

# VIEWPOINT

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December 2020

## Curtis Park precincts among Biden's top percentages in county

By Mike Scheible

President-Elect Joe Biden received overwhelming support from Curtis Park voters in the general election, even by California standards.

Biden received 85.6% of the neighborhood vote, President Trump 11.8%, and minor-party candidates received 2.5%. The remainder declined to vote for any of the listed candidates (two write-ins and 57 who didn't vote for president).

Biden's vote percentages in the neighborhood's southern and central precincts – roughly 86.6 % each – were the third- and fourth-highest percentages among the 600 precincts in Sacramento County. Some 83% of voters in the northern precinct also supported Biden.

Election Day had sunny weather and a steady stream of voters the Sierra 2 vote center. Poll Inspector

Kate Tibbitts indicated that voting went peacefully and smoothly. The center was staffed with 13 Election Day workers who were paid hourly. Two workers staffed the drop box outside Curtis Hall, where many voters dropped off ballots. Other workers checked in voters from behind Plexiglas barriers. The voting booths were well spaced along the east wall of Curtis Hall. Mask wearing was universal and traffic was steady.

Curtis Park turnout was 91% as of Nov. 20, and will grow slightly when the remaining ballots (less than 1.3% countywide) are counted. Because final vote counts were not available, results are presented in percentages, which are not expected to change significantly.

Neighborhood voters showed strong support for Democrats in congressional and Assembly races.

- Rep. Doris Matsui won 87% of the vote in

her race with Republican Chris Bush. Matsui's vote margins in the Curtis Park precincts were the fifth-, seventh- and 17th-highest in the city.

- Kevin McCarty won 86% of the vote in his race with Republican James Just. McCarty's vote margins in the Curtis Park precincts were the second-, fifth- and eighth-highest in the city.

Statewide Propositions 15, 16, 18, 22 and 25 asked Californians to address a range of issues from consideration of diversity and taxation to criminal justice. Roughly two-thirds of local voters supported higher taxes on business properties, greater consideration of diversity, more access to voting for young people and the abolition of cash bail. On Proposition 22, the rideshare initiative, Curtis Park voters had a higher percentage (57%) of "no" votes than 95% of the precincts in the city.

*Please see Voting, Page 2*

## Neighbors go to alternatives to celebrate the holidays

By Judy Green Scheible

The virus has upended holiday traditions. Grandmas and grandpas are missing out on family gatherings. What to do? A sample of neighbors and businesses suggests they anticipate creating joy in new ways, which involve smaller gatherings and lots of Zoom and FaceTime.

For **Elizabeth Vasile** and her husband, **Robert Riggle**, of Third Avenue, the holiday will be a quiet one at home. They do plan to continue with their tradition of putting up five Angel stockings on their mantle – one for each of them, one for each of their dogs and one for the loved ones they have lost.

"I expect my husband will continue with his tradition of getting into his PJ's and slippers to watch (the 1955 comedy) 'We're No Angels' with Humphrey Bogart," Elizabeth said. This will be their fourth Christmas as Curtis Park neighbors.

Nearby on 23rd Street, **Becky Botelho** was out painting a new fence in her front yard when she talked about how her family will cope with bending tradition. "We can't do regular things,"



Photo/Joan Cusick

Elizabeth Vasile and Robert Riggle have a holiday tradition of putting up five Angel stockings – for themselves, their dogs and loved ones they have lost.

she lamented. "My mom's in a senior living facility and I haven't seen her since March." Becky expects the family will have a quiet holiday at home.

Over on Highland Avenue, **Jeff** and **Annie Cook** are planning a somewhat normal holiday with their daughter, **Meryl**, and her two young children, but their son, **Brian**, will not be able to come from Seattle. "For Thanksgiving we usually have 17 or 18 people in the house," Annie said. "Not this year. And it will be a small Christmas."

Across the street, neighbors

**Nancy Shea** and **Craig Ottersen** have grandparent plans for the holiday in the Bay Area. Both have been doing child care every other week for years, so Nancy said she thinks their bubble is relatively safe.

"I've given up a lot to stay safe so I can do that," she said. She's not sure whether their son, Mike, will join the family holiday.

### Taylor's Market

The butchers at Taylor's Market

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### Members' meeting Dec. 2 on Zoom

Candidates will be introduced before the members vote.  
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### Old olive trees get new home

Developer replants dozens of 130-year-old olive trees.  
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### Students miss schoolmates

Neighborhood kids give online learning a failing grade.  
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### Underground Books reopens

Store thriving again in Oak Park, in spite of pandemic.  
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# Vote center worker sees democracy in action

By Patti Roberts

Sierra 2 Center has been a voting location for 30 years, and this Election Day was no exception. Polls at Curtis Hall were open from Oct. 31 to Nov. 3 for in-person voting and ballot drop-offs.

