Mexico’s consul general values neighbors in Curtis Park

By: Mat Cusick and Carlos Alcala

Liliana Ferrer often talks about good neighbors. As the senior representative of Mexico in California, Ferrer sees the relationship between the two governments in terms of neighbors who must work together, in spite of a troubled history and hostility from the current resident of the White House.

“We have historical ties that go back hundreds of years, and we will be neighbors forever,” says Ferrer. “Mexico wants to build bridges, and good neighbors find ways to resolve challenging issues and collaborate as a team.”

Ferrer and her family moved to Curtis Park in 2017 after she was appointed Mexico’s consul general. Her husband, Douglas Smurr, grew up in Sacramento. He is an attorney who has specialized in Mexico and Latin America. Their daughter, Maria Cecilia, attends Sacramento City College and plans to transfer to a University of California campus. Son Alex is in the HISP program at C.K. McClatchy High School.

To Ferrer, Curtis Park is not just a neighborhood. It is a political ally, a great place to raise children, and a lesson in history. The family home on Markham Way represents part of that history, she says. Some of that is architectural, but she was also fascinated to learn that the perimeter of John Sutter’s original land grant, given to him by the Mexican government in the 1840s, runs right by her home.

Ferrer embodies bridge-building in both her personal and professional life. Born in Mexico City, she attended Del Campo High School in Carmichael while her father, Carlos Ferrer, served as consul general of Mexico in the 1980s. She studied international relations at UC Davis, and continued for a master’s degree at UC San Diego, where she was a fellow at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies.

Ferrer has spent more than 25 years in Mexico’s foreign service, including at the consulates in Los Angeles and San Diego.

The Rodriguez family delivered the news in Curtis Park for 15 years

Crocker Village 65-foot sign wins conditional approval

By Viewpoint Staff

A Sacramento zoning administrator has approved with conditions a request by Petrovich Development Co. for a variance to allow two freestanding signs – one 65 feet, the other 35 feet – in the Crocker Village shopping center. Unless appealed to the Planning Commission within 10 days of the Feb. 20 decision, the approval will be final.

During a one-hour hearing, zoning administrator Joy Patterson listened to remarks by project planner Robbie Thacker; Brian Holloway of Holloway Land Co., representing Petrovich Development Co.; developer Paul Petrovich; builder Mike Paris of BlackPine Communities; three residents of Crocker Village; and one resident of Curtis Park.

Thacker’s staff report focused on the 35-foot overpass on Sutterville Road, which he said would prevent eastbound traffic from seeing the smaller Crocker Village signs. The report noted that the sign variance was not detrimental to health and safety and was consistent with land-use policy.

Holloway noted that developer Petrovich was willing to waive “at least two signs” in exchange for the variance allowing the 65-foot sign.

Supporting comments came from

Seasonal recipes from our neighbors

Home chefs turn farmers’ market produce into tasty dishes

Page 10

Newspaper carriers decide to stop delivery

The Rodriguez family delivered the news in Curtis Park for 15 years

Page 11

Home Tour canceled

Not enough homeowners were ready to show their homes

Page 3
Neighbors express mixed views about new electric scooters

By Judy Scheible and Craig McCulloch

The Uber-owned company that manages rental of the bright red Jump Bikes has added about 100 electric scooters for Sacramento’s urban riders. The city plans to have an ordinance ready soon that will keep scooters off sidewalks and parked in racks. For now, scooter riders must follow the same rules as Jump Bike riders.

The scooters may be rented using the smartphone app for Uber. The rider must first register with a driver’s license and credit card on the Uber app. The app will locate scooters and bikes that are available to rent. They may be reserved with a push of a button. The scooters are unlocked by scanning a barcode on the scooter. A couple of short kicks gets the scooter rolling, powered by a small electric motor that will not exceed 15 mph.

The rider must be 18 years or older. Helmets are encouraged for rider safety, although state law does not require helmets to be worn by people over 18 years.

The rental charge for the scooters is $1 to unlock it and 15 cents per minute of operation. In other cities, residents have complained about scooters or bikes parked on sidewalks where they may pose a trip hazard or block wheelchair access. A planned Sacramento ordinance would impose a fine of $275 on the company for scooters not parked in a rack and left on the sidewalk. The scooter companies may impose additional fees on the rider.

In mid-February, two Viewpoint staffers walked around Curtis Park to ask neighbors what they thought about the new e-scooters buzzing around town.

Fred Thomas, a retiree who lives on Jeffrey Avenue, south of Sutterville Road, said he thinks the scooters are dangerous. “There are no helmets, and there is so much traffic,” he said.

