

VIEWPOINT

A publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association since 1979

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December 2024

SCNA Annual Member Meeting Dec. 10

By Kathy Les and Mimi Budd

SCNA members are invited to the association's annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10 in Curtis Hall.

Each year, the annual meeting's most important task is the election of new directors. Current bylaws call for the election of half of the current directors each year. In several instances, current directors will seek re-election. Advance notice of the meeting and the slate will be posted at sierra2.org by Dec. 1. Only

resident members whose dues are current are eligible to attend the meeting and vote.

Additionally, this year's meeting will include voting on specific provisions of the SCNA bylaws. Over the past year, a subcommittee has been hard at work reviewing the bylaws and making recommendations for updates and other changes deemed appropriate to make the organization more efficient. The bylaws were last reviewed and updated in 2020.

See SCNA, Page 5

SCNA board candidates voice their achievements and plans for the next term

On Dec. 10, SCNA members will elect directors to the board. The SCNA Board of Directors is responsible for making key decisions about the operation of the Sierra 2 Center for the Arts and Community, addressing neighborhood concerns and planning and putting on community events. Each year, half of the board is up for reelection. Below are brief statements from the incumbents and new candidates for 12 open seats on the board.

Incumbents

Madelyn Gelpi: As a director, I believe in accountability, building community trust and tackling issues head-on. Through my expertise in nonprofit management, policy analysis, and equity and inclusion, I want to uplift all the

voices within our Curtis Park community through innovative and transparent approaches that highlight shared values, needs and concerns.

I developed a tool for gathering community input about needs and priorities. I put forth a comprehensive plan to accomplish this goal and worked with the board to identify the most effective implementation method. Next year, we will open the survey and utilize this data to ensure our key decisions represent and align with our community.

The board can represent the community better through increased transparency and data-driven decisions informed by community input. As a neighborhood association, it's important to ensure we constantly have our finger on the pulse of what's working

See Candidates, Page 4

Baby boom!
Curtis Way welcomes new little neighbors



Page 11

Trunk or treat?
Bret Harte Fall Festival delights community



Page 12

Curtis Park voters weigh in on political races and propositions

By Jim Miller

Curtis Park voters split almost evenly on their mayoral preferences in the Nov. 5 election, with public health epidemiologist Dr. Flojaune "Flo" Cofer holding a slim lead over Assemblyman Kevin McCarty.

As of mid-November, Cofer had about 51.3% of the vote in the precincts covering almost all of Curtis Park to McCarty's 48.7%.

Results released Nov. 22 showed McCarty having a narrow 1 percent lead, with 26,050 ballots left to count. Some news outlets predicted a recount may be possible.

In the presidential contest, neigh-

borhood voters largely voted for the Democrat ticket: Democrat Kamala Harris received more than 86% of the vote in Curtis Park-area precincts, compared to 10.6% for Republican Donald Trump, according to unofficial vote totals. A small number of voters backed third-party and other candidates.

Harris' support in the neighborhood was up slightly from that of Democrat Joe Biden in 2020. Trump's Nov. 5 backing is about one percentage point below his 2020 share.

In the mayor's race, Cofer's Curtis Park support followed a strong showing in the March primary, when she finished

See Voters, Page 5



People packed Curtis Hall for wine and appetizers before the Tapestry of Tastes panel discussion.

Photo by Will Carlton

Tapestry of Tastes Draws Food and Wine Fans from throughout Sacramento

By Diana Sunseri

A fascinating evening with culinary and wine experts headlined the Nov. 19 "Tapestry of Tastes: 175 Years of Sacramento Food & Wine" event at Sierra 2. The speakers – Darrell Corti, Maryellen Burns and Mike Dunne – were engaging, funny, detailed

and highly knowledgeable on their subject areas.

Presented by the SCNA, the speakers' presentation on the Sierra 2 Theater stage followed wine tasting and appetizers in a packed house in Curtis Hall. Corti, Burns and Dunne took the audience on a journey through Sacramento's

See Tapestry, Page 4

Building safer streets for Sacramento

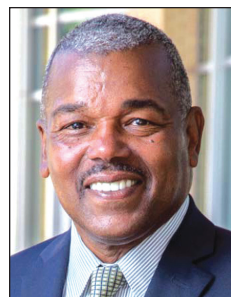
By Rick Jennings

As your representative on the Sacramento City Council, I believe every Sacramentan deserves safe streets where they can walk, bike and drive without fear. Yet this year we've experienced the heart-breaking loss of 31 lives in traffic collisions. Each life lost is a reminder of the work we still need to do, and I'm committed to working with each of you to make change happen.

In mid-November, my colleagues and I on the Law and Legislation Committee took a critical step forward by advancing a proposal to declare a state of emergency for pedestrian and cyclist safety. This declaration is more than a statement; it's a call to action to ensure safety becomes a top priority for our city.

Sacramento's Vision Zero's pledge to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2027 is an ambitious goal and, while challenges remain, I believe we can get on track. Our focus must be on real solutions: investing in infrastructure that protects lives. To do so, we must identify a dedicated and reliable funding source that ensures consistent progress year after year. As I said during the committee hearing, we can't keep using the excuse of our budget deficit or not having the money. "We've got to focus on finding the money and making sure we focus on this priority: safety."

RICK JENNINGS
City Council Member
District 7



This issue hits close to home for me. During the hearing, I had the privilege of introducing Alena Wong, a remarkable young woman from District 7. When Alena was 12 years old, she was struck by a car while biking to school. She fought through that tragedy and is now thriving at 17 and preparing for college. Her resilience is inspiring, and I'm grateful we can share her story of hope and potential.

Not every family has been as fortunate. Too many lives, like that of Kaylee Xiong, a promising 18-year-old college student, have been cut short on our streets. These losses are a sobering reminder of why we must act with urgency and determination.

This emergency declaration gives us a chance to create lasting change. By prioritizing funding for road safety improvements, we can build streets where everyone – children biking to school, seniors crossing intersections and families enjoying their neighborhoods – feels safe.

