

# VIEWPOINT

A publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association since 1979

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October 2022

## Record heat affects wild animals, too

By Pam and Will Carlton

Early September was hot, really hot. The high of 116 degrees on Sept. 6 was the highest temperature ever recorded in downtown Sacramento.

Even with the cooling shade of our urban forest, it was hot.

Our neighborhoods are more than lovely tree-lined streets; they are diverse urban ecosystems. Those ecosystems are populated by a variety of animals and plants. This heat and drought have been hard on them, too. It has impacted their habitats.

Recently, the behavior of splooting has been in the news. People living in major cities have seen squirrels lying flat out on the ground or in trees. Splooting, or heat dumping, is a natural behavior in mammals to reduce body temperature by lying flat on a cooler surface to transfer heat away. Dogs sploot, cats sploot, we often see squirrels splooting.

The raccoons on our roof sploot, too. We had never seen



Photo/Will Carlton

Splooting, or heat dumping, is a natural behavior in mammals to reduce body temperature by lying flat on a cooler surface.

these nocturnal neighbors sploot before. Normally, they would sleep in the heat of the day and forage at night when it's cooler. But in early September, it never really cooled off and being in the shade was not much help during the day.

The raccoons were photographed around 7 p.m., when it was still 100

degrees, after several days of triple-digit temperatures. The animals were OK, but clearly stressed by the heat.

To help our furry friends, we put out buckets of water in the backyard that they could use to drink or cool off.

The drought and heat are stressful for us all. A little kindness toward our wildlife can go a long way.

## Last chance Oct. 6 for a seat at SCNA fundraiser

Ticket sales close at midnight Oct. 6 for Gather at the Long Table, SCNA's fall fundraiser.

A VIP adults-only soiree begins at 3 p.m. Oct. 16 in the Curtis Hall courtyard. Dinner will be from 4 to 7 p.m. in a tented, intimately lit, and transformed area between the main Sierra 2 Center buildings.

Sac City Eats will cook onsite a barbecue dinner that includes rosemary-garlic chicken, barbecued pulled pork or vegetarian lasagna, accompanied by garlicky mashed potatoes, green beans with bacon, and a Caesar salad – and many desserts.

Dining will be at long tables with open seating to encourage guests to mingle and forge new friendships.

A VIP reception starts at 3 p.m. featuring Birria King meat and vegetarian tacos made to order and Scott's Seafood cheesecake bites along with specialty cocktail stylings from Ghost Tequila. Jon Merriman will entertain guests on acoustic guitar at this intimate prequel to the event.

Chef Doolittle will create elegant appetizers with induction burners in a SMUD cooking demonstration.

Diners can taste brews by Track 7 Brewery and Urban Roots, or pair their dinners with red or white wines from local wineries. The Nite Kats jam band will perform.

Emcee Kitty O'Neal will guide participants through the evening, announcing silent auction times and treasures from local artisans, Sean Minor Wines, JJ Pfister Distilling Company, Voler Cycling and others.

Sponsors are Steffan Brown Realtor, Cook Realty-Larry Easterling, Towerpoint Wealth, SMUD board member Rosanna Herber, and SCNA board members Kathy Les and Mimi Budd.

Tickets at <https://sierra2.org/event/gather/> are \$100 for dinner, \$150 for the VIP reception and dinner.

To volunteer to work at the event: <https://signup.com/go/yUevouT>.

## X Street shelter has little effect on homelessness

### Despite city promise, tent encampments remain in area

By Dennis Cusick

For more than a year, Andre and Tre have been our neighbors. They live in tents, side by side, in an encampment under a highway overpass, in the same block as the city's X Street Navigation Center, a 100-bed homeless shelter.

At 63, Andre is among the city's oldest homeless residents. Tre, age 29, is younger than most. They take care of each other.

"If you've got a little community, you try to look out for that community," Andre said in an interview just outside his tent. "See how this area's clean?"

That's how you avoid getting harassed. If you do foolish things, that's when you get harassed."

When the X Street shelter opened on Sept. 21, 2021, the city's intention was to clear out the tent encampments that had proliferated within a five-block radius.

*Please see Shelter, Page 2*



### In memory of Zach

Park bench honors grandson of longtime neighbors.  
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### Sounds like a boy band

Sierra 2 class gets singers to reach beyond comfort zone.  
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# Shelter: Estimated county total 9,278 homeless in February

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“Hopefully we can get whole encampments to come in, rather than ones and twos,” Councilmember Jay Schenirer said at an open house for the surrounding neighborhoods before the shelter opened.

Schenirer estimated then that about 100 people were living in five nearby encampments, meaning that the shelter would have the capacity to accommodate all of them within a month of its opening. “If there are encampments that spring up, we will have failed,” he added.

By Schenirer’s metric last year, the city has failed, which he acknowledged in an interview. “We did fail on the encampments,” Schenirer said. “We made a commitment to the community and we were unable to keep that commitment.”

In the year since the shelter opened, homeless encampments have become entrenched on Broadway and on X Street underneath Highway 99, just outside the shelter. Numerous other encampments line the Broadway corridor to the west.

Andre said he was invited to go into the X Street shelter when it opened, but declined. His reason? “Negativity,” he said. “You’ve got people in there with mental problems. They shouldn’t be in there. ... I chose to be out here. As I look at it now, and the games people play, I prefer to be out here.”

## Shelter turnover

The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency oversees the X Street Shelter and the Meadowview Navigation Center for women, both of which are managed by Volunteers of America of Northern California and Northern Nevada (VOA). Entry to the shelters is through a closed referral process. The shelters don’t have waiting lists.

Before the X Street shelter opened, Schenirer said: “If this place works really well we could cycle 200 people through it in a year.” He cautioned, however, that there would be no drop-dead date to get residents out of the shelter in six months: “It’s really meeting them where they are” and addressing individual needs.

