

# VIEWPOINT

A Publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association

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September 2020

## The color lines that divided us

*Decades of racist attitudes, restrictive covenants and government actions segregated city neighborhoods*

By Dennis Cusick

**W**hy is Curtis Park so white?

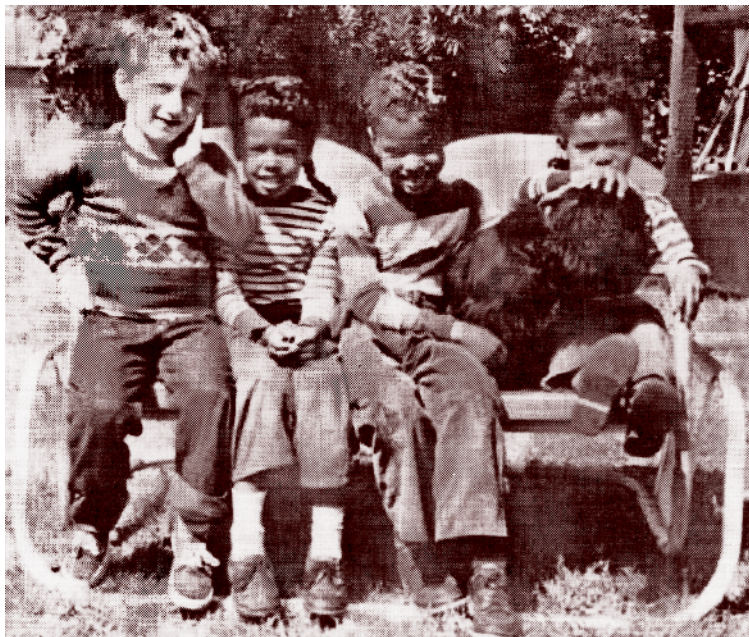
U.S. Census Bureau data show Curtis Park is the fourth-whitest of 50 neighborhoods in the city of Sacramento, after River Park, East Sacramento and Land Park.

These four neighborhoods, all largely developed by the middle of the 20th century, are today between 70% and 87.7% white, while the city as a whole is less than 34% white. That didn't happen by accident. A combination of factors – dominant whites' racial intolerance, real estate developers' decisions to restrict access, lenders' overt discrimination and government policies promoting racial boundaries – created middle-class neighborhoods that were for "whites only."

At a time when "Black Lives Matter" signs have appeared throughout the neighborhood in reaction to police killings of Black men and women nationwide, *Viewpoint* has examined property records, court cases, historical documents, academic research and newspaper accounts in an attempt to explain how Curtis Park came to be the neighborhood it is today.

### The Rutland family

Consider, in particular, the Rutland family. Today, Ginger Rutland and husband Don Fields live on Donner Way. But



Photo/Rutland Family  
Neighbor Gus Kaplanis, left, with Ginger, Billy and Patty-Jo Rutland outside the Rutlands' 27th Street home in 1953, when Black families weren't welcome south of Second Avenue.

when Ginger was a child, that was not possible for her African American family. Her father, Bill Rutland, came to Sacramento from Ohio in 1952 for a civilian executive position at McClellan Air Force Base. He sought to buy a

*Please see Lines, Page 6*

## Porch Picnics fundraiser for SCNA on Oct. 10

By Kathy Les

**C**OVID-19 shouldn't stop our fun and fundraising, even though current pandemic conditions make the 30th annual Curtis Park Wine Tasting event an impossibility.

Enter Porch Picnics, your chance to help SCNA raise money to sustain Sierra 2 until the community center is allowed to reopen.

Each porch picnic will be delivered directly to your home by 5 p.m. on Oct. 10. You choose dinner in advance from one of our premier local restaurants. Also expect a surprise drink, a fun art activity created by Sierra 2's Learnery, and a special link to live music during our wine-and-dine time from 4 to 7 p.m. All this plus a one-year membership to SCNA, starting or extending your current membership, for \$150 per person.

Several restaurants, including Taylor's Kitchen and Revolution Café, will offer carnivore and vegetarian options. This is not only a fundraiser for SCNA, but also a way to help our loyal local restaurants, which will be paid market rate for the food they provide.

The SCNA board seeks 200 Curtis Park households willing to take advantage of this Porch Picnics event and membership opportunity while sheltering in place.

The SCNA board will create a fun stay-at-home event for you. In turn, you will help SCNA raise \$25,000 that would normally be generated from its premier fundraiser, the annual Wine Tasting, in which 400 neighbors and friends would gather at Sierra 2, sip wine and enjoy tasty bites from local restaurants.

If the Porch Picnics fundraiser sounds like a way you can help SCNA weather COVID-19, then sign up at [www.sierra2.org](http://www.sierra2.org). There you will find restaurant and menu options. All orders must be placed by Oct. 1.

## Developer agrees to change building's design

By Andrea Rosen  
and Erik Fay

**W**hen SCNA board members get a chance to talk with a developer about concerns with a project's design, sometimes both sides can win.

That's what happened this summer with a proposal for a two-story, mixed-use building at Castro Way and 24th Street, opposite the historically and architecturally significant 24th Street Theatre.

Members of SCNA's Neighborhood Concerns Committee who reviewed the proposal thought its original design for a modern steel-and-concrete structure was inconsistent with neighborhood architectural styles and specifically with the Spanish Revival-style theater, designed in the 1920s by renowned local architects Dean & Dean, who also designed Memorial Auditorium. NCC pointed out that there are many Spanish Revival-style homes in the neighborhood,

*Please see Changes, Page 2*

## New light signal on Sutterville to calm traffic

An example of how hard it can be for the city to get something done  
Page 10



## Tai chi class in the park offers breath meditation

It's a way to be social, see neighbors and help improve and sustain good health.  
Page 12







East elevation facing 24th Street indicates stucco as primary exterior material, terra cotta brick at base of building, ornamental iron for railings and balconies.

## Changes: New drawings show sensitivity to neighborhood aesthetic

*Continued from Page 1*

including some new ones in Crocker Village.

On Aug. 3, committee members met with the developer, HK3 Development Co., Councilmember Jay Schenirer and city staff to urge several specific design changes intended to improve compatibility with existing neighborhood architectural styles.

The suggested changes were relatively minor, but committee members felt they would have a huge

impact on the proposed building's fit at a location that functions as a gateway to the residential core of Curtis Park. The committee relied on a city General Plan requirement that new construction in established neighborhoods be sensitive to the neighborhood's aesthetic.

Asserting that new architecturally sensitive construction in a historic neighborhood is possible, committee members provided examples from Midtown and Crocker Village to

illustrate how this can be done successfully.

HK3 returned on Aug. 11 with a revised design that incorporates most of the requested Spanish Revival features, such as the use of stucco as the primary exterior material, terra cotta brick at the base of the building, ornamental iron for all railings, balconies and window shade supports, fabric sunshades and base columns wrapped in tile.

The building will include eight housing units and ground-floor

commercial space. It is planned for about 8,900 square feet.

Committee members thanked HK3 for eliminating the blight of an empty lot once occupied by a gas station and for being responsive to the neighborhood's concerns.

Neighborhood Concerns is one of SCNA's standing committees. It reviews building projects proposed for the neighborhood and addresses a wide array of other issues that arise in the neighborhood.

## Couple went looking for a community – and found it on Fifth Avenue in Curtis Park

*By Dennis Cusick*

**J**on Miller and Susan Stone may be part of a national trend – people fleeing the nation's largest cities to places where the grass is greener and the people friendlier.

In their case, they bought a house on Fifth Avenue in Curtis Park in May and moved here over the summer from Berkeley with their dog, Kiwi.

"We were kind of tired of the Bay Area and the busy-ness of it," Susan says. "It had become so hectic that it just didn't have the appeal anymore."

The real estate website Redfin ranked Sacramento second in the nation in out-of-market searches by potential homebuyers in the second quarter of this year, behind only Phoenix.

