

VIEWPOINT

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March 2022



Photo/Chris Smith

With his dog Jax as lookout, Mark Baker paddles his kayak and tows a raft of garbage found along the American River.

Mark Baker thought: 'I wish someone would pick up this trash.' He did it himself.

By Patti Roberts

Mark Baker has always had a love of nature, kayaking along the American River since he was a boy growing up near its banks. Since he moved to 24th Street in Curtis Park with husband Michael Roberts, Baker has continued exploring the river on a regular basis.

When he began helping take care of his elderly mother full time four years ago, Baker would find solace by paddling the American River waters near Sutter's Landing. And that's when he began noticing the accumulation of trash along its shores, mostly the result of abandoned homeless camps.

"Walking my dog at Sutter's Landing, I always thought to myself, 'I wish someone would pick this trash up,' until I realized I could be that someone," he said.

Much of the trash along the banks could only be

accessed by water. So, along with dog Jax, Baker began piling discarded objects and bags of trash on his kayak and raft, and hauling them to dumpsters.

"I would go back to my mom's house and tell her my tales of trash pickup," Baker said. "She lived vicariously through my stories, which was so sweet since she was the one who taught me the love of outdoors." His mother died two years ago, and Baker returned to work as a self-employed contractor (Mark Baker Contracting). But he did not stop his cleanup efforts.

Please see *Trash*, Page 2



Photo/Joan Cusick
Blossom's owners pick up trash in Curtis Park. Page 2.

Neighbors seek to unify goals in newly joined Council district

Priorities in housing, commercial corridors

By Bruce Pierini

SCNA has begun a series of meetings with other nearby neighborhood associations to see if all can collaborate as residents of newly reconfigured City Council District 7.

Because each neighborhood is different, total agreement may be expecting too much from associations representing such areas as Land Park, Mangan Park, South Land Park, Greenhaven and the Pocket. Time will tell.

One of the first inter-neighborhood meetings was a Feb. 3 housing forum hosted by Land Park Community Association. Also participating was Save Sacramento Neighborhoods, an alliance of city neighborhoods lobbying for particular city and state housing policies. Several SCNA board members also participated.

The Land Park association organized the meeting to discuss ways neighborhoods can work together.

Please see *Meeting*, Page 4

People in the News



Ginger Rutland

KCRA profiles a pioneer.
Page 8



de Courcy family

Historic homes had appeal.
Page 8



Angelina Caceres

She opens full-service salon.
Page 9

Picking up litter has become a mass movement

By Anne Da Vigo

Liquor bottles, COVID masks, fast-food cartons, castoff clothing – it's difficult to ignore the tide of litter defacing local parks and streets.

Several Curtis Park residents are part of a movement of volunteer anti-litter activists collecting trash and making Sacramento a better place to live.

Jennifer Padua and Becca Berggren have joined Sacramento Picks It Up (SPIU), a grass-roots organization that is only a year old but already has 1,400 friends on its Facebook site.

Another neighbor, Mark Baker, facilitates regular trash removal events for the entire community. (See story of Baker on front page.)

On a recent morning, Padua and Berggren, who live on Franklin Boulevard, walked the streets surrounding Bret Harte Elementary School. Using trash grabber tools, they



Photo/Joan Cusick

Becca Berggren, left, and Jennifer Padua pick up trash along Ninth Avenue.

each picked up a shopping bag full of trash, including many COVID masks tossed aside by students.

With their dog Blossom, they've canvassed the nooks and crannies of Curtis Park since joining SPIU. "We love walking the neighborhood and seeing it clean," Berggren said.

Berggren and Padua purchased their home five years ago and moved here after living in far-flung parts of the world. They now work for state and federal emergency agencies.

Their introduction to the severity of the trash issue came along the American River. "We were walking in East Sacramento one day, and saw an abandoned homeless camp," Padua said.

Trash degrading the riverbank

made a lasting impression. Soon after, the two women saw an SPIU flyer announcing a cleanup event. "We joined immediately and never looked back," Padua said.

Allyson Seconds, a local gym owner, founded SPIU. "I always wanted to be a nature person, but I was just too busy," she said. "Then I got my first dog, Lulu, and she changed my life."

Their daily walks, usually along Sacramento's riverbanks, inspired Seconds to start SPIU. The group's Facebook site, along with KFBK radio and Instagram, notifies the public of cleanup events. "They let people know it's cool to pick up trash," she said.

SPIU, partnering with Sacramento

County Regional Parks and the city's 311 site, has been notably successful. A recent pickup event at Sutter's Landing netted more than 10 tons of trash.

For Berggren and Padua, their neighborhood strolls have pinpointed problem areas. One is around Bret Harte. On some days, candy wrappers, plastic drink containers, school papers, and eight or 10 masks lie in the shrubbery or gutters. More troubling are the empty liquor bottles lying close to the school grounds and needles found near William Curtis Park.

Other places of concern are bus stops on Franklin Boulevard and Sutterville Road, and the vacant lot at 10th Avenue and Crocker Drive, just east of the Curtis Park Court apartments.

What's the solution to the litter problem? Close to home, Berggren and Padua would like to see a pickup event in Curtis Park/Crocker Village. More trash cans at bus stops and on sidewalks in front of businesses would also be helpful, they said.

The city allows residential customers two free pickups a year between February and October of bulky items such as furniture, mattresses and tires.

SPIU volunteers, some of whom Seconds respectfully calls "trash addicts," post photos on Facebook of their hauls from a day's pickup, encouraging others to follow their lead.

"What are our values?" Berggren asked. "Keeping our community safe, keeping it clean. We want people to come together for a common goal."

Discarded needles

If you find a discarded needle, SPIU founder Allyson Seconds suggests:

- Use a trash grabber tool to pick up the needle.
- Place an empty hard-plastic bottle upright on the ground.
- Drop the needle into the bottle.
- Dispose of the bottle in a trash can.

Trash: Cleanup events inspire volunteers from local groups to help

Continued from Page 1

His solo effort eventually morphed into community events of up to 50 volunteers gathering to pick up trash.