According to Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Office, 437 people voted in person and 1,239 ballots were dropped off over the four-day period at our site.

Poll Inspector Kate Tibbits said there were noticeably fewer in-person voters at Sierra 2 this time around compared to the primary, which she attributed to more people voting by mail.

Those of us who worked at the vote center were privileged to witness a parade of enthusiastic voters passionate about being in the room where it happens. It was gratifying to see the excitement of first-time voters, others who brought their children to witness democracy in action, those coming early in the morning and later after work, and some seniors using walkers.

Tibbits said Sierra 2 is her favorite of the 80 polling stations in Sacramento County. “I truly appreciate all the poll workers who are willing to take the



Photo/Joan Cusick

Elections worker Sandra Christensen cleaned each polling station after every use at the Sierra 2 Center in Curtis Park on Election Day 2020.

time and responsibility to make sure the voting process runs smoothly,” she said. “And everyone who voted was very supportive, all masked up and taking the process seriously.”

Tibbits praised the Curtis Hall maintenance crew who “were outstanding from set-up to helping us with anything we needed.”

Buffalo Pizza & Ice Cream Co. donated pizza for the poll workers. Several neighbors dropped off bottled water.

Sierra 2 Executive Director Terri Shettle said the election was the first time the center has been open to the public since March. Shettle made sure that the vote center had all the COVID-19 safeguards in place.

“It was great to see the voters coming out to Sierra 2 Center,” said Shettle. “It’s always inspirational to see so many people doing their part to keep democracy alive.”

# Voting: 3 precincts in Curtis Park

Continued from Page 1

Curtis Park voters had higher “yes” percentages than 90% of city precincts on Propositions 15, 16, 18 and 25. While each of these measures was defeated statewide, all prevailed easily in the local vote, and all had much higher “yes” percentages than the city, county and statewide tallies. On Propositions 14, 17, 20, 21, 23 and 24, the results in Curtis Park aligned with the statewide totals on whether the measure passed or failed.

For the most part, there was little difference on any of the ballot issues in the “yes” and “no” vote percentages among the three Curtis Park precincts. One exception was Proposition 21, on which in the northern precinct 58% voted “yes,” compared with 46% in the two other areas. This could be explained by the northern precinct having a much higher percentage of renters than the central and southern areas.

Local Measure A (“strong mayor”) and Measure C (rent control) both lost decisively, with about two-thirds of Curtis Park residents voting “no.”

The Curtis Park neighborhood has 4,344 registered voters, a 5% increase since the 2016 election. Most of this increase was in the southern area, likely due to the new housing in Crocker Village.

The three Curtis Park precincts are bounded by the W-X Freeway on the north, Highway 99 on the east, Sutterville Road on the south and the Union Pacific railroad tracks and Freeport Boulevard on the west. This aligns with the SCNA boundaries and is an area of about a square mile.

The three precincts and their boundaries are:

**Precinct 44261**, in the north and east part of Curtis Park, has an L shape. Part of it lies north of Castro Way,

# Neighborhood votes heavily against ‘strong mayor’ system

By Dennis Cusick

Does the city need a “strong mayor?” *Viewpoint* posed that question in its October issue, publishing articles by City Councilmember Jay Schenirer in favor of Measure A and SMUD Director Rosanna Herber in opposition.

The answer of voters – both in Curtis Park and throughout the city – was a resounding “no.” In the three neighborhood precincts, the vote was 35% in favor and 65% opposed, according to Sacramento County’s election website link, <https://results.saccounty.net>.

The city totals were 42% in favor, 58% opposed. A cluster of four precincts in East Sacramento voted more than 70% in opposition, as did one precinct in the Pocket. Support for Measure A was generally strongest in northern, southern and southeast precincts, although no area of the city registered more than 64% of the vote in favor.

In 2014, a similar measure promoted by then-Mayor Kevin Johnson was defeated by a margin of 44% in favor, 56% opposed citywide.

Measure A would have changed the City Charter to strengthen the mayor’s powers. The mayor would have become the city’s chief executive officer, with powers to appoint and remove the city manager with City Council concurrence. The mayor would have gained veto power over ordinances and

the budget, subject to a six-vote City Council override. The mayor would have been limited to two terms.

Mayor Darrell Steinberg, who pushed for passage of Measure A, issued a statement expressing disappointment with its defeat. Nonetheless, he said, “I am ready to launch a second term under this system and fight for the same causes and people that motivated me to serve as our city’s mayor.”

Schenirer, in campaigning for Measure A, went against the prevailing sentiment in his district, where the majority of precincts opposed the measure and only four precincts narrowly favored it. “The case that I made is if you’re going to vote for a mayor with vision, give him the tools to implement that vision,” he said. “Change is hard. In many ways, folks in Sacramento see themselves along the lines of a smaller municipality.”