McGeorge School of Law professor Leslie Jacobs, who lives on Montgomery Way, said the scooters, like the bikes, present a dilemma. “They are all dangerous,” she said. “All bikes and scooters need to share the road.” She said scooter riders might be tempted to show off a bit. Jacobs said she rode scooters in San Diego along the Pacific Beach boardwalk, but not on the street. Although she said she likes “green stuff,” she thinks solving environmental problems with traffic is difficult.

Richard Kong of Marshall Way said he had yet to decide how he feels about the scooters, while his wife, Audrey, said she thinks they are OK.

John I. of 11th Avenue, a retired driver for FedEx, said he thinks the scooters are too small to be in traffic. He wants to see how they are used, where they are left when a rider is finished with them. “I like the (Jump) bikes,” he said.

Paul Lepinski and Maureen Cleary, semi-retired software developers who live on Montgomery Way, said they are a little uneasy about the scooters. Paul said he’s unsure about “all these motorized vehicles on the street.” Maureen said she thinks they are OK if the riders follow the traffic rules.

Crocker Drive residents’ concerns include traffic, lighting, parking

By Erik Fay

The Curtis Park Village Community Association held its quarterly meeting Feb. 12 in a model home on Crocker Drive. More than two dozen residents attended.

In attendance were Mike Paris and Dan Murphey, president and vice president of BlackPine Communities, and Stacy Longley of the property management company for CPVCA.

CPVCA President Louis Lane led the meeting through agenda topics such as the proposed 65-foot shopping center sign, speed and traffic calming in the alley behind the homes that have been built, parking in the alley, and lighting in the parking area. The discussion involved options such as installing arm gates at points of entry to the alley, speed humps and increased signage.

Residents expressed support for the 65-foot shopping center sign and its proposed location. Many said the sign is needed for the success of the shopping center and the entire development.

Paris said permits have been obtained for BlackPine to build on all vacant lots in the development in 2019. The development will have three new areas, with homes in two areas similar to the cottages on 24th Street and the existing Estate homes, but without a rear alley.

BlackPine plans to begin selling the homes in June. Home designs have not been released pending a final planning report, but within a month should be posted on the BlackPine Communities website.

The BlackPine officers said the higher grade in the unbuilt area was a mistake as the proposed 65-foot shopping center sign, speed and traffic calming in the alley behind the homes that have been built, parking in the alley, and lighting in the parking area. The discussion involved options such as installing arm gates at points of entry to the alley, speed humps and increased signage.

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The BlackPine officers said the higher grade in the unbuilt area was a mistake and will come down. The grade will be balanced for the whole area for drainage. The shape of the water detention basin will be adjusted and function when dry as a passive recreation area.

A dog park and a children’s playground are being planned.

The developer has set aside the oblong lot at Donner Way and Crocker Drive for a special project.

SCNA President Andi Liebenbaum spoke about the history of SCNA and the need for SCNA to reach out in a meaningful way to Crocker Village residents. She invited residents to attend SCNA board meetings and urged them to consider serving on the SCNA board.

Correction:
In the February issue, the caption on page 2 in the annual meeting story should have said Linda Bell commented on the need for legal responsibility for the many forms of bicycling in Sacramento.
Viewpoint appreciates neighbors who submit news about their babies, new neighbors, milestones and special events. This includes letters to the editor and opinions.

Please send your ideas to dennisicusick52@gmail.com with Viewpoint in the subject field or call the Sierra 2 office at 916 452-3005. Deadline for Viewpoint copy is the 15th of the month prior to publication.
Notes from Feb. 6 meeting

BlackPine to build homes at north end of Crocker Village

BlackPine Communities President Mike Paris told the SCNA board his company has agreed to build all the homes at the north end of the Crocker Village development. Paris estimated construction would begin on the new homes in early June.

Brian Holloway, an adviser to Petrovich Development Co., presented a packet of information on future signage for Crocker Village. Holloway said he would let the board know the daily number of out-of-town shoppers the commercial area expected. Board members agreed that a successful, vibrant shopping center was very much wanted.

New SCNA President Andi Liebenbaum said she would meet homeowners in Crocker Village with Councilmember Jay Schenirer. She also planned to attend their February homeowners association meeting to start building bridges of communication with our new neighbors. The board wants to have Viewpoint delivered to Crocker Village residents so they know about the programs, classes and events Sierra 2 provides.

Neighborhood Concerns

The Neighborhood Concerns Committee will host a Cops & Coffee event Wednesday, April 10, in Curtis Hall (see page 12). More information will be posted on the sierra2.org website.

John Mathews met with an architect in Curtis Park to review a preliminary concept for a community bulletin board.