The large events happened when Baker met the team from Sacramento Picks It Up (SPIU), the year-old grassroots group with the same goal of cleaning up the environment.

The group adopts areas that need cleaning up, including Curtis Park, WX Freeway ramps, streets, Sacramento River and the Tower Bridge, Steelhead Creek, Arcade Creek, and the American River Parkway.

"These events are so inspirational, and the volunteers are kindred spirits," Baker said. "We have found our fellow tribe members."

After cleaning up Sutter's Landing, Baker chose nearby Woodlake as his next "Adopt-A-Spot" and SPIU project. Through the volunteers' efforts, more than 150,000 pounds of trash has been hauled away

from the Woodlake area of the parkway, which is now 95% clean.

"When a huge camp, right on a beautiful beach across from Sutter's Landing, became abandoned after many years of trash buildup, it was time to act," said Baker. "But I needed more help for this one."

Baker gives credit to multiple partnerships that include SPIU, Friends of Sutter's Landing, Friends of the River Bank, Save the American River Association, the American River Parkway Foundation and Sacramento County Regional Parks, which brought in a bobcat and dump trucks to haul the trash away.

"I organized my first group cleanup with 10 volunteers, then the next one we had 20, and the following one we had 30 volunteers," Baker said. "When so many showed up, I was surprised, heartened and so uplifted."

Baker makes it clear that his mission is to clean up areas, mostly abandoned camps, and not to

displace the homeless living there. The few times he's found people still camping out, he has introduced himself and the group's efforts. He is careful to only clean, away from occupied camps.

"We practice mutual respect," Baker said. "When any of them move out, we move in."

The volunteers have found shopping carts, old furniture, tools, vacuum cleaners, teddy bears, a bathtub, a bouncy house, a veteran's letter home and a walking stick adorned with more than 50 medallions from all over the country.

"But the thing I found I most treasure are the connections I've made, and the pride I feel when I see a pristine shoreline," Baker said. "There are so many river heroes out there, dedicating years to cleaning up and preserving our waters. We are kindred spirits who all love nature."

For more information on how to volunteer for future cleanup events, visit the Sacramento Picks It Up! Facebook page.

I still believe 2022 will be a good year

About this time two years ago, COVID-19 entered our lives, leaving an indelible mark that continues to this day. It has put us “through the wringer” in almost every aspect as individuals and as an organization.

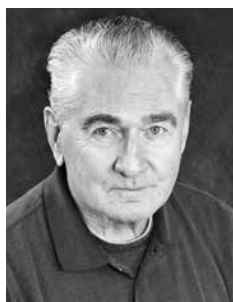
In my November column, I expressed optimism that 2022 would mark a new beginning for SCNA and Sierra 2 Center. That optimism has been sorely tested by the recent Omicron outbreak. This latest COVID variant triggered reimposition of restrictions and closure of Sierra 2 just as we were starting to reopen. This led to cancellations of Sierra 2 facilities rentals and plans for neighborhood events.

While unfortunate and untimely, these recent cancellations should be temporary obstacles. As conditions continue to improve, I still believe 2022 will prove to be a good year for SCNA and Sierra 2 Center.

However, the past two years have placed tremendous strain on Sierra 2

**BILL
HOOVER**

**SCNA Board
President**



staff and operations. A staff of 14 at the beginning of 2020 is now at eight. Executive Director Terri Shettle and staff members Valerie Burrows, Stacy Gray and Jimmy Krey work full time. Fran Coletti, Heather Hogan, Dale Stebbins and Doris Wiggins work part time.

The fact that we are still in business is largely attributable to the dedicated work of those folks. They deserve our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Working with the Sierra 2 staff, the SCNA board continues to adapt to ever-changing circumstances.

As SCNA continues to evolve

as an organization, the need for greater connectivity with neighboring organizations becomes apparent. City Council and the state Legislature are enacting measures that will have direct consequences for all neighborhoods.

Consequently, while we may live in different neighborhoods, we share mutual concerns on many issues. Also, working collaboratively with other neighborhood associations on matters such as the Broadway Corridor, affordable housing and the homeless crisis can provide mutual benefit.

Rather than a fragmented approach, tapping into the resources, thoughts and ideas of others can help develop broader approaches to identifying and solving problems. Equally important, collaboration can provide a more cohesive, persuasive and stronger voice when dealing with city planners and leaders. Each neighborhood can maintain its independence yet provide

unity when necessary and appropriate.

Finally, though we hoped to remain in the same district as our neighbors, plans to develop a mutually beneficial relationship with Oak Park will continue.

• • •

SCNA's Executive Committee met with District 7 Councilmember Rick Jennings and his staff members Dennis Rogers and Henry Adkisson on Feb. 25.

Our intent was to welcome the councilmember to our neighborhood, provide him with an overview of SCNA's history and convey our desire to develop a good working relationship.

Jennings assured us he shares SCNA's commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of life in Curtis Park and he fully intends to support Music in the Park and other neighborhood events. He also agreed to appear at the March 2 SCNA board meeting, make a brief presentation and answer questions.

Notes from Feb. 2 SCNA board meeting

Permit sought for Music in the Park

Sierra 2 Executive Director **Terri Shettle** has applied for a permit for Music in the Park to be held on June 26. The event this year will include a scaled-down version of Curtis Fest with a limited number of artists invited to exhibit their work in booths. Curtis Fest is usually held as a separate event. Both events have been cancelled for the last two years because of COVID.

Treasurer **John Bailey** reported that SCNA net earnings for October through December were \$76,000. Excluding forgiveness of the \$106,000 Payroll Protection loan and non-cash depreciation

expense and investment earnings, the cash-basis loss from operations for the quarter was \$10,000. That is about the same as the previous quarter and close to budget.

Gerre Buehler reported that the Facilities Committee met with the Department of Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment to discuss options to amend the Sierra 2's lease with the city. The goal is to better define SCNA-city maintenance responsibilities for the building.

SCNA President **Bill Hoover** called for collaboration with other neighborhood associations and for building a relationship with

Councilmember **Rick Jennings** to create a strong voice for SCNA in dealings with the city. Planning for a meeting with Jennings is underway.