I'm optimistic about what we can achieve together. We have the opportunity to turn our Vision Zero pledge into reality and make Sacramento a city where every resident can thrive. Let's work as a community to create safer streets and brighter futures for all.



The Angel Tree will be ready with tags bearing gift ideas for needy kids on Dec. 3. Photo by: Courtesy Sierra 2 staff

Be an angel and fulfill a child's wishes this holiday season

By Danielle Whitmore

The Sierra 2 Center staff, in partnership with the Salvation Army, is pleased to host the Angel Tree gift-giving event for the Curtis Park neighborhood. The Angel Tree, adorned with tags bearing the gift wishes of children in need, will be ready early on Tuesday, Dec. 3 in the Sierra 2 Center entryway.

We invite you to help us meet our goal of 100 donated gifts from the Curtis Park neighborhood. Drop by the Sierra 2 Center to find your perfect tag and bring the gifts to Sierra 2 main office staff by noon on Dec. 13. All gifts will leave Sierra 2 on Dec. 14 via the Salvation Army truck. If you miss this cut-off date, you will be responsible for taking your Angel Tree gifts directly to Cal Expo by Dec. 17.

Please remember to enter the tag information and your information on the sign-out log on the podium next to the tree. Grab one bag for each Angel Tree tag taken; bags will be on the shelf below. Feel free to pick up a copy of how the program works, as it notes the deadline for returning your unwrapped gifts. When you bring your gifts to the Sierra 2 main office, please return the bottom portion of the Angel Tree tag with your gift and tape the tag to the item.

Sierra 2 office hours are Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you drop off your gift when the office is closed, please call facility staff at 916-634-3323, and one of our "elves" will help you. Please do not leave your gifts under the tree or in the hallways.

The Sierra 2 staff are truly grateful for the neighbors who have given so generously in years past and hope you will once again be an angel and participate this year.

For any questions, please contact Vivian in the Sierra 2 Center office: 916-452-3005 x200 or vivian@sierra2.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Angel Tree:

December 3 – December 13 in the entry of the Sierra 2 Center

SCNA Membership Meeting:

December 10 at 6:30 p.m.

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SCNA delivered significant accomplishments in 2024

Autumn is an eventful time. Many thanks to the Racial Justice Committee led by Kathy Les and Mimi Budd for presenting the highly informative “Desegregating Sacramento” event. Thanks also to the *Viewpoint* and Development Committees for producing the Tapestry of Tastes event celebrating Sacramento’s cuisine and wine culture. And thanks to Bruce Pierini, who spearheaded the effort.

As the year ends, I would like to highlight 2024 accomplishments. Significant and effective volunteer effort and staff support resulted in:

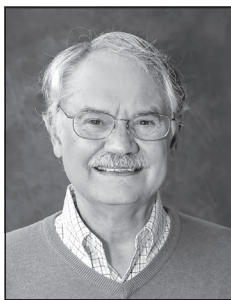
Fundraising and Events

- Successful Big Day of Giving, Home & Garden Tour and Curtis Fest events
- Three Music in the Park concerts at Curtis Park
- The inaugural Kids’ Music in the Park event at the park at Sierra 2
- A well-attended Pajama Parade and Egg Hunt after the years-long COVID-related hiatus

Facilities Management

- Negotiated a new lease with the City of Sacramento for 10 years with two five-year options to renew. The city will now accept responsibility for repair

JOHN BAILEY
SCNA Board President



of storm damage

- New flooring in the Garden and Learnery rooms
- Electrical upgrade to the Garden Room courtyard
- New roofing over the main building and south wing
- New HVAC heat pumps in progress

Sierra 2 Center Management

- Maintained strong rental activity and a robust website and social media presence while undergoing significant staff turnover
- Upgraded office systems and expanded Learnery offerings
- Saw between 500 and 1,000 people visit Sierra 2 daily, or about a quarter of a million service encounters this year

Neighborhood Concerns

- Presented mayoral debate in February
- Worked with the city to establish a

fund to install and maintain a bench in honor of the late SCNA stalwart John Mathews

- Sent letter to the city supporting modifications to the Urban Forestry Plan, and one requesting shared funding to combat the elm tree leaf beetle
- Coordinated with Slow Down Sacramento, Sacramento Neighborhood Action Coalition, Missing Middle Housing Advocates and other community organizations on regional issues

Personnel

- Recruited, hired and onboarded a new executive director and office staff

Bylaws

- Updated bylaws with approval of the board of directors

Racial Justice

- Presented “Desegregating Sacramento” program
- Hosted Zoom session with leaders of the Sacramento Community Police Commission

Viewpoint

- Successful transition to new Executive Editor Dorsey Griffith and new Production Manager Bonnie Rodriguez
- Successful Tapestry of Tastes wine and food event raising funds to support *Viewpoint*

- Continued track record of providing interesting and informative articles with distribution to 2,600 households

Several board members opted not to run for another term, and I would like to thank them. Kirsten Smith served for two years, and her service is appreciated. Miles Thorne and Dick Weng served for two years, and each provided valuable insight in negotiations to renew our city lease. Christian Muller served for two years and worked in support of the Senior Center. Mimi Budd, a long-time SCNA stalwart and former president, served most recently for four years, including as an officer. Mimi oversaw the significant undertaking to update our bylaws. A special thanks goes to Bruce Pierini, who served for 12 years, including terms as an officer, and as chair of the Neighborhood Concerns Committee. Bruce has been a steadfast volunteer. I have benefited from his wisdom and counsel, and the neighborhood is a better place due to his involvement.

Thanks to everyone who supports our neighborhood. I wish everyone a warm and wonderful holiday season.