More than twice as many people have cycled through the X Street shelter than Schenirer anticipated, according to the shelter’s weekly and monthly

reports. As of Aug. 23, some 433 people had been shelter residents – 367 had departed and 66 remained.

Monthly reports show the X Street shelter was near its capacity at the end of 2021, but the population dropped in January because county health officials wouldn’t allow new admissions due to the rise of the omicron COVID variant. The population rebounded in February, but declined again in June because of a COVID outbreak. The shelter remained well below capacity throughout the summer.

The shelter’s data indicated that 107 residents had left for some kind of housing – about half of them to permanent residences, the others to transitional or temporary housing or institutions. Almost all of the rest, about 70% of the departures, were categorized as “program exits” – they were asked to leave, either because of “noncompliance of program rules” or simply because their time was up.

VOA’s communications with shelter residents who are about to leave make clear that shelter management recognizes the limits on its ability to help residents find other housing.

“It has been such a great pleasure to have you as our Guest,” read the form letter that a Meadowview shelter resident received in August. “I must provide you with this letter to inform you, at this current time, we do not have any housing options that will meet your current requirements and conditions. Your last night at the shelter is going to be 9/2.”

With no other options, the 65-year-old woman went back to living in her car in Oak Park. “I slept in my car from December to April and now I’m going back to my car,” she told participants in the Community Summit on Homelessness in late August. “So don’t go homeless – it’s bad.”

## Scope of problem

The reality is that there isn’t nearly enough housing available in Sacramento County to accommodate even the limited numbers of shelter residents, let alone the much larger homeless population on the streets.

This year’s Point-in-Time (PIT) count, conducted over two days in February, estimated that 9,278 individuals were then homeless in Sacramento County – 6,664 of them unsheltered, and 75% of them living in the city. The number of homeless



Photo/Joan Cusick

An encampment under a highway overpass is in the same block as the city’s X Street Navigation Center, a 100-bed homeless shelter.

## Homelessness by the numbers

Findings of Point-in-Time Count, Feb. 23-24

92%....of homeless from Sacramento County,  
5% moved here in previous six months, 3% transient

79%.... individuals, 15% families,  
5% unaccompanied children, 1% couples

78% ... of adults had been homeless more than a year,  
59% more than three years

69% ... ages 35 to 64, 15% under age 25, 14% ages 25 to 34,  
1% over age 65

65% ... male, 33% female, 2% transgender or nonconforming

58% ... had at least one disability

46% ... white, 31% Black, 11% multiracial, 7% American Indian,  
2% Asian

7% ..... military veterans

SOURCE: Homelessness in Sacramento County -  
Results from the 2022 Point-in-Time Count  
<https://sacramentostepsforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/PIT-Report-2022.pdf>

people had more than tripled since another count in 2015.

The causes of homelessness are varied. Andre, who was previously incarcerated, chose the relative freedom of the streets over the rigid rules and regulations of the housing that was offered to him. Tre said he became homeless when he lost his job at a warehouse. Sharon, who has been living in an encampment on the American River Parkway, said at the homeless summit that she too became homeless after losing a job, while Kim said being homeless “was better than being in a domestic violence situation.”

As many as 20,000 individuals may be homeless in Sacramento County

at one time or another in the year, according to the PIT report, issued in July by eight professors and researchers from Sacramento State University and UC Davis. The rate of homelessness in Sacramento County, 59 per 10,000 population, was the highest ever – lower than San Francisco (89), but about the same as Alameda County, slightly higher than Santa Clara, and much higher than most Southern California counties. (Los Angeles County had not reported its data.)

“This is on a trajectory that is unfathomable and unacceptable,” said Tim Brown, former executive director of Loaves & Fishes and board president

*Please see Shelter, Page 3*



# Shelter: 78,000 affordable housing units needed in county, study says

*Continued from Page 2*

of the Sacramento Regional Coalition to End Homelessness.

Homeless advocates and the business community agree that the level of homelessness in Sacramento has reached a crisis point. What to do about it is another matter.

In April, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce proposed a city ballot measure that would use a carrot-and-stick approach to homelessness: Produce enough shelter beds or camping spaces to accommodate everyone living on the street, but then make it a misdemeanor to continue living on the streets and refuse to go into a shelter. City Council approved the resulting Measure O, with some adjustments, on Aug. 9. It will be on the November ballot. (See related story below.)

Both the city and county approved ordinances in August that homeless advocates considered punitive. A city ordinance requires campers to keep at least a four-foot clear path for pedestrians on sidewalks and not block business entrances. The county outlawed camping on the American River Parkway and Dry Creek Parkway and around “critical infrastructure.”

## More housing needed

The rapid rise of homelessness in California is the result of “a housing affordability crisis that

worsened during this time,” the PIT report said. “Specific housing markets in California that indicated the largest increase in rents also reported the largest increases in homelessness.”

The report said rents in Sacramento jumped 20% from the start of the pandemic to a median rent in Sacramento County in November 2021 of \$1,402 for a one-bedroom apartment, far more than low-income people can afford.

The PIT report cited a recent national study finding that Sacramento County “needs an additional 78,000 affordable housing units to meet the needs of low-income households in the county.”

When the PIT counters in February asked homeless people “what two things could Sacramento do better” to help people experiencing homelessness, 44% said more affordable housing, 19% said more shelter beds, 18% said more jobs or job training.

At the summit, homeless people had additional concerns: lack of access to restrooms and showers; no secure locations for possessions; lack of a mailing address; difficulty charging cell phones; and police harassment.

Schenirer says he doesn’t believe the city will build more shelters: “We simply don’t have the money and we don’t have the expertise.” But he does agree with the PIT survey of homeless people. “The solution,” Schenirer said, “is more affordable housing.”

# Measure O would make it a crime to camp without permission in city

By Dennis Cusick

City voters in November will consider Measure O, which would make it a misdemeanor to camp on public or private property without permission.

