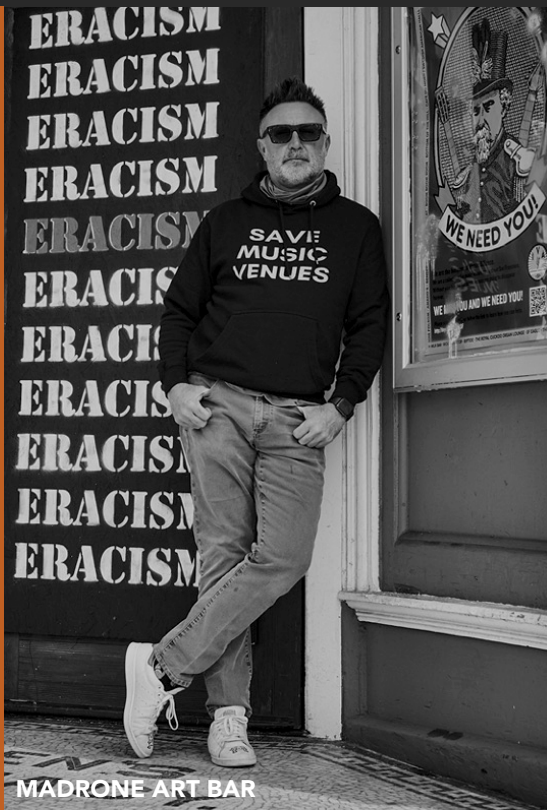


NOPNA News

nopna.org

A Publication of the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

Fall 2021



MADRONE ART BAR



BISTRO CENTRAL PARC



SF HARDWARE

NEIGHBORHOOD REOPENINGS

It's been exciting to see some of our favorite small businesses and restaurants reopen in recent months.

Read on for more information on Madrone Art Bar, Bistro Central Parc, SF Hardware, and Automat, and please email us at board@nopna.org if there are other local businesses you'd like to highlight in the News!

MADRONE ART BAR

After being closed for almost a year due to the pandemic, Madrone Art Bar — NOPA's notoriously fun and lively bar and music venue — reopened at full capacity on June 15th, 2021, to much community excitement.

Due to COVID-related mandates, Madrone was forced

to pivot their business — serving "to-go drinks" in the beginning and then serving food to operate. Owner Mike "Spike" Krouse acknowledges the many challenges of the pandemic, but says he found a new sense of neighborhood camaraderie.

"I've had so many heartfelt responses from the community in regard to how much they truly missed the environment created at the bar. This is affirming to hear and certainly helps our morale when the work is overwhelming."

If you're in the mood for a delicious drink, friendly conversation, and some fantastic music (Motown Mondays are a must!), Madrone Art Bar is the place to be. The bar is

(continued on page 3)

FROM THE BOARD

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE NOPA

Hello Neighbors—

What a rollercoaster we've experienced in recent months. Early summer was bursting with exuberance as the city officially re-opened and events that had been delayed or cancelled altogether were finally taking place again. In my own family, we reinstated a long-standing summer field day tradition, complete with face painting and egg and spoon racing, and we also gathered to commemorate a loved one whom we lost last year. At both events, there was a great sense of joy in being able to reconnect again in-person with family and friends.

More recently, as we've grappled with the reality of the Delta surge, it's been difficult to loosen my grip on the sense of normalcy I felt in early summer and reset expectations for the months ahead. That said, I take great comfort living in a city that continues to navigate this challenge with perseverance, ingenuity, and an unwavering focus on public health. And I am more thankful than ever to live in NOPA, a neighborhood with a deep sense of community and culture that volunteers like Jim and Suzanne Cowan have been building for decades (check out "The Cowans and the Power of Organizing" article in this issue).

