

VIEWPOINT

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December 2022

Councilmember
Jay Schenirer
has sponsored
Music in the Park
and served more
than 600 gallons of
Gunther's ice cream.

Photo/Joan Cusick



Schenirer looks back on career of service

Councilmember gets credit for progress on issues involving youth

By Dennis Cusick

Soon after Jay Schenirer became a City Council member in 2010, he told *Viewpoint* that his priorities would be support for schools, youth initiatives, food access, housing and bicycle boulevards.

"I tried to stay pretty true to that," he said recently, looking back on his three terms representing District 5, which has included Curtis Park, Oak Park and several other neighborhoods. He will leave office Dec. 13.

His self-assessment? "Pretty successful if you look at the youth agenda," Schenirer said. "I think we've changed the culture. People in the Police Department and Fire Department are getting training in youth development. That's a huge change."

Mayor Darrell Steinberg, his longtime friend, mentor and political ally, agrees with Schenirer's self-assessment. "He's been one of the most successful City Council members in Sacramento of all time," the mayor said in an interview.

Schenirer and Steinberg don't seem to remember the details of how their friendship began, though both point to an incident in 1996, when Steinberg was a City Council member from Tahoe Park, and then-

Mayor Joe Serna decided to take on the problem of the city's troubled school district by backing a slate of reform candidates for the school board.

"I was one of the people that reached out to Jay to run for the city school board," Steinberg said. "He was active in the community and he had this reputation for being smart and committed."

Part of the connection that led to a deep friendship was their "shared value systems," Steinberg explained. "It's what's called Tikkun Olam, 'Do your part to repair the world.' We're both driven to make a difference."

Schenirer's path to politics was hardly a straight line, but his Jewish faith is connected to his public life. In 1996, the rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel, Brad Bloom, was co-chairman of Schenirer's campaign for school board. Schenirer was president of the congregation when he decided to run for City Council. Steinberg's wife, Julie, is the synagogue's cantor.

Schenirer came to Sacramento in 1981 after obtaining a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Texas, where he met his wife, Bina Lefkowitz, who was in the same program. In June, she was re-elected to the Sacramento County Board of Education.

See Schenirer, Page 2

Unleashed dogs no longer allowed on Sierra 2 Green, parks officials say

Concerns about safety of people, pets, traffic

Viewpoint Staff

The Sierra 2 Green is no longer a dog park – if it ever was one.

On Nov. 18 dog owners noticed a sign posted at the Fourth Avenue entrance to the Green with the warning: "ALL DOGS MUST BE ON LEASH," citing City Code Section 6.40.

This is a dramatic change from previous signage posted at the Fourth Avenue and 25th Street entrances that identified the Green as the "Sierra II Resident Dog Training" facility, open for off-leash dogs daily from 6 to 9 a.m. and 5 to 8 p.m.

However, city officials say their research has revealed no permit was ever granted for unleashed dogs at Sierra 2.

Members of DogX, the current name of the decades-old dog owners group Dogxilliary, are resisting the city's efforts to close the Green to off-leash dogs. And, they point to a signed agreement with the city from 2001 that was updated in 2009 and 2013. It allowed limited use of the Green for off-leash training and exercise.

For months, the city and SCNA have been dealing with a rash of complaints about unleashed dogs at the Green.

In October, SCNA President Bill Hoover devoted his *Viewpoint* column to the issue, recounting the complaints that had been received, including "aggressive dogs, potentially dangerous

See Dogs, Page 11



Photo/Joan Cusick

Sierra 2 Green will transition to requiring leashes.



Central Oak Park
McClatchy Park is gathering place of diverse neighborhood.
Page 4



New murals at Bret Harte
Artists bring touch of magic to elementary school walls.
Page 10

Schenirer: Board helped schools make rapid gains

Continued from Page 1

Schenirer's first job in Sacramento was as a legislative budget analyst, but after three years, he quit the state job and spent 11 years in the restaurant business. After that, he went to work for the Sacramento Food Bank, first writing grants but quickly moving up to general manager.

And then Steinberg persuaded Schenirer to run for the city school board in 1996. *The Sacramento Bee* endorsed him, saying, "Schenirer would bring to the board a much-needed public policy focus and the conviction that the city schools, in spite of tremendous challenges, can provide a strong education to all children, including his two young sons, who are about to enroll."

The four members of the Serna-backed reform slate were all elected. Schenirer was chosen to be board president.

The board moved quickly to turn around the city's schools. Three months after they were elected, the new board majority voted to buy out the superintendent's contract and introduced a plan to revamp district operations.

After the city elementary schools posted what *The Bee* called "some of the state's most impressive gains on standardized tests," all four reform board members were re-elected in 2000. But, they were not so fortunate in their second term. A pension fund scandal and a controversial decision to close Sacramento High School and then reopen it as a charter school disenchanted some voters. Board critics targeted all four reformers for defeat. Schenirer, the board president, was voted out. The other three survived.

In 2005, Schenirer founded an education consulting firm, Capitol Impact LLC, which he continues to



Photo/Joan Cusick

At the national convention of NeighborWorks in 2013, which drew about 1,000 people to Sacramento, Councilmember Jay Schenirer led one of the "mobile" tours, including this stop in McClatchy Park, home of Oak Park Farmers Market.

operate along with partners.

That same year, Mayor Heather Fargo appointed Schenirer to chair the new Mayor's Commission on Sacramento Youth.

In 2009, Schenirer announced that he would run for City Council to replace Lauren Hammond, who planned to run for the state Assembly. Schenirer captured 53.4% of the vote in the general election, defeating Patrick Kennedy, who would later become a county commissioner.

Schenirer was re-elected in 2014 and 2018.

"Politics is rough," Schenirer says he learned right away on

City Council. "I thought I had good relationships on both sides of the aisle, that I could put my head down and do my work. I learned quickly that that wasn't the case."

He was referring to the 2011 redistricting, when a backroom deal among a "Gang of Six" City Council members moved UC Davis Medical Center out of his district. *The Bee* editorial columnist Foon Rhee commented: "It certainly seemed to surprise Councilman Jay Schenirer, who had that deer-in-the-headlights look." It is a description, and a feeling,

Schenirer has not forgotten.

He also hasn't forgotten, but will not discuss, what is likely the biggest headache of his political career, his struggles with developer Paul Petrovich over the Crocker Village development, particularly the gas station proposal that City Council has twice rejected.

After the initial 7-2 vote in 2015, Petrovich filed suit, blaming Schenirer for orchestrating the decision behind the scenes. Superior Court Judge

Michael Kenny agreed, saying Schenirer had "demonstrated an unacceptable probability of actual bias" in his actions leading up to the vote. The judge

ordered City Council to vote again with Schenirer recused. In February 2022, the vote was 7-0 to reject the gas station again. More litigation is pending.

Nonetheless, Schenirer has a substantial number of accomplishments, including pushing three times for a designated youth fund, which finally passed in November as Measure L.

Steinberg points to his friend's accomplishments in youth issues, affordable housing and cannabis regulation, which now generates \$20 million a year in city taxes.

If Schenirer were to run again, he

**'If it's the right thing
to do, he's the person
to get it done.'**

**— Allison Joe,
chief of staff**

would have to move from the Curtis Park home where he has lived since 1990, as last year's redistricting moved most of Curtis Park out of District 5. However, he had decided years earlier that this would be his last term.

During the run-up to the 2018 election, Schenirer told *Viewpoint* that the key to his decision to seek a third term was his friendship with Steinberg and his hope to help his old friend achieve his goals as mayor.

"His agenda was very similar to mine — homelessness and economic development and how we support our young people," Schenirer said in the recent interview, although he said they don't always agree.

When pressed, both say their differences are more style than substance.

"We do have our different style," Steinberg said, describing himself as having "a big vision and go after it. ... You will have accomplished something significant by setting a big goal and stretching for it. Jay's style is a little bit more build it from the ground up. Don't overpromise."

Through it all, Schenirer's operating style engendered staff loyalty. He only had two chiefs of staff in 12 years.

Joe Devlin, who was chief of staff up to mid-2017, recalled Schenirer's lighter side. He would sometimes walk into Devlin's office and playfully juggle things on the desk, before getting to the matter at hand. Schenirer acknowledged that he had done that: "I think it's pretty symbolic of the work that we do. You're always juggling, you're always working to find the balance."

Allison Joe replaced Devlin as chief of staff. She said the reason she has stayed in the job for more than five years is that it is constantly challenging. "Working with Jay has been a really good experience," she said. "If it's the right thing to do, he's the person to get it done and think of creative ways to accomplish that."

Steinberg said Schenirer "isn't a back-slapping politician, so maybe he doesn't get the attention he deserves. But in the end, what matters is his work — and his work's been profound."

COVID reportedly up more than 40% in county, 31% in 95818

By Mike Scheible

New COVID cases reported countywide increased more than 40% to 155 per week by mid-November from 110 per week in late October, which had been the lowest level since late spring.