Herber said she thinks the defeat of Measure A “shows that people don’t want to give ONE person the power to solve city issues. They want to come together in one place (Council meetings) and work through the issues and problems in our city.”

“People want to have MORE say in their government, not less. The strong mayor model would have split the power in the community and would have made it more difficult to bring about cooperation and consensus on the Council.”

Proposition Number	CP Yes%	City Yes%	Sac Co. Yes%	State Yes%
15 Property tax ...	68%	57%	47%	48%
16 Diversity.....	64%	53%	41%	43%
18 Youth voting....	66%	54%	46%	44%
22 Ridesharing ....	42%	43%	59%	59%
25 Money bail.....	67%	53%	44%	44%

east of 21st Street, south of the W-X Freeway, and west of Highway 99, and the other part lies north of Sutterville Road and east of Franklin Boulevard. It has 1,245 voters.

**Precinct 44255**, in the northwest and center part of Curtis Park, also has an L shape. It includes a middle section from Portola Way north, east of 21st Street, south of Castro Way and west of Franklin Boulevard, and a northern leg east of Freeport Boulevard, south of the W-X Freeway and west of 21st Street. It has 1,468 voters.

**Precinct 44337**, on the southwest, is a rough rectangle. It lies south

Proposition Number	CP Yes%	Sac Co. Yes%	State Yes%
14 Stem cell research .....	64%	51%	51%
17 Felon voting rights .....	81%	57%	59%
20 Criminal penalties .....	21%	39%	38%
21 Rent control .....	49%	36%	40%
23 Dialysis .....	38%	32%	36%
24 Privacy rights .....	51%	55%	56%

of Portola Way, west of Franklin Boulevard, north of Sutterville Road and east of the Union Pacific railroad tracks. It has 1,631 voters.

The central and southern Curtis Park areas are similar – more than 80% White and less than 20% combined Hispanic, Black and Asian. The northern area is more diverse – about 60% White, a quarter Hispanic, 15% Black and 5% Asian, according to the 2010 Census.

Up-to-date results, including precinct-level tallies, can be found at the Sacramento County election website – <https://results.saccounty.net>.



# Old olive trees get new life throughout Crocker Village

By Kara Leong

Driving west from Donner Way onto Crocker Drive, you may notice mature olive trees gracing key corners of the young neighborhood. About 35 full-grown trees have been moved from old orchards in Tehama County to become the newest Sacramento residents.

Developer Paul Petrovich rescued hundreds of trees from being bulldozed and burned. More than 130 years old, the trees come from Corning, more than 100 miles north of Sacramento, where older olive trees are being pulled out and replaced with more profitable almonds and pistachios.

"I have a passion for them and have become obsessed with saving them," Petrovich said. "I bought all three orchards to do so."

These trees are a dual fruit and oil variety known as Sevillano, an old Spanish variety prized for its willowy



The Sevillano olive trees that were replanted in Crocker Village are more than 130 years old. They are up to 4 feet across and weigh 12,000 to 14,000 pounds.

Photo/  
Paul Petrovich

silver foliage, gnarled trunk and plump green fruit. The trunks of these heritage trees measure up to four feet across. Each tree weighs 12,000 to 14,000 pounds.

Petrovich said he "made eight trips up to Corning, walking orchards eight to 10 hours a day and talking to

farmers, and found the three oldest and largest patches of these Sevillano olive trees up there."

A crane was used to gently dangle the trees into their new locations. Petrovich encouraged neighbors to help direct the placement of each tree.

Petrovich said the olive trees were replanted throughout Crocker Village, except in the park overseen by the city. To prevent the slippery black staining of walkways and concrete from fallen fruit, the trees will be sprayed with water in the spring to knock down blossoms and prevent pollination.

Olive trees are drought-tolerant, evergreen and well suited for our Mediterranean climate. The trees that were replanted in Crocker Village have an expected lifespan of 500 years, so these beautiful newcomers may grace the neighborhood for generations to come.

"I also wanted to distinguish Crocker Village from any other neighborhood with these landmark trees that look like they have been here from their beginning," Petrovich said. "What could be better than buying a new house surrounded by these landmark trees? It's the best of both worlds."

## Leaf blowers banned on unhealthy-air days

By Kathy Les

The Sacramento City Council has taken the first step in more than 20 years to further regulate polluting lawn equipment.

An ordinance that takes effect Dec. 9 prohibits use of leaf blowers, both electric and gas, on days when the Air Quality Index (AQI) for small particulate matter reaches 101 or higher. This might occur intermittently or for a full day at a time. Such days typically occur during periods of intense fire smoke as we experienced this summer.