The measure has five provisions:

- 1) The city manager would be required to authorize emergency shelter spaces for 20% of the homeless population within 90 days of the measure’s effective date;
- 2) enforcement of the anti-camping ordinance would be conditioned on the availability of shelter space;
- 3) homeless encampments would be prohibited;
- 4) citizens could sue the city to prevent illegal camping on city property;
- 5) the city’s expense to enforce the measure would be capped at \$5 million.

City Council voted to place the measure on the ballot at its Aug. 9 meeting by a 7-2 vote, with Councilmembers Katie Valenzuela and Mai Vang in opposition.

The Measure O ballot language is 77 words, but the city’s explanation of the measure’s provisions takes up more than 11 pages on the city’s website.

Measure O would not take effect until and unless the city and county reach agreement on funding of mental health, substance abuse and other social

services for homeless residents of the city.

The ballot argument in support of Measure O was signed by Mayor Darrell Steinberg and Vice Mayor Angelique Ashby, as well as the chief executives of the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce and Sacramento Region Business Association. Also signing was Amani Sawires Rapaski, chief operating officer of the Volunteers of America of Northern California and Northern Nevada, which manages the X Street Navigation Center and Meadowview shelter for homeless women.

The ballot argument opposing Measure O was signed by Councilmembers Valenzuela and Vang, as well as representatives of the California Democratic Party, Sacramento Area Congregations Together (SacACT) and Sacramento Housing Alliance (SHA).

SacACT, SHA and three other nonprofit groups sought an injunction to keep Measure O off the ballot. They challenged the constitutionality of the measure in light of *Martin v. City of Boise*, a 2018 decision of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. That court held that it is cruel and unusual to prosecute people “for sleeping outside on public property when those people have no home or other shelter to go to.”

Superior Court Judge Shelleyanne Chang declined to issue an injunction, but said in her Aug. 24 decision that the plaintiffs could raise the issues again if the voters approve Measure O.

## VIEWPOINT

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## To our readers

*Viewpoint* editor Dennis Cusick and managing editor/production manager Carol Blackman will step down after the December issue.

Cusick has been the primary editor for five years, succeeding Judy Green Scheible, who had been the editor for many years. Cusick was previously editor from 1988 to 1990.

Blackman has been a member of the *Viewpoint* staff since its first issue in 1979. She has been the production manager for most of the neighborhood newspaper’s 43 years.

*Viewpoint* depends on the contributions of more than 120 volunteers – more than 30 reporters, editors and photographers, and more than 90 delivery people – to reach more than 2,000 homes in Curtis Park each month except August and January.

Replacements for both positions are being sought.



## President's message

## Sierra 2 Green, dogs and the city

**BILL  
HOOVER**

**SCNA Board  
President**



Sierra 2 Green was the playground for the Sierra Elementary School, which closed in 1976.

As a result of the Save Sierra School movement, the school property became the responsibility of the nascent neighborhood association that incorporated in 1980 as the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association. Sierra School was reborn as Sierra 2 Center for the Arts and Community.

The city's Parks and Recreation Department (now the Department of Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment) assumed responsibility for operation and maintenance of Sierra 2 Green.

The soccer field on the Sierra 2 Green was established prior to 1982. The children's playground opened in July 1985, a testament to the then close cooperation between the city and SCNA. Both of these city approved and permitted amenities have been well used



Photo/Joan Cusick

Dog owners and their dogs enjoy the camaraderie of their friends at Sierra 2 Green.

for over 30 years.

By the mid-1990s, a small number of neighborhood households were using the Sierra 2 Green for unleashed playtime for their dogs. In 1996, the group asked the city's Parks and Recreation Department to consider the area for a city dog park. The request was denied. The group next approached our City Council member for assistance. This led to an agreement that the group would form a dog training club, and submit an application to the city for a permit to use the property for that purpose. The group called itself Dogxilliary.

Today, the green is used by more

dog owners and their dogs than ever envisioned. With the increase in use, complaints have multiplied. The city, through its representatives and 311 number, and SCNA regularly receive complaints about aggressive dogs, potentially dangerous interactions between dogs and children, intimidating behavior by some dog owners, holes dug in the field by dogs, uncollected feces, and dog owners not observing the posted hours and conditions of use.

Sierra 2 Green has not hosted soccer games for over a year due to its deteriorated condition and safety concerns voiced by soccer clubs. With soccer fields in short supply, the field's

condition and its mixed use have raised concerns with the city.

On Sept. 13, a meeting arranged by SCNA's Neighborhood Concerns Committee was held involving the city and Dogxilliary representatives. The city reiterated that Sierra 2 Green does not meet requirements for a dog park. Concerns were also noted regarding inappropriate fencing and dog proximity to the children's playground. Further, the city found no record of a permit application being filed by Dogxilliary and no similar permit has ever been issued.

The matter is under review by the city. Stay tuned.

### Notes from Sept. 7 SCNA board meeting

## Positive balance projected in SCNA's fiscal year budget

Treasurer **John Bailey** presented the fiscal year 2022-23 budget for approval by the SCNA board. Budgeted income is \$896,277.56 and expenses are \$939,101.79. With \$70,000 depreciation, there is a positive balance of about \$27,000. It is SCNA's first annual budget since the beginning of the COVID pandemic in 2020. SCNA had shifted to quarterly budgets due to fiscal uncertainty during the pandemic.

The operating budget's increase in income is due to additional rental income, which continues to climb toward pre-COVID numbers. More community events will return in the coming year, including the Home and Garden Tour. However, utility, rental and staffing costs are expected to rise. The capital budget, which focuses on maintaining and replacing major building components

for the Sierra 2 Center, is based on a 10-year engineering plan. The fiscal year 2022-23 capital budget of \$187,000 addresses projected building improvements needed and contingency funding. The operating and capital budgets were approved unanimously during the Sept. 7 meeting.

The SCNA board ratified a letter sent by the executive committee in partnership with multiple neighborhood associations regarding the city's Climate Action and Adaptability Plan. The vote was 6-1 in favor, with one abstention.