It was about this time last year that on a listless Saturday morning I picked up a copy of this very newsletter and — intrigued by the audacious yet playful aspirations of a shoestring team that set out to break a hopscotching world record — read the issue from cover to cover. The experience broke through a long and monotonous run of working from home and, well, doing everything from home, and I realized that my COVID-inflicted sense of boredom and disconnect was self-imposed. There were amazing people in my very own neighborhood doing fun and inspiring things together, and they wanted me to be part of the team! I responded to the Board's request for volunteers that same day.

Looking back over my experience with NOPNA over the past year, I'm so thankful for the new relationships I have built with fellow board members, local merchants, and community volunteers. I am also incredibly impressed at how this community network pulls together to support neighborhood events like the Halloween Extravaganza, Divisadero Farmers' Market, and — new this year — Phoenix Day, Livable City's initiative to bring every district of San Francisco together on the same day in celebration of community, health, resilience, and car-free fun in the streets.

I invite you, too, to come and join the fun! Email board@nopna.org to learn more about upcoming events, to get paired with any one of our numerous volunteer opportunities, or even simply to share your own audacious aspirations for the neighborhood. We would love to meet you and hear your ideas.

Best,
Em



Em Minor
NOPNA Treasurer

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



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.

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

Contact NOPNA
board@nopna.org
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Sign up for our
email newsletter!

(continued from page 1)



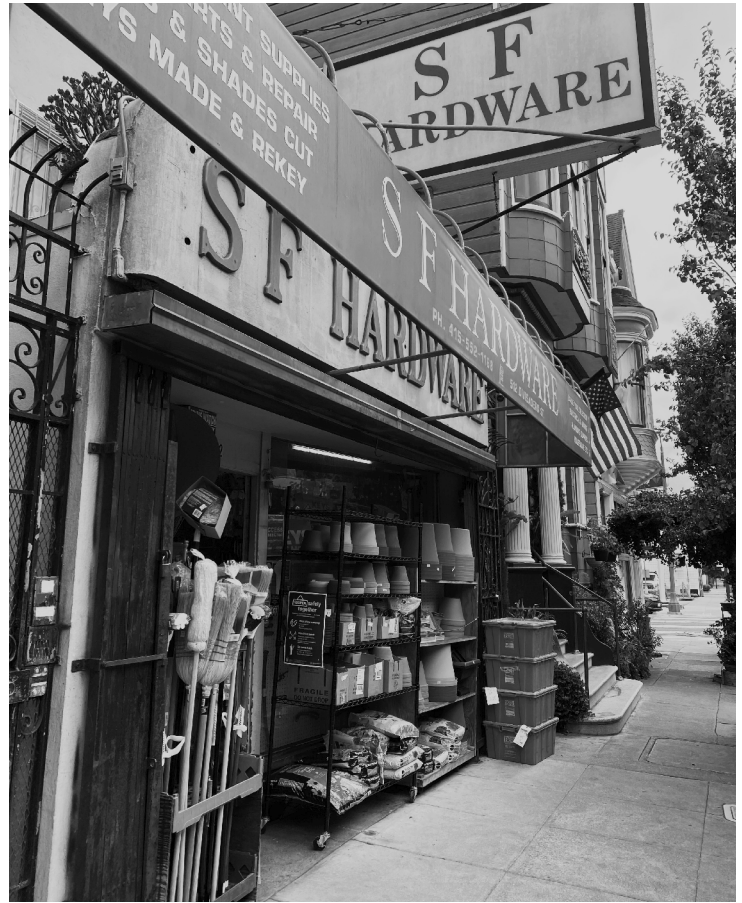
open 4pm–2am Monday through Saturday and 3pm–midnight Sundays. Check out Madrone’s calendar or a full line up of their entertainment schedule at www.madroneartbar.com.

BISTRO CENTRAL PARC

Bistro Central Parc, a neighborhood staple on the corner of Central and Grove that had been closed since 2019, reopened under new ownership in mid-July. Owner Bayram Evsen decided to keep the name, but the menu now focuses on Italian-French fusion with a California flare. Evsen and his team take pride in working closely with local farmers and purveyors to offer a delightful farm-to-table experience for their customers.

