NOPNANews

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A Publication of the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

Fall 2022

Halloween 2022

Thank you neighbors, volunteers, and sponsors!













FROM THE BOARD

A NEIGHBORHOOD COMES TOGETHER

It's not often that NOPA makes the news, let alone twice within a week. One building fire at Divisadero and McAllister and a second less than a week later on Haight and Divisadero, displaced nearly thirty of



Martin Almaraz NOPNA President

our neighbors and three small businesses. We are eternally grateful for the firefighters who arrived on scene guickly and ensured the safety of everyone. Personally, I am extremely grateful as the McAllister building, where the Oasis Cafe is located, was my home not too long ago. During my time there I got to know nearly every other resident.

Even through all of this, the support and togetherness that everyone in the neighborhood showed was overwhelming. Numerous grassroots GoFundMe campaigns popped up almost instantly to help the residents and businesses affected by both fires. The City, District 5 office, Red Cross, San Francisco Fire Department, Human Services Agency, and Office of Small Business all came together in a huge joint meeting to coordinate efforts to ensure that everyone affected was connected with the help they needed. On top of that, NOPNA, Divisadero Merchants Association, and Bay Woof from Bark the Vote, all quickly organized fundraisers to support the residents with all they could. Anita Beshirs, an artist, friend, and neighbor, partnered with NOPNA in collecting and distributing funds to all the residents.

One thing is for certain: even with all the fundraising that we pulled together for each and every displaced resident, nothing compares to having proper renters' insurance. For an average of \$10 a month, it can cover nearly everything, from the cost of replacement of all your belongings, to temporary housing assistance and peace of mind. It protects you and your belongings from the financial harm that follows tragedies like this and many others. Personally, I've carried renters' insurance in every apartment I've rented. Although sometimes it feels like I'm throwing money into the wind, it has helped me recover from a burglary, and that's enough for me to believe in it.

It really does take a village — the efforts and collaboration from people across the neighborhood — to bring all the help we can to our fellow neighbors in times of need. This is something special. I'm convinced that he neighborly love we feel here is unparalleled in the rest of the City; it's what makes NOPA a special place.



Sign up for our email newsletter!

Martin is the President of NOPNA and frequently runs and bikes the Panhandle. He is an advocate of pedestrian safety and a walkable, accessible San Francisco.



North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association

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.

> PUBLISHER NOPNA Board of Directors

> > **EDITOR IN CHIEF** Jason Cauthen jason@nopna.org

> > > EDITOR **Emeline Minor**

COPY EDITORS Robin Kutner, Nathan Lovejoy

LAYOUT AND GRAPHIC DESIGN Brenda Drake Lesch

> DISTRIBUTION Will Valentine

> > PRINTING

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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!

> > Contact NOPNA board@nopna.org www.nopna.org

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HALLOWEEN 2022

Thank you neighbors, volunteers, and sponsors!

On Monday, October 31st, NOPNA celebrated our 15th annual Kids' Halloween Block Party centered at Grove and Lyon Streets. We began the evening with an incredible Halloween costume contest, sponsored by long-time business leaders and residents

Jennifer Rosdail from Jennifer Rosdail Real Estate and Mollie Poe from Mollie Poe Indigo Real Estate.

Then, as they have done for over ten years, the USF Band

kicked off an active night of trick-or-treating by playing classics like "Thriller" and "Werewolves of London" to entertain families. While it was a success and a big night for young and old, we had the streets cleaned up and looking spotless by 9pm!

The NOPNA Board extends a huge "thank you" to everyone who helped make the trick-or-treating a success. First and foremost, we couldn't have done it without the generous neighbors on Grove and Lyon Streets, who have hosted this wonderful tradition since 2006. We would also like to thank the many volunteers who monitored the street barricades, dropped off candy to houses running low, and helped set up and break down the whole event. You are all superstars!

nk You 8

The Awesome Neighbors Grove Street Neighbors

Lyon Street Neighbors Gift Card Donations

- Gamescape
- Schloks

Candy Donations

- SF Day School families
- Pacific Primary families
- Jono Kornfeld
- and countless others that dropped off bags at the NOPNA tent during the event....