Equipment operators, whether homeowners or landscapers, will be expected to check the AQI on the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District website, <http://www.airquality.org>. If a blower is in operation when the AQI threshold is reached, the best first step is to politely approach equipment operators to request they stop blowing until the AQI is reduced. If they fail to cooperate, call 311 or email [311@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:311@cityofsacramento.org) to report the violation.

Equipment operators will initially receive warning letters from the city, but eventually a \$250 fine or higher can be assessed.

The ordinance adopted Nov. 10 applies only to leaf blowers, not lawn mowers, which may still be used even on days of poor air quality, even though their engines spew pollutants. Gas leaf blowers not only emit harmful engine exhaust but also pollution from fugitive dust harmful to both the operator and those in the vicinity. This pollution is not limited to small particulate matter, but that is the most harmful of the pollutants generated by leaf blowers and their dust. Electric blowers do not generate toxic engine exhaust, but their blowing does contribute to fugitive dust.

SCNA weighed in with a letter to City Council and a statement at the council meeting asking for a forecast-based AQI that would be similar to a No Burn Day to provide more clarity to landscapers and the public. City Council adopted the ordinance as written, allowing for AQI fluctuation throughout the day and, therefore, fluctuating use of blowers as well.



Photo/Kathy Les

Kevin Walsh rakes at a home on Portola Way. Kevin's business, Fresh Air Yard Care, is an all-electric yard care service that includes manual raking and sweeping on a weekly basis.

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## Notes from Nov. 4 SCNA board meeting

### Porch Picnic nets \$17,800

The Oct. 10 Porch Picnic was a success, both as a fundraiser and as a social activity, event chair Kathy Les reported at the Nov. 4 board meeting, which was conducted on Zoom. SCNA netted \$17,800 after expenses. Other board members said the event provided the neighborhood with a pleasant social event in the midst of a pandemic.

Neighbor **Kathy Davenport** was singled out as having contributed beer for the dinner packages Kathy reminded the board that all restaurants were paid fair market value for the food ordered, resulting in \$9,570 in revenue to the restaurants.

#### Leaf blower restriction

The board voted 10-2 with one abstention to send a letter to the city in support of a proposed ordinance to ban the use of leaf blowers on days when the Air Quality Index is over 100. Prior to the vote, the board discussed the value of sending the letter, enforcement issues, the costs of going electric and potential

buy-back programs by SMUD and some air quality districts. (The City Council approved the ordinance Nov. 10. See separate story, Page 5.)

#### Whistleblower policy

The board adopted a whistleblower policy, which was unanimously approved.

#### Board candidates

SCNA board candidates **Jessica Bivens**, **Lily Harris** and **Mimi Budd** attended the meeting, introduced themselves to the board and gave brief explanations for why they want to be on the board.

#### Non-member attendance

**Bruce Pierini** asked the board to consider allowing nonmembers to attend board meetings as a recruiting device. President Bill Hoover suggested the Executive Committee take up the issue at its next meeting.

The next regular meeting of the board will be Dec. 2.

— *Bruce Pierini, board secretary*

## President's message

# Pandemic requires membership to vote by electronic ballot

**BILL  
HOOVER**

**SCNA Board  
President**



SCNA finds itself in the unusual position of conducting electronic voting for board candidates via Zoom at our upcoming general membership meeting at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 2.

For more than 40 years, annual membership meetings have been held in person at the Sierra 2 Center. COVID restrictions on gatherings make it necessary to hold this year's meeting via Zoom, including the voting for nominated board candidates.

SCNA's annual membership meeting and election of directors is one of our most important events, if not the most important. It reaffirms our members' commitment to ensuring the future governance of SCNA and its role in operating and maintaining the Sierra 2 Center.

Though our bylaws require in-person voting at the meeting, we feel comfortable using electronic voting, though it must be accomplished securely, accurately and privately.

All existing members of SCNA will receive a postcard in the mail asking you to register with your email address for the voting process.

All paid-up and lifetime members

have voting rights. You also have the option of joining SCNA prior to the meeting to vote. To do so, visit [Sierra2.org](http://Sierra2.org).

Sierra 2 Executive Director Terri Shettle and SCNA board members have been working diligently to develop a secure electronic ballot process linked to email addresses. Individual memberships are entitled to one ballot; household memberships include two ballots. If you have questions as to whether your membership is current, please email [terri@sierra2.org](mailto:terri@sierra2.org).

For members who joined with your Porch Picnic purchase, we likely already have your email address tied to your dinner purchase. You will be entitled to vote in this election. Don't hesitate to call the office or email [terri@sierra2.org](mailto:terri@sierra2.org) with questions.

## 4 candidates running for open positions on SCNA board

By Bruce Pierini

The SCNA annual membership meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 2 on Zoom.