Board members **Shannon Motley** and **Kathy Les** will co-chair the Development Committee this year. Fundraising will continue to play a key role in the survival of Sierra 2 given Omicron repercussions and the cancellation of the home tour again. It is hoped that neighbors will be generous once again during the Big Day of Giving fund drive.

Erik Fay reported for Neighborhood Concerns Committee that several organizations have sought SCNA support for efforts against new

laws impacting single-family zoning, including Senate Bills 9 and 10. The board asked NCC to review these requests and bring recommendations back to the full board. The committee is collaborating with neighbors' request for a four-hour time limit on parking in the streets along the cyclone fence surrounding Sierra 2 Green and playground. A petition will be circulated. There will be follow-up with the state Department of Motor Vehicles, as its employee parking may be impacted.

Kathy Les reported a demonstration of an electric ride-a-mower will be at 9 a.m. March 2 in William Curtis Park.

The next SCNA board meeting will be at 6:30 p.m., March 2 on Zoom. — *Mimi Budd, board secretary*

Caution urged despite drop in COVID infections

By Mike Scheible

While we may be moving to calling COVID an endemic rather than a pandemic, don't throw away your masks or stop being cautious just yet.

COVID-19 infections, while far below the January peak, remain substantial in the 95818 ZIP code

area. There were 305 new infections in the 30 days ending Feb. 22, down from 847 new infections in the 30 days ending Jan. 24. Weekly data show a greater drop in new daily infections, which averaged four per day most recently compared with 35 per day at the peak.

At the current infection rate, about 30 residents of 95818 are

getting confirmed cases weekly, with many more encountering mild infections that are never confirmed via tests reported to Sacramento County health officials.

Despite the wide availability of free vaccines for the 95% of the local population that is over 4 years of age, the fully vaccinated rate of those eligible in 95818 has only improved modestly.

It now stands at about 85%.

Curtis Park has about 5,000 residents. It shares the 95818 ZIP code with 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.

Highway 99 will get a more artistic look

By Sue Hida

The Highway 99 corridor will receive aesthetic improvements between Calvine Road and the U.S. 50 interchange as part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's Clean California initiative.

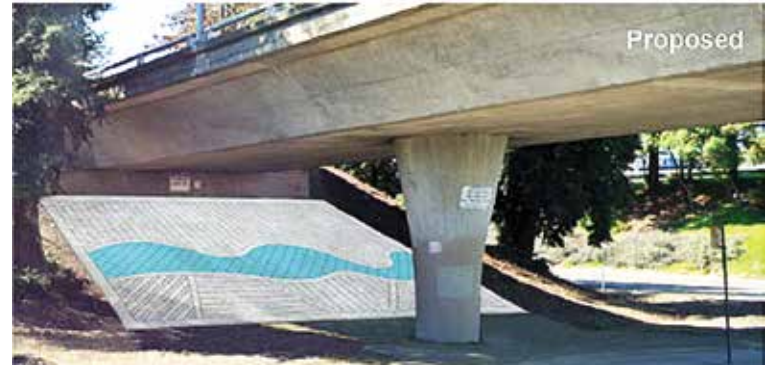
The \$14 million project has two phases. In Phase 1, the masonry sound walls will be painted in seven locations; the sloped paving will be replaced under 10 bridges; and mulch/inert materials installed at various locations. This work is to begin in July.

Phase 2 includes improved lighting at the Second Avenue tunnel and Fifth and 12th Avenue

overcrossings, new colored fencing at the Fifth and 12th Avenue overcrossings, and transportation art at the Second Avenue tunnel and various other locations along Highway 99. Work is to be completed by June 2023.

The Oak Park Neighborhood Association started developing plans for a mural in the Second Avenue tunnel in 2015. Former OPNA President and now District 4 Councilmember Katie Valenzuela led that effort with Curtis Park involvement.

The other transportation art along the highway will be steel panels. Six



Illustration/Courtesy of Caltrans Dist. 3

work groups will determine what is representative of the community in terms of culture, value, history, schools and businesses. Artists and art-appreciators are welcome to

participate. Contact seh@jps.net to be notified of stakeholder meetings.

Sue Hida is an SCNA board member and a retired transportation engineer for Caltrans.

In Phase 1 of aesthetic improvements will be the sloped paving, which will be replaced and painted under 10 bridges.

Meeting: Goals include more home ownership, housing diversity

Continued from Page 1

prime consideration, according to Kirk Vyberberg, chair of the association's land-use committee, is "neighborhood self-determination" in order to preserve and enhance livability, increase walkability, promote development of commercial corridors and centers, support housing diversity and increase home ownership.

In the next three to four months, the city will reveal its housing strategy for the 2040 General Plan. Senior planner Mark Hertel has said the city will conduct five studies during the spring. According to Vyberberg, these studies were prompted by questions about potential gentrification and how the city will increase density and support infrastructure, while providing more infill housing throughout Sacramento.

Vyberberg said Senate Bill 8 "usurped municipalities' control of land use." He expressed concern that the city declared "no negative environmental impacts" despite the doubling of new housing construction. He said the Sacramento Area

Council of Governments' estimate of a dire need for more housing was "bought by the city wholesale," even though the SACOG housing document appears solely as a guide with no references except a single citation to a 2015 UCLA study stating that R-1 zoning keeps amenities in a few better-off neighborhoods.

Jennifer Holden, lead of Mangan Park Neighborhood Association, said market-rate "missing middle" housing, promoted by SACOG and the city, is desirable but "low-income and affordable housing is the least amount of housing being constructed in the city." She expressed a concern that new low-income housing, along with housing for homeless people, is being shunted off to the poorest neighborhoods. Mangan Park is the neighborhood just south of Fruitridge Road between Freeport Boulevard and 24th Street.

