

VIEWPOINT

A publication of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association since 1979

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October 2024

SCNA Presents “Desegregating Sacramento” about Nathaniel Colley

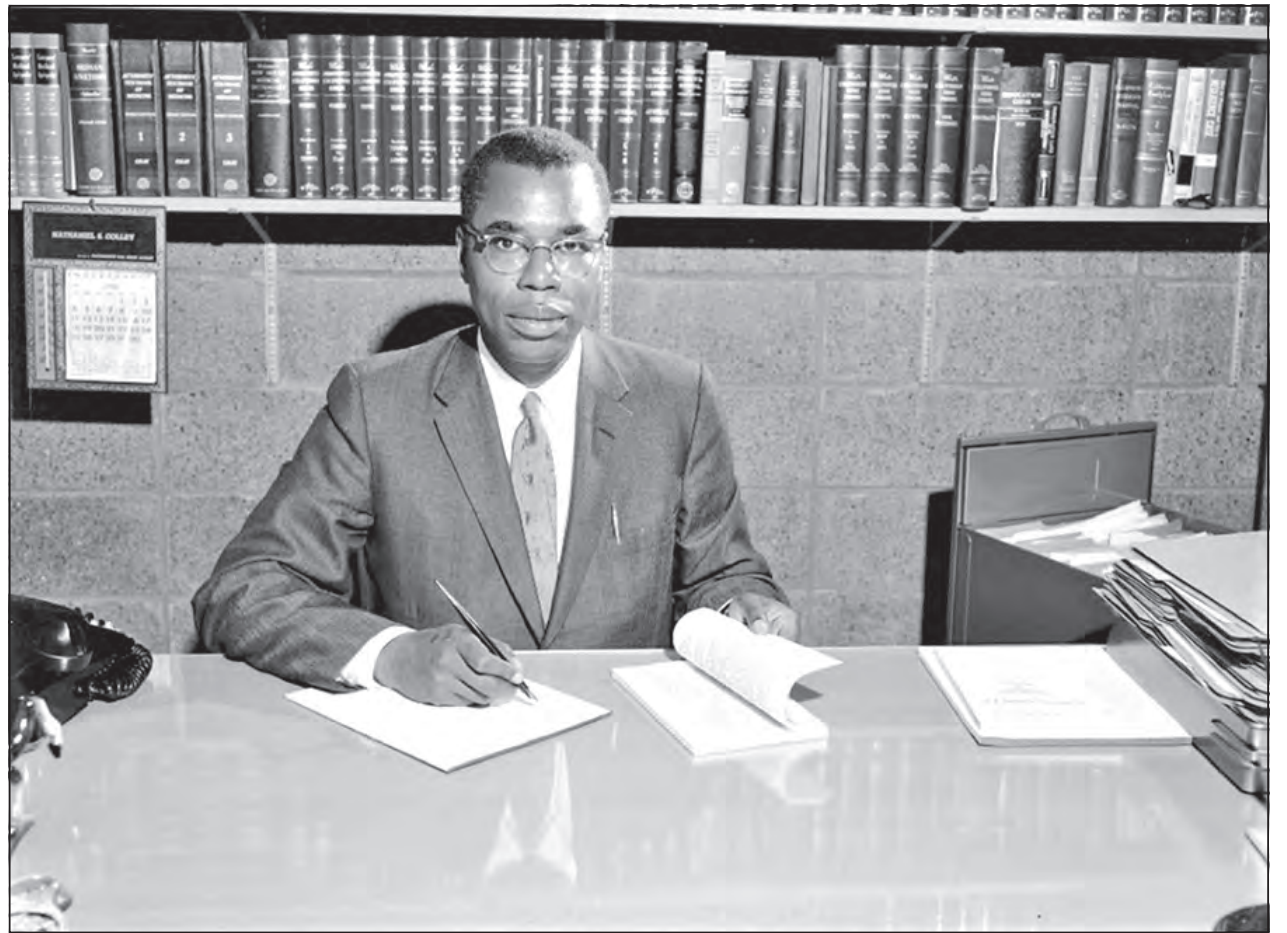
Sacramento’s first African American attorney subject of Oct. 17 event

By Kathy Les

Sometimes historical figures make a big impact but are lost to memory by subsequent generations. Such is the case with Nathaniel S. Colley, Sr., whose name may be unfamiliar but whose work in Sacramento and beyond had a lasting impact on housing desegregation.