Photography that **Captures the Moment**

- Steve Nuzzo
- Marco Williams

The Magical USF Band

• Quinn Chong and the USF Band

- **Our Heroic Volunteers** • Larry G.
- Adam A. • Alex A.
- Leela G. • Alex C. • Lukas S.
- Amanda E. M Rocket
- Apoorv N.
- Martin A. • Charles H.
 - Meg R.
- David B. • Meghan K. • Nathalie C.
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- Doug D. • Ohn H.
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- Jeff D. • Jon M.
- Jona M.
- Kion S.
- Kira A.





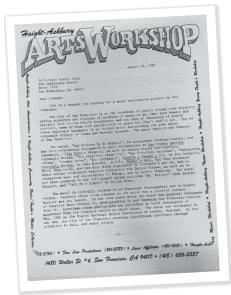


Leela Gill has lived in the neighborhood with her family for 20+ years and started the Halloween Block Party back in 2006 so local young ones and their families have a safe place to trick or treat.

• Sarah O. • Sean S. • Shakirah S. • Taylor C. • Tim H. • Yifat A.

CONTINUED FROM NOPNA NEWS SPRING AND SUMMER 2022

EDUCATE TO LIBERATE



I closed the weathered manila folder labeled, "Our History is No Mystery" with a sense of satisfaction. The intimate documents that Miranda Bergman had painstakingly preserved from the mid-1970s conjured a vivid image of the young, revolutionary artists on their quest to illustrate the unsung heroes and "ordinary" people who defined San Francisco through the previous decades and centuries.

And yet, the journey of the John Adams wall continued. I paused for a moment and looked with intrigue at the next, and even more daunting, folder that waited patiently in the impressive stack of files: "Educate to Liberate." What story would its content reveal? Why was the epic "Our History" painted over? I opened it and began leafing through its antiquated contents.

Through correspondence from the early 1980s, it became clear that "Our History" had sadly fallen into a state of disrepair: the wall was partially covered in graffiti and the underlying mural was disintegrating. The original artists could, and would, have completely restored "Our History," but funding was not available for mural restoration. It could *possibly* be found, however, to paint a new mural, and so this was the path the artists pursued.

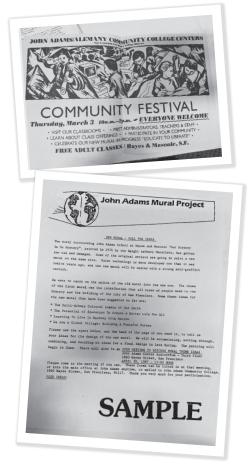
In the Fall of 1983, the Haight Ashbury Muralists began a letter-writing campaign to the city in order to raise funds to sand, reprime, repaint, and seal the wall with anti-graffiti varnish, a product that did not exist a decade earlier. They engaged community leaders and procured support letters from the Director of John Adams, The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation (a NOPA resident), and the Editor of Community Murals magazine. No response.

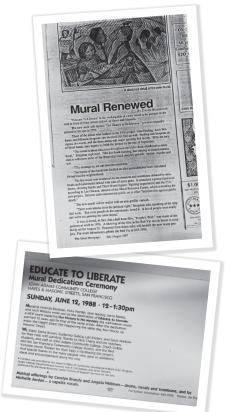
In 1984, the Muralists explored an alternative fundraising angle and contacted a number of private foundations, including the San Francisco Foundation, Zellerbach Family Fund, and Columbia Foundation. Rejection across the board.

Finally, in mid-1986, they obtained some traction with the San Francisco Office of Community Development's Mural Resource Center. Progress!

The following June (1987), the Muralists achieved a second major victory: the San Francisco Arts Commission granted approval for their new design, a hard requirement given that the mural was to be painted on city property. The new design included both a nod to "Our History" motifs as well as input from neighbors to capture an updated ethos of the community – that education is not just about book learning, but coming to consciousness throughout one's life, from childhood to adulthood. A heartwarming journal entry captured by Miranda commemorates the occasion:

We did it! The long and difficult process of visualizing, thinking, analyzing, researching etc etc for the mural design for John Adams has been done! What a process... Yoga and the inspiration of creation has kept me from falling off the edge of exhaustion... We have an immense job ahead to paint it, but there is a large hump that we're over. We have a reason to be proud. I am immensely grateful to all the supportive friends and comrades and the good spirits of the universe!