Neighborhood Concerns would like to partner with other neighborhood associations to host a job fair for the businesses going into Crocker Village.

Development

The Development Committee continues to expand and refine donor benefits. Kat Haro is working with Executive Director Terri Shettle and staff member Heather Hogan on evaluation benchmarks for events. They are also creating a volunteer database to ease staff members' workload.

Goverance

The Governance/Personnel Committee is undertaking a comprehensive review of priorities and policies to better fit with the Strategic Plan and upcoming fiscal year 2020 financial planning. SCNA board member recruitment and development is among the critical goals the committee has been structuring the past few months.

Senior Center

Angela Mia reported that Senior Center overall attendance in 2018 increased 19 percent from 2017. The My Story Project will be scaled back to one or two days per month to open up the room for other activities.

The holiday craft fair netted $2,139 with the addition of more vendors. Next year's craft fair will start earlier in the day and will spill out into the courtyard.

— Kate Van Buren, board secretary

President’s message

Our community is defined by how nice we are to each other

My neighbor Trent brought me an avocado pit he had sprouted in his kitchen. He did it to be kind. We had not known each other long, and we did not know each other well, but he saw that I was planting fruit trees in my front yard and he wanted to contribute. We engaged in the simple experience of neighbors being nice to one another.

When I was elected president of the SCNA board, I wanted to engage in the simple experience of being nice to some of my new neighbors. On a particularly cold and wet Saturday, District 5 Councilmember Jay Schenirer and I visited the new homes along Crocker Drive. While Jay had met many of the residents before, this was my first experience to meet my new neighbors, see some beautiful homes, and introduce myself to the residents and the neighborhood association. Several days later I was invited to attend the Crocker Village homeowners association meeting.

At the Crocker Village HOA meeting, I was pleased to share some of the priorities of SCNA's Strategic Plan. Our focus is to develop new and reliable revenue streams to fund association programs, encourage more Curtis Park residents to become involved in association activities and leadership, and promote neighbor inclusivity. Because inclusivity is such a critical element in our Strategic Plan, I shared the SCNA board's recent decision to gather feedback from Crocker Drive residents to better understand concerns and expectations associated with the Crocker Village development.

I heard that many Crocker Drive residents bought new homes across the street from what they believed was an imminent commercial development that would (a) bring convenience and wellbeing to their lives; (b) add to the value of their investments; and (c) convert an abandoned rail yard that attracted illegal camping and dumping into a community asset.

Some of the new residents have a great deal of frustration with SCNA for delaying Crocker Village development by waging a legal battle. As I said to Crocker Drive homeowners, we did not do a good job of soliciting a broad spectrum of perspectives as we developed our approach to demand quality in the development of Crocker Village.

And while the SCNA board acted in good faith, motivated by the belief that any developer should develop with integrity, we did not reach out to our neighbors most directly impacted by the successes and delays of Crocker Village. We failed to engage in the simple experience of neighbors being nice to one another.

Several weeks after Trent brought me the avocado sprout, he brought me a strawberry plant. He has lived in Curtis Park much longer than I have. I think he just wants me to feel at home. I baked him an angel food cake for Christmas. Trent and I now greet each other regularly. Simple acts of neighbors being nice to one another, whether through plants, pastries or participation, are perhaps the best definition of community.
New senior program focuses on mental health wellness

By Kate Lauter

The Sierra 2 Senior Center is unveiling a new program, Head Space, which focuses on mental health wellness and well-being.

Created by Sacramento State intern-turned-employee Kate Lauter, Head Space will take place from 12:30 to 2 p.m. every third Monday. It provides information on improving our mental health through a variety of ways. Stress, exercise, diet and sleep are some of the more common areas where individuals may struggle and get down on themselves. Inserting positive changes in these and other areas such as mindfulness, spirituality, and leisure activities has been shown to improve mental health outcomes, especially in older adults.

Head Space offers a place for older adults to discuss their own mental health struggles or concerns, ask questions and hear from others who may have experienced the same things. This group is the first wellness class offered that primarily focuses on mental health wellness instead of physical health and well-being. Each session of the program is individually designed and consists of pertinent information relating topics to their influence on mental health. The program aims to remove the stigma attached to mental health issues through open dialogue among peers. Finding comfort in discussing personal troubles and concerns may make it easier to talk about mental health, especially with loved ones and medical providers.

All are encouraged to attend the first class on March 18. This program is designed as a 12-part series, so attendance is encouraged for all sessions, but not required. The first session will cover information on general mental well-being, gratitude journaling and more. Free “emergency stress kits” will be handed out to all attendees.

