

VIEWPOINT

A publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association since 1979

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September 2022

Tale of two neighborhoods

*Residents consider Land Park and Curtis Park
'amazing,' 'beautiful' and 'not very diverse'*

*This is the first in a series of five profiles
of adjacent neighborhoods to Curtis Park.*

By Dennis Cusick

Vic's or Gunther's?
Land Park or Curtis Park?
Newspapers have compared the neighborhoods for decades. Publications have conducted a number of taste tests, one by *The Sacramento Bee* a decade ago promised to settle "a matter of sweet neighborhood pride." The result? Four out of six tasters preferred Gunther's vanilla, chocolate and mint chip ice creams, while four out of six preferred Vic's strawberry ice cream.

Newspaper writers have not been shy about expressing their own opinions about which neighborhood is best. Land Park has been described as "upscale," "desirable," "tony" and "leafy."

Curtis Park? Well, it too is "leafy."

But in ice cream and neighborhoods, the favorite appears to be a matter of taste.

One thing the two neighborhoods never were until now – political partners.

When City Council districts were created in 1971, Land Park was placed in District 4. Curtis Park was in District 5, along with Oak Park. Over the next half-century, the council districts changed shape, expanded and contracted. But Land Park was always in District 4, Curtis Park and Oak Park always in District 5.

All of that changed with the 2021 redistricting. Going forward, for the first time, Curtis Park and Oak Park will be in different districts with Curtis Park and Land Park in the same one,



Photo/Joan Cusick

The iconic Tower Theatre defines the entrance to the Land Park neighborhood.

the newly configured District 7. (The sliver of Curtis Park east of Franklin Boulevard remains in District 5, along with Oak Park.)

The new geographic union begged the question of who our neighbors are. With that question in mind, this is the first in a planned series of *Viewpoint* articles over the next several issues on Curtis Park's immediate neighbors – Land Park to the west, Newton Booth to the north, North and Central Oak Park to the east, and North City Farms to the south.

Who are they? How did they come to be?

'The envy ... of my friends'

The Land Park neighborhood "is beautiful, the park is only a few blocks away, and it's a quick bike ride into Midtown," one resident commented on the niche.com website.

"I love being able to easily get to farmer's markets, and before COVID, restaurants and events. It's a safe neighborhood as well." Another wrote: "I absolutely love living here and am the envy of most of my friends because I live here," describing Land Park as "beautiful and amazing."

Curtis Park responses on the website are similar: "Curtis Park is an amazing area to live in. I love being near a park, my neighbors are very friendly, and I feel safe walking down my street." And, "Curtis Park is a wonderful neighborhood with lots of nice people. The houses are mostly very old with gorgeous architecture. The community is for the most part welcoming, although it is unfortunately not very diverse."

For historical reasons, including red-lining and restrictive covenants,

Please see Land Park, Page 2

Electric cars have become common sight in Curtis Park

By Mike Scheible

Electric vehicles are now appearing more in Curtis Park and nearby neighborhoods, where one out of every five new cars bought recently is battery-powered.

On daily walks in the neighborhood, there is ample visual evidence of an increasing number and greater variety of EVs. Teslas account for about half, but there are also Chevy Bolts, Hyundai Konas, KIA Niro, Nissan Leafs, VW ID4s, and at least one "vintage" Fiat 500e charging on an orange extension cord hung from a tree on Donner Way.

These observations are borne out by ZIP code-level data on vehicle registrations from the California Energy Commission and the state Department of Motor Vehicles. This data suggests there are about 400 battery-electric vehicles and 300 plug-in hybrid electric vehicles registered in the 95818 ZIP code area. About 5% of vehicles in 95818 are now powered with electricity from SMUD's grid or rooftop solar.

The local EV population has roughly doubled since the end of 2019 and has quadrupled since the end of 2017. In terms of purchases of new EVs, the 302 EVs registered at 95818 addresses in the 18 months since January 2021 are double the number in the previous 18 months.

Statewide, about one in six new vehicle sales in the first half of 2022 was an EV. For 95818, the proportion was slightly higher – about one in five,

Please see Electric, Page 9



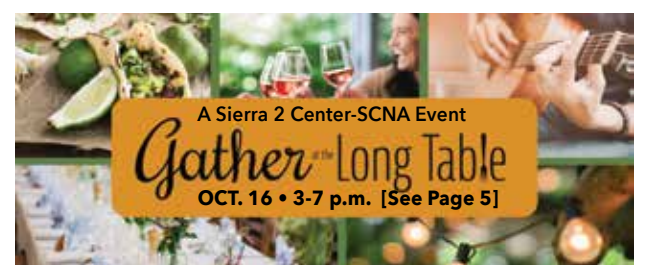
Good Food for takeout

Mother-daughter duo are cooking family recipes at Franklin & 5th. Page 5



Red-headed residents

Downy and Nuttall's woodpeckers mark their territory vocally. Page 8



A Sierra 2 Center-SCNA Event

Gather at the Long Table
OCT. 16 • 3-7 p.m. [See Page 5]

Land Park: Neighborhoods were built in 20th century

Continued from Page 1

Land Park (75% white) and Curtis Park (70% white) are among the least racially diverse neighborhoods in the city, according to U.S. Census data. Only River Park and East Sacramento are even less diverse.

The Land Park neighborhood is generally defined as east of Riverside Boulevard, north of Sutterville Road, west of the Union Pacific railroad tracks and south of the W-X Freeway. (The Land Park Community Association defines the neighborhood more expansively, to include an area several times the size of Curtis Park.)

Both neighborhoods are largely residential, with commercial districts on the periphery along Broadway and Freeport Boulevard, which they share, and Riverside Boulevard in Land Park, Franklin Boulevard in Curtis Park.

William Land's bequest

The two neighborhoods developed side by side, on opposite sides of the railroad tracks. Curtis Park got the head start, early in the 20th century, and was largely developed by the time construction of the high-end College Tract immediately north of William Land Park started in 1927.