SCNA’s Ad Hoc Racial Justice Committee and the Nathaniel S. Colley Sr. Civil Rights Coalition seek to rectify that when they present Desegregating Sacramento at 7 p.m. on Oct. 17 in Curtis Hall at the Sierra 2 Center. The program features Chris Lango, a Colley expert and producer of two short films spotlighting Colley’s impact in local, state and national efforts to end discrimination in both public and private housing. This year marks the 75th anniversary of Colley’s work in Sacramento. In his day, his success earned him the name “Mr. Civil Rights of California.”

Colley, who was from Alabama, graduated from the Tuskegee Institute and Yale Law School before arriving in Sacramento with his wife in 1948 to live in her



See Colley, Page 2

Nathaniel Colley, c. 1961 at age 43.

Photo courtesy California State Archives

John Mathews commemorative park bench fundraising begins

By Kathy Les

When SCNA board member John Mathews died suddenly last year, honoring his legacy was paramount, given his years of service on behalf of SCNA.

Mathews served over a decade as a board member, chairing the Neighborhood Concerns Committee for several years. He also was involved in myriad issues and events, striving to make Curtis Park more livable and fun.

Mathews will be honored with a bench in Curtis Park pending fund-

raising and application approval in the coming weeks.

Soon after his death, John’s wife, Nicoletta Anselmo, initiated talks with SCNA board members and contacted Joe Flores, Sacramento Parks Commissioner for Council District 7, which includes Curtis Park.

Flores met John in 2019 when names were considered for the Crocker Village park.

“John was the one who brought up and championed naming the park after Ray Eames,” explained Flores.

Flores remembered how passionately

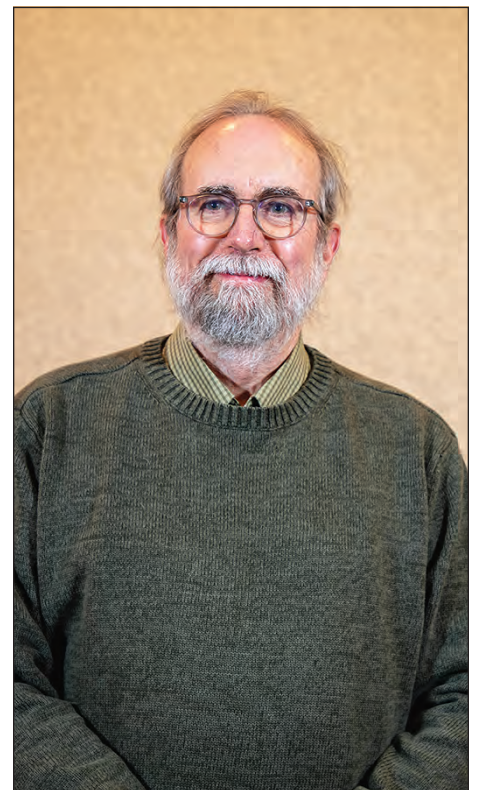
John felt about naming the park after the internationally famous designer, artist and filmmaker from Sacramento, while insisting that the process be fair to all under consideration.

Ray Eames, one of three semi-finalists, was ultimately chosen, in part because so few Sacramento city parks are named for women – fewer than 10 in 230.

“It was John who challenged me to manage a then-controversial item, to see a fair and equitable outcome,” said Flores, who is helping raise money for the bench.

“John gave his all to the neighborhood and volunteered for everything. I mean everything,” Anselmo said. “When I suggested he take a break, he’d insist he had to show up at an event to support the cause.”

Anselmo recalled that John also



See Mathews, Page 2

John Mathews

Photo courtesy Nicoletta Anselmo

Bret Harte
Students unwrap musical opportunities



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Mr. Pickles
Party to support shelter animals



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Colley

Continued from page 1

hometown. Their first home was on Second Avenue in Curtis Park.

Colley opened an office downtown and became Sacramento's first African American attorney in private practice, engaging in many aspects of law. When he learned that Blacks were only allowed residency in 16 of 310 units in the then-named New Helvetia public housing complex on Broadway, his life's work fighting for fair housing began.

In the landmark 1954 case *Ming vs. Horgan*, Colley convinced the U.S. Supreme Court that entities receiving federal funds could not engage in discrimination. His first legal win was for local public housing, but he ultimately won equal access for Blacks in public and private housing at the state and national levels, as well. He served on the State Board of Education under Governor Pat Brown and on President John F. Kennedy's Committee for the U.S. Armed Forces. He knew both men well.