For Sacramento, more than 72% of the Redfin searches came from the Bay Area, about 5% from Los Angeles and Fresno, 3.4% from Chico and less than 2% from San Diego, Seattle, Reno and New York.

"We see that effect here," Curtis Park-based Realtor Steffan Brown says of the Redfin numbers. He says 10-20% of his clients traditionally have come from the Bay Area. This year "that's definitely doubled, if not more."

Brown believes COVID-19 and its effect on the workplace may be responsible for much of the interest in Sacramento from Bay Area residents.

"I have several clients from the Bay Area who, since they can telecommute, they can live anywhere,"

Brown says. "So why not live in Sacramento, where they can have a bigger house?"

Interest in Sacramento from those leaving the Bay Area isn't random, Brown says. "The ones I'm hearing from have some ties to Sacramento anyway," he says. "Most people who haven't been here don't know what a gem Sacramento is."

Susan Stone's daughter Holly Larson lives in East Sacramento, which was part of the attraction for Susan and Jon, both of whom are retired.

"We didn't know where we wanted to go, but we knew we wanted community," Susan says. "We found a place we looked at in East Sac and it wasn't right at all."

Then, Holly sent them an ad for a house on Fifth Avenue, thinking Curtis Park might be a better fit. After they saw the house, they made an offer right away. "It was a remarkably lovely place," Jon says of their "new" house, which they think was built in 1907 or 1910.

"It's definitely the place for Bohemian moms," Susan says of Curtis Park. "That's how she saw me – as an old hippie."

In fact, Susan taught English and logic for 25 years at California State University, Bakersfield, before retiring and moving to Berkeley. Jon retired in 2009 as an investment adviser.

In the Bay Area, "people weren't friendly, like they are here," Susan says. "This has been an absolute delight. We lucked out."



Photo/Joan Cusick

When Jon Miller and Susan Stone moved to Fifth Avenue, their dog, Kiwi, whined and whined from loneliness in her new home until she met other dogs and learned that Curtis Park is a dog lovers' neighborhood.



*President's message*

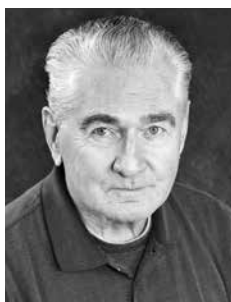
# Tough times require SCNA to be creative

Our fiscal situation is hardly rosy, as I have mentioned in previous columns. SCNA has about \$100,000 in our checking account and \$387,000 in our Reserve for Replacement (RFP) fund, Treasurer John Bailey reports. Unlike our checking account, the RFP's specific purpose is for major maintenance of and repairs to the Sierra 2 Center.

The overwhelming success of the Big Day of Giving (\$52,000) and Terri Shettle's diligence in acquiring various grants and other funding, including the Payroll Protection Plan, are helping us stay afloat. Since March, we have received more than \$190,000 in grants and contributions, but they are stopgap measures at best.

Due to the uncertainty about

**BILL  
HOOVER**  
**SCNA Board  
President**



reopening Sierra 2 and the conduct of large-scale events for the foreseeable future, our budgeting process has adopted a short-term approach. This allows us to adapt more readily to changing circumstances.

After accounting for current revenue and expenditures, we project a recurring monthly deficit of \$21,000, which will have to be covered by our checking account. Clearly we must

continue to explore ways to obtain revenue while reducing operational costs including Sierra 2 Center staff reductions.

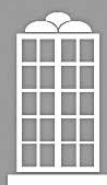
On the positive side, despite the overall closure of Sierra 2, we managed to retain almost all of our tenants under restructured leases. But we did lose one of the longest tenured tenants – the Italian Cultural Society.

The Development Committee has diligently worked to produce a creative October event that we hope will appeal to everyone. Kathy Les' article on Page 1 covers all the details about the Porch Picnics fundraiser. Because this will be SCNA's only event this year, please join us and help make it a success.

December looms large because

it's when our annual membership meeting is held to elect directors for the SCNA board. Our Ad Hoc Nominating Committee, chaired by Bruce Pierini, has been hard at work. It is tasked with presenting a slate of candidates to the board in November. In addition to its efforts, our bylaws also permit nominations to occur from the floor at the membership meeting.

*Viewpoint* is the voice of SCNA. My hope is that reading it will generate interest among our members and a willingness to volunteer their valuable time in service to our community. I also hope to encourage residents to join or rejoin SCNA. The upcoming Porch Picnics fundraiser is the perfect opportunity to do so.



**SIERRA 2 CENTER**  
**SIERRA CURTIS**  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## Sierra 2 Center remains closed, except for essential activities

By Terri Shettle

Because of the continuing health orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sierra 2 Center remained closed in August with a few exceptions for tenant businesses.

SCNA's annual events – Music in the Park concerts, Curtis Fest Artisan Fair, Wine Tasting & Silent Auction, and Holiday Gifts & Goods – were canceled for 2020.

When Sacramento and California appeared to have flattened the curve of the coronavirus spread, Sierra 2 staff began planning for modified reopening with limited and controlled activities. Unfortunately, coronavirus case spikes have kept the center closed to all non-essential activities.

A few tenants continue their business operations because they were deemed essential. A 39-year tenant, Italian Cultural Society, was forced to vacate its space in Room 13 to consolidate operations.

From May to July, SCNA benefited from Payroll Protection Program funding to keep essential facility staff working to provide necessary upkeep and maintenance to the building and grounds. This

funding also kept some staff working remotely to provide customer service, create and manage virtual classes and meetings, and maintain the website and social media communications.

Staff also have continued to take care of administrative tasks related to SCNA membership, *Viewpoint*, donations, general accounting activities and support of the board.

With no reopening plans on the horizon, SCNA faces the difficult task so many businesses are facing – financial survival. The operating plan is built on a tight first-quarter budget, assuming little to no normal operating income. Memberships, virtual classes, tenant rent and generous donations currently generate income. Staff are working to find additional grants.

The only expenditures being made are those necessary to keep the organization and the property intact. Unfortunately, the operating plan required a permanent reduction of staff along with additional layoffs until a reopening appears likely.

While Sierra 2 staff navigates the financial impacts of the social and physical distancing guidelines, we are also busy reimagining how to reopen our doors, our hearts and our minds.

## Notice of intent to amend bylaws

SCNA board members have been discussing some bylaw changes that address its current situation relating to the conduct of electronic meetings and providing authority for the Executive Committee to act on matters that require responses/action prior to regular board meetings.

The Executive Committee has developed and approved two amendments that are being submitted to all board members in accordance with Article XI: Amendment of the Bylaws, Section 2. Power of Directors of the Revised September 4, 2018 Bylaws.

The Executive Committee intends to present these proposed amendments for board approval at our next regularly scheduled board meeting on Sept. 2, and is providing this notice in compliance with the above Article and Section. Section 2 requires 10 days written or published notice to all members that shall include copies of the proposed amendments. [The notice was published on the sierra2.org website and in an email circulated on Aug. 25.]

It also requires a two-thirds vote by the attending board members. Please note that since these amendments do not impact on SCNA membership or voting rights, a vote of the entire membership is not required.

– SCNA President Bill Hoover

## Notes from Aug. 5 SCNA board meeting

# Budget assumes Sierra 2 closure for months

With the increase in local COVID-19 cases, it's possible that Sierra 2 will be closed with minimal allowed activity for several months. The Finance Committee recommended a bare-bones budget of \$17,000 per month in revenues and \$38,000 in monthly expenditures for a monthly cash deficit of \$21,000. SCNA could operate at the budgeted deficit for about seven months. The committee will continue searching for cost savings and re-evaluate the budget after three months. The budget was unanimously approved.

New leases have been extended to remaining tenants, giving them rights to use their rooms within the County Health Department constraints, Finance Committee Chair **John Bailey** reported.