In his lifetime, William Land had nothing to do with the park that bears his name. But Land had a vision of his own immortality. The longtime operator of the Western Hotel, Land was “easily one of Sacramento’s wealthiest men” when he died in 1911, according to his *Bee* obituary.

Land’s will left \$250,000 to the city “to purchase a public park with a suitable distance of said City of Sacramento, ... which public park shall be known and called the ‘William Land Park.’”

Competing visions appeared immediately: Should the park be along the American River? Along the Sacramento? Should the money be used to upgrade the existing Del Paso Park? Or for several parks, connected by parkways?

The battle over what to do with Land’s bequest, fought in public and in the letters columns of the city’s newspapers, went on for six years. Many supported their arguments with their interpretations of what Land would have wanted.

In 1918, city commissioners chose what was called the Swanston-McKevitt tract, 239 acres for which the city would pay \$146,836. However, city residents

objected. More than 5,000 signed petitions calling for the city to rescind the purchase. A referendum to that effect passed overwhelmingly.

But when the city then tried to back out of the contract, George Swanston and F.B. McKevitt sued. Four years of litigation later, a court of appeal ordered the city to honor the contract, ruling the referendum invalid.

Plans for the park were drafted in 1922 and the park was quickly developed. The first baseball game was played there in late 1923, and the golf course opened in 1924.

With the park in place, the area was ready for residential development. But the Depression hit, homebuilding largely stopped, and vast spaces remained vacant through the 1930s. Construction of a middle-class subdivision resumed in 1939, only to be interrupted by World War II. The homes of the neighborhood were largely built out by 1947, the year Vic’s opened at Riverside Boulevard and Eighth Avenue.

Today’s Land Park neighborhood appears, at first glance, much as the neighborhood has for the last 75 years. There have been changes at the edges, to be sure. Part of the golf course was replaced by the Fairytale Town children’s play area in 1959. A Target store now sits at Riverside and Broadway where Sacramento’s minor-league baseball team played from 1910 to 1960. And the former home of Tower Records, at Land Park Drive and Broadway, was recently torn down to make way for an apartment building.

A troubling present

From driving along the Broadway corridor, it is immediately clear that all is not well in Land Park, Curtis Park or the city as a whole. Homeless encampments have sprung up under and near the W-X Freeway, as the cost of housing and lack of social services have driven many at the margins of society to live in tents and makeshift shelters.

A city-operated homeless shelter that opened last September near X Street and Alhambra Boulevard was intended to alleviate the problem, but its capacity of 100 beds did not make a dent in the need for housing.

In July, *The Bee* reported that the area near 15th Street and Broadway “is the largest center of crime in the Land Park neighborhood,” with about 60 incidents in the previous two years, including robbery, assault, shoplifting

	Land Park	Curtis Park
Residents*	8,600	5,900
Median household income*	\$131,000	\$103,000
Median home sale price in June#	\$805,000	\$883,000
Best place to raise family*	3rd in city	12th in city
Commute by car^	86.7%	83.9%
Commute by bicycle^	5.9%	7.4%
Commute by walking^	3.7%	4.7%
Commute by bus/rail^	3.1%	3.4%
SOURCE: * niche.com; # redfin.com; ^ point2homes.com		

and vandalism, much of it blamed on homeless encampments nearby.

Kristina Rogers, vice president of the Land Park Community Association, told *The Bee*: “As much as our neighborhood wants to support our local businesses, many have stopped shopping there due to personal safety concerns. Businesses along Broadway may continue to lose business until people feel safe to visit.”

In the past year, city police, Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol have repeatedly removed homeless encampments from under or near the W-X Freeway construction zone. Within days, encampments usually reappear nearby, which Mayor Darrell Steinberg has compared to playing “Whack-a-mole.”

Vision of the future

So, what does the future hold? When Kirk Vyverberg looks down Broadway, he envisions not the current collection of century-old two-story brick

buildings but a corridor of “four-over-ones,” four stories of residential units above retail storefronts, utilizing many of the existing facades. To the west, he can see a bridge to West Sacramento and high-rise riverfront condominiums.

Vyverberg is the planning expert of the Land Park Community Association, which is wrestling with the city’s emphasis on more high-density housing. The future of the neighborhood promises to be much different than the past or present, with housing for about 5,000 people planned along Broadway at the northern ends of the Land Park and Curtis Park neighborhoods.

While Vyverberg and others see the opportunity for community improvement in future development, they also see the challenges of urban gridlock, continued housing insecurity and inequality, and the unintended consequences of the city’s long-term plans.

These are challenges that Land Park and Curtis Park will confront together.



George Swanston paid \$10,000 in the 1920s for a statue of a gold miner in memory of his father, Charles Swanston, whose cattle ranch included much of the Land Park neighborhood. The statue is just north of the Sacramento Zoo.

Photo/Joan Cusick



Photo/Uladzik Kryhiny, Adobe Stock Images

SCNA is co-hosting town halls on city's climate action plan

By Bruce Pierini

SCNA and the Land Park Community Association are co-sponsoring two Zoom town halls to discuss the city's final Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, which was scheduled to be released in late August.

The first town hall will be at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 1, the second at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 12. Neighbors are encouraged to raise questions and concerns.

The California Environmental Quality Act obligated the city to issue a climate action plan to establish Sacramento's greenhouse gas baseline and reduction targets for 2030 and 2045, along with strategies for achieving the goals. The draft document laid out a strategy to reduce greenhouse emissions to one-third of 1990 levels by 2030 and to zero by 2045.

The city released its massive and technical 400-page draft on July 1, giving the public 30 days to comment. And comment the neighborhoods did.

A 24-page critique was produced by activists from 10 different neighborhood associations, including SCNA board members Kathy Les and myself, and *Viewpoint* Editor Dennis Cusick. The critique was then distilled into a three-page letter to the city with the key points.

The major concerns in the critique:

1) Sacramento's tree canopy must be adequately supported by city policies to get to adequate carbon absorption of carbon dioxide by our urban forest; currently it is not.