Executive Director **Terri Shettle** reported that the Development Committee continues work on the Gather at the Long Table event, scheduled for 3 to 7 p.m. Oct. 16 at Sierra 2. Ticket sales are open, and board members were encouraged to

spread the word.

**Erik Fay** reported that the Neighborhood Concerns Committee (NCC) is continuing to research purchasing air-quality sensors for the neighborhood. NCC is gathering information from Mangan Park and Oak Park neighborhoods on their air sensor costs.

Fay said several neighbors reported streetlamp outages on multiple streets over the summer, with a total of 11 out as of early September. The city reports the problem might take up to five months to resolve.

The city recently held a hearing to consider the removal of a protected tree on Fifth Avenue, within the Crocker Village development. Fay shared that while SCNA was able to attend the hearing, a number of participants were kept in the Zoom waiting room until the end, and public comment was limited. A

decision has not yet been made.

**John Mathews** reported that concerns surrounding the "dog training area" at Sierra 2 Green are ongoing. Dog owners are not observing posted rules. The field has not been used for soccer for more than a year due to safety issues mostly related to dog use. The field is city property and under the control of its Department of Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment, which has visited the site. The agency noted there is a shortage of soccer fields and it wants to use the field for that purpose, but it will need work to restore the field to playable condition. The city does not recognize Sierra 2 Green as a dog park, complicating management of the dog training area. (See president's message above.)

The next SCNA board meeting will be Oct. 5 on Zoom.

*Submitted by Emily Lemei*



# Fanny: Legendary band with roots in Curtis Park

By Mindy Giles

A recent documentary film, “Fanny: The Right To Rock,” tells the story of young women who broke the heavy leaded-glass ceiling of making rock music on a major label. “Fanny was the first all-women rock band that could really play and really get some credibility within the music industry,” Bonnie Raitt says in the documentary. “They were badass ... and they still are.”

And it all began in Curtis Park.

In 1961, Filipina-American sisters June and Jean Millington arrived from Manila with their parents, and moved into the house at 2571 Portola Way.

But being pre-teens in a new school in a new town is never a party. It takes time to fit in and find a sense of place.

**“We practiced in our backyard. Hundreds of neighbors watched through the fence,” June recalled.**

Some of that came with the ukuleles they had brought from their homeland. Self-taught, they accompanied themselves, singing songs by The Beatles, The Beach Boys and a few of the many British Invasion bands.

Their natural talent and spirited work ethic, apparent even then, became their way to make friends. In 1964, they formed their first real band, The Svelts, with June on lead guitar and Jean on bass.

“We practiced in our back yard. Hundreds of neighbors watched through the fence,” June recalled. “We attended McClatchy High, and California Junior High before that. My main memory of that neighborhood is that it was totally quiet and peaceful, and the park started, like, maybe two blocks away. Jean’s boyfriend, who played bass in a surf band, lived on the

left side. No problems at all, always very sweet. My memories were of when it was sunny and balmy.”

Meanwhile over in Folsom, another young Filipina-American musician, Brie Brandt, somehow heard that The Svelts were looking for a drummer. “One of them played bass, one of them played guitar, they were my age (17), and we were exactly the same racial mix,” Brandt said. “When I found out they were looking for a drummer — I think my mom read it somewhere — it was a perfect mix.”

They performed at Governor’s Hall at the old State Fair Grounds on Feb. 4, 1966, on a bill with another local band, The New Breed (led by Timothy B. Schmit, later of Poco and The Eagles). They knew they were on their way.

In 1969, the Millington sisters and Brandt traveled to Los Angeles and joined up with another all-female band, Wild Honey, but it was mostly a Motown cover band and not the original rock they wanted to play. As a last gasp before disbanding, they signed up for one more open mic night at the legendary Troubadour in West Hollywood. And that’s where the secretary to producer Richard Perry scouted them — he had been searching for an all-female rock band “as a novelty act.”

From 1970 to 1973, the band, now called Fanny, recorded four albums for the Warner Brothers/Reprise Records label. Producer/musician Todd Rundgren produced the fourth album. Fanny toured relentlessly. The members’ ferocious playing, original songs, energy and beauty were acknowledged around the world. David Bowie became and remained one of their biggest champions. But there was never a hit single.

The band members took refuge off the road, all living together, some with



Photo/Linda Wolf

From left, Jean Millington, Nickey Barclay, Brie Brandt, June Millington, producer Richard Perry practice at Fanny Hill about 1970.



Jean Millington, Brie Howard-Darling (formerly Brandt) and June Millington appear in a 2021 documentary, “Fanny: The Right to Rock.”

Photo/Marita Madeloni

their girlfriends, in a Hollywood home once owned by movie star Hedy Lamar that they dubbed, humorously, Fanny Hill.

There were multiple pressures — the label wanted a hit single and wanted the gay members of the band to stay in the closet, even telling them to invent fake “missing” boyfriends during interviews. A move to another label, some change of personnel, and the dawn of glam and disco brought Fanny to an end in 1975. “I had to find out who I was without a guitar,” June said.

The 2021 documentary film by

Bobbi Hart began filming in 2018, at the same time as the band’s first album in 44 years, “When Fanny Walked the Earth.” The documentary is on the festival circuit now, delayed by COVID. As the trailer trumpets, “Fighting early barriers of race, gender and sexuality in the music industry, and now ageism, the incredible women of Fanny are ready to claim their hallowed place in the halls of rock ‘n’ roll fame.”

