

NOPNA News

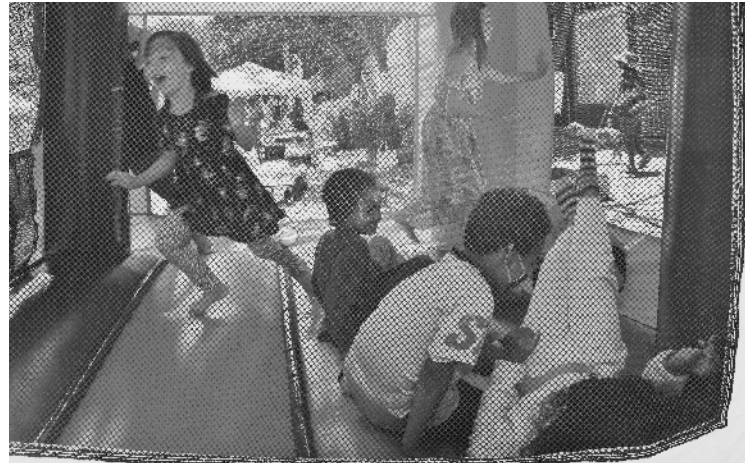
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A Publication of the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

Summer 2022



**NOPNA
BLOCK
PARTY
2022**



FROM THE BOARD

CELEBRATING NOPA

After two very long years off due to COVID-19, NOPNA reignited the Annual Block Party on Saturday, July 16th! It was a beautiful day, packed with activities on Lyon Street between Grove and Fulton. There were attractions for kids and adults, great live music from local bands, and even some special "celebrity" guests.

Kids delighted bouncing all day in the Big Castle bounce house, got their faces painted, and contributed to a collaborative chalk mural in the middle of Lyon Street facilitated by local artist Sasha. Throughout the day, kids and adults were treated to a variety of music from four bands: The Sunblock Boys, The Band Ice Cream, The Undercurrent, and Fonsie.

Local elected officials were also sighted that Saturday: newly appointed District Attorney Brooke Jenkins and State Senator Scott Weiner both mixed and mingled with the crowd, listening to neighbors and trading ideas.

All these festivities are only possible with the generous support of our sponsors. As a Platinum sponsor, BASA (Bay Area Safe Alternatives) hosted a booth that was busy throughout the day. BASA is a dispensary which prides itself on being a compassion-based enterprise that supplies top-of-the-line products. Gold sponsors included long-time NOPNA supporters: Indigo Group Real Estate (Mollie Poe and Declan Hickey) and City Real



Leela Gill
NOPNA Board Member



The NOPNA News is published by the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association for the residents, businesses, and friends of our neighborhood, which is bounded by Masonic Avenue and Turk, Divisadero and Fell Streets.

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NOPNA's Mission: The purpose of this association shall be to establish neighborhood unity, maintain multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity, foster a sense of neighborhood pride, promote a safe and clean community, and improve the quality of life for all residents of the neighborhood.

Your financial support allows NOPNA to cover the costs of our newsletters, community building events like our block party and holiday party, public art projects in the neighborhood, and other activities that enrich our dynamic neighborhood. It also supports this site. <https://www.nopna.org/get-involved>

Make a difference on our streets and become a member today!

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Block Party Photos by M Rocket; Steve Nuzzo; Yifat; Jim Jenkins



WHAT HAVE WE VOICED IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS?

Do you sometimes feel like campaign season never ends? In 2022, we had elections in February, April, and June. Our next one is in November. There was also the curious (and soundly thrashed) 2021 effort to recall Governor Gavin Newsom.

In February, three SFUSD board members were up for recall. All three recall efforts succeeded with city-wide approval for the recall at 76%. The NOPA neighborhood was only slightly more forgiving and still voted to recall all three members at 63%.

In April, our neighborhood voted to elect Matt Haney rather than David Campos to fill state Assembly District 17 with 63% support for Haney, almost identical to the SFUSD recall vote.

Two high-profile local propositions in June were Propositions A (SFMTA funding) and H (District Attorney recall). Despite support from the Mayor and all Supervisors, Prop A fell barely short of the 2/3 majority required of bond votes. We NOPA residents were more supportive of additional MUNI funding, and supported it at a rate of 79%.