RVSP online at www.sierra2.org/senior-center or call 916 455-6339 so we can prepare materials accordingly. Wellness Program prices apply: $10/drop in; $35 for 5 classes; or $60 for 10 classes.

The Side Door books 5 artists

By Viewpoint Staff

The Side Door at 2900 Franklin Blvd. continues to offer live entertainment in its 140-seat “listening room,” The Side Door. The five shows booked for March are:

- March 8: Mike Beck, guitarist and songwriter
- March 15: Chris Trapper, acoustic troubadour
- March 22: One Button Suit, Sacramento-based string band
- March 23: Adam Block, Sacramento singer/guitarist
- March 30: Nell & Jim Band, folk, bluegrass and Americana

All performances start at 7 p.m. For ticket information, visit www.thesidedoor.net.

Grammy-winning vocalist coming to 24th Street Theatre

By Viewpoint Staff

Jazz and blues vocalist Catherine Russell will perform in the newly restored 24th Street Theatre at 7 p.m. March 26.

Russell is touring behind her new record, “Alone Together,” her seventh studio album. She draws on composers and lyricists Irving Berlin, Eddie de Lange, Jimmy Van Heusen, Nat Cole and Louis Jordan.

Russell and her touring band have visited four continents, appearing in major festivals, while also selling out concert halls in San Francisco, New York and Moscow. She has worked with David Bowie, Steely Dan, Cyndi Lauper, Paul Simon, Jackson Browne, Michael Feinstein, Levon Helm, Wynton Marsalis and Rosanne Cash.

In 2012, Russell received a Grammy as a featured artist on the soundtrack of the TV series “Boardwalk Empire.” The show is promoted by Swell Productions, a partnership of Mindy Giles of 10th Avenue and Steve Nikkel of 23rd Street.

Opening the show is Sacramento’s own Proxy Moon, four multi-instrumentalist musicians with diverse backgrounds. The band uses traditional and non-traditional instruments, including “the junk,” made up of a ball-peen hammer and heavy iron coupler.

Tickets are $40 general admission. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit swell-productions.com/shows/catherinerussell.html.
WE GOT TALENT 2!
March 16
Showtime: 6-8 p.m.
Tickets: $10 ($5 at the door) 5-12 years old
$20 ($25 at the door) 13 years and up
Advance tickets: haitiearlylearningproject.com
Info: 916-912-3658

Come out, enjoy and cheer on some of Sacramento’s best talent in this family-friendly event. Event proceeds will provide scholarships, student and school supplies, and continued teacher support in northern Haiti and Sacramento local Early Childhood Educator Scholarships and Recognition.

HAPPY SLIP LIVE
March 22
Showtime: 8-9:30 p.m.
Tickets: $20 general admission; Meet and greet: $25 (includes merchandise and a photo with Christine)
Purchase: eventbrite.com
Info: happyslip.com

Christine Gambito, also known by her screen name Happy Slip, is a Filipina-American Internet personality, actress and comedian. As a pioneer on YouTube in 2006, she was the first personality to create a one-woman show and act as multiple characters in her sketches. She was nominated for YouTube’s Best Comedy award in the same year. Now with more than 100 million video views across the web, she prefers to perform live for audiences in her one-woman show.

CATHERINE RUSSELL
March 26
Showtime: 7:30 p.m. show/6:30 p.m. doors
Tickets: $40/eventbrite.com
Info: swell-productions.com

Jazz and blues vocalist Catherine Russell brings her band to perform. Russell is touring behind her new record, “Alone Together,” her seventh studio album. She draws on composers and lyricists Irving Berlin, Eddie de Lange, Jimmy Van Heusen, Nat Cole and Louis Jordan.

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2nd Monday, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Mar. 11: “Rabbit Cake” by Annie Hartnett
April 8: “The Soul of America” by Jon Meacham
NONFICTION BOOK CLUB
3rd Thursday, 7:30–9:30 p.m.
Mar. 21: “James Jones: A Friendship” by Willie Morris
FILM CLUB
3rd Tuesday, 1:30–4 p.m.
Mar. 19: “The Philadelphia Story” (1940)
WOMEN’S FRIENDSHIP GROUP
2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Room 11
• Now an extra hour longer!
LIFE HISTORY WRITING
Wednesdays, 1-4 p.m.
OPEN ART STUDIO
Fridays, (except the last Friday) Noon-3 p.m., in Room 11
BEGINNING DRUMMING
Tuesdays, 1-2 p.m. Studio 1
Fee: $7 per class or $25 for the month
POTLUCK
Last Friday of the month, Noon-2 p.m.
WELLNESS PROGRAM
New! HEAD SPACE
3rd Tuesdays, 12:30-2 p.m., Room 12
FITNESS
FITNESS WALKING
Thursdays, 9 a.m. Fees: free to walk; $5/pole rentals; $60 poles purchase
Meets in the parking lot by basketball court.
GENTLE YOGA
Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m.
Fridays, 12:30-3:30 p.m.
PILATES WITH LAUREN
Tuesdays/Fridays 11 a.m.-12 p.m. in Studio 2
TAI CHI
(Beginner, Intermediate & Mixed) Mondays, 10-11 a.m. Studio 2
11 a.m.-noon Studio 3
Thursdays, 10-11 a.m., Room 12