Film producer Chris Lango, previously with KCRA, is now an independent archival producer and researcher who also works as a consultant for the Nathaniel Colley Civil Rights Coalition. He has made films for The Center for Sacramento History's award-winning series "Unlocking the Past" about the history of systemic racism in the Capital Region. Both of his films prominently feature Colley's voice, with context and perspective provided by historian Clarence Caesar and sociologist Jesus Hernandez of the



Photo of Nathaniel S. Colley displayed at the dedication of the Nathaniel S. Colley High School in May 2002. Photo courtesy Colley family

Colley Civil Rights Coalition.

In addition to the films, Lango will speak about his research process and share additional clips, some of which are being shown for the first time.

This is a rare opportunity to hear Lango, view his archival films and learn more about the Black attorney who first won equal access to housing across the country.

The event is free, but RSVPs at sierra2.org will guarantee a seat. Your attendance helps shine a light on this nationally important figure from Sacramento.

Mathews

Continued from page 1

worked with the League of Women Voters on behalf of SCNA to present candidate forums and debates at Sierra 2, helped save trees in the neighborhood and was active at the annual Egg Hunt at Sierra 2 Green.

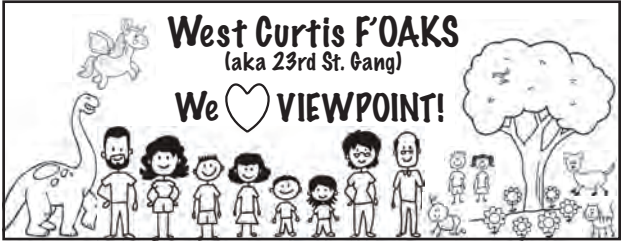
"In honor of John Mathews, as his loving wife, I am pursuing having a bench and plaque installed in the northeast corner of Curtis Park," said Anselmo, who will co-sponsor the bench application with Flores.

The cost of purchasing, installing and maintaining the bench over 10 years is \$11,000. Once the total amount is raised and submitted to the city, the bench will be approved and installed.

Fundraising is underway. At last month's meeting, the SCNA board voted to approve \$1,000 in seed

money toward the bench and accept additional donations until the entire sum is raised.

Donations in any amount are welcome. Please make checks out to Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association, earmarked John Mathews Bench, and send to Sierra 2 Center, 2791 24th Street, Sacramento, CA 95818 or drop them off at the Sierra 2 office. Funds will be held in a separate account until fundraising is complete. Questions can be addressed to info@sierra2.org.



Desegregating Sacramento

Short films and a talk by Chris Lango of the Nathaniel Colley Civil Rights Coalition

RSVP for this free event at sierra2.org/event/desegregating-sacramento/

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at 7 p.m.
Curtis Hall at Sierra 2 Center

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Events, bylaws update and the Neighborhood Concerns Committee explained

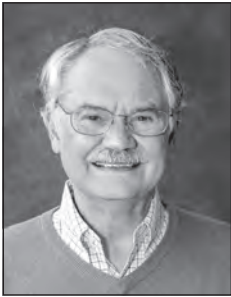
Our Music in the Park series concluded in August with “On Air” and Mr. Cooper, and SCNA initiated a new music program for families with Jillian Van Ness providing entertainment at Sierra 2 Park. Thanks to all who worked on these great events, especially Alysse Macaluso for founding the program for families. Upcoming events include “Desegregating Sacramento” on Oct. 17 and “Tapestry of Tastes” on Nov. 19. Read more about these events elsewhere in *Viewpoint* or at scna.org.

An ad hoc committee to update our bylaws, comprised of Mimi Budd, Lily Harris and Matthew Royal, presented its proposal at our September board meeting. We appreciate their thoughtful due diligence. Also, thanks to Ryan Marenger, Miles Thorne, Matthew Royal, Dave Gonsalves and Bill French for serving on a Nominations Committee to identify candidates for open board positions.

Our new executive director, Danielle Whitmore continues to do a fine job. She is working closely with Treasurer Ryan Marenger to upgrade office systems and make them more efficient.