### Treasurer's report

Treasurer **John Bailey** said there was an accounting error in the past balance sheet, which caused the available fund balance at the fiscal year's start to be overstated by \$120,000. SCNA began the fiscal year with a \$100,000 deficit, not a \$20,000 surplus.

The year-to-date profit-and-loss statement will show a loss of \$61,000 due to COVID-19. Because of the subsequent reduction in Sierra 2 activities, three people were laid off; two more will be furloughed until the end of September.

SCNA has about \$100,000 in its checking account and \$387,000 in its portfolio. We may receive more funds if and when Congress decides on a new stimulus bill. SCNA was approved for more than \$40,000 from a city grant for arts and culture and another \$4,000 reimbursement grant from the city. With a now forgivable \$13,000 grant, \$52,000 received from Big Day of Giving and \$80,300 from the Payroll Protection Program, SCNA has received more than \$190,000 in grants and contributions since March.

A recent Hop Gardens fundraiser for SCNA/Sierra 2 resulted in an \$850 donation.

### Executive director

"Lifeline," a medical group doing screening for diseases, has used the parking lot at Sierra 2. The Blood Bank Donation truck has also parked there

with its donation event completely booked. Executive Director **Terri Shettle** checked with the city to see if blood donations fall under "essential services." They do and Sierra 2 provides the space as a community service.

### Facilities

**Gerre Buehler** reported there were options for rentals if the pandemic goes on for two years or more. Most tenants are current on payment or up-to-date on a scheduled payment plan. Italian Cultural Society has left and still owes two months' rent. There is sometimes a homeless problem on the theater steps.

### Neighborhood Concerns

**John Mathews, Andrea Rosen** and **John Bailey** raised concerns about the new traffic lights on Sutterville Road just south of Curtis Park. They're worried that drivers, used to accelerated speeds, will not slow down or even stop and this could cause serious accidents.

### Racial Justice

Ad hoc committee chair **Kathy Les** described the results of several weeks of engaged and robust discussions with committee members, including several neighborhood activists. She presented an overview of initial projects they hope to undertake, including a resource list on the SCNA website, and two upcoming webinars on Sept. 24 and Oct. 1. [See related story on Page 9.]

### Attendance

In attendance at the Aug. 5 meeting via Zoom were Executive Director **Terri Shettle** and board members **John Bailey, Bill French, John Mathews, Nury Enciso, Kathy Les, Bruce Pierini, Mike McKeever, Dan Pskowski, Andrea Rosen, Gerre Buehler, Susan French, Dan Murphy, Erik Fay, Kimberley Bond, Martin Pierucci** and **Susan French**. Guest **Shannon Motley** observed the meeting.

— Submitted by **Bruce Pierini**, board secretary

## 2020 board members

Bill Hoover, President  
Kathy Les, Vice President  
Bruce Pierini, Secretary  
John Bailey, Treasurer  
Andrea Rosen, Exec. Committee At-Large  
Kimberly Bond  
Gerre Buehler  
Nury Enciso  
Erik Fay  
Bill French  
Susan French  
John Mathews  
Mike McKeever  
Dan Murphy  
Bruce Pierini  
Martin Pierucci  
Dan Pskowski

Readers can reach Bill Hoover at [president@sierra2.org](mailto:president@sierra2.org). General neighborhood requests/issues/concerns can be communicated to [ncc@sierra2.org](mailto:ncc@sierra2.org). Other general inquiries can be directed to [info@sierra2.org](mailto:info@sierra2.org) where it will be forwarded to the appropriate person. And, Sierra 2 Executive Director Terri Shettle can be reached at [terri@sierra2.org](mailto:terri@sierra2.org).

## SCNA seeks new board members

The SCNA board has approved the Nominations Committee's recruitment of potential new board members for the December 2020 election. These characteristics will help round out the board's perspectives, strengths and neighborhood representation.

Prime characteristics are leadership; racial, ethnic, geographic and age diversity; fundraising; creativity; willingness to volunteer time and follow through while working collaboratively; enthusiasm; and non-profit experience.

Interested neighbors should contact Bruce Pierini, chair of the Nominations Committee, at [NCC@sierra2.org](mailto:NCC@sierra2.org) with the subject line "Nominations."

## Next meeting

The next regular meeting of the SCNA board will be a Zoom meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Sept. 2. If you're interested in attending, please contact [president@sierra2.org](mailto:president@sierra2.org).

## City's appeal of courts' gas-station rulings is final

By Dennis Cusick

The holdings of two courts that developer Paul Petrovich was unfairly treated in 2015 when City Council denied permission for a 16-pump gas station adjacent to Safeway in Crocker Village are now final.

On Aug. 12, the California Supreme Court rejected a request by the California League of Cities and California State Association of Counties to depublish the decision of the Third District Court of Appeal so

that it couldn't be used as precedent in future cases. On its own motion, the high court also declined to review the lower-court decisions.

In April, the appeals court had affirmed the 2018 decision of Sacramento Superior Court Judge Michael Kenny that Councilmember Jay Schenirer demonstrated "an unacceptable probability of actual bias" and failed to act in an open-minded manner before the Council voted 7-2 in 2015 to deny Petrovich a conditional use permit for the gas station.

Judge Kenny's decision didn't comment on the merits of whether the permit should have been granted. Instead, the judge pointed to text messages between Schenirer and Eric Johnson, who was then SCNA president, as evidence that Schenirer had made up his mind about the project before the Council hearing.

The judge ordered City Council to hold a new vote on the project within 60 days. Instead, the Council voted six days later to appeal. That appeal is now over. So, now it's back to City Council for a new vote.



# The Side Door creates live concert streaming series

By Mindy Giles

The dire warning “#SaveOurStages – Time is running out” came from NIVA, the nonprofit National Independent Venue Association.

According to a July survey of 2,400 independent live music venues and promoters, 90% will close permanently in a few months without federal funding.

Like every live music venue, The Side Door, the intimate, 130-seat listening room established two years ago in Curtis Park, had to make a major pivot. Part of what is allowing The Side Door to remain open is a new live streaming concert series featuring some of Sacramento’s best Americana, folk, blues, country and jazz artists. Richard March, Ross Hammond, Jessica Malone, Gabe Nelson, Sea of Bees, Dog Party and The Blanchards have all performed this summer.

**Scheduled in September are The Sidedooros (John Green’s country band) on Sept. 19, and jazz singer Shelly Burns Sept. 26.**

Tickets are \$10. Once you pass the paywall, you’re in. If you miss any of the one-hour concerts, they are all archived so mid-afternoon or late-night viewing is at your fingertips at <https://www.thesidedoor.net/livestreams>.

Eric Bianchi, a longtime Curtis Park resident and owner of Bianchi Sound, designed, installed and ran sound at The Side Door. Bianchi is now working with owner (and Fifth String Music School master) John Green, buying gear and ramping up production values.

“It’s so odd,” Bianchi says. “In November, I started buying more cameras so that I could learn streaming for my business ... and then COVID happened. I had no idea that it would become the way musicians are having to present themselves.”

There is no live audience for these entertainers



Photo/Mindy Giles

Longtime Curtis Park resident Eric Bianchi is working with The Side Door owner John Green to produce concerts so that musicians can present themselves via his streaming equipment.

to play off – just you, a loyal music lover – with your favorite beverage in the comfort of your home. But, “It’s such a relief to play and sing out again,” said Lorieanne Blanchard during The Blanchards duo performance Aug. 15. Because there are no gigs or touring this year, live streaming is one way musicians survive.

Bianchi says he “shoots with three to four cameras through a switcher set-up that goes to a MacBook that streams directly onto thesidedoor.net site on Wix. We record all of the individual cameras and backup audio to ProTools on a second Mac in case we want to re-edit audio or video later.”

August has been particularly booked up. Some of the bands that would normally play live on Labor Day weekend at the 30th Annual Chalk It Up! Festival in midtown Sacramento have been recording segments that will be part of the three-day live streaming festival – <https://chalkitup.org/>.