What about the city's stated interest in opening "amenities-rich" neighborhoods like Land Park, Curtis Park and East Sacramento to more diverse residents? A UC Berkeley study of U.S. Census data found that Sacramento was one of only two U.S. cities out of 119

studied that reduced segregation in the last decade, with Land Park, Pocket and the central city leading the way to integration. Nevertheless, Curtis Park remains 70% white, though less white than the three whitest Sacramento neighborhoods – River Park, East Sacramento and Land Park.

SCNA sent a letter to the city last July supporting the idea of increased housing densities through re-zoning but with serious questions and concerns. The four primary policy requests in that letter are that residents play a significant role in determining locations for real affordable housing; that city policies require affordable housing; that design requirements ensure that multiplexes are compatible in height and mass with surrounding neighborhood buildings; and that allocation of building permits for additional multiplexes be distributed equitably among neighborhoods to be impacted.

Another Zoom meeting sponsored by the Land Park association on March 3 will consider issues concerning commercial corridors, especially Broadway.

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February Feast successful

The February Feast raised \$5,000 toward the Sierra 2 Center's ongoing expenses.

The extension of COVID-19 restrictions necessitated the closure of the Sierra 2 Center for one week in January, again causing a drop in revenue. SCNA's Development Committee pivoted to a to-go dinner model with participants picking up their meals at Sierra 2 to enjoy in their homes.

The three-course lasagna dinner for two prepared by La Famiglia Catering, a Sierra 2 tenant, was enjoyed by 130 households on Feb. 11.

Gunther's Ice Cream, Meet & Eat, New Helvetia Brewing Company, Plant Foundry and Ritual Yoga donated raffle gift cards. Winners were announced the day of February Feast.

February
FEAST

— Kathy Les

Support systems can help protect neighborhood's ancient valley oaks

By Dan Pskowski

The Curtis Park neighborhood is fortunate to have many stately valley oak trees that are 100 to 250 years old. Unfortunately, some of the first homes in the neighborhood were built within a few feet from the base of these valley oaks. Markham Way was built with two valley oaks in the middle of the street.

This early development impacted the tree's vitality due to the lack of arboreal knowledge on how to protect valley oaks when constructing around them. An inspection of the growth rings on valley oaks that have been removed bears this out. When the development occurred, the significant reduction in the yearly growth increments required a magnifying glass to count the growth rings.

The California Oak Foundation considers the valley oak the monarch due to its size, beauty and age. Its massive trunk, with thick, blocky texture bark averages 3 to 4 feet in diameter. The valley oak is a deciduous tree with an average height of 60 feet and a round, spreading canopy of massive limbs that usually exceeds its height. This riparian species thrives in deep, rich loam soil and provides habitat for numerous birds and insects.

The valley oak is a protected tree. A permit to prune or remove is required from Urban Forestry.

During my 29½ years as Sacramento city arborist, I would inspect numerous valley oaks for permits and when there was a limb failure. Due to their size, the limb failures usually resulted in property damage. Some of these large, majestic oaks were removed because the limb failure had compromised the structural integrity. These limb failures occurred not only during high winds or winter storms, but also on calm, scorching summer days due to internal cracks.

Steel-cable or Cobra support systems are recommended preventative measures on mature valley oaks. Cobra support systems use strong ropes, and the installation requires no drilling into the limbs. These systems modify the wind load on the limbs, which prevents failures and internal cracks. Limbs could still fail in extreme weather, but having a professionally installed support system reduces the risk. Once a support system is in place, an arborist should inspect it annually. I have seen valley oaks in the neighborhood with worn-out cables that require replacement.

Unfortunately, most arborists have little or no experience with support systems and recommend extensive pruning. Why? Support systems require advanced knowledge to ensure that the system will achieve its objective of providing added support, without increasing the risk of limb failure by changing the dynamics of the tree. The installation of a support



Photo/Dan Pskowski

Valley oaks on Markham Way

system does require periodic inspections by a qualified ISA arborist.

If you have a mature valley oak and are concerned about limb failure, I recommend seeking out an ISA-certified arborist who is qualified in the installation of support systems.

Workshop offers tips for transition to electric lawn-care equipment

By Kathy Les

A number of Curtis Park residents tuned in for SCNA's first Lawn Care Workshop on Zoom in February to hear Dan Mabe of the American Green Zone Alliance discuss the evolution toward electric equipment for lawn and yard maintenance.

SCNA's Ad Hoc Clean & Quiet Lawn Care Committee hosted the workshop, largely in response to the new California Air Resources Board regulations prohibiting the sale and manufacture of gas lawn care equipment starting in 2024. The workshop goal was to encourage neighbors to prepare for the transition with their own gardeners.

Mabe said most yards are overly maintained by high-powered mowing and leaf blowing.

"There's no need for lawns to be regularly stripped clean," he said. "It's OK to let your yard reflect the seasons."

Mabe asked workshop attendees to consider:

- Electric equipment is vastly quieter and is as efficient with the right technique; less blowing and more mowing/mulching gets the job done.
- It's OK for a light dusting of leaves to remain on lawns post-lawn care.
- Blowers should be reserved for cleaning hardscape and moving leaves onto lawns, where they can be mowed and mulched back into the

lawn or removed to an onsite or off-site compost pile.

• Consider jointly purchasing one piece of electric equipment, preferably a blower, for your gardener to use while tending to your yard. You and your landscaper will both benefit from quieter and pollution-free lawn care.

Ted Frink of 25th Street, a career biologist and ecologist, said he appreciated hearing the environmental benefits of leaves and mulch remaining in gardens. "We need to increase people's awareness and understanding that Mother Nature provides all the nutrients that landscapes need as long as we leave them in place," Frink said.

Frink was interested to learn that homeowners need to create incentives

for the yard care industry to change to electric. "But homeowners may need to pay just a little more for the investment costs of electric tools to move their landscaper toward a faster transition," he said.

Ultimately, not just homeowners benefit from quieter, less polluting yard care, but so do the workers who otherwise use gas equipment all day long. "I love seeing workers have a better working environment," Mabe said.

To learn about healthier yard maintenance practices and to view information and visuals from Dan Mabe's presentation, visit <https://sierra2.org/neighborhood-scna/advocacy/clean-quiet-yard/>

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MARCH ACTIVITIES

Due to health concerns related to the spread of the coronavirus variants, events listed below may change.

