

VIEWPOINT

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February 2024

Mayoral Forum Set for Feb. 6 at 24th Street Theater

The Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association (SCNA) will host a Sacramento Mayoral Forum at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6 in the 24th Street Theater at Sierra 2 Center.

The event will give residents a chance to learn more about Sacramento mayoral candidates and their ideas, plans and hopes for the city before the March 5 election. Candidates scheduled to attend are Steven Hansen, Richard Pan, Kevin McCarty and Flojaune Cofer. The winner will replace outgo-

ing Mayor Darrell Steinberg, who has served in the role since 2016.

A moderator will ask community-based questions submitted ahead of time, and there will be an audience question-and-answer period as well.

The event is being co-hosted by SCNA, Land Park Community Association, Hollywood Park Neighborhood Association and South Land Park Neighborhood Association. Six people qualified to run for mayor. The forum will last about 90

minutes.

SCNA has hosted many candidate forums in the past so residents can learn more about them in a neutral setting. These forums allow neighbors to ask candidates questions about citywide and local issues. Residents can send their questions to forms.gle/Vw1m1AjiwzSsQrbp8

The forum is expected to last about 90 minutes. The event is free, but registration is required. To register visit sacramentomayoralforum.ticketleap.com.

City changes course on dog park plans Curtis Park neighbors express frustration, relief

By Jim Miller

Months of community meetings, open houses, concept plans and other discussions on the feasibility of a city-sanctioned dog park in Curtis Park abruptly shifted course in mid-December.

Acting on a recommendation from the city parks department, the Sacramento City Council voted Dec. 12 to

research and pilot an unfenced, off-leash dog park in Land Park. The vote included allocating \$200,000 to a new capital improvement project for the effort.

The prospects for a city-sanctioned dog park in Curtis Park, meanwhile, remain uncertain. City crews hauled off all of the pieces of a temporary dog park at the Sierra 2 Green following the council vote.

See Dog Park Plans, Page 10



Sinfonia Spirituosa Artistic Director Lorna Peters

Photo by Ketil Wright

Meet the newest members of the SCNA Board of Directors

SCNA members elected new board members during the annual membership meeting in December. Incumbents reelected to the board include Gerre Buehler, Andrea Rosen, Bill French, Kathy Les and John Bailey. *Viewpoint* interviewed the members who were elected for the first time:

Noah Soliday Bench

Noah Soliday Bench and his family have always loved the SCNA events and their community, and serving on the board of directors gives him a chance to give back.

"I want to do my part to bring neigh-

bors together and strengthen that community," he said.

As a technical artist working in video games, Soliday Bench said he brings a myriad of technical and artistic skills to the role. "I'm very well organized, and I'm great at working with groups of people to achieve a common goal," he said.

He is eager to restart events that were postponed during the COVID pandemic, as well as support the new Sierra 2



Noah Soliday Bench

executive director and update the organization's bylaws.

"Also, the city sounds interested in establishing a dog park somewhere other than Sierra 2, though it is as yet unclear to me what that process will be like or how SCNA may be involved," he said.

Neighbors may recognize the Marshall Way resident whistling video game tunes as he walks around the neighborhood. He can tap dance, too.

Kinsley Earl

Kinsley Earl of Sixth Avenue ran for the SCNA Board "to give back to the neighborhood that so warmly welcomed my family and to help preserve Curtis Park's legacy of community involvement."



Kinsley Earl

See Board, Page 2

Curtis Park resident delights audiences with Baroque orchestra

By Diana Sunseri

"So fresh and spontaneous" is how a music enthusiast recently described the feeling she gets at a Sinfonia Spirituosa concert, where you never quite know what's going to happen next.

"She said you don't quite get that from any other concert, and that's what made it so exciting and kept bringing her back," said the Baroque orchestra's artistic director Lorna Peters, who lives on Montgomery Way. "It was an amazing epiphany to me."

See Peters, Page 8

Clean-up crew

Meet the first graders who want to save the planet



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New neighbors
Welcome Rian and the Prommer family



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Board

Continued from page 1

Earl said she brings a skillset that includes communication, advocacy and qualitative analysis, as well as a proactive and entrepreneurial spirit to the board.

Her goal is to find ways to meet the needs of what she described as a growing and diversifying community.

A native Sacramentan, Earl also has lived in Chicago, Los Angeles and Denver. She jokes that she is left-handed and slightly left-footed, “but I bat equally badly in both directions.”

David Enos

After 20 years in the neighborhood, David Enos decided it was time to serve his community as a volunteer.

“I have owned a sign company for 28 years. I have been on several boards, and I work well with others,” he said of the skills he brings to the board post.

The 25th Street resident said the most pressing issue facing SCNA and the neighborhood is strengthening community engagement.

One thing neighbors may not know about Enos is that he worked as a juggler at county fairs when he was 13.

“I also traveled around the United States in an RV with my family for a year as a kid.”

Madelyn Gelpi

Madelyn Gelpi was inspired to run for the SCNA board by the friendships she developed with long-time neighbors while exercising their dogs together.

“I felt called to serve the community I love so much – a community that my sister, brother-in-law, niece and parents also call home – and contribute my natural abilities in problem-solving, experience in bridging divides, and my diverse perspective as an LGBTQ+ person and younger resident to complement the work of the SCNA board.”

An executive director of a local foundation, Gelpi said she brings skills in policy analysis, diversity, equity and inclusion, and nonprofit management to the post.

“I have developed a deep understanding of the nuances of running a successful nonprofit using sound financial management, board governance, strategic planning and program development,” she said.

The Donner Way resident said the most pressing issue facing the community is overcoming the divide that surfaced surrounding the use of the Sierra 2 Green.

“I aim to assist in healing the neighborhood through the SCNA’s leadership and ensuring that the needs of all neighbors are heard, represented and addressed in meaningful ways.”

Gelpi is originally from New Orleans but fell in love with California while working a summer job in Sequoia National Park about 12 years ago teaching

guitar and songwriting.

“Now, I enjoy exploring the wonders of California with my sweet golden retriever, Ranger, and take pride in the fact that I can make delicious gumbo that is out of this world (if I do say so myself). Gumbo night soon, anyone?”

David Gonsalves

David Gonsalves has spent the last 28 years working for elected officials and brings a strong set of political skills and a willingness to volunteer to his new post on the SCNA board of directors. “I want to give back to and enhance the community we call home,” he said.

Although his children are grown, the Highland Avenue resident hopes to bring back the “kid-friendly and other long-time fundraising events” like the Easter Egg Hunt to the neighborhood. “Also, we need to work toward healing the neighborhood after a very contentious issue created a terrible divide amongst neighbors,” he said.

