

# VIEWPOINT

A Publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association

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September 2021

## City proposes housing for hundreds of homeless

### X Street shelter expected to open mid-September

By Andrea Rosen

The oft-delayed temporary shelter intended to house up to 100 homeless individuals is expected to open in mid-September on land owned by CalTrans and leased to the city at 2970 X St.

Additionally, City Council approved a variety of temporary solutions to homelessness in the city in August. Four of the proposed sites are near Curtis Park – between 18th to 24th streets under the W/X freeway. Pending state and federal approval, construction is slated to start in February 2022 to install 200 tiny homes intended to house up to 400 people at a time. (See Councilmember Jay Schenirer's column on this page, which addresses the tiny homes project.)

The X Street shelter will give



Photo/City of Sacramento

The X Street shelter will give priority to people living on the streets and sidewalks near the site, but all guests must be referred; no walk-ins will be allowed.

priority to individuals living on the streets and sidewalks near the site, but all guests must be referred as no walk-ins will be allowed.

Construction has been underway for months and is almost complete. All the structures on the site are temporary and can be taken down and removed

when no longer needed.

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency selected Volunteers of America to operate the shelter.

According to the city's draft policy, "This site will provide space

*Please see Shelter, Page 2*

### Councilmember urges slow start for tiny homes

By Jay Schenirer

In August, City Council unanimously approved the 2021 Master Siting Plan to Address Homelessness, which attempts to involve the entire city in creating a fair share of participation among council districts and neighborhoods.

**In the District**

Unfortunately, the plan falls short in some parts of the city for a variety of reasons.

What does this mean for our district and neighborhood? Currently, we have two shelters operating in Oak Park – one for families and one for LGBTQ+ youth. In addition, the X Street Navigation Center, with 100 beds, is scheduled to open in September.

Included in the plan are 20 priority sites throughout the city. In District 5, the priority sites are the Florin light rail station, for safe parking; and a privately owned lot on 29th Avenue just west of Franklin Boulevard, for tiny homes.

Included in District 4's list of priority sites are five sites under the W/X freeway between 18th and 24th streets, which would be used for up to 200 tiny homes and could have the capacity for 400 individuals. These sites require Caltrans and U.S. Department of Transportation approval.

You can view the plan in its entirety at <https://bit.ly/2VX4IVV>.

*Please see Schenirer, Page 2*

## Delta variant blamed for COVID jump in 95818

By Mike Scheible

In June, it appeared that Curtis Park and the rest of Sacramento were approaching the COVID-19 vaccination level thought to provide "herd immunity," the rate needed so that new infections decrease naturally. Unfortunately, the arrival of the delta variant has shown this optimism to be wildly premature.

The impact of the COVID infection spike is dramatic – 121 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in

the 95818 ZIP code area in the first three weeks of August, compared with just eight in the first three weeks of June.

The resurgence of COVID infections in 95818, as measured by the number of new daily infections per 100,000 people, as of mid-August stood at 26.7. During this wave of infections, the experience in 95818 was similar to the county and statewide averages of 32.1 and 25.8, respectively.

On the positive side, local vaccinations have increased. The fully

vaccinated rate now exceeds 80% of the population age 16 or over, with another 2% having received a first dose. This compares to 73% fully vaccinated in mid-June, with another 6% having received a first dose.

Curtis Park has about 5,000 residents. It shares the 95818 ZIP code with another 17,000 residents of the Land Park, Newton Booth and Poverty Ridge neighborhoods. Statistics on COVID-19 infections and vaccinations are not available publicly at less than the ZIP code area.

**Porch Picnic returns Oct. 2**  
8 restaurants offer dinners in SCNA fundraiser  
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**Beloved business is gone**

Vintage bike shop is casualty of COVID pandemic  
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**Little library treasures**

Variety of themes found on display in neighborhood  
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## Order online for Oct. 2 Porch Picnic

By Kathy Les

The Porch Picnic fundraiser returns Saturday, Oct. 2, by popular demand and out of financial necessity for SCNA.

This is a chance to enjoy a delicious dinner from one of Sacramento's most popular restaurants, delivered by a friendly SCNA volunteer.

All eight of last year's restaurants were recruited again – Hop Gardens, Pangaea, Paragary's, Revolution Café, Sampino's, Taylor's Kitchen, Urban Roots and Vallejo's. There is one addition, Canon, which will feature a special seasonally prepared meal just for Porch Picnic.

All restaurants will offer special to-go dinners for two – or in some cases for four. Popular items last year included Paragary's lasagna, Sampino's short ribs, Taylor's Kitchen family chicken dinner and Revolution's vegan offering.

Each restaurant sold out last year, so act fast to

get the restaurant and menu you want.

All meals will come with a bottle of wine as well as a chance to win one of several prizes, including a case of assorted wine, a case of beer, a bottle of Piper-Heidsieck champagne, a staycation of one night at the Double Tree Inn Sacramento, and an autumn dinner for eight in the backyard garden of Kathy Les and Hal Thomas.

Meal packages are \$150 for two complete dinners (or four, depending on the restaurant). All meals will include three courses – a starter, entrée and dessert – with meat and vegetarian options.

Ordering and selections can be made at [www.sierra2.org/picnic](http://www.sierra2.org/picnic) starting Sept. 1.

Meals will be delivered to the Curtis Park and Crocker Village neighborhoods. Residents of other areas will be able to order meals for pickup at a designated location.

While it was not possible to host the Curtis Park Wine Tasting event this year due to COVID-19, the SCNA board wanted to offer an opportunity to gather with food in a friendly and socially distanced way. And because SCNA is not out of financial jeopardy yet, this one last fundraiser for the year is planned.



Photo/Kathy Les

Maggie Thomas, visiting her parents on Portola Way, anticipates this year's Porch Picnic event.

## Shelter: Client services and support on site will help clients move to permanent housing

*Continued from Page 1*

to temporarily house 100 adults in a 100-bed homeless triage center, including center space, office and bathroom trailers, parking, storage, and pet area. The Navigation Center will provide low barrier entry, offer client-centered services and support on site, and maintain a 'housing first' approach to quickly and successfully connect individuals experiencing homelessness to stable, permanent housing. Low barrier entry means no one will be turned away because they have a partner, possessions, behavioral health, substance abuse or disabilities."

The shelter will operate 24 hours

a day, seven days a week, with night-time curfews and security, maintained by staff for all hours of operation. The site will be locked overnight. Security will be in place. The Sacramento Community Response Team will work closely with the shelter operators.

No food preparation is planned onsite but three meals a day will be provided for guests. Some pets can be accommodated in limited kennel space; no pets will be allowed in the sleeping quarters.

Showers will be available along with an array of service providers who will work with guests to help them secure permanent housing, job skills, health care and other social services.



Photo/Jasleen Escobar, City of Sacramento

Sprung exterior structure is now complete and in process of interior furnishing.

## Schenirer: Homelessness encompasses every aspect of community

*Continued from Page 1*

As you can imagine, there has been justifiable concern from residents and businesses along the W/X corridor that have struggled with homeless issues over many years.

My advocacy for these sites will focus on addressing implementation concerns impacting the community.

While we have learned a great deal from the shelters at the west end of the W/X corridor, I believe we are still developing our capacity and expertise in operating these facilities.

I will argue that we take it slowly to make sure that we get it right and that we open only one site

as a starting point while continuing outreach to the community.

We cannot, as a city, have residents continue to live unsheltered. We also must support our businesses while at the same time recognizing the needs of our neighbors by ensuring safety and shelter for all.

The homelessness issue encompasses every aspect about who we should be as a community. I truly hope that as a community we can be patient, civil, compassionate and persistent as we move forward to provide shelter, permanent housing and long-term stability for those currently on the streets.

My support for this approach may not be popular with everyone, but as I have always done, I will vote

my conscience and principles.