Proposition H was the nationally discussed proposal to recall Chesa Boudin, the District Attorney who entered office in 2020. Citywide, Boudin was successfully recalled with 55% of voters in favor; our NOPA community had a different take with only 38% voting in favor of the recall.

The NOPNA Board considers neighborhood voting records when we choose what to advocate for. Please vote in every election, no matter how hyperlocal! There's one more election in November, in case you thought you were done for the year. Voting is a very important responsibility for society. Our voice is a privilege and it's important in maintaining democracy to use our vote to express that voice. Get out the vote!

Tim Hickey and his wife, Leah, have lived in the neighborhood since 2010 and can be seen with their son, Liam, biking and walking through the area.

Estate (David Cohen and John Dallas). Emporium contributed as a Silver sponsor and shared a variety of outdoor games for all to enjoy. Thank you also to Central Coffee, Bob's Donuts, Souvla, and Sparky's Balloons who each contributed in their own way to enhance the day. Finally, huge thanks to all who volunteered to help set up the event, monitor traffic, and clean up after the activities. We also want to thank the many neighbors who donated to NOPNA during the party.

NOPNA is a 100% volunteer-run non-profit organization that relies on donations from its community to fund activities, such as the Annual Block Party, the Halloween Block Party, the Holiday Party, and the NOPNA News. We hope to see you at the next one!

Best,
Leela



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<p>SILVER Emporium</p>	<p>COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS Central Coffee Bob's Donuts Souvla Sparky's Balloons</p>

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS: Brooke Bower, Cynthia Chapman, Garen Checkley, Doug Diboll, Jayasi Mehar, Jeff Liu-Leyco, M Rocket, Max Almaraz, Quang Duong, Rebecca Reis, Romil Bhardwaj, Sarah Otis, Steve Nuzzo, Taylor Carden, Vahini, Yifat Amir

Leela Gill is married with two boys, is a NOPNA board member, and has been active in safety and community organizing in the neighborhood since 2000.

CONTINUED FROM NOPNA NEWS SPRING 2022

OUR HISTORY IS NO MYSTERY

In my mission to learn more about the City College murals at Masonic and Hayes, I was introduced to Miranda Bergman and her long-time collaborator, Jane Norling. Miranda and Jane are founding members of the Haight Ashbury Muralists and the creative forces who have infused “The People’s Wall” with color since the mid 1970s. To my delight, Miranda kindly suggested I swing by her residential workshop in an effort to jump-start the process of organizing her personal archives, a process Jane had recently completed for herself.

At that point, I knew some high-level facts about “Our History Is No Mystery,” the first of three murals painted at the site: funding was established through a federal bicentennial initiative and scenes depicted a “people’s history” of the United States that boldly confronted a number of uncomfortable realities such as the internment of Japanese-

American citizens. What I didn’t know — and what I was seeking to better understand — was the journey that brought the wall to life.