NIVA was founded in April to help venues deal with the pandemic. The NIVA website is <https://www.saveourstages.com/>.

The local nonprofit version of NIVA is California Capitol Venue Coalition, representing area venues and promoters – <https://www.facebook.com/capitolvenuecoalition/>.

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# Lines: Family farms came first

Continued from Page 1

home in a new subdivision near the base, but was turned away.

In “When We Were Colored,” Ginger Rutland’s play based on her mother’s 1964 memoir, Ginger’s character explains what the family discovered upon arrival in Sacramento: “While California may have been integrated technically, by custom and practice, neighborhoods were strictly segregated. ... Dad had to find a house for us, no easy task for ‘Negroes’ of that era when racial discrimination in housing was everywhere and it was legal.”

In the play, Bill Rutland tells of a white co-worker who bought a new three-bedroom house near McClellan with a \$250 down payment. Why, his wife Eva asked, didn’t they get such a house?

“Cuz they won’t sell to Coloreds in that neighborhood. I know. I tried. ... Only reason I got this house was that one day I went out on my own, saw some Orientals playing across the street from this house that had a for-sale sign on it. Figured if they’d sell to Orientals, they’d sell to Colored. And they did. But the Colored agent couldn’t even broker the deal. Had to get a white agent to arrange the sale even in this mixed neighborhood.”

“This mixed neighborhood” was Highland Park, the part of Curtis Park north of Second Avenue that the federal government had ranked as “declining” more than a decade earlier.

Eva Rutland’s response: “Doesn’t seem much different from Georgia, does it?”

**In the beginning**

Today’s Curtis Park can be traced to two owners – a Mexican land grant to John Sutter in 1840, roughly north of Castro Way, and U.S. government control of land south of Castro Way that it had seized from the Mexican government. All of it had been taken from the Nisenan people, whose ancestors had lived in the Sacramento area for thousands of years.

The shape of the neighborhood has been described as a “rough trapezoid,” the result of early wagon and stage roads to Stockton (Franklin Boulevard) on the east, Freeport Boulevard on the west, Sutterville Road on the south, and the city limit (now Broadway) on the north. Throughout the 19th century, most of the land remained divided into several family farms.

The first neighborhoods south of the city were Highland Park, where the Rutlands would later settle, and Oak Park. Both were subdivided in 1887 with the promise of streetcar service from downtown.

Curtis Park began to take shape at the start of the 20th century, with the 28th Street Tract in 1904, Curtis Oaks in

1907 and West Curtis Oaks in 1910. In 1911, with what was called the Oak Park annexation, Sacramento more than tripled its land mass and increased its population from 44,000 to more than 60,000 by annexing the land to its south and east, encompassing Land Park, Curtis Park, Oak Park and East Sacramento.

In the early decades of the 20th century, California was about 95% white and Hispanic, less than 4% Asian and about 1% Black. In Sacramento, the Black population totaled only 675 persons as late as 1920.

**Segregation by covenant**

During World War I, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a zoning ordinance intended to promote racial segregation in Louisville, Ky., was unconstitutional because it denied a white man his right to sell his property to a Black man.

The real estate industry, seeking to preserve housing segregation, got around the Supreme Court’s ban on segregationist ordinances by promoting “restrictive covenants,” private agreements in property deeds to prevent subsequent sales to non-white buyers. For several decades, the National Association of Real Estate Boards required real estate agents to honor restrictive covenants and provided templates for local real estate boards to draft restrictive covenants to ensure neighborhoods would be segregated.

Developer J.C. Carly, one of the founders of the Sacramento real estate board, introduced restrictive covenants into his South Curtis Oaks subdivision, starting in 1920, to prevent home purchases by non-white buyers. “Restrictions” were a common selling point in real estate ads in 1920s newspapers, one of which promised, “Strict race restrictions guard you against unpleasant neighbors.” Deeds for properties in the Heilbron Oaks subdivision in 1923 required that “no NEGRO, JAPANESE or CHINESE, or any person of AFRICAN or MONGOLIAN descent shall own or occupy any part of said premises.” Deeds in South Curtis Oaks had similar language.

Racially exclusive restrictive covenants were legal, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1926, because they were private agreements. Nothing in the Constitution, the court said, “prohibited private individuals from entering into contracts respecting the control and disposition of their own property.”

Even where restrictive covenants were not in effect, local prejudice prevented

racial integration of the suburbs. In 1921, Tome Takatsuki, president of the Japanese Growers’ Market, purchased a house at 2632 21st St., which “aroused indignation in the neighborhood” of Highland Park, according to *The Sacramento Bee*. The local district attorney, in concert with the California Japanese Exclusion League, threatened to sue to challenge the purchase, prompting Takatsuki to sell the home back to the real estate broker who had sold it to him just a few weeks earlier.

**Segregation by FHA**

The federal government became directly involved in enforcing racial segregation in the 1930s, after the Roosevelt administration created programs to promote homeownership: Home Owners’ Loan Corp. (HOLC), which refinanced existing mortgages to prevent foreclosures; and Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which insured bank mortgages. “Because the FHA’s appraisal standards included a whites-only requirement, racial segregation now became an official requirement of the federal mortgage insurance program,” author Richard Rothstein notes in his 2017 best-seller, *The Color of Law*.

To assess lending risk, HOLC surveyed 239 cities throughout the country and developed “residential security maps,” grading neighborhoods from A to D and color-coded green, blue, yellow or red. “Grade A” neighborhoods, marked in green on maps, tended to be relatively new, single-family and all white. “Grade B” neighborhoods, marked in blue, were also all-white. They were considered “still desirable,” though the dwellings may be somewhat older and may include two-family homes. “Grade C” neighborhoods, marked in yellow, were considered “declining.” The bottom classification, “Grade D,” marked in red, was primarily inner-city neighborhoods with multi-family dwellings and large minority populations. The federal government would not insure home loans in the red areas, hence the origin of the term “redlining.”

In 1937 and 1938, HOLC surveyed the Sacramento area. Three tracts in East Sacramento and Land Park received the highest grade, A+. All three tracts had deed restrictions, residents’ occupations were “professional and business executive type,” and no residents were in the categories “Foreign-born families,” “Negro” or “Relief families.”

Most of what is now Curtis Park – Curtis Oaks, West Curtis Oaks, South Curtis Oaks and Heilbron Oaks – received a B grade or “medial blue.” The survey noted that deed restrictions “are operative except in early development.” Like the “green” neighborhoods, these

Neighborhood	White %
1) River Park	87.7
2) East Sacramento	75.8
3) Land Park	75.5
4) Curtis Park	70.0
5) Campus Commons	68.9
6) Tahoe Park	65.3
7) Midtown/Winn Park	64.6
8) College-Glen	64.5
9) North Highlands	49.9
10) Downtown	49.8
11) Village 9	48.8
12) Willowcreek	48.7
13) South Land Park	47.8
14) Natomas Crossing	47.6
15) Village 7	43.6
16) North Oak Park	43.5
17) East Del Paso Heights	40.1
18) Westlake	38.0
19) Village 11	36.8
20) Village 2	36.7
21) Village 12	36.6
22) Greenhaven	36.5
23) Pocket	35.3
24) Colonial Village	34.6
25) Robla	33.1
26) Natomas Park	30.5
27) North City Farms	29.5
28) Upper Land Park	29.4
29) Gateway West	28.6
30) South Hagginwood	27.7
31) Old North Sacramento	27.5
32) Natomas Creek	24.9
33) Glenwood Meadows	24.8
34) South Natomas	24.2
35) Creekside	24.1
36) Northgate	22.7
37) Hagginwood	21.8
38) Fruitridge Manor	21.4
39) Noralto	19.8
40) Golf Course Terrace	19.5
41) Central Oak Park	18.3
42) Parkway	15.2
43) Del Paso Heights	14.1
44) Gardenland	14.1
45) Valley Hi/North Laguna	13.9
46) South Oak Park	13.4
47) Southeast Village	12.3
48) Meadowview	10.8
49) Avondale	10.3
50) Woodbine	9.9
SOURCE: <a href="https://statisticalatlas.com/place/California/Sacramento/Race-and-Ethnicity">https://statisticalatlas.com/place/California/Sacramento/Race-and-Ethnicity</a>	

somewhat older subdivisions had no “Foreign-born,” “Negro” or “Relief” families. Favorable influences included a “Homogeneous population of upper middle-class social and income levels.”