Beyond his political acumen, Gonsalves has other notable talents. “I was a contract disc jockey in college.”

Alyse Macaluso

As a former varsity soccer player at the University of the Pacific, Alyse Macaluso is a team player and plans to bring her creative thinking, positive attitude and collaboration skills as a new member of the SCNA board.

“I want to coordinate family-oriented events so that children of all ages and families can come together in the community,” she said. “I would also like to utilize social media platforms and other avenues of technology to create more awareness for Sierra 2 events and engage a more diverse demographic.”

The Curtis Way resident hopes to boost engagement among people of all ages and find new ways for people to connect in Curtis Park.

Among her fondest memories is attending Christmas Mass at St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City.

Ryan Marenger

Ryan Marenger and his family have lived in their Eighth Avenue home in Curtis Park for just over a year, but Marenger decided that the time to give back was now.

“Being part of an open and vibrant community makes life better and more fulfilling for everyone, but that type of community does not make itself,” he said. “I decided to serve on the board to take part in building and supporting our neighborhood, promoting community involvement and making sure that all people feel welcome.”

Having worked as a financial consultant and accountant for various nonprofits, Marenger has seen a range of financial situations and hopes his experience can help keep SCNA on a stable financial and operational footing while also planning for the future.

“I am excited to learn about the most pressing

issues, to offer level-headed opinions and sound financial advice, and hopefully help resolve any issues that may occur.”

When he’s not working, Marenger is writing fiction, reading or cooking. “I think it would be fun to host pop-up dinners for friends and neighbors.”

Karl Saddlemire

Karl Saddlemire of Highland Avenue envisions his board tenure as an opportunity to give back to the community and “help recover the small-town feel that distinguishes it among Sacramento’s many neighborhoods.”

A public defender, Saddlemire said he is trained to ensure that everyone has some agency in the most critical decisions affecting their welfare.

“I plan to ensure that all members of our community have a voice in our shared neighborhood concerns.”

At the top of his to-do list are restoring lapsed traditions like the Easter Egg Hunt, Wine Tasting & Silent Auction and Crab Feed, as well as creating new events to build community now that the pandemic is over.

A bit more about the new board member?

“I know the secret location in Curtis Park where you can run one-mile intervals with two children hanging out of your BOB Revolution stroller.”

Richard Weng

Richard “Dick” Weng of 27th Street said his background in land development and construction will be useful in serving on the SCNA board of directors.

He hopes to help contribute to what he calls “this great neighborhood.”

“Along with those hard skills, I believe I bring another pragmatic perspective to the board,” he said, adding that more community engagement and collaboration would benefit Curtis Park.

What neighbors may not know about him is that he co-founded a start-up in 2015. “It was a car-sharing platform for Teslas,” he said. “We raised money (and) built the platform and company, but we mistimed the market. A real-life MBA.”

– Dorsey Griffith



David Enos



David Gonsalves



Alyse Macaluso



Madelyn Gelpi



Ryan Marenger



Karl Saddlemire



Richard Weng



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A time for introspection with an eye to the future

Winter weather is upon us and, while the gray clouds and rain might inspire a seasonal slowdown and more personal introspection for some, I find this time of year to be exciting and invigorating. Dramatic clouds, wind and the occasional thunder and lightning storm remind me of the variability of life and inspire me to appreciate the beauty all around us, even when that beauty is a bit more chaotic and wind-blown.

As the new Executive Director for Sierra 2 and the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association, my enthusiasm for the wild winter weather echoes my excitement for the future of Sierra 2 and SCNA. The year 2024 will usher in the return of many great community events put on by our organization, such as the annual Wine Tasting & Silent Auction, along with new events and opportunities, with a significant focus on activities

KENT ANDERSON Sierra 2 Executive Director



for children and families in the community.

I am thrilled to be a part of an organization and team that take an active leadership role in the community and that hold art, cultural and educational opportunities and community as the core pillars of what makes the Curtis Park area more than simply a neighborhood, but instead, a vibrant community.

We are so fortunate to have Sierra 2 as the gem and focal point for our neighborhood and the community and

region beyond. This 100-year-old facility features a long and diverse history and an architectural beauty that makes it a pleasure to behold and a wonderful place to work, learn and gather, be it for yoga or dance lessons, theater performances, educational opportunities, community events or personal and familial milestones. The diversity of the use of Sierra 2 reflects the diversity of our community, and each helps to enhance the other.

I am very pleased to be working with the excellent SCNA Board of Directors, many of whom are newly elected and entering their first term on the board. The excitement of our newly elected board members compliments the passion of the incumbent members and brings enthusiasm and fresh ideas to the organization, helping to inspire even greater eagerness for this next chapter

for Sierra 2 and SCNA.

Of course, I would be remiss if I failed to mention the fantastic team of professionals who make up the Sierra 2 staff and whose passion and dedication to our mission and community clearly show each and every day. They keep Sierra 2 spotless and functioning in tip-top shape, deliver programs and opportunities to the community, coordinate engagement and site use, all with the professionalism, kindness and passion that makes Sierra 2 one of the greatest community amenities the Sacramento region has to offer.

So, as the rain falls and the winds blow and we face some cloudy days ahead, I cannot help but feel excited, both for the fair weather ahead and for the amazing work we will do together as part of Sierra 2 and the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association.

SCNA Board elects new officers

In January, the SCNA Board of Directors elected board officers, who comprise the board's executive committee. *Viewpoint* asked each about their goals for their one-year terms of service.

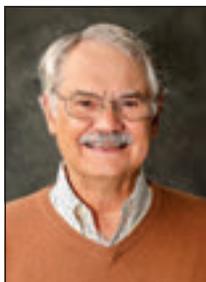
John Bailey, President

My goal is to return to "normalcy" in social and fundraising activities. The pandemic is over, and we look forward to resuming regular social and fundraising activities such as the Wine Tasting & Silent Auction, Egg Hunt and parade and First Friday Neighborhood Dinners.

I also want to expand social activities. Neighbors who have hunkered down in their homes are eager for new activities for adults and the now significant population of children. A few ideas I have heard bandied about are outdoor family movie nights, kid-oriented nature walks in Curtis Park, an organized babysitting co-op, a speaker series and a three-person basketball league.

I also want to strengthen our financial position. During the COVID cash crunch we were unable to make deposits into our savings account for long-term maintenance. The rule of thumb for "reserves for replacement" is to hold a minimum of five years' worth of maintenance costs. We have a shortfall of nearly \$200,000. We need to put into place a program to refill the coffers over a period of years.

John Bailey lives on Coleman Way.



