SENIORS TALK: How did you spend New Yearâ??s Eve?

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On a cool, clear winter morning, the Noe Valley Town Square is a fine place to sip coffee and chat with friends and neighbors. The former site of an abandoned gas station, the gathering spot on 24th Street is dotted with tables and chairs and is steps away from shops selling coffee and bagels. The community has struggled to get the city to install a bathroom, but the project has been delayed. SeniorBeat stopped by recently and asked a group of seniors how they spent New Yearâ??s Eve. Did they stay up to watch the ball drop and party into the wee hours? Or did they turn in early? Hereâ??s what they had to say:

Our participants: Steven Pressman, far left in a blue cap; his partner Lisa Stark to his right; and Peggy Cling, to the right of the man in the Stetson hat. Her husband Pete Cling is not in the picture. Susie Shaw, in the light blue jacket, is next to Peggy, and on the far right, in a black jacket and wearing sunglasses, is Jean-Paul Raynal. (Photo by Colin Campbell)

Steve Pressman, who lives in Noe Valley, and his partner **Lisa Stark, 67**, were traveling in Arizona on New Yearâ??s Eve, so they decided to postpone their observation of the holiday, said Pressman, who is 68 and working as a documentary filmmaker. â??It was a different sort of New Yearâ??s Eve. We used to have friends over and sit around the fire.â?• This year, the couple went out to dinner when they returned to Noe Valley. Stark, who lives in Bethesda, Maryland, but commutes regularly to be with Pressmen, used to enjoy going out for a dinner of Peking Duck on New Yearâ??s, even when she was younger. The couple watched the traditional ball at Times Square drop at 9 p.m. Pacific Time and went to bed soon after.

Pete and Peggy Cling, a Noe Valley couple, spent the holiday at Lake Tahoe with their daughter. â??New Yearâ??s Eve was a non-event,â?• said Pete, 75, a retired prosecutor who worked in the San Francisco District Attorneyâ??s office. â??We barely knew it was there,â?• said Peggy, a 76-year-old retired teacher. â??We used to party with friends and when midnight came, weâ??d bang pots and pans together,â?• she said. The couple went to bed at 9.30 that night. Do they miss the celebrations of their younger days? â??Not really,â?• Pete said.

Susie Shaw, 80, says her New Yearâ??s Eves have been quiet ones for decades. â??When I was in my 40s, Iâ??d usually go out with friends.â?• This year, the retired school psychologist stayed home and got to bed â??at my usual time. About 10:15. I slept right through the midnight celebration.â?• Missing the festivities, she said, doesnâ??t bother her at all.

Jean-Paul Raynal, a retired computer technician, grew up in a small town in France. â??When I was young, there were always lots of parties on New Yearâ??s Eve. And I enjoyed it.â?• But now that heâ??s 65, the holiday has lost its luster. â??Maybe itâ??s the state of the world. Maybe itâ??s just how Iâ??m feeling, but I didnâ??t feel like celebrating this year.â?• Raynal, who lives in the Sunnyside neighborhood, went to bed around 10 in the evening. â??If I had a choice, Iâ??d stay 20 years old,â?• he said with a wry smile.

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