

VIEWPOINT

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June 2020

Seniors share memories of a school year like no other

Editor's note: Viewpoint asked graduating seniors from the neighborhood to describe their experiences with the coronavirus pandemic. Here are their responses.

I expected to close off my time in high school in June with a spring graduation ceremony, senior sunset, and an in-person goodbye to all my classmates and teachers. I never imagined that a random Thursday in March would be my last day at C.K. McClatchy

Olivia Ang-Olson
of Ninth Avenue High School.

In the first weeks of quarantine, I felt both disappointment and confusion. The stark change of environments and life pace – going from a busy student life to empty days stuck at home – made the adjustment to pandemic life quite difficult. However, in the last month I have found solace in talking with fellow youth who can identify with these feelings. Online youth groups, Facetime calls, and social-distancing walks offer closure at a time when so much has been stripped away.

It's easy to feel alone during this crisis; everyone thinks their life has been impacted uniquely more than anyone else's. There are 2,600 graduating seniors in the Sacramento City Unified School District, and I've personally sought comfort in knowing that I'm not alone. Everyone's plans, big or small, were turned upside down by this global curve ball.

We can all try to take this time to cherish memories from the past 12 years of our educational journeys, connect with classmates and friends who can share in what we're feeling.

Focus on what we have, instead of what we don't. COVID-19 might take away a traditional graduation, but it can't stop the immense accomplishment and pride we should all feel as graduating students and families of the Class of 2020.



Photo/Joan Cusick

Olivia Ang-Olson plans to attend Yale University.

The first announcement was that school would close for a few days, to clean and plan. I tried to convince friends to bet on when we would actually resume, but no one was very enthusiastic. I thought eight weeks was a little too bold. Wuhan was already moving toward reopening, after all. Six weeks would be my prediction.

Jacob Dean
of Third Avenue

As the date of return marched deeper into the calendar, cancellation and virtualization rode in its wake. Senior projects were the first question. Online presentations, somehow? At least we had more time to perfect. No, too many projects relied on physical

Please see Grad Views, Page 2

Over 350 donate to SCNA on Big Day of Giving

By Kathy Les

The Big Day of Giving was a huge success for SCNA and the Sierra 2 Center this year. SCNA more than doubled its goal with a final take of \$52,630 from generous friends and neighbors.

In all, more than 350 donors helped raise desperately needed funds to stave off further financial deficits as SCNA weathers the coronavirus quarantine, which forced closure of the Sierra 2 Center since late March.

Donors gave in amounts ranging from \$15 to \$1,500. The largest donation came from Marlena Klopp of Gunther's Ice Cream, which is particularly generous because Gunther's has endured its own financial loss from limited operation.

More than 60% of the donations were \$100 or larger, including 85 donations from \$200 to \$1,000.

The SCNA board will coordinate with Sierra 2 Executive Director Terri Shettle to determine how best to use the funds. The intent is to make sure SCNA has the financial resources to keep the center operating in the short and long term.

The SCNA board and staff have extended their thanks to the giving community. SCNA's thank-you emails asked donors to describe what inspired their contributions. Dozens of testimonials were received. Donors expressed the view that the Sierra 2 Center is at the heart of the neighborhood and has a fond place in neighbors' hearts. All of the testimonials will be posted at sierra2.org, with excerpts on Page 12 of this issue.

If you weren't asked to donate or didn't have a chance, it's not too late. Go to sierra2.org and click the Donate button.

For thoughts from the contributors, read the testimonials on Page 12.

Keeping in school mode with students

Some kids seem to thrive with distance learning, but others really struggle with it.

Page 5



Creative idea was a game changer

Doing a yoga class on FaceTime with a friend showed a new way to start the day.

Page 8



Song for health-care workers risking their lives

Now on YouTube, the lyrics and actual hospital images show 'Frontline' workers with COVID-19 patients.

Page 9

Grad views: Students share their thoughts in the time of COVID-19

Continued from Page 1

events. Classes, then? Welcome to Zoom! Somehow two hour-long calls feel as big as a seven-hour day. And it looks like no senior ball now. Much more disappointing than I expected.

Graduation is next to fall. Apparently the venue is still reserved? No, a virtual ceremony.

Now college is the question. The answer? “A highly flexible academic model that provides options for faculty to deliver courses in a variety of modalities.”

Of course. Why didn't I think of that? I am reassured.

I'm graduating! Technically.

Finishing my undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University is definitely an accomplishment, but it would be nice to complete it back in Maryland.

I flew back to California for spring break, expecting to visit family for only a week, but instead I've stayed. My apartment is still in Maryland, I didn't say goodbye to friends before leaving, and I even have a fish now living with a neighbor.

I'd hoped to be working in Washington, D.C. this summer before moving to Arizona for graduate school. Unfortunately, I won't have those months to say a temporary goodbye to the place I've called my home for four years.

But I've been incredibly lucky during all this craziness. I have family with whom I can quarantine. There are worse places to be stuck than beautiful California. I also have plenty of friends going through this same make-do graduation, so we've managed to hold virtual happy hours and calls to stay in contact as best we can.

The class of 2020 is still graduating! Congratulations to everyone, from pre-K to graduate school.

During these unprecedented times, high school seniors missed out on activities and celebrations that in previous years were guaranteed for all graduating students. I personally looked forward to my second semester of senior year for reasons like Metro Swim Championships, a three-day Disneyland trip with the VAPA Orchestra, and attending a graduation present from myself: a concert of my favorite band, Senior Ball. And most importantly, walking the stage at graduation.

Instead, I found myself trapped at home, away from my friends, looking sadly at my classmates and teachers through Zoom meetings. The motivation to do any high school work was at an all-time low, especially because I already applied for summer college classes at Sacramento City College and was accepted onto the cross country team.

During my 12 years of schooling, I looked forward to so many things that were set to occur in the next few months. However, these activities and celebrations always seemed like a fantasy, too good to be true. So now that they're not happening, I do not necessarily feel angry or sad. I just feel empty, like I was enjoying a good book but it ended badly.

I'm trying my hardest to view this extra time as a gift. It's an opportunity for us graduates to calibrate where we are in our lives and careers right now, and figure out a plan of how to get where we want to be.

With my preferred industry almost completely shut down, I have a unique opportunity to focus on preparing and planting seeds so that when it opens back up, I can hit the ground running.

Aside from planning my career, I feel grateful

and blessed to be in a situation where I can focus on returning to old hobbies – painting, writing, journaling, playing music or watching new movies. And even just taking this time to rest and reset after graduating.

On the bright side, this may be the closest any of us will get to retirement!