John Bailey

Kathy Les, Vice President

As we transition from an executive director of 14 years, I want to help bridge the previous and new executive director roles by sharing institutional memory, procedures and best SCNA practices for the smoothest and swiftest possible transition. I want to see SCNA move forward without missing a beat so we can meet our mission and more.

I want to support the new SCNA president and the board in overseeing the operations, events and activities of our organization. As a multi-faceted organization managing the Sierra 2 Center and its inherent activities, in addition to providing special events and activities for our neighborhood, our work is managed through several committees and the association staff, which requires extensive attention and hard work.

It's my goal to usher in the smooth flow of SCNA's annual events back toward a normal palette of activities following COVID and to help foster new events and activities to engage our community, especially children and families. Our activities and events build community and make Curtis Park a stronger neighborhood in which to live, work and play.

Kathy Les lives on Portola Way.

Lily Harris, Secretary

I joined the SCNA Board in January of 2021, in the middle of the COVID



Kathy Les

lockdown. On Jan. 10, after three years of service, I attended my first in-person meeting as a board member. I'm very excited to work with the new SCNA board and executive director as we progress out of a very difficult time for our organization and our community.

As the newly elected secretary, I consider myself the board's scrivener. As such, I hope to document the work we do on behalf of the Sierra 2 Center and the community accurately and thoroughly, and keep the neighborhood informed of that work through monthly stories in *Viewpoint*. I also hope to use my advocacy and writing skills as an attorney to help ensure that the board's messaging on any given issue is accurate, even-handed and clear.

Lily Harris lives on Coleman Way.

Ryan Marenger, Treasurer

My three goals as treasurer of the SCNA board are to: Provide practical financial oversight to ensure SCNA maintains good accounting practices and continues to operate within the bounds of the law; help SCNA leadership strategize financially to invest funds in a way that expands our impact; and plan for key capital costs so that the Sierra 2 building continues to



Lily Harris



Ryan Marenger

be well-maintained.

Marenger lives on Eighth Avenue.

Shannon Motley, At-Large

I am excited to focus on community engagement and events. I would like to see many of the pre-pandemic events that brought the neighborhood together, such as the Wine Tasting & Silent Auction, the crab feed, community dinners and the Easter Egg Hunt, occur in the future. There have been several comments regarding the need for kids' activities. I look forward to partnering with the Curtis Park community to increase engagement and support future events.

I aim to encourage transparency and inclusion, keeping community members in the loop, and sharing the good and the bad. I plan to support board behavior that welcomes honest feedback and open communication among both board and community members. I want to ensure that all voices are equally represented.

Another goal is to provide opportunities for Curtis Park youth and children to create fond memories and to develop the future leaders of SCNA. The request for more kid-specific and/or family-focused events for the younger members of our community has been identified as a strong desire from many residents. I'm committed to making sure we identify events that represent the entire Curtis Park population across the generations to pursue in future years.

Motley lives on West Curtis Drive.



Shannon Motley

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Centennial Celebration a big success

By Kathy Les

Last month's Centennial Celebration of the Sierra School building – today the Sierra 2 Center for the Arts & Community – drew a nice crowd and lots of praise for the historic building. Room 10 was brimming with nearly 75 people who came to wish the old school building Happy 100th Birthday.

Organized by SCNA's Development Committee headed by Committee Chair Shannon Motley, the event drew invited speakers as well as many who helped with the transition of the school building to the Sierra 2 Center. Marty Renault, widow to Dennis Renault (founder of SCNA's *Viewpoint*), made the trip from Santa Cruz to join the celebration, as well as many of SCNA's original board members and previous Sierra 2 executive directors.

Sean de Courcy, the City of Sacramento's preservation director, shared interesting facts about the history of the building, citing the building's original architects Dean & Dean, who were prominent building designers in the 1920s. De Courcy paid tribute to the historic importance of the building, now listed on the Sacramento Historic Register.

Assemblyman Kevin McCarty presented an official proclamation by the California Assembly recognizing the history and importance of the Sierra School building. In addition, McCarty lauded the Sierra 2 Center for the many ways it serves the community with classes, theatrical performances and special events. McCarty emphasized that the Sierra 2



Pictured at the celebration are, from left Sean DeCourcy, Marty Renault, Bill Hoover, Karen Sharp and Ken McCarty.

Photo by Judy Harper

Center holds special meaning to his own family, especially his twin daughters who have enjoyed many shows at the 24th Street Theatre as well as classes in the dance studio.

Karen Sharp, herself a former student of Sierra School and now an active artist and Sierra 2 tenant, presented both a commemorative mosaic glasswork and a sentimental overview of student life at the Sierra School. Sharp, along with her five brothers and sisters, attended the school starting in 1958. (See sidebar below with Sharp's recollections.)

The artwork presented by Sharp was created by the Glass Art Mosaics Collective (GLAM) in celebration of the Sierra School building's 100th birthday. The collective, a tenant at Sierra 2, has been

meeting on Tuesdays for the past 10 years in Room 11. The collective is comprised of artists who enjoy mosaic art and the congenial atmosphere of kindred spirits.

When one of their members got wind of the impending 100th birthday, GLAM members decided to create a piece to celebrate the occasion. During her remarks, Sharp presented the mosaic replica of the Sierra School building to the SCNA board of directors with the words: "Here to many more years as a special gathering place for the community and the arts."

With a loud round of applause and cheer and joy throughout the room, a special cake donated by Freeport Bakery was served. The cake featured the Sierra 2 logo atop a tasty buttery frosting. There was plenty to go around for the happy crowd.

Karen Sharp reminisces about Sierra 2 during Centennial Celebration

I've been asked to speak to what Sierra School was like many years ago. When thinking about giving this talk, I was flooded by memories of growing up in this wonderful community. While I can't speak to the beginning years of Sierra School, I was a student here beginning in 1958 – as were all five of my siblings. We all attended Sierra School from kindergarten through sixth grade.

Take a moment and close your eyes. Imagine what the school looks like physically today. Where the parking lot is now had been a vast playground – with areas painted for four-square, hopscotch, tetherball, and large circles for dodgeball and kickball. There were monkey bars where the current basketball courts are now. The yard was teeming with children.

The kindergartners had their own play area to the right of the cafeteria. The first and second graders had a designated area in the U of the playground so they were safe from the rambunctious older children. The older kids had the run of the rest of the playground, as well as free run throughout the field. The large oak trees were a favorite place to sit and rest during the warm summer days. There were always a couple of teachers on yard duty to make sure things went well at recess or on lunch breaks.