Board Notes

Board Ratifies Capital Expenditures Budget

The board ratified the capital expenditures budget with some modifications from the budget initially approved by the Facilities, Finance and Executive Committees. Because of the presidential election’s outcome, the committees felt it was no longer certain that the rebates anticipated under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) would remain available. Instead, a budget of approximately \$84,000 for emergency HVAC repairs was presented for ratification. The longer-term project that IRA

rebates would have partly funded has been put on hold.

Changes to the Operating Budget

There has been a 4% increase in income and expenses in this year’s budget. The Facilities Committee has worked on increasing tenant rents. Sierra 2 Executive Director **Danielle Whitmore** hopes to bring revenue from the theater up to par with the market. Whitmore and staff are working to find more instructors and artists who want to teach in the Learnery. The Senior Center also is looking for additional programming. Whitmore has hired a part-time event

coordinator to help support events and hopes to bring in more corporate sponsors to help cover costs.

Nominations Committee to Recommend Six Candidates

The Nominations Committee received six applications from people who would like to serve on the board. All six were interviewed and will be put forward at December’s general meeting.

Development Committee Hoping to Expand Programming

The Development Committee is busy planning events for 2025. The committee hopes to expand fami-

ly-friendly programming with events like a “Mad Hatter Tea,” a kid-focused Music in the Park and a “Pie and Pajamas” event.

Fundraising for Mathews’ Bench

The Neighborhood Concerns Committee continues collecting donations to help fund a bench in Curtis Park in honor of late board member **John Mathews**. The committee has collected over \$4,000 and has a goal of \$11,000.

The next meeting is the general membership meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 10.

– Submitted by Lily Harris

Viewpoint is taking the month of January off. Look for our next issue in February. Stay updated on neighborhood activities by visiting sierra2.org or by following Sierra 2 Center on Facebook and @sierra2center on Instagram.

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Tapestry

Continued from page 1

agricultural, food and wine history, beginning as far back as the agriculture and foods of the indigenous peoples of this area. The trio showed how every subsequent era, shifting populations and even wars brought new ideas, practices, foods, developments, trends and, sometimes, challenges.

SCNA staff said 165 people attended the fundraising event, which, with sponsorships, raised about \$10,000 for the neighborhood newspaper, *Viewpoint*. First published 45 years ago and staffed entirely by volunteers, *Viewpoint* reaches 2,600 households with local and neighborhood news targeted to the Curtis Park community.

Event sponsors included Paloma Begin, Steffan Brown Real Estate, Capitol Optometry, Ten Acres Phar-



Mike Dunne, Maryellen Burns and Darrell Corti visit before their presentations at Tapestry of Tastes, benefiting *Viewpoint*.
Photo by Will Carlton

macy, Fast Break Tech and media sponsor Capital Public Radio. Food and wine sponsors included Acheson Wine Company, Haarmeyer Wine

Cellars, Masullo, Painted Fields by Andis Wines, Sandlands, The Great Greek, La Famiglia Catering, Seasons 52 and Seka Hills.

Candidates

Continued from page 1

in the neighborhood, what's not and how we can build stronger communities together every day.

Lily Harris: I'm running for reelection to the SCNA board because I'm committed to continuing the work we've started to improve our community. Over the past term, I've gained valuable insights and built strong relationships. My work on the Executive and Bylaws Committee was impactful. We hired our new and wonderful executive director, Danielle Whitmore, and we passed much-needed revisions to our bylaws. My goal is to ensure our neighborhood remains a vibrant, connected and welcoming place for everyone.

Alex Moos: I want to run for reelection because I believe in the work that neighborhood associations do to improve the lives of their residents. We have two small children and own a small business in the neighborhood (Capitol Optometry), so we are invested for the long term.

This is my second stint as a SCNA board member. I was part of the board in 2017-2019 and rejoined the board in October. In my first few board meetings, I've begun building board relationships and finding areas where my expertise can best assist in our projects and initiatives. Additionally, I'm enthusiastic to help with SCNA events.

I believe SCNA is the heartbeat of the neighborhood. Not only is it the catalyst that brings neighbors together at events, but it serves as a voice for the concerns we need to raise with the city. Our neighborhood culture wouldn't be as great without the SCNA.

Shannon Motley: When I joined the board, it felt like everything was on hold because of the pandemic. As Development Committee chair, I knew we had to get creative. With the support of Kathy Les and Mimi Budd, we pulled off Porch Picnic, Gather at the Long Table and the Centennial Celebration, and we restarted the Home & Garden Tour, grew Curtis Fest, held Music in the Park and introduced Kids Music in the Park.

On the Executive Committee, I helped recruit our new executive director. With her support, and that of our amazing staff, we have a strong events calendar going into 2025. Our dedicated board will ensure the Sierra 2 Center thrives.

We listen to the community; the community wants more family and kid-friendly events. We all want the fall wine event back and look forward to spending time with neighbors in Curtis Park. The 2025 calendar will not disappoint, and I'm excited to be part of the board again next year.

Matthew Royal: Knowing the SCNA finances, it's clear that even when we're not in survival mode, most of our money goes into maintaining

buildings. I'd like to increase our impact by growing our non-building revenue to sponsor new educational and community-building events and expand existing programs such as the Learnery and Senior Center.

I served as a moderating voice on the dog-park issue, advocating for reason and respect. I also worked to promote the health, safety and welfare of our residents by arguing successfully against two initiatives that overstepped SCNA's role. In the shadow of the city's dog park ruling, I worked on SCNA's Bylaws Committee to ensure our organization operates efficiently and transparently.

The board has risen to the challenge of resuming fundraising and planning community events. Even so, the SCNA represents only 10% of all Curtis Park residents. The board must become more representative of the neighborhood and listen to 100% of the community and its needs.

New candidates:

Janet Irene Hecsh: I have lived in Curtis Park since 2000 with my late husband, Robert Lipelt, and want to do my part. I want to be engaged productively so that Curtis Park continues to be a great place to live for all our residents.