In contrast, the areas of Curtis Park adjacent to the Western Pacific Railroad yard, along 24th Street and Portola Way, and the area between the railroad tracks and 21st Street received a C grade, yellow on the map. Most of Highland Park, where the Rutlands would settle more than a decade later, was grouped with the part of Oak Park immediately to its

Please see Lines, Page 7



# Lines: 'Forever' didn't last long

*Continued from Page 7*

east. The area received a “low yellow” grade, “owing to age and obsolescence.” Other “detrimental influences” included “Danger of subversive racial infiltration and encroachment of business.”

The areas of Sacramento considered least desirable, indicated in red, were largely in the urban core – what was then known as “the West End,” the oldest part of the city west of the state Capitol, as well as the current Alkali Flat and Southside Park neighborhoods.

During World War II, with the rise of anti-Japanese hysteria in California and increases in numbers of Mexican farm workers and Black workers in the defense industry, petition drives sought to protect the all-white character of some city neighborhoods, including Land Park and Curtis Park. Where deed restrictions were about to expire, efforts were made to renew them. Where deed restrictions had never existed, such as in Curtis Oaks and West Curtis Oaks, new restrictions were added to ensure that “such property shall be restricted to persons of the Caucasian Race forever.”

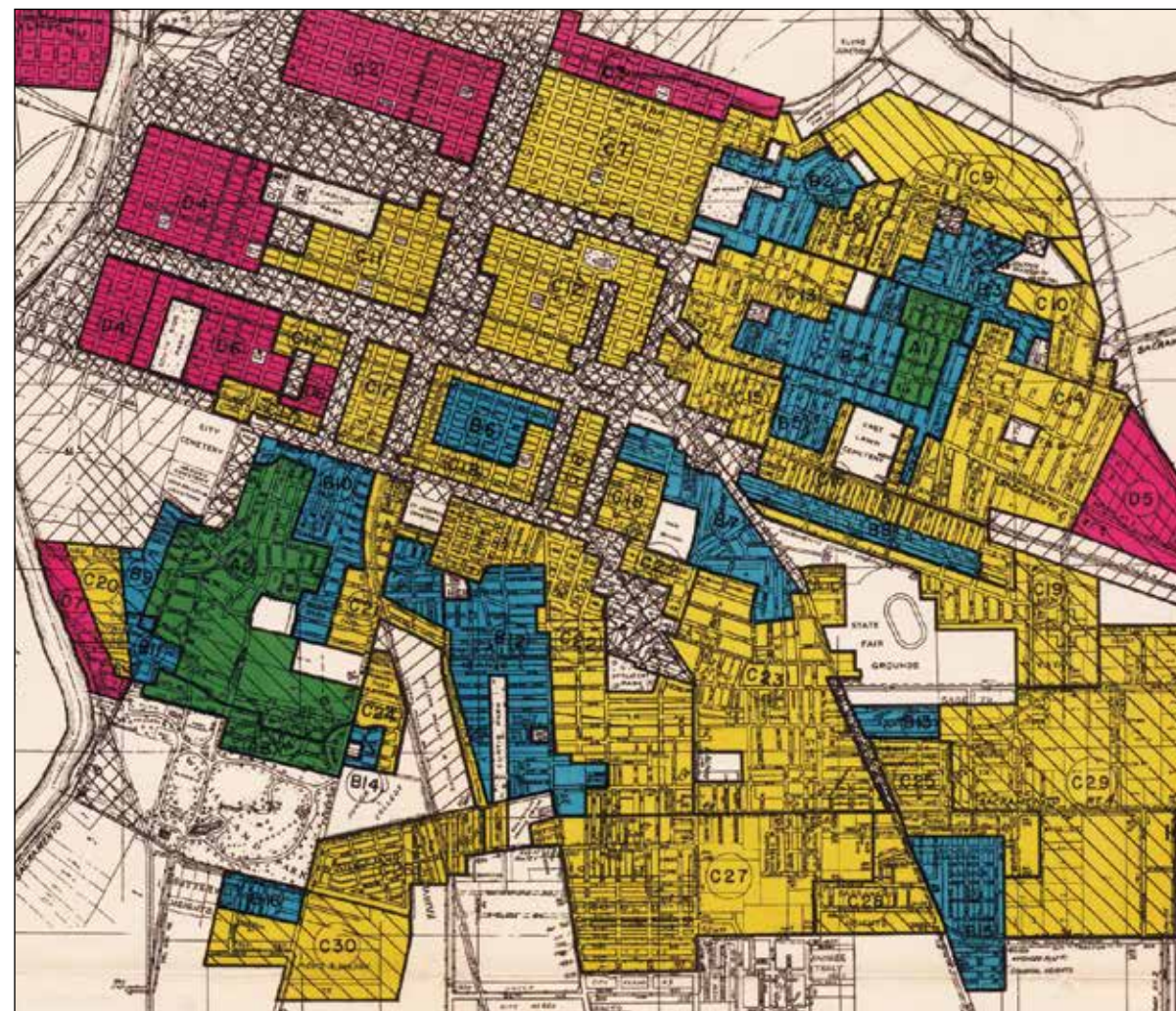
## Post-war changes

“Forever,” as it turned out, didn't last long. The U.S. Supreme Court, having a different ideological makeup from two decades earlier, ruled in 1948 that racial restrictions were unenforceable. “The Constitution confers upon no individual the right to demand action by the State which results in the denial of equal protection of the laws to other individuals,” the court wrote.

Still, the real estate industry resisted integration. In 1950, almost 70% of the city's minority population was concentrated in the West End – 87% of Hispanics, 75% of Asians, and 60% of Blacks. New suburbs were built to the north, east and south of Sacramento, available to qualified white buyers with \$250 down payments. Minorities need not apply.

Enter Bill Rutland and his fellow Black executives at McClellan, affluent enough to afford the new suburbs but denied entry based on race alone. One of Rutland's colleagues at McClellan, Oliver Ming, ran into the same obstacles to Black homeownership in 1953 that the Rutlands had experienced the previous year. Ming applied to buy homes in new developments near McClellan, in Rancho Cordova and in Parkway Estates. All of his applications were rejected.

But unlike the Rutlands, who had



The federal government's 1938 assessment of mortgage lending risk rated Sacramento neighborhoods green, blue, yellow or red, the origin of the term “redlining.” Most of Curtis Park was blue, the second-best rating.

settled for an older home on 27th Street in the racially integrated Highland Park neighborhood, Ming sued the local real estate board, homebuilders, several real estate companies and the agents who had rejected his applications.

After four years of litigation, Ming won a declaratory judgment. The trial judge's decision described the ways local real estate firms had discriminated against Blacks – “by avoiding talking to Negro inquirers; if that failed, by seeking to disqualify such inquirer on financial grounds; if that also failed, by denying authority to accept a deposit and referring the inquirer to the main office; or if no other excuse was handy, by explaining that the owner had forbidden his sales agent to sell to Negroes.” However, the judge awarded damages of just \$1.

Whites statewide remained stubbornly committed to racial segregation. Although the California Legislature in 1963 passed the Rumford Fair Housing Act, prohibiting landlords from rejecting applicants because of ethnicity, religion, sex, marital status, physical handicap or familial status, 65% of California voters the following year approved Proposition 14, an initiative sponsored by the California Real Estate Association to overturn the housing law and make housing discrimination legal again. Gov. Edmund G. Brown, who opposed the ballot measure, called it “a provision for discrimination of which not even Mississippi or Alabama can boast.” The California Supreme Court

ruled two years later that the initiative was unconstitutional. But only with the congressional passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 did racial discrimination in housing become illegal nationally.