From the comfort of the house where I lived from birth until leaving for college, I hit “Submit” on my final. And that was it – after 17 years of school, quite possibly the last final I would ever take. I texted my parents to tell them, then started making dinner.

Shaina Zuber
of Castro Way

Usually, we mark the end of finals for any semester with various rituals. At UC Berkeley, students gather under the Campanile to drink a beer after the last exams. That won't happen this year. Nor will commencement, nor will awkward brunches before graduation with various parents who are strangers to each other. There were no Senior Spring happy hours and dinners with friends, imbued with the carefree feeling brought by imminent graduation.

We mark our accomplishments with rituals, large or small, formal or informal. My diploma will still carry as much weight even though I haven't walked across a stage. Yet I still feel a sense of grief.

But if there's a bright side, it's the opportunity to find my own ways to celebrate. Sharing the post-finals dinner I made with my parents, calling my friends or planning a Zoom meetup with my extended family (many of whom couldn't have come to my graduation anyway). All remind me that who we share our significant moments with is most important.

I look forward to the day when we celebrate in person. Meanwhile, I'm grateful for all the ways we've found to mark this moment right now.

Camille Combrink
of Fourth Avenue

Jacqueline Bonsignore
of East Curtis Drive

It's OK to play again – at a distance



Photo/Joan Cusick

Pickleball enthusiasts from Midtown rode their bikes to Curtis Park to play after the city reopened the public tennis courts in May. Sacramento County was given the go-ahead in May to move into Stage 2 of California's Resilience Roadmap, in which the state allowed retail (curbside and delivery only), office workplaces, limited personal services, outdoor museums, child care and essential businesses to reopen with modifications. On May 26, the county added places of worship, in-store retail shopping, hair salons and barbershops.

Blood donations accepted June 17 at Sierra 2 Center

By Terri Shettle

Because the need for blood is constant and critical, even during a pandemic, Sierra 2 Center has partnered with the American Red Cross to set up a temporary blood donation event from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 17 in Curtis Hall.

The event is by appointment only; no walk-ups will be allowed. The rest of Sierra 2 Center will remain closed.

To register for an appointment, visit redcrossblood.org, enter the sponsor code Sierra 2 or 95818 ZIP code, and select the Sierra 2 Center location. There is a lengthy questionnaire to be completed online



during the registration process.

The Red Cross has put into place cleaning, protection and distancing protocols to ensure the safety of all donors, staff and volunteers who are

part of the donation drive. Examples include a face mask requirement for all, temperature checks prior to entering, spacing of patient stations, and appointments that spread out arrival and departure times so there is minimal gathering.

A strict regimen of cleaning and disinfecting before, during and after each appointment will take place.

Donors can expect the appointment to last an hour to an hour and a half.

SCNA President's message

Big Day of Giving donations far exceed goal

The Big Day of Giving is over and to say it exceeded our expectations is a gross understatement. The final figures are in, and we more than doubled our goal with donations exceeding \$52,000.

There were more than 350 donors, the overwhelming majority of them Curtis Park residents. Many other donors are former Curtis Park residents and some were even born and raised here. The results validate the significance and importance of the Sierra 2 Center as an integral element in the fabric of Curtis Park.

With SCNA Vice President Kathy Les spearheading our efforts, a multi-pronged approach was used that appears to have worked well. Early *Viewpoint*

articles and display ads that addressed our financial need and the opportunities presented by the fund-raising campaign were followed by lawn signs posted throughout the neighborhood.

Each SCNA board member was asked to raise \$1,000 by personally reaching out to neighbors and friends. An active social media campaign was pursued via Twitter, Instagram and Facebook using the theme of "Sierra 2gether."

The SCNA board will work with Executive Director Terri Shettle to determine the most effective and appropriate uses for the Big Day funds. Keeping in mind that we still face an uncertain future, our goal is to ensure the

present and future viability of Sierra 2.

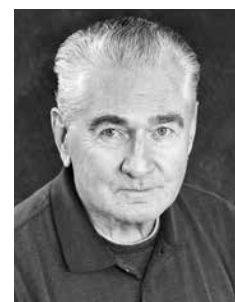
Terri is planning a phased reopening of the center on June 1, but it will be tempered by ongoing restrictions governing the size and type of activities. Future SCNA events such as Music in the Park, Curtis Fest and the Wine Tasting will likely be affected.

The SCNA board will do what it can to adapt and adjust. As we have come to understand the situation and directives seem to change on a daily basis, patience is probably the key to success in any of our endeavors.

As president of SCNA, I can assure you that we will use the donations wisely to ensure continuation of Sierra 2 and its

**BILL
HOOVER**

**SCNA Board
President**



contributions to our neighborhood now and in the future.

For those residents who are not members of SCNA and those whose membership may have lapsed, I strongly encourage you to join SCNA at www.sierra2.org and help make our community even stronger.

My sincere thanks to all of you who donated so generously. I am truly grateful for your support of Sierra 2.

Notes from May 13 meeting

More donors than ever for Big Day of Giving

About 350 donors gave a total of \$52,600 to SCNA in the Big Day of Giving, according to Vice President **Kathy Les**, the Big Day chair.

Donations ranged from \$15 to \$1,500 from Gunther's Ice Cream. There were six donations of \$1,000, and more than 60% were \$100 or more.

A social media campaign, along with testimonials from people who support Sierra 2, encouraged more benefactors in 2020 than any other year. Lawn signs also populated the neighborhood. The Development Committee put in long hours strategizing, planning and executing all aspects of this wildly successful day.

The Sierra 2 Center received federal Paycheck Protection Program funds, which will be used for payroll and personnel expenses, the Finance Committee reported. Executive Director **Terri Shettle** is pursuing other loans and grants to offset losses. SCNA has been paying utilities, insurance and taxes, even while the center has been closed. No money will be drawn from the reserve account in May and probably June.

A slow reopening of the center will commence June 1. Terri is working with state, county and city health officials to draft a document outlining new operating practices. The center will not be at full capacity soon, but a formula will be implemented to guide staff on rentals. There are new disinfecting protocols and more time scheduled between groups so surfaces can be sterilized. Most of the staff are back at work preparing for the reopening. The 24th Street Theatre will likely be closed until December.

City Assistant Planner **Armando Lopez** replied to SCNA's inquiry about the status of the mixed-use project at 24th Street and Castro Way project. He stated that once the city receives new revisions, a new comment period will be issued.

The traffic safety group led by Land Park Community Association's **Jerry Champa** will apply for a CalTrans grant to finance traffic-calming measures on some of the main collector and arterial streets south of Broadway and north of Fruitridge Road.