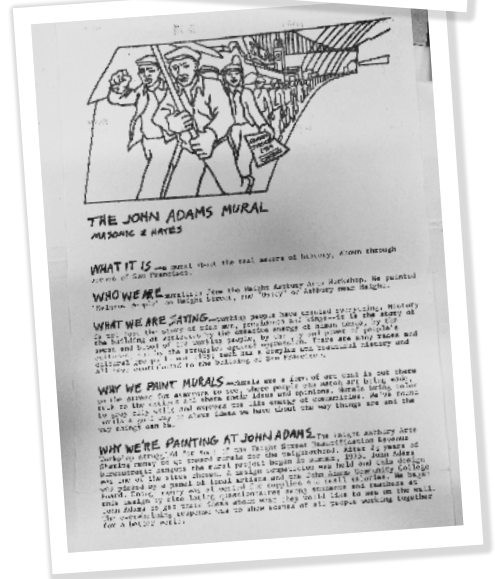
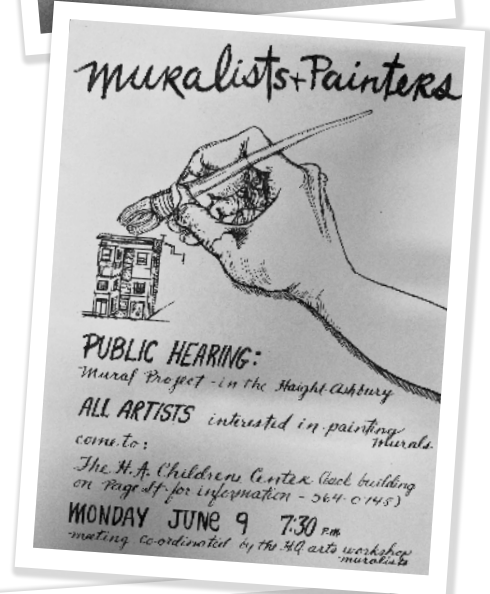
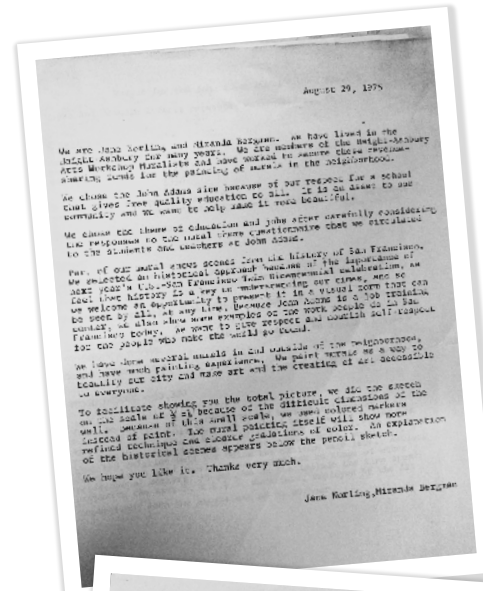
I rang Miranda’s doorbell on a bright January afternoon and was warmly greeted by a fashionable septuagenarian with a timeless, down-to-earth vibe. She settled me into a nook in her cozy backyard workshop and left me alone with Triscuit the Cat and some underground jazz radio while she disappeared to retrieve her files. When she returned with a tall, unwieldy stack, I was thrilled, impressed, and more than slightly intimidated.

One of the earliest documents, minutes from a Haight Ashbury Improvement Project meeting hosted at City Hall in the fall of 1974, unexpectedly brought a smile to my face. The arcane notes paint a familiar picture of interest groups and civil servants duking it out to finalize the allocation of public resources. Merchants, represented by the Improvement Project, believed the allocation of bicentennial funds for murals to be excessive. (If I’m connecting dots correctly with Tim Drescher’s² account, they wanted to paint fire hydrants instead.) The Muralists, represented by Miranda, Jane, Arch Williams, and Thomas Kunz, were able to hold their ground by promising an endorsement letter from Supervisor Molinari. I silently celebrated the big-picture thinking and tenacity of the underdog artists and I continued sifting through files.

In documents spanning throughout 1975, I saw the Muralists continuing their crusade by conducting community outreach and building a broad base



Miranda Bergman, one of the founding members of the Haight Ashbury Muralists.



Top: Letter from Jane and Miranda, dated August 29, 1975. Middle: Notice of the Public Hearing for All interested Artists. Bottom: About the mural.

Scenes from Our History is No Mystery

1. Ohlone people, and their decimation by the Spanish Missions.
2. Mexican American War, 1846 - 1848: the U.S. seized a large portion of Northern Territories part of which became California.
3. The Gold Rush, 1850s: showing the Chinese labor in the mines and the booming growth of S.F.
4. Convention in 1850 to demand that public schools be open to black children.
5. The Spanish American war of 1898 and the US colonization of Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. Major shipbuilding for the war took place in San Francisco.
6. 1906 earthquake and reconstruction.
7. The Great Depression of 1934, picturing William Randolph Hearst Sr, who built his castle when millions were unemployed.
8. The San Francisco general strike of 1934.
9. World War II, showing the detention in camps of Japanese Americans, and the large influx of African Americans to work in the Hunter's Point shipyards.
10. The sixties. Times of much social activism in San Francisco. Featuring a portrait of imprisoned leader of the Black liberation movement, George Jackson.
11. Threatened destruction of the International Hotel. The Hotel was destroyed in 1979.
12. Working people in San Francisco - women, men and children of many cultures creating their world.