I am always open to new ways and approaches. If you have a better idea, I'd like to hear it. Nevertheless, I will always keep my eye on the end goal – getting as many unhoused neighbors sheltered with services to support and transition people to permanent housing.

Rest assured that, as I work towards this goal, I will balance my responsibilities of representing my district and of doing what is best for the city as a whole. While it won't be easy, it is the path forward to success.

*Jay Schenirer is the City Council member representing District 5.*



## Afghan refugees given shelter in Curtis Park

By Andrea Rosen

An Afghan refugee family of 10 recently settled in with a family in Curtis Park. They will stay until permanent housing is found.

The husband/father of the family worked as a cook and driver in Afghanistan for U.S. military officers. As a result, he received one of the special immigrant visas issued as U.S. forces withdrew from Afghanistan. The family was evacuated.

The family is settling in well. The children are enjoying coloring books, puzzles, Ping Pong, basketball, TV and getting used to the hosts' dog they call "The Wolf." The hosts enjoy the Afghan food the family shares with them.

Portola Way resident Kathleen Babin, a longtime volunteer for Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, said the agency received at least 25 families in a few weeks in August.

The evacuated families left nearly

everything behind. They first arrived in Virginia, where they were tested for COVID-19 and received their first COVID vaccine.

The Food Bank, based in Oak Park, is one of four resettlement agencies in Sacramento receiving refugees, along with Opening Doors Inc., International Rescue Committee and World Relief Sacramento.

Temporary and permanent housing for Afghan refugees is needed immediately. Permanent housing

will need complete furnishing. The temporary housing shortage is exacerbated by the number of wildfire evacuees currently housed in hotels in Sacramento.

Neighbors who would like to contribute may consider donating a "Welcome Home Basket" (see [www.sacramentofoodbank.org/refugee-resettlement](http://www.sacramentofoodbank.org/refugee-resettlement)).

Those who are able to offer temporary housing should contact Kathleen Babin at [katjbabin@gmail.com](mailto:katjbabin@gmail.com).

## Part of Second Avenue closed for traffic safety

The city has permanently closed a portion of Second Avenue near 34th Street and Broadway as the result of a traffic study that found it was the most dangerous intersection in that stretch of Broadway.

The street closure in August was part of the city's larger Envision Broadway in Oak Park Plan, which was approved by City Council in March 2020 with the support of the Oak Park Neighborhood Association, Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates and WALKS Sacramento.

The plan calls for reducing Broadway traffic from two lanes in each direction to one, enlarging the median to create center turn lanes, adding bike lanes and improving sidewalks. The improvements are projected to cost \$13.3 million and be completed by 2026.

The goals of the Envision Broadway plan are to improve traffic safety and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and drivers; strengthen neighborhood cohesiveness; and support economic development in the area.

**The improvements are projected to cost \$13.3 million and be completed by 2026.**

The plan covers the area of Broadway between Franklin Boulevard and Martin Luther King Boulevard.

Between 2009 and 2017, a total of 177 collisions were reported in the study area, the greatest proportion of which involved motorists heading east on Second Avenue colliding with other motorists traveling north on 34th Street.

The only other locations with significant numbers of collisions were the Franklin Boulevard and Alhambra Boulevard intersections with Broadway.

The city temporarily closed the Second Avenue intersection in September 2019 to gather community feedback and test a conceptual design intended to reduce crashes. The resulting feedback was that much of the community felt more comfortable traveling through the area with that portion of Second Avenue closed to vehicles.



Photo/Lucky's Drive-In

After the double-decker bus had been graffitied, Lucky's owners spent 40 hours scrubbing off the offensive graffiti. They still need to bring it back into the paint shop.

## To open hamburger joint, owners must deal with heartbreak, frustration

By Patti Roberts

Neighbors have been eager to welcome a new addition to the neighborhood – a classic hamburger joint housed in the old Hideaway Bar and Grill on Franklin Boulevard. Owners of the future Sacramento Lucky's Drive-in, Willow Eskridge and Michael Feagins, have poured a lot of love and creativity into opening an eatery similar to the one they ran up in Washington.

They even duplicated the eye-catching feature of their other hamburger joint – parking a retro bus out in front. Here in Sacramento, passers-by were quick to fall in love with the bright red retrofitted London-style double-decker parked next to the 1921 building.

But their plans to open in August have stalled both in the frustrating permit process, and last month in the heartbreak of having their beloved bus defaced by ugly graffiti sprayed across the side of the vehicle.

"When we saw the graffiti, we were devastated," Eskridge said. "There was so much work in finding and getting the bus down to Sacramento, then painting the outside, redoing the inside of this beautiful and rare vintage vehicle."

The morning she discovered the massive damage to the bus, she posted a video in which she panned across the image of the damaged bus.

"This is really sad and so disrespectful," she says in the Facebook video. "We're just the little guys, and

this has made such a difference."

But neighbors quickly showered Eskridge and Feagins with sympathy and positive messages.

"We felt very supported and encouraged," she said. "This whole restaurant project is a huge undertaking, and to know there are people waiting for you to open and being so welcoming... It feels so good. We won't give up – that's how we roll."

They have already spent 40 hours scrubbing the offensive graffiti off, and still need to bring it back in to the paint shop.

While they're dealing with the damage, they've also been trying to navigate the permit process. Their original plan was to start the inside reconstruction and open by Aug. 1. But they did not anticipate the vexing and lengthy government process.

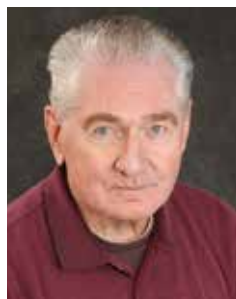
"This has been the most frustrating part," Eskridge said. "We hired all of the professionals – designers, engineers – had all the technical plans drawn and submitted. We have been in the permit process since April. Once submitted to the city, they kicked it back four times after two-week reviews each time. We may have our permit soon but have learned not to hold our breath."

The plan is to maintain the outside ambiance of the 1920s building with some redesigning of the inside.

"This city's bureaucracy is insane," Eskridge said. "We may be able to finally open by the end of this year, right after the one-year anniversary of signing our lease."

**BILL  
HOOVER**

**SCNA Board  
President**



### *President's message*

## SCNA always needs a few good volunteers

By the time this *Viewpoint* arrives on your doorstep, August will be in the rearview mirror and with it (fingers crossed), SCNA's only Music in the Park event for this year. Assuming we pulled it off, thanks for attending. Hope you all had a great time.

Our fourth quarter is rapidly approaching and with it the general membership meeting and board elections in December. We are hoping for an in-person meeting this time around. The Nominations Committee, chaired by Bruce Pierini, has been actively seeking SCNA members to run for the board of directors. The board always appreciates folks with expertise in particular areas. But, what really makes the engine run are those willing to roll up their sleeves and do whatever is necessary to get a job done right.

The SCNA board is involved in housing, racial justice and homeless issues. Additionally, the planning and implementation of events and fundraisers such as the Home Tour, Wine Tasting & Silent Auction, and Music in the Park all require board member commitment. These and other activities help define our neighborhood and make board service so

rewarding. If you have the time and energy, let us know by contacting Bruce Pierini at [brucepierini@gmail.com](mailto:brucepierini@gmail.com). Please be sure to put "Nominations" in the subject line.

Speaking of activities, by popular demand the Porch Picnic returns Oct. 2. Board members and neighborhood volunteers will reprise their delivery roles to get the food to you as quickly as possible. Keep in mind the number of meals is limited, so be sure to place your orders early.

I want to express my sincere thanks to Erik Fay (chair) and the Neighborhood Concerns Committee (NCC) for incredible efforts over the past several months in responding to the City Council's General Plan 2040 and related matters. While each of SCNA's committees has performed well, the matters NCC has dealt with – and continues to deal with – are often on short notice and complex. An inordinate commitment of time and effort over an extended period of time has been required of this committee. Thank you all.