2) The financing and distribution of costs for the immense effort are not adequately detailed in the plan. How will infrastructure upgrades, including electrification, be paid for? By whom? Will lower-income residents and businesses be burdened? Will landlords use the need to upgrade with electric appliances as a reason to evict poor people? Will there be government subsidies? Why rely solely on long-distance solar farms and not stress rooftop panels?

3) Transportation issues, including the use of public transport and electric vehicles to reduce greenhouse gases, are not adequately addressed. Regional Transit

Facing Urbanization - Strategies for Our Community Plans

Town hall meeting on Zoom 6:30 p.m. • Sept. 1

- Do you want more affordable housing in Sacramento?
- How do we manage urban growth?
- Can we enhance commercial and community streetscapes to reduce green-house gasses and avoid congestion?
- How do we preserve and increase our urban forest canopy?

If these questions interest you, please attend the panel discussion at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 1 on Zoom. Three panelists Chris Jones, Colonial Heights Neighborhood, Jennifer Holden, Mangan Park Neighborhood and Jeff Coleman, Land Park Community will discuss the city's plans for development. SCNA board member Bruce Pierini will be the moderator.

Register at <https://sierra2.org/event/urbanization/#rsvp-now> and submit your questions and comments about the plan.

is totally inadequate for the needs of Sacramento and surrounding areas.

4) Community engagement methods (questionnaires, public meetings, etc.) should be accurately interpreted and not part of "spin." The generally supportive responses that the draft cites are suspect on closer examination. These positive responses, the draft plan concedes, are "not statistically representative of the Sacramento community-at-large." Should a response such as "I will consider" electrification be interpreted as "I will support" a citywide switch from gas to electric appliances?

5) While eco-planning efforts have emphasized infill for a generation or two, will denser infill housing necessarily result in quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions? How will progress be measured?

City officials said they would consider these issues (along with an unknown number of other comments) in their final climate plan.

The neighborhoods' three-page letter to the city may be viewed at sierra2.org/CAAP.

VIEWPOINT

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Call Fran Coletti: 916 452-3005 x210
or fran@sierra2.org

President's message

Volunteers are essential for a thriving community

By the time you read this column, SCNA will have concluded its Music in the Park series, if the temperature cooperated. The first two events were very well attended and the performances excellent. I expect the last one was equally well received.

While indoor and outdoor events are integral to SCNA's purpose, it should come as no surprise that they require a great deal of advance planning and coordination. Without the dedication, commitment and hard work of your neighbors who serve as board members and Sierra 2 Center staff, these events simply would not take place. I truly hope their spirit of volunteerism provides some incentive for greater involvement in SCNA operations, whether as a board member or event volunteer.

Some of you may think I spend too much time on this subject, but volunteerism is the key to keeping

**BILL
HOOVER**

**SCNA Board
President**



Curtis Park a thriving community. Fresh faces are not just welcome on the SCNA board of directors, they are essential. It is not about individual agendas, but about bringing new ideas, energy and balance to the board, while respecting SCNA's history and mission.

So, once again, I ask you to consider serving on the SCNA board. There is a great deal of satisfaction in knowing you are contributing to keeping Curtis Park an active, desirable community. With that in mind, SCNA board elections are coming up in December at our annual general

membership meeting.

Although the SCNA board did not meet in August, board committees were active. Budget planning, fall events, Sierra 2 and responding to city actions affecting Curtis Park (and other) neighborhoods were all addressed in August. Because the city seems to have a penchant for last-minute notice on significant matters, we often have little time for meaningful evaluation and preparation of a response. One such matter is the impact that tree removals for development purposes is having on our tree canopy.

Providing timely information to neighbors about important matters is an area SCNA is seeking to improve upon. Since *Viewpoint* is published monthly, we are going to try using our sierra2.org website as a way to do this.

Bruce Pierini, co-chair of SCNA's Neighborhood Concerns Committee, was instrumental in preparing a presentation on the city's 2040 plan, which is available on our website. I encourage its viewing and welcome feedback.

In numbers there is strength. Make SCNA's voice even more effective by joining today at sierra2.org.

Hop Gardens donates \$7,140

The SCNA board of directors extends a BIG thank you to Hop Gardens for their donation of \$7,140 from the proceeds of their July customer appreciation fundraiser for SCNA and Sierra 2 Center.



Notes from July 6 SCNA board meeting

SCNA treasurer reports improving financial picture

Treasurer **John Bailey** reported a balance of \$187,000 in SCNA's checking account and \$361,000 in the investment portfolio as of the board's July 6 meeting.

Rental revenue for the 24th Street Theatre was below budget. Because of its size, the theater is the room at the Sierra 2 Center most subject to cancellation due to COVID concerns. However, a full month block of theater rental has been booked for the near future. Rental revenue for the other rooms was ahead of budget.

Operating revenue and expenses were equal in April and May, excluding portfolio losses, Big Day of Giving receipts (\$50,000) and non-cash depreciation. In May, the unrestricted, undesignated portion of the fund balance was a positive \$10,000 for the first time in several years.

The board commended Bailey for his sound financial leadership, Executive Director **Terri Shettle** for her leadership in securing grants and exercising belt tightening measures, and **Kathy Les** and

the Development Committee for successful fundraising efforts.

Gerre Buehler reported for the Facilities Committee that **Hal Thomas** had updated the committee on his findings regarding the Solar Options Project. The next step is to authorize SMUD to conduct a Complete Energy Solutions analysis of Sierra 2 to identify areas where energy costs can be reduced. Shettle is following up with SMUD. She also reported that COVID issues at Sierra 2 continue to negatively impact scheduling. Repairs to the ADA lift were estimated at \$7,500.

Bailey reported that due to PG&E rate increases, costs per therm of natural gas were 35% higher in fiscal year 2021 than in 2019, and 42% higher in fiscal year 2022 than in 2019. The board consensus was that Sierra 2 would benefit from transitioning from gas to electricity wherever possible and asking tenants to accept some increased utility costs was warranted.