[I plan to bring “Fanny: The Right To Rock” right back home to their neighborhood in Curtis Park at the 24th St. Theatre. Stay tuned! — Mindy Giles]

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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

## OCTOBER 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

Two Rivers Dance Center/  
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

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  
PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED  
mad@madyoga.org, 916 290-2693

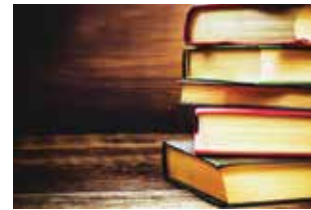
WW Studio Workshop  
Th/Fri/Sat, 8:30-10 a.m., Room 10  
800 374-9191, weightwatchers.com

## SIERRA 2 CENTER 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  
**Oct. 10** – “Pastoral Song,”  
by James Rebanks

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

**Oct. 20** – “The River of  
Consciousness,” by Oliver Sacks

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

MAHJONG  
Mondays, 10 a.m.-noon. Room 12

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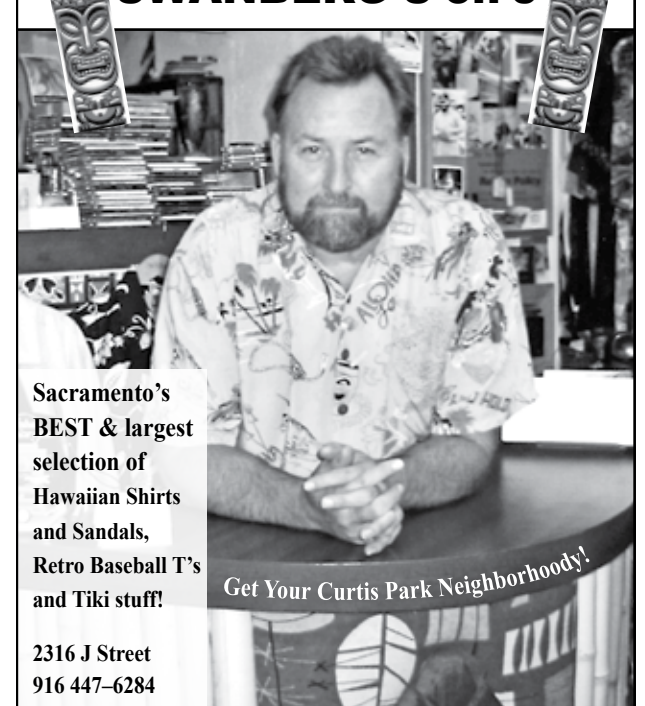
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**Oct. 16** ... Kepi with Hutch (from the Thermals) Harvest Hootenanny (Acoustic), 2 p.m.

**Oct. 21** ... Mike Beck & John Green (Cowboy & country), 7 p.m.

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### SPOOKY STAMP CARVING

Sunday, Oct. 23

10 a.m.-noon

The Learnery, Room 7

\$35 per person (includes materials)

Learn to carve your own stamp and print it on paper or fabric. Choose from Halloween designs or bring your own. With artist Heather Hogan's guidance, students will learn to prepare art to transfer to the block, cut basic shapes, ink a plate, stamp test prints and make final prints on paper and, as time allows, on fabric. Bring a shirt or scarf if you want to print on it in class.

### ABSTRACT INTUITIVE PAINTING

Saturday, Oct. 29

10 a.m.-noon, Room 7

\$25 for class, plus \$25 optional art kit (paint and brushes)

Tap into your creative side. 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 8" x 10" canvas will be supplied. Buy one of our paint kits or bring your own acrylic or oil paints and brushes.



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# Avoid winter storm damage by inspecting trees now

By Dan Pskowski

Right now is the time to inspect your trees. Why? With the onset of winter storms comes precipitation and high winds. Inevitably branches fall and occasionally trees blow over. Looking for tree problems now could prevent damage to your car or home and, in certain circumstances, save the tree.

Start by standing back from the tree and look up into the canopy. Binoculars are helpful, especially for tall trees. Since the leaves have not yet fallen off, dead branches should be obvious. Those greater than 4 inches in diameter are the ones to be concerned about. Are there any branches that previously snapped off and are resting on other branches?

Arborists call these “hangers.” Also look for branches that are split which are not as obvious, but one sign is the branch that takes an abrupt turn.

Next, inspect the main fork. This is the area where the trunk bifurcates into branches that develop into the crown. Inspect the branch unions for cracks. V-shaped unions are more prone to splitting than U-shaped unions.

Look at the trunk and large branches for cavities or large pockets of decay. If squirrels inhabit them, that indicates there could be extensive decay.

Finally, inspect the base of the tree. When trees fall over due to root decay, there are above-ground signs, usually around the tree’s base, indicating there could be a problem. Mushrooms or conks

(bracket-like growths), which form on the external surface of the tree’s base, indicate that a professional arborist needs to do an advanced assessment. This involves excavating soil from around the base of the tree to assess the structural integrity of the anchoring roots.

Decay analysis could involve probing, drilling or using specialized equipment, such as the resistograph, that accurately measures internal decay.

If you have any concerns while inspecting your trees, contact a tree company that has International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certified arborists on staff to determine what proactive work is required before the start of the winter storm season.

If there is a city street tree in front of your home, also inspect it. The city’s Urban Forestry section does not have enough staff to inspect the approximately 75,000 public street trees annually.

If you do notice one of the signs that were discussed above, contact Urban Forestry through the City Call Center by dialing 311 or emailing 311@cityofsacramento.org. Emailing is usually quicker.



Photo/Dan Pskowski

This crack at branch union requires an inspection by an ISA certified arborist.

## Naked Coffee coming to site of Bud & Sons

By Kelsey Wehls

Naked Coffee is opening a new cafe in Curtis Park at 30th Street and Fourth Avenue, adjacent to Franklin Boulevard.

Naked Coffee is known for its coffee shops in Midtown, East Sacramento and North Oak Park. The Curtis Park location was ideal because of its proximity to Naked Coffee’s roasting facility in North Oak Park, allowing the business to stay within established delivery areas.

“We’ve wanted to open a cafe here for many years and this is the first space that checked all the boxes,” said Kyle Khasigian, co-owner of Naked Coffee. “We also have several employees who live in Curtis Park, Midtown and North Oak Park and have expressed excitement to walk, bike or take public transit to work.”