Painting of the new mural, led by four of the original Muralists (Miranda Bergman, Jane Norling, Vicky Hamlin, and Arch Williams) and John Adams student artist Maria Ramos, began with fanfare the following month. The Street Newspaper covered the project in an article entitled

"Mural Renewed," The Red Victorian hosted a screening of The People's Wall, and SFPD were enlisted to barricade the Masonic parking lane to enable the artists to project their line drawing onto the wall.

The project quickly hit snags, however, that delayed its completion by almost a year. The new design was quite detailed, and the uncompromising artists refused to cut corners in their labor of love (which they doggedly pursued even when much-needed funds did not arrive when expected). Knowing now what the Muralists endured to complete "Educate to Liberate," excerpts from the June 1988 dedication announcement seem particularly profound:

The extra-long colorful mural you see springing to life along the corner of Masonic & Hayes at John Adams Community College is a NEW MURAL replacing the well-known but deteriorated favorite "Our History Is No Mystery." It is called EDUCATE TO LIBERATE, and continues the scene-byscene educational aspect of the original mural. "Our History is No Mystery" pictured sections of San Francisco working people's history which are left out of the textbooks; it revealed hidden historical facts. EDUCATE TO LIBERATE shows scenes from the cycle of human life, emphasizing ways we learn throughout life.

Although we mourn the passing of "Our History Is No Mystery" (it lives on in slide form!), we are excited by the fresh new images emerging on the historic mural site...

We offer "Educate to Liberate" to the San Francisco (and world) community, in a joyous celebration of lifelong learning.

With a renewed sense of gratitude and awe for the many artists who have contributed to our vibrant community over the years, I closed the folder and prepared to tackle the next and final chapter in the journey of the John Adams wall: "Educate to Liberate, Lessons in Community."



TO BE CONTINUED

Em Minor has lived in NOPA since 2018 and feels fortunate to have experienced the legacy of the John Adams murals on a daily basis. She could not have written this article without the support of Miranda Bergman and Jane Norling, who dedicated years of their lives to creating the John Adams murals, made themselves available to share their experience and archives, and provided valuable feedback on this content.

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PLUM TREE by JD Jenkins CONFESSIONAL

The plum tree out my window said to me:

I heard you talking about me and I want to set something straight

The little girl the other day down on the sidewalk with her father

You told her that I'm the happiest in Spring with my pink dress and perfume

That I'm looking like I'm going to picnic up on Alamo Square

Do you realize what it takes to bring Forth one little painful acne bud of blossom?

Can you see under my skin, how I work as the buses go by and trucks unload?

And then my surfaces erupt to the world for everyone to see, and they grab at my garment

The winds echo from February and get caught in my tresses, pulling me to splinters Who says I'm not happier in Winter? Barren, standing upright to the dawn

Naked twigs and branches lifting up and out to morning warmth, lean shadows below

Unburdened in my clean lines cleaner Than your city streets

I sway it is true in the winter wind But I'm not weighted down with Beauty

Who says I'm not happier in my temporary death? Who says I'm not smiling underneath?

There, collecting raindrops and weaving them into a thousand-eyed necklace

Let your ending be thus - unburden yourself Trick everyone with your death! Barren and naked, laugh inside as you String jewels between your boney fingertips

And then the plum tree fell silent for a long time; although later that night I heard her laughing quietly with the Moon in the clouds.

JD has lived and loved in San Francisco since 1988. A NOPA resident since 2018, he feels it is the neighborhood that's been waiting for him to arrive.

PHOENIX DAY **RISES AGAIN!**

For the second year in a row, our neighborhood came together in mid-October to celebrate Phoenix Day. It's a day to commemorate San Francisco's rise from the ashes of 1906, and it embodies that rising spirit as we all re-establish our footing after the worst impacts of COVID.

In a block party on Lyon between Fulton and Grove, neighbors of all ages played, talked, ate, and hung out from noon to five on an overcast but warm Sunday afternoon. NOPA Corner Market partnered with NOPNA this year to deliver fun and entertainment of all kinds for all ages, providing beverages to ensure that everyone stayed well hydrated. Kung Food nourished us with tray after tray of delicious food and Bob's Donuts found everyone's sweet tooth.