Even if you are unable to participate as a board member, SCNA can always use a few good volunteers to help with events. In the meantime, pray for rain.

### *Notes from July 7 SCNA board meeting*

## Smaller deficits projected with reopening of Sierra 2

Treasurer John Bailey reported at the SCNA board's July 7 meeting that SCNA received \$33,000 in direct offline donations from Big Day of Giving donors in May and an additional \$50,000 from the online donors.

Monthly deficits are expected to decline as rentals pick up with Sierra 2's slow opening.

- A bid to replace the solar system over the day care area was prohibitively expensive. The Facilities Committee will solicit additional bids for replacement of the solar panels.

- The re-flooring of Studio No. 2 is still out to bid. Great Beginnings childcare will get a three-month lease.

- Bailey encouraged committees to work on their budgets in August and to complete them by September.

- The Development Committee hopes to increase last year's revenue from \$18,000 to \$25,000 from the upcoming Porch Picnic fundraiser. Music in the Park has a go-ahead from the city for Aug. 29.

- The Neighborhood Concerns Committee met with the fire marshal's office regarding illegal fireworks. Many illegal fireworks are stored in Reno and eventually make their way

**The next meeting of the SCNA  
board will be at 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday, Sept. 1 on Zoom.**

**If you're interested in attending  
and to receive the link, please  
contact [president@sierra2.org](mailto:president@sierra2.org).**

to Sacramento. The city has already gathered \$200,000 in fines.

- The Racial Justice Committee met with Dwight White, the Sacramento County Inspector General, on reform in the Sheriff's Department. White also discussed his work to oversee police-involved shootings to make sure they are fairly assessed.

The SCNA board will send a gift certificate, paid for privately by board members, to Katie Byram of the Sierra 2 Center staff to welcome her new baby.

The board agreed unanimously not to meet in August.

The next board meeting will be Wednesday, Sept. 1 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.

– Bruce Pierini, board secretary

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### Please send your story ideas to:

[denniscusick52@gmail.com](mailto:denniscusick52@gmail.com) with *Viewpoint* in the subject field. Deadline for copy is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

*Viewpoint* appreciates neighbors who submit news about their babies, new neighbors, milestones and special events, as well as letters to the editor and opinions.



## Sierra 2 Center wins \$10,000 grant for native plant garden

By Heather Hogan

The Sierra 2 Center has been awarded \$10,000 from the Sacramento County transient occupancy tax grant program to build a native plant demonstration and learning garden at the front entrance of the center on 24th Street.

Sierra 2 will partner with Miridae Living Labs, a nonprofit that promotes the ecological role of native plants and insects. With the help of local volunteers, the garden will include bug and butterfly-friendly, low-maintenance and drought-tolerant native plants, interpretive signs, a seed-dispersing sculpture, and educational opportunities through the Learnery at Sierra 2.

"We are thrilled to partner with Sierra 2 to kick off our first big community garden project," said Caroline Larsen-Bircher, executive director of Miridae Living Labs.

"It's a wonderful space with strong community support. We look forward to working with volunteers and helping to spread the love of California native plants and insects."

Since 2017, the county grants have provided support to nonprofit organizations that carry out community programs and/or services in the areas of arts and culture, community development and services, economic or workforce development, and health and human services.

### Mobile nursery Sept. 25

The Miridae Mobile Nursery will be parked at the Sierra 2 Center entrance on 24th Street from 8 a.m. to noon Sept. 25. This mobile nursery is a modified box truck available for on-site visits to help people engage with their gardens safely in self-isolation.

An assortment of native plants will be available for sale along with garden tools and supplies.



Photo/Heather Hogan

Cheering the success of receiving the grant, are, left to right, Heather Hogan, Kate Hayes, Billy Krimmel, Caroline Larsen-Bircher, Kimberly Bond and Gerre Buehler.

### Garden volunteer workdays

**Saturday, Oct. 16, 8 a.m.-noon:** Help install drip irrigation as sprinklers are converted to drip lines.

**Saturday, Oct. 30, 8 a.m.-noon:** Help get plants into the ground. Bring gloves, water, sunblock, a mask, and perhaps a shovel or spade. To volunteer, sign up at <https://sierra2.org/garden/>.

## Sierra School class photo captures a moment in time

By Patti Roberts

The 1926 sepia-tone photo showcasing a second-grade class at Sierra School is both fascinating and intriguing. When Debra Sherman came across the image at a recent Fourth Avenue estate sale, she knew it was a treasure.

The photo belonged to Virginia Pitts, who passed away in March. (See *Viewpoint*, May 2021.) But, according to Virginia's niece, Virginia could not be one of the students because the photo is dated 1926 and she was born in 1928.

This image depicts one of the first classes at Sierra School, which opened in 1923 and is now the Sierra 2 Center for the Arts & Community on 24th Street. Though the students' identities remain a mystery, the photo captures a moment in time – the girls in Buster



Second grade class, Sierra School, 1926

Brown pageboy haircuts and the boys decked out in sweaters, shirts and ties.

According to noted Curtis Park historian Dan Murphy, "This was the high point of construction in the surrounding 1920s developments. The building is in Spanish (Revival) style, specifically Andalusian/vernacular mode. The school closed in the late-1970s under the Field Act that mandated earthquake safety standards statewide."

The last graduating class was in 1976. In the summer of 1978, neighbors organized as

the Sierra School Neighborhood Association (SSNA) to restore the building for community use. Soon the neighborhood organization came to encompass all of Curtis Park, renamed itself Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association (SCNA) and repurposed Sierra School as the Sierra 2 Center that now includes the 24th Street Theatre, Senior Center, Dance Wing, Sierra Green and classrooms for neighborhood and regional activities, classes and events.

The photo is being framed and will be donated to SCNA.

## New members recruited for SCNA board

The SCNA board Nominations Committee seeks nominees to run for several seats on the SCNA board in the December 2021 election.

Diversity is sought in the association's leadership – racial, ethnic, age and geographic, including neighbors in Crocker Village, along Franklin Boulevard and north of Second Avenue.

Nominees are sought who can lead and work collaboratively. They must agree to volunteer time and follow through with commitments.

A background or interest in one or more of the following would be helpful:

- Neighborhood issues such as land use and zoning, traffic and safety, and tree canopy;
- Special events (Home & Garden Tour and Wine Tasting & Silent Auction) and family-oriented neighborhood activities (Music in the Park and Egg Hunt & Pajama Parade);
- Personnel and human resources;
- Financial management and fundraising;
- Marketing and media;
- Local government.

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



## Executive Director's Report

# Sierra 2 expands offerings amid concerns for safety

By Terri Shettle

Sierra 2 Center staff and volunteers began rolling out a gradual and controlled approach to reopening for events, activities and programs after Gov. Gavin Newsom announced that the state would "open" on June 15.

On June 16, Sierra 2 welcomed its first guests in well over a year.

The Senior Center reopened July 1 on a limited basis with volunteer help.

In August, the first theater production group returned, as did some in-person classes in The Learners.

At first, the reopening consisted of returning activities in the studios with known and limited participants plus use of several rooms in the main building that allowed for self-contained groups, social distancing and pre-registrations.

Access to the building was limited, with the office open half-days on Wednesdays through Fridays only. Staff continued working from home outside of those hours. Mondays and Tuesdays were initially closed to rentals and other activities.

Interest in Sierra 2 and activities has increased as people are anxious to return to doing the things they love, socializing

and celebrating all the things that make life special. To enable these activities to take place, we are increasing staff time and hours of operation while also continuing to keep a measured pace of returning to full operations.