## Neighborhood evolves

The previously all-white neighborhoods gradually changed. As late as 1970, East Sacramento remained 97% white, while Curtis Park and Land Park combined were 92% white.

By the mid-1980s, Ginger Rutland and husband Don Fields were able to purchase a home on Highland Avenue without resistance. They looked first at houses in McKinley Park, but “we didn't like the vibe,” Ginger says. “It was a little too white. Curtis Park was a little more inviting in terms of the ethnic makeup.” About eight years later, wanting a larger house, they moved to Donner Way.

Sitting on her front porch, Ginger Rutland points to the nearby homes now occupied by Blacks and interracial couples.

“Actually, there are a lot of Black people dotted throughout Curtis Park,” she says. “It's not the white enclave that it was.”

Indeed, the same database that ranks Curtis Park as the city's fourth-whitest neighborhood at 70% white, also shows that its population is now 14.8% Hispanic, 8.5% Asian and 4% Black.

And yet the legacy of racist housing policy affects today's homeownership numbers. Those who were denied the opportunity to purchase homes on the

same basis as whites in previous eras were unable to accumulate comparable home equity to pass on to future generations. The Census Bureau calculates that home equity represents about one-third of the average household's net worth, which for whites averages about \$140,000 while for Blacks the figure is less than \$13,000.

Even today, resistance to integrated housing remains a campaign issue with which President Trump attempts to appeal to white suburban voters. Over the summer, the Trump administration announced the rescission of an Obama administration rule promoting the 1968 Fair Housing Act's goal of eliminating racial discrimination in housing. The president told supporters Democrats want to “eliminate single-family zoning, bringing who knows into your suburbs, so your communities will be unsafe and your housing values will go down.”

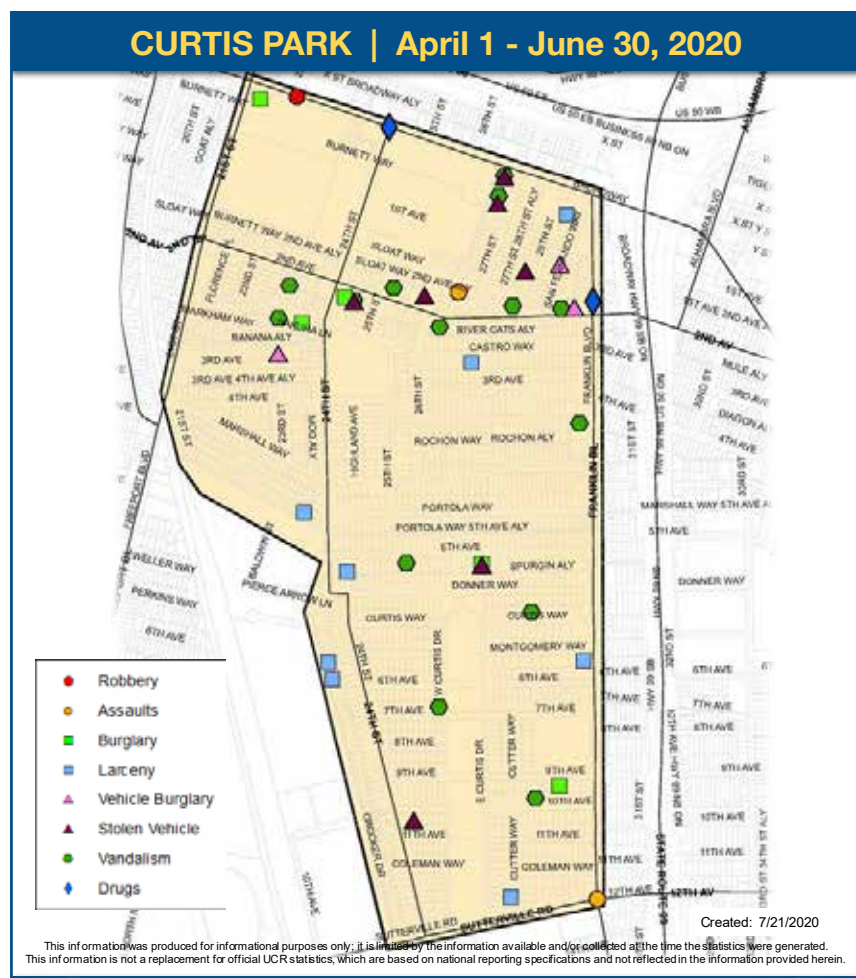
But here we are again. To paraphrase Eva Rutland: Doesn't sound much different from where we've been, does it?

Today, Ginger Rutland seeks ways to help other members of minority groups become homebuyers, whether in Curtis Park or elsewhere, so they too can acquire the home equity that historically has led to family wealth.

“I want to know what we as a community can do to repair those damages that have been done,” she says.

*William Burg, Mat Cusick, Dan Murphy, Jim Rose and Ginger Rutland provided research assistance.*





## Crime down in second quarter

By Erik Fay

Curtis Park residents reported 44 crimes to the police in April, May, and June, a 12% drop from the first three months of the year.

Robberies decreased from 2 to 1, assaults from 4 to 2, thefts from 13 to 8, vehicle burglaries from 15 to 3, and drug cases from 7 to 2.

Stolen vehicles increased from 2 to 7, and vandalism increased from 2 to 16.

Burglary remained the same at 5. Porch thefts and vehicle burglaries

have long been the most common crimes in Curtis Park. These numbers have greatly reduced from 2018 and 2019.

The majority of reported crimes in the second quarter were from Second Avenue to Broadway, and 27th Street to Franklin Boulevard.

Police encourage residents to report all crimes. Call 911 if you witness a crime in progress. Call the nonemergency number, 916 808-5471, to report other criminal activity, including illegal fireworks.

## Trees in Curtis Park

# Be aware of low branches on neighborhood walks

By Dan Pskowski

While the COVID-19 pandemic has kept many at home, it has encouraged more daily walks and visits to the park. The neighborhood's trees make it possible to take a stroll even when the mercury rises above 95 degrees. Getting outdoors helps improve physical and mental health.

Homeowners should be aware of the vegetation in front of their home and if it impairs pedestrians walking down your block. The city code requires that trees provide an 8-foot clearance above any sidewalk and a 14-foot clearance above any street or alley.

On my walks around the neighborhood, many of the low branches I encounter over the sidewalk are from young trees that have been in the ground less than 10 years.

Is the tree located in the park strip between the curb and sidewalk? Then the city should be contacted to take care of the situation or issue a permit. On some streets without a park strip, the tree adjacent to the sidewalk may be within the street right-of-way and therefore maintained by the city.

Email 311@cityofsacramento.org to report low limbs or find out if you have a city-maintained tree.

When a limb or downed tree blocks the street or sidewalk, call 311 for an immediate response to abate the hazard, regardless of whether it's a city or private tree.

Low branches from the trees on your property can be addressed with hand loppers or a pole pruner.

Not sure how to prune? The International Society of Arboriculture site, treesaregood.org, has a "Tree Owner's Manual" that can be downloaded. You can also visit the Sacramento Tree Foundation's site, sactree.com, and click on tree care to access "Growing Beautiful, Safe and Healthy Trees."

Senior citizens or those with disabilities can contact me for assistance at 916 451-1033.

Shrubs or plant material can slightly encroach over the sidewalk, but there must be at least a 3-foot-wide clearance for the path of travel.

Keeping the public sidewalk free of low branches, encroaching shrubs and plants makes for an enjoyable stroll in the neighborhood.