The 1,400-square-foot space will feature a bar and pastry area in the middle with indoor seating next to the windows. Outdoor seating will be on 30th Street.

While the owners hope to have the coffee shop operating by Halloween, there is no set date for it to

open. There will likely be a soft opening with a grand opening in November or December.

The building has additional leasing space. Other tenants will be announced at a later date.

Only two walls remain from the original building, which formerly housed Bud & Sons used furniture and appliance store. Windows and brick were added. The building was renovated to be compatible with neighboring businesses.

“Down to the colors that were chosen,” said building owner Michael Bober, “the overall design of the building was specially planned and thought through with the neighborhood in mind.”



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# 55-member Empire Pop Choir delivers boy-band hits

By Patti Roberts

The sounds of Backstreet Boys, NSYNC, and the Jonas Brothers waft through the windows of Curtis Hall at Sierra 2 Center. Inside, Heather Waid directs the 55-member choir through vocal warmups and guides them in renditions of “Bye, Bye, Bye” and “I Want It That Way.”

The 10-week Empire Pop Choir class will conclude with a public performance of the songs they’ve learned throughout the process.

The pop choir is part of Empire Arts Collective, a performing arts nonprofit housed at Sierra 2. The pop choir’s classes and performances began in 2019, under the guidance of founders Heather Waid and Emily Perez.

Waid is the artistic director, conducting the choir, picking the musical genre and songs, figuring out the arrangements and providing piano accompaniment. Perez is the managing director, handling all the logistics such as finding performance locations, hiring musicians for the final performance, and taking care of class registration.

Although some participants have a solid choral background, Waid and Perez encourage those who haven’t sung in a while, or even those who’ve never sung in public, to join the pop choir.

“Our singers range from experienced vocalists to choir newbies who are singing for the very first time,” Waid said. “Outside of church or professional choirs, there are few opportunities for adults to sing with a group.”

Their main goal is to find music that won’t be intimidating for new participants while welcoming back returning choir members. Previous themes included “Golden State: Songs of California,” “Space Oddity,” and “One Hit Wonders.”

The majority of the people find out about the choir through word of mouth or by a Google search, Perez said.

“Our students have a wide range of ages, backgrounds and experiences,” she said. “We wanted to create a choir where people could sing pop music and join in the fun even if they had zero choir experience. In choir, there’s safety in numbers. And pop music is more accessible and less intimidating.”

Waid, a Sacramento native with an extensive



Artistic director Heather Waid leads choir members in warmup exercises.

Photo/Joan Cusick

**“We love seeing the confidence growing throughout the rehearsal process, and their strength shows in the final performance,” said Waid.**

background directing church choirs and assisting Sacramento Gay Men’s Chorus, sees Empire Pop Choir as an invitation for those who may be hesitant to sing with others. She is excited about the current selection of boy-band songs.

“I loved pop music when I was a kid, and it’s stuck with me,” Waid said. “Our selection of boy bands as a theme was easy because most the songs come from bands who sing in harmony. And the era range is wide, from the Jackson 5 and Temptations to Jonas Brothers and BTS.”

The current class that meets on Tuesday nights has 55 members, 35 of them returning students and 20 new. There is a wide range of ages and backgrounds, with sopranos, altos and baritones blending harmonies. While most participants are from outside the neighborhood, a few neighbors are in the class.

Hannah Larson of 28th Street said she sang in high school and college choirs and was looking for

a way to sing again. “I always liked pop music: One Direction, KPop,” she said. “It’s been a lot of fun getting together and singing.”

For J Hamilton of Portola Way, it is a new experience. “I’ve never done choir before,” Hamilton said. “I grew up in a religious household where we weren’t allowed to listen to secular music, so I had to sneak to listen to Backstreet Boys. A while ago, I was looking for something new to do and discovered this class. It’s great to feel a part of it when we all come together.”

Teresa Koro of 28th Street said this is her fourth time taking lessons and performing with the pop choir. “I was in church and school choirs, and when I discovered pop choir, I realized it was a great way to get back into music and meet great friends – and it’s built up my performing confidence.”

This kind of feedback is heartwarming to Waid and Perez.

“We love seeing the confidence growing throughout the rehearsal process, and their strength shows in the final performance,” said Waid.

“There is one overall criteria in choirs – no divas,” Perez added. “Choir is a team sport.”

More information on Empire Pop Choir can be found at [www.sacramentochoir.com](http://www.sacramentochoir.com).

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## Leaf Season means return of the claw

As we march into the fall and winter, I thought it would be good to provide information on Leaf Season, which will run from Nov. 1 through Jan. 23.

The claw will make at least seven collections on each street during that time. Starting in late October, you can use the SacRecycle app to receive an estimate of your next collection date.

Here are some general guidelines for making this process as smooth as

possible for you and your neighbors:

- Fill your normal yard waste containers first before putting leaves on the street, as bins will be picked up 13 times during this period as compared with seven claw rounds.
- When you place leaves on the street, make sure they are no more than five cubic yards in size, are at least six feet away from any obstructions, and are spaced out from the curb.
- Don't use any plastic bags and

**RICK JENNINGS**

**City Council Member District 7**



make sure not to include any food or pet waste. Yes, Christmas trees will be accepted!

For more information on Leaf Season, as well as specific guidelines on what types of items are and are not accepted, visit [www.cityofsacramento.org/public-works/rsw/collection-services/yard-waste/leaf-season](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/public-works/rsw/collection-services/yard-waste/leaf-season).

org/public-works/rsw/collection-services/yard-waste/leaf-season.

By the time this article is published, the web page may also be updated with the detailed collection calendar, but if not, it will be up within a few weeks.

Together, we can make this Leaf Season go as smoothly as possible!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about Leaf Season or need any support or service from my staff or me, please do not hesitate to contact my office at [rjennings@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:rjennings@cityofsacramento.org).

As always, it is my immense privilege to be your councilmember.