Evsen says, “I am really excited to be a part of this beautiful neighborhood. Everyone is super friendly and welcoming, which is hard to find these days. People really care and show their support in ways I didn’t expect.”

Neighbors, please give Evsen and his team a warm welcome and treat yourself to a fabulous meal in the heart of the neighborhood. Bistro Central Parc is open Tuesday–



Thursday from 4:30–9:00 p.m. and Friday–Sunday from 4:30–9:30 p.m.

SF HARDWARE

SF Hardware, a family-run hardware business on Divisadero and Fell, has been open for over 20 years, but had to shut down for nearly 15 months during the pandemic. It opened back up in July, and owner Fai Chen says he appreciates the patronage from the NOPA and surrounding community. He asks that everyone continue to support local businesses as they try to bounce back from the impact of being closed for so long.

AUTOMAT

Automat, formerly a pop-up from former Lazy Bear sous chef Matt Kirk, will settle into its permanent home on McAllister and Baker (formerly Green Chile Kitchen) before the end of the year. Its menu will feature a multitude of delicious breads and fried chicken sandwiches, which you can find on sale from time to time from the @automat_sf Instagram handle. Stay tuned for more details.

Meg Rahner has lived in NOPA for over 10 years and currently serves as president on the NOPNA board.

Aimee Rancer is on the NOPNA board and lives in the neighborhood with her husband and pit bull-husky, Bolt.

WHAT IS SFPD'S "FOCUS ON THE FIVE"?

Have you heard of "Focus on the Five"? It is a traffic safety initiative from SFPD to help San Francisco meet its Vision Zero goal: end traffic fatalities by 2024. The "Five" refers to the top five California Vehicle Code violations that lead to most injuries and fatalities. SFPD aims to "focus" on these violations, with a goal of having at least 50% of traffic citations fall into these five categories.

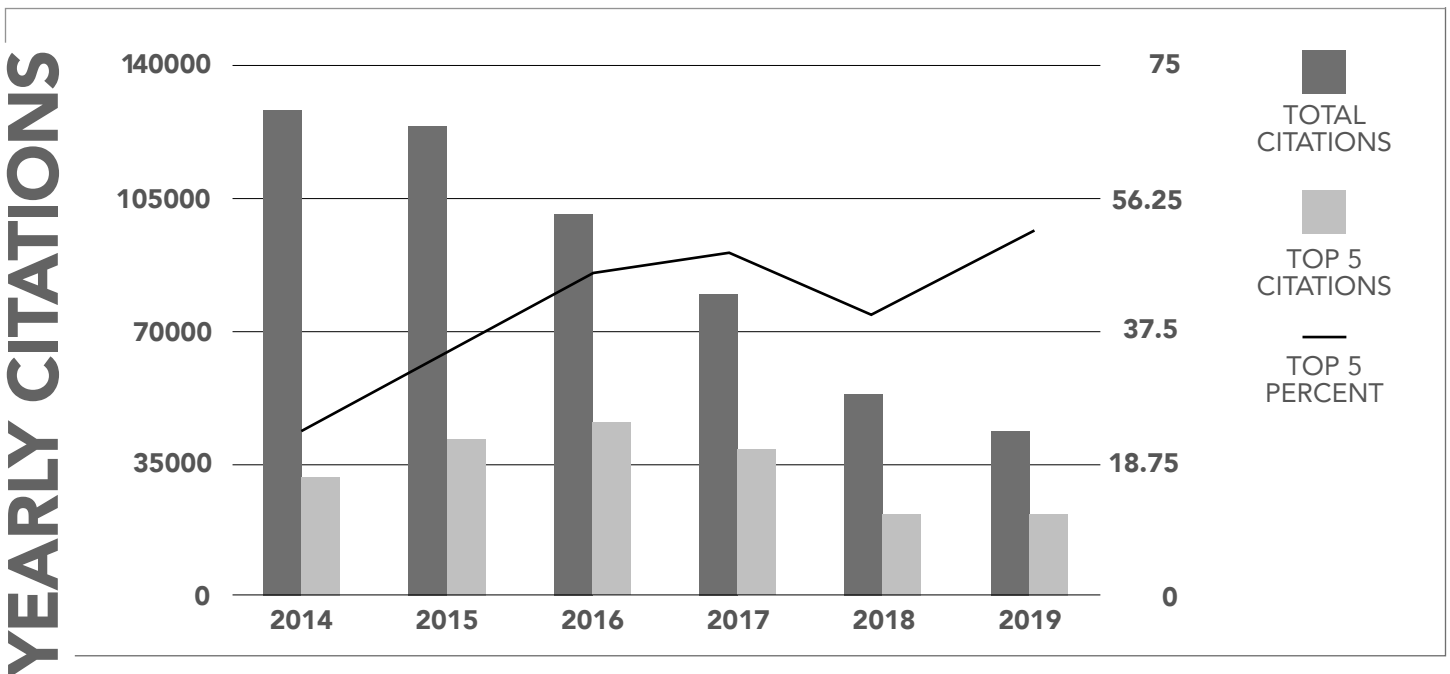
"THE FIVE"