The Clean and Quiet Yard Care ad hoc committee has been encouraging the Mayor's Climate Commission to approve new ordinances. One proposal would require the use of zero-emission landscaping equipment and hand tools for municipal, residential and private properties by 2025 with incentives for early adoption.

Some committee members are actively reporting noise and time-of-use violations of gas lawn equipment. The city's 311 website has made it easier to report violations anonymously; homeowners are notified in writing of their violation. Violations can be reported at the new 311.cityofsacramento.org.

SCNA President **Bill Hoover** sent a letter to the city on behalf of SCNA regarding planning policies. Several board members requested that letters from SCNA be approved, at a minimum, by the Executive Committee prior to sending, regardless of deadlines.

Attendance

In attendance at the May 13 meeting, by Zoom conference video, were SCNA President **Bill Hoover**, Executive Director **Terri Shettle** and board members **Bruce Pierini**, **Nury Enciso**, **Kathy Les**, **Kat Haro**, **John Mathews**, **Dan Pskowski**, **John Bailey**, **Martin Pierucci**, **Kimberley Bond**, **Dan Murphy**, **Erik Fay**, **Gerre Buehler**, **Andrea Rosen**, **Mike McKeever**, **Bill French**, **Eric Johnson**, **Kate Van Buren** and **Jonathan LaTurner**.

— Submitted by *Kate Van Buren*, board secretary

Next meeting

The next regular meeting of the SCNA board will be a Zoom meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. June 3. If you're interested in attending, please contact president@sierra2.org.

VIEWPOINT

Editors Dennis Cusick and Susan MacCulloch

Managing Editor Carol Blackman

Proofreader Fran Coletti

Contributors

Kimberley Bond, Steve Bond, Valerie Burrows, Katie Byram, Erik Fay, Mindy Giles, Adrianna Gonzalez, Heather Hogan, Bill Hoover, Alison Ledgerwood, Kathy Les, John Mathews, Dan Murphy, Bruce Pierini, Dan Pskowski, Patti Roberts, Andrea Rosen, Judy Scheible, Jay Schenirer, Terri Shettle, Kate Van Buren

Ad Managers Fran Coletti and Kimberley Bond

Distribution Gerre Buehler

Photography

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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 denniscusick52@gmail.com with *Viewpoint* in the subject field.

Deadline for *Viewpoint* copy is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

In the District

We will never be the same after this crisis

“Unprecedented” is the word folks use to describe our current situation – as a community, city, country and world. My hope, our hope, is that we are through the worst, are adjusting to this new world, and will come out of this stronger than when it began.

Without a doubt, we have a long way to go. As we emerge, I think it is important that we stop to take stock, see what we’ve learned, and have a thoughtful discussion about what we want to hold on to as we figure out the new normal.

The challenge of COVID-19 has confirmed what a wonderful community we live in. I have always said that when challenged, Sacramentans step up. Our Donate4Sacramento response fund has generated nearly \$1.3 million from more than 1,300 donors. Organizations such as Sierra Health

**JAY
SCHENIRER**
**City
Council
Member
District 5**



Foundation, the Sacramento Food Bank, Sacramento Steps Forward, the Asian Chamber of Commerce, United Way, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation and hundreds of others have shown tremendous leadership in helping support individuals and their families in need. It was amazing that the Big Day of Giving raised nearly \$12 million, with more than \$50,000 raised for our Curtis Park community.

Under the leadership of Mayor Darrell Steinberg and City Manager

Howard Chan, our city is working hard to meet the challenges before us. City employees have stepped up to continue vital city services. Despite having more than 1,700 employees working remotely, the city continues to move forward – dealing with budget challenges while starting to make decisions about the federal stimulus money we received.

I have great confidence that our management team will work collaboratively with City Council toward our goals of investing in our most at-risk neighborhoods, finding solutions for our unsheltered population, supporting our youth, and meeting many, many needs of those we represent.

By the time this is over, every one of us will be impacted. I don’t believe we yet have a concept of the depth of damage to our way of life, socially and economically. But I do hope we find some silver lining. More folks are out

of their cars and in our parks. Our relationships with each other, while mostly on Zoom, have been enhanced. Our empathy for those who have suffered the most has increased.

What I fervently hope is that our caring for one another will continue to grow. We will base future decisions on the collective good, whether around the environment, transportation, the unsheltered, or our young people. Let’s keep looking forward to making our community and city the place we want to raise our children and grandchildren. Be safe, be healthy and look out for one another.

Personally, despite leaving my house only for an early morning bike ride and an afternoon walk with my wife, I feel like I am working more than ever. Thank you, Zoom. I never realized how exhausting it could be to look at a screen for hours on end.

Customers wait at 6-foot intervals and wash hands before entering the Oak Park Farmers Market. Everyone is asked to wear a mask, stay six feet apart and let the farmers handle the produce.

Photo/Mike Scheible



Oak Park Farmers Market is open as essential service

By Judy Scheible

Before we get to the apricots, flowers and honey this year at the Oak Park Farmers Market, we need to line up six feet apart, wash our hands and put on our face mask. That’s the drill during the pandemic.

Market manager Joany Titherington says she met every pandemic challenge so she could open the market, starting May 2 in McClatchy Park, at Fifth Avenue and 35th Street. In addition to the Saturday market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the park now hosts a market on Wednesdays from 3 to 7 p.m. Food trucks are part of both market days.

“It’s been a challenge,” Titherington says. “We’ve considered an essential service so we could open.”

The number of vendors has yet to return to the robust numbers of years past, but a full complement of 36 vendors is expected by July.

Everyone does have to wait for the

farmer to select and bag the produce. On May 9, all vendors sold out.

Among this season’s new vendors are Darcy and Ryan Rodriguez from Zena Foods. They sell pita bread and Middle Eastern sauce like baba ganoush. Also new is Rachel Carter of Buckeye Blossoms from Fruitridge Manor. She sold out early the day before Mother’s Day.

Returnees include Glenn Baldwin with herb starts from Six O’Clock Farm, and Ansally Stuyt from Stuyt Dairy in Escalon.

Other familiar stands were selling strawberries, honey, fresh fish, organic meats, eggs and breads.

In June, Titherington hopes to start the Oak Park Fresh to You website for customers to order online in advance and pick up their produce at the curb. The program will start with a maximum of 25 customers.

For further information, call Joany Titherington at 916 704-2843.

Volunteers help seniors with Medicare decisions

By Marge Ginsburg

Like many friends and neighbors, I faced the question of how to use my retirement years. I became a Medicare counselor in the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP).

Because most of my career focused on healthcare policy, becoming a counselor was a logical step to helping seniors and their families make sound, informed choices about Medicare. This was one of the smartest decisions I’ve made (besides moving to Curtis Park).