Shannon Motley reported for

the Development Committee that Curtis Fest and Music in the Park in June were successful. About 1,500 to 2,000 people attended Curtis Fest. Shettle said food truck vendors were pleased with the turnout. About 800 to 1,000 attended Music in the Park. Motley also reported that planning for the fall fundraiser "Gather at the Long Table" was underway. It is scheduled from 3 to 7 p.m. Oct. 16 at Sierra 2.

Erik Fay reported for the Neighborhood Concerns Committee (NCC) that **Matthew Winters**, a neighborhood volunteer, is reading air-quality sensors outside the area and documenting the results. With freeways on three sides of the neighborhood and the Executive Airport flight path overhead, NCC is looking into purchasing sensors for the neighborhood.

Fay has contacted the city about streetlamps that have been reported as not working. He said reported car break-ins and car thefts increased in the neighborhood in the last quarter, which is consistent with the city overall.

John Mathews has requested

another sign from the city's parks commission for the 25th Street entrance to the Sierra 2 Green, denoting rules and regulations governing usage by dogs and their owners. Unruly dogs and owners not cleaning up after them have been problematic. Mathews also noted that with redistricting, the neighborhood has been divided into three City Council districts.

Oak Park Neighborhood Association expressed concern at its June 2 meeting about traffic and other impacts of a proposed development on Fifth Avenue. Neighborhood Concerns is monitoring the proposal.

A protected tree on Fifth Avenue was noticed for removal. NCC is writing to remind the city that under a prior agreement, these trees cannot be removed, with certain exceptions.

Les reported for the Racial Justice Committee that **Marco Guerrero**, chairman of the Sacramento Community Police Review Commission, would be invited to the committee's September meeting.

The next board meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 7 on Zoom.

— *Mimi Budd, board secretary*

Good Things to Eat offers family recipes for takeout

By Jean Minton

The mother-daughter duo Delcy and Elinor Steffy have soft-launched “Good Things to Eat,” a takeout restaurant at the northeast corner of Franklin Boulevard and Fifth Avenue.

They strive to create dishes and an atmosphere full of love inspired by the many ethnicities that contribute to their genetic makeup and life experiences.

“My mom was Armenian and I am also German, Jewish and Hungarian,” Delcy said. “Elinor is everything that I am, plus African American with some French heritage.”

Elinor added, “I think a lot of people look at my mom and see white lady, or they look at me and they see black person. They skip over the fact that there are a lot of different people from a lot of different places that make us up. That’s what our food is like.”

Delcy’s mother was a chef who died before Elinor was born. Delcy said, “My mom was extremely creative and very joyful in how she cooked. It was a fun, exploratory process. Elinor and I definitely feel like she’s alive with us when we’re in the kitchen.”

The name “Good Things to Eat” comes from a cookbook published in 1911 by Rufus Estes, a former slave who became a professional chef. “I loved the name because it was simple, straightforward and had multiple

Good Things to Eat offers unusual beverages such as London Fogs made with oat milk and honey, classic dishes such as a Reuben sandwich.

meanings,” Delcy said. “Our food is good in that it’s wholesome. It’s good in that it’s super tasty and it’s good in that it’s made with lots of love.”

Good Things to Eat offers unusual beverages such as London Fogs made with oat milk and honey, classic dishes such as a Reuben sandwich with homemade sauerkraut inspired by their German heritage, and treats from old family recipes.

The Steffys find their ingredients all over Sacramento and emphasize the importance of using the proper source. “If I’m making Middle Eastern food, I definitely want very specific



Photo/Jean Cusick

Elinor Steffy, left, and her mother, Delcy, say ethnicity inspires their cooking.

olive oil that I get from a Middle Eastern market,” Delcy said. “I’m not going to use Italian olive oil.”

They are grateful for the warm welcome from the community. “I feel like we’ve been overwhelmingly embraced by the people of Curtis Park and it’s been really lovely,” Delcy said. “They seem to be really responsive to the idea of trying something new. They like that our food is different. It’s more than we could have hoped for.”

Good Things to Eat, 2995

Franklin Blvd., is serving takeout dinners Wednesday through Friday from 5 to 8 p.m.; and breakfast, lunch and dinner from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends.

To find out about their latest creations and learn more about their planned Caribbean inspired Labor Day fundraiser, follow them on Instagram at @goodthingsac and Facebook at goodthingstoeatsacramento. The telephone number is 916 389-7900.

SCNA's fall fundraiser is set for Oct. 16

By Heather Hogan

SCNA is planning a fall fundraiser, Gather at the Long Table, from 3 to 7 p.m. Oct. 16. The main event will be held in Sierra 2 Center’s parking lot. A VIP reception/mixer will precede the dinner in the Curtis Hall garden courtyard.

Gather at the Long Table will bring together neighbors and community members in a celebration of the arts and community. The sit-down neighborhood dinner will include fare from Sac City Eats BBQ, Scott’s Seafood, specialty cocktails from Ghost Tequila, beer from Alaro

Craft Brewery, and local wines.

Long tables with open seating will encourage guests to mingle and forge new friendships.

Kitty O’Neil will be the mistress of ceremonies. Entertainment will include Jon Merriman’s guitar stylings and a dance party with The Night Cats.

The intimate VIP reception mixer will be from 3 to 4 p.m. in the Curtis Hall garden courtyard where participants can enjoy a special VIP cocktail, early auction access and appetizers from Biria King Tacos cooked on site.

General admission tickets are \$100 per person,



VIP tickets, \$150 per person. Tickets are available at Sierra2.org/event/gather through Oct. 7.

Contact Terri@sierra2.org to help sponsor the event, make raffle and silent auction donations, and volunteer.

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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

Due to health concerns related to the spread of the coronavirus variants, events listed here may change. Questions? Please contact groups directly.