- Yield to pedestrians when turning
- Stop fully at stop signs
- Obey the speed limit (or slower depending on conditions)
- Stop at red lights (including before a right turn)
- Yield to pedestrians at all crossings

SFPD has made its citation data public since the Vision Zero goal was set back in 2014. During this period, total traffic citation numbers decreased significantly, dropping from roughly 130,000 to 40,000 annually. In the same period, although the absolute number of Focus on the Five citations has also decreased, those citations are a greater share of the total - suggesting that the SFPD's is prioritizing those violations. In fact, 2019 marked the first year during this period that SFPD reached the 50% goal.

As neighbors, we also have a role in achieving the goals of Vision Zero. According to TransBASE, the city's public traffic crash data information database, traffic collisions occur where

vehicle speeds are high and where foot traffic is more common. As a result, the intersections of Divisadero/Fell, Fulton/Masonic, and Fulton/Baker are some of NOPA's most dangerous. We are fortunate to live in NOPA, a family-friendly walker's paradise, and it's up to us to walk, roll, skate, and drive safely for everyone. The onus is on all of us to slow down, minimize distractions, take care, and look out for each other. The SFPD's "Top Five" aren't chosen arbitrarily: they are selected through careful study of our own and other cities' historical traffic collision patterns. Help us maintain safe streets and keep your own traffic citations at bay: when you're behind the wheel, keep our neighborhood safe and "focus on the five"!



Martin Almaraz moved to the neighborhood in 2020 and is an avid cyclist, runner, and photographer.

A LOCAL ARTIST'S LIGHT BULB MOMENT

Todd Kurnat is a visual artist who has lived in NOPA since 2006. His art practice varies from hand-drawn illustrations to large public murals. Todd is inspired by nature: specifically, the patterns, colors, and shapes that are found in wildlife.

The route to Todd's art studio takes him past Nihon Whiskey Bar on Folsom. Shortly after the 2020 shelter-in-place began, merchants began boarding up their storefronts to protect their property. As he was passing by Nihon one day, Todd saw the graffiti-tagged, boarded-up windows, and felt a sense of despair. It was a light bulb moment for him.

Todd saw an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive. He did some research, found the bar owner's email address and pitched his idea. He received a response the next morning.

Khaled (Nihon's owner) loved the idea and asked "When can you start?" This connection kicked off Todd's campaign to beautify San Francisco storefronts.

As luck would have it, Khaled also owns Tsunami Panhandle and Bar 821 on Divisadero, both in our neck of the woods. Todd volunteered to paint custom murals on the plywood covering the windows of the temporarily-closed

businesses. From there, he gained the confidence to seek out more merchants in need. Before he knew it, Todd was on a quest to beautify our city and lift the spirit of the neighborhood, one mural at a time.

