

Conference Calendar

Times and places for topic-driven in-person conversation.

05 | SUN

No Conference

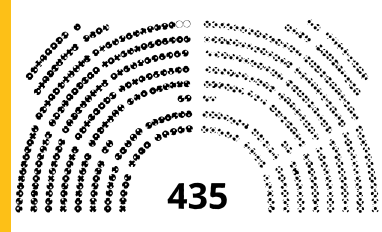
06 | MON

No Conference

07 | TUE

Size Up the House

7-8:30pm @ doña, 3770 Piedmont Ave, Oakland

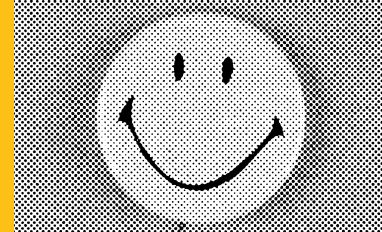


U.S. House members were originally supposed to represent 30K people. Now they represent 800K, which disempowers, disenfranchises, and polarizes, but a new movement is trying to fix this.

08 | WED

The Pursuit of Happiness

7-8:30pm @ Milyar Coffee, 3300 Adeline St, Berkeley

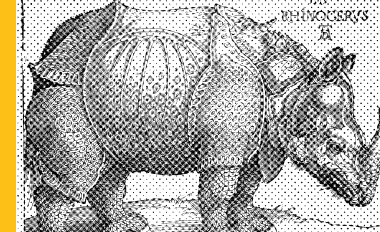


When have you been happiest, and why? Let's share our most positive time periods and peak experiences, irrespective of the shape they may have taken, for greater self- and other-understanding.

09 | THU

AI for Art Businesses

6:30-8pm, Fort Point Valencia, 742 Valencia, SF

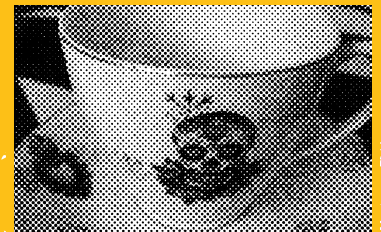


Let's share how we use AI, or are considering using it, to handle the money, messaging, and marketing so that we can focus on the making. Most artists suck at the business side, but AI can help change that.

11 | SAT

Death Cafe

2-4pm, Central Library Meeting Room, 2090 Kittredge, Berkeley



A friendly gathering with strangers to chat about death. Hosted by Death Cafe, deathcafe.com

12 | SUN

No Conference

13 | MON

Small Talk Sandbox

7-8:30pm @ Tallboy, 4210 Telegraph Ave, Oakland

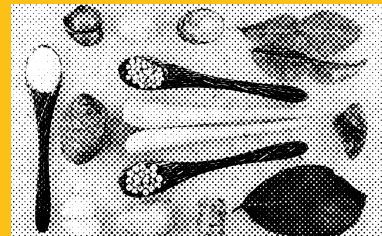


No topic? Small talk with strangers is a skill that takes practice, so let's meta-discuss becoming better superficial conversationalists, using improv techniques and finding interestingness and connection behind light chat.

14 | TUE

Product Ingredients

6-7:30pm @ North Branch library, 1170 The Alameda, Berkeley



Whether it's waxes on organic fruit, growth inhibitors on garlic, tomato soup in chocolate cake, cheap spices, expensive salt, or bay leaves from Tilden, let's discuss what's in the food that we buy and make.

15 | WED

Puzzle Night

6-9pm @ Gilman Brewing Company, 912 Gilman St, Berkeley



Something magic happens when people work on jigsaw puzzles together. Come assemble with others (free) or compete in a speed-puzzling competition (ticket required). Hosted by Assemble Puzzlery, assemblepuzzlery.com

16 | THU

No Conference

17 | FRI

No Conference

18 | SAT

Slang and Vernacular

10-11:30am @ Coffee Conscious, 1312 Gilman St, Berkeley



What new words and phrases do you love, or hate? When do you decide to start (or stop) using new expressions, and where do they come from? Why do we talk the way we do, now and historically?

19 | SUN

Maintenance

Noon-1:30pm @ Farley's East, 33 Grand Ave, Oakland



The frustrations and joys of maintenance, from society at large to one's own personal health. How do we reinforce the importance of proper maintenance—make it joyful, and not a drag?

20 | MON

Citywalking

7-8:30pm @ Tallboy, 4115 Telegraph Ave, Oakland

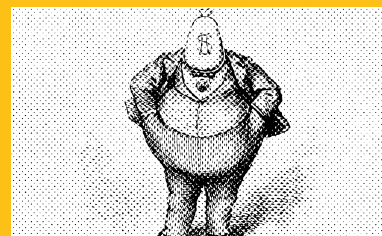


We walk to get around, sure, but also to explore, socialize, exercise, or meditate. Let's share favorite local places, times, tips, and creative approaches to urban hiking and wandering that reveal our city from new perspectives.