There were lots of activities for the many kids who attended, with several parents commenting, "I had no idea there were this many other kids in the neighborhood!" Throughout the day, those who weren't weaving through the crowds on bikes, scooters, or roller skates could be found at the Free Library carpet, creating chalk drawings inspired by local chalk artist Sasha's magnificent tree frog, or playing ringtoss and cornhole. And of course the bubbles! Thanks to the still, humid, and temperate air, conditions for bubbles were fantastic. Huge bubbles could be seen floating down the block throughout the day, often chased by their young creators.

The day culminated in not one but two fashion shows featuring local designers, Swankety Swank and Size Queen Clothing. Some also chose to accessorize their look with sparkly glasses from Fat Ass Glass, or crystals, rocks, and





vintage jewelry by Rob Jolin. Further enhancing the visual delights, artistic creations by Digglesworth Production and Love Alchemy Prints were on display.

Phoenix Day again served as a reminder of how many incredible, talented, generous, and warm people we have

in our neighborhood. We all benefit from getting out there, talking to one another, and experiencing some of the hidden (and less hidden) pleasures of this community.

Jason Cauthen is a San Francisco native who has lived in NOPA for the past decade with his wife and two boys. He is most frequently found enjoying the coffee at local cafes.



GETTING TO KNOW D2 SUPERVISOR CATHERINE STEFANI



Every ten years, San Francisco redraws voting districts to ensure that each Supervisor represents roughly the same number of residents. District lines were recently redrawn in June of 2022.

NOPA was previously represented entirely by District 5 Supervisor Dean Preston. Now, NOPA is split between Districts 5 and 2.

We interviewed D2 Supervisor Stefani to hear about her history, policy focuses, and NOPA-area favorites. Welcome to the NOPA family, Supervisor!

How long have you been in San Francisco?

I was born here and moved away as a baby to Merced, CA. I then moved straight into our current Cow Hollow house 21 years ago, which is the house my mother-in-law grew up in.

What was your journey into local politics?

My family was somewhat politically active. We would go to these barbecues and my congressman would be there, Congressman Tony Coelho. I saw him helping people and I looked up to him when I was 16. I went to Washington, DC for a summer; I was one of his interns and I loved it. I thought, I'm going to do this someday.

What are your top priorities in your next term?

1) Implementation of the Office of Victim and Witness Rights. We'll be consolidating domestic violence victim services that are separate from the criminal justice system. We will be implementing a pilot program that will offer free legal counsel to domestic violence victims. We are the first city in the nation to do it.

2) Economic recovery. Downtown is an economic engine for the entire city: Changing some office space into residential; bringing more people downtown to do more than just have tech offices there; and working to keep small businesses in district two happy. We did a twenty-million dollar rebate for small businesses during the pandemic: we refunded fees that they were having to pay to stay open when public health mandates forced them to close.

3) Public safety, which pulls into homelessness. I've been concerned that we have a police force that Chief Scott says is about 500 officers short. We also are looking at how we police and what we have them respond to: I've been a big proponent of having them not respond to all homeless issues and having our street crisis response team on that.

How are you engaging with the new blocks in your district?

I've been reaching out to take meetings with people to see how I can help. For example, Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory School is now in District 2 and I'm meeting with them on Friday to talk about their needs. I'm being as available as I can to all the new constituents.

Can you comment on three issues NOPA residents frequently talk about?

 Housing and displacement.
I'm really proud to say that I have entitled more units of housing in District 2 than any of my predecessors.
I care deeply about creating more housing for all income levels. District 2 has to do its part in providing affordable housing; I don't believe in just market rate housing. Any ideas you have, any properties you might know of, any developers that are looking, I am willing to take meetings and discuss.

2) Empty storefronts.

I'm a huge proponent in streamlining permits and making it easier on businesses to open up, and then when they are open, not to hit them with so many different fees. What I do is help businesses when they bring an issue to me and we figure out how to make it easier to do business in San Francisco.

3) Pedestrian safety.

I'm working with Caltrans and SFMTA on slowing traffic on Lombard to 25 mph because that's a Vision Zero high injury corridor. I'm all about making it safer. My kids ride their bikes, my kids walk around here. We need to make our streets safe for all who use them.