Todd's work would not have been made possible without generous donations from merchants and San Francisco residents alike, blooming into a community-supported ecosystem. If you would like to support Todd or learn more about his work, you can visit his website at toddkurnat.com/murals - (there is also a helpful map to help locate his murals around the city).



THE COWANS AND THE POWER OF ORGANIZING

Hailing from Los Angeles and Baltimore respectively,

Jim and Suzanne Cowan are well-known neighbors to the NOPA community. They originally moved to the neighborhood in 1982 and later transitioned to their current residence, where they've been since 1989. In the mid-1960s, Jim and Suzanne were students at UC Berkeley, where they met at a Free Speech Movement rally. From the steps of Sproul Plaza, they went on to stints in Paris and Santa Cruz; along the way they welcomed their son Ben to the world, and eventually settled down in San Francisco.

Jim and Suzanne note that,

like many of San Francisco's neighborhoods, NOPA has changed substantially. They recall that the area experienced more frequent public safety issues. But over the years, the neighborhood transformed into a vibrant area of community-building and commercial activity. The Cowans credit the radical change in both overall safety, commercial expansion, and community engagement to the residents — in Jim's words, "change happened because we organized."

In the early 1990's, handwritten and photocopied fliers circulated around NOPA, calling for a meeting of community members interested in advocating for a safer, more

welcoming neighborhood. Jim and Suzanne were among the attendees at the first official meeting at Mt. Herman Church off Lyon St, which kicked off what we now know as the North of the Panhandle Neighborhood Association — or NOPNA. In one of their earliest organizing efforts, NOPNA's members set a precedent for new development projects in the area by compelling the developers to engage directly with the neighbors on the shopping complex project at Masonic Ave and Fulton St. Jim and Suzanne recall that process proudly, as it showed what a group of committed community members can do when they organize.

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<< Suzanne & Jim Cowan in their home displaying an original NOPNA t-shirt designed by Sasaki.

was the production of the NOPNA newsletter, which started as a single-sheet in 1991. Suzanne — a former Editor of the NOPNA News— credits it with bringing into being many of

the neighborhood’s fun community events like the Block Party and Halloween. [The NOPNA News issue you are reading now still endeavors to carry through the Cowan’s legacy and

serve as a key information resource spotlighting small businesses, promoting community events, and educating neighbors on local issues.]

Jim and Suzanne’s many contributions to the NOPA neighborhood and the NOPNA newsletter embody the best of what it means to be a member of the community. Though we’ve spent the last 18 months without the large gatherings, Jim and Suzanne remind us that change is possible when a group of committed community folks come together and organize.

Tom Paulino is a 9-year resident of San Francisco and recently moved to NOPA in late-2020.

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HIDDEN IN PLAIN SITE: THREE DECADES OF VIOLIN CRAFTSMENSHIP ON DIVIS



In a quiet corner of NOPA there is a shop reminiscent of an old-world craftsman studio. It's filled with beautiful wooden string instruments — mostly cellos and violins — and, in the backroom workshop, the small hand tools and wooden bits and pieces required for the repair of fine instruments. This is where master craftsman Roland Feller plies his passion for instrument making, repair, and restoration.

Feller came to New York City from Germany in 1971, having completed three and a half years of study at a German-state run vocational school at Mittenwald in

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Bavaria. This world-renowned school trains youngsters in instrument-making, especially string instruments like the violin. Swiss-born Feller came from a musical family and was fascinated with wood working as a child. Before he was twenty, the newly minted “journeyman” instrument maker arrived in New York City to continue his studies under the expert Italian violin maker and restorer Sacconi.

Feller, fascinated with the intricacy required in the handicraft and with a couple years’ experience under his belt, embarked on his career as a professional instrument maker and repairman. Seeking to escape the Hell’s Kitchen apartment he lived in, he made his way to San Francisco where, in 1974, he established his first business with a partner, “Feller and Furey,” making and repairing string

instruments. The shop was located at the corner of Geary and Masonic.