The cafeteria was a great place for breaks and lunch. A woman by the name of Dotty ran the kitchen. She was a tiny woman with a hairnet – and she ran a great kitchen. The food was always good, and there was the wonderful aroma of freshly baked cinnamon rolls and peanut butter cookies that I still

remember. Lunches cost 25 cents – and milk was 5 cents.

Teachers were generally kind, some were stricter than others, but we all learned our lessons well. Parents came for parent-teacher conferences, so periodic reports on behavior as well as academics were routine. And there was an active PTA, which would hold an end-of-year snow cone celebration for all the kids – the cost was 10 cents a snow cone and everyone looked forward to that last event of the school year.

Hopefully, that gives you a taste of some of the memories of growing up in this wonderful community. It was a lovely experience.

I would like to say that I've come full circle. From attending grammar school, I've become a person who attends weekly artists sessions at Sierra 2.

Trees in Curtis Park

Planting the right tree in the right place

By Daniel Pskowski

Arborists understand that species selection and placement are crucial when growing a tree in an urban environment. With most trees, the spreading roots also eventually cause problems.

This is what happened, for instance, in some North Natomas neighborhoods where, 10 or more years after moving into new homes, people had to replace sidewalks because of root damage. Over my career as an arborist, I have seen hundreds of trees removed because the wrong species initially was planted.

Trees can and do cause damage where there is inadequate above-ground and below-ground space, or when planted close to or on top of underground water, sewer, gas or telecommunication lines. It is sad to see a tree become established and begin to provide shade and beauty only to be cut down. Improper tree selection can happen when a homeowner does not understand how large the tree will get; landscape professionals also can make this mistake.

Crocker Village is off to a great start on replacing the canopy of the approximately 160 native oak trees that were removed when this 72-acre site was developed. However, as I walk around the new neighborhood streets, I see problems as these trees mature. Some are due to the lack of adequate space. Crocker Drive was the first street to be developed with more than 40 cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) planted in the city park strip. SCNA sent a letter to the city Urban Forestry section in 2014 expressing concern that the 4½ foot- to 5½-foot-wide planters were too small for large canopy shade trees. Urban Forestry wrote back defending the selection of the cork oaks.

Homeowners can address potential problems with trees on their property; however, the Crocker Village Homeowners Association should be contacted first if you want to remove a tree that your arborist believes is inappropriate for the planting site.

To replace an ill-suited tree or one that was recently removed, you should follow these steps:

Figure out how much above- and below-ground space is available. Next, look up. If high-voltage wires are present marked by a sign just below the crossarm, select a tree that will mature to 35 feet or less.

Call 811, the local one-call center, to help find an underground utility. This free service locates the un-

derground gas, water, sewer and telecommunications lines and is recommended before digging in your yard. A tree should be planted six feet from utilities and drainpipes.

In choosing the right tree, consider drought-tolerant trees such as the native valley oak, blue oak or interior live oak. Other drought-tolerant species include Chinese pistache, cork oak, Canary Island pine, western redbud, Marina strawberry tree and crape myrtle.

For more information about trees that do well in Sacramento, check out the City of Sacramento Street Tree List. Another good reference is the Sacramento Tree Foundation's "Shady 80" tree list, which also includes excellent information on how to plant and care for young trees.

S.M.U.D. customers qualify for free shade trees through the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

If you have a city park strip in front of your home that needs a tree, contact the City of Sacramento call center. Let's get planting.

Dan Pskowski is a retired Sacramento City arborist and urban forester. He is an ISA-certified arborist. Questions? danielpskowski@gmail.com



Hybrid elm, which can grow to 30 or 40 feet tall, is surrounded by two water meter boxes, drainage pipe and telecommunications box in Crocker Village.

Photo by Daniel Pskowski

Help with trees

Sacramento Tree Foundation: <https://sac-tree.org/> or call 916-924-8733

City of Sacramento tree list: <https://www.cityofsacramento.org/Public-Works/Maintenance-Services/Trees/Street-Tree-List>

To request a tree planted in the park strip call 311 or email: 311@cityofsacramento.org

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 Wednesdays, 6-7:30 p.m.
 Adult/Teen Basic Ballet (some experience required)
 Wednesdays, 7:15-8:30 p.m.
 Adult/Teen Ballet from the Beginning (no experience required)
 dancingwithheidi@gmail.com

Two Rivers Dance Center/ River City Taps
 Mondays-Thursdays/Saturdays
 Class schedules:
 tworiversdancecenter.com/ and rivercitytaps.com/

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

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

OTHER
City Life Church
 Sunday worship service, 10 a.m.
 Room 10
 916-538-9292



EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Activities are free, except where noted. (Donations appreciated)
 Room 12 • 916 455-6339. For more information: Sierra2.org.

NEW ACTIVITY
Bits & Bobs Upcycled Art Club
 Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon
 Room 7
 Reinvent jewelry bits and bobs into new creations to sell at Curtis Fest. Funds raised will directly support the Senior Center at Sierra 2.

Women's Friendship Group
 Meet new friends and discover new hobbies. 2nd and 4th Wednesday, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Room 11

EDUCATION
My Story Project
 2nd Monday, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

LEISURE
Book Club
 2nd Monday, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 Room 12
Feb. 12 - "Crossing to Safety," by Wallace Stegner

Nonfiction Book Club
 3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon
 Room 12
Feb. 15 - "The Last Slave Ship: The True Story," Ben Reines
Mar. 20 - "The Art Thief," Michael Finkel

Life History Writing
 Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

Open Art Studio
 Bring your art or craft project to work on while socializing.
 Fridays, noon-3 p.m. Room 11

CARDS & GAMES
Pinochle
 Fridays, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

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

Fun Bridge (Contract)
 Thursdays, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

SENIOR WELLNESS PROGRAM

Punch cards \$80/10 classes; \$45/5 classes or \$10 drop-in (purchase in the Sierra 2 office)

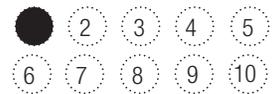
TAI CHI CHUAN
 Wednesdays, 10-11 a.m. Studio 1

STRENGTH AND BALANCE
 Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m. Studio 1
 Thursdays, 11 a.m.-noon, Studio 1

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

ZUMBA GOLD
 Mondays & Wednesdays, 10-11 a.m. Studio 2

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



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BASICS OF DRAWING SERIES

Feb. 4: Positive and Negative Space: Still Life

Feb. 11: Proportions: Measurement & Figures

Feb. 18: Perspective: Point of View & Landscapes

Sundays, 1-2:30 p.m.