## How to vote on Measure L?

### YES: Youth need dedicated funding source

By Jay Schenirer

This November, I will support Measure L, which creates the Sacramento Children's Fund. I want to tell you why.

First, let me give information about what the measure will and will not do. If approved, Measure L will set aside an amount of the city's unrestricted general fund into the Sacramento Children's Fund. This amount will be equal to 40% of the city's cannabis business operations tax revenues and can be used for children and youth services only.

What Measure L will not do is raise your taxes.

My reasons for supporting Measure L are simple. It will have a positive impact on youth, make our city safer, and build in multiple levels of accountability.

First, dollars from the Children's Fund can be invested in services that support our kids holistically. For instance, programs for foster youth transitioning to independence, mental health counseling for children/youth, and early substance abuse prevention can all be supported by the Children's Fund.

Thankfully, we know what works. Decades of research has shown that, when young people have positive youth development experiences that include stable adult mentors and safe spaces, they are more likely to be successful as adults.

Second, the fund can be used to support job training and internships for our young people. I believe well-paying jobs with benefits are the key to successful neighborhoods and ensuring equity among Sacramento residents. If initiatives such as

Aggie Square and the California Mobility Center are to be successful in supporting our economic development, we need to have well-defined educational pathways to prepare young people for those jobs.

Third, our city will be safer through the investment of resources into youth violence prevention. If passed, we can, for example, invest resources from the Children's Fund into the expansion of the programs that both our police and fire departments have implemented to create interest in and prepare today's young people for careers in public safety. These programs include older youth on the verge of making a career choice while also exposing younger youth to different careers. This forward thinking is what the city should be doing instead of waiting until kids end up in the back of a police car.

Finally, Measure L ensures accountability. City Council will have the final say on the allocation of the Children's Fund. A nine-member planning and oversight commission will be created and be responsible for ensuring that your tax dollars are used effectively and appropriately. Nonprofit organizations and public agencies delivering services will be regularly evaluated.

I'm tired of watching services for kids be the last to be funded and the first to be cut when there is a downturn in the economy. For these reasons, youth programs need a dedicated funding source that is protected from politicians.

I ask you join me in supporting our city's kids by voting yes on Measure L.

Jay Schenirer is the District 5 councilmember.

### NO: Ballot box budgeting is irresponsible

By Jeff Harris and Heather Fargo

It's déjà vu all over again. This measure has failed twice as Measure Y and Measure G. It failed for good reason – ballot box budgeting is fiscally irresponsible, and this measure is an attempt to fund nonprofit organizations with tax dollars collected to provide essential city services.

Currently, 7.5% (over \$23 million) of city funds are spent on youth services and nonprofits that support after-school programming, workforce development, youth employment, gang prevention and gun violence reduction programs, youth recreation, public safety academies and more.

This measure would amend our City Charter to spend another \$10 million annually on additional youth spending and it would be untouchable, limiting our ability to fund critical programs and our options to close anticipated budget deficits.

Further, the lock box could lower our bond rating, decreasing our ability to borrow for essential projects.

Spending on youth is important and we already do a lot of it, but our recent community survey showed clearly that the most pressing concern for constituents is to get our city cleaned up, and for it to feel safe again.

Homelessness, climate change and clean mobility are also critical priorities, as are basic city services like repairing our parks and infrastructure. If this measure passes, there will be cuts or no further enhancements to these priorities.

On any given Tuesday, City Council can vote to spend on youth projects when funds are available. This measure locks up money for a youth fund, making it the only issue protected by the City Charter. That is poor fiscal stewardship of tax dollars and doesn't address urgent constituent concerns.

Uncertain economic times with high inflation and falling incomes are the worst possible conditions to pass ballot box budgeting. In fact, there is never a good time for it.

Please vote NO on L.

Jeff Harris is the District 3 councilmember. Heather Fargo is a former Sacramento mayor. This is the ballot argument posted on the city's website against Measure L.



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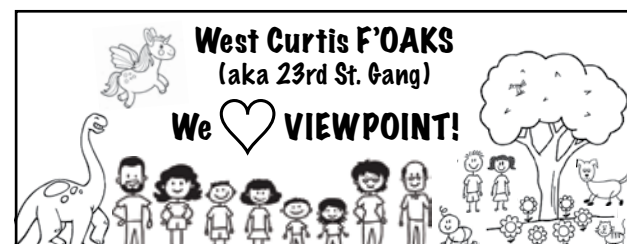
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## Park bench memorializes teen, helps to educate others

By Lindsey Sin

On the morning of Sept. 2, Laura Didier looked on as workers poured the cement slab for a new park bench near the southern end of William Curtis Park.

Under the shade of a towering elm directly across the street from her parents' house on East Curtis Drive, the bench is dedicated to the memory of Zachary "Zach" John Didier, Laura's son and the grandson of longtime Curtis Park residents Bob and Shirley Olson.

On Dec. 27, 2020, Zach died from fentanyl poisoning at age 17.

Growing up, Zach spent family celebrations and holidays playing in the park across the street from the Olsons' house, which has been in the family for 70 years. As a kid, Zach insisted on having his birthday parties at his grandparents' home; he loved playing their piano. The Didier family even rented the house next door, living there when Zach was ages 3 to 5. His mom always thought Zach would be the one to inherit her parents' house, because of how much he loved being there.

Curtis Park was a place where



Photo/Lindsey Sin

Zach Didier's memorial park bench is under the shade of a towering elm directly across the street from his grandparents' house on East Curtis Drive.

the Olsons, their kids, grandkids and extended family gathered regularly. To Zach's family, the bench is a loving tribute to his memory.

"We'd just all take lawn chairs out there," Didier said. "Three generations playing Frisbee; my dad, my uncles, my kids and my cousin and their kids. What a beautiful thing to have that bench there and whenever we're out there playing Frisbee, we can feel like he's with us still. If someone wants to take a break, they come sit on the bench."