Please contact groups directly with questions.



MUSIC

Beginning Taiko Drumming

3-week class

No experience necessary.

Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m.

Studio 1; \$45

Intermediate Taiko Drumming

3-week class

Previous taiko experience required.

Tuesdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

Studio 1; \$75

Register: kristyoshiro@gmail.com

ART

Glass Acts Mosaics Collective

All skill levels welcome.

Tuesdays, noon-3 p.m., Room 11

Drop-in fee is \$12; monthly fees are \$40 (includes supplies)

Karen, karensharp51@gmail.com

MARTIAL ARTS

Yi family Tai Chi/Qi Gong,

Shaolin Martial Arts

Thursdays, 7-8 p.m.;

Saturdays, 10-11 a.m., in Studio 2

Byron, Lohan36@sbcglobal.net

ADULT DANCE

Two Rivers Dance Center/

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Mondays-Thursdays/Saturdays

For times, contact Richard, richard@tworiversdancecenter.com



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Room 12 • 916 455-6339. For more information: Sierra2.org.

LEISURE

BOOK CLUB

2nd Monday, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Meets on Zoom

March 14: "How Much of These Hills Is Gold," by C. Pam Zhang

NONFICTION BOOK CLUB

3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon,

Sierra 2 Green,

behind Sierra 2 Center

March 17: "Ship of Fools: How a Selfish Ruling Class Is Bringing America to the Brink of Revolution," by Tucker Carlson

LIFE HISTORY WRITING

Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

STITCHERS CIRCLE

A social group for sewers, knitters and more.

2nd Thursday & 4th Monday, 2-4 p.m. Room 11.

OPEN ART STUDIO

Tuesdays, 12-3 p.m. Room 7

EDUCATION

MY STORY PROJECT

Mondays, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

FITNESS

GENTLE YOGA

Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon

Fees: \$60/8 classes; \$30/4

classes or \$10/drop-in. Room 12

STRENGTH & BALANCE

Thursdays, 11 a.m.-noon, Room 11

WELLNESS PROGRAM fees

apply. Punch cards: \$60/10

classes; \$35/5 classes or \$10

drop-in. Purchase cards in the

Sierra 2 office or pay drop-in

fee to instructors.

CARDS & GAMES

MAHJONG

Mondays, 10 a.m.-noon.

Room 12

FUN BRIDGE (Contract)

Thursdays (except 2nd Thursday), 1-3 p.m. Room 12

PINOCHLE

Tuesdays, 12-3 p.m. Room 12

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ST. PATRICK'S DAY HIGH TEA TO-GO

St. Patrick's Day High Tea at Sierra 2 is an annual tradition, and the ongoing pandemic won't stop it. The Novel Tea, in partnership with The Learnery, is offering individual High Tea kits to enjoy in the comfort and safety of your home. Each kit comes with tea sandwiches, scones, desserts and The Novel Tea's premium loose-leaf tea. You steep the tea, add the finishing touches to the food, and serve.

Saturday, March 19 • Pickup times: 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Pick Up Location: Sierra 2 Center main parking lot off Fourth Avenue
Fee: \$45/person. Order To-Go Tea Kits: sierra2.org/event/st-patricks-day-high-tea/



NEW DATE! ... PAINT & SIP CLASS

Enjoy a painting class with a twist. Unleash your creativity with your favorite beverage in one hand, paintbrush in the other and discover the artist within. No previous experience is required. You'll be guided step-by-step by artist Cara Gregor, who will help you create your own original canvas mixed-media painting, "Bouquet of Camellias."

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Photo/Henry Robinett

Henry Robinett will perform March 25.

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March 5 Jon Emery & The Unconventionals (Alt country) 1-7 p.m. Free.

March 11 ... Brother G & Sol Peligro (Roots reggae)

March 12 ... Burning Man fundraiser

March 18 ... Be Brave Bold Robot (Indie rock)

March 19 ... Sacramento Infinity Festival

March 21 ... Ballin' That Jack (Grateful Dead night)

March 26 ... Dante Daprato fundraiser (River City H.S. music scholarships)

March 31 ... Spunj Jelly (Psychedelic jam rock) 6 p.m. Free show.

— Mindy Giles

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Photo/KCRA.com

Brandi Cummings of KCRA-TV interviews Ginger Rutland in her living room. Rutland won the Emmy award in 1982 for a KRON-TV documentary on the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

KCRA profiles Ginger Rutland in 'Celebrating Black History'

By Dennis Cusick

Retired journalist Ginger Rutland, who has lived in Curtis Park most of her life, was profiled on KCRA-3 TV station's "Celebrating Black History" series in February.

"She was the station's first African American female TV reporter," anchor/reporter Brandi Cummings wrote in the version of the profile posted on the station's website.

Rutland met husband Don Fields, who was then working at the Capitol, while she was a KCRA reporter in the 1970s. They bought a house on Highland Avenue, and later a larger one on Donner Way, where they still live.

"I thought I was going to go to NBC, ABC, CBS and all those things," Rutland told KCRA about her early journalistic aspirations. "My goal was frankly to be the CBS correspondent in Paris and as I look back, I thought that was really not a good career move for me. I grew up in Sacramento, I knew Sacramento and my advantage for a

bunch of reasons was that I knew this town really well. I think that was an asset as a reporter."

Rutland went from KCRA to the Capitol bureau of San Francisco's KRON-TV, and then to *The Sacramento Bee*, where she was an editorial writer and columnist for 25 years. She also has done commentaries on Capital Public Radio.

Rutland's mother, Eva, wrote a 1964 memoir that recounted the family's move from Ohio to the segregated Sacramento of the 1950s, when the best home they could find to buy was an old two-story house on 27th Street north of Second Avenue. Rutland turned the memoir into a stage play, "When We Were Colored," that the Sacramento Theatre Company produced in 2019. A later production was running at the Guild Theater in Oak Park when the pandemic hit.

Rutland told KCRA that she now enjoys spending time with her two grandsons and writing occasional opinion articles.