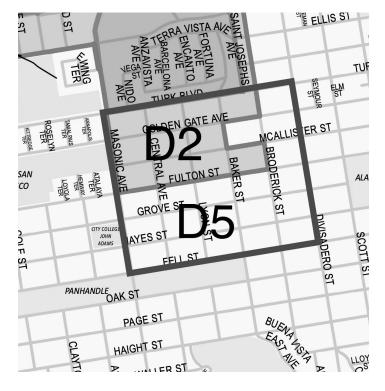
What is your favorite place to hang out in NOPA?

I had one of the best lunches of my life with Mayor Breed at Nopalito. I also have to make a plug for Bob's Donuts. We get Bob's Donuts sometimes for the office. And I do love running anywhere in Golden Gate Park and the Panhandle.

What's the best way for neighbors within the NOPA community to reach out to you in your office?

You can sign up for updates on my website or just call the office. We answer the phones, we answer our email, we get back to people.

Get in touch with Supervisor Stephanie at: Website: https://sfbos.org/supervisor-stefani-district-2 Email: Catherine.Stefani@sfgov.org Phone: (415) 554-7752



Apoorv Narang and Garen Checkley have been NOPA residents for 2.5 years, and Apoorv is on the NOPNA board. They love living on a slow street, enjoying Golden Gate Park, and successfully grew three varieties of tomatoes this summer.



FROM JORDAN, THROUGH MEXICO TO DIVISADERO: **THE BEAN BAG CAFE**





The Bean Bag Cafe has always been my favorite Divis café. Maybe it's the unpretentious décor harkening back, for me, to the early 70s — or perhaps it's the extensive breakfast and lunch menu, or it could just be the fact that I once had an espresso there that was as good as any I've had in Italy.

Mike Alzagha opened the Bean Bag Cafe in 1992, way before real estate agents rechristened our neighborhood as NOPA. Back then, Bean Bag was a cornerstone of what was considered an "underdeveloped neighborhood." Today it stands as a steady and dependable "home away from home" for many.

Mike was born and raised in Amman, Jordan. He was "born to play soccer" and at 16 left home to play professionally in Egypt, but that's a tough row to hoe for most. Soon, his love of food and the culture surrounding it supplanted soccer and became his second and lifelong passion. In Jordan, food preparation and subsequently sharing it with family and friends became a mainstay of life and a way to welcome any who came through the door. This effort, or better said personal pleasure, Mike found always well-rewarded with the joy of satisfied and happy faces.

But it was the ten years Mike spent living, working, and collecting recipes in Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains that set the stage for what would

become Bean Bag's eclectic, south of the border-inspired menu, that he introduced in the beginning of the pandemic. The meshing of food cultures was a fascinating discovery for him. For example, he learned that the method of preparing and cooking "al pastor" is based on lamb shawarma brought by Lebanese immigrants to Mexico in the early twentieth century. The ingenious combination of Middle Eastern techniques and Mexican ingredients is known today as Tacos Arabes. This culinary experience helped create the Bean Bag we know today, which,

over the course of thirty years, has received many awards, including "Best Breakfast," "Best Happy Hour," and "Best Breakfast Burrito."

Today, the biggest challenge Mike faces is anticipating how the tidal wave of change surging through our city will impact the restaurant business. The pandemic, deteriorating conditions on many of our streets, and intractable inflation have created unprecedented uncertainty for restaurants and changed food culture tremendously. Everything costs more now, and Mike's main focus is to keep prices at a reasonable level and still make a profit and remain in business.

But Mike is carrying on, working 16-hour days, determined to sustain the "pleasurable responsibility" he learned in Amman and create for the regulars, some who come in three times a day, a home away from home. Don't forget your espresso!



Steve Nuzzo has been a NOPA resident since 2006. He is saddened and frustrated to encounter expanding homeless encampments on the sidewalks on Grove Street.

VISION ZERO: ELECTION RESULTS

What is Vision Zero? It is an effort across the globe to reduce instances of injury and death due to vehicular violence to zero. Tragically and preventably, our neighborhood has seen too many such fatalities in recent years, and that catalyzed the formation of the NOPNA Vision Zero subcommittee to prevent future loss of life on NOPA streets. We've been busy this past year with Slow Streets work, getting new bike parking installed, daylighting our neighborhood's intersections, and strategizing on a future Oak Street road diet. This fall, though, the excitement ramped up more than usual because our San Francisco voter ballots contained a few propositions directly related to Vision Zero safety and sustainable transportation initiatives.