The Olsons described their grandson as a very active kid and straight-A student. The youngest of three children, Zach attended Whitney High School

in Rocklin. He was on the track team, played recreational soccer and showed an interest in musical theater.

In spring 2020, Zach played the lead role in "High School Musical." A plaque in his honor is now installed at the school's theater, just offstage where Zach would stand and encourage his castmates.

"Zach loved life so much," Didier said. "His absence is overwhelming. It's so quiet without him."

In the 20 months since his death, Zach's parents have worked to raise awareness about the circumstances of his death. Didier hopes to educate other parents, young people and the

community about the extreme danger and insidious way fentanyl can be counterfeited to pass as prescription drugs and sold on social media.

Such was the case for Zach, who made the decision to try a prescription opioid. Zach's family says the experimentation was out of character, as he had no known history of prior drug use. Using Snapchat, Zach purchased what he believed was Percocet. The deadly pill was actually fentanyl, a synthetic opioid stronger than heroin and 50-100 times stronger than morphine.

Zach's parents are working with organizations such as Song for Charlie, the cities of Rocklin and Roseville, and the Placer County Sheriff's Office to educate high schoolers about "fentapills," the commonly used name for the counterfeit pills.

Three months after Zach's body was laid to rest, an acceptance letter arrived from UCLA, his top pick for college. It was a painful reminder that the inspirational young man described by a friend as "impossible not to like" would not see his promising future.

A quote from Zach is inlaid on the plaque at the foot of the park bench. It was a letter Zach wrote to himself as a high school freshman, to be opened at his graduation:

*Always remember our friends, family, dogs and potential we have in life. Good luck on whatever project you are working on right now. Don't forget to smile. Have the best day of your life.*

## Music in the Park series a successful return

By Terri Shettle

Music in the Park summer concerts returned this year after a three-year absence to an energetic and enthusiastic audience ready to dance, sing and play the night away.

In June, to kick off the summer

series, UnSupervised brought down the house with rocking favorites and all the fanfare of being neighborhood celebrities.

In July, Vivian Lee set a relaxing mood that enabled attendees to enjoy the soothing sounds from their picnic blankets while children ran free, playing chase and eating paletas, Mexican frozen treats, provided by Councilmember Jay Schenirer. The kids stopped moving only long enough to sing along with Mister Cooper.

The August concert with the classic-rock band On Air was a crowd favorite as always. With an estimated 800 attendees, the park was abuzz with social chatter, food trucks, frenetic energy of mass numbers of children in the throws of summer and a clear appreciation for the ability to gather as the summer music events came to a close.

Sponsors included Realtor Steffan Brown, SMUD, Councilmembers Jay Schenirer and Rick Jennings, and Cook Realty.



Photo/Joan Cusick

At the August concert, the classic-rock band On Air was a crowd favorite with an estimated 800 attendees.



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## Bret Harte's popular Fall Festival returns to the public Oct. 28



**LAUREN  
GOTHARD  
and  
LINDSEY  
SIN**

With the new school year in full swing, Bret Harte Elementary School students and families are preparing for the return of Bret Harte's popular Fall Festival after a four-year hiatus.

The event will return to campus from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 28.

Organized by teachers, staff and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the 2022 Festival promises to be the biggest yet.

Monica Hyde of Ninth Avenue recalled the fun of previous festivals for students and families, including her granddaughter, a 4th grader. "Just to be back on campus and getting the kids and families there for the event is exciting," Hyde said.

As in past years, the event will be an evening



Photo/Elizabeth Sterba

This 2013 Bret Harte Fall Festival brought families together for food, games and prizes. After a four-year hiatus, this year's popular Fall Festival returns.

of food, games and "all things fall!" Parent and student volunteers will lead carnival-style games, such as pumpkin bowling, mini-golf and Plinko. Participants can purchase tickets to play games and

win candy and other prizes.

A cakewalk and silent auction will run throughout the evening.

Proceeds will go to support school field trips and other PTA events.

To get Bret Harte students involved in the planning, each class will curate and auction off themed gift-baskets. Donations for the gift-baskets are needed.

The PTA Events & Fundraising Committee has been planning this event since the first week of school. The hope is to grow the event by combining successful ideas from past festivals with new ideas.

"We want to see the Fall Festival grow and be successful, not just for Bret Harte, but for the neighborhood as well," said PTA President Adam Gothard. "We hope it can become something that the entire community surrounding our school looks forward to year after year."

This year, the festival will also add a taco truck and provide music from a local deejay whose grandchild is a first-grader at Bret Harte. Dancing and Halloween costumes are highly encouraged. Teachers will decorate their vehicles for trunk-or-treat. Popcorn, nachos and cotton candy also will be available for purchase.

The festival is open to the public. Curtis Park neighbors are welcome and encouraged to attend. This will be the largest on-campus event since spring 2020.

For more information about the Fall Festival, contact [brethartebearspta@gmail.com](mailto:brethartebearspta@gmail.com).

## Developer wants residential use for 'flex zone'

By Dennis Cusick

Developer Paul Petrovich's PDC Construction Co. has asked the city to designate the remaining 2.5 acres of the "flex zone" in Crocker Village for residential use.

The parcel is at the northwest corner of 10th Avenue and Crocker Drive.

The city's planning staff recommended approval of the request, saying it is consistent with the city's

"goals and policies in that the project will facilitate future residential development."

A public hearing was scheduled for Sept. 22 with City Council review on Oct. 18.

A notice of the public hearing before the city's Planning and Design Commission was posted on the property in early September.

As of mid-September, the only comment on the developer's request that the city had received was from Sacramento Regional Transit, which favored

approval: "Designating the remaining 2.5 acres for residential use would benefit future patrons that may reside here and rely on transit, as there is a nice pedestrian walkway near this project site over to the City College light rail station."

The designation of a flex zone was included in the development plan approved by the city in 2010. It left the property's eventual use vague, dependent on later market conditions.

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