With professional interest in history, this couple found a home in Curtis Park

Sean de Courcy and his wife Meg pose with children, Brianne and Patrick, in front of their home.

Photo/Judy Harper



By John Mathews

Sean de Courcy and his wife Meg were expecting their first child when they realized their Oak Park home was too small for a growing family.

They had friends in Curtis Park and were familiar with the area. They wanted to live in an older neighborhood that was tree-lined, had smaller streets, older architecture and was walkable. When a Colonial Revival house in Curtis Park came on the market, it reminded Meg of the home in Virginia where she grew up. They jumped at the chance to live in one of Sacramento's historic areas.

"We moved from a street in Oak Park that had very little front yard and was on a busy street where our kids couldn't run and play," de Courcy said. "Now we have the park just steps from our front door, plus our street has lots of eyes on it to keep the kids safe. We also love the trees so much. It keeps the neighborhood walkable even in the hot summer months."

Both have a professional interest in historic homes. She is a planner

for Sacramento County, having previously worked for Page & Turnbull, a San Francisco-based preservation architecture firm.

Since last August, he has been the city's preservation director. Among the many duties of de Courcy and his staff are citywide design reviews, advising City Council on preservation policy issues and determining historic landmarks and districts. de Courcy makes presentations to City Council, explaining the reasoning for specific historic designations. He has been instrumental in helping homeowners on Montgomery Way get their homes listed as historic landmarks.

Recently, the Preservation Commission has emphasized identifying and preserving the history of underrepresented groups and places that are important to minority communities.

For example, the Midtown office of Nathaniel S. Colley was placed on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources last year. In 1948, Colley became the first black attorney

Please see de Courcys, Page 12

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REALTY

Full-service salon opens after major renovation

By Erik Fay

Deeda Salon at 3247 Franklin Blvd. is a new full-service salon that promises to bring some glamour to its block and the neighborhood.

The salon is owned by Angelina Caceres and her brother Brian Seva. Caceres has more than 20 years of experience in the industry and previously owned a salon on 34th Street.

They purchased the building in May 2016. It was built in the mid-1920s for Tuttle's Market, but most recently had been used as a church.

The building needed a complete renovation as maintenance had been deferred for many years. The building had been vacant for some time and was not habitable. The interior was dark with covered-up windows and some furniture left over from the church.

Caceres had a different vision for the building, which is across the street from Bret Harte Elementary School: "I could see this space as a bright salon with views of the sky and neighborhood tree tops."

Caceres, her brother's construction team and designer Emily Vierra broke ground on their project in June 2020. The entire space was redesigned. They installed custom workstations and

built a long communal island, wired for laptops, with built-in seating. They created new windows and poured new concrete floors to match the original floors of the market. All new electric and plumbing were installed, new interior rooms were created and ceilings were raised.

Due to the pandemic, construction was slow, materials were scarce at times, and as with most rehab projects, there were numerous surprises.

They experienced a serious setback when an adjacent home burned to the ground. Their building was damaged from heat and flames on the north side, and the newly installed roof was so damaged by flying embers that it had to be replaced. Some new windows and a door had to be replaced after firefighters broke through them to enter the building.

The fire damage only strengthened Caceres' resolve to have the building reflect her vision for the salon. "It was a lot to deal with, but every step forward, and every step back, perfectly weaves into the story of how we got this far," she said.

Deeda has an unusual feature – a spacious patio wrapping around two sides of the building, designed around



Photo/Joan Cusick

In her newly designed space on Franklin Boulevard, Angelina Caceres says that she expects for the salon to be fully staffed this month.

an old avocado tree that Caceres called "the first seed of inspiration for what we could do outside." Plantings, new trees and fixed seating have just been installed. A custom-made bike rack is planned for the front.

In addition to hair styling, the salon will offer skin-care services by Healing Beauty Bar.

In the front of the main room is Magpie Alchemy, where clients can purchase beauty products created on site and solely from plant-based

materials. The result of their creations is a fragrance that permeates the salon. Caceres says after everything they've experienced they are "happy to be here and are looking forward." She is planning for the salon to be fully staffed in March. They had a "tiptoe quiet soft opening in mid-December."

She invites neighbors to drop in, take a look around, shop and just see what they have created in the space.

For an appointment and more information, visit deedasalon.com.

Taylor's new wine manager brings New York experience

By Bruce Pierini

Sarah Milstein, the new retail wine manager at Taylor's Market, comes to Curtis Park from Flatiron Wines & Spirits in New York City, bringing with her the dedication of customer service as the top priority.

"As a new Sacramentan, exploring the local wine scene, I was impressed when Dick Ebert approached me to help with wine selection as a customer," Milstein said of Taylor's retired wine manager. "Dick expanded the selection, particularly in regions he loved, such as the Rhone Valley, and helped introduce people to a whole new world of wine."

Coming from years of experience in the New York City retail wine trade, Milstein considers herself lucky

to have quaffed fine wine from Burgundy, Champagne, Piedmont and beyond.

"Personally, I tend towards lighter-style reds with a lot of aromatics and a more delicate, refined palate," she said. "I also like racy and mineral-driven whites with a good balance between texture and acidity."

Milstein points to a favorite, locally grown, produced and often overlooked grape variety: chenin blanc. "It can be sweet or dry depending on the winemaker's style," she said. "As a varietal, it has richness and weight that is balanced by acidity and verve."

She mentions Curtis Park's own Craig Haarmeyer's St. Rey chenin blanc – grown in Clarksburg. She also applauds one of the new additions to the Taylor's shelf, a syrah from Perch Wine Co., crafted by Sacramentan Adam Saake. Milstein describes it as "a smoky, delicious, French-style syrah with varietal correctness and a real core of California fruit" from grapes grown



Photo/Will Carlton

New wine manager Sarah Milstein focuses on customer service, offers her wine knowledge.

in Amador County.

"It is interesting that every neighborhood does seem to have preferences in Sacramento. Taylor's clientele loves light reds, especially pinot noirs," she said. "We also get a lot more requests for specific French, Spanish and Italian wines."