\$75/month

Good drawing is the foundation for art in any media. Using the humble pencil, you'll learn the basic elements of drawing, such as form, dimension, shading, perspective and more. The in-class drawing will be supplemented by optional homework and instructional videos. By the end of this course, you will have drawn a variety of subjects including animals, flowers, landscapes and still lifes. Local artist and teacher Marie Taylor is the instructor.

VIBRANT EXPRESSIONS PAINTING

Thursday, Feb. 8

Monthly: 2nd Thursdays

6-7:30 p.m.

\$35 per class

Paint Kit (optional): \$25

This exciting class will explore our intuitive personal connections with the colors of the rainbow. This class is not a typical color theory and mixing class. This class is an artistic adventure in which to immerse yourself in the emotional and cultural dimensions of color, discovering the unique ways in which each hue can evoke feelings and tell stories.

SacSews: Hearts & Crafts

Saturday, Feb. 10

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

\$45 (materials included)

In this beginner-friendly workshop, students will embark on a creative journey to craft charming patchwork heart ornaments. No prior sewing experience is needed as our expert instructors guide you through the basics of stitching and patchwork. Unleash your creativity, learn essential sewing techniques and leave with adorable handmade heart orna-

ments to adorn your space or share with loved ones. Join us for a fun and rewarding sewing adventure! Materials will be provided, and all experience levels are welcome.

ABSTRACT INTUITIVE PAINTING

Saturday, Feb. 24

10 a.m.-noon

\$30

\$25 art kit (optional)

In this engaging and immersive painting class, participants can explore the wonderful world of art, where the focus is not solely on the result, but on the joy and fulfillment found in the creative process itself. Whether you are a novice or an experienced artist, this class welcomes individuals at all levels.

THE BASICS OF DRAWING SERIES

Feb. 4, 11, 18

Sundays, 1-2:30 p.m.

\$75/month

A good drawing is the foundation for art in any media. Using the humble pencil, you'll learn the basic elements of drawing such as form, dimension, shading, perspective and more. The in-class drawing will be supplemented by optional homework and instructional videos. By the end of this course you will have drawn a variety of subjects including animals, flowers, landscapes and still lifes. Local artist and teacher Marie Taylor is the instructor.

Submit your creations for Park Arts

Viewpoint wants to feature your creative work on its occasional Park Arts page. Submit short written pieces or reproducible photos of your creative work to Dorsey.griffith@gmail.com. Works should be accompanied by the creator's name, email address, phone number and short bio. Submissions will be curated and run as space permits.

PARK ARTS

A Winter Prayer While Walking

It is December and cold.

I walk the dusk knowing the moon will rise like a lantern in the darkened sky.

Along the edge of the orchard jays peck sweet meat from long fallen November pears.

It is simple delight in this winter that is closing on us.

We should gather in these months, together at our tables the way the birds have come to the orchard.

Let us not miss the chance to hold one another.

I keep walking the check and brace in my coat against the cold wind down from Alaska,

against drought, bombs, bullets.

As the star flecked sky opens up, let us look,

listen to the voices of small gods,

to be guided by these astounded souls.

Release

The wild horses come down to the river to drink

and eat the grassy hummocks along the bank.

Their coats shine in the late summer sun, the canyon

rim towers above us. I know you would love to see them;

you've only heard my stories of these horses.

Three summers ago I watched this canyon burn,

and now the regrowth brings them.

Biology tells us intense heat opens seeds—

even the scorpionweed grows back. When you're out,

the lockdown over, parole is off, we'll float this water,

let your heart run like the river, catch a few fish,

then sit under the stars with a little whiskey

free, where unbranded horses

roam the draws for years.

— *Jeff Knorr lives on 25th Street. He is an English professor at Sacramento City College and was the Poet Laureate of Sacramento from 2012-2016.*

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LOCAL MUSIC SCENE

Here's your handy guide

THE SIDE DOOR

2900 Franklin Blvd.
thesidedoor.net • All shows 7 p.m.
Tickets: \$20-\$30. Advance tickets available.

Friday, Feb. 2: Mark Hansen & Greta Pedersen, the Great American Songbook from an award-winning fingerpicker and vocalist

Thursday, Feb. 8: Tony Furtado, Portland-based, multi-instrumentalist singer-songwriter, an Americana festival star

Friday, Feb. 9: Dellow, Craven & Gregory, exuberant, no-boundaries soul-folk

Saturday, Feb. 10: Forever Goldrush, uplifting NorCal roots rock 'n' roll

Friday, Feb. 16: Geoffrey Miller, rising country star with Bakersfield Sound

Saturday, Feb. 17: Shelley Burns, premier West Coast jazz vocalist

Sunday, Feb. 18: Gareth Pearson, "The Welsh Tornado," acoustic guitar pyrotechnics

Thursday, Feb. 22: Derv Gordon, legendary 1960s, Jamaican-born British ska/soul/rock singer who led The Equals. With Bay Area-based So What and Kepi Ghoulie.

Friday, Feb. 23: Cosmic Roots Music, young jazz, funk, hip hop, soulful roots quintet. Think Stevie Wonder, Return to Forever. Album release party!

Saturday, Feb. 24: Finnerly-Gordon Project featuring saxophonist Darius Babazadeh, jazz, post-bop, ballads and high-energy playing

Thursday, Feb. 29: Mark Shatz and Bryan McDowell, multi-generational duo with broad spectrum of American acoustic music. Banjo, fiddle, guitar and hambone!

OLD SOUL COFFEE

3434 Broadway Ave.
New weekly series starting Feb. 18
oldsoulco.com/cafes/40-acres-in-oak-park
Sundays, 4-6 p.m. FREE.

"Jazz @ Old Soul" 40 Acres curated by noted guitarist Ross Hammond. New groups every week.

THE GUILD THEATER

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Celebration Arts Presents Ntozake Shange's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow Is Enuf"

The award-winning choreopoem follows seven women through a world of racism, oppression and sexism. Filled with passion, humor and raw honesty, the production tells their stories and those of other women they know through a fusion of poetry, music and dance.

Tickets: celebrationarts.net

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Tuesdays: "Dead Night" with Dick's Picks, Dave's Picks and unreleased. 5:30-9 p.m.

Thursdays: Black Yacht Club presents "The Acoustic Circus," 1st Thursday, 7-9 p.m.

"On the 2 & the 4," Jazz with Kent Lacin & Two Rivers Trio," 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 6-9 p.m.

Fridays: "Local Sounds" acoustic showcase hosted by Four-Eyed Whale, 6-9 p.m.

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

--Mindy Giles



Derv Gordon at The Side Door Courtesy of the artist

Peters

Continued from page 1

Indeed, the professional musicians playing period instruments (many of which the audience has never seen nor heard) are improvising a lot during performances, Peters said of the group, which performs locally later this month. "Part of the beauty of Baroque music is that it's not dialed in. Much of the music from this time (1600-1750) wasn't written out, and improvisation was one of the main characteristics of this style."