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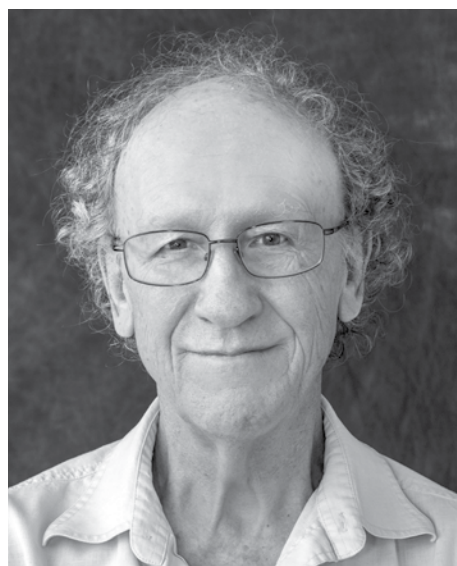




Dennis Cusick



Ginger Rutland



Dan Murphy

Photos/Jean Cusick



Alison Ledgerwood

Photo/UC Davis

## SCNA making plans for action on Black Lives Matter support

By Bruce Pierini

SCNA's Ad Hoc Committee for Racial Justice has worked to address many of the grievances people of color have expressed in the wake of the May killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

The committee has three general categories to approach its work:

**Personal Connections.** The committee will encourage the board to form relationships with people of color to break down collaborative barriers. The board has adopted language in its recruitment for potential new members encouraging nominations of Curtis Park residents with racial and ethnic diversity.

**Advocacy.** The committee seeks to bring a number of initiatives to the SCNA board in support of communities of color in Sacramento.

**Self-Work.** SCNA encourages everyone in Curtis Park to do the introspection that real understanding across racial lines requires. Self-work includes acknowledgements of historic discrimination in housing, racist attitudes and feelings of exclusion in a white-dominated society.

### Zoom webinars

The committee will sponsor two public Zoom webinars:

**"Facing the Long History of Racial Exclusion in Curtis Park,"** is set for Sept. 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Viewpoint Editor Dennis Cusick will moderate a discussion with panelists Dan Murphy, an SCNA board member and Curtis Park historian; and Ginger Rutland, a retired *Sacramento Bee* editorial writer and author of the play "When We Were Colored," based on her mother's memoir.

**"Discovering and Dealing With Unconscious Bias,"** will take place Oct. 1, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dr. Alison Ledgerwood of UC Davis will provide practical and helpful means to gain insights into unconscious biases we carry around as filters to our experience.

Everyone is invited with no charge to attend.

Part of each webinar will be interactive with questions taken from

the audience. Register for the webinars at [sierra2.org/event/webinar](https://sierra2.org/event/webinar). Once registered, you will receive an email with a link to join the Zoom webinar.

If you're new to Zoom, there is an easy YouTube lesson at [support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-video-tutorials](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-video-tutorials).

To learn more about the struggles people of color live with daily, the committee has posted links and references to resources – books, films, videos, podcasts, internet sites – on the SCNA website at [sierra2.org/racial-justice/](https://sierra2.org/racial-justice/).

If you'd like to attend the committee's Zoom meetings from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays, email Kathy Les at [NCC@sierra2.org](mailto:NCC@sierra2.org). Note "Committee for Racial Justice" in the subject line.

## Progress still slow on X Street shelter

By Andrea Rosen

The city continues to work, although at a slow pace, on its goal of constructing and operating an emergency shelter on X Street near Alhambra Boulevard to address the needs of those currently unhoused in our community, especially in its immediate vicinity.

The Federal Highway Administration claims the parcel is part of the federal highway system and thus requires its approval. Caltrans disagrees and has pushed back. Even though no federal response has been received yet, Caltrans is working on getting a lease signed with the city. Funds for construction have been approved by the City Council. The city hopes construction can parallel preparation for operation.

Sacramento Housing and

Redevelopment Agency will oversee operations by a private entity, which was expected to be selected by September. SHRA has taken responsibility for keeping the surrounding grounds clean.

Operators are required to incorporate services by local community-based organizations as much as possible. For example, Downtown Streets provides cleanup services, often hiring newly sheltered individuals. The city offers wrap-around services that go beyond housing. The Urban League provides workforce development. Drug and alcohol rehabilitation services will be available on site. The American Legion High School culinary program may prepare food for the residents.

The goal is to have a community-based shelter operation rather than just a city service. Volunteers are expected



This Sprung shelter, a 60-by-100-foot unit, was one of the designs proposed for the X Street shelter.

Photo/Office of Councilmember Jay Schenirer

to pitch in, including people from Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, WellSpace and Sutter Health.

While 100 beds will be available, unhoused individuals will only be accepted by referral, with no walk-ins allowed.

"As Sacramentans, we have a responsibility to support our neighbors, particularly those who have fallen on tough times," says Councilmember

Jay Schenirer. "We must build an infrastructure in our city that moves individuals and their families from homeless to housed, from unemployed to working, from desperation to success.

"The W/X Shelter is one piece of a larger support network the city is building to fulfill our responsibilities and I look forward to its important opening. I am thankful for the backing it has received from our neighborhood."



## In the District

## More than 3 years to get new crosswalk? Really?

**F**inally! You may have noticed a new light signal under construction in front of the Children's Home on Sutterville Road. It took more than three years.

Don't get me wrong, I am not complaining. I'm happy to have the crosswalk returning along with a signal. It's a critical matter of safety for the young people and others at the Children's Home. I have seen far too many kids running across Sutterville Road as cars come barreling down the hill at 40 to 50 miles an hour.

And I am not complaining about city staff, who have done a good job moving the process forward over the past three years and five months and are bringing it to completion.

It's the system that can be frustrating. The fact that we can remove a crosswalk and it takes more than three years to replace a safety feature is just not right and must be fixed.

I thought the saga of the signal would be a good example of how difficult it can be to get something done in the city. And again, I am not arguing with the decisions that were made – when traffic surpasses a certain point, crosswalks amplify the danger. They create a false sense of safety. Taking out the original crosswalk was the right thing to do.

**JAY  
SCHENIRER**

**City  
Council  
Member  
District 5**



The new signal cost nearly \$200,000 – so we had to cobble together the funds. The city has a large traffic safety problem that we are attacking through our Vision Zero initiative, so balancing the priorities of where and when to spend limited funds is always challenging.

But three and one-half years? Really? Here's the chronology:

March 2017 – Crosswalk markings are removed.

October 2017 – Capital Improvement Project is established.

March 2018 – Individual Project Agreement (IPA) with Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) is executed for Community Development Block Grant funds to begin the design phase.

October 2018 – California Environmental Quality Act clearance is obtained.

December 2018 – IPA for construction phase is executed with SHRA.



The new light signal in front of the Sacramento Children's Home on Sutterville Road is intended to halt traffic so children can safely cross the road to get to the park.

Photo/  
Will Carlton

May 2019 – Project report approved.  
December 2019 – Construction contract is awarded.

January 2020 – Signal equipment is approved and ordered.

June 21, 2020 – First day of construction.

Aug. 25, 2020 – Signal startup, construction complete.

So here is my point. It is not unusual for me to get an email or text “demanding” that something be done about this or that. It may be about a crosswalk, a broken sprinkler in the park, a homeless encampment. I have two folks in my office who do almost nothing but

work on constituent concerns. Generally, we take the concern and relay it to the appropriate city staff and ask that it be put on the to-do list.

Under our system of governance, I have no authority to tell city staff what to do without a majority vote by the City Council. I can't control the timing or the work itself. It's a system that needs improvement. The buck needs to stop somewhere and someone needs to be held accountable. I'm happy for it to be me as long as I have the tools and resources to be successful.

For now, I'm happy to have a new crosswalk and signal.

## Second Avenue among 24 city streets with speed limits reduced

*City of Sacramento*

**C**ity Council has approved reduced speed limits on Second Avenue and 23 other street segments to make them safer for those who use or live near the roads.

Speed limits will be reduced by 5 mph based on studies of how fast people drive on the streets.