HICAP was established in the 1980s when Medicare’s growing complexity surpassed the ability of the Medicare hotline to address increasingly complex situations.

Our program in Sacramento functions under the nonprofit Legal Services of Northern California. Funded by federal and state grants, Sacramento’s HICAP includes 40 trained volunteer counselors who serve residents of nine counties. Our meetings with clients take place in community centers, libraries and other local venues throughout the region. Since the pandemic started, counseling sessions have been done by phone.

Referrals commonly reach us through the Social Security office, counseling sites, or via friends and relatives. All counseling services are unbiased and free of charge. The goal is to help people make decisions that best meet their individual needs.

Of course, not all Medicare decisions require a counseling session. Many people get the information they need through the website <https://www.medicare.gov>. They can also obtain an electronic or print version of “Medicare & You 2020,” which provides basic information for making an informed decision.

Yet, not all questions and concerns can be addressed with general information. Here are a few examples from my clients:

- I’m about to turn 65 but can stay on my spouse’s employer-based coverage. Does it make sense to do that?

- I’m inundated with mailings from insurance companies about “Medicare Advantage” and “Medigap” plans. How do I decide what to sign up for?

- My parents live in Sacramento but I live in the East Bay. I’m getting nervous about their Medicare coverage decisions.

- I know that open enrollment comes in October when we can switch plans. How do I decide if I should or need to change plans?

- Medicare denied payment for the ambulance service that my husband needed. Can you help me appeal this?

- What are my options for lowering my drug costs?

If you or someone you know could use help in understanding Medicare, call our main office at 916 376-8915 to request a counseling session. There is nothing to lose and a lot to gain.

For more information about the program, feel free to email me at mginsburg@hicap-services.net.

Teachers say learning at a distance in pandemic isn't normal for anyone

By Susan MacCulloch

Three public-school teachers who live in Curtis Park and normally commute to suburban districts want parents to realize that educators all know there's nothing normal about the distance learning that became necessary in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mary Durbrow of 26th Street has adjusted to distance-teaching 27 first-graders in the San Juan Unified School District.

Will and Pam Carlton of Fourth Avenue teach in the Elk Grove Unified School District. Will teaches five classes of eighth-grade physical science. His average class size is 32. Pam teaches 28 fourth-graders.

For Mary, a "typical" school day now includes messaging parents with updates, plus trouble-shooting technical problems families may experience with the online platform. She checks work submissions from her students and either approves it for their journals or sends it back for revision if needed.

Mary plans, records and schedules lessons for each day of the following week. On some days, there are Zoom grade-level check-ins, staff meetings or district-provided training for distance-learning professional development.

"I am using mostly online activities," she says. "Students can take a photo of their work if they choose to do some of the items such as math problems or writing on paper at home." But students don't have their normal supplies at home — just their math workbooks and one other reading and writing book.

"Some kids seem to thrive with distance learning, but others really struggle with it," Mary says. She also notes there is a limit to how much screen time should be assigned to very young students.

She has heard from many parents how their kids miss school, their



Photo/Paul Durbrow

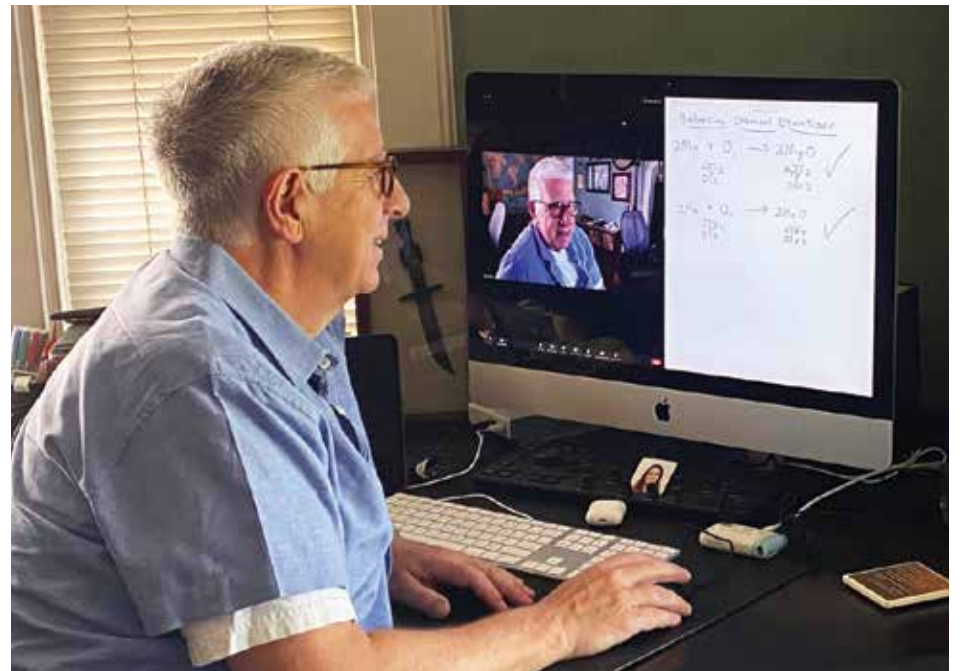
First-grade teacher Mary Durbrow messages lessons to parents.

friends and teacher; they need to know those feelings are valid and important. Teachers also miss "the sense of community in the classroom and on the school campus," Mary says. That community feeling is hard to replicate online.

For parents, Mary recommends adherence to a schedule so students stay in school mode. "At the beginning of all of this, a few parents mentioned they were struggling because their kids felt summer had come early, and I think a schedule can really help with this."

Mary believes everyone should understand there will be gaps in some students' learning when school resumes. "As a community, I think we are going to need to think of unique ways to support students as we move forward next year," she says. "I know we are going to need extra support and, when it is safe, possibly volunteers to help support students who might have fallen behind."

Will's school day now often starts with emails, "putting out the little fires everywhere." Many teens study late at night, so there are questions in the morning. He then moves into grading, provides feedback on current



Photo/Olivia Carlton

Will Carlton presents short instructional videos for his students to watch when they're studying. He misses the one-on-one that many students need.

assignments, updates the grade book and contacts students about missing work.

"I don't do Zoom lessons, as that forces an external schedule on students and parents," Will says. He embeds into his lessons short instructional videos and screencasts that can be watched at any time and replayed as needed. He spends part of each day on curriculum design or re-design, and concludes the school day setting up the agenda and lessons for the following day.

"I think the toughest thing for all teachers right now is that we do not have the one-on-one that many students need," Will says. "The structure of the classroom is essential for a lot of kids. I am actually very proud of how well my students have done."