Reported COVID infections in the 95818 ZIP code also increased. The 76 cases in 95818 for the

30 days prior to Nov. 2 were up 31% from the 58 reported in a comparable period a month earlier.

The increases in COVID cases could signal the start of a winter surge or just be a "blip" in the data. It continues to be prudent to keep taking reasonable measures to avoid infection.

Actual case numbers are much higher than those reported. The reported data are useful only as

a trend indicator.

The vaccination rate in 95818 improved by 0.8% in November from a month earlier to 82.2% 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.

**BILL
HOOVER**
**SCNA Board
President**


As 2022 draws to a close, I am constantly reminded of how far we have come since COVID struck in 2020. Despite all the financial and other setbacks, Sierra 2 Center is still here and promises to be for a long time to come.

We are not completely out of the woods financially, but we have turned the corner. Time and vigilance are still needed to get us back into a comfort zone.

This past year also saw SCNA stage its first in-person events with the

President's message

Community has stepped up since COVID struck

return of Music in the Park. The three performances were well received and attended. A new event, "Gather at the Long Table," was also well received. Those attending had a great time meeting and dining with neighbors.

SCNA looks forward to more in-person events in 2023, such as the Home Tour and other activities that will enhance our community.

SCNA owes its success and longevity to the many contributions of our Curtis Park community. Whether those contributions are by providing financial support, volunteering for board service or helping with neighborhood events, it all counts. The manner in which the community has

stepped up during the past three years is clear evidence of that.

That sense of community began with the early efforts to save the Sierra School buildings from demolition in 1976. It continued with SCNA's incorporation Dec. 31, 1980. Our Articles of Incorporation articulate the specific purposes of our corporation:

"Promote the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Sierra Curtis neighborhood in Sacramento; To promote the educational, community and recreational uses of the Sierra School and its grounds; To promote and foster good racial and community relations in the Sierra Curtis neighborhood; To sponsor and

encourage educational, community and recreational programs through public and private funding in the Sierra Curtis neighborhood of Sacramento."

SCNA, through its board, has been mostly successful in fulfilling the above purposes, recognizing they are not just goals but ongoing commitments. The key has been to understand that whatever we do has to be for the benefit of the entire Curtis Park community.

The SCNA board is involved with myriad issues, including the city's climate action plan, traffic safety and a host of others. The board expects to welcome some new members next month who want to help us tackle these issues.

Notes from Oct. 5 SCNA board meeting

4 candidates seeking positions on SCNA board

SCNA President **Bill Hoover** introduced three candidates who will be running for election to the board at the annual membership meeting Dec. 7. They are **Talene Ghazarian**, an attorney with the state Department of Health; **Christian Muller**, founder and owner of Neuwaste commercial recycling; and **Jack Foster**, a technology program developer who works remotely from Sacramento in San Francisco and New York. These three join **Miles Thorne**, who was previously introduced. He works at UC Davis Medical Center and has a mechanical engineering background.

Representatives of the city Department of Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment addressed the board about the current use of Sierra 2 Green by dog owners with unleashed dogs. Director **Jackie Beecham**, Assistant Director **Shannon Brown** and park planning and development manager **Raymond Costantino** made presentations and answered questions from board members and neighbors. Councilmember **Jay Schenirer** was also present. The city does not plan to continue to operate Sierra 2 Green as a dog park, citing safety concerns. (See story on front page.)

Sierra 2 Center Executive

Director **Terri Shettle** reported on events being organized to honor Schenirer when he retires from his City Council position. Hoover and Shettle led the board in acknowledging the many years of service and support Councilmember Schenirer has provided SCNA and our neighborhood.

The holiday Angel Tree through the Salvation Army will be up in the Sierra 2 entrance with tags to be chosen and requested gifts returned to the Sierra 2 office by Dec. 14. Light Up Curtis Park will be celebrated again with gift card prizes going to the most creative decorations. Planning is underway for Sierra 2's centennial next year with events yet to be determined.

Treasurer **John Bailey** reported that the continuing bear market has brought the portfolio balance down to \$343,000. The checking account balance is \$131,000, with about \$60,000 soon to be disbursed for repair and replacement of major building components, including materials for flooring in Studio 2 and roofing. Highlights of the July/August financial performance included a Hop Gardens fundraiser that raised \$7,000 for Sierra 2 and a short-lived rebound in the investment portfolio. Through Aug. 31, net earnings showed a

loss of \$14,000, which is \$10,000 better than the budgeted loss of \$24,000. Excluding depreciation and investment earnings, the loss through August is \$9,000.

Gerre Buehler reported that Hal Thomas updated the Facilities Committee about the Solar Options Project to convert current heat and air conditioning systems to electric heat pumps, install solar panels and battery backup. With current annual utility costs of \$57,000, the SMUD Complete Energy Solutions study concluded that upgrades would result in utility savings.

Passage of the Inflation Reduction Act enables nonprofits like SCNA to finance this project directly rather than going through an intermediary and may provide up to a 30% grant to reduce project costs. Other funds may be secured through fundraising and additional public capital. The project target assumes a cost of less than \$500,000. The yearly utility cost savings could be used toward payment of principal and interest. Consent from the city for the project needs to be obtained before proceeding.

Sutter Capital Group has acquired the former Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints property on Franklin Boulevard and plans to redevelop the existing building as a preschool for up to 190 children

and 30 staff. This is believed to be the largest building reuse project ever in the area.

Curtis Park resident **Kathleen Ave** proposed asking City Council to support construction of affordable housing in the Crocker Village flex zone rather than the market-rate housing that is currently proposed. She plans to draft a letter for Neighborhood Concerns Committee review. If approved, the letter would be forwarded to the board for consideration. Committee members expressed concern that Crocker Village residents should be, but have not yet been involved, in discussions about use of the flex zone; that the city and the developer may be predisposed to reject the proposal; and that another lawsuit could be in the offing.

Kathy Les reported for Clean and Quiet Yard Care that she had contacted the city after an exceptionally large blower that was loud, dirty and dusty was used in and around the park, even though the city had promised to use quieter and greener tools. The city responded with an apology, saying management had asked staff not to use the blower in Curtis Park.

The next board meeting will be the annual membership meeting at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 7 on Zoom.

— Submitted by Mimi Budd
SCNA Board Secretary

VIEWPOINT

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A highway divides, interests connect

Central Oak Park overcomes challenges, emerges with diversity

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles about the neighborhoods surrounding Curtis Park.

By Lauren Gothard

Central Oak Park is the largest section of Oak Park, separated from Curtis Park by Highway 99.

But the communities also have had enduring connections – by bridges at Fifth and 12th avenues, the northern and southern borders of Central Oak Park; by Bret Harte Elementary School, which has served children from both areas for nearly 100 years; and by representation by the same member of City Council from the creation of district boundaries in 1971 until the 2021 redistricting.

Central Oak Park's adaptation to change enabled it to become the diverse community that it is today. What Curtis Park seems to lack in diversity, Central Oak Park has in abundance. Of the neighborhoods that surround Curtis Park, Central Oak Park is the most diverse – 36% Hispanic, 26% white, 20% African American, and 18% other. Niche.com gave Central Oak Park an A+ grade for diversity based on ethnic and economic diversity.

One resident of the neighborhood said, "I love the diversity of the neighborhood and the friendliness I have encountered from every person I have met. I think it is important for everyone, including children, to perceive a community of many different cultures and religions so that they can gain acceptance and understanding."

Once a blue-collar suburb

Named for its abundance of Oak trees, the larger Oak Park neighborhood has been growing and changing since its development in 1887. What was originally a 230-acre ranch, developer Edwin Alsip transformed into Sacramento's first suburb. Just southeast of the 19th century city limits, Oak Park became an affordable option for many early city residents and European immigrants with blue-collar jobs.

The center of the neighborhood, Central Oak Park, became the home of the streetcar line that ended at Joyland amusement park, now McClatchy Park.

Oak Park's shift from a white working-class neighborhood to a predominately black neighborhood was a gradual change that took place after World War II. Much of Curtis Park, Land Park and other city neighborhoods that developed in the 1920s and 1930s had restrictive covenants written into property deeds preventing racial and ethnic minorities from purchasing property. But Oak Park, being older, did not.

As white families moved further away to automobile suburbs of Sacramento, they were often replaced in the neighborhood by black families, both newly arrived from other places and displaced by the demolition of the West End. By the 1960s, African Americans made up almost 50% of Oak Park's population.

Many factors led to the decline of Central Oak Park in the 1960s. The construction of Highway 99,



Photo/Lauren Gothard

Joyland entrance at 33rd Street looks into the park, paying homage to the former amusement park.

which opened in 1961, and Highway 50 a decade later isolated it from other neighborhoods. The State Fairgrounds, which had been at Stockton Boulevard and Broadway since the 1920s, relocated to Cal Expo in 1968, devastating the nearby economy. As job prospects declined, poverty, drug use and crime increased.