of support for "Our History Is No Mystery." A letter from City College indicates former Director Maxwell Gillette's support for a mural on-site, a public hearing notice encourages all artists to get involved, an open house notice invites the public to review all submitted designs, and a "Who, What, Why" flyer outlines the Muralists' motivations and intent. As I imagine the creation and distribution of these documents, composed with hand-rendered fonts and graphics, it becomes increasingly clear that "Our History Is No Mystery" was the result of a major, multi-faceted effort to engage the entire community in a collective work of art.

In the fall of 1975, almost a year after surmounting the bureaucratic hurdles at City Hall, the mural evolved from concept to reality. Jane and Miranda submitted a sketch of Our History to City officials for review, accompanied

by an inspiring vision statement:

We are Jane Norling and Miranda Bergman . . . We chose the John Adams site because of our respect for a school that gives free quality education to all. It is an asset to our community and we want to help make it more beautiful. . . We feel that history is a key to understanding our times, and so we welcome an opportunity to present it in a visual form that can be seen by all, at any time. . . We hope you like it.

And finally — in May of 1976, after an almost catastrophic bout of racially-motivated vandalism — the mural was completed and dedicated. An untitled sheet of paper with three typed paragraphs begins:

We are happy to be having this celebration today because it is the birthday of Malcolm X. . .

I smile again as I recognize Miranda's opening lines in "The People's Wall."¹

It's taken years for the Muralists to reach this celebratory milestone, and as the enormity of their life-long labor of love is beginning to sink in, I realize I've only scraped the surface of their efforts. I still have two massive file folders to work through and the winter sunlight is beginning to wane through the workshop window.

TO BE CONTINUED

1. Tim Drescher, 1994, San Francisco Murals: Community Creates Its Muse (Expanded Edition) Pogo Press
2. "The People's Wall," produced by The Haight Ashbury Film Collective, can be viewed at



Em Minor has lived in NOPA since 2018 and enjoys strolling through the Panhandle in the evenings with her husband John.

FALLEN

by JD Jenkins

Crowds and clouds scudding by
As if nothing happened

Oak and Fell full
Nose first and indifferent

Standing here in Panhandle mud
I live in a fallen Eucalyptus

Sparrows flit in and out
Mourning or rejoicing

We'll never know

No one heard the night crack
Tucked inside little apartments warm
And dry, blue panels flickering

Wind howling
Coyotes cowering
Pinched yips in the den

Brought down by wind or falling fish
Or the weight of starlight piercing
The satin sack of night

We'll never really know
Brought down by me by you
Climbing to get a better view
And leave us completely

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Does it matter now?

It would have continued falling
Through the leaves of our sheets
Into the places where we dreamt

Rainbow skinned, not a drop of sap
To stick us together
No blood, no weight of one another

Before the yellow tape
Before the chain saws
Before disintegration

I want to see what the sparrows see
I want to see what the crow saw
From the top we never reached

Reaching down I part the branches
And there you are, complete
With the last breath of Spring

LOVE, HONEY, BEES, AND MINDFULNESS



I met Jeff MacMullen at the Lower Haight bar,

Danny Coyle. Upon entering, I immediately recognized Jeff from his We Be Honey booth at the Sunday Divisadero Farmers' Market at the DMV.

"Welcome to my office!" he said.

Despite this office being a neighborhood bar, complete with the usual bar-stuff (beer, darts, football), it's

clear that Jeff is telling the truth: this is not only his regular after-work stop, but also his conference room and office.

Jeff's honey is featured prominently on Danny Coyle's menu: Honey Lemonade is on the first page of Danny Coyle's menu, as is a hot toddy with honey from Jeff's local brand. Jeff speaks fondly of the bar, sharing how the owner and staff have been good to him while managing to remain open with outdoor seating throughout the pandemic. Community is important to Jeff: sharing with local people and bees.