EVERYONE IS WELCOME
Activities are free except where noted.
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Punch cards: $60/10 classes; $35/5 classes; or $10 drop-in. Purchase cards in the Sierra 2 Center office or pay drop-in fee to instructors.

CARD & GAMES
MAHJONG
Mondays, 10 a.m.-noon
FUN BRIDGE (RUBBER/CONTRACT)
Thursdays, 1-4 p.m.
PINOCHLE
Fridays, 12:30-3:30 p.m.
EDUCATION
MY STORY PROJECT
2nd Monday, 1 p.m., and Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m.

Everyone is welcome.
Activities are free except where noted.
(Donations appreciated)
Room 12 • 916 455-6339
seniorcenter@sierra2.org

Punch cards: $60/10 classes; $35/5 classes; or $10 drop-in. Purchase cards in the Sierra 2 Center office or pay drop-in fee to instructors.

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eskaton.org/eml
The Sacramento Center for the Textile Arts will bring its monthly meetings to the Sierra 2 Center starting in March. SCTA is a nonprofit organization that shares textile knowledge and skills with the Sacramento area.

Study groups meet the second week of each month. They select a textile topic to study together. For five months each year, they invite an outside speaker with advanced textile skills to share their knowledge through a lecture, demonstration or workshop.

The Beading Study Group meets the second Tuesday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Room 10. The Surface Design Study Group meets the second Thursday from 1:30 to 4 p.m. in Room 11. The Needle Arts Study Group meets the second Monday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 9. (It is mostly knitting and crocheting, but welcoming to embroidery and lace making as well.)

SCTA is open to developing new groups. If you have a textile passion not listed, please contact SCTA about your idea for a new group. Find out more about SCTA at www.sactextilearts.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SacramentoCenterForTheTextileArts/.

Doodle Birds & Flowers Watercolor Workshop
Join Tonja Wilcox for a couple hours of pure creativity, using blobs of watercolor paint, a fine-line pen, and a little imagination to make whimsical birds and flowers. Introducing ink will take your watercolor painting to a whole new level. Beginning to intermediate painters welcome.
Saturday, March 2, 3-5 p.m.
Room 11, Fee: $40

Gouache Painting
Over two classes, discover the joys of painting with gouache – paint almost identical to watercolor except it has white pigment giving it a bold, opaque and matte quality. It’s quick drying, great for laying detail, and can be easier to use. Come try it for yourself with instructor Cate Schmiedt.
Saturday, March 16 & 23, Noon-3 p.m.
Room 12, Fee: $50

St. Patrick’s Day High Tea
Enjoy three tiers of delicious Irish tea food while you learn about tea culture in Ireland. Listen to stories about tea from an Irish expert who will discuss all things tea, from the role of tea in popular culture in Ireland to the role tea plays in rural life.
Sunday, March 17, 1-3 p.m.
Garden Room, Fee: $40

“Girl Power” Embroidery
Crafty, powerful women unite! Stitch an empowering reminder of your awesomeness and add a few decorative flowers and designs. Phrases to choose from include: GIRL POWER, THE FUTURE IS FEMALE, FEMINIST AF, or NASTY WOMAN. Learn basic stitches as you complete your project. All materials included.
Saturday, March 30, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Room 12, $35

Succulent & Cacti Watercolor Workshop
Tonja will teach a couple types of succulent and cacti styles, then guide participants through creating a beautiful prickly pear painting that’s ready to frame, hang and show off to your friends.
Saturday, March 30, 3-5 p.m.
Room 11, Fee: $40

Coming April 20–
Pet Portraits with Lizzy
Paint a realistic portrait of your favorite pet, whether it’s a dog, cat, chicken or iguana! Artist Lizzy Mailho will guide you through this process, sharing techniques for capturing fur texture, lifelike eyes, and the details that make your furry friend unique.
Saturday, April 20, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Room 11, Fee: $60

For more information and to see more listings, visit www.sierra2.org/thelearnery.
In the District

It’s time to welcome Crocker Village to the neighborhood

It is no small effort to be invested in a neighborhood, especially one with as much potential as Curtis Park. As we all know, what is now Crocker Village was once a vacant brownfield site.