A harpsichordist, pianist and chamber music coach, Peters was inspired to retire early and create Sinfonia Spirituosa in 2018 while on faculty at the School of Music at CSU Sacramento, where she worked for 24 years. "I realized that what was driving me was the deep joy – to my core – that I felt when working with my university students in Camerata Capistrano, an undergrad and graduate student baroque ensemble that absolutely excelled in every way. I wanted to direct a professional baroque orchestra, and I needed to get going while I still had the energy to take on such a huge project."

And it is huge. Its musicians come from as far away as Colorado and the process, from music selection to performance, is mind blowing. Peters searches through an enormous body of Baroque music to create programs that "inspire and challenge Sinfonia's musicians and stimulate and move our listeners."

"I can really go down wonderful rabbit holes listening to music while studying the scores," she said. "Since our instruments produce the kinds of colors and timbers that most people don't get to hear every day, it's fun to design a program that allows each instrument to shine; for instance, a bassoon line that compliments a vocal solo, or a duet between violin and oboe, or a bass line that shows off all our "pluckers," harpsichord, guitar and theorbo or lute."

"It's obvious that the talented performers are having a blast from start to finish," said SCNA board member Kirsten Smith, who has attended several performances. "The audience is quickly captivated. You'll see heads bobbing and toes tapping—quite an achievement for a classical concert." She appreciates that Peters selects music "that is varied and beautiful, full of life. I always look forward to the next Sinfonia concert."

Peters' biggest challenges – coupled with the orchestra taking two years off during the COVID pandemic – are fundraising for such a large ensemble and the logistics of pulling together 10 to 15 incredibly busy,



Sinfonia Spirituosa orchestra

Photo by Ketil Wright

professional musicians twice a year. Amazingly, they meet for just three days of rehearsal directly followed by two days of concerts.

"Only highly skilled collaborators with the deepest respect for other musicians can pull this off. There are no prima donnas," Peters said. From the beginning, the group has also prioritized a mentorship program that features a student musician or two at each concert.

Her own student experiences led her to this moment. After completing her doctorate in harpsichord performance at the State University of New York (SUNY), Stony Brook, she was awarded two Fulbright Scholarships and moved to Austria for four years, studying and performing early music in the place where historically informed performance was born.

The orchestra's two upcoming performances of Bach, Handel and Rameau reflect a long-awaited bucket list of contralto and soprano arias that range from heartrending to hilarious. The concerts are Saturday, Feb. 24 at Trinity Cathedral in Sacramento and Sunday, Feb. 25 at the Episcopal Church of St. Martin in Davis, and feature soprano Chea Kang and contralto Sara Couden. Information and tickets are available at sinfoniaspirituosa.org.

"This music was written 300-plus years ago. It is bigger than we are," Peters said. "Playing it humbles us and constantly challenges us to unravel its mysteries. It is a privilege to explore it with my wonderfully talented colleagues and then, ultimately, share it in live performances with our audiences."



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Dog Park Plans

Continued from page 1

Councilman Rick Jennings said the issue remains a priority for him. Irate supporters of a dog park in Curtis Park contacted his office soon after the release of the council agenda, he said at the council meeting.

“I heard you, loud and clear,” said Jennings, whose district includes Curtis Park and Land Park, extending south to the Pocket.

“None of these processes are perfect, but we are moving in the right direction to try to figure out what is needed in order to be able to serve the community,” he said. Jennings promised more open houses and community engagement, without “political games” or “backdoor deals.”

Three Land Park locations were among several dog park options the city released ahead of a July open house held at Sierra 2 Center.

Yet the December council item was a surprise turn of events in the months-long process. The city’s action plan had called for a second open house once parks staff finished reviewing feedback from the first one.

The parks department posted votes and comments from the July open house in early December, more than four months after the event.

Longtime Curtis Park resident Dan Bernstein told the council that he and others were “very frus-

trated by the process.

“It seems odd to us that a process that began with satisfying the need of Curtis Park residents has now resulted in immediately funding a new dog facility for Land Park, which is inaccessible to many of our neighbors,” said Bernstein, a member of Common Ground. The group supports the shared use of Sierra 2, including unleashed dogs during certain times of the day.

Other Curtis Park residents backed the council’s action. As a large regional park, Land Park is a more suitable place for a dog park than a neighborhood park such as Sierra 2, they said.

“The Land Park proposal is a big win for off-leash dog users in 95818,” said Anne Linton, who lives next to Sierra 2.

The Sierra 2 Green park became a dog-owner favorite during the pandemic. Positive online reviews drew people from around the city.

That led to complaints and disagreements among park users.

Critics said unleashed dogs destroyed the turf and deterred other park users, including children. Dog owners called the concerns overblown. They said the unofficial dog park helped to foster community in a city with a shortage of places for dogs to run free.

Last winter, the city installed a popup dog park at Sierra 2’s north end. The fencing blew down in the winter storms and, in early spring, the city opened a new temporary park at Sierra 2’s south-

west corner. It included a water supply and trees.

Parks officials, though, determined that the temporary park was too small and was a “significant maintenance burden” for the city, according to a report to the council.

There also continued to be unleashed dogs outside the temporary park, according to the city. From October 2022 to September 2023, there were 488 calls to the city’s 311 line about Sierra 2, with more than half involving unleashed dogs outside the temporary park and related issues.

Mayor Darrell Steinberg said the city has to balance dog owners’ needs with the number of complaints about unleashed pets at Sierra 2.

The city, though, will still consider Curtis Park as a potential site for a permanent dog park, along with Land Park, the mayor said. “This is not the end of the discussion; it’s the beginning of the discussion,” he said.

With the city’s ruling out of Sierra 2 for an official dog park, there remain three Curtis Park locations put forward last summer as dog park possibilities: the north end of Curtis Park and the south end of Curtis Park and Ray Eames Park along Crocker Drive. The city identified pros and cons for each of those options, yet none seemed popular at the July event, based on the vote totals and attendee comments.

“Completely opposed to putting a dog park in Curtis Park. It’s a beautiful park that gets a lot of use,” one commenter wrote.

Board Notes

Board Elects New Executive Committee

SCNA outgoing Vice President **Kathy Les** introduced and welcomed the new board members elected at the annual membership meeting in December. The Board then held the election of officers. The following were elected to the executive committee by vote or acclamation: **John Bailey** (president), **Kathy Les** (vice president), **Ryan Marenger** (treasurer), **Lily M. Harris** (secretary) and **Shannon Motley** (member at large). They will serve one-year terms.