When the topic turns to bees and honey, Jeff's demeanor completely changes. His eyes ignite with passion and reverence as he talks about bees, pollen, honey, nature, flavor, and mindfulness.

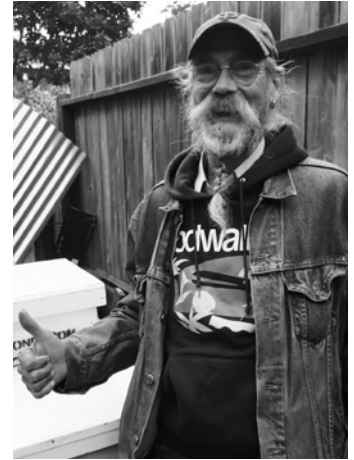
The respect and wonder with which he speaks of nature and his work reveals that, to Jeff, honey production is a real vocation — a true calling, bordering on spiritual practice. At the risk of sounding overly-dramatic, I would go so far as to say that hives are Jeff's temples. The words he uses — beautiful, brilliant, clever — are spoken with a demeanor that dances around from joy to delight, then to awe and wonder.

We talked about how honey flavor is often a surprise to be discovered, rather than a product to be controlled. "You've got to taste it to label it!" he says. For example, his prior week's batch was flavored with accents of avocado and hints of sage and eucalyptus. And the terroir of another hive resulted in a lighter flavor, with subtle hints of wildflower.

Terroir tĕr-wär' (n): "the complete natural environment, usually referring to wine production, including soil & climate." For honey, the terroir and the flavor is determined by what the bees are eating. This fall, Jeff's looking forward to batches of fennel honey.

Later, we walked to one of his hives, where we discussed topics ranging from hive dynamics to the agricultural regulations applicable to local beekeeping and I learned honey is antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral! We discussed hive construction and repair, the fact that bees can't tolerate rhododendron, and Jeff's standing offer to remove bee swarms from properties that don't want them, or establish hives on properties that do. (Call him at 415-646-6585 if either applies to you.)

A neighbor passed by on the sidewalk and, without even turning their head, shouted, "Don't give away all your secrets, Jeff!" This served as more evidence that I was



dealing with a real local artisan, something all communities should protect and treasure.

I took one last sip of the honey lemonade and prepared to depart from the bar. Before calling it a night, I asked Jeff where readers can find him and his products. He is at the Civic Center Farmers' Market on Wednesdays, Divisadero Farmers' Market on Sundays, and soon to be at Kate's Cafe.

Crockett Dunn has been a NOPA resident since 2018 and enjoys biking through the park with his wife Natalie and 10 year old son

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FAREWELL TO HEAVEN



L to R: Hadi, Wafa and Yahya Salih

Wafa Salih, co-owner and manager of Jannah Restaurant at 1775 Fulton Street, looks around the spacious, high-ceilinged room with an expression both rueful and relieved. She and her husband, Yahya, have presided over this location for thirteen years, but now it is time for them to go. Sunday, May 22 was Jannah's last day of operation.

a California twist. Two years later, they moved to 9th Avenue in the Inner Sunset, where the restaurant operated side by side with their less formal deli. In 1997, Yahya decided to explore a new location at Geary and Montgomery, in the Financial District, again paired with a café. Other iterations have included a location at Van Ness and Union and even one in Burlingame.

Before settling in NOPA, the restaurant, previously called Yahya Cuisine, occupied many other locations. It was a moveable feast. They started downtown in 1989, offering Middle Eastern mesquite-grilled kebabs with

Finally, on July 4, 2009, they opened in their recent NOPA location. Its name was taken from that of their daughter, born in 2004: Jannah, meaning paradise, or heaven.

Throughout its journey, the restaurant remained close to its roots, serving a highly sophisticated form of Middle Eastern cuisine based on ancient recipes of Mesopotamia and the family's native Iraq. While some components of their menu, like hummus, tahini, and bulghur wheat, are staples of Middle Eastern cooking, the Salihs prepared them with special techniques. For example, they distinguished their dishes by combining tangy fruit sauces with vegetables, and grains with meat. Among their signature recipes were garbanzo-crust "pizza"; phyllo dough pockets stuffed with shredded chicken, rice, raisins, and almonds enhanced with cardamom-dried apricot sauce; and dolmas (grape leaf wraps) filled with meats, rice, and vegetables, and flavored with tamarind, allspice, and ginger.