We are working within the current employee capacities as we plan to add staff, especially for facility services. Currently, Sierra 2 is open seven days per week. The office is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Even with this gradual opening for business, the pandemic is not over. While the vaccination rates in Sacramento County remain lower than the goal, the rise in cases of the delta variant is creating new cause for concern. On July 30, the county reinstituted mask requirements in all indoor settings, impacting the ability of certain activities to continue at Sierra 2.

The center will continue to operate on a limited and controlled basis, allowing activities that work within the health orders and general safety best practices. Updates can be found on the website ([sierra2.org](http://sierra2.org)), in email newsletters and on social media sites.

*Terri Shettle is executive director of the Sierra 2 Center.*

## Senior Center reconvenes some in-person groups

By Katie Byram

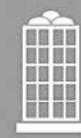
The Sierra 2 Senior Center is slowly finding its way back to "normal"—if there is such a thing. Pre-registration is no longer required.

Sierra 2 welcomes back Mahjong to Mondays from 10 a.m.-noon. New faces are always welcome by these neighborhood Mahjong players.

My Story Project has returned on the calendar on Mondays from 1-3 p.m. Please call the office at 916 452-3005 prior to stopping in because they sometimes don't meet or are in the middle of filming. Visit [sierra2.org/senior-center/my-story-project/](http://sierra2.org/senior-center/my-story-project/).

The Stitcher's Circle, a group of knitters, sewers and quilters are always welcomes crafters to join. They meet virtually on the second Thursday and fourth Monday.

*Katie Byram is the Senior Center coordinator.*



SIERRA 2 CENTER  
SIERRA CURTIS  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

Due to health concerns related to the spread of the coronavirus variants, events listed below may have changed. Please contact groups directly with questions.

### MARTIAL ARTS

Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Kung Fu  
Yi family Tai Chi/Qi Gong,  
Shaolin Martial Arts/Qi Gong  
Thursday, 7-8 p.m.;  
Saturday, 10-11 a.m., in Studio 2  
Byron, [Lohan36@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Lohan36@sbcglobal.net)

### ADULT DANCE

Two Rivers Dance Center/  
River City Taps  
Mondays/Thursdays/Saturdays  
Richard, [richard@](mailto:richard@tworiversdancecenter.com)  
[tworiversdancecenter.com](http://tworiversdancecenter.com)

### OTHER

Friday Way Out Group  
of Alcoholics Anonymous  
Open Hybrid Meeting –  
in person and Zoom  
Fridays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. in Room 11  
Helen Sundet, 916 769-7471

### MUSIC

Beginning Taiko Drumming  
4-week class  
No experience necessary  
Tuesdays, starting Sept. 14 & Oct. 12  
6-7 p.m. in Studio 1; \$60  
Intermediate Taiko Drumming  
4-week class  
Previous taiko experience required  
Tuesdays, starting Sept. 14 & Oct. 12  
7-8:30 p.m. in Studio 1; \$90  
Register: [kristyoshiro@gmail.com](mailto:kristyoshiro@gmail.com)

### Beginning Taiko

3-week class  
No experience necessary  
Tuesdays, starting Nov. 9  
6-7 p.m. in Studio 1; \$45  
Intermediate Taiko  
3-week class  
Previous taiko experience required  
Tuesdays, starting Nov. 9  
7-8:30 p.m. in Studio 1; \$75  
Register: [kristyoshiro@gmail.com](mailto:kristyoshiro@gmail.com)

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Oct. 11: The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

NONFICTION BOOK CLUB  
3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon, Sierra 2  
Green behind Sierra 2 Center  
Sept. 16: The Genius of Birds  
by Jennifer Ackerman  
Oct. 21: Confederates in the Attic:  
Dispatches From an Unfinished Civil  
War by Tony Horwitz

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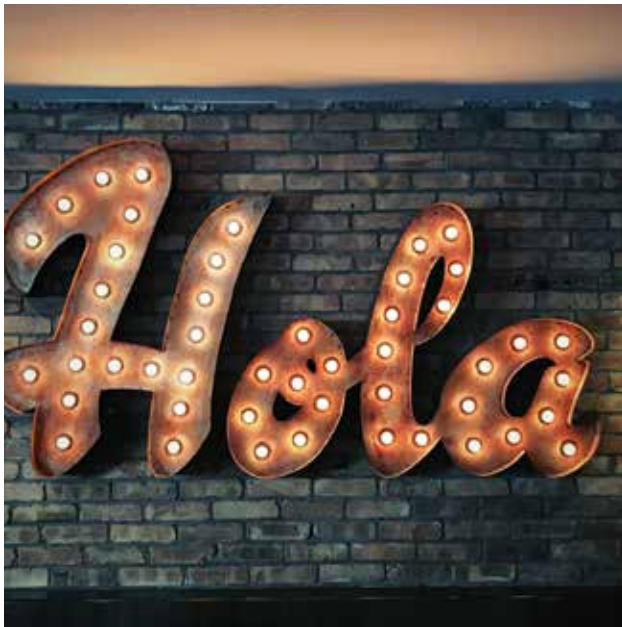
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**Room 7, Saturday, Sept. 25, 10 a.m.-noon**  
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## Neighborhood artists showing their works in Sac Open Studios

By Heather Hogan

Three Curtis Park locations are participating Sept. 11-12 in Sac Open Studios, a free, self-guided studio tour.

Four artists will display their works at Triple Exposure Studio at Fifth Avenue and Franklin Boulevard – ceramicist Sandy Fong Whetstone, painter Jen Beckman, and photographers Donald Satterlee and Ed Asmus. A block away, Thomas Fillebrown will open his studio at Franklin Boulevard and Portola Way. Additionally, Patricia Altschul will open her studio at 2926 24th St., just south of Sierra 2 Center. The studios will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day.

Sierra 2 Center staffer and former Curtis Park resident Heather Hogan will have four artists showing at Tenacious Goods Studio on Annrud Way in South Land Park. Visitors can make their own tie dyes with Backyard Art Academy, try out waterslide decals with Heather Hogan, giggle at pop art animal portraits by Dawn Pederson, and marvel at gargoyles and ceramic tusk sculptures by Michael Gray.

Verge Center for the Arts is hosting Conversations with Artists, an online interview series to complement and promote the in-person tour. Log in to hear regional art professionals interview Sac Open Studios artists about their artwork, inspirations and processes. Each artist interview will last approximately 15 minutes. View the schedule, featured artists and links to register at [sacopenstudios.com/conversations-with-artists-2/](https://sacopenstudios.com/conversations-with-artists-2/).

Sac Open Studios is a two-weekend event. Studios west of Highway 99 and Business 80 will be open Sept. 11-12, studios to the east the following weekend, Sept. 18-19. The hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. both weekends.

Hundreds of artists will open their spaces to the public for tours and demonstrations. Find your favorites online at [sacopenstudios.com](https://sacopenstudios.com) or pick up one of their printed guides around town. In 2019, Sac Open Studios attracted more than 30,000 visitors and featured more than 250 emerging, mid-career and established artists in their homes and studios.



Photo/Jason Pierce

Benwar Shepard, educator, musician, lives in Sacramento and will perform with Element Brass Band Sept. 17 at Two Rivers Cider Co.

## MUSIC in the neighborhood

Local live music concerts continue. Masks may be required. For questions, check the venue websites.

### THE SIDE DOOR

2900 Franklin Blvd.

<https://www.thesidedoor.net>

All shows 7 p.m. Tickets: \$20

Sept. 18....The Gold Souls (Fresh Funk soul blues)

Sept. 24....The Californios

(California Americana/country)

### TWO RIVERS CIDER CO.

4311 Attawa Ave.

<https://www.tworiverscider.com>

All shows 6:30-9 p.m.

Table reservations suggested.