However, while Oak Park was declining, two academic institutions moved in, which would ultimately prove crucial to the neighborhood's revitalization and increasing home prices.

In 1957, while Highway 99 was under construction, McGeorge School of Law moved from downtown into what had been the Well Baby Clinic at 34th Street and Fifth Avenue. In 1966, the school merged with the University of the Pacific. Today, the Oak Park campus has expanded to include parts of UOP's School of Health Sciences and education and business programs.

In 1973, UC Davis took over ownership and management of the 121-year-old Sacramento County Hospital with the goal of creating a teaching and research institution for its medical school. Over the years, it has expanded its campus along Stockton Boulevard to absorb much of the old fairgrounds. Today, what is now the UC Davis Medical Center complex continues to expand with the \$1.1 billion Aggie Square research and housing project.

Diversity comes at a cost

When the Great Recession hit in the early 2000s, the demographic makeup of the neighborhood changed again. This time, investors bought abandoned properties cheaply, made cosmetic improvements and sold them for a profit to those looking for affordable starter homes close to the city center. This practice resulted in a number of young, white professionals moving into the neighborhood. According to niche.com, a quarter of Central Oak Park's population today is young working professionals between the ages of 25 and 34.

Some look at the changes that have taken place in

See Oak Park, next page

Correction: Will Carlton should have been identified as the photographer of the photo of Mother Rose on Page 5 of the November issue of *Viewpoint*.

Oak Park: Its future

Continued from previous page
Central Oak Park and see a neighborhood that is being revitalized, what City Councilmember Jay Schenirer describes as “the Renaissance of Oak Park.” However, others see their neighborhood being gentrified and are fearful for what these changes might mean for them and their families.

Whether you see it as revitalization or gentrification, the changes that Central Oak Park has gone through over the last twenty years have not always been kind, especially to black residents who have been in the neighborhood for decades. As the neighborhood has been redeveloped raising housing prices, many black residents have often stated that they feel like they are being pushed out of the neighborhood.

The community today

Today, Central Oak Park’s historic past can still be seen throughout the neighborhood as well as new neighborhood spaces dreamt up by those who live there.

Luigi’s Pizza Parlor, which claims to be Sacramento’s original pizza parlor, opened in 1953 as a front for illegal gambling on Stockton Boulevard, Central Oak Park’s eastern border. Today, Luigi’s remains a neighborhood staple for delicious pizza. Down the street from Luigi’s is the Colonial Theater, which opened in 1940 as a movie theater. It now operates as a venue for live music and film festivals. The Hells Angels’ Clubhouse on Ninth Avenue has been a part of the community since the 1970s.

Small community projects such as Pansy Garden Park on Pansy Avenue (which should be completed soon) and the Oak Park Art Garden on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard started with community members seeking insight on what neighbors would like to see added to the community. With help from active members of the community and Alchemist Community Development Corp., these ideas were brought to life. The Oak Park Art Garden, a 1/3-acre community food forest and public art space, received a \$694,295 grant at the end of last year to further develop the community space into a park. The renovation will include connection to the city’s water and sewer, ADA-compliant walkways, a shade structure, native plants and a pollinator garden. On site there are already multiple fruit trees as well as “The Friendliest Bus Stop in Town.”



Photo/Lauren Gothard
At McClatchy playground, Teagan Gothard enjoys the play structure.

	Central Oak Park	Curtis Park
Residents*	5,811	5,900
Median household income*	\$60,781	\$103,000
Median home sale price in October#	\$388,750	\$883,000
Best place to raise family*	57th in city	12th in city
Commute by car^	85%	83.9%
Commute by bicycle^	5.3%	7.4%
Commute by walking^	6%	4.7%
Commute by bus/rail^	6.35%	3.4%
SOURCE: * niche.com; # redfin.com; ^ point2homes.com		

McClatchy Park continues to be the heart and soul of Central Oak Park. Until recently, it was home of the Oak Park Farmers Market. (See story, Page 12) In 2014, a \$2.7 million renovation was completed with state bond money. The new playground pays homage to Joyland amusement park. The renovation included upgrades to the baseball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts and city pool. A disc golf course has also been added as well as a butterfly garden. Most afternoons, neighbors can be found spending time together in the park.

Lauren Gothard is a resident of Central Oak Park and co-author of Viewpoint’s monthly Bret Harte Elementary School column.

To Viewpoint readers

SCNA seeks two Viewpoint editors

After 43 years, *Viewpoint* Managing and Production Editor Carol Blackman is stepping down. While hers are hard shoes to fill, the SCNA Board is optimistic that someone in our community is willing to help carry on the fine tradition of *Viewpoint*. Along with Blackman, we are also losing primary Editor Dennis Cusick, who has served the last five years. Blackman’s position is paid, while Cusick is a volunteer.

Viewpoint managing/ production editor oversees the monthly production of *Viewpoint*, including: work with volunteer writers to make story assignments; creating a story board for editorial layout and ad placement; page design and copy fitting; copy editing; interface with advertisers; overseeing final proofing; and pre-press and upload to printer. Professional graphics and computer design experience are essential (fluency in Adobe InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator and Acrobat), preferably with journalistic emphasis. Hours and compensation to be determined.

Viewpoint’s primary editor is historically a current or retired professional journalist who serves on a volunteer basis. The editor also works with the volunteer writers to generate story ideas, edit all content and oversees monthly layout of the newspaper. He or she proofs all stories for the month to determine accuracy, tone and objective writing content to conform with AP and *Viewpoint* style and principles.

In both cases, preference will be given to Curtis Park residents who will be expected to have a knowledge of neighborhood issues and, in some cases, citywide issues as they relate to Curtis Park. Both editors work closely with a staff of volunteer writers and SCNA Board members participating on the planning of each issue.

Viewpoint is a hard copy publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association with a long tradition of balanced journalism and enthusiasm for Curtis Park events, people and issues. The neighborhood newspaper is produced 10 months of the year (January and August excluded) and delivered by an extensive volunteer team to the doorsteps of 2,500 households each month. It is also uploaded electronically on the Siera2.org website.

If interested in learning more, contact SCNA Executive Director Terri Shettle at terri@sierra2.org or SCNA President Bill Hoover at bhooverjr@gmail.com.

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2125 Portola Way Curtis Park Craftsman Cottage
On a beautiful tree-lined street, this 2-bedroom, 2-bath home was renovated in 2012. Large kitchen with island, granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. Updated bathrooms/travertine tile. Dual pane windows.

Viewpoint - Curtis Park news since 1979

It all started with 'Carol's Corner'

By Judy Green Scheible

Carol Blackman is the reason our neighborhood newspaper *Viewpoint* has survived and thrived for more than 43 years.

Several of us neighbors have filled the editor's job. And a strong team of volunteer writers has mined our neighborhood for stories, both newsy and human interest.

But Carol's charming tenacity and perseverance have kept the paper going. When one of us wanted to quit, she encouraged us to stay. When a writer missed a deadline, she cajoled him or her into stepping up. When her grandchildren or mother needed her, she managed to work on *Viewpoint* without missing a beat with her family.

There's no way *Viewpoint* would have survived as long as it has without Carol's strength and creativity.

I know. I have worked with her for more than 30 years. Some months we sailed. Other months we struggled. But we never went dark. Long nights and long hours got the paper out.

Our neighborhood can never repay Carol for the job she has done. Because of her, we're all more informed about our lives here. Yes, reporters brought in the stories and others of us edited them, but Carol used her desktop publishing skills to put the paper together, get it to the printer and make sure it got in the hands of our principal distributor, Gerre Buehler.

Now Carol has decided to step down. Enough, she says.

When *Viewpoint* started in 1979 with Dennis Renault at the helm,



Photo/Peter Blackman

Designing *Viewpoint* at her desk

Carol was one of five listed staff members, along with Bob Foreman, Bruce Hagel and Judy Schroeter. Carol contributed "Carol's Corner," which evolved into the "Community Corner" page.

In 1985, Carol started a desktop publishing business and took on *Viewpoint* as one of many jobs, including the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op's newsletter.

"It's been a real love," she said about her years with the neighborhood paper. "Dennis (Cusick) has given me a sense of pride in our newspaper, so professional and conscientious. Our *Viewpoint* group has expanded because people want to write. The team is enthusiastic and versatile."

Carol expects life without *Viewpoint* will lower her blood pressure and give her time to travel to the coast and the mountains and to garden.

For her husband, Peter, her decision provoked this reaction, "It's about time."

Judy Green Scheible has had multiple stints as Viewpoint editor over more than three decades.

From mimeograph to computer link

By Dennis Cusick

Viewpoint has come a long way in 43 years.

The first issue in July 1979 was typed on typewriters by a staff of five and printed on an old mimeograph machine on two sheets of legal-size paper.

Conditions still seemed primitive when I became editor nine years later. Reporters still wrote stories on typewriters and handed them to me. I edited with a pencil and handed the stories to Carol Blackman. She retyped them on her Macintosh Plus computer with its 6-inch screen and handed a floppy disk to the printing company.