If you are an active SCNA member and have not received a postcard with directions to the link to the annual meeting on Zoom, contact Sierra 2 Executive Director Terri Shettle at [terri@sierra2.org](mailto:terri@sierra2.org).

SCNA President Bill Hoover will give a welcoming address. Chairpersons of the Finance, Development, Facilities, Neighborhood Concerns and Racial Justice committees will present reports.

Four candidates for open board positions will be introduced before the members vote. The candidates are:

**Jessica Bivens** is a Sacramento native, but she was not familiar with Curtis Park before returning to Sacramento in 2019 after 15 years away. She had moved to the Bay Area in 2004, and then to New York in 2013. She lives in a 1950s ranch house at 24th Street and Ninth Avenue.



Jessica Bivens

**Mimi Budd** has lived in Curtis Park since 1981. During her career, she worked as an attorney for several elected members of the California Legislature and numerous state departments, and served as chief counsel of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. She served previously as both a member and president of the SCNA board. She serves on the SCNA Ad Hoc Committee for Racial Justice. She is active in Emily's List, a political action committee that supports Democratic



Mimi Budd



Lily M. Harris

women candidates, as well as the Brady Campaign United Against Gun Violence. She served in the Peace Corps in Nigeria and is currently vice president of the Friends of Nigeria board of directors.

**Lily M. Harris** is an attorney for a law firm in San Francisco but works almost entirely from home. Lily and her husband, Chris, and their two-year-old daughter, Roxana, live on Coleman Way, and have another child on the way. They moved to Curtis Park in June 2019. Roxana just started at



Photos/Judy Harper  
Shannon Motley

Great Beginnings. Chris is a stay-at-home dad, though he is hoping to open a coffee shop in the next year or two, ideally within Curtis Park.

**Shannon Motley** has lived in Curtis Park for four years. She has spent her career in medical sales. She has a master's degree in public health and welcomes the opportunity to put that training to use in the community. In her free time, she rides her horse, teaches Pilates, and chases after her nephew, niece and cousin, all of whom love exploring Curtis Park.



# Big hole in Crocker Village will be part of Ray Eames Park

By Andrea Rosen

Curious about the big hole in the middle of Crocker Village?

Ray Eames Park is slowly taking form. The big hole will serve as both a detention basin for rainwater runoff and – when not full of water – 3 acres of open turf available for recreation. No trees will be allowed in the basin and grasses will complement the turf.

Sacramento has several detention basins, such as Bahnfleth Park on Seamas Avenue, but none appear to be as deep as the one under construction in Crocker Village. Designed to hold approximately 11,713 cubic yards of water, it is deep because of its limited size. Gates at both entrances to the basin will close off public access when it holds water.

When City Council adopted the first major legal document concerning the development of what is now Crocker Village in 2010, it contained some hard-fought design and development principles advocated by SCNA, including a grid layout and a no-big-box provision intended to ensure that the neighborhood-serving retail fit in. It also called for a 6.8-acre park, calculated under a state law formula based on the number of residential units and commercial square footage. At the time, city officials and neighbors welcomed a 6.8-acre park as the neighborhood was considered underserved for park space.

The city Planning Commission approved a tentative subdivision map on Jan. 28, 2016. It called for a 6.6-acre park and required the developer to finalize the tentative map within three years or it

would expire. Three years later to the day, the zoning administrator approved a request by Petrovich Development Co. for an extension of time.

In the interim, the state's parkland requirement had shrunk to 4.08 net acres, based on a reduced number of housing units. The new condition also allowed the developer to pay in-lieu fees to further reduce the size of the parkland.

The final park area will be 3 acres of open-space turf within the 4.49-acre detention basin, with an additional 0.53-acre active park to the northwest of the detention basin. The small park is designed to have a picnic area, a playground and zipline play equipment. The developer paid about \$356,000 in fees to compensate for the lost parkland.

A retaining wall now under construction will hold water in the basin. On top of that wall will be a 6-foot-tall tubular steel fence. A maintenance road accessible from Crocker Drive will be built along the north side of the basin.

Pedestrians will access the detention basin at four spots – ramps at the northwest and southeast ends of the basin as well as two points on Crocker Drive. Two huge culverts – an inlet on the north side and an outlet on the southeast side – will connect to the city sewer system.

While the basin currently appears to have steep and dangerous drop-offs, city parks planning manager

MASTER PLAN FOR:  
**Ray Eames Park**  
CITY OF SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA (6.5 AC)



Raymond Costantino says it will be safe and will look quite different when the maintenance roads, ramps and perimeter fencing are completed.

With the addition of 200 new homes and multi-family units in the subdivision, there is little doubt that this new open space, while much smaller than originally promised, will be welcome and heavily used.

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## Students say they learn less, miss friends in online school

By Patti Roberts

Students who have had to adjust to on-line learning rather than in-person classroom lessons are among those most impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Two Curtis Park families shared their experiences in dealing with the daily challenges of school shutdowns.

