

I know this is long, but I just want to explain the situation as I see it, and address the different arguments I've heard against what I'm proposing.

When I started in May of 1997, Maxine was market manager and she accepted every single qualified applicant who applied. We really did have dozens, if not over 100, artists on the daily list. Although this rule was made before I started, I believe it was made in fear that so many crafts vendors would take over the market.

Now it is over 20 years later, and I believe 30 years since the rule was made, and the market manager is vastly more selective across all categories. We have accepted very very few new crafts category vendors over the last 15 years, and I've also seen more recent market managers be much more selective about other categories of vendors as well.

The 'mix' of vendors should be controlled at the time of accepting vendors, as has already become the case. It is not a reasonable or fair policy to accept vendors but then treat them unfairly. It is simply wrong.

It is a city market.

We are members of the market, like the chocolate maker, the baker, the pesto maker, the farmers, the beekeepers, the coffee shop owner, the florists, the bedding plant sellers, fish sellers, meat sellers, Zingerman's, etc.

We pay the same fees. We follow the same rules. We are also 'producers' who face the same rigorous inspections to prove that we produce our goods.

There's no other special category of vendor, the farmers, plant growers, bouquet sellers, all the different prepared food vendors, beekeepers, etc, are not made into separate categories with separate rules...just us. Theoretically, it might mean one thing, but in reality here at our market, it means that a few human beings who you all have been working with for over 20 years [except for Stephen Kinnard, who is a bit newer but has still be around a long time] are treated unfairly. It's hurtful, it's demoralizing, it's unfair, and it's wrong.

Every July I get demoralized and depressed as I see the vendors who started years and years after me, get moved ahead of me for picking stalls.

The consequences of the way things are now is that artists are waiting years or even decades longer to get stalls. If we changed things and integrated us as full members like everyone else and gave us annual stalls, the vendors after us on the list would only be delayed a short amount of time, and they would still be picking in the same order as they are used to doing now, so it wouldn't have any negative effect on anyone. They wouldn't lose anything or go backward in any way.

There are two ways that we are treated differently.

1. We have a segregated set of stalls that we have to wait for, 'artist' stalls, which

means that we have to wait years and years longer than other vendors to become annuals. This July some growers just got stalls after 14 years. I've been coming for 22 and Christine and Carol longer than me, and we don't have stalls yet. How this plays out in reality: we don't get to pick a better spot after paying our dues like everyone else. It doesn't mean that there are fewer artists here, which is supposedly the problem that this rule was created to solve [to keep arts and crafts to a small percentage of the market). We're still here, we just don't get to pick stalls in our deserved order.

2. We are limited to 1 annual stall, and 2 stalls on a daily basis. This means any of us can 'move up' into 2 stalls each day, but we can only ever own 1 annual stall. This means that after 25, 30, 35, 40, infinity years, those of us who take two stalls have to wait and worry each morning. We can never just own our 2 stalls, relax and set up in them. Every year, annual crafters have to worry and fret in July that someone will take the stall next to our single annual stall and, in effect, kick us out of our own annual stall since we need to take 2, and we have to know that it will never change, even after 50 years. It's unfair and demoralizing and really really stressful. Again, it does not change how many stalls are actually taken by artist on any day, it just affects our getting to choose in a fair order and getting to finally own our stalls and relax a little after putting in decades of 'dues' like everyone else.

There are several things that can be done here.

- The separate 'Artist' category should be eliminated, and we should just be regular members of the market with the same privileges and rules as everyone else. We should get our annual stalls once we reach the top of the daily list, and we should get to own the same number of stalls as everyone else.

Once we do that:

- Artists could be integrated into the seniority list based all the way back on their original start date for seniority [taking full 15 times/year attendance into account of course].

or

- Artists could at least be integrated into the list based on where they are now on the list, after having been skipped over for years, meaning whoever is at the top of the daily list right now is next to get an annual stall.

At the very least:

- There are 3 open annual spots right now. The top 3 people on the daily list, Christine Schopreiry, Carol Scott, and I (Ann Sheppard) are at the top of the daily list and have all been here well over 20 years. Please, at the very least, award those 3 spots to us.

Make all artists full members of the market now, and simply don't accept more new artists than you want at the market going forward [as has actually already become the

case since Parks and Rec took over the market].

The current art/craft vendors are already here and setting up and taking two stalls if desired. Changing this unfair rule will not change the amount of artists we currently have at the market or the percentage/number of stalls we take on any day. It will not change the amount of stalls that artists take each day. It will simply take away the fact that they are treated unfairly every day, by having to choose last, even though they've been coming for years, or decades, longer than those choosing before them - paying the same fees, following the same rules and principles.

This isn't some abstract thing, this is a small group of people who you have worked and lived with for over 20 years at a minimum. I started when I was 25 years old and now I'm 46 and have made my living here my whole life. We artists have gone into labor here, brought our infants here, celebrated our birthdays here, gotten greeting cards signed for our losses, been here in freezing weather, blizzards, thunderstorms, days over 100 degrees with high humidity, with you. Please stop segregating us.

Thank you, especially if you read it all!,
Ann Sheppard