The affected segment of Second Avenue is from 21st Street to Stockton

Boulevard. Other nearby streets affected are 33rd Street from Fifth to 12th Avenues in Oak Park; Seventh Street from F to T streets Downtown; and Capitol Avenue from 15th Street to Alhambra Boulevard in Midtown. On each of these streets the new speed limit will be 25 mph.

“Data shows that high-speed collisions are more likely to cause fatalities or serious injuries,” said senior traffic engineer Megan Carter,

“and encouraging drivers to go slower improves safety for everyone living on these streets.”

State law requires cities to study speed limits every five to 10 years to ensure vehicle speeds are enforceable and safe for their surroundings.

Public Works employees conduct speed surveys on a rotating basis every seven years, measuring the average speed of cars along each segment. Using average speeds and other factors such as

pedestrian and bike activity, and nearby schools and parks, they recommend the appropriate speed limit to be posted, Carter said.

Franklin Boulevard was among 46 streets surveyed with no changes recommended. The speed limit will remain 30 mph from Broadway to Sutterville Road and 35 mph from Sutterville Road to Fruitridge Road.

The changes become effective as soon as new signs are installed.

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# COMMUNITY CORNER



Bob Miller

Photo/Gail Miller

## Bob Miller, 78, attorney, lived on Highland Avenue

**B**ob Miller, a longtime resident of Highland Avenue, passed away at home Aug. 3 from complications of Alzheimer's. He was 78. Bob was a retired attorney with the state Department of Consumer Affairs.

He was a serious runner, and participated in his first marathon at age 60. He loved nature and hiking. He was an avid reader and photographer.

He is survived by his wife, **Gail**; his daughter, **Sarah**; and stepson, **Ryan**. His youngest daughter, **Juliet**, died in 2014.

— Judy Scheible



Photo/Erik Fay

Monica and Kevin Flanagan moved from their restored Oak Park bungalow to 10th Avenue.

## New neighbors move to 10th, 11th avenues

By Erik Fay

**K**evin and **Monica Flanagan** moved to 10th Avenue in May from their Oak Park home of nine years.

Kevin, originally from Salinas, sells German manufacturing equipment. Sacramento native Monica is director of innovation and partnerships at the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. She can bike to work.

The Flanagans had lovingly restored their Oak Park Craftsman bungalow but wanted a larger home. They visited an English Revival-style home a few times before deciding to make an offer. They loved the bones of the house, but it needed some attention. Talented and experienced old home restorers, Monica and Kevin have been at work from the moment they received the keys. Several projects will keep them busy into 2021.



Photo/Carla Meyers

Leaving their San Francisco apartment, **Marissa Meyers** and fiancé **Jon Cedercreutz** moved to 11th Avenue.

While Kevin is focused on the house, Monica also finds time for sewing and food preservation. She has entered her delectables in the State Fair three times, receiving 14 blue ribbons for jams, marmalades and a variety of pickled vegetables.

...

Saying goodbye to their small San Francisco apartment, **Marissa Meyers** and fiancé **Jon Cedercreutz** have bought their first home on 11th Avenue.

Marissa grew up in Curtis Park. She graduated from McClatchy High School and the University of Colorado, Boulder. Jon is from Piedmont. He graduated from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. They met in San Francisco and plan to marry next summer.

Marissa's parents have lived on Curtis Way for 34 years. Marissa's sister **Kristin**, her husband **Ken Lambert**, and sheepadoodle **Larry** moved to Coleman Way two years ago.

## 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 story ideas to: [denniscusick52@gmail.com](mailto:denniscusick52@gmail.com) with Viewpoint in the subject field.

Deadline for Viewpoint stories is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

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## Tai chi instructor conducts classes in park on Mondays

By Patti Roberts

Neighbors gather at the north end of Curtis Park on Monday mornings, social distancing while following the lead of martial arts instructor Tav Byerhoff as he conducts a weekly tai chi class. Byerhoff is interested in sharing his love of the physical, mental and spiritual growth he's found in martial arts and sees a great need in this unprecedented time of uncertainty and stress.

So he's begun to hold classes in the park and over Zoom.

"Right now I'm offering an introductory breath meditation and tai chi class on Monday mornings at 9 a.m.," he says. He's looking to add days.

"My goal for this park group is for people to get outside and get fresh air, breathe and relax, and learn something that can improve and sustain their health," Byerhoff says. "Even though we're observing social distancing, it's important to be social, and seeing neighbors helps us all stay connected, even if we are behind masks right now."

More than 20 years ago, Curtis Park native Byerhoff discovered his love of martial arts, which blossomed into a passion for its physical and spiritual components. When his kung fu and tai chi teacher moved to Glendale 10 years ago, Byerhoff followed to help him open up a studio.

When the coronavirus pandemic



Tai chi is happening at 9 a.m. Monday mornings in the park.

Photo/  
Joan Cusick

hit, Byerhoff was forced to close his Los Angeles-area martial arts studio.

"My wife and I had been discussing making the move back to Sacramento for a while to be closer to family and put down roots for our kids," Byerhoff says. "So, when all this happened, we decided to listen to the cues and return home."

Byerhoff, his wife and two kids are staying temporarily with his mother on Marshall Way. Information on Byerhoff's Curtis Park tai chi class can be found on his Facebook page, "Six Harmony Martial Arts," and on the Nextdoor app for Curtis Park. His email is sifutav@sixharmonymartialarts.com.

## Fitness studios adapt in the COVID-19 era

By Erik Fay  
and Susan MacCulloch

"Pivot" is often used to describe adaptation during our "new normal." Two local fitness studios that opened for business earlier this year initially held classes indoors, then revolved more than once to outdoor, indoor, then again to outdoor sessions.

Summer Moon Yoga Studio opened in January at 2910 Franklin Blvd., on the same block as Hop Gardens. The business name joins the names of its owners, Summer Ward and Cassidy Coelho, whose nickname is "Moon."

The pandemic facilitated the owners' creativity by expanding their vision of a more open, inclusive and outdoor practice of yoga. They have conducted yoga classes at Camp Pollock, Soil Born Farms, and at multi-day yoga retreats at several locations in the El Dorado National Forest. Summer even practices yoga on a paddle board in a lake.

Outdoor classes were held prior to the pandemic, but it facilitated the addition of more open-air sessions. Virtual classes are also offered.

Neighbors can observe Summer Moon yoga classes taking place at the north end of Curtis Park at 26th Street and Donner Way. The studio also offers a beginning hooping series of classes (remember Hula Hoops?) in the park.

Visit their website at summermoon.com or go to Facebook (The Summer Moon Sacramento) for their calendar of classes and retreats and sign-ups, or call 916 443-6535.

• • •

Married couple and co-owners Brandon and Sofia Ferrante opened Power Pack Fitness in January at the former power equipment storefront at 2932 Freeport Blvd. They offer group classes and personal training featuring boxing, boot camp and barre classes. The studio was open just seven weeks before the March shelter-in-place orders.



Photo/Erik Fay

Cassidy Coelho and Summer Ward at their Franklin Boulevard yoga studio.

During the shutdown of gyms, the couple used this time to install various features and protocols to ensure a safe workout when in-class sessions could resume.

While they reopened to indoor classes during the brief window in June-July, now all classes are held outside or virtually. Their "fancy gym is now a storage unit," says Brandon.

Their parking lot now hosts boxing/kickboxing sessions and boot camp. Barre classes are held in a park, and yoga is offered in virtual sessions.



Photo/Brandon Ferrante

Connie Nunez uses fitness equipment outside in back of Power Pack Fitness.

They continue to offer personal training but now outside in the back area of the studio. Adapting to the summer heat, there's a shade tent, a wind tunnel and misters. "We adapt as we go," Brandon says of personal training. There is a pre-screening for COVID symptoms before each session.

For more information, visit powerpackfit.com, Instagram, Facebook or call 209 627-6953.

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