Judy Green Scheible is responsible for me being *Viewpoint* editor – both times. In 1988, she tracked me down at *The Sacramento Bee*, where we both worked, and asked me to take over from Kathryn Beltrami, who was pregnant.

My first issue as editor was May 1988. The big stories were about plans to clean up toxic chemicals in the railroad yard and about unbearable noise from jet planes taking off. We wrote about the annual pumpkin toss, and plans to close Sixth and Seventh avenues through the park. And we celebrated the 10th anniversary of *Viewpoint*.

I stepped down after two years as editor, and reluctantly left the neighborhood a year later.

Fast forward 20 years. Joan and I bought a home on Portola Way, and relocated from Martinez. Judy heard that we were coming and asked me to write a Community Corner item about the new neighbors – us. In the next few years, I wrote about plans to develop



Photo/Joan Cusick

Editing *Viewpoint* from his home office

Curtis Park Village, and about adding bike lanes and subtracting parking along Freeport Boulevard.

By 2017, Judy wanted more time to travel, which meant less time for *Viewpoint*. I offered to step in again, committing to another two years at the helm. I stayed five years.

In 2018, we changed *Viewpoint's* format – reducing the page size and adding color. The staff grew – the masthead lists three editors, 35 contributors, four proofreaders and 90-plus who deliver the paper to more than 2,000 homes.

But for improvements in technology, publication of *Viewpoint* might not have been possible during the pandemic, when we stayed "socially distant" from each other. Instead of face-to-face meetings, we have met on Zoom. We write and edit stories on computers, and communicate with each other by email.

These days, we still get a thrill in seeing the printed paper on the porch. But we don't need to mail copies to distant relatives. We can send them the link: <https://sierra2.org/viewpoint-community-newspaper/>.

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Holiday lights event returns to neighborhood

By Heather Hogan

SCNA is hosting the third annual Light Up Curtis Park competition, in which residents are encouraged to untangle their holiday lights and spruce up outdoor spaces to dazzle nighttime passersby and neighbors.

To get involved:

- Decorate your front yard, porch, windows, roof, bikes or pets with festive lights and creative displays.
- Register your space for the People's Choice competition using the



form at sierra2.org/LightUp22.

- Walk, bike or drive through the neighborhood and enjoy your neighbors' creations.
- Vote for your favorite decorated spaces online Dec. 16 through Dec. 31. Winners will be announced Jan. 4. Gift cards donated by local businesses will be awarded.

If you have any questions about this event, contact the Sierra 2 Center office at 916 452-3005.

Median replanting project proposed

By Ellen Holmsmen

A neighborhood group is organizing to revive and replant the median area at 26th Street and Fifth Avenue. The city has promised to take out the mimosa tree soon, and the overall plan is to put in a drought-tolerant garden.

This group is looking for volunteers – neighbors, amateur and master gardeners – to come to their first meeting at 9:30 a.m. Jan. 7 at the

median to help beautify the Curtis Park neighborhood.

They foresee cultivating the area and replanting with native plants that are bee- and bird-friendly. Any ideas for plants and design suggestions are welcome. Also, some muscle will be needed for future digging, tilling, etc.

Neighbors are encouraged to join this group, meet other neighbors and enjoy a fun local project. If you have any questions, contact Ellen at 916 212-2181.

Neighbors participate in Angel Tree program for 7th year at Sierra 2

By Stacy Gray

For the seventh year, neighbors are helping the Salvation Army make sure every needy child gets a gift through the Angel Tree program.

Sierra 2 staff set up the Christmas tree with 100 Angel tags hung Nov. 11. Each tag has a child's name, age and a wish list that includes toys and clothes.

Neighbors are encouraged to choose a tag or two, and return the requested gifts to the Sierra 2 office by Dec. 14. All gifts will leave Sierra 2 on Dec. 15 on a Salvation Army truck. If you cannot make it to Sierra 2 by the deadline, you may take Angel gifts to Cal Expo by Dec. 16.

When you sign out your Angel tag, you will enter the tag information and your contact information on the sign-out log. When you return your gifts to the Sierra 2 office, include the bottom portion of the Angel Tree tag with your gift – tape this part of the tag to one item. Clear plastic bags will be available when you return your gifts. To be sure every Angel is accounted for, Sierra 2 staff will keep track of the Angel gifts when they're brought into the Sierra 2 office.

If you have questions, contact stacy@sierra2.org



Photo/Stacy Gray

Tree awaits your choice of Angel tags; complete sign-out log at podium.

sierra2.org or 916 452-3005, ext. 200. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday.

If you bring your gift when the office is closed, please be sure to call the facility staff at 916 812-4939. Do not leave gifts under the tree or in the hallways.

SCNA got creative with the new concept of 'Gather' fundraiser

By Terri Shettle and Heather Hogan

More than 100 neighbors and friends enjoyed socializing, merriment and relaxation. Gather at the Long Table was the first in-person fundraising event since the annual Wine Tasting & Silent Auction in October 2019.

This event was more than raising funds to help maintain the Sierra 2 Center historic building and theater and providing financial aid for community programs and activities. The main intention was to bring friends and neighbors together to recapture Curtis Park's caring, sustainable, inclusive community.

Sierra 2 Center/SCNA staff, board members, neighbors and volunteers provided music, food, cocktails,

cooking demonstrations and silent auction prizes.

The barbecue dinner was cooked on site by Sac City Eats: rosemary-garlic chicken, BBQ pulled pork, or vegetarian lasagna, side dishes and desserts.

The VIP reception featured Birria King meat and vegetarian tacos and bacon-wrapped meatballs from La Famiglia Catering. Margaritas added a twist with tequila from Ghost Tequila as Jon Merriman played his guitar.

Attendees were treated to culinary treats and a demo on energy-saving induction cooktops by Chef Doolittle, representing SMUD. Local brewery favorites Track 7 Brewery, Urban Roots and Bike Dog, all offered beer while guests also sampled wines from Casque Winery.

Wrapping up the evening's activities, the silent

auction inspired the crowd with bidding for treasures from local artisans, wineries, JJ Pfister Distilling Company, Voler Cycling, New Helvetia Brewery and Ghost Tequila.

A huge thank you goes to the sponsors who made this event possible: Steffan Brown Realtor, Mimi Budd, Cook Realty-Larry Easterling, Fifty Flowers, Grateful Dog Daycare, Rosanna Herber-SMUD Board, Kathy Les/Flowers For Food, SMUD and TowerPoint Wealth.

Volunteers Becky Botelho and Laura Jackson created the lovely setting with decorations. Thank you also to event planner, Marjorie Perez, Something Planned Events.

SCNA looks forward to sharing more occasions with our neighbors and friends as we move closer to a full slate of live events in the new year.

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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

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

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

ADULT DANCE

Dancing with Heidi
Adult and teen ballet
Monday/Wednesday/Thursday
Schedule: dancingwithheidi@gmail.com



**Two Rivers Dance Center/
River City Taps**
Mondays-Thursdays/Saturdays
For times, richard@
tworiversdancecenter.com

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

OTHER

Puppy kindergarten and social class
Puppies ages 8-12 weeks
Mondays, 5:15-6:45 p.m., Room 10
www.midtownmutts.com
916 600-3259

SIERRA 2 CENTER FOR THE ARTS & COMMUNITY

Senior Center

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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
Dec. 12 – “Bewilderment,”
by Richard Powers

NONFICTION BOOK CLUB
3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon
Room 12
Dec. 15 – “Aftermath: Life in the
Fallout of the Third Reich
1945-1955,” by Harald Jähner

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

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

CARDS & GAMES
PINOCHLE
Fridays, noon-3 p.m. Room 12

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

WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIP GROUP
Meet new friends and discover new
hobbies. 2nd and 4th Wednesday,
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Room 12

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

EDUCATION

MY STORY PROJECT
2nd Monday, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

FITNESS

GENTLE YOGA
Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon
Studio 3
Pat Shaw, 916 856-0136



WELLNESS PROGRAM

Punch cards \$60/10 classes;
\$35/5 classes or \$10 drop-in
(purchase in the Sierra 2 office)

STRENGTH & BALANCE
Thursdays, 11 a.m.-noon. Room 9

LINE DANCE BLISS
Tuesdays, 1-2 p.m., Studio 1

FIND THE INNER CALM
Relaxation & meditation
Every other Thursday
1:50-3 p.m. Room 12

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LOCAL MUSIC SCENE



Moon Howlers at The Side Door Dec. 9

Photo/Elle Jay

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<https://www.thesidedoor.net> • All shows 7 p.m.

Tickets: \$20-\$30. Advance tickets available.

Vaccination card & mask may be required.

Dec. 2Richard Smith (British.Nashville roots guitar)

Dec. 3Mark Stuart with Bastard Sons
(Americana/country)

Dec. 9Moon Howlers (Folk harmony)

Jan. 27Henry Robinett (Jazz guitar legend)

Jan. 28Richie Lawrence & Katie Thomas (Americana)

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Live amplified music will return later in the year.