Sept. 3.....Creamery Station (Blues/jam/rock)

Sept. 4.....Dusty Green Bones Band (Newgrass)

Sept. 10....Ballin' That Jack (Blues & jam)

Sept. 11....Nipper Brothers (Grateful Dead covers)

Sept. 17....Element Brass Band

(NOLA second line, funk)

Sept. 18....Brotherly Mudd (Americana folk)

Sept. 20....Saints of Circumstance

(Dead/Garcia re-creation)

Sept. 24....Sean Lehe Band (Jam rock)

Sept. 25....Urban Sherpas (Jazz rock fusion)

– Mindy Giles

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# Neon lights go out at College Cyclery; Pilates moving in

By Patti Roberts

It's always sad when a beloved local business closes its doors. Even more so when it has been a neighborhood fixture for decades. But the owners of College Cyclery on 21st Street were hit hard during the pandemic and had to make the difficult and heartbreaking decision to turn the lights out at the end of June.

College Cyclery was easily recognized by its classic neon sign and rows of bicycles out front as well as new bikes and vintage cycling memorabilia displayed inside.

The 1920s building began as a series of markets including Piggly Wiggly, but eventually morphed into the bike business starting in 1946 as College Hardware and Cyclery. It was College Cyclery when Terry and Allison Cox took ownership in 2006.

College Cyclery was not the main business support of the family. Rather it was a passion of bike enthusiast Terry, who also owned Sacramento Theatrical Lighting, which provided production equipment for venues and outside events throughout the area, including theaters, concerts and conferences. But then the pandemic hit, causing a crashing

financial domino effect for the family. With all events and productions shut down, so did the need for theatrical lighting, thus the painful decision to close down both businesses.

"With Theatrical Lighting closing, I lost my primary source of income," Terry said. "And the bike shop never was a big money maker, never profitable enough to support my family."

"We're so sad," Terry said. "We loved the bike shop, our regular customers and the feeling of neighborhood support. It was heartbreaking and gut-wrenching to close – especially after having to close down Sacramento Theatrical Lighting." At the heart of College Cyclery was lead mechanic, Mike Threadgall, who started working at the store for previous owners in 1985.

"It was always more than a job," Threadgall said. "It's been my life. I've seen multiple generations of cyclists throughout the years, thousands of bike stories. It was really tough – saying goodbye to opening the door and turning on the lights like I did every day for 30 years."

Threadgall, and the bike shop, are still in business, operating out of a 14,000-square-foot downtown warehouse on 13th Street that housed the theatrical lighting equipment as well as Terry's top fuel dragsters, his other passion. However, bike repairs and sales are by appointment only: 916 456-2042.

Terry and Allison Cox looked for someone to buy the building as a bike shop and continue its legacy.



Photo/Courtesy of College Cyclery

Supplying bikes for the neighborhood for decades, this shop had to close in June due to the pandemic.

But after a year on the market, nothing worked out. However, there is a new owner who loves the building and the neighborhood and is turning the shop into a Pilates studio.

Maria Bardet is aiming to open Humani Pilates Studio at the beginning of next year with group and private classes.

"I look forward to inviting Curtis Park neighbors to the new space," Bardet said. She is relocating the studio from her current I Street location downtown. "I love the ambiance and history of this building, as well as feel of community the neighborhood offers."

## Birds of Curtis Park

# Bushtits are tiny birds that flock together

By Dan Murphy

One of the smallest and cutest birds in the neighborhood is the bushtit, at 4½ inches and ¼ ounce. The only smaller birds around here are hummingbirds.

One notable feature is a long tail. Males have dark eyes; females have lighter, often yellow eyes.

Bushtits are usually found in flocks of 10 to 40 members. They do not fly far in any single flight. They move in concert from tree to shrub to tree. They are primarily bug eaters that glean the foliage, sometimes upside down, for scale bugs, spiders and other tiny prey.



Male bushtit

Photo/Dan Murphy

You may spot bushtits as they sporadically dribble across an open space. If you see several minute birds crawling around together in the

foliage, they are likely bushtits.

The benefit of bushtits traveling together is that they have a lot of eyes and vantage points to see predators. They are extremely social and tolerate other birds and even birders. Often other birds, e.g., warblers, will travel with them in mixed flocks to take advantage of the bushtit sentries. Their characteristic alarm call when spotting an avian predator galvanizes every prey bird in hearing distance to take cover or flee.

Bushtits are among the small number of species that are cooperative breeders. The mated pair choose their site and build their nest together. Other members of the flock, usually those

that have been unsuccessful in breeding, assist the parents with building the nest and with feeding nestlings and fledglings. Both parents incubate the eggs, which average six per brood.

Spider webs and plant materials are combined to fashion a long sock nest. The finished nest is pendulous and gourd-shaped, with a small hooded circular entrance near the top. It is camouflaged with local plant material and heavily lined with whatever soft insulating material is available.

Bushtits do not migrate. They are found throughout California and the Pacific Coast from Canada to Mexico. They can live about eight years.

## Hitching posts, anyone?

By Judy Harper

There are a few hitching posts in the older part of our neighborhood – Portola Way, Third Avenue and Fifth Avenue among others – mostly in front of homes built in the 1910s or so, when horses were the predominant means of transportation.

It was a "dark and stormy night" probably 25 years ago or so when some

dastardly fiend stole the hitching posts in front of two homes on Portola Way – just sawed them off in the noise of the storm.

The neighbors are finally searching for replacements. They are working with Jim Gray, who has developed a few options to recreate the posts. The option that would most closely match existing hitching posts involves creating a mold of the top knob. Five homeowners on Portola Way are

interested, but more are needed to go with this method. The post and ring are more easily made or procured.

If your home is screaming that it wants its own hitching post, this is a good time to contact Judy Harper (judejudy@pacbell.net). If you know anyone else who may be interested, please forward this information. Other older neighborhoods might be candidates for their own hitching posts.



Neighbors are ready to order a vintage replacement for the hitching posts that were taken from their home fronts.

Photo/Judy Harper





Photo/Will Carlton

In the back gallery, Public Land's Natalye Valentina admires the corpse flower.

## Rare corpse bloom

Last month, Curtis Park's Public Land Store hosted a blooming *amorphophallus titanum* – or "corpse flower" – providing yet another reason to wear masks inside.

This beautiful plant native to Sumatra is known for its pungent bloom, which happens rarely and has been compared to the smell of rotting flesh. This corpse flower usually resides with the Biological Sciences Department of Sacramento State University, which loaned the flower to Public Land Store for the bloom, providing the neighborhood a rare and remarkable viewing (and smelling).

Over a few days of its short bloom, about 300 people came to check it out. A natural queue formed outside to wait their turn; some took photos. Then it was returned to Sac State.

– Lily M. Harris

## For Land Park gift shop, success is in the 'Details'

By Kelsey Wehseles

Details Mercantile is a Land Park neighborhood gift shop catering to many different tastes and flavors.

The concept of the shop is as eclectic as its name. The store is a mixture of pure retail, a representation of local artisans, and consignment with multiple departments including home, kitchen and personal. Patrons can select from a variety of items including throws and pillows, olive oils, linen aprons, cookware and utensils, clay pottery and candles.

Owners Loretta and Kevin Schell opened Details Mercantile at 2665 Riverside Blvd. near Second

**... linen aprons made by retired chef Julie Hawkins, art from Elaine Bowers, as well as wooden cutting and serving boards from Block & Bowl, all Curtis Park suppliers.**

Avenue on July 11, 2020. They had signed the lease in November 2019, and were planning to open in April 2020, but then the pandemic hit.

As Loretta points out, the name says it all. "We are detail people," she said. "We created a business that leans heavily on our ability to pay attention to all of the small details."

The shop's location just happened upon them. While driving down the street, Loretta saw a "for lease" sign out front, looked at the space that afternoon and



Photo/Judy Harper

Loretta and Kevin Schell opened Details Mercantile July 2020.

decided it was the perfect place to set up shop.