She also gets a lot of requests for "natural" wines – the term depends on the customer but might include those without sulfites or histamines.

"We often are asked for a wine that is less manipulated in the winery or that is lighter in alcohol," she said. "Too much alcohol and you can lose the nuance of the wine."

Climate change is impacting this, however, and more and more, we're seeing bigger wines from Sancerre or Beaujolais, where this has historically not been the case."

Milstein and Taylor's wine director and restaurant manager Keith Fergel taste dozens of wines each week. "Our palettes jive most of the time," she said. "When they don't, we'll often say, 'OK, if you believe in it, you sell it, or I'll sell it.'"

Kitchen closed temporarily

Taylor's Kitchen announced Feb. 24 on Facebook that it was closing for the next few weeks. "With a new chef coming on board mid-March, we are going to pour our efforts into getting ready with a new innovative menu," the post said. "We are still available for wine events and private parties!"

Civic Seal recognizes students' involvement

Why is it that some people are involved in their neighborhood or church and others are not? Why do some people vote, and others don't?

Some of us saw our parents involved in their community, inspiring us to get involved. Others had a chance at school or in a youth program to provide service to their community or serve as a leader. Social injustices moved some to march or protest to demand change.

Many of our Curtis Park friends and neighbors spend a good part of their adult lives engaged in our community as employees of state or local government, members of nonprofit boards, volunteers at community events and even as elected officials.

As a city, we need actively involved residents to help solve neighborhood issues, to lead neighborhood groups,

**JAY
SCHENIRER**

**City
Council
Member
District 5**



to provide volunteer service like neighborhood cleanups, to serve on boards and commissions and run for elected office. Our democracy requires that our citizens vote to ensure we have representative government.

Knowing we can teach civic skills and create civic habits by introducing students to civics while young, we created the Summer at City Hall program my first year in office. The program teaches 80 to 100 students each summer about how local government works and gives students

a chance to identify issues of concern, develop solutions and present their ideas to the City Council. The program also offers internships for students to work in city government and learn about public service careers.

Three years ago we created the Youth Leadership Academy at the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. Last year we helped Sacramento County create the Behavioral Mental Health Youth Advisory Board. All of these programs provide our young people with the skills and competencies to be successful in school, career and life – and to be community leaders.

In recent decades, civic education has not been taught in our schools, contributing to the decline of civically engaged adults. Recently, the state of California adopted a Civic Seal to be awarded to students at graduation

from high school recognizing their civic involvement. The seal is a way to incentivize schools to prepare more students for civic life.

The Sacramento City Unified School District adopted criteria last fall to award Civic Seals to its 2022 graduating class. If you have a junior or senior in high school, they can achieve the Civic Seal if they participate in civic activities where they learn about a community issue, research solutions, develop and/or implement a solution and present their effort to an adult. Student applications are due by early April.

Curtis Park residents have always been leaders in the Sacramento community. The Civic Seal is one tool to help pass that active participation on to our next generation.

Bina Lefkovitz contributed to this column.

How can I contribute to this community?

I'd like to talk about how I can help contribute to the Curtis Park community by working with the community and the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association on sponsoring public events.

As state and county health guidelines appear to be loosening in the near future, my staff and I are preparing to resume working with communities throughout District 7. We want to hear from you about what you'd like to see our office support.

I commend SCNA for constantly working to bring events to the neighborhood, even in this period of incredibly difficult logistics.

**RICK
JENNINGS**

**City
Council
Member
District 7**



In the past, my office has sponsored several spring and summer events entitled "Trucks & Such." With our partner SactoMoFo, a major food truck organizer, we bring food trucks to a District 7 park for the evening, and then provide entertainment at the same time. Sometimes it's a jazz concert.

Sometimes it's a movie night with a giant screen. Sometimes it's a festival of vendors or a sports clinic. Curtis Park seems like a perfect venue for these sorts of events, and I'd love to hear what you think.

Additionally, my office has held special holiday events, including egg hunts for Easter and a parade and festival for the 4th of July. I know there are many treasured events already happening in Curtis Park. We look forward to the opportunity to partner with community organizations to support these events.

Finally, we like to hold town halls and office hours in neighborhood

venues. I believe that you shouldn't have to come to City Hall to meet with me. Where in Curtis Park would you like to meet with my staff and me to discuss everything from neighborhood issues to the city budget? We want to come to you and make things as easy as possible, so we'd love to reach out to your preferred venue.

If you have any feedback about community events (or really any topic at all), please do not hesitate to contact my office at rjennings@cityofsacramento.org.

It is my immense privilege to be your councilmember, and I can't wait to see you at an event in Curtis Park!

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.

Please send your ideas to denniscusick52@gmail.com with Viewpoint in the subject field. Deadline for Viewpoint copy is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

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SMUD endorses Electric Stars in push to convert homes from gas

By Judy Green Scheible
and Mike Scheible

So you are environmentally conscious and want to help mitigate climate change. Are you willing and/or able to go all-electric in your home? Part way?

You love your gas stove. Would you give it up for an induction stove? What about your heating and air conditioning system? And the water heater? Clothes dryer?

It's a lot to consider. Cost, function, rebates, messy construction.

SMUD's goal is to switch to zero-carbon electricity by 2030. It is offering generous incentives to help customers convert appliances from gas to electric.

Still on the fence?

You can ask one of the Curtis Park Electric Stars

for advice. Two are technical experts. They have some or all of these appliances. And, they are ready to share their knowledge.

Kathy Les of Portola Way started the Electric Stars group of eight. The group has received official endorsement from SMUD, which hopes to get more neighborhoods wired into clean energy. Oak Park is already on board, according to SMUD board member Rosanna Herber, a Castro Way resident and one of the eight Electric Stars.

Les and her husband, Hal Thomas, are glad they switched out their old gas furnace. "Our electric heating system is the best we've ever had," Les said. "It's quiet inside and out." Les also has an electric water heater and solar panels on their house, which is more than 100 years old. Next on their project list is an induction stove.

A survey of neighborhood residents who replaced gas stoves with induction found no complaints.