ADULT DANCE

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River City Taps
Mondays–Thursdays/Saturdays
For times, richard@
tworiversdancecenter.com

Dancing with Heidi

Monday, 7-8:30 p.m. Adult/Teen
Basic Ballet, Studio 2
Wednesday, 3-4:30 p.m. Adult/Teen
Mixed Level Ballet, Studio 2
Wed 6-7:30 Adult/Teen Ballet
from the Beginning, Studio 2
Thursday, 6-7:30 p.m. Adult/Teen
Intermed./Advanced Ballet, Studio 1
Thursday, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Adult/Teen
Pointe/Pre-Pointe, Studio 1
dancingwithheidi@gmail.com

ART

Glass Acts Mosaics Collective
All skill levels welcome.
Tuesdays, noon-3 p.m. Room 11
glassactmosaics.org

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

MARTIAL ARTS

Yi family Tai Chi/Qi Gong,
Shaolin Martial Arts
Thursdays, 7-8 p.m.; Studio 2
Saturdays, 10-11 a.m., Studio 2
Lohan36@sbcglobal.net

Eagle Claw Kung Fu

Monday: 6-7 p.m.
Wednesday: 6-7:15 p.m.
Studio 2
Saturday: 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Studio 2
Sifu Mary Melliza: 916 802-3144
eagleclawsacramento.com

Puppy kindergarten and social class

Puppies ages 8-12 weeks
Mondays, 5:15-6 p.m., Room 10
www.midtownmutts.com
916 600-3259

FITNESS

NEW! Zumba with Pakko
Sundays, 10-11 a.m., Studio 3
pakko.zumba@yahoo.com

Gentle, Breath-Centered Yoga

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
4:30-5:40 p.m., Room 9
Saturdays, 9-10:15 a.m.
(no class 2nd Sat), Room 9
mad@madyoga.org, 916 290-2693

WW Studio Workshop

Th/Fri/Sat, 8:30-10 a.m., Room 10
800 374-9191, weightwatchers.com

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FOR THE ARTS & COMMUNITY

Senior Center

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Activities are free, except where noted. (Donations appreciated)
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
Sept. 11 – “Cloud Cuckoo Land,”
by Anthony Doerr

NONFICTION BOOK CLUB
3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon,
Room 12

Sept. 15 – “Yogi: A Life Behind
the Mask,” by John Pessah

LIFE HISTORY WRITING
Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m.
Room 12

STITCHERS CIRCLE

A social group for sewers,
knitters and more
(To return in October)

OPEN ART STUDIO
Fridays, 12-3 p.m. Room 11

CARDS & GAMES

PINOCHLE
Fridays, 12-3 p.m., Room 12

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— Mindy Giles



Photo/Tara Jones

Grub Dog & Friends: Sept. 10, The Side Door.



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The Mad Hatter's Tea Party
Sunday, Sept. 18, 12:30-2 p.m.

Garden Room
\$45/each in-person
\$49/each to-go tea kit

Join The Novel Tea and The Learnery for an English-inspired tea party and learn why hatters did indeed go mad. And learn the answer to "why is a raven like a writing desk?" Traditional three-tier afternoon tea will be served with English tea sandwiches (egg, cucumber, roast beef, ham) as well as scones and jam. And tea of course! By all means wear your hats, even though poor Alice did not have one, and we promise there will be no Dormouse sleeping in a teapot.



Abstract Intuitive Painting class
Saturday, Sept. 24
10 a.m.-noon, Room 7

Fee: \$25 for the class with \$25 optional art kit (paint and brushes)

Under artist Cara Gregor's guidance, you will explore, play and put feelings on paper, creating a beautiful piece of art with layers of paint and colors. No drawing or prior painting experience is required. You'll be painting in an abstract style, adding patterns, textures, and drips and dabs – whatever feels right to you. An 8x10 canvas will be supplied. Buy one of our paint kits or bring your own acrylic or oil paints & brushes.

Paint & Sip class Fall Pears
Friday, Oct. 7, 6-8 p.m., Room 7
Fee: \$25 for the class
with \$25 optional art kit

Unleash your creativity with your favorite beverage in one hand, paintbrush in the other and discover the artist within. Enjoy painting in a casual party atmosphere. No previous experience required. Artist Cara Gregor will help you create your own original painting. Join with your friends or take part solo. Bring your favorite drink (wine and beer are great, no cocktails please), a glass and a snack. An 8x10 canvas will be supplied. Buy one of our paint kits or bring your own acrylic paints & brushes.



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Downy, Nuttall's woodpeckers more often heard than seen

By Dan Murphy

The Nuttall's woodpecker and the slightly smaller Downy woodpecker are prevalent in the Curtis Park neighborhood.

They are generally similar in appearance – males have a bright red patch on the back of the head. The Nuttall's red patch is larger, covering the back of the crown.

They are most readily distinguished by the pure white splash running down the middle of the back of the Downy. If you cannot see the back of the bird, the Downy has a pure white breast, while the Nuttall's has black spots on the flanks.

Nuttall's are more common hereabouts. They are specialists in the

California oak woodland environment and are found only within our state boundaries and a small strip along the northern west coast of Baja California.

The Downy, America's smallest woodpecker, has a more widespread range, throughout most of the U.S. and Canada. Downys are mainly found near rivers, streams and lakes in California.

Neither species migrates. Both mostly eat bugs, 75-80% of their diet. The remainder is vegetable matter such as berries and flowers.

I have seen both species on my block, though they are more likely to be heard rather than seen. They communicate and mark their territory vocally. The Downy with a "pik" call, sometimes repeated in a string. The



The male Downy, far left, is America's smallest woodpecker. The male Nuttall's, at left, uses a rapid "rattle" call. For samples of the sound, go to <https://ebird.org/explore>.

Photos/Dan Murphy

Nuttall's uses a rapid "rattle" call.

A common question concerning woodpeckers is why don't they knock themselves silly banging on trees to uncover food or drumming to communicate. The long-held conventional wisdom was that the skull of the bird acted as a shock absorber. However, an article in the July 14 issue of *Current Biology* has upended this appellation. The authors used high-speed cameras to learn that the whole head

reacted stiffly like a hammer to deliver the blow of the beak, dispelling the shock absorber theory.