"The interior is well lit because of the windows, and we love the architecture of the building," she said.

As a veteran shopper and researcher, Loretta does all the buying for the store, so she can talk with customers about the products, where they come from, the uniqueness of the items and how to use them. Loretta merchandises the store from shows, online and especially from local artists who consider the store a retail space to sell their goods.

They sell linen aprons made by retired chef Julie Hawkins, art from Elaine Bowers, as well as wooden cutting and serving boards from Block & Bowl, all Curtis Park suppliers.

A couple of Loretta's favorite items currently in the store are the David Fussenegger blankets. "Kevin took one home and had a nap with it and he said it was the best nap he'd had in a long time," she said. And the Vintage Farm Suds goat milk soaps: "They've changed my skin and arrested my eczema."

The Schells' favorite aspect to owning a business in the area is the local patronage. "Our customers are so loyal and supportive, and they really want to see us succeed," she said.

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# Bitte offers products for children at Vallejo Way shop and online

By Susan MacCulloch

*Bitte* in German means “please” and “you’re welcome.” It’s also the name of a children’s store at 2051 Vallejo Way, adjacent to Chocolate Fish Coffee on Freepoint Boulevard.

Bitte Shop’s small retail location is one part of a much larger business with a strong online presence owned by Maia McDonald Smith and her mother, Sara McDonald. Their inventory is the opposite of plastic, disposable toys found at mass market stores.

Bitte offers toys, clothing in natural earth tones, books and an array of products for the early years that focus on sustainable and modern designs destined for years of use.

The business partners have strong retail marketing experience. Sara’s career spanned 32 years in the retail business, but Bitte is her first storefront. Maia pushed for the store; she oversees the colorful and inviting product displays. Business decisions are a joint effort. “It’s a nice collaboration,” Sara said. “We have a very similar design aesthetic.”

As a grandparent, Sara appreciates a younger voice advising on products for their retail and web stores. Maia concentrates on space design, while Sara manages procurement.

“We had talked about starting a business together for years, and after I had my daughter we really started talking and planning seriously,” Maia said.

Bitte began in Maia McDonald Smith’s home in Oakland in January 2015. The business website launched later that year in August. Then Maia and her family moved to Sacramento when daughter Ingrid was 2 years old. She’s now 7. The couple also has a son, Ansel, age 3.

Maia created Bitte’s online shop in her dining room with merchandise stored in her garage. As sales grew, the products soon took up half the house and she eventually ran out of storage.

When the space adjacent to Chocolate Fish Coffee became available, they leased it in March 2019. It took a year for the build-out and their shop opened in February 2020, just before the COVID-19 lockdown. The pandemic paused the build-up of their retail store.

Bitte is small enough to be nimble in business decisions. They pivoted to an increase in book and puzzle offerings during the pandemic.

Their retail storefront contains just a portion of what’s available on their website. A tour of their inventory and shipping operation behind the scenes revealed a wealth of products. Selling online is now Bitte’s main business.

Bitte has a strong social media presence, with 66,700 Instagram followers. It’s frequently updated and enhanced by Maia’s photography and product styling.

Maia believes their storefront is an



Photos/Judy Harper

Maia McDonald Smith and Sara McDonald offer clothing in earth tones.

opportunity to be part of the community. They can display many of the products posted online. Lots of neighbors and young families come by. A 12-year-old girl offered a compliment they cherish: “I could see this shop in Paris!”

The business duo emphasizes natural materials and sustainable products. This focus is always at the forefront of new products they offer. When available, they offer recycled items also. “It’s a marriage of our natural aesthetic and a clean, sustainable product,” Sara said. Their merchandise will stand the test of time.

They source products from California and worldwide. Local products include Urb Apothecary, felted knit slippers from Wee Woolikens, books by a local illustrator, and Hello Tartlet’s bows and headbands.

Their bestsellers are a wooden toy camper with surfboard, wooden arches made in Ukraine (mini wooden



The business partners emphasize natural materials and sustainable products.

stacking rainbow arches), Holztiger wooden toys and teddy bears made of recycled wool. Kids’ books and products from recycled materials are popular.

Bitte plans a Labor Day sale the first weekend of September.

Bitte Shop is open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday to Saturday. Private shopping appointments are available on Wednesdays. Bitte offers local pickup of online orders.

For more information, visit [bitteshop.com](http://bitteshop.com) or @shopbitte on Instagram.

## Viewpoint wants your story ideas

**Viewpoint appreciates neighbors who submit news about their babies, new neighbors, milestones and special events, as well as letters to the editor and opinions.**

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## Avid Reader owner adds toys, games to store's offerings

By Judy Green Scheible

At age 74, Stan Forbes, owner of Avid Reader on Broadway, has not forgotten the joy of toys. Until recently, he had not ventured far from the business of selling books. About a year ago he decided to get playful and add toys, games and puzzles to his bookstore.

Now, when you walk through his front door, you see colorful displays of child-friendly items. Everything is thematically grouped. There are telescopes, flutes and harmonicas, dinosaur kits, plush stuffed animals that beg to be touched and art project kits.

Of course, there is still a rich collection of picture books, novels and non-fiction and the child-size table

and chairs for getting a closer look. And the adult collection remains strong and current.

Forbes has been in the book business for 35 years. He moved into his current Broadway location in 2017, when he lost his lease at the old Tower Books site at 16th Street and Broadway. Previously he had stores downtown at 10th and L streets and in Davis.

Although Target and Walmart carry toys, “they were not the toys I wanted to offer,” Forbes said. “I wanted models to make and board games to play. I wanted traditional toys.”

When it came to selecting toys, Forbes got advice from his former wife, Alzada. She owned the Avid Reader store in Davis and its adjacent toy store.

Forbes said he thinks he made a good decision. “We had the best year ever,” he said. “During the



Photo/Joan Cusick

Stan Forbes, owner of Avid Reader bookstore, holds a kite kit. It's among the many toys and child-friendly items he has added to the store.

pandemic people read more. They also understand the importance of supporting a small, local business.”

Forbes expects storytellers to return to the store to perform in September.

## Weller Way resident surrounds home with fantastic sculptures

By Kelsey Wehsels

On a quick walk down Weller Way, you'll notice art pieces courtesy of Bruce Morse, a 30-year resident of the street who believes in contributing to the public art effort.

“I like when people can walk along in their normal life and look up and see something that's a little bit out of the ordinary,” he said. “I think public art makes people feel a bit better and I wanted to be a part of that.”

One such piece is a dragon in Bruce's front yard made of stucco, several pieces of tile, old ceramic plates and cups, and marbles he found in tile shops, etc. The dragon has old doorknobs for eyes, screws for teeth, a handrail for the tongue, and expanded metal for the wings.

Construction of the art piece took a few months as Bruce worked on it when he had spare time. The longest part of the project was the tile work. “I'm lucky I had some help. That was the most time-consuming part of it,” he said, crediting the assistance

of friends Allyson Spurlock, Claire Mitchell, Chase Ploesch, and Addison and Elise Goga.

The inspiration for the piece was from alebrijes, brightly colored Mexican folk art sculptures of fantastical creatures.

Bruce has several pieces in his back yard, including a couple of rebar trees with flowers climbing up them, a windmill inspired by his time working on old water-pumping windmills in Nicaragua, a stack of old wheelbarrows arranged on top of each other, and a rebar cage around a plant inspired by the Beijing National Stadium that resembles a bird's nest.

Bruce added another piece of art down the street, a tile mural of two cranes, completed by local artist Robert Sharland. At the very end of Weller Way is a train mural painted by students that Bruce's wife, Mari, helped coordinate when she was a teacher at Loretto High School. Bruce adds lights to the train during Christmas time.

Bruce is currently building a cabin in the mountains, but his next project will be a lion standing on two legs in his front yard.