21 | TUE

Democracy and Elitism

7-8:30pm @ Gilman Brewing Company, 912 Gilman St, Berkeley



What's the relationship between democratic systems and the influence of elite groups? And if you choose your political views to demonstrate better judgement than most, are you perpetually in the minority?

22 | WED

Travel Tales and Tips

7-8:30pm @ Adegaz Azul, 1287 Gilman St, Berkeley



Let's swap travel stories! What blew your mind, changed your life, almost killed you, or always gets a laugh? What's worth doing again and what would you recommend (or not)?

23 | THU

Weaponized Complexity

7-8:30pm @ Milyar Coffee, 3300 Adeline St, Berkeley



To do unethical or anti-competitive things, bad guys pay experts to obscure them within a maze of complexity—fine print, shell companies, loopholes, etc. Are there new tools or strategies that we can use to bypass such barriers?

24 | FRI

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25 | SAT

No Conference

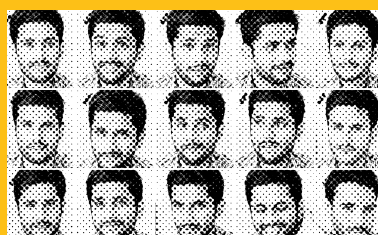
26 | SUN

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27 | MON

Spoken Inflections Jam

7-8:30pm @ Temescal Brewing, 4115 Telegraph Ave, Oakland



It's fun how a sentence can mean such different things depending on how you say it. Let's exercise the richness of spoken language, uncaptured by our writing system. Bring a few flexible sentences, and we'll see what we can do with them.

28 | TUE

Tipping

6:30-8pm, Fort Point Valencia, 742 Valencia, SF



Tip screens: Who are they helping and who are they hurting? Is cash better, or worse? What about automatic Living Wage Fees? Whether you're tip-happy or tip-fatigued, come calibrate your views and habits.

29 | WED

Sudden Personal Transformation

7-8:30pm @ Discover Community Cafe, 3207 Louise St, Oakland



Epiphanies, realizations, bottoming out, Damascus conversions, chemical interventions — what makes people change their programming suddenly, not gradually? Has it happened to you? ...do you seek it, or want to avoid it?

30 | THU

Modern Monetary Theory

7-8:30pm @ Discover Community Cafe, 3207 Louise St, Oakland



Modern Monetary Theory says that governments can create and spend money without regard to how much taxes they collect, and that taxes are mainly useful for controlling inflation. That's revolutionary, but is it true? Does anyone even know?

31 | FRI

No Conference

Credits

July/August 2026 Conference Calendar credits: Wendy Becktold, Adrian Cotter, Jane Daly, Will Daly, Brian DeSimone, FolgerGraphics, Bill Robinson, Hans von Sichart, Paul Spinrad, Louise Wo, anonymous



confcal.org
Check website for latest schedule.

How-To: The rules of Conference are simple:

- Be **respectful**
- End conversations with **thanks**
- Offer to **treat people** that you learn from
- **No recording or photography**
- (Recommended) In commercial venues, **buy something**, so it's worth it for them to host.
- (Under 21) **Check age policy** of venue before attending.
- (Optional) To indicate that you're participating, **wear a leaf**.

Hosts: A leaf-wearing host will be at each venue to check in with and facilitate the discussion.

Locations: Conference takes place at transit-accessible bars, cafes, public parks, and other locations in the East Bay and San Francisco that are open to the public, or at least the 21+ public, and are not too loud for conversation.

To suggest a location, email locations@confcal.org.

Topics: See the calendar on both sides of this sheet to read the topics discussed. To suggest new topics, email topics@confcal.org.

We're looking for topics that are most of the following:

- Local (East Bay, SF Bay Area)
- Positive or constructive
- Edgy, "alternative," or not yet widely processed (but not threatening)
- Helpful and practical
- Good to discuss in real life
- Not already discussed ad nauseum elsewhere
- Not a flashpoint issue that tends to spiral down into a shouting match

Conference Calendar

Times and places for topic-driven in-person conversation.

01 | SAT

Making Art

1-2:30pm @ Sweet Bar Bakery, 2355 Broadway, Oakland



As humans, how do we continue making art amid busy lives and in the age of AI? What strategies can we use and share to continue our practices? Where do we struggle, and how can we support each other?

02 | SUN

Get-Rich-Quick Schemes

4-5:30pm @ Mushin Social Club, 416 13th St, Oakland



Got some moneymaking schemes that you want to sanity-check — or morality-check? Come share them, and let the verbal NDAs fly!

03 | MON

Legal and Political Ideas

7-8:30pm @ doña, 3770 Piedmont Ave, Oakland

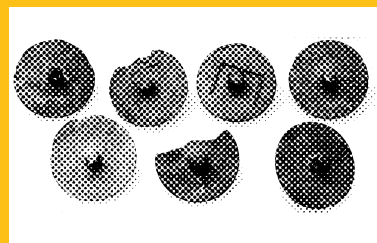


"There oughta be a law," you say? Maybe you're right. Let's refine our ideas and figure out next steps.