**Boris Smith-Heilbron**, a sixth-grader at Sutterville Elementary, has been online schooling since April, spending about five hours a day on Zoom with his teacher and fellow students. He uses a computer at his Fifth Avenue dining room table from 9 a.m. to 2:30 or 3 p.m., with two 10-minute breaks and one lunch hour.

"Online school is not fun when the Zoom meeting lags out (slows up or freezes) and my teacher has to repeat the lessons," Boris says. "The other reason I don't like online school is because we don't get to see our friends at recess and lunch."

Boris' parents, **John Heilbron** and **Stephanie Smith**, face the challenges of a computer-weary son as well as having to juggle childcare because they both work full time. "The biggest challenge for us is having someone at home with Boris during school hours while we both work," says Heilbron.

But Heilbron is grateful for Boris' teacher, Michelle Kuennen. "We're very fortunate to have an excellent teacher this year who has been very proactive in adapting to students and being very patient with the online learning curves," Heilbron says. "Boris has adapted well in spite of missing his friends and the structure of the physical classroom."

The **Brostrom** household on Third Avenue is juggling two daughters' school schedules – **Piper**, a seventh-grader at the Language Academy of



Photo/Will Carlton

Sixth-grader **Boris Smith-Heilbron** has been online schooling since April, spending about five hours a day on Zoom.

Sacramento; and **Teaghan**, a 10th-grader at St. Francis High School.

"The challenge has been to keep spirits and interest in school up when social interactions are limited," says dad **Peter Brostrom**. "We applaud the teachers for trying to make it fun and interesting, but it is hard to teach and keep students focused online."

"I don't think I'm learning as much as in school, but am able to keep up with my classes," says Piper, who is online from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. "It's boring looking at a screen all day, but it's more independent so you get to do the work when you want to. But I do miss my friends and having in-person classes."

Teaghan is starting a hybrid schedule at St. Francis High School that allows her to attend school in person at least two days a week.

"I have been doing distance learning since March," she says. "I'm definitely not learning as much as I would be in the classroom. It's a lot harder to retain information when it is all presented online. I've found chemistry to be the hardest online since so much of the class is lab-based."

"I miss the simple things the most, like carpooling and seeing my friends in the halls and at lunch. But there are some advantages to distance learning. I get to sleep longer, wear my pajama pants to class and hang out with my dog all day."

## Time to look back with thanks, forward to challenges

By Jay Schenirer

City Council Member, District 5

I generally spend Thanksgiving appreciating all that I have to be thankful for and thinking about my goals for the coming year. This year much of the "family and friends" aspects will be virtual.



Most of all, I am thankful for the opportunity to make a difference in our community. I remain honored to be your representative on the City Council. More than ever, I am thankful to be in a position to help Sacramento have a brighter future.

With two years left in my term, there is still much I want to accomplish. In the coming year, my main priorities remain issues of homelessness, economic development and supporting Sacramento's young people.

With respect to homelessness, I am excited that we finally have approval from Caltrans to move forward on the Broadway/WX Corridor shelter. My hope is that the shelter will be ready for use by late summer or early fall. Because of COVID precautions, its initial capacity will be limited to 50 individuals, but that should provide some support for individuals in the immediate vicinity.

Prior to COVID, Sacramento's economy was performing well. Almost 10 months in, the strength of our economy is uncertain. However, we must not be deterred from moving forward. Citywide, we have made a commitment to use at least \$40 million of Measure U funds to support inclusive economic development in our most under-resourced neighborhoods. This promise was sidetracked with COVID, but I believe this is the right thing to do. Given the current state of our economy, it will be difficult to fulfill this commitment, but I believe it must be our first priority in the coming budget.

My two district economic priorities will be Aggie Square and the Sacramento tree nursery projects. Aggie Square has tremendous potential in catalyzing economic development in Sacramento. It will bring jobs and resources to our city, but if not done right, it could be disastrous to the surrounding neighborhoods. It will impact housing, transportation and a host of other issues. The mayor, Councilmember Eric Guerra and I are working closely with UC Davis, the Aggie Square developer and the community to ensure the development becomes a win for all concerned.

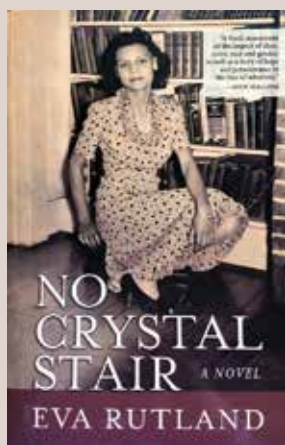
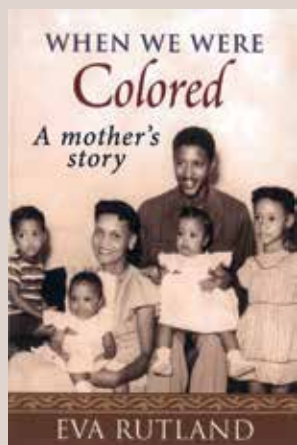
I am continuing to work with Planting Justice, Three Sisters Gardens and The Yisrael Family Urban Farm to make the former city tree nursery abutting Executive Airport a productive, urban agriculture hub for the city.