In Bruce Morse's front yard, he created a dragon made of stucco, pieces of tile, old ceramic plates and cups, and marbles that he found in tile shops, etc.



A sculpture of old wheelbarrows arranged on top of each other serves as planters in the garden.



Photos/Kelsey Wehsels

Bruce built a windmill inspired by his time working on old water-pumping windmills in Nicaragua.





A Third Avenue homeowner built a little library to match their home.



Another box has been redesigned into a purple robot library.



This little library promotes book sharing with a creative flair.



Photos/Anne Da Vigo

Bill and Patti Petersen on Donner Way repurposed a former newspaper vending box.

## Neighborhood's little libraries offer variety of literary treasures

By Anne Da Vigo

One of pleasures of my walks on the tree-shaded streets of Curtis Park is browsing the many inviting little library boxes mounted in front yards.

These free little book boxes are as varied as our neighborhood's unique vintage homes.

Some residents have constructed their pint-size libraries using kits from Little Free Library, a worldwide nonprofit that promotes book sharing. Other owners have built boxes to match their houses, indulge their creativity, or employ recycled materials, such as decommissioned newspaper vending boxes.

In front of the West Curtis Drive home of Sue Staats and her partner, Dale McKeag, is a library box built 10 years ago by Sue's grandson Ian Chusluk-Staats as an elementary school project.

"Originally it was just a box, painted yellow with purple polka dots, but over time it leaked, so a year ago Dale and I built a roof for it and painted it to

match the house," Sue said.

On Donner Way, Patti and Bill Petersen have repurposed a former *Sacramento Bee* newspaper vending box painted and decorated in a Dr. Seuss theme by their son and daughter-in-law.

Yet another news box on 24th Street has been transformed into a purple robot library.

The fascinating variety of the library boxes is echoed in the rainbow of books residents have tucked inside.

Featured reading includes everything from children's books to popular fiction, classics to romances, and how-to's to self-improvement. Mysteries are a recurring favorite.

In my bookcase at home is a fascinating volume I spotted on Castro Way about Jewish mysticism – Kabbalah – that I never would have encountered otherwise.

Sue said she stocks her box with a variety of fiction, from time to time slipping in a few kids' books

her grandchildren have outgrown.

Patti Petersen was a teacher years ago. She and her husband, Bill, focus their collection on multicultural children's books. "We love kids," Bill said.

One of the hallmarks of the little library movement is that giving works both ways. While neighbors relish giving books away, the recipients also donate books from their collection that they think others might enjoy.

Interested in setting up your own sidewalk library?

The Little Free Library Foundation offers pre-made kits costing \$150 to \$200, plus postage. For those who want to create their own, the foundation's web site, [www.littlefreelibrary.org/build/](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org/build/) offers detailed instructions and a myriad of ideas.

*The Sacramento Bee*, which originally said it had given away all of its news boxes, discovered two boxes in a corner of its warehouse. We transferred them to our garage. If a neighbor would like one, contact me at [annedavigo@gmail.com](mailto:annedavigo@gmail.com).

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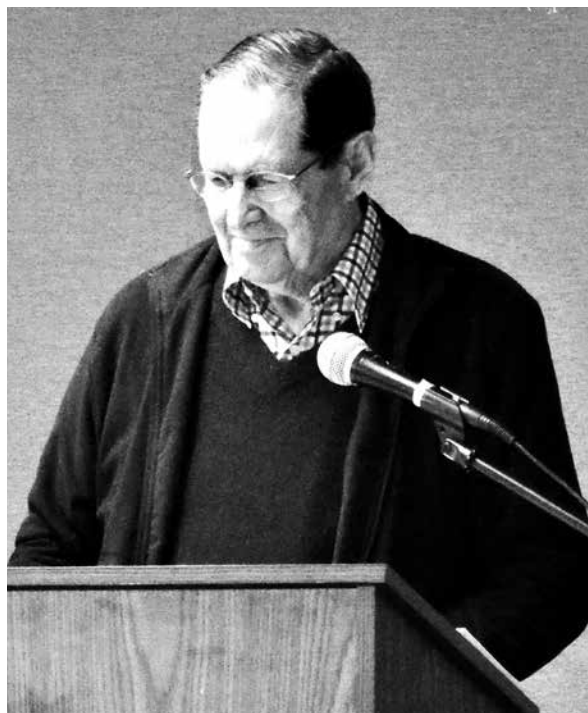
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Photo/Craig McCulloch

Bob Ralston reads one of his stories to the Life History Writing class at the Senior Center.

## My Story Project founder Bob Ralston moves to Elk Grove

By Craig McCulloch

Robert “Bob” Ralston, a Seventh Avenue neighbor since 1986, recently moved to Elk Grove.

Bob and his wife, Carolyn, were married for 42 years. She died in 2018. The couple was active in the Sierra 2 Senior Center for many years in both the Life History Writing class and the My Story Project.

Bob, now almost 95, is a Navy veteran of World War II who continues to wear a veteran’s cap proudly. After he finished his naval service and his education at UC Berkeley, he went to work as a nuclear physicist at Lawrence Livermore Lab.

After several years of writing segments of his life story in the

Life History Writing class, Bob combined them into a book, “God, Physics, and Me,” published in 2012. The book discusses the integration of his spiritual beliefs with his scientific background. It is available at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

Bob was the founder of the My Story Project in the Senior Center 10 years ago. Volunteers coach seniors and produce a video of them telling their life stories. Their story is edited with photos added to produce a DVD video.

My Story Project started with a gift from an anonymous donor to purchase video cameras, a computer system, lights, DVDs, memory chips and other equipment needed to start video production. More than 70 stories have been recorded.

## POINT OF VIEW

# Neighborhoods would benefit from ‘depaving’ asphalt surfaces

By Doug Bojack

A new nonprofit – Uncover Sacramento – offers residents resources to learn how to “depave” their neighborhoods by removing areas of excessive asphalt through community partnerships and volunteer efforts.

Over the coming years, the Central Valley will face significant environmental challenges, including more frequent droughts and infrequent but heavier winter storms. Sacramento is one of the major U.S. cities at greatest risk for catastrophic flooding.

Paved surfaces contribute to hotter temperatures in the summer, greater flood risk in the winter, air and stormwater pollution, and the depletion of critical groundwater. Removing impervious surfaces like asphalt helps reduce stormwater loads and pollution, mitigates stormwater runoff, enables more urban trees and native vegetation to reduce summer heat, and increases habitat restoration and connections.

Successful community-driven depaving projects have a few common characteristics. A good spot is in an easily accessible place with a built-in community, such as a school playground or church parking lot, and is highly visible to attract volunteers and donors. Project proponents should look for asphalt or concrete pavement that is failing, cracked, underutilized and prone to chronic flooding or puddling during rainstorms.

When scoping a project, a good starting point is aiming to remove a minimum of a couple hundred square feet of pavement (about the size of a single parking space) – and for first-timers, probably no larger than 500 square feet. Why these sizes? The project is worth your time to plan and do, but small enough to be accomplished if

you’re just starting out. Knowing the history of your site is also important to avoid uncovering contaminated soil. And finally, understanding and creating a feasible long-term maintenance plan with the property owner is a critical piece of any project’s ongoing success.

Although Curtis Park is already well forested, there is always room for improvement. For example, the Sierra 2 Center parking lot off Fourth Avenue drains a number of the center’s downspouts across more than 27,000 square feet of asphalt. There are several opportunities to disconnect these downspouts from flowing directly into the sewer and redirect them into permeable swales that can further support



Photo/Doug Bojack

A possible depaving project is at the downspout in the Sierra 2 Center parking lot.

shade trees that intercept rain.