In 1989 the business, now owned and operated solely by Feller, moved to its present location on Divisadero (that’s over 30 years in the ‘hood). Clients come from all around San Francisco to buy Feller’s handiwork as well as newer, less expensive instruments mostly produced in China, and Feller continues to work with his hands on repairing and restoring instruments. He says he has seen many changes to NOPA over the years, mostly for the better, and enjoys the NOPA community which is why he elects to remain.

Elisabeth Kvitashvili is a retired US diplomat who moved to NOPA five years ago with her husband. She’s an active volunteer in the community and continues to teach at Georgetown University.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Phoenix Day - Oct 17th
<https://www.sundaystreetssf.com/phoenixday/>

Halloween Night Block Party - Oct 31st (go to www.nopna.org for the latest)

NOPNA Virtual General Meeting
 Third Thursday of Even months
 Next meeting: October 21st – 7–8:30 pm

Sign up for our email list and get all the details and updates at www.nopna.org! Or follow us on facebook, Instagram, or twitter!

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THE GROOM

Short Story by **Katherine McCarty**

Light penetrated the classroom window — his skin never looked so pale, he thought. Leaning against his desk, he sensed none of the warmth of outside, and the sunny day remained removed like a portrait, framed within a pane of glass. Against the rough angles of the brick sill, the day appeared captive in a display of light and heat. Everything beautiful gets a cage, after all.

A cough sounded from behind him. A woman stood in the doorway, her posture like Botticelli's Venus.

"It has been a while." His ribs turned to steel bars against his breath.

"A lot has changed," the woman said, her eyes in an attitude that did not match her voice. The soles of her shoes clicked against the floorboards, each a chime to a vacant clock.

"Congrats." He nodded to her hands, as she twirled a diamond around her ring finger.

She dropped her gilded fingers to his desk, picking up pages and books as she read titles aloud. Her hair fell like the sun's rays on sand, and in his memory he sensed the sea breeze of her skin.

"Teaching the same books, I notice." Reaching into her back pocket, she pulled out an envelope and set it on a stack of papers. "It's a thank you card, only."

Walking to the chalkboard, her fingers traced the marks of powdered words with an expression of distant musing.

His hand met hers against the blackboard, the light from the window casting his shadow over hers. The white gold of her ring chilled him as he pinched it between his fingertips.

"So, this is worth it?" While his voice softened, something stirred against his tongue.

She pulled her hand back. The ring slid from her finger and trembled in his grasp. The diamond reflected the white from her eyes, blinding him. It fell, bouncing on the ground till it laid still.

The woman's look held the stone's piercing clearness. "At least it is much harder to break a diamond."

Squatting to the ground, she slid the ring back over her knuckle.

He stood, arched. Could a look, or a movement, tell her otherwise? His gut clenched as if he stood on a precipice, her movements threatening to topple him from the edge of an unknown height.

Her steps towards the door pushed against him like gusts of wind, and he shuddered as if her look produced a clap of thunder. A tempest engulfed his own inaction, and not until he heard the door shut behind her did the storm stop. He lowered himself into his chair — weathered.

From the window to the door he moved his gaze. Their rectangular forms held the outside, both its lightness and its darkness, locked beyond knob and latch; contained like Pandora's box beyond his surrounding walls.

The outside world glittered from its cage like rare stones set in gold.

Katherine McCarty is a writer, house call chiropractor, and local small business owner. She is working on her second novel and lives by Alamo Square with her fiancée. Sending love to their sweet dog, Boo Radley, who walked the streets of Nopa first at a run, and now only in memories.



VOLUNTEER FOR NOPNA NEWS

NOPNA News is a volunteer-driven publication created by and for our neighbors. If you'd like to get involved we'd love for you to be a part of it, whether by contributing your skills, your voice, or your time.