As a Sacramento State administrator, I have skills and experience managing large and complex budgets in HR and student service, and I work well with

See Candidates, Page 5

Voters

Continued from page 1

ahead of McCarty, former Sacramento Councilman Steve Hansen and former state Sen. Richard Pan.

McCarty and Cofer each had dozens of local endorsements. Former Curtis Park area councilman Jay Schenirer backed Cofer, while former council member and state lawmaker Deborah Ortiz, whose council district included Curtis Park, endorsed McCarty.

In other local contests, the neighborhood backed a half-billion-dollar school construction and modernization bond placed on the ballot by the Sacramento City Unified School District. The measure received almost three-quarters of the vote district-wide and passed.

In statewide ballot measures, the neighborhood both followed and broke with statewide trends:

- Supported successful ballot initiatives Prop. 2 (school bond), Prop. 3 (marriage equality), Prop. 4 (resources bond) and Prop. 35 (provides permanent funding for Medi-Cal).
- Supported unsuccessful initiatives Prop. 5 (bonds for affordable housing and infrastructure), Prop. 6 (eliminates forcing inmates to work) and Prop. 32 (raises the minimum wage).
- Opposed Prop. 34 (restricts spending of prescription drug revenues), which is narrowly ahead statewide.
- Voters in Curtis Park's northern area supported unsuccessful Prop. 33 (local government residential rent control), but voters in other parts of the neighborhood opposed it.
- Voters in Curtis Park's northern and eastern precincts opposed Prop. 36 (increased sentencing for certain drug and theft crimes), but the measure narrowly leads in the neighborhood's southern portion.

SCNA

Continued from page 1

A synopsis of the bylaws' changes approved by the directors, as well as those that the membership must approve, can be found in the November Viewpoint at sierra2.org. Provisions requiring membership approval are summarized below:

- Pay dues at least 72 hours before the membership meeting to be eligible to vote.
- Vote up to 14 days early to facilitate member voting.
- Reduce the number of directors from the current 23 to 15.
- Board candidates nominated from the floor or self-nominated at the membership meeting must be members in good standing three months prior to the meeting or have two members vouch for their candidacy.
- The board will have the discretion to fill director vacancies.
- Authorization for the board to remove a director or officer for cause, as defined.

SCNA memberships are \$40 for individuals and \$50 for households. Other membership levels include supporters, sponsors, patrons and benefactors, each of which includes additional benefits. If you are unsure if your membership is current, please contact Jaclyn@sierra2.org.

Candidates

Continued from page 4

university stakeholders on boards, and as chair of the faculty senate. As an SCNA board member, I would support the mission of SCNA and participate in consensus-based decision-making.

I want to participate and support SCNA because of the sense of community here. It feels natural to give back in the form of service, and I would appreciate the opportunity to do so.

Garrett Jensen: I want to continue to build community through events, develop city and county relationships and grow fundraising efforts. With a background in policy and politics, I am well positioned to advocate for our neighborhood with local elected leaders.

If elected, I would grow our membership, create opportunities for new and diverse small businesses, support landscapers' transition from gas-powered to electric yard equipment, add art-filled public spaces and make sure we improve road safety and stop reckless drivers speeding through our streets.

Since moving to Sacramento, I have been passionate about finding ways to be more engaged in my community. I love being the *Viewpoint* paperboy for my neighbors, strengthening my sense of belonging. SCNA would allow me to engage more deeply and give back to make our city even better.

Nicole Kite: I want to serve on the SCNA board to become more actively involved in my community and neighborhood. I value arts organizations and community resources such as SCNA, and I hope that my professional background in fundraising and arts management will support the organization.

If elected, I would like to support the SCNA in deepening its community of support and diversifying its revenue streams.

I am a relative newcomer to Curtis Park – I purchased a home here in April 2023 – and value the character and amenities of our neighborhood. I believe that high-quality, accessible arts experiences and opportunities for lifelong learning are an essential resource that strengthens our social fabric and improves quality of life. I am grateful to have SCNA and the Sierra 2 Center in my neighborhood and am eager to see these organizations thrive.

Michael Oates: I can bring a fresh perspective

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and positive energy to the board, as well as some new ideas. I want to create volunteer events and opportunities for the community to not only give back but create lasting bonds between neighbors. As a human resources professional, I can lend my expertise to help Sierra 2 manage its staffing needs, find compromise and build trust.

I want to find new ways for our community to engage with the Sierra 2 Center through events, fundraisers and community service. For example, we have many talented gardeners in the community; we could help improve and maintain the grounds. There's also ample opportunity to keep our neighborhood parks and major thoroughfares clean.

I'm committed to preserving and enhancing the Sierra 2 Center, as well as the SCNA. As someone who intends to spend the next 30+ years in Curtis Park, I'm invested in ensuring its valued presence in our community.

Nicki Ruszczky (pronounced like resist-key): Living east of Franklin Boulevard, in what I call "Oatis Park" since we are technically in Oak Park, I sometimes feel excluded from the events and services hosted by Sierra 2 and the SCNA. I feel like a portion of the community is being left out of decisions, events and activities, and I want to represent their voices.

I want to volunteer my creativity, organizational skills and can-do attitude to expand and/or revitalize our community programming and ensure that it includes and represents the surrounding areas of Curtis Park within the SCNA boundaries.

I love living here. Curtis Park is a very walkable neighborhood with friendly people and fun businesses. I am committed to living here for the foreseeable future and would love to have a voice in the community's culture.