Those who want to learn how to develop depaving projects or who want to help others develop depaving goals can visit UncoverSacramento.org. Uncover Sacramento intends to act as a technical assistance provider and fiscal sponsor for community groups and individuals who wish to pursue these projects in the Sacramento area.

Doug Bojack is an SCNA member and the founder of Uncover Sacramento. He lives on Fourth Avenue.

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# COMMUNITY CORNER



Photo/Shirley Olson

Bob Olson, left, son David, grandson Sam Didier and son-in-law Chris Didier celebrate Sam's graduation and Air Force commissioning.

## Military is family business

Bob and Shirley Olson of East Curtis Drive celebrated the college graduation and Air Force commissioning of grandson Samuel Didier. Sam was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and is on track to earn his pilot's wings.

Sam graduated from U.C. Davis with a degree in chemistry and, pending his potential 12-month wait for a flight school vacancy, has accepted a paid internship with Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

Sam was given the oath of office by Grandpa Bob, a retired

Lieutenant Colonel in the California National Guard. Sam's parents, Chris Didier, a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, and Laura Didier, daughter of Bob and Shirley, pinned on Sam's new rank. Also in attendance was David Olson, son of Bob and Shirley, who retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Marine Corps.

Bob and Shirley have lived for 51 years in Curtis Park, where they raised David and his twin sister, Laura Didier, both 1988 graduates of C.K. McClatchy High School. Laura is Sam's mother.



Photo/Joan Cusick

From left, Mia's sister, Danielle Gardner, Mia and Will Weiland talk with Erik Fay at the neighbor-planned party. About 50 neighbors turned out for the event.

## Baby shower in park for postal carriers

By Erik Fay

Curtis Park is the rare neighborhood with a husband and wife letter carrier team. Mia and Will Weiland have been U.S. Postal Service employees for more than six years. On a daily basis they deliver the mail, but also offer pleasant greetings, smiles and very considerate service. The Weilands are not only beloved mail carriers, but also friends and honorary neighbors.

Knowing the couple were expecting their first child, 10th Avenue residents organized a baby shower for the morning of July 11. More than 50 neighbors from several streets gathered in William Curtis Park for

a casual celebration. They enjoyed a continental breakfast and loaded the tables with gifts for the baby. The best part was the opportunity to visit with Mia and Will for longer than when they're on the job and on the move.

The couple met at work while both were carrier assistants and training. For about five years, Will has been a carrier for postal route No. 1814 for the Fort Sutter Post Office. Mia has been working the route for a year and a half. Will and Mia grew up in Orangevale and currently reside there. Their parents also live in the area.

Ezekiel ("Zeke") was born nine days early at 5:04 a.m. Aug. 11, weighing 8 pounds, 14 ounces. He was 21 1/2 inches long at birth.

## To his own taste

## A brief history of eating ramen

By Martin Pierucci

In a building on 24th Street now occupied by Noodles to Thai For (which I recommend) was the home of Shoki Ramen. At that time there were no social distance rules, and we sat cheek by jowl enjoying incredible ramen like Tokyo salarymen. Heaven!

Shoki moved to the historic Trails Restaurant on 21st Street, which was opened over 80 years ago by

swimming movie star Esther Williams (I'm not joking). Then disaster with a fire resulted in a seeming abandonment of the building, with Shoki's remaining business on the R Street corridor.

What joy and rapture when we saw the sign for the grand opening of Ramendou in a strip mall at 4001 Freeport Blvd., Suite 110. Tidy and brightly lit with earnest proprietors.

We ordered to go, but there is the

opportunity for indoor dining and actually a couple of café tables in front.

Our choices? Lunch specials: one Pork Ribs and one Shoyu Ramen. The ribs were falling off the bone tender and richly flavored. The Shoyu broth was equally tasty with perfectly prepared noodles. Neighbors visited, enjoyed bowls of the Veggie Ramen and said they will return for more.

Ramendou is open daily, from 11 a.m. to 8:45 p.m. Its website is <http://www.ramendouusa.com>.

Martin Pierucci, an SCNA board member, lives on 27th Street.



Photo/Kathryn Beltrami

Ramendou's Shoyu Ramen



## PTA works to make school positive experience for all

By Lauren Gothard  
and Lindsey Sin

The Bret Harte Parent Teacher Association aims to increase parent involvement on campus, connect parents and staff, and fundraise for student activities. Like many organizations during the pandemic, the PTA postponed in-person events and met virtually, but the goal remained the same: Continue serving the needs of the Bret Harte school community.

PTA President Adam Gothard shared some of the struggles during the past 18 months. “Technology barriers and burnout made it difficult for some families to participate in the PTA; it felt like we had less participation this year,” he said. Still, Gothard is ready for the new school year and for students to return to campus for the first day of school on Sept. 2.

Just before the pandemic, the 2019-20 school year was an active one for the PTA. There were several fun events for students and families, such as a Halloween dance and movie nights in the cafeteria, plus support for academic activities, like the school’s music program. The PTA also supported parent training for the i-Ready student learning program and a STEM night. Gothard recalls, “Everyone enjoyed being on campus together outside of normal educational instruction.”



PTA President Adam Gothard with his then-kindergartner, Caileigh, at the last PTA-sponsored event before the COVID shutdown, a family movie night for Valentine’s Day 2020 in the school cafeteria.

Photo/Lauren Gothard

Since the pandemic brought those activities to a standstill, the PTA focused instead on moderate fundraising, support for distance learning and teacher appreciation.

After the school year begins, the PTA will reconvene to hold officer elections and recruit new members. Elections will be held for president, treasurer and secretary, and may also include the historian and chairs of the Events Committee and the Parent Engagement Committee.

While Sacramento City Unified School District expects a full return to in-person learning for this academic year, there are still several unknowns about what that means for school events and activities.

“We will have to take some guidance from the district about meeting in person as a larger school

community, but we hope to get more parents involved in the PTA and continue to support students and staff,” Gothard said.

Principal James Tucker is looking forward to the new school year also. “Our PTA has an opportunity to re-imagine what events and fundraisers will look like for the fall,” Tucker said. “It is important that we create a community for our families virtually through the fall because connection is an essential part of education for our families and students.”

If you’re interested in learning more about the Bret Harte PTA, check out the Bret Harte Facebook and Instagram (@brethartesac) pages for updates. For more information on the school district’s plan for in-person learning, visit <https://returntogether.scusd.edu/return-health>.

## Household batteries must be treated as hazardous waste

City of Sacramento

Whether for smoke detectors, kids’ toys or kitchen gadgets, batteries get a lot of use in local households. But there are several important reasons used batteries should not be thrown away in regular garbage bins.

“Many people don’t realize that batteries are considered hazardous,” said Jesa David from the city’s Recycling and Solid Waste Division. “That’s because

of the metals and other corrosive or toxic materials they contain, such as lead or cadmium, which can leak or be vaporized and carried on the wind if they are not disposed of properly.”

Common batteries such as AAA, AA, C, D, and 9-volt are banned from household trash and must be treated as household hazardous waste, David said. Car batteries and other types of single use and rechargeable batteries are also treated as hazardous.

Single-use battery drop-off locations in Sacramento include: City Hall, 915 I St.; Department of Utilities, 1395 35th Ave.; Belle Cooledge Community Center, 5699 South Land Park Drive; Coloma Community Center, 4623 T St.; Ethel MacLeod Hart Multipurpose Senior Center, 915 27th St.; George Sim Community Center, 6207 Logan St.; Joe Mims, Jr. Hagginwood Community Center, 3271 Marysville Blvd.; Sam and Bonnie Pannell

Meadowview Community Center, 2450 Meadowview Road; South Natomas Community Center, 2901 Truxel Road; Oak Park Community Center, 3425 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.; and Robertson Community Center, 3525 Norwood Ave.

The drop-off locations listed above are free to city residents and apply only to household batteries (no business waste). Call the individual center to confirm hours of availability.

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