He urges parents to make sure their students are completing assignments by checking the school's online grade book and their Google classroom. Especially with older students, Will suggests, "Give them the space to figure this out. They are learning a lot about individual discipline and organization through this process."

Pam's biggest challenge is student engagement. Many of her students are

not doing the lessons or are settling for low or incomplete scores. She finds that younger students really need the direct contact with their teacher and classroom to maintain engagement and make progress.

The Carltons' daughter Olivia is completing her senior year remotely at C.K. McClatchy High School. The family is grateful for the technology at their disposal, a strong Internet connection and space for all to concentrate.

Thanks to a garage remodel, Pam has an office and classroom. Will works in an office space within their home. Olivia finds a comfortable spot on the couch or in the recliner for using her laptop.

Will emphasizes that school districts were not prepared for the educational pivot to distance learning. Schools had to ensure all students had access to the curriculum. Because of the digital divide, few teachers use all of the available digital platforms.

"My science department of nine teachers share 70 Chromebooks total," Will says. "If my classroom had been one-to-one, this transition would have been much easier."

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Jacqueline Bonsignore, daughter of Robin Brewer and Robert Bonsignore of East Curtis Drive, graduated from Stella Adler Studio of Acting, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University.



Sophia Fotos, daughter of Brenda Fotos of Curtis Way, graduated from San Francisco State University with a major in communications and a minor in art.



Marian Haarmeyer, daughter of Craig and Kelly Haarmeyer of Highland Avenue, graduated from UC Davis with a bachelor's degree in sustainable agriculture and food systems.



Lindsey Wiser, daughter of Ryan Wiser and Maureen Hand of Fifth Avenue, graduated from Johns Hopkins University with bachelor's degrees in engineering mechanics and earth and planetary science. She will attend Arizona State University for graduate school.



Shaina Zuber, daughter of Joseph and Teresa Zuber of Castro Way, graduated from UC Berkeley with highest distinction and membership in Phi Beta Kappa, with dual degrees: a bachelor of science in business administration and a bachelor of arts in mathematics.

HIGH SCHOOL

Taylor Andrade, daughter of Tiffani and David Andrade of 24th Street, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend University of Oregon.



Olivia Ang-Olson, daughter of Saralyn and Jeff Ang-Olson of Ninth Avenue, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend Yale University.



Ellinor Arzbaeher, daughter of Bill and Cecilia Arzbaeher of Fifth Avenue, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend UC Berkeley, majoring in environmental science.



Sebastian Babin, son of Kathleen Babin and the late Rex Babin of Portola Way, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. He will attend Arizona State University.



Natalie Bianchini-Stults, daughter of Susan Bianchini and Jeff Stults of Fifth Avenue, graduated from West Campus High School. She will attend Chico State University.



Ada Birdsong, daughter of Patrick and Angie Birdsong of Fourth Avenue, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend the University of San Francisco.



Olivia Carlton, daughter of Will and Pam Carlton of Fourth Avenue, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend Sacramento City College.



Camille Combrink, daughter of Scott and Karen Combrink of Fourth Avenue, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend Sacramento City College, run cross country and study history.



Will Davies, son of Bill Davies and Kathleen Ave of 25th Street, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. He will attend Chico State University.



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to our CURTIS PARK GRADUATES

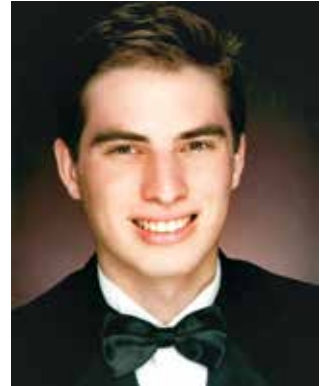
Jacob Dean, son of Elizabeth Landsberg and Gordon Dean of Third Avenue, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. He will attend the University of Colorado's College of Engineering and Applied Science.



Zachary Enos, son of Sheila and David Enos of 25th Street, graduated from John F Kennedy High School. Zachary will attend Sacramento State to play baseball and he will major in Kinesiology.



Nolan James Grealish, son of Tara Leung and David Grealish of Cutter Way, graduated from John F. Kennedy High School. He will study engineering at San Jose State University.



Erika Hansen, daughter of Patrick and Kristin Hansen of Marshall Way, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend Chico State University.



Katharine Jacobs, daughter of Leslie and Matthew Jacobs of Montgomery Way, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend UCLA.



Anton Knepprath, son of Paul Knepprath and Valeri Mihanovich of East Curtis Drive, graduated from West Campus High School. He will attend Colorado Mesa University, majoring in criminal justice.



Mirjana Knepprath, daughter of Paul Knepprath and Valeri Mihanovich of East Curtis Drive, graduated from West Campus High School. She will attend the University of Oregon, majoring in political science.



Mae Krause, daughter of Broc and Arlene Krause of Donner Way, graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. She will attend Santa Clara University to study public health and anthropology. She has delivered *Viewpoint* on Donner Way for many years.



Julian LeForestier, son of MaryBeth Moylan and Marc LeForestier of 7th Avenue, graduated from Heritage Peak Charter School. Julian will attend Tiffin University in Ohio to study psychology and play League of Legends for the Tiffin Dragons eSports team.



Gabrielle McKay, daughter of Anne Marquiss and Andy McKay of Curtis Way, graduated from George Washington Carver School for the Arts and Sciences. She plans to study psychology at Chico State University in the fall.



Emily Murrell, daughter of Karen Murrell, M.D., and Richard Hundrieser of Portola Way, graduated from West Campus High School as salutatorian. She will attend UCLA.



Drew Woolley, daughter of Kate and Patrick Van Buren of 24th Street, graduated from Options for Youth. She will attend Sacramento City College.



Viewpoint wants your story ideas

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 denniscusick52@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.



SIERRA 2 CENTER
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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Pandemic forces neighbors to slow down, be creative, count their many blessings

By Bruce Pierini

While neighbors acknowledge the suffering of so many people during the world pandemic, some count their blessings for the opportunities the forced isolation has given them – to compose works of poetry, history or music, to take care of grandchildren, and just to listen to the birds singing.

Jessica Bevins of Ninth Avenue recognizes that the pandemic has been a “terrible thing for a lot of people,” but says it “has been an absolute blessing for me. My life spun pretty heavy and I was not going to rein myself in anytime soon so the fact that I actually get up every morning and do a yoga class on FaceTime with a friend before I start my day is a game changer.

“Before all this happened, I didn’t have time for anything but work and I put people off who tried to connect with me because I just didn’t have time. Now I walk around and I look at the sky and I see the plants and I look at people’s yards and I just think it’s been such a blessing. I don’t ever want to go back to that hectic life.”