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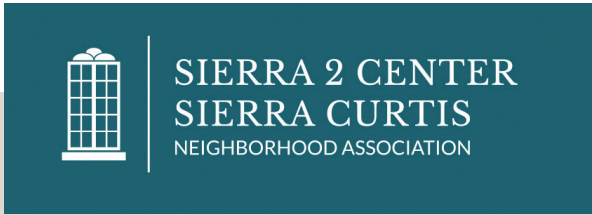
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Saturdays, 10-11 a.m. Studio 2
lohan36@sbcglobal.net

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Mondays, 6-7 p.m. Studio 2
Wednesdays, 6-7:15 p.m. Studio 2
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ADULT DANCE

Dancing with Heidi

Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Children's Ballet I, ages 6-9 (no experience required)
Wednesdays, 3-4:30 p.m.
Adult/Teen Basic Ballet (some experience required)
Wednesdays, 6-8:30 p.m.
Adult/Teen Ballet from the Beginning (no

experience required)
dancingwithheidi@gmail.com

Dance for Parkinson's

Free class. Sponsored by Pamela Trokanski Dance Theater.
Wednesdays, 1-2 p.m., Studio 1
Rcarlson404@yahoo.com

Two Rivers Dance Center/ River City Taps

Mondays-Thursdays/Saturdays
Class schedules:
tworiversdancecenter.com and rivercity-taps.com

FITNESS

Zumba with Pakko

Sundays, 10-11 a.m. Studio 3
pakko.zumba@yahoo.com

WW Studio Workshop

Thursdays/Fridays, 8:30 a.m. Room 10
Saturdays, 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
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Amnesty International offers Write for Rights

Dec. 10 (Human Rights Day)
3-6 p.m. Room 10
We help you produce letters and emails for people around the world persecuted or jailed for their identity, beliefs or words. Guidance, materials and snacks provided. More information at tinyurl.com/w4r-2024sac



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For more information: Sierra2.org.

LEISURE

Book Club

2nd Monday, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Room 12
Dec. 9 – “Long Division” by Kiese Laymon

Nonfiction Book Club

3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon
Room 12
Dec. 19 – “Why We Get Sick” by Benjamin Bikman

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Fridays, noon-3 p.m. Room 11

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Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m.
Room 12

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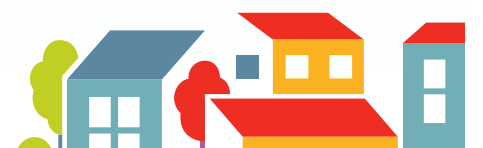
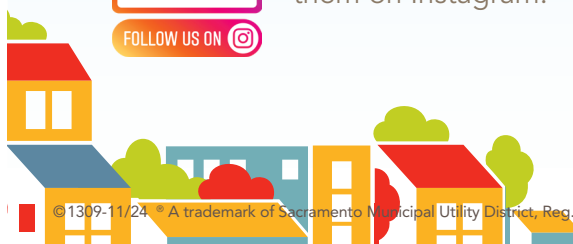
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The Aha Method: Expand Your Art Vocabulary – Mixed Media
Wednesdays, Dec. 4 & 20
 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$35 per class

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dazzling variety of art materials to fashion a surprising, revealing and often unexpected art creation uniquely you. Taught by award-winning artist and teacher of the year Larry Ramos. Explore: What were the feelings of your fondest Christmas memory? What does the spirit of Christmas mean to you?

The Aha Method: Expand Your Art Vocabulary – Watercolors
Wednesday, Dec. 11
 5:30-7:30 p.m.
\$35 per class

Explore watercolor dry-brush technique. Experience fun and easy technical instruction combined with freedom of expression. Taught by local award-winning artist Larry Ramos.

Letting Go: Creative Painting Workshop
Saturday, Dec. 14
 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
\$30 per person
Optional paint kit: \$25

In this warm and uplifting acrylic painting class, students will embark on a journey into the wonderful world of art, where the focus is not just on the finished piece, but the joy and fulfillment found in the creative process itself. This class allows you to play with acrylic paints, experiment with different tools, and even incorporate mixed media as your creativity takes shape. Under the caring guidance of instructor Cara Gregor, you'll learn how to tap into your inner voice to create a piece of art that is entirely your own.

Painting Snowflake Ornaments
Thursday, Dec. 19
 6-7 p.m.
\$30 per class

Join us for a festive and fun-filled creative class where students design and paint holiday snowflake orna-

ments. Using acrylic paints, paint pens and various other creative tools, students explore different techniques to bring each ornament to life. Each artist in the class will receive three ornaments to paint, plus access to creative supplies to make your snowflakes unique. Come ready to relax, enjoy the holiday vibes and leave with beautiful handmade decorations that will add a special touch to your celebrations.

Quilting Basics
Saturday, Jan. 18 & Sunday, Jan. 19
 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
\$150 per class

This two-day workshop is perfect for confident beginners and those with some sewing experience, offering a deep dive into essential skills needed to craft cozy quilts of your own. Learn about quilting tools, precision cutting, machine vs. hand stitching, binding techniques and more. Discuss some basic principles of quilt design, explore color theory and create your own quilted wall hanging. All materials are provided.

Cracking Codes: Beginners Guide to Cryptograms
Friday, Jan. 31
 5-6 p.m.
\$30 per class

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Thursday, Dec. 5: David Luning, pensive and concise, North Bay Americana artist inspired by John Prine, loved by Keith Urban

Friday, Dec. 6: Misner & Smith Album Release Concert, full-hearted NorCal singer-songwriters (with band) celebrating a long-awaited album, All is Song

Saturday, Dec. 7: Rita Hosking, powerful country-folk composer/singer favorite

Saturday, Dec. 14: Jim Lauderdale, authentic American music star who helped remake Nashville. A great country/folk/bluegrass/Americana singer, writer, player UP CLOSE!

Thursday, Dec. 19, 5-7 p.m.: "Hangout Gigs with Cosmic Roots," presented by Solving Sacramento Journalism Collaborative. Live music and conversation. Cosmic Roots combines elements of jazz, funk and soul. First, a live interview with the co-host of the podcast "Creativity in the Capital," then live music. Ticket cost includes appetizers. \$12.