Thursdays ... "Two Rivers Unplugged" (Acoustic open mic),
6:30-9 p.m.

FridaysLocal musicians acoustic showcase, 6-8 p.m.

Sundays Ukulele class with Gurukulele (Jim Coats),
4-5 p.m.

— Mindy Giles

Sierra 2 Center THEATER

SINGING CHRISTMAS TREE: "Grandma's Unplugged Christmas"

Dec. 8-11 and 15-19

Thursdays & Fridays, 7-9 p.m.

Saturdays, 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m.

Sundays, 1-3 p.m.

Tickets: shp-sct.com/tickets

Info: 916 582-8613

Doris Halter, who has recently lost her husband, is invited to spend Christmas with her daughter and her family. Doris soon realizes that their idea of Christmas and hers are very different. Theirs is filled with electronics, social media and blurred eyes from staring at cell phones. To prevent Doris from walking out, the family agrees to lock away all electronics for one night. Through this process, we see the family reconnect as Grandma Halter takes them on a journey of discovery of the true meaning of Christmas.

Serving Hearts Productions is carrying on a Sacramento Christmas tradition of The Singing Christmas Tree – a community faith-based presentation of the joys of Christmas that has been a hallmark of the Sacramento area for over 60 years.

AT SIERRA 2 CENTER The LEARNERY Cultivating Curious Minds

TO REGISTER FOR A CLASS:
www.sierra2.org/thelearnery

HOLIDAY HIGH TEA

Saturday, Dec. 3

12:30-2 p.m.

Curtis Hall

\$50/person

\$54 limited to-go kits

Join The Novel Tea at Sierra 2 for their annual Holiday Tea. Take a couple hours to relax and enjoy seasonal teas and delicious tea sandwiches, scones and sweets. Learn a little about different holiday traditions and come to enjoy the end of the year and the holiday festivities.

PAINT & SIP: SNOWMAN

Friday, Dec. 9

6-8 p.m., Room 7

\$25/class and \$25 optional art kit with paint and brushes

Unleash your creativity with your favorite beverage in one hand, paintbrush



in the other, and discover the artist within. No previous experience required. Artist Cara Gregor will help you create your own original painting. Bring your favorite drink (wine and beer are great, no cocktails please), a glass and a snack. An 8"×10" canvas will be supplied. Buy one of our paint kits or bring your own acrylic paints and brushes.

GALENTINE'S STAMP & SIP

Sunday, Jan. 22

11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

\$35 (includes materials)

Celebrate the friends who understand you best in this gift-making workshop in honor of Galentine's Day. Select from dozens of love-themed graphics (or bring your own printed design sized to 4×5 inches), trace it on a speedy-carve stamp block and carve away. You'll learn how to test-print, finalize your stamp and print on cards, muslin gift bags and Swedish dishcloths or flour sack towels.

Bring your favorite drink (wine and beer are great, no cocktails please), a glass for

sipping and a snack. You'll take home one-of-a-kind, love-themed Galentine's gifts created by you.

All skill levels are encouraged. Good for kids 10 and up with good fine motor skills. Advanced registration required to secure your seat; attendance is limited to 15 students. Registration closes Jan. 21.

ABSTRACT INTUITIVE PAINTING CLASS

Saturday, Jan. 28

10 a.m.-noon, Room 7

Fee: \$25/class and \$25 optional art kit (paint and brushes)

Tap into your creative side with this unique art class. With artist Cara Gregor's guidance, you will experience the ultimate in self-expression as you explore, play and put feelings on paper, creating a beautiful piece of art. No drawing or prior painting experience is required. You'll paint in an abstract style, adding patterns, textures and whatever feels right to you. An 8"×10" canvas will be supplied. Buy one of our paint kits or bring your own acrylic or oil paints and brushes.



Join the Curtis Park Electric Stars!

Did you know that nearly 75 of your neighbors have gone electric? They've made upgrades like heat pump water heaters, heat pump HVAC systems and induction cooktops. Going electric not only saves on energy costs, it's also safer, healthier and better for the environment.



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Monthly check-in will help me learn about you

The holidays are approaching and I want to take the time to say I hope you are enjoying time with your loved ones and spending a fun but safe and responsible time together.

Even with the upcoming holidays, I want to reflect back on Thanksgiving. I enjoy doing check-ins with my team to learn more about them. And, since I'd like to know more about you, I want to start doing a monthly check-in with

you. For this month, I want to know what you were thankful for, and what you are looking forward to this holiday season. I am thankful and looking forward to representing this wonderful community. Be sure to tag us in social media, which are linked below, with your replies.

I also want to give a huge thank you to Councilmember Jay Schenirer. I think he and his team

RICK JENNINGS
City Council Member District 7



did a wonderful job organizing events and accomplishing so much for this community. I want to congratulate them, and I hope you receive me warmly as your new councilmember. I think he did great work representing

Curtis Park, and I hope to represent this community just as well as he did.

Thank you all for reading what I have to say this month, and I'm looking forward to reading your answers to our check-in on our social media: Twitter and Instagram @RickJenningsD7 and at Facebook.com/RickJennings.

I hope you enjoy your holidays. If you have any questions or need support from my staff or me, you can always reach out to rjennings@cityofsacramento.org. As always, it is my immense privilege to be your councilmember. Have a great month!

Murals bring magic and whimsy to Bret Harte's walls

By Lindsey Sin

More than 25 artists descended on the Bret Harte Elementary School campus Nov. 19 and began painting murals on the school's exterior walls in a program organized by the Sacramento-based nonprofit Wide Open Walls.

Bret Harte is the third elementary school in the Sacramento City Unified School District to receive such murals, following Tahoe and Elder Creek.

The project began with an all-day community event on Saturday morning, hosted by the district, including live music, kids' entertainment and a turkey giveaway. Speakers and guests included Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg, district Superintendent Jorge Aguilar, Area 1 school board Trustee Lisa Murawski and Area 5 Trustee Chinua Rhodes, a Bret Harte alumnus.

Families, teachers, neighbors and students watched the artists work and visited booths hosted by local organizations and businesses.

The painting continued throughout the weekend and into the following week, while students and teachers were on Thanksgiving break.

The artistic creations included a blue wall covered in whimsical bubbles overlooking the kindergarten classroom, multicultural identities reflecting the many interests of students,



A blue wall covered in giant bubbles overlooks the kindergarten classroom.



Multicultural identities reflect the many interests of students.

trees near the playground, two unicorns among pink clouds and a neon jelly fish.

A flowery mural now serves as the backdrop to the school's garden, while a vast galaxy covers two enormous walls on another building. Across from the school's music room, a 15-foot-tall creature plays the saxophone.

Each artist selected for the



Photos/Lindsey Sin

A flowery mural now serves as the backdrop to the school's garden.

project brought a unique style to the space. Some murals reflect the school's identity, featuring the bear mascot; others connect with the multicultural identities and reflect the many interests of Bret Harte students. Some murals impart sweet messages of encouragement and love.

Murals also face Seventh and Ninth avenues and Franklin Boulevard,

inviting passersby to enjoy the public art and wonder what other works may be discovered within the school's grounds.

Handprints of students, teachers and family members also cover walls in bright orange, yellow, green, red and blue paint, as if to simultaneously decorate the once-white stucco and put marks of ownership on this newly transformed neighborhood treasure.

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Dogs: City will conduct survey to find out what neighbors want

Continued from Page 1

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.”

Members of DogX said they met with city officials Nov. 1 in what they thought would be a discussion of issues that could be resolved. Instead, parks officials told them the Green would be closed to off-leash dog activity by the end of 2022.

Several representatives of the city’s Department of Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment addressed the Nov. 2 SCNA board meeting concerning the status of the Green, prompted by the often conflicting concerns of three groups – dog owners, parents of children who use the adjacent playground, and soccer teams that hope to use the soccer field.

City officials listed their concerns about unleashed dogs at the Green:

- The area is not fully fenced and therefore unleashed dogs can dart into the street.
- Two separate entries are not provided.
- Large dogs and small dogs cannot be separated.
- Dogs can jump the low fence of the children’s playground as well as place their muzzles between the bars of that fence.
- Dog have run up to park patrons who have felt uncomfortable.

- The acreage of the Green does not meet the requirements of a city dog park.

At the SCNA board meeting, the city officials stressed that all of their concerns involve risks to the safety of people and their dogs. They said the City Attorney’s Office has recommended that the city avoid the risky safety issues inherent in the current use of the Green.

Shannon Brown, the assistant parks director, said that since Dogxilliary began in 1996 as a pilot program for a dog training club, use of the Green has evolved into a full dog park. “The park was designed as a neighborhood park, not a dog park,” she said.

Brown said the city would not continue to operate the Sierra 2 Green as a dog park. There will be an adjustment period as usage changes from unleashed to leashed dogs.