My priorities for supporting our young people remain consistent. We must provide the support, access and opportunities our youth need to be successful in school, career and life. We've had some great wins over the past few years, including free public transportation for all K-12 students, mental health support in our schools, and this year, passing a resolution that redefines public safety to include prevention services for youth. In this last effort, we must continue to create spaces where youth can actively engage and be a part of the decisions that impact them.

As always, please feel free to contact me at jschenirer@cityofsacramento.org. All the best in 2021.

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# COMMUNITY CORNER

## Underground Books has reopened after remodeling project

By Judy Green Scheible

The pandemic's dark cloud over businesses in our region has failed to darken Underground Books at 35th Street and Broadway in Oak Park. The store did close for about 10 weeks but that was to complete a long-planned remodel.

Now it's back and thriving. Ever since the grand reopening in mid-October, store owner Georgia West, aka "Mother Rose," has reigned over her expanded inventory and enlarged staff. Her shelves now display gifts, art work, T-shirts and snacks in addition to books and cards.

Tragedy also boosted her business. She told *Viewpoint* that the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25 stimulated orders both in the store and online.

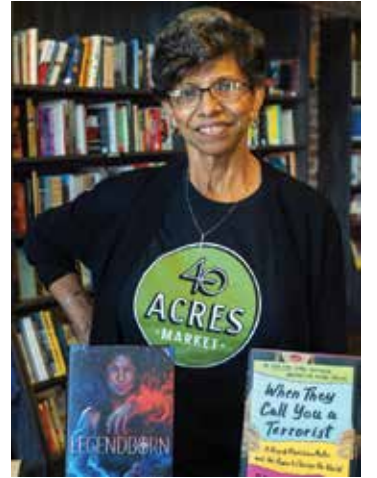
Mother Rose says she loves having the bookstore and making it an arts and culture center. "This is a wonderful place to be," she said. "I've been here 17 years. ... It's a good place for people to read and learn about African and African American history and culture."

Underground Books is part of the 40 Acres Market that includes St. Hope's schools. It's a nonprofit business.

The store hosted an author Zoom event in November and plans another in December.

Pandemic rules permitting, Mother Rose hopes to restart her children's story time. She has a large collection of children's books as well as toys and puzzles. She's also hoping to manage a children's Christmas event in Oak Park.

Underground Books is at 2814 35th St.; 916 737-3333.



Mother Rose Photo/Will Carlton

## Graphic designer Sarah Hansel, 31

Sarah Hansel of Highland Avenue died in mid-October of ovarian cancer. She was 31.

She had lived in five different homes in Curtis Park. She graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School and UC Davis. She worked as a graphic designer and art director for the Sacramento News & Review. In her free time, she enjoyed gardening, illustrating and volunteering with the Sacramento SPCA.

She is survived by her husband and partner of 10 years, **John Blake**; her parents, **Kate Williams** and **Peter Hansel**, **Tom Gohring** and **Debbie Vorous**; her twin sister, **Kristin Hansel**; five step-siblings; and her two beloved dogs, **Vontae** and **Jenny**.

The family requests that any donations be made to the Sacramento SPCA or Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

— Judy Green Scheible



Sara Hansel

## Taylor's butcher shop earns national ranking

Taylor's Market has been ranked as one of the best independent butcher shops in America by Food & Wine magazine.

About Taylor's, the magazine said, "The locals know all about this classic corner market refitted for the modern age. The in-store butcher shop marries the best of new and old, sourcing top meat and poultry from California's best ranches."

Ten other California butcher shops made the list, including Fatted Calf in Napa and The Local Butcher Shop in Berkeley.

"In choosing this list of nearly 100 essential shops across the country, there was one very clear standard – the more sustainable, the more rebellious against the prevailing winds in a morally corrupt industry, the better," the magazine said.

The complete list may be found at <https://www.foodandwine.com/meat-poultry/best-butcher-shops-in-america>.

## Neighbors will vote for favorite holiday decorations

Untangle those lights and pretty up your outdoor space to dazzle night-time passers-by and neighbors.



- Decorate your front yard, porch, windows, roof, bikes, pets with festive lights and creative displays.

- Register your space using the form at [sierra2.org/holiday](https://sierra2.org/holiday). Registration begins on Monday, Dec. 14.