Peter Winslow of 25th Street says he and his wife **Cheryl** had committed to caring for grandchildren Lily, 3, and Marty, 1, before the pandemic. “By the second week in March, the kids’ daycare closed down due to the pandemic and we went from a part-time role to full-time. Providing full-time childcare for Marty has been a blessing. For him to give us unsolicited kisses sent our hearts reeling. Sharing this time with him was amazing and we are so grateful to have had the opportunity. It was exhausting, but so rewarding. Our stint ended with their return to daycare. We miss them deeply.”

Kathy Les of Portola Way says she participated in National Poetry Month “by writing a poem each day of April – something I normally aspire to do, but never actually get to. The sense of things slowing down fueled me to spend more time cultivating my poetry brain.

“Shelter in place isn’t too different from our retiree lifestyle. But the world has slowed way down and I find the pause so needed for the earth and sky. I think we are all finding that things don’t have to be as speedy and demanding as they were before COVID-19. And I hope we’ve all learned to value home and family more. I love seeing all the dads in the park with their kids in the middle of the day, watching all sorts of neighbors I’ve never seen walk by my house, families bicycling together, blue sky, birds singing. And the flowers still grow, pandemic or not. It’s been a healing and an inspiring time for us.”

Greg La Traille of 10th Avenue says he is composing the last movement of a three-movement concerto for horn and string orchestra. “It’s basically a tuneful, light-hearted work though serious classical music. The French horn has a wonderful lyric sound. I’ve used it much in my orchestral music and always wanted to write a concerto. I began it while serving as an assistant teacher at Camellia Waldorf School. Some of the youthful exuberance of the kids is in the concerto.”

He also recently completed a concerto for bassoon and orchestra, “which I also sketched out while at Waldorf and completed while sheltering during the pandemic.” The bassoon concerto can be heard on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yod1BWFDXFs>

Eric Johnson of 26th Street says he has “become much more aware of the world above eye level, what with the profusion of western bluebirds, Cooper’s hawks, Black Phoebe and other avians just in a two-block radius. A new series of ‘peep peeps’ brought me to a Nuttall’s woodpecker nest at Fourth Avenue and 27th Street, and my son gasped in delight as mom and dad flitted back and forth, and the babies poked their heads out of the hole and took in their new world.”

A neighbor struggling with Parkinson’s and the profound side effects of depression, anxiety and fear says she “welcomed the isolation. People like me



Photo/Bruce Pierini

To start her day, Jessica Bevins does yoga with her virtual partners, while at the same time FaceTiming the class with her longtime friend and yoga partner in Natomas (in iPad at bottom).

are practically under mandatory doctors’ orders to force ourselves not to isolate, to socialize and be with people and, most important, to exercise. Yuk! With the quarantine, I actually had an excuse to stay in the house. I believe many of us are quite paranoid about getting sick while others flout mask requirements in public as if they’re immortal.”

Lori Tibbett of Markham Way is writing a memoir and family history. She is “secretly enjoying this time of shelter in place because life is so much quieter and there is time for some of the many items on my list for when I retired. I happened to retire just before this whole pandemic started, so I already had a list prepared. Of course, I feel guilty even verbalizing that I can enjoy this time because so many people are having such a terribly difficult time, and I miss my family ever so much, but if those things were taken out of the equation, truth be told it has been nice.”

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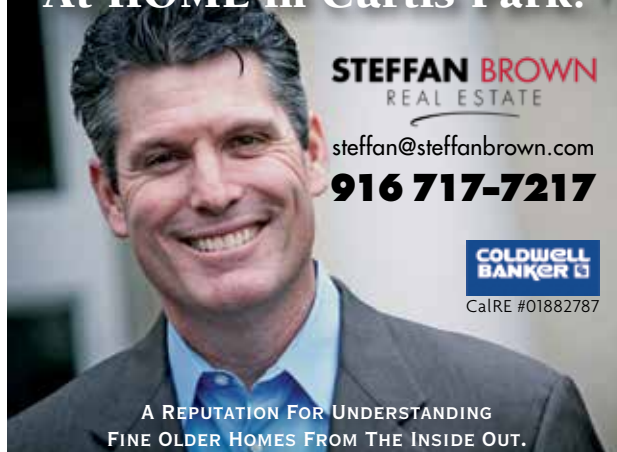
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Purple martins find refuge at edge of neighborhood

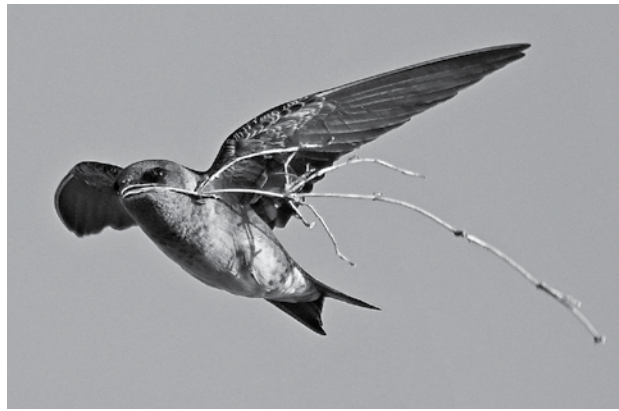
By Dan Murphy

The purple martin is the most intriguing bird residing in the neighborhood. It's the largest swallow in North America and feeds in flight on insects, generally higher in the air than most other swallows. It arrives in spring from as far away as Brazil.

Though iconic of freedom, the purple martin has been driven into decline in California by human activity. It's a "species of special concern" for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The first major blow to the purple martin was the arrival of the European starling. Starlings were introduced into the United States in the 1870s by a group led by Eugene Scheieffelin, a Shakespeare fanatic, which tried to bring every bird mentioned by the bard to America. They succeeded all too well with the starling.

Unfortunately, the starling competes with native birds for nest cavities in trees and structures. The eventual spread of the starling to California in the 1960s wiped out Sacramento Valley's purple martins,



Photo/Dan Murphy

A purple martin in flight carries nest building material. It usually flies higher in the air than most other swallows.

with the exception of a population in Sacramento.

Somehow our local purple martins made a cultural shift to nesting in the "weep holes" on the undersides of long bridges or overpasses. This has been the one redoubt where purple martins have been able to hold out against the starlings.

A dozen or so colony sites in Sacramento have remained in use since 1964 when the martins were first discovered using our colony site under the Sutterville Road Overpass. However, even in their Sacramento holdfast the martins are faltering, having declined approximately 80 percent since 2004.

Daniel Airola, a purple martin expert and Curtis Park alumnus, attributes the second major blow to the population to the increasing use of neonicotinoid pesticides on farms and urban landscapes. Airola believes these systemic pesticides are so successful in killing off the insect population that the martins' limited food supply has decreased their reproductive success. Neonicotinoids have been banned in the European Union for adverse effects on pollinators, but are still permitted here.