Those specialties didn't catch on right away, though. On its first day at the downtown venue, recalls Yahya, just three people showed up. A few more trickled in over the next few weeks. It was touch-and-go until an enthusiastic *San Francisco Chronicle* review by food critic Patricia Unterman opened the floodgates and customers began lining up all along the street to get in. "That review changed my life," recalls Yahya. "By 7 p.m.

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on those evenings, not a scrap of food was left!" Since then, the restaurant has received rave reviews in many prestigious food and travel magazines.

Like most dining establishments, Jannah navigated rough waters during COVID, mainly preparing takeaway packages. Over the past half-year, with the virus relatively contained, its in-person clientele started drifting back in. Their son, Hadi, helped handle the workload and managed the bar. Their dedication created generations of grateful, faithful patrons.

The Salihs effusively thank all of these patrons, old and new, institutions as well as individuals. "Almost every department at the University of San Francisco has held a special dinner here to celebrate graduation," exclaims Wafa proudly. Jannah has hosted innumerable parties, from weddings to memorial gatherings, for other groups.

Despite their success, or perhaps because of it, the Salih family has begun to feel the inevitable wear and tear of so many years of hard work. Additionally, the general economic

downturn has bitten a chunk out of their budget. Wafa has been postponing needed reconstructive knee surgery for years. Then, several months ago, they were informed that the building housing the restaurant had been purchased by a San Francisco-based property company, Andina Property LLC, which plans to remodel the entire structure. The company offered the family the option to continue operating Jannah in its current location, but at that point they decided that it was time to withdraw and take a break.

The couple's long-term plans are uncertain. Wafa says that they may decide to open a new restaurant eventually. It is difficult to imagine this creative, energetic team retiring to a sedentary life. For now, however, they are looking forward to a well-deserved period of rest and decompression. After 44 years of delighting San Francisco diners, that must seem like heaven.

Suzanne Cowan is a long-time NOPA resident and former NOPNA News editor and Board Member

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VANGUARD PROPERTIES



THE GENTLE GIANT OF THE PANHANDLE



Photo by M. Smolinski

Left, View of Mercy Terrace from the GGP panhandle, 2022.

Below, View to Southern Pacific Hospital's west wing under construction from GGP panhandle, 1910.



Each Sunday as I walk along the path of the Panhandle

toward the DMV parking lot for my weekly farmers' market visit, I pass by the stunning beast of a building along Fell Street, spanning the entire city block between Lyon and Baker. Protected by the tall, ornate iron fence, I often see the same elderly gentleman sitting on the portico high above the street level atop the massive staircase at the center of the main structure. Nodding to him a "good day," I find myself marveling at intricate details of this architectural masterpiece, including its gilded crosses, even though I have seen them hundreds of times.

My curiosity finally got the better of me and I did a little laptop sleuthing to learn more about this building. The complex was originally built as the largest, nongovernmental hospital in the city for the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. Back in those days, railroad companies provided an early version of an employee healthcare plan. With a portion of earnings withheld from

the workers, along with subsidies paid by the company, the railroad hospital provided a lower cost way to deal with the injuries common in the early railway industry.

The purchase of the 2.5 acres of land on the northwest corner of Fell and Baker was one of the largest real estate deals in the immediate aftermath of the 1906 earthquake. This plot of land was to be the new home for the Southern Pacific Hospital after the one it had only recently built in the Mission was destroyed in the big quake. So, in 1909, the neoclassical structure designed by Daniel J. Patterson rose up at the entrance of the panhandle of Golden Gate Park (see photo).

It must have been healing to the patients at the time to look out from

their hospital windows, perhaps from one of the 450 beds, to the trees of the Panhandle and residents from the neighborhood strolling along or resting on a bench in the park, just as we do today. Behind the main structure were the social hall, nurse's quarters, and the powerhouse. The eastern annex was added in 1930.