- Walk, bike or drive through the neighborhood enjoying neighbor creations.

- Vote for your favorite decorated spaces.

Voting for the "People's Choice" winners will happen online. Winners will receive gift cards donated by Gunther's Ice Cream, Hop Gardens, The Summer Moon Yoga Studio and Pangaea. Voting will close and winners will be announced on Jan. 4, 2021.

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# Ancient sandhill cranes have a dance to behold

By Dan Murphy

Sandhill cranes got me started in bird photography. In our neighborhood, cranes can be heard and less often seen flying high above us, especially during fall and spring migration.

Several anatomical adaptations allow them to produce vocalizations more typical of a larger bird. Their trumpeting, bugling, rattling and croaking sounds convey information about gender and age, and communicate location and intentions.

Their calls have a primeval quality. This befits them as the bird species with the longest known fossil record, with a direct ancestor 10 million years ago found in Nebraska and fossils identical to the modern sandhill crane dated from 2.5 million years ago. Happily, at present, they continue to thrive and are not an endangered species.

We have two subspecies locally – greater sandhill cranes and lessers. They are identical in appearance, but the greater, at 46 inches, are five inches larger than lessers, and more than three pounds heavier, at 10.6 pounds.

Sandhill cranes are generally gray overall, sometimes with rusty patches from minerals, with a bright red crown (or a brown crown in the young) over a white head. Though gangly, cranes are most often described as elegant. In flight, the head is

always outstretched. They play a prominent role in art and mythology in Asian and Native American cultures.

Our cranes winter nearby in the Central Valley and migrate to and from nesting grounds in the Sierra and northward through Canada and Alaska. They are omnivorous, finding prey on the ground and in shallow marshes and often foraging on waste grain in harvested fields.

In years not threatened by a pandemic, you can easily find nearby guided tours online offered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife or the Lodi Crane Festival. However, there is no real need for a guide. Cranes can easily and reliably be found in the area around the Isenberg Crane Reserve and along the long dead-end road that transects Staten Island west of Lodi.

If you do decide to see them up close, the best time is near and shortly after sunset on any mostly clear fall or winter evening. After foraging in the surrounding fields, they assemble and return in flocks to their nightly roosts in shallow flooded fields at



Photo/Dan Murphy

Regardless of cranes dancing, the sunset spectacle of dozens or hundreds of cranes sailing, gliding, and swooping into their roosts, accompanied by the eerie symphony of their calls, is well worth the trip.

Isenberg or along Staten Island Road.

If you are lucky, you may see their courtship dancing displays. These displays play a role in pair bonding that leads to monogamous relationships that could last a lifetime, 35 years. The displays are so memorable that one of their collective nouns is a “dance of cranes.”

## Holidays: Market anticipates higher volume of smaller orders

*Continued from Page 1*

are busy slicing and prepping orders, but the orders are smaller than usual. Butcher Mitch Lind said the team behind the counter is anticipating a higher volume of smaller orders because so many people are having smaller, home-cooked meals.

Owner Danny Johnson added that the store would continue to monitor the number of people who can come inside. “It’ll depend on what the state orders,” he said. “At the moment (just before Thanksgiving) it’s 30.” Danny also said he will do his best to meet all requests. “We don’t say ‘no,’” he said, referring to the philosophy of original

owner Bob Taylor. “Whatever the customer wants, we’ll do it.”

### Taylor’s Kitchen

Next door at Taylor’s Kitchen, executive chef Scott Macumber said he and his staff will prepare holiday meals for takeout. “We’ll have a full holiday menu with many sides. It’ll be similar to last year without the indoor dining.

“We’ll start taking orders right after Thanksgiving,” Scott said. The Kitchen will be closed Christmas Day, so orders will need to be picked up in advance. Scott said he didn’t expect to put a limit on the orders, but he will stop taking orders Dec. 23.

### Freeport Bakery

Sweet notes from Freeport Bakery owner Marlene Goetzler include an assemble-yourself gingerbread house. “We’re also doing new, smaller cakes and pies for home cooking,” Marlene said.

They are preparing frozen pies that can be picked up early and baked at home.

She also said pre-orders that are pre-paid will be picked up in the parking lot on a timed basis. The time will be determined by the customer.

“People without pre-orders will be allowed in the bakery,” Marlene

said, explaining she can have only four customers inside at a time.

### Angel Tree

For many holiday seasons, Curtis Park neighbors have shown their generosity by taking part in the Angel Tree project sponsored by the Salvation Army. Not this year. The pandemic has kept the Sierra 2 Center closed.

However, there is a way to take part. Neighbors can adopt an angel through the Salvation Army’s website and deliver their gift(s) to the Salvation Army’s receiving stand at Cal Expo.

For information on adopting and donating, see <http://BeTheAngel.org>.

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