As we watch the progress of Crocker Village and anticipate the future development by BlackPine Communities of more than 200 single-family homes, now is a good time to take stock and think about how we move forward as a community.

I’ve discussed these questions with Andi Liebenbaum, the new SCNA board president. Given my commitment to all of Curtis Park, here are my thoughts about what could be:

• Ensure that Crocker Village residents feel like they’re part of the Curtis Park neighborhood.

I know that many who live on Crocker Drive do not feel a part of the Curtis Park community. Further, they feel some of the aniosity against the developer has shifted to them. Until last December, these residents weren’t receiving Viewpoint.

I want to thank former SCNA President Eric Johnson for personally delivering the December Viewpoint and adding Crocker Drive to the delivery list. I was happy to see a number of Crocker Drive residents attend the SCNA annual meeting and receive a warm welcome when introduced. However, we need to do more.

In February, Andi and I went door-to-door, introducing (or reintroducing) ourselves to let the Crocker Drive folks know we’d like them to feel part of the neighborhood and SCNA. Andi also attended their monthly homeowners association meeting and connected with its leadership.

I have asked BlackPine President Mike Paris to co-host a few events with my office for all Curtis Park residents, to showcase plans for the upcoming residential development.

• Create a process where potential problems are solved in a collaborative and amicable manner.

Given the size and complexity of the development, and the intense interest of many of our neighbors, questions and concerns will undoubtedly arise as we move forward. We were successful many years ago in coming to an agreement over issues surrounding the removal of heritage trees. My hope is to create a working group that could offer (non-binding) solutions when issues arise.

Trees of Curtis Park

Large trees have some risk, especially after high winds

When I inspect large trees, the homeowners usually ask if their trees are safe. As an arborist involved with trees for more than 38 years, I realized not to use the word “safe” when evaluating a tree’s structure.

Arborists assess risk looking for signs or indications the tree could shed a limb or fall over. Arborists understand trees are subject to environmental stresses beyond our control.

We cannot predict with absolute certainty a tree’s structural integrity. A healthy, structurally sound tree can blow over by the uplift of the surrounding root system during a winter storm. This type of failure is called windthrow and occurs when the soil is saturated and doesn’t have sufficient strength to keep the root system firmly anchored in the ground.

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) has developed a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification. The arborist attends a three-day course focusing on tree risk assessment, mitigating risk and using the two-page ISA Basic Tree Risk Assessment Form. This comprehensive form considers many factors to establish an overall tree risk rating of low, moderate, high or extreme.

Last summer I took the course and passed the exam to become a qualified tree risk assessor.

I recently inspected a deodar cedar for a Curtis Park resident who was concerned about the tree toppling over because of a trunk lean. This particular cedar has a phototropic lean, which is a natural growth response to the surrounding environment. In this particular case, the tree was growing toward the sun away from an adjacent cedar.

My inspection determined that this cedar was not loose in the ground. The overall risk assessment of this tree is moderate.

Why wasn’t it rated high due to the size of the tree and the existing lean? Because this tree is growing between two other deodar cedars of similar size. The adjacent cedars buffer the leaning one from the prevailing winds. Furthermore, the root systems of all three trees are grafted to each other, which provides better anchoring spread over a much larger area than if it were a single tree.

This homeowner also had the tree pruned in the past, which reduced the wind sail.

But no matter what risk rating a tree receives, I recommend that homeowners should inspect their trees after the wind exceeds 20 mph. Look for soil mounding, broken or hanging branches, and cracks in the wood.

Addressing these problems before the next wind could prevent damage to your car or home and, in certain circumstances, save the tree.

Jay Schenirer
City Council Member
District 5

Join neighbors to become an SCNA member: sierra2.org or call 916 452-3005.
Neighborhood chefs offer favorite farm-to-fork recipes

By Bruce Pierini

Our Curtis Park urban lots are, on average, small and often shady. In our household, we can only grow herbs and citrus for the kitchen. Those wonderful old oaks, elms and ash trees hog the available sunlight, but they’re so beautiful I don’t mind going to the two closest farmers’ markets for some of the best organic produce in the region.

When we have out-of-town guests, they clamor for a shopping spree at the Sunday morning, year-round extravaganza under the freeway at Fifth and W streets. Alternatively, I head to the seasonal and much smaller Oak Park Farmers Market in McClatchy Park on Saturdays.