Park Planning and Development Manager Raymond Costantino said a survey would be conducted to see what uses the neighborhood wants at the Green. Results should be ready in January. The city will share them with the community at a public forum.

A delegation from DogX attended the Nov. 15 City Council meeting, waiting more than five hours to make their voices heard at the end of the meeting.

Linda Reed said she had lived in Curtis Park 35 years and exercised her dog at the Green every day. “It’s come to my attention that Sierra 2 Green, used by a dog training club, will be immediately closed to all off-leash dog use,” she said. “I’m very concerned that this has become an issue.” She said dog owners had been given the impression in a meeting with parks officials in the summer that



Photos/Joan Cusick

City officials say small and large dogs can’t be separated at Sierra 2 Green.

no changes would be made until the public had a chance to comment.

Councilmember Angelique Ashby, who was running the meeting, suggested that Assistant City Manager Mario Lara and Councilmember Jay Schenirer meet with the delegation that was there to address the Sierra 2 Green issue.

Before doing so, Schenirer offered some comments on the record. “I’ve probably gotten 100 emails about this,” he said. “We can’t use the soccer field anymore because it’s been ruined because of the usage by the dogs. And I get it. I have a dog. But there are some safety issues.”

The DogX delegation felt the discussion with Lara and Schenirer was productive, a spokesman said in an email to supporters three days later. “Our collective efforts ... have already resulted in some promising modifications to City Parks’ approach toward the Green,” including city recognition of the need for a dog park in the neighborhood, the email said. “We all need to stay on our best behavior as responsible patrons of the Green.”

The city’s parks department operates 14 off-leash dog parks. Those closest to Curtis Park are Truitt Bark Park, 1818 Q St.; and Partner Park, behind the Belle Cooledge Community Center, 5699 South Land Park Drive. The city’s website says all dog parks “are fenced, with a double-gate system for safety” and include “benches, shade areas, drinking fountains for dogs, and plenty of room to run. Dogs of all sizes are welcome.”

Dennis Cusick assembled this report based on reporting from Erik Fay, Dave Knox and Bruce Pierini.



Waiting for the next ball to be thrown

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location: Sierra 2 Center

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HOME OF RIVER CITY TAPS

Neighbors' 'Il Circolo' expands to tour of Italy

By Patti Roberts

“Ciao!” “Ciao!” Neighbors Bruce Pierini and Nicoletta Anselmo greet each other at Café Dantorels on 24th Street, where they’ve been meeting with their weekly Italian language group “Il Circolo” on Saturday mornings. The group varies in size but averages eight members and has been together since 1991, first at the Dante Club before switching to Dantorels.

Sitting around a table, members practice their Italian for two hours, speaking about Italian food, family, travel, history and their Italian lineage, and reminisce about the Italian influences each had growing up in families that trace back to the Mediterranean country.

Though both were born in California, Anselmo and Pierini were surrounded by the sounds of Italy

growing up. Anselmo remembers hearing her mother and grandmother talking to each other in their native language, while Pierini picked up Italian during large family gatherings on Sunday around plates of ravioli, gnocchi and tortas.

Over the years while meeting with “Il Circolo,” Anselmo and Pierini found they had much in common. First, they are Curtis Park neighbors – Anselmo on Fifth Avenue and Pierini on 25th Street. Also, their families come from the same region of Italy – Lunigiana in the panhandle of northwest Tuscany. And both travel to Italy on a regular basis.

Pierini has been on dozens of Italy trips to visit relatives, explore the country, trace family roots and even spend Christmases in Rome. Anselmo also has traveled to Italy more than 15 times, to the village of her grandparents.

During discussions, they discovered they both were going to be in Italy in



Nicoletta Anselmo and Bruce Pierini with their local guide, Giovanni Libby in the main piazza in Ascoli Piceno, Italy.

October – Pierini for five weeks and Anselmo for four weeks. And both were going to be in the same area where they had common family ties.

“We’ve talked for years about being from the same part of Italy, and when we found out we were going to be there at

the same time, we decided to meet up,” Pierini said.

Their first encounter was in Bagnone for lunch at Da Lina restaurant, where they ate ravioli and drank local wine. A week later, they met up again for five days, eating local dishes, drinking wine, walking through plazas, visiting ports and meeting up with family and friends’ contacts who hosted them.

“We were in the regional capital city of Pontremoli on its feast day, which meant we saw lots of folkloric activities like chestnut roasting and traditional crepe-making (‘testaroli’),” Pierini said. “We re-met up on a superfast Freccia Rossa train in Bologna, then toured for four days in two Adriatic coastal cities, San Benedetto del Tronto and Ancona.”

“It was pure pleasure,” Pierini said. “I enjoyed traveling with Nicoletta as she speaks Italian and has the same family roots in Lunigiana.”

“It was a dream come true to meet Bruce in Italy and experience our love of our ancestors’ country,” Anselmo said. Both exclaimed: “L’Italia è bella!”

NeighborWorks shuts down Oak Park Farmers Market

By Judy Green Scheible

The Oak Park Farmers Market is gone. For more than a dozen years, it was a thriving Saturday morning hub of vendors and entertainers in McClatchy Park. Market manager Joany Titherington’s jovial personality and business sense made the market a fun venue with many farmers and food trucks.

Last spring, NeighborWorks removed Titherington from her management job and moved the market day to Sunday. Most of the vendors left. A few new farmers tried to make it work, and other nonfood vendors set up stands.

The changes put the market in slow decline. In mid-September, NeighborWorks posted on Instagram that the market’s last day with farm vendors would be the last

Sunday in September. In previous years, the market had run through the end of October.

The market began in 2007 as an informal “crop swap” among 25 backyard gardeners, according to *The Sacramento Bee*. The crop swap evolved into a weekly farm stand in 2009 in the northwest corner of McClatchy Park, where inaugural sponsors were SCNA, the Sacramento Mutual Housing Association and the Alchemists Community Development Corp. The market moved to a vacant lot at 35th Street and Broadway in 2010. Then, under the management of NeighborWorks, it returned to the park in 2011 and remained there. The city later built a permanent staging area in the park for the market and other activities.

About the demise of the market, City Councilmember Jay Schenirer said, “I think it’s a shame.

It’s something the community spent years building and supporting, including Curtis Park. It’s a tragedy that it took so long to build up and was brought down so quickly. ... A lot of decisions were made in a vacuum, especially moving to Sunday. That hurt the sustainability of the enterprise.”

Curtis Park resident Kathleen Ave, who helped launch the market, lamented its loss. “It’s sad. It was a great place in a beautiful park,” she said. “The city’s improvements to the area for the market were fantastic.”

Titherington said she was not sure if she would be able to restart the market. She said she would need substantial financial support from a nonprofit.

NeighborWorks had no comment about the market closing. A staff member said to call back in February.

ACE rail operator says commuter trains coming in 2024

By Dennis Cusick

The operator of ACE commuter rail is “on track” to expand its network to three stations in Sacramento County before the end of 2024, with a stop at Sacramento City College in 2027, its marketing director says.

A hearing Nov. 15 on Zoom was intended to update the public on the “design, the look and feel of the Midtown station – and also to hear any concerns they continued to have about the project,” said David Lipari, marketing director of the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, which owns and operates the ACE service.

Most of the questions at the hearing concerned not the proposed Midtown station design but what the rail agency would do to prevent people from hanging around the station who should not be there, Lipari said. One idea is to make the area available to food trucks rather than have it be a stagnant space

when passengers are not present.

The Midtown station is planned east of 19th Street, across from the Safeway supermarket and partially under the light-rail flyway, an area that has been a site of homeless encampments.

The ACE rail network extension will begin with one southbound commuter train each morning from Natomas to San Jose, with stops at new stations in Midtown and Elk Grove, and then at stations on the existing route, including Stockton, Tracy, Livermore, Pleasanton and Fremont. A northbound evening train will reverse the route.

A Lodi station is scheduled to open in 2025, when two additional ACE trains a day will be scheduled.

In 2027, the rail commission intends to open a station adjacent to the Sacramento City College light-rail station, enabling passengers to transfer from one system to the other.

Lipari said a public hearing on the City College

station design is likely to be scheduled 18 months before the station is to open, perhaps some time in 2025.

He doesn’t think there will be much controversy regarding the City College station design: “It will really be a platform-to-platform station, so it really won’t be a very complicated design.”

The tracks to be used by the new commuter rail route cross Freeport Boulevard at Fourth Avenue. That route was part of the Western Pacific Railroad’s Feather River Route until 1970.

The commission also manages the rail authority that operates the Amtrak San Joaquin intercity trains. A second Amtrak train a day from Sacramento to Bakersfield is expected to resume service in the summer of 2023. That train was shut down at the start of the COVID pandemic in 2020.

The Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) is a commuter rail service, now connecting Stockton and San Jose.

New neighbors enjoy old homes, friendly faces

By Kelsey Wehls,
Gerre Buehler
and Patti Roberts

New neighbors move to Curtis Park for a variety of reasons, but a number of recent arrivals have mentioned walkability, friendliness and the quality of the older homes.