The Southern Pacific Hospital operated for over 50 years before transitioning to the Harkness Community Hospital in 1968 which operated until 1974 when it closed due to financial woes. This magnificent pillar of the community then entered a decade of abandonment. Mercy Housing, the present tenant of this structure, revitalized this sleeping giant into a subsidized assisted living facility for seniors with the first occupants of the 158 residential units gaining possession through a lottery on September 6, 1983, for an average rate of \$150 a month. The group of buildings along Hayes Street, including the powerhouse and nurses' quarters, were later converted into 36 affordable housing units called Mercy Family Plaza. The Mercy Housing lease runs for 99 years to maintain this much needed affordable housing for seniors.

So, the next time you pass by this gentle giant, wave to its residents high up on the front portico, or smile as you pass by the current front door on Baker Street with its proud moniker of Mercy Terrace.

Mark Smolinski is a medical epidemiologist and long-time NOPA resident, along with his Bombay and Bengal rescue cats

THE PATH TO A SAFER AND MORE PLEASANT PANHANDLE CONTINUES

Any stroll along the Panhandle multi-use path on the north side likely results in a noticeably less congested sojourn than it did prior to July 2020. This is a result of the Fell Street road diet: a quick-build safety project that reduced the surface highway from four vehicle travel lanes to three, improved crosswalk visibility and safety, and created a westbound protected bike lane. The effort has relieved congestion on the Panhandle multi-use path.

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) collected speed and vehicle volume data along Fell Street before the project was implemented, 6 months after implementation, and again 12 months after implementation. They found several positive safety and efficiency outcomes. Compared to the state of Fell Street pre-project, 12 months after implementation there was a 6% reduction in vehicle speeds and a 31% shift of bicyclists off of the Panhandle multi-use path and onto the Fell Street bike lane. There is also a significant increase in the overall number of people using the Fell corridor: 12% more vehicles, ~65% more pedestrians, and ~40% more bicyclists.

With these improvements to the westbound multi-use path, we are glad to share that, in December 2021, the San Francisco County

Transportation Authority approved funding to design and complete a similar project on Oak Street from Shrader to Baker. This side of the Panhandle will be more complicated than Fell: traffic signals along Oak do not consider bicyclist safety, whereas Fell already had bicycle-specific signals built into traffic signals at Baker, Masonic, and Shrader. With the upcoming quick-build project, we expect a further reduction of congestion and bicyclist speed on the Panhandle multi-use path. Finally, now that the JFK Promenade has been made permanent, there is an opportunity to improve safety and comfort of the Stanyan crossing between the Panhandle and Golden Gate Park.

Oak, Fell, and Masonic are categorized as SFMTA "High Injury Corridors." This is not a designation we are proud of, and therefore the Vision Zero Committee of the NOPNA Board continues to advocate to city agencies for drastic safety and livability improvements around our Panhandle. We look forward to collaborating with D5 Supervisor Preston on Oak Street, as he hopes to get the quick-build road diet in the ground by the end of 2022. Please contact robin@nopna.org if you'd like to learn more, share feedback, or get involved with the VZ team.

Robin Kutner is the Corresponding Secretary on the NOPNA Board. She is extremely concerned about climate change and Vision Zero street safety and she makes transportation mode decisions accordingly.

Tim Hickey and his wife, Leah, have lived in the neighborhood since 2010 and can be seen with their son, Liam, biking and walking through the area.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday Streets Western

Addition: September 18 from 11:00am - 4:00pm on Fillmore St, Fulton St and Baker St

Brothers for Change Basketball

Tournament: October 15th in the Panhandle Park

Phoenix Day:

Oct 16th from 12:00-5:00pm on Lyon Street between Fulton and Grove

NOPNA Virtual General Meeting:

Third Thursday of even months. Next meeting: October 20th, 2022 (check nopna.org for updates)

Bark the Vote:

October 22th at Alamo Square

ASNA Alamo Score:

October 30th at Alamo Square

NOPA Halloween

Extravaganza: October 31 from 6:00 - 8:00pm on Grove Street (between Central & Baker)

Farmers Market: Sundays

9am-1pm at the DMV Parking Lot on Broderick & Fell

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board@nopna.org



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