Friday, Dec. 20: "Another Almost X-Mas Eve Hoot" with Allyson & Kevin Seconds, David Houston, Jonah Matranga, Kepi Ghoulie – five true Sacramento talents all on stage, sittin', pickin' and tellin' stories. An honest Liar's Bench

Saturday, Dec. 28: Lee Bob & The Truth, a five-year reunion of the original band with a retrospective of idioms and rhythms. Plus, new work from Greg Brown (Deathray, Cake) and Dana Gumbiner (Deathray, LGS). "There are three things a songwriter needs: a river, a bible and a broken heart." — Lee Bob

Friday, Jan. 10: Caltucky Jamgrass band blends bluegrass, country and soul music

Saturday, Jan. 11: Dirty Cello, It's in the name! "...all over the map: funky, carnival, romantic, sexy, tangled, electric, fiercely rhythmic, and textured, and only occasionally classical." — Oakland Magazine

Friday, Jan. 17: McClean, Justis & Barwick, poetic justice that this folk/blues power trio is still playing together, making music since Woodstock had its 20-year reunion

Friday, Jan. 24: Keith Greeninger & Nina Gerber, lauded guitarist Gerber joins up with soul-singin' troubadour/empath Greeninger for a needed night of both rousing renewal and sanctuary



Jim Lauderdale

Saturday, Jan. 25: Clement Brothers, shared voices, identical twins on guitar and stand-up bass (plucked and bowed), bring their New England folk-rock sensibilities

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Saturday, Dec. 14: "Christmas at 40 Acres" 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The family festive event features Underground Books, Guild Theater, Fixins Soul Kitchen, Old Soul Co., and World Class Faders Barbershop. Holiday cheer and activities. Enjoy free photos with Santa at Underground Books, face painting, cookie decorating and hot cocoa for the kids.

First Thursdays, 7 p.m. The Guild Theater's monthly Poetry and Hip-Hop Night, POHOP, hosted by J. Nash.

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

1st Saturday: "Sactown Swings," 6-8 p.m.

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

— Mindy Giles

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Rosemarie and Thomas Cannell, owners of Block and Bowl.

Photo by Rosemarie Cannell

Crocker Village couple carves out custom woodworking business

By Patti Roberts

The smell of fresh-cut wood permeates the woodworking shop on the 4500 block of 24th Street where Thomas Cannell is constructing a custom-made console, one of the many unique wood furniture pieces he's designed and built.

The shop is just a short distance from Pierce Arrow Lane in Crocker Village, where Thomas and his wife, Rosemarie, live. The couple co-owns Block and Bowl Woodworks, specializing in cutting boards, cheese and charcuterie boards and other culinary items. They also own Tyne Design, specializing in custom-made furniture for residential and commercial customers.

Thomas is the designer and woodworker, while Rosemarie is the accountant, tech expert and photographer when she isn't working as a Kaiser Permanente pharmacist.

On the Tyne Design side, Thomas does both furniture and custom renovations. He worked on Faria Bakery on Broadway and with Curtis Park neighbor Rob Archie on his businesses, including Pangaea Café, Urban Roots, Bawk Fried Chicken and The Roost. He has also made kitchen items and custom furniture for neighbors' houses.

How Thomas and Rosemarie landed in Sacramento is a story of work and fate.

Thomas was born in Newcastle, England, where his woodworker grandfather introduced Thomas to the craft. After graduating from college, Thomas eventually interned as a woodworker and became a custom builder in Newcastle.

"Then I got the traveling bug," Thomas said. "I made my way to Vancouver, where I decided to become a chef."

While there, he worked in a ski lodge town. Meanwhile, Rosemarie was getting

her pharmacy degree in Los Angeles.

"My friend and I decided to go snowboarding up in Vancouver and bumped into Thomas in the lobby of a hotel," she said. Sparks flew, and they moved back and forth from Los Angeles to Seattle and eventually to Sacramento, where Rosemarie secured a pharmacy job.

"While in Seattle working in restaurants, I helped open up a pub by working on the renovation, which bridged the gap between being a chef and getting back to woodworking," Thomas said.

They moved to Land Park three years ago and renovated their house. Then fate intervened again.

"We were on a bike ride and found ourselves riding past the houses in Crocker Village," Rosemarie said. They both liked the house they eventually bought, but what sealed the deal was the two-car garage, where Thomas could expand his woodworking. During COVID, when he was stuck at home, he further developed his woodworking projects.

One of those projects was working with Sacramento designers doing renovations and custom remodeling on the HGTV show "Mash-Up Our Home." When the show ended and the space on 24th Street became available, Block and Bowl Woodworks and Tyne Design took off.

Thomas is very grateful for the couple's supportive neighbors. "We were very fortunate," he said. "We're a really close group and have great gatherings. Many neighbors own our woodworking kitchen items, and we have made custom furniture for Curtis Park neighbors."

For more information about the couple's businesses, visit Block and Bowl Woodworks, at blockandbowl.com and Tyne Design, tynedesignco.com.

Trees in Curtis Park

Follow these safety tips for winter tree health

By Daniel Pskowski

Sacramento's rainy season begins with the onset of winter. As storms bring precipitation and high winds, some residents with mature trees become concerned about falling branches or the entire tree blowing over. Arborists know trees are subjected to environmental stresses beyond their control and cannot guarantee a tree's structural integrity.

However, once the wind has subsided, homeowners can inspect their trees to avoid damage from a branch or whole tree failure. Below are some tips for safely caring for trees this winter.

Look for branches snapped off by the wind that are caught on another branch or split branches. Exercise extreme caution if any part of the tree has come into contact with overhead utility wires or if a fallen branch has brought down a wire. Do not touch the wire or any part of the tree, as the entire tree could be energized and you could be electrocuted.

Avoid getting on a ladder to take care of a broken or split branch. The branch could spring back toward you due to the sudden recoil, causing severe injury. This also could happen when cutting up a large branch already on the ground.

Look for cracks at the main fork of the tree where the trunk bifurcates into the primary scaffold limbs. If you see a crack, prompt action is required. An arborist can install a rope as a temporary measure until the tree can be assessed to determine if a support system can save this tree.