This group of newer neighbors all found homes in the last year within a three-block area around 26th Street between Castro Way and Fourth Avenue.

For **Eva Adams**, the lure of the neighborhood included the older homes, the large, mature trees and the variety of businesses in walking distance.

"Being able to walk to my gym – Figure 8, have a pizza and a beer at Hop Gardens and Pangaea, and then an awesome dessert at Gunther's have been highlights of my last year here," she said.

A transplant from Southern California, Adams moved to San Francisco in 1993, then to the Sacramento area in 2000. After living in Elk Grove for 20 years, she decided to make the move to Fourth Avenue in November 2021.

"I work near Freeport and Fruitridge in South Sacramento, and I have always loved to walk in Curtis Park on my lunches when I could get away," she said. Adams is an associate dentist for Dr. Jill Whitney, where she has worked for more than 22 years.

Adams has a 21-year-old son at UC Irvine and an 18-year-old daughter at UC Santa Cruz. She also has a year-old Bernedoodle named Ellie.

In her free time, she travels and spends time with family.

...

Andrew Blaisdell and **Dawn Hoppe**, along with their two cats Fiona and Marvin, moved into their 26th Street home in September.

Hoppe is a jewelry artist and yoga teacher. Blaisdell is retired from a tech marketing career. They moved to Sacramento from the Bay Area five years ago, buying a home in Upper Land Park before discovering the allure of Curtis Park.

"We fell in love with the neighborhood – all the trees and the older houses, each with their own unique charm," Hoppe said. She describes their home as "a cute little Curtis Park cottage," so cute

they've even named it "Trudy."

"Trudy has all the charm of an old house, but with updates and comforts of modern living," Hoppe said. "We love the pool, the trees, the hardwood floors, the skylights in the kitchen, the moldings, the sconces and the vintage glass doorknobs."

The couple also love walking around the neighborhood, taking in the beauty and the friendly, welcoming neighbors.

...

Cindi and **Mike Bradshaw** moved to Fourth Avenue in late August.

"We moved to Curtis Park for the beautiful neighborhood, community feel and walkability to local shops and restaurants," Cindi said. Their favorite part about Curtis Park is the friendly neighbors.

Cindi and Mike met in Vacaville when they were 18. They lived in Davis for 16 years and Gold River for five years before moving to Curtis Park.

They both love to hike with their favorite destination being the Sierra Nevada. They have two adult children, ages 21 and 23, and a Tabby cat named Vinney.

Cindi is an admissions director. Mike is an account director.

...

Lily Jewett moved into her home on 26th Street in June. She lived in the Elmhurst neighborhood for almost 10 years while attending UC Davis Medical School. Due to an interest in pickleball, Jewett became familiar with Curtis Park. She found the neighborhood charming and spent time walking

around and admiring the homes and gardens. She never thought she'd find a home here, but she did.

While she is primarily an emergency room doctor at UC Davis Medical Center, Jewett also helps out in toxicology, where she treats drug overdoses and snake bites. When she isn't working, she enjoys paddleboarding, pickleball and walking. She also admits an obsession with gardening. Now that she has a home, she plans to acquire a pet soon.

...

Lynne Meredith and **Greg Spiering** moved into their home on Third Avenue in September after living in Modesto for over 30 years. Both are retired attorneys, though Meredith reports that Spiering failed retirement

and still does a bit of work.

The search for a new home took more than 10 months. They were almost ready to give up, but a friend recommended Curtis Park and the rest is history. Martin Pierucci of 27th Street helped them find their home.

Curtis Park met all of their requirements: easy airport access (their daughters live outside California), a walkable neighborhood and easy access to public transit. The couple have walked to Gunther's, Hop Gardens, Taylor's Market and Safeway.

Both enjoy hiking and travel. Spiering likes to cook. Meredith is involved with Girl Scouts and Soroptomists. They share their home with Oscar, a 10-year-old springer spaniel and Harper, a 4-year-old Gordon setter.

A next-door neighbor dropped off cookies the other day and they recently enjoyed a local party where they met a number of neighbors.



Eva Adams

Photo/Will Carlton



Dawn Hoppe and Andrew Blaisdell

Photo/Judy Harper



Mike and Cindi Bradshaw

Photo/Will Carlton



Lily Jewett

Photo/Will Carlton



Greg Spiering and
Lynne Meredith

Photo/Will Carlton

How Curtis Park voted in November election

By Mike Scheible

Lower voter turnout, expected to be around 55% in Sacramento County, was the norm for the Nov. 8 general election. Even among the dedicated voters in Curtis Park, 90% of whom voted in 2020, turnout was expected to drop to about 75%.

About 346,000 ballots had been counted as of mid-November of the estimated 490,000 cast countywide. All results are presented in percentage terms. Final percentages may differ, but none of the outcomes are expected to change.

State and federal races

In state and federal races, the local vote aligned with district and statewide outcomes that favored incumbents.

Gov. Gavin Newsom captured 83% of the local vote to 17% for Republican

Brian Dahle. Newsom received 59% of the vote statewide.

U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui received 87% of the local vote, 69% districtwide.

U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla received 86% of the local vote, 61% statewide.

Local races

In state Senate District 8, Dave Jones received 62% of the local vote compared with 38% for City Councilmember Angelique Ashby. Districtwide, Ashby received 52% of the vote.

In state Assembly District 6, incumbent Kevin McCarty received 83% of the local vote and easily beat Josh Pane. Districtwide, McCarty received 65% of the vote.

In the race for District 4 SMUD director, incumbent Rosanna Herber, a Curtis Park resident, was re-elected. Herber received 67% of the local vote

and 57% of the vote districtwide in defeating challenger Derek Cressman.

The race for a seat on the Sacramento City Unified School District board was extremely close. Locally, Anna Molander Hermann and Tara Jeane received 1,198 and 1,176 votes respectively. Districtwide, Jeane led by 418 votes out of 12,552 counted.

Because of the 2021 redistricting, only the part of Curtis Park east of Franklin Boulevard remains in City Council District 5, containing 386 voters. Locally, Tamiko Heim was leading Caity Maple by 111 votes to 98. Districtwide, Maple held a 385-vote lead out of 9,441 votes counted.

State and local issues

Proposition 1, which places abortion rights into California's Constitution, passed easily. It received 88% of the vote locally, 67% statewide. Measure A, which would have increased the sales tax by a half-cent countywide to support transportation, was opposed

by 59% of local voters. It was defeated countywide, with 55% voting no.

Measure L, which calls for guaranteed city funding for youth programs, was approved by 58% of local voters and 61% of voters citywide.

There was a split between how Curtis Park voted and the outcome for two key measures.

Measure O, which was placed on the ballot in response to concerns about homelessness, was losing locally with 54% opposed. Citywide, 52% voted in favor.

Proposition 30, which would have funded electric vehicles and infrastructure, received 59% yes votes locally but was defeated statewide, with 58% voting no.

Up-to-date results, including precinct-level tallies, can be found at the Sacramento County election website, <https://results.saccounty.net>. The "results by map" feature shows the results for the four Curtis Park reporting areas – 44132, 44191, 44274 and 44384.

Curtis Park author publishes third novel

Richard Meredith of Portola Way has just published his third novel, "Maskirovka – The Russian Science of Deception," a story of international intrigue in which a rookie San Francisco homicide detective tracks down nefarious connections around the world.

This is no whodunit. Meredith tells us in the first seven pages who did it – a Russian spy, though exactly how is not immediately clear. But will the local authorities come to see this as anything but a routine suicide, as it first appears?

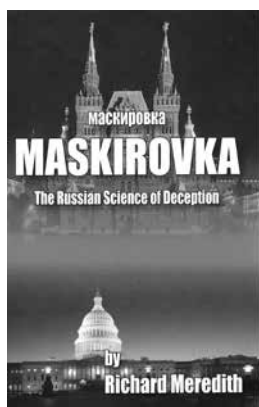
Over the course of the novel, the persistent detective ultimately connects a Russian oligarch, a corrupt foundation director, a philanthropist aiding Russian control of European energy markets and willing accomplices in Washington politics.

Kirkus Reviews gives "Maskirovka" a starred review, calling it "a taut, timely, terrific thriller."

As in Meredith's previous novels, "The Crow's Nest" and "Sky Dance," he draws on his experience as a marine and wildlife biologist for more than 30 years with the federal government and private industry.

"Maskirovka" is for sale on Amazon and Barnes & Noble websites, as are the earlier novels.

– Dennis Cusick



Meredith's new book

Dental school has plans for 2201 Broadway

California Northstate University will expand its College of Dental Medicine to 2201 Broadway, with room for an 80-chair dental clinic, *The Sacramento Business Journal* has reported.

The private medical school, which is based in Elk Grove, acquired the site and nearby buildings on X and 23rd streets totaling about 128,000 square feet of office space in October for \$12.75 million, *The Business Journal* said.