I would like to highlight the role of our Neighborhood Concerns Committee (NCC). The NCC is one of five standing committees established by our bylaws, which state the NCC is “responsible for monitoring and responding to issues that affect the

**JOHN
BAILEY**
SCNA Board
President



quality of life within the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood.” Over the years, such issues have included traffic safety, crime, pollution and contamination concerns, zoning, park amenities and urban forestry. The committee also organizes political forums held during election years. During the early years of SCNA, a committee with a similar charge was called the Community Services Committee.

The NCC’s responsibilities are important and time-intensive, requiring much skill, knowledge and time. The NCC is among one of the largest committees and comprises nearly half the board membership; nine out of our current 21 board members serve on the NCC.

The NCC reports to the board monthly and gets full board approval prior to engaging in any action. The NCC carefully researches issues that come before it, including researching ordinances, regulations or laws, consultation with neighborhood residents, interviews with experts and research as to the experiences of other

communities in dealing with similar issues. In my experience, matters brought to the board by NCC are always well considered, but board approval is not automatic.

The NCC is in regular contact with other neighborhood associations concerning issues that affect multiple city or county neighborhoods.

Regarding the recent dog park controversy, NCC thoroughly researched the Dog Auxiliary arrangement, the city’s guidelines for neighborhood, community and regional parks and dog park guidelines in Sacramento and other municipalities, including cities with various approaches to dog parks and off-leash arrangements. Advocates of all perspectives were invited to meetings. NCC kept the board fully informed of its findings, including neighbor input. In 2022, NCC attempted to arrange Youth Parks & Community Enrichment meetings with representatives of groups of different perspectives. In 2023, NCC arranged a listening session for board members with input from Common Ground, DogX, Land Park Soccer and Sierra 2. I believe NCC was extremely diligent in providing the board with relevant information and in its attempts toward productive dialogue.

Over the decades, the NCC and its predecessor have led SCNA in advocating on many matters. These come

to mind: removal of the two streets north of the softball field where drug dealers regularly did business; cleanup of graffiti when gangs marked territory in the neighborhood; construction of the running track around Curtis Park; ceasing the dropping of containers on flatbed rail cars at 2 a.m.; curtailing the persistent routing of high-decibel eastbound flights out of SMF over our neighborhood; ending the regular presence of public inebriates around the 24th Street Market; addressing the adverse effects of a half-way house that could not control its mentally ill residents; cleanup of contamination in the Union Pacific brownfields and significant improvements to the Petrovich Development Company design; protecting the urban forest and canopy (including spending some \$50,000 to fight Dutch Elm disease); addressing traffic safety issues, Broadway corridor and Franklin Boulevard concerns, illegal fireworks, air pollution, racial justice matters and joining other neighborhood associations to advocate for a variety of issues toward the betterment of the city.

I believe NCC did the heavy lifting in the vast majority, if not all, of the above. Our neighborhood is a much better place thanks to the contributions of the volunteers who have graciously and productively served on the NCC.

Board Notes

Bench in Honor of John Mathews

The SCNA board voted unanimously to donate \$1,000 toward a fund to raise \$11,000 for the construction, placement and maintenance of a bench in honor of late board member **John Mathews**. The proposed location is the patch northeast of William Curtis Park above the split. SCNA will collect donations for the fund.

Board Rejects Proposed Letter to City on Missing Middle Housing

A previously formed working group presented a proposed letter addressed to the city’s Planning and Design Commission for the board

to adopt, which outlined recommended changes to the city’s interim ordinance regarding bulk control and property setbacks for new housing in Sacramento. By adopting the letter, SCNA would be taking a position against removal of bulk controls (on density and the physical dimensions of buildings), and for greater setback requirements for new housing built in Curtis Park. Neighbors and members of House Sacramento, including **Connor Finney** and **Joey Wraithwall**, expressed their concerns about the proposed letter to the board, arguing that the letter’s proposed limitations would lead to very little housing being built. Wraithwall implored the board not to take a position, citing

John Bailey’s recent President’s Report suggesting that SCNA not get embroiled in controversial issues. After a hearty discussion, the board voted against adopting the working group’s proposed letter.