When the ground becomes saturated from heavy rains accompanied by high winds, trees blow over. "Windthrow" is a type of failure associated with the uplift of the entire root plate caused when the soil does not have sufficient strength to keep the root



Crack in the main fork of a tree.
Photos by Daniel Pskowski



Inspect the tree's main fork and look for cracks.

system firmly anchored in the ground.

One can look for signs that a tree is about to blow over: The tree was vertical and now has a significant lean, and the soil is heaved; there are cracks in the soil or soil that has pulled away from the sidewalk's edge or curb; there are large amounts of soil on the sidewalk or other hard-scape material not attributed to natural erosion. All are cause for concern.

What if your tree grows with a lean? Leans can occur in response to the tree growing toward the natural light or due to a neighbor's tree, a structure or from pruning for overhead utility wires. You need to note the existing lean of the tree to assess whether it has gotten more prominent over time.

Do this by placing a level on the trunk where you can easily read it. Then mark the trunk at the top and bottom of the level. This ensures the measurement is accurate every time and allows you to determine whether the tree shifted in the ground. I usually mark the level's placement with two nails in the trunk so the level goes in the same spot. Some owners use the level app on their phones.

It is important to inspect your trees after a storm.

Update on elm leaf beetle affecting the English elms in the park

The SCNA board submitted a request to the city's parks manager offering to incur half the cost (\$3,200) to treat the 11 elms at the north end of Curtis Park. Without the soil treatment this winter to control elm leaf beetle, these elms will again be leafless by the end of July.

If something appears out of the ordinary, call an ISA-certified arborist. The city's Urban Forestry staff will inspect city trees, which are those located in the park strip between the curb and sidewalk and in the front yard located within the street right-of-way. Urban Forestry will respond if the tree belongs to the city or if it is a privately-owned tree that blocks the street or sidewalk.

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

Tree Problem Resources

- For a limb or tree down that is blocking the street or sidewalk, call 311.
- For sparking or downed power lines, call 911.
- To request city tree inspection, call 311 or email 311@cityofsacramento.org.
- S.M.U.D. Tree Division 866-473-9582

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WHAT'S NEW AT SIERRA 2?

Drawing connections: How comics help shape literacy with Eben Burgoon

By Erin Gottis

From a middle school doodler to invitations to conduct international workshops, local cartoonist and Sierra 2 tenant Eben Burgoon has come a long way. Growing up, Burgoon loved comics and art, often doodling on his homework and tests. He eventually lost touch with the art form.

"I fell into the trap that comics are 'kid stuff,'" he said. "It wasn't until I was much older that I re-connected with the medium in profound ways and ultimately fell back in love with it for storytelling and collaboration inherent in making comics."

Today, he enjoys working on his art in his studio at Sierra 2 Center.

"It's been a huge help being at a creative space where I can focus and create and collaborate," he said. "Working out of Sierra 2 gave me a comfortable place to do mentoring, hold classes and even invite colleagues over to work on our respective projects together."

Burgoon is an advocate for comic books and their contribution to literacy.

"Just recently, a student said their parents told them comics aren't reading because they are too short – as though the length of the book determines if it is reading or not," he recounted. "We debunked the claim as a class."

Burgoon argues that comics can be valuable on a child's path to literacy. When asked to advise parents concerned about their children reading comics, Burgoon said, "Don't discourage any sort of engaged reading. If they are reading comics and not doing assigned reading from school or not interested in the book(s) you want them to read, that's not the fault of comics! You gotta have that 'why not both?' attitude when it comes to reading and literacy."

Burgoon believes that local neighborhoods and communities also play an important role in supporting literacy.

He highlighted censorship as a concern for comic book writers and aspiring writers.

"I'm intensely concerned about how hostile this country has been toward storytellers and truth-tellers, and it's a virtual certainty that's going to get more



Sierra 2 tenant and cartoonist Eben Burgoon, interacting with comic book art. Photo courtesy Eben Burgoon

aggressive in the coming years," he said.

"Comic books and graphic novels are often the most targeted books for bans and often have the fewest protections. It is incumbent on our local communities to stand up and make sure these books survive the dark times ahead." Such books, he noted, often are being banned "because of how effective they are as guiding lights in dark times."

Creating comic books has provided Burgoon many unique opportunities. In 2019, he traveled to the United Arab Emirates for the Sharjah International Book Faire. "I was invited by one of the largest book festivals in the world to share over 20 workshops on cartooning and comics."

Burgoon also participated in the Guinness World Re-

cord's "World's Largest Author Signing" at the book fair.

For adults and kids who aspire to be comic book writers, he suggests a technique called "lettering."

"If you write out what you want the characters to say before you make your word balloons, readers will have a far easier time reading your comics."

Visit Burgoon's website, ebenburgoon.com, to view his art and read more about his comic book adventures.

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A baby boomlet on Curtis Way

By Susan MacCulloch

A single block on the west side of Curtis Way welcomed three newborns in six months this year.

First-time parents Erin Heydinger and Brad Mendenhall welcomed Cavin on April 25. Erin, a water resources engineer, and Brad, an investment manager, have lived in their Curtis Way home since 2017 after relocating from Minneapolis.

“While becoming parents has undoubtedly been challenging, especially with the lack of sleep, it has been a joy getting to see Calvin’s personality emerge, and every day is more fun than the last,” said Erin.

The family enjoys becoming more acquainted with the two other young families on Curtis Way. “We are excited to have three kids within six months on the same block,” said Erin. With Calvin’s arrival, they hope to connect with other families within the Curtis Park neighborhood.

The next arrival was Clara, born Aug. 23 to first-time parents Amanda Northam and Kevin Henson. Both parents are nurses and have lived on Curtis Way for one year, moving from a rental in East Sacramento.

“Everyone warned us about sleep being so hard to come by, but Clara is already sleeping through the nights and seemingly immune to all the loud noises we make,” observed Kevin.