"We see the Broadway corridor in Sacramento as an area that will provide a variety of housing, commercial and service-related activities," said California Northstate CEO Alvin Cheung in a news release.



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May 20
Neighborhood Yard Sale

June 4
Curtis Fest Artisan Fair

June 25, July 30, Aug. 27
Music in the Park

Oct. 14
Fall Fundraiser

Dec. 6
Annual Membership Meeting

Floral and pottery shop opens on Franklin Boulevard

By Kelsey Wehsels

Poppy and Pot, a new floral and pottery shop, has opened at 2908 Franklin Blvd., Suite A, where Zen Threads used to be.

The business is owned by Kevin and Da'Reen Reichenberg, who decided to combine their passions into a business.

Da'Reen is a florist who had a successful and growing business out of her home. When Kevin took a

pottery class, he fell in love with ceramics and the pair decided to open a business together.

"We're not your typical flower shop, so you won't see the standard dozen red roses," Da'Reen said.

Da'Reen specializes in weddings and events, so the goal is to blend the two art forms so floral centerpieces are arranged in ceramic pots designed by Kevin.

The location for their business happened by

chance. They had been looking for a space when a friend mentioned that Zen Threads was moving. "We were highly encouraged to get in there," Da'Reen said. "We absolutely jumped at the opportunity."

A grand opening of the shop with specialty arrangements for patrons to purchase was scheduled for Nov. 26.

They plan to offer pottery classes in the future, but the space will primarily be a floral and ceramic retail store.

'Nutcracker' veteran at 9

Vander Armstrong, 9, son of Maggie and Stacey Armstrong of 24th Street, has been entranced by "The Nutcracker" ballet since age 3, when he began lessons with the School of Sacramento Ballet. This is his third year in the Sacramento Ballet Company's production – this year filling the role of naughty little brother Fritz in the party scene. He will also play a page in the opening scene of the land of sweets. Performances of "The Nutcracker" are scheduled Dec. 10 to 24 at SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, 1301 L St.



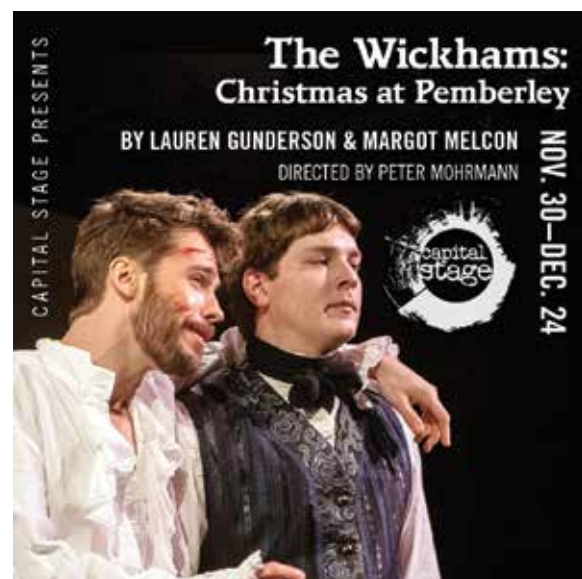
Photo/Courtesy of Sacramento Ballet Company

Returning as Mr. Wickham

Chicago-based actor **Colin Sphar**, who grew up on Third Avenue in Curtis Park, is back in town to play Mr. Wickham in "The Wickhams: Christmas At Pemberley," Nov. 30 through Dec. 24 at Capital Stage, 2215 J St.

He attended Natomas Charter School's Performing and Fine Arts Academy before heading to theater school at DePaul University. He described the play as "a fast-paced and hilarious riff on the Jane Austen world of 'Pride and Prejudice,' wherein Mr. Wickham returns to the Darcy estate at Christmastime and, well ... hijinks and chaos ensue."

Sphar has fond childhood memories of delivering *Viewpoint* to his neighbors. "Every month, a stack of *Viewpoints* would show up on the porch and it was my job to take them around and deliver them to all the houses on my block," he said. "And yes, while I am in town my parents have me delivering the paper to the block like old times."



Photo/Courtesy of Capital Stage

Actor Colin Sphar, left, returns to his home town to play Mr. Wickham at Capital Stage.



Photo/Karen Uyeno

As his daughter, Eleanor, watched, Jeff Hunts, left, and Dan Pskowski plant the tree in the Curtis Park playground in 2003.

Hunts memorial tree planting

Two trees will be planted in William Curtis Park in memory of longtime Donner Way resident **Jeffery L. Hunts**, who died Dec. 1, 2021 of brain cancer at age 59.

The tree planting will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 10, at the north end of the park along the west side across from Curtis Way.

Hunts worked 27 years for the California Environmental Protection

Agency, where he managed the electronic waste program. He took an interest in the neighborhood trees and was always involved in park tree-planting events.

Come, share your memories of Hunts with his wife Karen Uyeno and their two daughters, Madeline and Eleanor.

If you have questions, contact danielpskowski@gmail.com.

– Dan Pskowski



Photo/Susan MacCulloch

Susan and George Blondin of 26th Street

Celebrating 50 years together

The year 1972 was eventful for **George** and **Susan Blondin**. Although they had been acquainted a few years, April 15 "was the beginning of our life together," Susan recalled. On July 29, they moved into their 26th Street home. On Nov. 11, standing by the fireplace, they were married. Exactly 50 years later, the couple celebrated their anniversary with family, friends and neighbors in the same home.

Crime incidence low in Curtis Park

Curtis Park is in a statistical area with some of the lowest reported crime in the city, according to police data for the first 10 months of 2022.

The neighborhood is in police District 4, which recorded the city's lowest incidence of homicide, robbery, aggravated assault and motor vehicle theft.

Crime was highest in all reporting

categories in the downtown area.

Crime was lowest overall in the northwest part of the city, including Natomas and Northgate.

Reported crime in the city increased 13.6% from the same period of 2021. Crime was up significantly in all reporting categories except homicide, which increased from 50 cases in 2021 to 51 in 2022.



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After-school program offers students enrichment



**LAUREN
GOTHARD
and
LINDSEY
SIN**

Kindergarten tours in the Sacramento City Unified School District have started for the 2023-24 school year and will continue into January.

Tours typically include a presentation from the principal, classroom visits and an introduction to other unique aspects of the school.

No two schools are exactly alike. The school tours offer parents and families some freedom of choice within the district's open-enrollment system. Families may also choose to enroll their student in their neighborhood school.

Families also have to consider where to place their child before school and after the school day ends and should know what childcare may be available at their prospective school. Before- and after-school care is administered separately from a school's daily schedule.

The typical kindergarten school day ends around noon, at which point students either need to be picked up from school or enrolled in after-school care. Just as no two schools are exactly alike, before- and after-school care at each site is also unique.

Some school sites offer care at a cost, while others provide care for free. Some programs may be impacted due to high demand and require a waitlist.

At Bret Harte, before- and after-school care is available for all grades. The program, funded through the state's After School Education and Safety program, is free for families. The local nonprofit Empowering Possibilities Unlimited (EPU) runs Bret Harte's program and other sites across the district. EPU has been providing before- and after-school care and enrichment opportunities for over 20 years.

Under the leadership of program manager Rochelle Nazareno, a team of six instructional aides



Instructional aides at Bret Harte's after-school care are, from left, Mahogany, Lorena, Gabby, Alejandra, Daisy and Rochelle.

Photo/Audrina Velasquez, 4th grade student

provides daily enrichment for more than 100 Bret Harte students. Now in her fifth year as program manager with EPU, Nazareno partners with local organizations to bring a variety of activities to students throughout the school week.

Each day offers something different. "On Mondays we have yoga and basketball; Tuesdays we have BTU Arts and tennis; yoga again on Wednesdays; and Mad Science and BTU Arts on Thursdays," Nazareno said.

BTU, which stands for Bigger Than Us, is an "arts education organization that brings music, visual, and performing arts directly to the community," according to its website, <https://www.btuarts.org>.

Mad Science Sacramento Valley offers "safe and engaging activities that have been kid-tested and approved," according to its website, <https://sacramento.madscience.org>.

Students also receive help with homework, recreation time with their peers and enrichment time for the program's STAR (STEM, thrive, arts and research) curriculum. Snacks are provided.

This holiday season, EPU will provide several opportunities for family engagement, a recognized

strength of the program. A canned food and coat drive will run through Dec. 16 to support families in need throughout the community.

"We will also be hosting a family night where families work with their students to design a holiday card," Nazareno said. "We will send the cards to the elderly in retirement homes."

She also hopes to add field trips to the after-school program in 2023. "The after-school program is a great place to get homework done and socialize with their peers," Nazareno said. "But we also provide opportunities to expose students to programs that they won't get from regular-day school."

The Sacramento City Unified School District will accept applications for the 2023-24 school year beginning in February. To schedule a school tour at Bret Harte, contact the school office at 916 395-5190.

No Viewpoint

The *Viewpoint* staff is taking a holiday break. The next edition will be in February. The deadline for that issue is Jan. 15.

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