04 | TUE

Voting Methods

7-8:30pm @ Discover Community Cafe, 3207 Louise St, Oakland



Plurality (Vote-for-One) voting entrenches opposition and shuts out new ideas. The alternatives? Let's look at Ranked Choice's record, along with less-tested approaches like Approval and Score Then Automatic Runoff (STAR).

05 | WED

Bring Them Cheese!

7-8:30pm @ Milyar Coffee, 3300 Adeline St, Berkeley



Life in the big city: You wanna get to know your neighbors, but keep putting it off. Come strategize about how to break the ice with the other kids on the block, and commit to making it happen. Your neighbors and your future self will thank you.

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08 | SAT

Photographing People

1-2:30pm @ Camera West, 120 Maiden Lane, SF



Getting good photos of people can be tough, whether they're candid or posed. But pro tricks on both the camera and people side can make them click. Bring some favorite pics and let's analyze.

09 | SUN

Favorite Books

1-2:30pm @ Adegaz Azul, 1287 Gilman St, Berkeley



What books do you often think of, recommend, or go back to? Are there books that you love which most people have never heard of, don't give a chance, or need to read in order to understand you?

10 | MON

Aging Well, Aging Poorly

6:30-8pm @ Medicine for Nightmares, 3036 24th St., SF



How do we inhabit our age while staying young in the ways we want — and what's going too far? We can't predict our healthspan, but let's discuss how we've probably influenced it, whether it was worth it, and where we go from here.

11 | TUE

Paranormal Experiences

6-7:30pm @ North Branch library, 1170 The Alameda, Berkeley



Have you or someone you know had a paranormal experience that you want to share, like telepathy, seeing a ghost, or a near-death experience? If not, do you want to talk with some folks who have?

12 | WED

What Is To Be Done?

7-8:30pm @ Adegaz Azul, 1287 Gilman St, Berkeley



What would Lenin do? Or Dolores Huerta, or Ayn Rand? If you want revolution, how do you build or identify the movement that can make it happen? And how can you tell if a revolutionary leader isn't just in it for themselves?

13 | THU

Hospitality Industry Confidential

6-7:30pm @ Manny's, 3092 16th St, SF



Whether you're a local hospitality industry insider or guest, come swap tips and wild stories, and discuss what's new and what's next in the dining and tourism mecca that is San Francisco.

14 | FRI

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16 | SUN

Dream Interpretation and Action

3-4:30pm @ Adegaz Azul, 1287 Gilman St, Berkeley



Long before Freud, Iroquoians understood dreams as encoded desires ("ondinnonk"). At wintertime events, they shared them with each other to collectively decipher and plan how to fulfill their underlying desires. Let's try this!

17 | MON

Clean Energy

7-8:30pm @ Gilman Brewing Company, 912 Gilman St, Berkeley



Plugging into the sun, wind, oceans, and deep earth is a big global project. Let's discuss its current state and technical, financial, and (for some reason) political challenges. And the personal ones, too — how does the clean energy transition factor into your life?

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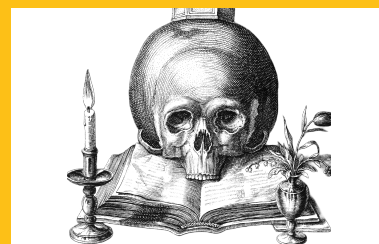
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Procrastinators Anonymous

7-8:30pm @ Milyar Coffee, 3300 Adeline St, Berkeley



Let's commit to a circle of peers that provides external expectation and motivation for each others' personal projects. Coaching and Focusmate are great, but this is free.

21 | FRI

No Conference

22 | SAT

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Conference is a real life space.

The Conference **calendar** lists discussion **topics, times, and local places** where anyone can come join the discourse. **You don't have to be an expert**, but people will appreciate it if you are.

The discussions are **free** and **unstructured**, although a facilitator will be present to help make things click.

There's **no commitment or tracking**; if you want to show up for some or all of the discussion, great. But there's also **no photography or recording**; the folks who miss a discussion that they're interested in will just have to **hear about it from the people who went**.

Why this format? There are many ways to discuss things with people, but each has limitations:

Friends and family are the first choice, but what if you're super interested in something that they aren't, or you want to hear some new perspectives?

Professional conferences are where experts go deep with the latest findings, but what if you're not an expert, won't travel and pay to attend, or want to talk about something that doesn't even have an organized conference?

Image credits:

July 7: President Loki, 8: Anacostia Community Museum, SI, 14: Herusutimbul, 15: No dice, 18: d150Rd3R, 27: Kuiperbharat, 29: Pforzheimer Collection (NYPL), August 4: Marsyas, 8: Eva Besnyö, 9: U. of North Texas, 17: Erik Wilde

Lectures, panel discussions, and author events are great, but they focus on consuming and reacting to the views of the people onstage, rather than discussing everyone else's ideas.

Online forums and Comments sections support some discussion, but they're typically superficial, polarized, and filled with trolls and bots. Plus, your every word is slurped up by search engines and AIs.

Parties and other gatherings can work if you steer the conversation towards topics of mutual interest, but that's easier for extroverts.



confcal.org
Check website for latest schedule.