At least four pairs of purple martins are making a go of it this year in Curtis Park. You can see them soaring and singing joyfully in the area just north of the Sutterville Road Overpass behind the new Safeway. They are hard at work gathering food to feed their young in the complex interrelated environment of our land of the free.

'The Frontline' is powerful anthem of pandemic



By Mindy Giles

Sacramento musician Lori Sacco-Nelson had seen those red-line badges of courage on the faces of nurses and doctors in countless television news reports throughout the long weary month of March. So when a nurse friend in Australia emailed, asking her to write a song for fellow healthcare

workers risking their lives, Sacco-Nelson had the first line – *Lines on our faces from the masks that we wear* – ready to go. Sitting at her piano, the rest of the song came fast, within 90 minutes.

She called her Curtis Park musician colleague, drummer/producer Rick Lotter (Mumbo Gumbo) and asked if she could come over to his Good Dog Studios and record, right away. He said

yes – tonight. In only two takes, her reflective, poignant folk-pop song, "The Frontline" was done.

"I'm a musician and music helps to heal the soul," said Sacco-Nelson, "and we've all been trying to figure out things we could do to help our communities get through this trying time. When I finally stepped back and listened, as if I were a doctor or nurse ... that's when I cried."

*Livin' in a living hell
The enemy invisible
Seems like we're only biding time
We take an oath and live by it
We fight the fight and never quit
The soldiers
We are the soldiers
Fighting on the front line.*

So did her videographer friend George Holden. After one listen, he immediately offered to make a video for her. Using powerful COVID-19 news footage from inside hospitals, and outside nursing homes, the earnest, caring and exhausted faces of young healthcare workers amplify the lyrics.

The song and video, now on YouTube, is being used as a theme song opening a nightly radio show in Adelaide, Australia. Locally, it was featured both on Capital Public Radio's "Insight with Beth Ruyak" and on KFBK with Kitty O'Neal, Sacco-Nelson's current band mate in Skyler's Pool. The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=669VkkRvCjg>.

Credits at the end list three websites to donate assistance to the healthcare workers referenced in "The Frontline": <https://getusppe.org/donate> <https://1strcf.org/> <https://secure.feedingamerica.org/>

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Curtis Park group seeks to help food-insecure people in Oak Park

Several neighbors have formed Curtis Park Shares Meals to help food-insecure families in the Oak Park neighborhood.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, the Sacramento Food Bank provided food to 150,000 people a month, according to communications director Melanie Flood. Now, says Flood, “the need is exponentially growing daily, faster than we can keep up. We’re seeing folks who were never in a food

line before. We are now providing food for 250,000 people per month.”

The Curtis Park group has formed a working relationship with several restaurants that were already packaging ready-to-eat meals for a family of four or for one person for four days. The bags cost \$20.

If you’d like to support this effort, contact Kimberley Bond at calliyards@gmail.com or Bruce Perini at bruceperini@gmail.com.



Photo/Judy Scheible

As *Viewpoint* distributors, Matt and Jackie Edwards of 26th Street find Curtis Park neighbors much friendlier than their former suburban neighborhood.

Sign of the times

Photo/Mike Scheible



A “monument” sign intended to alert motorists to the businesses in the Crocker Village shopping center went up in early May at Crocker Drive and Sutterville Road. Center tenants will pay for placards on the sign, but purchasing decisions were delayed by the economic chaos resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. Developer Paul Petrovich says a 35-foot deep concrete footing for the larger 65-foot-tall “pylon” sign is expected to be poured soon. The footing will require three weeks of curing before the sign can be attached. The larger sign, intended to be visible from the Sutterville Road Overpass, may be installed by the end of the summer.

Viewpoint distribution eases adjustment of new neighbors

By Judy Scheible

When Jackie and Matt Edwards moved to 26th Street last August, they wasted no time getting involved in the neighborhood. First they filled in as *Viewpoint* distributors for a neighbor who needed a medical timeout. Now they have their own route.

The Edwards were living in Roseville when they became empty nesters and decided to move to a traditional neighborhood. Not knowing which one, they rented here and there and looked around for two years. Once they drove through Curtis Park, they knew they’d found their new home. Now they’re deep into renovating what Jackie calls “a classic fixer-upper.”

Jackie likes distributing *Viewpoint*. “I’ve met more neighbors here in less than a year than I did for 16 years in Roseville,” she says.

When the pandemic lockdown hit, Jackie was furloughed from her job as a finance manager for a car dealership. Now at age 52 she’s considering early retirement or switching to a new career.

Matt set up his at-home office in the RV in their driveway for his job in marketing with Tony’s Fine Foods. Rounding out the household are Gibson, a 9-year-old Yorkshire terrier, and their son, who suddenly returned when his college campus closed.

Jackie and Matt are among 90 volunteers who distribute *Viewpoint* every month. Overseeing this effort since 1987 is Gerre Buehler of Fourth Avenue.

Gerre’s organizational tree has six main distributors who sort and hand out newspapers to block captains who do the actual walkabout and porch drop. Before the stay-at-home order, distribution also included nine local businesses.

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New baby arrives on Highland Avenue

Amy and Patrick O'Neill of Highland Avenue welcomed their daughter Adelynn Jo on March 31. She was born at Sutter Medical Center and weighed 6 pounds, 14 ounces. The O'Neill family has been using this quieter time to get settled and acquainted with their new blessing.

Photo/Judy Harper



Photo/Laura Didier

Shirley and Bob Olson in front of their family home.

Olsons celebrate 50 years of marriage in one home

Bob and Shirley Olson of East Curtis Drive celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary May 2. Their children and grandchildren surprised them with a "quarantine" anniversary sign. Gifts included champagne, toilet paper and gift cards to five local restaurants.

The couple have spent their entire married life in their Curtis Park home. Bob has lived in this same house for 65 years; Shirley joined him when they married.

Bob attended the original Bret Harte Elementary and Cal Middle schools and graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School. Their twin children, David and Laura, attended the newer Bret Harte and Cal, and also graduated from McClatchy.

All in the family love the neighborhood and have declared that the Olson home must never leave the family.

Portola Way neighbor publishes second novel

By Dennis Cusick

Richard Meredith of Portola Way has just published his second novel, "The Crow's Nest," a crime thriller involving a tuna boat crewmember who gets trapped on a minibus loaded with 10 tons of cocaine.