Mayoral Forum

Les and Executive Director **Kent Anderson** reported that, subject to ratification by the entire board, the executive committee decided that SCNA would co-sponsor a Mayoral Forum on Feb. 6. By co-sponsoring the event, SCNA helps get the word out about the event and hosts it at the 24th Street Theater. There is no financial obligation. The board unanimous-

ly ratified the decision to participate, and **Harris** and **Kinsley Earl**, together with **Anderson**, agreed to shepherd the project.

Executive Director’s Update

Anderson reported that during November and December the executive director’s focus was on onboarding processes, including meeting with staff, board members and partners, as well as introductions with tenants and other user groups. **Anderson** and the Personnel Committee are in the process of interviewing and hiring for two facilities positions and expect to have the new staff in place in January. **Anderson** reported that the tenants were generally happy, save for periodic maintenance issues. He expressed concern about the costs associated with an aging facility and the need to bring in more funds for the organization generally.

Updates at Sierra 2 Center

Anderson and **Gerre Buehler** reported that flooring projects have been completed in the Garden Room and Learnery at Sierra 2. Both projects

ran across significant issues with prior flooring conditions and removals. Dedicated and restricted funds for the theater have been allocated for some curtain and window repairs and for the purchase of a new video/movie lens. Concrete repair work was completed for the south entry on the main building. Updates for office spaces, work areas, desks, chairs and a combination breakroom/meal area/small meeting space are ongoing and planned for implementation in January and February. The Facilities Committee continues to work on the Zero Carbon Project and hopes to meet with the city on the project in February.

2024 Events

Anderson reported that preparation was well underway for the following 2024 events: Mayoral Forum (February), Board Orientation (February), Home & Garden Tour (April), Egg Hunt (TBD) and Big Day of Giving (May). The board discussed ways to encourage neighbors to help organize events, including through ad hoc event committees or advisory boards. The board agreed that additional communi-

ty engagement would be a huge benefit to the organization and the neighborhood.

Les solicited ideas for 2024 speakers or presentations for the Racial Justice Committee. **Motley** reported that additional homes were needed for the 2024 Home & Garden Tour and asked board members to contact neighbors about their potential interest in participating.

Moving Forward

The board discussed holding hybrid board meetings in 2024. Some expressed concern that the fully virtual meetings of 2023 might have increased tensions on contentious issues. Most felt in-person meetings would lead to more positive, productive discussions. People also cited the benefits of virtual attendance, which would allow members to participate even while out of town. Ultimately, the board agreed to try the hybrid model going forward.

The next SCNA board meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 7.

— Submitted by Lily Harris

Crocker Village builder is sued

By Dennis Cusick

Three subsidiaries of Petrovich Development Co. are suing BlackPine Builders for breach of contract, negligence and misrepresentation for allegedly failing to construct 71 single-family infill rental homes in Crocker Village in a timely manner.

The lawsuit says BlackPine agreed in 2021 to build the homes within eight months or pay a penalty of \$200 a day per home for the first 30 days, and an additional \$400 a day thereafter. The deadline was measured from when the concrete slabs were poured to when the city approved the final inspections.

The suit claims the developer's damages exceeded \$3 million in expenses and loss of rental income as a result of the delays.

BlackPine CEO Mike Paris told the *Sacramento Business Journal* that the delays were caused by global supply chain problems and labor shortages in 2021 resulting from the COVID pandemic in the previous year.

"Despite the unprecedented challenges," Paris reportedly wrote in an email, "BlackPine remained committed to the successful completion of Crocker Village and is pleased to announce that it was, in fact, a resounding success."

The lawsuit is scheduled for a case management conference Oct. 25 in Sacramento Superior Court.

When contacted by *Viewpoint*, developer Paul Petrovich declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Light Up Curtis Park winners announced

Curtis Park celebrated a festive and bright season during the December holidays with many homes and streets festooned with beautiful lights and creative decorations. The People's Choice contest received 17 entries and 246 votes.

Voters had great things to say, including:

"This house has nice front yard decor all year round!"

"The Fab Forties got nothing of us!"

"So many good choices!"

"Beautiful display! We love your neighborhood's holiday

spirit!"

"Always fun to go down Markham!"

"Absolutely awesome!"

The winners were: 2408 Sixth Avenue (first place); Markham Way between Castro and 21st Street (second); 2533 Ninth Avenue (third) and Spurgin Alley (fourth).

The prizes were graciously provided by Gunther's, Poppy + Pot and Hop Gardens, all sponsors of the annual event.

— Heather Hogan



First-place winner 2408 Sixth Avenue



Second-place winner Markham Way between Castro and 21st Street



Third-place winner 2533 Ninth Avenue



Fourth-place winner Spurgin Alley

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RIVER CITY TAPS

Thirty-year 26th Street neighbor dies

Steven Alan White, 68, died peacefully in early January at the 26th Street home he shared with his wife and partner of 43 years, Susan MacCulloch. He was diagnosed with a glioblastoma brain tumor after suffering a seizure at home last April.



Born in San Francisco and raised in Marin County, White earned his B.A. in sociology at UC Berkeley and his J.D. at Golden Gate University. He practiced law for 30 years, initially specializing in business litigation with a later focus on legal malpractice.

When he wasn't suing other lawyers (aka legal malpractice), White lived an adventurous life. He was an avid downhill skier at Kirkwood and also enjoyed backcountry adventures. Neighbors often saw him riding his bike and taking long walks around the neighborhood. He enjoyed biannual visits to Glacier National Park with friends and hiked many trails in the Sierra and the Pacific Northwest. He achieved a few mountain summits over the years including Shasta, Mt. Whitney and Mt. Kilimanjaro in 2009. Steven had a zest for life and a passion for fun.

The couple's families are deeply grateful for their longtime 26th Street neighbors and Curtis Park community for their support during his final weeks at home. A celebration of his life will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. on April 6 at Curtis Hall in the Sierra 2 Center.

— Susan MacCulloch

Family finds community on Montgomery Way

By Dennis Cusick

Avery Prommer, who moved to Montgomery Way in December with her husband and two daughters, grew up in Davis and later attended Sacramento City College. But she wasn't familiar with the neighborhood until recently.

"I didn't know Curtis Park existed growing up," she said. She happened upon the neighborhood when the hair salon she goes to relocated to Curtis Park. She started driving around and told husband Michael, "This neighborhood feels like us."

Avery kept her eye out for Curtis Park real estate listings. When a newly built home on Montgomery Way came on the market, she jumped at it. "Michael was in Germany with his family, and I said I was going to get things in motion — 'I hope you like this house.'" He came back and they put an offer on the house right away.