Those of us interested in fresh and creative cooking have to jump over our neighborhood home chefs sought from foodstuffs or ingredients some of us were interested in which particular ingredient or food from local farmers? Can you tell us how you use them?

Sautéed greens. I use chard, spinach, even kale. Remove the stems. Chop up some red onion, dice some garlic and sauté in some olive oil. Add chopped greens and sauté until wilted. (Kale will require more cooking, even some steaming with a bit of water while covered.) After cooking, dress them with olive oil, some balsamic vinegar, and Parmesan cheese.

— Peter Winslow, 25th Street

Too many eggplants? Even the Japanese variety? Try making Caponata – a piquant Sicilian relish for crostini or a savory pasta sauce. Simply cube the eggplants (skin on), salt them, and let drain. Sauté them in olive oil; add onion and celery and continue sautéing until all the veggies are soft. Incorporate diced tomatoes with juice and pitted ripe green olives (not cocktail olives) and simmer to thicken. Finish with capers, chopped basil, and an ounce or two of wine to develop a subtle sweet-and-sour aspect to the dish. Serve at room temperature on crostini, warm and toss with your favorite pasta, or use in a vegetarian lasagna.

— Mark Helmar, Rochon Way

Anticipating the arrival of spring and summer, I am eager to begin making fermented, spicy and crunchy kosher pickles. Having run out sometime in the fall, the hunt for fresh organic pickling cucumbers begins. The key is to buy them fresh, small about the size of your thumb and very hard. Sea salt (2 tablespoons per quart of water), water and a little time in a jar are all it takes to transform a cucumber into an amazing pickle. Wash the cucumbers in cold water and make sure the blossoms are removed. I use a one-gallon jar with an airlock in the lid. I fill the jar with cucumbers, leaving a couple of inches of space below the top. Add a bunch of smashed garlic, some red pepper flakes and a teaspoon of pickling spices. Add a couple of bay leaves for their tannin, which helps keep the cucumbers crunchy. Pour in the water. The cucumbers will float, so put a Ziploc bag full of the saltwater brine on top to keep them submerged. Close the lid, add some water to the airlock and place the jar on the kitchen counter. In about five days, test for taste. Keep testing, if necessary, until you find the taste you like. At that point, put them in jars and keep them refrigerated.

— Peter Blackman, 26th Street

Our weekly winter trips to the Sunday farmers’ market invariably result in a pound or two of Brussels sprouts. While I’m drawn to those big beautiful stalks, I always buy them loose. My favorite way to prepare them is by roasting in a moderately hot oven. The sprouts become tender inside and crispy, caramelized outside. After trimming and halving the sprouts, I toss them with olive oil, salt, freshly ground pepper, and maybe some sprigs of thyme from the garden. Then I drizzle on some aged balsamic vinegar, flavored with figs, and roast about 40 minutes at 400 degrees.

— Anne Mazur, 10th Avenue
Rodriguez family ends 15-year run of delivering the news

Day after day, the white pickup truck moved slowly down the neighborhood streets, the quiet of the early morning darkness interrupted by the “thwack” of newspapers landing on front porches.

For 15 years, Alma and Juan Rodriguez of East Curtis Drive delivered newspapers to parts of Curtis Park – Sacramento Bee, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, San Francisco Chronicle, USA Today and Barro’s.

And then on Feb. 16 they attached a handwritten notice to the newspapers: “Our last day to be your carriers is Sun. Feb. 17th.” The note said it was “very difficult to get coverage” when family emergencies forced them to be away, “so we decided we’d better stop.”

In the early days, their three sons and two daughters, then ages 14 and younger, helped with deliveries.

“We actually started this so the boys could work,” Alma says. “They were baseball players, pitchers, so they could throw the papers.”

Alma had a day job as a supervisor in the state controller’s office while Juan worked in construction. Because delivering newspapers is early morning work, sleep schedules had to be altered.

Sometimes they would see garage doors left open, with houses dark and suspicious people lurking around.

“We not just delivered, but we’d go around the block and let them know we were watching them,” Alma says.

Subscriber Carlos Alcala of Marshall Way recalls one day when he received The Bee but not The New York Times. “When I called them,” he wrote in a Facebook tribute, “they said they hadn’t been given enough papers. They went to Starbucks and got me a Times, on their dime.”

At the end, the Rodriguezes’ circulation area was from Fourth Avenue to Sutterville Road, and from 21st Street to Franklin Boulevard.

In their note to subscribers, the Rodriguezes wrote that they “greatly appreciate your generosity, especially your prayers.” The note suggested customers with particular delivery preferences – “on the driveway or walkway… over the gates etc.” – contact the new carrier, Joe Flennory, at 916-628-7101.