The authors reasoned that a plausible reason for the lack of concussions in woodpeckers is the small mass of the brain and head, because force is directly proportional to mass. Numerical modeling indicated that during hammering, woodpecker brains are still below the force threshold known to cause concussions in primate brains.

Some food waste can be turned into compost

By Elinor H. Teague

California now requires all residences to add their food scraps, food-soiled paper and food-soiled cardboard boxes to the green-waste bin for weekly pickup along with yard trimmings.

But not all compostable materials need to be hauled away. Starting your own backyard compost pile is much easier than many people realize.

Compost is a significant source of beneficial microorganisms, fungi and bacteria that increase water retention, improve soil texture and drainage and nourish the soil. Adding compost to the soil also helps to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. The beneficial microorganisms, bacteria and fungi

in bagged commercial composts are often killed by having been stored in hot, dry conditions. Fresh, homemade compost is chock full of living organisms.

The compost is mixed with native soil and container potting soils at a 50/50 ratio when planting, and is applied as a side dressing fertilizer monthly during the growing season.

Start your pile with bags of commercial compost as well as fresh or bagged worm castings (and fresh worms, if possible). Add kitchen scraps, which must be limited to vegetable and fruit scraps and peelings, eggshells, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags and tea leaves.

Do not use grease, meat, bones,

dairy, bread or weeds, all of which should be discarded in the organic or green-waste bin.

Use the sharp edge of a shovel to chop the food waste into 2-inch pieces, and then turn the pieces into the compost. Flies are not a problem in piles that are regularly turned. However, raccoons, rats and dogs love to forage through them. Trellises, lattices and plastic nursery flats make good, water-permeable protective pile covers.

Keep the compost pile moist but not soggy, and turn the pile every time you add to it. Water lightly every two days in summer, once a week or less in winter. If the pile is too wet, it may develop an ammonia smell, but a well-maintained pile will not smell at all.



Photo/Carol Blackman

Peter Blackman of 26th Street turns his compost pile used to amend soil.

In fact, within three to four weeks in summer, you'll have ready-to-use, sweet-smelling, fluffy, dark-brown compost.

Volunteers sought to plan Sierra School centennial celebration

SCNA is looking for leaders in the community who have the time and enthusiasm to devote to organizing a celebration of the 100th birthday next year of Sierra School, the home

of the Sierra 2 Center for the Arts & Community, which is the social center of the Curtis Park neighborhood.

The volunteers will form a committee to plan a celebration that

captures the history of the building and all that it has meant to the community since it was built in 1923, as well as SCNA's vision for its future.

The celebration might be a single

event or a series of events.

Please direct inquiries and interest to terri@sierra2.org or call 916 452-3005, ext. 204.

— Terri Shettle, Sierra 2 Executive Director



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Electric: Most new models go over 200 miles on single charge

Continued from Page 1

of which four-fifths were battery-electric and one-fifth plug-in hybrid.

Why have so many people in Curtis Park decided to buy electric vehicles?

Environmental concerns are a major reason, and recent spikes in gas prices are driving recent demand. Owners have also discovered that EVs are quiet, fun to drive, are much cheaper to operate and often have lower lifetime costs than a similar gas car. Some 57 battery-electric models are now available, 84% of which have more than a 200-mile range on a single charge. Another 55 plug-in hybrid models are available.

Charging a typical EV battery from 10% to full at SMUD's nighttime rates will cost about \$6.25 and provide about 225 miles of range. Gas for a 225-mile trip in a relatively efficient 38-mpg gas car would be about five times as much.

SMUD provides an EV cost comparison tool on its website. The tool estimates that a Hyundai Kona



Karol Moncrief of 25th Street charges her Tesla in her driveway.

Photo/Joan Cusick

EV with a \$34,000 suggested retail price (\$23,750 after incentives) has a 258-mile range. If driven 10,000 miles per year, it would save \$12,500 over five years compared to a gas-powered Kona (with a \$27,780 suggested retail price and 29 mpg).

A higher-end Tesla Model Y Performance (\$63,990 suggested retail price, \$63,240 after incentives) has a 303-mile range. If driven 15,000 miles per year, it would save \$15,000 in fuel costs over five years compared to a gas-powered Audi Q7 (\$57,500 suggested retail price, 22 mpg).

DMV data indicated there were 16,000 vehicles registered in 95818 as of the end of 2020. Curtis Park shares the 95818 ZIP code with the Land Park, Newton Booth and Poverty Ridge neighborhoods. Assuming vehicles are proportional to population, Curtis Park has about 3,600 vehicles, of which about 200 are battery-powered.

To find out more about the electric vehicles that are available and what they cost, try out the SMUD tool at <https://myaccount.smud.org/manage/vendor/evestimator>.

Man found dead in home

Christopher Brenner, 61, of Portola Way was found dead Aug. 8 in his home, which had been owned by his family for more than 80 years.

A postal carrier became suspicious when he spotted a broken front window in Brenner's home and noticed an unpleasant odor. He notified a neighbor who called police and asked officers to conduct a wellness check.

Police officers who responded found Brenner's body in the front room.

Neighbors surmised that Brenner collapsed from a heart attack, fell into the window and then to the floor. Foul play was not suspected. The Sacramento County Coroner's Office listed the death as accidental.

Although Brenner had lived in the home for several decades, few neighbors had ever spoken with him. One longtime neighbor who checked up on him regularly said they last spoke in July. She said he had been in ill health.

Brenner's maternal grandparents, Elmer and Annabelle DeVore, purchased the house in 1941. Elmer died in 1977. Annabelle continued to live in the house for several years thereafter.

Brenner's parents, Harvey and Ellen Brenner, and sister, Therese, predeceased him. The family lived on Highland Avenue when Brenner was a child.

He is survived by a niece and a nephew.