Meredith draws on his experience as a marine and wildlife biologist for more than 30 years with the federal government and private industry. Early in his career, he spent a couple years on



a tuna boat as an observer of the handling of dolphins trapped in fishing nets. He also served in the Navy at the end of the Vietnam War, but jokes that "I never saw a boat," as he spent most of his tour working at the naval hospital in Oakland.

Meredith is an avid bird watcher, which helps explain the titles of his books – "Sky Dance," a reference to the mating behavior of ospreys, and "The Crow's Nest," which is the perch of a ship's lookout based on its resemblance to crows' habitat. "I had to cut out a lot of the bird stuff because they (his editors) thought it was too technical," he says. "I like a lot of wildlife in my stories."

Even the name of the bad guy, Cuervo, is the Spanish equivalent of "crow."

"The Crow's Nest" is for sale on Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites. "Sky Dance," published in 2015, remains available in paperback from Barnes & Noble.

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Big Day of Giving donors say they couldn't do without Sierra 2

Editor's note: SCNA's thank-you email to Big Day of Giving donors asked them to share what inspired their donations. Here are excerpts from their responses. All of the comments can be found at sierra2.org.

I donated to the Sierra 2 Center because in ways it is the center of our community. We have meetings there, the SCNA office is there, and its offerings serve many in our neighborhood. The center helps to hold us together as a community.

– **Wayne Anderson**

Sierra 2 plays such an important role in Curtis Park. We've enjoyed shows in the theater over the years, and we love that so many diverse groups use the building all the time. We like knowing that the old Sierra School is still part of the neighborhood's fabric. When Sierra 2 had to close, Curtis Park temporarily lost some of what makes us Curtis Park. We hope our donation helps in some small way to offset the financial setback.

– **Lisa Brodkey**

For the 40 years I've lived in Curtis Park, Sierra 2 has anchored our neighborhood. It has enriched my life, providing a space to study Italian and Spanish, learn modern dance, enjoy performances at the theater, practice yoga, drink and dine with friends and neighbors, watch my weight, attend forums about local elections, and give voice to issues that matter at board meetings.

– **Mimi Budd**

I've lived on Fifth Avenue since 1962 and have seen all the changes, ups and down. After the center opened, I was able to volunteer in the late 1990s teaching individuals about Apple computers. After my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I was housebound for years. The Viewpoint was my main connection to what was going on in the neighborhood and still is. For years, I've looked forward to getting Viewpoint each month and read about all the activities and what the neighbors are doing. I may not be able to attend the classes that are offered, but want to see the center remain healthy for those that follow me.

– **Shirley Burman**

My childhood home is in Curtis Park – born and raised on 10th Avenue. My parents are still there. Growing



Photo/Joan Cusick

Chatting in front of Gunther's Ice Cream table at the 2017 SCNA Wine Tasting are, from left, Hal Thomas, Gerre Buehler and Jesse James. Marlena Klopp, owner of Gunther's Ice Cream, is one of Sierra 2's biggest supporters.

up, I attended ballet and modern dance classes at Sierra 2. We also had a birthday party for my parents in the main courtyard. My mom ran a summer camp there too. And now, we love attending the wine tastings. Curtis Park and Sierra 2 are dear to my heart so it only makes sense that I'd contribute. Oh, and also my dad is (SCNA President) Bill Hoover but I promise I donated without him asking.)

– **Courtney DalPorto**

When I describe my neighborhood to people who don't know it, one of the things I always mention is that we have an amazing community center, which truly is our "town center," a place where everyone feels welcome, connected and anchored to the neighborhood. Sierra 2 is a key asset, and one that ties me to a place I've called home for more than 25 years.

– **Dorsey Griffith**

We are happy to continue donating to Sierra 2 and will continue to do so despite our severe loss of business and income. It is our opinion that your commitment in supporting Curtis Park and the community at large are indispensable. We also appreciate the loyal support that Sierra 2 and its community bring to Gunther's.

– **Marlena & Rick Klopp**
owners of Gunther's Ice Cream

Our family has lived in California and Curtis Park for just over two

years. We have fallen in love with it for many reasons, one main reason being because of the Sierra 2 Center! We have two young daughters, and Sierra 2 has provided us with a space to play, learn and grow in. Our oldest daughter attends Great Beginnings for preschool. We have also utilized many of the amenities the center has to offer, including the Music Together classes, craft sales, the annual Egg Hunt, dog park and playground.

– **Anthony, Jill, Abrielle**
and **Riley Krutzkamp**

I believe we are incredibly fortunate to have the Sierra 2 Center as both a cultural icon and a resource. I'm a cautious optimist – I believe we will get through this frightening, perplexing time, and the center will once again thrive, welcoming, serving and representing people from throughout Sacramento and beyond.

– **Andi Liebenbaum**

As longtime residents of Curtis Park, our family has always understood the importance of the many programs, events and activities Sierra 2 Center offers, especially when they're no longer accessible. It's up to us users to protect this valuable neighborhood resource.

– **Steve Martarano**

As a second-generation Curtis Park resident, I am happy to support the great community activities and advocacy coordinated by Sierra 2.

We certainly see the return on our investment regularly.

– **Teresa Montijo**

Sierra 2 provides a meeting room for the SMG AA group. It is a very special meeting that is the foundation of my sober life. If Sierra 2 closed, I feel we would be hard-pressed to find another location that all of our members would be able to attend.

– **Trenton Pitts**

I donated to Sierra 2 because the community center means a lot to our family. We enjoy the Home Tour and especially the Easter Parade every year. I also returned to my mission to learn to sew thanks to The Learnery.

– **Brenna Rizan**

Sierra 2 has been a part of our family's fabric since 1983. Our son attended First Step there, and we have gone to dozens of weddings, memorials, parties, plays and classes ever since. Sierra 2 is an ESSENTIAL service!

– **Mary Ellen Shay (Land Park)**

We've been Sierra-Curtis Park residents since 1981 and have never forgotten the successful efforts of neighbors to save Sierra School from being torn down. The idea of turning it into a not-for-profit community center run by the neighborhood association was and continues to be a beautiful vision.

– **Genevieve Shiroma**
and **Michael Abbott**

Prior to purchasing my home in Curtis Park, I walked around the neighborhood and talked with people who were walking around. I could tell that I was not moving into a neighborhood, but into a community. And it is a wonderful thing to be a part of a community. I have not had the time to take advantage of all that the Sierra 2 Center offers, but I want to make sure that I do my part to ensure that it remains a vibrant part of our neighborhood.

– **Debbie Small**

Oh, I wish I could have given so much more. I love Sierra 2. It is the center of our neighborhood, providing essential and vital services to the Sacramento community. I'm grateful to the staff, board and all the volunteers for creating a hub of creativity, connection and learning.

– **Shelly Willis**