What can we interpret from these results? A consistent supermajority of our neighbors — you! — continue to broadcast the message loud and clear: we support sustainable transportation, we prioritize San Francisco's public transit, we value car-free spaces for recreation and transportation, and we champion green spaces and parks.

Thank you for tuning in, turning out, and participating in democracy. This data helps your NOPNA Board prioritize our efforts and advocacy as well. We are proud to represent a neighborhood with such high support for people-centric community spaces and sustainable and safe transportation.

So how did those ballot measures perform?

Prop	Description	Citywide Outcome ¹	How did NOPA Vote? ^{1,2}
I	To return vehicle through-traffic to JFK Drive and Great Highway; to scrap the ongoing Ocean Beach erosion mitigation plans at a cost of \$80 million	64% No	85% No
J	To maintain recreational use of JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park	62% Yes	82% Yes
L ³	To continue the current ½ cent sales tax to fund transportation projects	71% Yes	86% Yes
N	To transfer management of the GGP muse- ums parking garage to SF Rec and Park	74% Yes	85% Yes

Notes:

1: These numbers are current as of Tuesday, November 15

2: Voter precincts do not exactly match our neighborhood boundaries, so this calculation includes precincts 7206, 7504, 9237, 9505, 9507, 9508.

3: In California, tax measures require 66²/₃% votes to pass, compared to the default 50%+1.

Robin Kutner has lived in San Francisco for 10 years. Like most millennials, she is extremely anxious about climate change, and she makes lifestyle and transportation mode decisions accordingly.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JFK Annual Holiday Tree Lighting

December 1st from 3pm - 8pm on JFK Promenade in Golden Gate Park Check sfrecpark.org/calendar for full calendar of JFK Promenade events

Holiday Music with the Washington HS Choir

December 1st from 5:30pm - 7:30pm at the Golden Gate Bandshell Check sfrecpark.org/calendar for full calendar of Golden Gate Bandshell Concerts

NOPNA Holiday Party

Thursday December 15th at Club Waziema (543 Divisadero) from 6pm - 9pm

NOPNA Community Meeting

Third Thursday of even months, next slated for February 2023 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

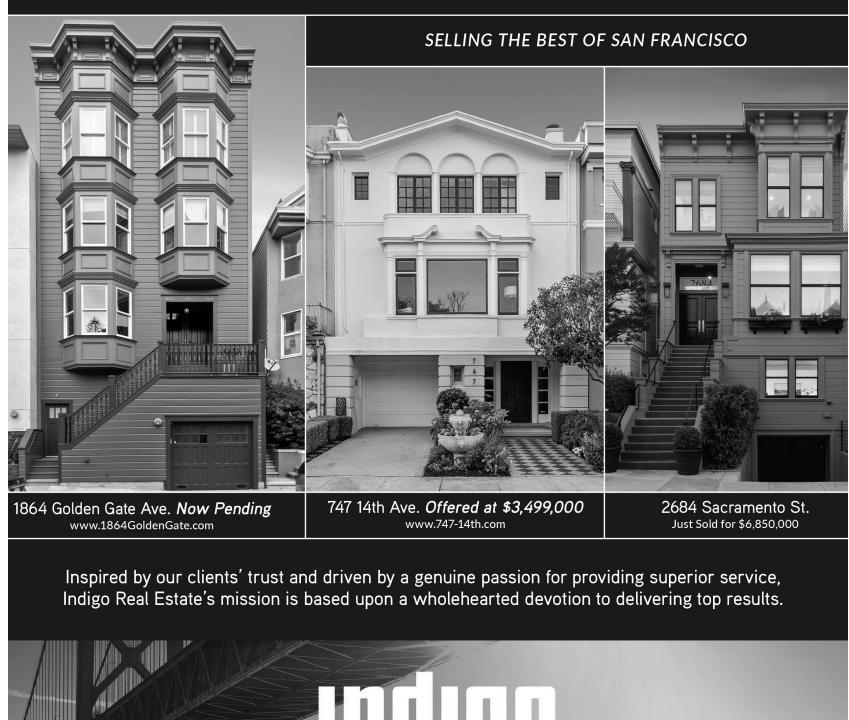
Farmers Market

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

Email us to get involved: board@nopna.org



North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association











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