Their path to Curtis Park — and each other — was circuitous. Michael was born in Munich to an Austrian father and American mother. He received a degree in economics from the University of California, Berkeley, and moved to San Francisco to work in management consulting.

Avery received an English degree from the University of San Francisco.

Michael and Avery met while contributing to XLR8R, a music magazine in San Francisco.

And then, separately, they went on what Avery calls "the hipster trifecta — San Francisco, to New York, to Los Angeles." Michael spent a decade in New York; Avery lived there briefly, before missing California and moving to Los Angeles.

Michael started a music publishing and management company in New York in 2004 and moved to Los Angeles five years later, by coincidence two blocks from where Avery was already living. "If you live within two blocks in L.A., you're legally required to date," she said. They married in 2011.

They left Los Angeles for a better lifestyle and schools for their daughters, and moved to Avery's hometown, but placed their girls in Sacramento Country Day School. Una is in the



Michael and Avery Prommer with their daughters, Una and Aggie

Photo by Joan Cusick

sixth grade, Aggie in the third grade. One of their new neighbors also attends Sacramento Country Day School.

"We're always working remotely so we can live wherever," Michael said.

Avery is chief operating officer of a digital advertising company.

While they lived in Davis, the Prommers often dined in Sacramento. "We came here because we were hungry," Avery said.

What they have discovered in Sacramento, and particularly in Curtis Park, is what the family found lacking in the college town of Davis — a sense of community.

New baby joins Donner Way family

Shilpa Girimaji and Carl "Champ" Nash of Donner Way welcomed their second child on Nov. 22.

Son Rian weighed nearly 8 pounds and measured 22" long. Daughter Anai-

ya, who is 2 1/2, approves of the new addition to the household, doling out lots of hugs and kisses when Rian is awake, which his mom said is more often now that he is out of his "sleepy newborn phase." The family's golden retriever, Sadie, has been adoringly gentle around the new bundle.

The couple, both public-sector attorneys who bought their home two years ago, felt ready and prepared for Rian's arrival.

"I knew what to expect," said Girimaji. "My experience with Anaiya helped me mentally to prepare."

It's also helped to have what the couple calls their "baby bible," the indispensable "Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child," which has aided them in new practices



Pictured at their home are Shilpa Girimaji and Carl Nash with their children, Anaiya and Rian, and their dog, Sadie.

Photo by Dorsey Griffith

to improve Rian's naptime rituals.

Nash is back to work; Girimaji returns to her job in late March.

— Dorsey Griffith



Residents of Spurgin Alley (between Fifth Avenue and Baldwin) celebrate their Light Up Curtis Park fourth-place award with a Gunther's ice cream cake purchased with their gift card prize.

Photo by Melanie Jordana

First-graders are committed to helping the environment

Empty juice boxes, food wrappers and discarded Enapkins are just some of the items found on the Bret Harte playground at the end of a typical school day. The campus is looking much cleaner this year, thanks to a few students in Heather Bunney's first-grade class. It began with Isabela Eastwick and May Akiyama cleaning up the playground at recess. Then they enlisted their classmates to help until most of the first graders were cleaning up regularly.

Akiyama and Eastwick wanted to spread the word throughout the rest of the school and recruit more students. They approached their teacher about a new campaign and schoolwide effort. Bunney agreed to help and supplied students with gloves, buckets and trash grabbers.

"The goal is to keep the entire playground, including the field, trash-free," she said.

First-graders then made posters to help spread the word and recruit volunteers from other grades. "The Keep Our Campus Clean Club" was born. "Students in different grades have shown interest and we share the equipment with anyone who wants to help out," Bunney added.

All first-grade students who attend Bunney's class learn the song, "Every day is earth day, if it's cold or wet or hot. Pitch in to save the planet, it's the only one we've got!" Eastwick credits the song as her inspiration to clean up



**LAUREN
GOTHARD
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SIN**

the school, which seems to be working. Staff and students have noticed the positive results, too.

"There hasn't been as much trash around. It feels like we are making a difference," said Akiyama. "Some teachers and the principal always encourage us when they see us picking up trash,"

Bunney recognizes that the benefits of the club extend well beyond campus beautification.

"The students are learning that they can make a difference and make the world a better place," she said. "It starts with them. They are our future, and I am so pleased to have a class that has such strong opinions about what they think is important."

As for the club's founders, both Akiyama and Eastwick are just getting started.

"It would be fun if we could do the trash pick-up club at other places, like the park," said Akiyama.

The first-grade class also wrote letters to Washington D.C. officials to advocate for more ways to save the planet. Looking to the future, Eastwick hopes to invent a garbage can that opens from the bottom, so that trash doesn't spill in the street when the garbage truck collects it.

For now, Akiyama and Eastwick will continue to recruit their peers to help keep the campus clean. They want to build momentum to continue their campaign into the next school year and beyond. They also hope that their goal for a clean campus extends to the neighborhood surrounding Bret Harte and that neighbors will be encouraged to pick up trash when walking around. As Akiyama said, "It's much more fun when other people join in."

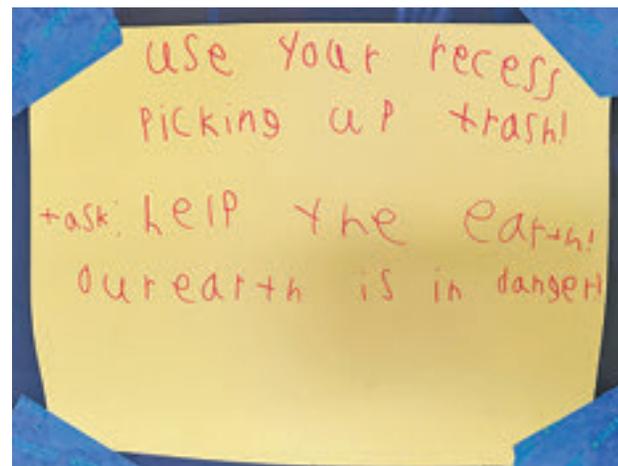
Alison Ledgerwood and Aya Akiyama contributed to this report.



May Akiyama and Isabela Eastwick work together to keep the school clean. Photos by Lauren Gothard



Isabela Eastwick picks up trash on the blacktop.



Sign posted in the library by May and Isabela

Curtis Park Home & Garden Tour tentatively set for April 27

SAVE THE DATE! The Curtis Park Home and Garden Tour is Saturday, April 27. A fun day of activities is being planned. To volunteer contact Lori Harder at lorikoi@sbcglobal.net

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