— Dennis Cusick

Electric Stars to host information parties on home electrification

By Kathy Les

Dozens of Curtis Park households already enjoy quiet and energy-efficient heating and cooling and hot water from heat pumps, as well as induction cooking, each an electric technology to reduce home-based carbon emissions.

However, the majority of homes still use gas for heating and cooking. If left unchecked, the city estimates gas-fueled appliances would contribute 22% of the city's greenhouse gases by 2030 and 31% by 2045.

Soon lawn signs will be popping up around the neighborhood to identify homeowners who have installed at least one high-efficiency electric appliance and who are happy to share their experience.

The Curtis Park Electric Stars, seven Curtis Park women seeking to encourage home electrification, will hold informational house parties this fall to share their experiences with efficiently and economically electrifying their homes. Each session will be held in a Curtis Park home and will feature an induction cooking demonstration paired with food tasting and a look at heat pump technology used to heat and cool the homes and heat water. The aim of these sessions is to share the cost savings, comfort and health benefits of these new appliances.

With recent passage of President Biden's climate bill setting aside up to \$14,000 per household for

electrification, plus \$50 billion in California's climate priorities established by Gov. Gavin Newsom, there will be plenty of financial incentives for homeowners to replace gas appliances with high-efficiency electric appliances, including rebates for heating and cooling systems, water heaters and induction stoves and cooktops. Homes that replace gas appliances with electric will spend less on utilities and support SMUD's Carbon Zero 2030 goals.

The city is pursuing an Existing Structures Electrification Strategy to transition existing buildings from gas to carbon-free electricity by 2045.

There is no charge to attend the electrification house parties. Each will last no more than 90 minutes. Attendance is limited to 10 guests per house. Please consider attending one of these: Sept. 8 at 4 p.m. at the Cutter Way home of Nancy and Mike McKeever (serving an Italian bite); or Oct. 8 at 11 a.m. at the Portola Way homes of Kathy Les and Hal Thomas and Lydia Marque and Allen Perumal (serving an Indian bite).

For questions and to RSVP, please email CPElectricstars@gmail.com or Kathy.les321@gmail.com. Confirmations and addresses will be sent with each RSVP.

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Water may be discolored while city flushes mains

I'd like to discuss an issue that we've all become intimately aware of the last several years – water quality and conservation.

In August, the city's Department of Utilities began a project to "flush" water mains in many parts of the city to help maintain high drinking water quality for residents. The idea is to get rid of the sand, sediment and debris that can build up in the system over time. The process works by releasing water from fire hydrants, which

refreshes older water and removes sediment and deposits from the city's water distribution system.

During this process, your water supply will be unaffected, though you may notice some discolored water. If this happens, you can run your faucet for several minutes and the problem should go away.

I want to make sure you are aware of this in case you have seen discolored water or the flushing process itself and have had questions.

RICK JENNINGS

City Council Member District 7



The city's goal is to strike an important balance. While the city is making this investment in the quality of our drinking water, city officials also request that residents not increase their water usage as a result. Many scientists say California is in a "megadrought" that will likely last

at least another decade if not much longer, according to a recent report in *The Sacramento Bee*. Because of this, all of us have a responsibility to help conserve water regardless of its quality.

Together, we can help mitigate the worst effects of the drought. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about water quality or conservation or need any support or service from my staff or me, please do not hesitate to contact my office at rjennings@cityofsacramento.org.

For more information on water conservation efforts in Sacramento, please visit www.cityofsacramento.org/Utilities/Water/Conservation.

Park is hub of activity for neighborhood and community

I am so fortunate to live within a block of William Curtis Park. We should never take our beautiful park for granted. It is a wonderful amenity that has become even more important to the community with the advent of the pandemic.

I take my dog for multiple walks in the park each day, many with my wife. And I even have ongoing fantasies about taking up running around the park to keep in shape.

But our park is so much more important than a place to walk or run. It is a true hub of our neighborhood and our surrounding community. Each day, I see a diverse

JAY SCHENIRER

City Council Member District 5



collection of individuals and groups coming to the park to do their own athletic training, have family picnics, celebrate life-cycle events, walk their dogs (please remember to keep them on a leash!) or simply sit on a bench and enjoy the quiet and, hopefully, the breeze.

The tennis/pickle ball courts are getting more use than ever, and the tot lot is continuously filled with youngsters enjoying the swings and playground equipment.

And let's not forget the larger community events such as Music in the Park, Curtis Fest and Movies in the Park. All of these activities serve to bring folks together, something so important in this day and age (thank you, SCNA).

For those of us who have been around for awhile, we remember when the park was bisected by a number of streets. We certainly owe a debt of gratitude to those

neighbors, including our former Mayor Joe Serna, who led the effort to eliminate the cross streets, increasing both safety in the park and an overall feeling of being in nature. We remember those who helped rebuild and upgrade the children's playground. And, we have benches and trees commemorating neighbors who are no longer with us.

Finally, we should thank our city parks employees who keep the grass mowed, the trash collected, the trees healthy and the sprinklers sprinkling. Please say thanks when you see them in the park.

Reports of COVID near June level

By Mike Scheible

While COVID cases have dropped countywide by one-third since their early June peak, reported infections have changed little in the 95818 ZIP code area.

The 191 local cases in the 30 days before Aug. 5 were just slightly below the 194 reported on June 2 for 95818.

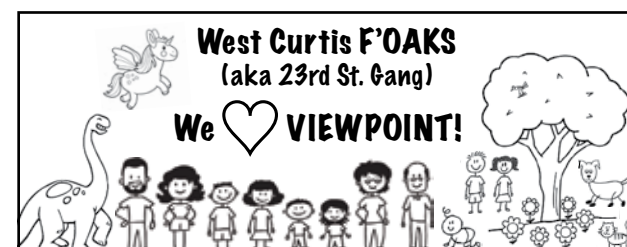
Actual case numbers may be much higher than those reported. Data on reported cases is only

useful as a trend indicator.

