephen Lam/S.F. Chronicle

**Karen Girard's home office in Altadena (Los Angeles County) was damaged by smoke and soot from the Eaton Fire last year.**

**By Megan Fan Munce and Susie Neilson**  
STAFF WRITERS

The January 2025 Eaton and Palisades wildfires leveled more than 16,000 homes, businesses and other structures. Thousands more were untouched by flames, but deeply contaminated by soot and ash blowing through open vents and unsealed doors.

What to do with these homes left standing has become a defining question in the aftermath of the Los Angeles County wildfires — one California is now poised to answer.

Two new laws signed by Gov. *Smoke continues on A8*