For the love of old houses

Barbara Alexander moved into her Third Avenue house in mid-September after doing some remodeling and needed repairs, including a new roof. She continues to upgrade her home, painting several interior rooms.

A couple of years ago she bought a house in Natomas to be closer to her daughter, son-in-law and their children, but discovered suburbia was not to her liking. “I love the old houses, big trees and the park,” she said of her new neighborhood.

She lived for many years on the outskirts of Petaluma, where she gardened her property into habitat for wild animals, including feral cats. She also put in other plants and bushes to attract butterflies and wild birds. She has plans to add native plants to her front and back yards.

Her current cat, Honeybunny, is a former feral cat who decided to enjoy the creature comforts as an inside cat.

Since retiring 20 years ago, Barbara has been involved in many volunteer activities. She is a former caretaker of the rose garden in the Sacramento City Cemetery on Broadway. Currently she volunteers at the SPCA thrift store at 15th and E streets.

Kimberley Bond, who has lived in Crocker Village for a year, is now delivering Viewpoint to the homeowners on Crocker Drive.

Kimberley lived in Oak Park from 2008 to 2015. She was on the Oak Park Neighborhood Association board of directors for four years. After moves to Yuba City and Grass Valley, her love for Sacramento led her to return to the city with her husband, Steve.

A dedicated bicyclist, Kimberley believes in riding to nearby errands, living by the motto, “If it’s under 5, don’t drive.” She works as a landscape designer, which allows her to pull her commitment as a native plant advocate to good use.

Steve Bond is an elite 5k/10k runner. He finished 10th in Run Sac last year at the age of 62.

While looking forward to the completion of the construction across the street, Kimberley and Steve are enjoying the continuing serenade of the railyard frogs at night.

Crocker Drive volunteer

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Photo/Joan Cusick

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A REPUTATION FOR UNDERSTANDING FINE OLDER HOMES FROM THE INSIDE OUT.
PTA offers Family Movie Nights, all-you-can-eat pancakes

By Adrianna Gonzalez

One of the goals of Bret Harte Elementary School and its PTA is building community. The PTA leadership and school staff have put together community-building events for the school year that everyone is invited to attend.

Family Movie Night – Once a month the PTA invites the entire school to a free Family Movie Night. The next Family Movie Night will be Friday, March 29, in the multipurpose room, featuring “Smallfoot,” an animated film perfect for the whole family. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the movie starts at 6 p.m. Students are encouraged to bring pillows, blankets or sleeping bags to sit on the floor. Concessions will be available for purchase with cash only. Parents or guardians must stay with their students during the movie. The entire family is welcome to meet other families and watch this movie together.

Pancake Breakfast – The PTA’s annual all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast will be from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday, April 27, at Bret Harte.

Tickets are $5 per person for scrambled eggs, bacon, fresh fruit, coffee, milk, juice and pancakes. Tickets will be sold in advance at the school office. Students and parents will also take home tickets to sell door-to-door in the next couple weeks. You may also purchase tickets on the event day. The entire neighborhood and surrounding communities are invited.

The breakfast is a fundraiser to support such activities as Family Movie Night, STEM Night, Harvest Festival, Garden Curriculum and End of the Year School Dance.

Volunteers are needed for a successful pancake breakfast. If you are interested in lending a hand, call the school office at 916 277-6261, or email PTA President Daniel Savala at daniel.savala.206@my.csun.edu.

Consul: She has rank of ambassador

(Continued from page one)

Diego, as well as eight years at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C. Last year, outgoing Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto recognized her experience and skills, elevating her to the rank of ambassador.

As a foreign service officer, “that’s the apex of our career,” she says. It also means a greater responsibility for serving her compatriots and getting things right.

Ferrer’s appointment to be consul general in Sacramento followed an assignment as deputy chief of mission at the Mexican Embassy in Paris.

The Mexican Consulate, located in Natomas, serves nearly one million Mexican nationals living in 24 Northern California counties.

Part of Ferrer’s job is to help California’s Mexican immigrants remain in the state, which is a subject of collaboration between California and Mexico.

Ferrer says it is a mistake to think of immigrants simply as “some sort of foreign group, where in reality, they’re your neighbor and they’re your kid’s friend at school and they’re your kid’s teacher at school, and they’re the nurse that took care of you.” Ferrer reminds that “these are members of your community … and they’re just asking for a chance to continue … being part of your community and being your good neighbor.”

Ferrer said her family relishes the progressive feeling of both the neighborhood and California as a whole, as well as the willingness to support Mexicans in this country.

“California has played a leadership role in standing up for what is right,” she says.