The vaccination rate in 95818 increased by 1% over the last two months to 81.2% of the population.

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 infections and vaccinations are not available publicly at less than the ZIP code area.



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Photo/Steve Schweigerdt

Bike-inspired sculpture is a tribute to The Bike Party group who have been instrumental in growing the garden.

Gateway Garden is experiment in bringing neighbors together

By Dave Knox

A vacant lot on the northeast corner of Second Avenue and 26th Street has been transformed recently into Gateway Garden.

Steve Schweigerdt, who lives just a few doors from the garden, spearheaded the project after being inspired at Tanama Garden in Oak Park and getting connected to the property owner through Always Growing Foundation and Alchemist CDC. Schweigerdt works with these groups through his conservation efforts with Sacramento Valley Conservancy and Sacramento National Park City.

Schweigerdt distributed flyers, met with neighbors and gathered materials.

Wood chips were acquired to mulch the area. Volunteers provided drip irrigation, hoses, plants and seeds. Khalafi Kaspian was a key volunteer in expanding the garden by recruiting volunteers from Bike Party, and donating plants and irrigation supplies. Bike Party hosts rides and has adopted the garden.

The garden is intended for all people who want to lend a hand in growing the crops and then reap the harvest of fresh vegetables.

Tomatoes, peppers and squash were plentiful in mid-August. Dahlia tubers brought from San Francisco bloomed in abundance. Planning is underway for fall planting.

Schweigerdt suggested that anyone who wants to volunteer can join him at the garden at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays.

Schweigerdt emphasized that the garden is an experiment to bring people together to share and make connections that benefit neighbors and the community.

The property owner is allowing the lot to be used as community space until it is developed at some future date.

If you are interested in harvesting, planting, helping or learning about other “greening” projects, contact Schweigerdt by phone at 415 846-9665 or by email at info@sacparkcity.com. Also check the website sacparkcity.com/gateway-garden.

Taylor's Kitchen closes, but options are considered

By Judy Green Scheible

When Taylor's Kitchen closed suddenly at the end of July, its customers were stunned. The high-end restaurant had been serving delicious dinners since January 2009.

It had survived through the pandemic's restrictions, but it couldn't survive the reality of tough staffing problems and increased costs. Wages were high, food costs were high.

“You can only raise the menu prices so much,” co-owner Danny Johnson said while sitting in his office at the back of the restaurant.

Johnson and his wife, Kathaleen, the other co-owner, had been pondering the decision to close for weeks. Once it was made, Johnson said there was no need to prolong the situation.

Johnson talked about his mixed feelings concerning the closure. “Part



Danny Johnson of Taylor's Market

of me feels I let the community down,” he said. “The other part of me feels relief because I'm not running the restaurant.”

He was clear his primary focus is on Taylor's Market, which the Johnsons also own.

As for the future of the Taylor's Kitchen space, Johnson said no firm decision has been made. For the immediate future, he envisions special events such as pop-up dinners with guest chefs, special-event breakfasts and wine tastings.

Neighbors travel to Costa Rica



Photo/Courtesy of Heart of Travel

Two Curtis Park households from 25th and 26th streets independently signed up for a 10-day tour, which they only learned when they arrived in Costa Rica in June. Pictured at Camaronal National Wildlife Refuge on the Nicoya peninsula are, front row from the left, Kate Davies, Kathleen Ave, Susan MacCulloch and Steve White. In the back row are Bill Davies, far left, and son Will, fourth from left.



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Bret Harte principal aims for school to be one of district's best



**LAUREN
GOTHARD
and
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Bret Harte Elementary School teachers and staff are welcoming students back to campus for the beginning of the 2022-23 school year.

Principal Roxanne Wolfe, who arrived more than halfway through the 2021-22 school year, is ready to implement her vision for the campus.

"We will create opportunities for families to be present on campus, getting to know each other once again and having some fun in the process," Wolfe said. She also shared her goals for academic achievement. "We need to move all our students forward. We see the need of our students and have plans ready to be put in place this year to raise student achievement and to build lifelong learners. My hope is to be a top school in [the district] once again."

Part of Wolfe's preparation over summer included refreshing the bear paw prints in the front of the school with bright green paint. Teachers, staff and the Parent Teacher Association have been preparing as well. Staff participated in professional development training and prepared their classrooms for a new group of students.

An ice cream social for families and students is scheduled for Aug. 30 to reconnect and welcome newcomers. Schoolwide events will start right away and should continue for the remainder of the year. The school will host a grandparents tea party on Sept. 12, in recognition of the number of



Photo/Lauren Gothard

An artistic rendering of the school's name was installed over the summer in the school's chain-link fence along Franklin Boulevard, courtesy of the Parent Teacher Association.

"The new signage not only improves the aesthetics of the school, but also increases awareness and visibility of the school." – Adam Gothard

grandparents who care for or live with Bret Harte students. That will be followed by the annual Back to School Night on Sept. 21, when families are invited to meet their students' teachers and peers and tour their classrooms.

An artistic rendering of the school's name was installed over the summer in the school's chain-link fence along Franklin Boulevard, courtesy of the Parent Teacher Association. "Many people drive down Franklin Boulevard and are not aware of the school or know which school it is," said PTA President Adam Gothard. "The new signage not only improves the aesthetics of the school, but also

increases awareness and visibility of the school."

The PTA has been brainstorming other ideas for visual improvements in the front of campus on Ninth Avenue and the back of campus on Seventh Avenue. "We can always use more help and community involvement from neighbors on these projects," Gothard said. "Please reach out and join our garden committee if you are interested."

The PTA executive committee finalized its event calendar for the school year, including a number of successful events from last year such as a lunch time art activity, family play dates in the park, and the Christmas Lights Scavenger Hunt. The PTA also plans to partner with staff and teachers to organize a perennial favorite, the Harvest Festival Fundraiser.

• • •

Anybody can join the Bret Harte PTA. If you would like more information about getting connected, school events and garden workdays, please email BretHarteBearsPTA@gmail.com.

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