Mike McKeever was quoted in *Viewpoint* last July as saying he would never go back to gas. "I cook every day, so I wanted the best stove available," McKeever said. "I love it for the power, speed and exact temperature control. It can't be beat."

The McKeeveres received \$9,500 in rebates from SMUD for the upgrades they did with their water heater and heat pump. "We still have a gas dryer," Nancy McKeever said. "We'll replace it when it dies." Another neighbor who anticipates converting to all-electric is Meily Lee of Third Avenue. She expects to have an induction stove when her home remodel is complete. She was hesitant at first because she's so comfortable with her gas stove, according to her partner, Doug Satterfield.

"I want to do the right thing environmentally," Satterfield said. He expects to change over the water heater and dryer but not the gas furnace for now. SMUD offers incentives for rewiring and panel changeouts when heat is converted from gas to electric as well as incentives for installing new heat pump heating and cooling systems.

Gerre Buehler of Fourth Avenue said her gas bill dropped after she replaced her gas furnace with an electric heat pump, which is much quieter.

For John Brush of Third Avenue, the SMUD rebate for his new heat pump was an unexpected bonus that he learned about from his contractor, Fox Family Heating & Air. "They were excellent."

Brush said one major difference with heat from electricity is that the heat pump keeps the house at a steady temperature with no drama. "You can't stand over the floor vent and feel a whoosh of warm air," Brush said.

Electric Stars' two principal experts are Cheri Davis, SMUD's residential electrification specialist, and Nancy McKeever, who is retired from the California Energy Commission. They can be reached at CP.ElectricStars@gmail.com.

Information about SMUD rebates for going electric can be found at www.smud.org/en/Rebates-and-Savings-Tips/Rebates-for-My-Home.

'We love living here'

Milu Sharpe, 9, and her mother, Lupe Rodriguez, share a hug on the porch of their home at Third Avenue and 22nd Street. They moved to Curtis Park last year from the North City Farms neighborhood. Rodriguez works as a therapist and program director at Spark Center for Self Development, 1412 S St. Milu is a student at Leonardo da Vinci eK-8 School. "We love living here," Rodriguez said. "There are lots of kids, and the neighbors are so friendly."



Photo/Judy Green Scheible

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Bret Harte students return to garden for spring planting



**LAUREN
GOTHARD
and
LINDSEY
SIN**

Life has been breathed into Bret Harte Elementary School's garden program, just in time for spring.

Because of pandemic restrictions, students and teachers had not used the school's garden for nearly two years. However, they returned to the garden in February to plant sugar snap peas and potatoes.

Significant preparation went into readying the garden for planting. Since November, neighbors, families and teachers have been volunteering on weekends to ready the space for spring planting. Volunteers have pulled weeds, pruned trees and prepared planting beds so students would be able to enjoy their outdoor classroom again.

"We've actually got several families who don't even have kids going here yet, but they're in the community and part of the neighborhood and considering (Bret Harte) when their kids do get older," said parent volunteer Aya Akiyama of Sloat Way. "It's a great way to have them check out the school."

The school's garden, which started as a passion project of Brian and Karen Hill of Sixth Avenue, has grown over the years to become a visual focal point in the schoolyard and a source of pride for Bret Harte. Karen Hill also created the lessons taught during February's planting.

"A pea seed is a seed and comes from a pod," she said. "They're going to get to see the whole process of planting that seed in the ground. They only go down to their first knuckle. It comes up pretty quickly, it

grows up on the trellis and they can come out here with their teacher and pull it right off the plant and eat it. They just love doing that."

Parent volunteers showed students what plants need to thrive, what makes up a seed, and how to plant the pea seeds. They also taught students about the potatoes, which are grown from tubers and how the cuttings need to be buried deep in the soil.

"The neat thing about both of those things is that they have high contrast," Karen Hill said. "It's a really great juxtaposition between the two plants."

Every class at Bret Harte, from pre-K special day classes through sixth grade, had the opportunity to visit the garden, plant the seeds and potatoes and talk about what they'll see later this spring. During a lunch recess, fourth-graders pulled weeds along the garden's fence line and harvested the last of the oranges in the orchard.

Bret Harte teachers have enjoyed the return to the garden as well. "I think getting the kids back into the garden is so beneficial, especially now with all they have had to endure with this pandemic," said first-grade teacher Heather Bunney. "The garden provides them with a real-time look at how food is grown. It gives them a hands-on experience about where food comes from and what it takes to grow it."

Paul Yenovkian's fourth-grade students hadn't been active in the garden since second grade. Being able to work and spend time in the garden again was exciting. "My class really enjoyed just being back in the garden since it had been so long," Yenovkian said. "Before we went out to the garden, students shared



Photo/Lauren Gothard

PTA President Adam Gothard teaches about the varieties of seeds to fourth- through sixth-grade students. (The 3-year-old at left is Gothard's daughter.)

memories that they had... I'm really excited to get my class back out in the garden. It's really great to have all the students out in the garden and sharing something for our entire school community."

Students will get to enjoy the fruits of their labor in late spring when everything is ready to be harvested. Until then, they will continue to learn about the garden and how to care for it.

For neighbors who are interested in volunteering during garden workdays or would like to learn more, contact BretHarteBearsPTA@gmail.com.

de Courcys: It's like living in a small town with benefits of a big city

Continued from Page 8

in private practice in Sacramento. The building is also an important example of the work of James Dodd, the first licensed African-American architect in Sacramento.

The Preservation Commission will continue to identify and list places important to the social history

of the city, de Courcy says.

The de Courcys' first child, Brianne, will turn 6 this year. She is in kindergarten at Bret Harte Elementary School. Son Patrick, going on 3, attends Great Beginnings preschool at the Sierra 2 Center.

"Curtis Park is the best for raising a young family," de Courcy said. "On our little block of 10th Avenue

there are 12 kids – ours plus 10 others that are around the same age."

"We've now been here for five years, and we love it. I doubt we would ever consider leaving. We can't go for a walk without running into neighbors we know, which is terrific. It's like being in a small town with all the conveniences of living in a big city."

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