There are several areas where we are always looking for more support

PHOTOGRAPHY — do you have a great eye and a decent camera? We can always use volunteers who can capture the beauty and humanity of our neighborhood in photographs.

COPY EDITING — if you are good with words, have an eye for detail, and like early sneak peaks we'd love your help with the process of getting the articles from submission to print.

WRITING AND DELIVERY — we can always use more folks interested writing articles or delivering the news. Time commitment is minimal and very flexible, and you will see the impact of your work in real life.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN — if you have InDesign skills (or would like to learn), we can always use help pulling together each issue. Our designers are responsible for the clean, professional, and stylish look and feel of each issue.

If any of these are interesting to you, or if you have other ideas for how you would like to be involved, I'd love to hear from you at jason@nopna.org.

NEIGHBORLY ETIQUETTE: THE ART OF BEING A GOOD CUSTOMER

As the COVID-19 pandemic lingers on, our local small businesses are still struggling to keep their doors open, maintain staff, and adapt to shifting public health mandates. With the onset of new variants, many business owners are bracing themselves for a difficult autumn, and a hard holiday season.

As neighbors, it's important that we help keep our corridors safe and sound — for everyone. Here's a bit of neighborly etiquette to help us all get through:

- Do wear a mask (above your nose!) even if you're vaccinated.
- You know the deal: keep 6ft apart and wash your hands. If you're not feeling well, stay home.
- Know before you go — call up, or review business websites or Instagram accounts to get up-to-date information.
- Some businesses may require proof of vaccination. Kindly be prepared, if asked.
- Do pay attention to COVID-protocol signage — it's there for a reason!
- Do tip your server, bartender, and delivery driver well.
- Be patient — many businesses are understaffed and their operations are still recovering. This may mean longer lines, limited offerings, timed reservations, and new rules. Be flexible.
- Sourcing ingredients, supplies, and packaging is still a challenge. Some supply chains are getting back up and running, but some have never recovered.
- Don't overstay at sit-down restaurants or cafes. Turning tables is an important part of bottom lines.
- Sidewalks are also meant to be shared with pedestrians.
- Keep your spatial awareness when dining outside.

Lastly, a little compassion goes a long way!

Shakirah Simley is a writer, nonprofit executive director, and food justice activist who has worked in District 5 for 10 years and recently bought her first home in NOPA.

THE AIR CONDITIONER THAT CAN'T BE REPLACED

We're lucky here in San Francisco, where the ocean often serves as an air conditioner. Our city is frequently 30 degrees cooler than many of our Bay Area neighbors, but climate change has been gradually weakening this natural AC. Our average lows have increased almost three degrees since 1971.

We also have 3-4 fewer hours of fog per day than we had in the roaring twenties. And less fog means more hot days. At our current rate, we're predicted to go from two days a year on average above 90 degrees to 10 days by 2050. By 2080, our city is predicted to feel a lot like present-day Los Angeles.

You might be wondering if we should all rush to install air conditioners. Thankfully, we still have many more decades of our marine layer to protect us, but may need to be more mindful as we deal with hotter days.

First, stay in the know about heat waves by signing up for the city's AlertSF system — text your zip code to 888-777.

On hot days, a few simple tricks can go a long way. Drink a lot of fluids. Apply ice packs wrapped in dry towels. Limit the use of your oven. At night, sticking a bowl of ice water in front of a fan or putting your sheets in the freezer for a few minutes before going to bed can make it easier to fall asleep. Most importantly, check on your NOPA neighbors, especially the elderly and those with health concerns.

If you end up getting an AC anyway, consider a heat pump system. They are better for the environment, using significantly less energy and potentially saving hundreds of dollars over a traditional system. And remember to share them with a neighbor on the next hot day.

Apoorv Narang is a product manager at Lyft and recently joined the NOPNA board. He loves living on the Golden Gate slow street and is trying to grow three varieties of tomatoes this summer.

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