“I’ve never owned a house before,



Erin Heydinger, Calvin and Brad Mendenhall
Photo by Erin Heydinger

but now, living here, I’m experiencing a community that truly feels neighborly. Up and down the street I know my neighbors and have got to spend time with them. And, that familiarity makes this place home to me,” said Kevin.

The most recent neighbor, Penelope, was born in October and joins brother Sonny, 3, and parents, Nick and Alysse Macaluso. Nick is a corporate lawyer, while Alysse, formerly in corporate retail, now cares for their two children at home.

The couple have lived on Curtis Way for two years, relocating from San Francisco. Alysse is from the Central Valley, and they chose to be closer to family as they started their own young family.

“Sonny has been so sweet with his



Penelope Macaluso
Photo by Nick Macaluso



Kevin Henson, Amanda Northam and Clara
Photo by Kevin Henson

baby sister,” said Nick. “He wants to hold her and hug her constantly. Everyone is so nice and generous, which is exemplified by all the meals and gifts neighbors have given us since Penelope’s birth.”



Kelly Salina and Jacob Weiss on the day their offer was accepted on their first home.

Photo courtesy Kelly Salina and Jacob Weiss

Couple buys their first home on Portola Way

By Nancy Anton

Portola Way welcomes new neighbors and first-time home buyers Kelly Salina and Jacob Weiss.

Kelly and Jacob were living in McKinley Park when they began their house hunt and weren’t familiar with the Curtis Park neighborhood. Jacob’s dad, Steve Weiss, a longtime *Sacramento Bee* employee, suggested they look here. The home they bought was the first one they looked at. The couple was enthusiastic about the neighborhood and the historical details of their home, including original unpainted woodwork, coved ceilings and built-ins.

Kelly grew up in Connecticut and moved to California as a member of AmeriCorps, where she and Jacob met. Jacob grew up in Davis, where his parents still live, but he has deep roots in Sacramento. His great-grandfather built a family home in Oak Park, and his grandmother and uncle attended Bret Harte Elementary School.

Kelly works as a social worker for the Sacramento City Unified School District. Jacob works for Spork Food Hub in Yolo County, which secures fresh produce for schools, food banks and restaurants.

Montgomery Way welcomes the Belliveaus

By Dorsey Griffith

Philippa and Ray Belliveau lived in the Greenhaven area for almost 27 years in a wonderful home for raising their two children. But when they no longer needed quite so much space, they shifted their sights to Curtis Park, where their children had attended preschool at a home on Portola Way many years ago.

“We like the feeling of community here,” said Philippa. “We like older homes.”

The couple had lived in a historic rowhouse in Salem, Mass. early in their relationship; taking on a smaller, 91-year-old home on Montgomery Way seemed the natural next step.

Ray works in a not-for-profit real estate company. Philippa works for the California Victim Compensation Board. The couple’s son, Camden, attends law school in Washington, DC. Their



Portola residents Philippa and Ray Belliveau.
Photo by Dorsey Griffith

daughter, Emma, is living at home with her parents after finishing her master’s degree. She works at UC Davis as a student advisor.

Before their move to Curtis Park on Aug. 29, they conducted a rigorous culling of long-held belongings.

“It forces you to look at everything you own and ask yourself, ‘Do I love this? Do I need this?’” Philippa said.

“Fortunately, I made the cut,” quipped Ray.

These days, some of the couple’s clothes are piled on the living room floor of their new Spanish-style home. Carpenters are renovating the closets, and roofers are fixing damaged Spanish tiles on the roof. The white oak floors have been sanded down to their original color, and the fireplace tiles have been spruced up.

In addition to the ongoing work of moving in, the Belliveaus are enjoying the neighborhood parks.

“I love the feel of Curtis Park itself,” said Philippa.

Added Ray: “Just today, while riding my bike, I saw a pick-up soccer game at Sierra 2, youth soccer games in Curtis Park and so many dogwalkers.”

Bret Harte's 2024 Fall Festival a success thanks to volunteers and local businesses

On Oct. 25, Bret Harte Elementary students, families and neighbors celebrated together at the school's annual Fall Festival. While the event's main purpose is to foster community in the school, the Fall Festival is one of the biggest annual fundraisers organized by the PTA.

Each class created themed baskets for the silent auction, such as a baking-themed basket and a movie-themed basket. A highlight for this year was the number of local businesses from Curtis Park and Oak Park that donated gift cards, including Café Dantorels, Fixins Soul Kitchen, Gunther's, Hop Gardens Taproom, La Venadita, Safeway and Strapping. In total, the silent auction raised around \$2,000, which will go toward student art projects in the spring.

This year's celebration also featured the return of a recent popular addition, the Trunk-or-Treat from the backs of classic cars. Last year, the families of two fifth-grade students provided a few of their classic cars to the Trunk-or-Treat activity. It was so popular that they enlisted friends to provide their own classic cars and lowriders. Parents and students enjoyed looking at the cars, decorations and receiving treats. Lights twinkled and music filled the air. Fan favorites included the cars decorated for Dia de los Muertos and the popular kids' cartoon Bluey.

Several activities were available for kids and families, including carnival-style games, music and,



LAUREN GOTHARD and LINDSEY SIN

of course, costumes and candy. Hotdogs, nachos, cotton candy and popcorn also were on the menu, but the most popular item was Leticia Charles' homemade tacos. Charles, a long-time employee of Bret Harte and better known as Ms. Letty, enlisted her family members to help serve the in-demand dish.

Many of the attendees enjoying the evening were current staff and students, but Curtis Park neighbors and several former students also returned for some fun.

"It's always nice when the community feels like a part of the school, too," said PTA President Megan Campbell Miller.

The 2024 Fall Festival was a success, made even better thanks to volunteers and the generosity of the local business community.



Students enjoyed playing carnival games. Photos by Janet Moody



Monica Hyde of Ninth Avenue looks over silent auction items.



The silent auction raised about \$2,000.



Parents loaded a decked-out lowrider truck trunk with treats

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