Bylaws Committee Presents Recommended Changes

The Bylaws Committee, comprised of **Mimi Budd**, **Matthew Royal** and **Lily Harris**, presented proposed revisions to the SCNA bylaws following months of meetings with board members, staff and others wishing to provide input. During a nearly hour-long Power-Point presentation, committee members explained the proposed changes and revisions with amended copies

provided to the board. Several substantive changes were proposed, as well as some edits for more concise language and consistency of style. Following the presentation, Budd asked that comments and suggestions be emailed to her no later than Sept. 11 for committee consideration. A final set of recommended changes to the bylaws will be submitted for board consideration at the October meeting. Provisions that affect member voting rights or change the number or terms of directors will be submitted for a vote at the annual membership meeting in December.

The next board meeting is at 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 2.

– Submitted by Lily Harris

Del Rio Trail bridge update

RICK JENNINGS
City Council Member District 7



The opening of the Del Rio Trail provided our community with a Class 1 bike trail that connects to the Sacramento River, bringing much-needed alternative transportation options. The wonderful reuse of the abandoned train tracks was the result of a collaborative partnership that brought together community groups, and alternative transportation and bicycle advocates in support of this spectacular amenity. So many people enjoy walking, jogging, running and biking on the trail each and every day.

One of the major benefits of the Del Rio Trail is its connection over Riverside Boulevard and Interstate 5. This protected crossing eliminates the need to navigate along busy Sutterville Road to access the Sacramento River Bike Trail, greatly increasing ease of access and safety. Due to the project length, the city designed the contract to open in two phases so the community could enjoy the trail while the bridge was finalizing construction. Unfortunately, the bridge over Riverside Boulevard and Interstate 5 could not be opened.

Many of you have reached out to the city asking a simple question: When will the bridge open? As has been publicly released, the city of Sacramento has rejected the bridge and is requiring the contractor to remove and replace the entire bridge expansion. This decision was not made lightly.

The community's frustration with this situation is understood and justified. We have all been waiting a long time for this safe crossing over Riverside Boulevard and Interstate 5. The ability to reach the river without navigating Sutterville Road and the I-5 interchange is a significant safety and access improvement. Coming up to the bridge and seeing it blocked off is a cruel reminder that it is not yet open.

When building any infrastructure project, the city provides detailed plans and specifications that its contractor is required to follow. In this case, the city's contractor failed to comply with the plans and specifications when constructing the Del Rio Trail bridge over Riverside Boulevard and Interstate 5. The deficiencies in the construction and materials were discovered through the city's standard inspection process, which functioned as intended. The city identified the problems and demanded its contractor make the repair.

While there is no immediate threat to public safety, the noncompliant work must be removed and replaced in compliance with the city's plans and specifications.

We understand the frustration and desire for greater communication and transparency, but we also need to manage legal risks in disclosing information prematurely. As soon as possible, we will share more details, including potential timelines for the bridge's replacement and eventual opening.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Desegregating Sacramento:

October 17 at 7 p.m.

Angel Tree: mid-November to mid-December

Tapestry of Tastes: November 19 from 5:30-8 p.m.

SCNA Membership Meeting: November or December (TBD)



VISIT SIERRA2.ORG

Correction:

An article in the September issue of *Viewpoint* incorrectly stated that Merryhill Schools had purchased a former church site on Franklin Boulevard. The organization has a long-term lease on the site.

Trees in Curtis Park

Elm leaf beetle population explodes in Curtis Park

By Daniel Pskowski

Anyone who has been to William Curtis Park recently has noticed that the English elms (*Ulmus procera*) at the north end appear dead. The leaves have turned brown, and most have fallen. Is this lack of foliage due to Dutch elm disease (DED)? No, Dutch elm disease also causes the leaves to turn brown, but the leaves hang on the branch. If Dutch elm disease is confirmed by a plant pathology lab, the elm must be removed immediately to prevent it from spreading.

For several years, SCNA had hired Davey Tree to treat these English elms with a preventative fungicide that provided three years of protection against DED. However, these treatments were suspended due to SCNA revenue shortfalls during the COVID-19 pandemic and have not resumed. SCNA had sent a letter to the city parks manager requesting assistance with treatment but received no help. DED remains a threat.

The culprit causing the defoliation of English and Siberian elms (*Ulmus pumila*) is the elm leaf beetle. When beetle populations are allowed to build up their larvae, feeding on the leaves causes a skeletonized appearance followed by leaf drop. Extended elm leaf beetle damage can have dire consequences for long-term elm health.

The elm leaf beetle has been a persistent pest to Sacramento's elms for decades. It was controlled with an integrated pest management (IPM) program developed by the late professor of insect biology Don Dahlsten of UC Berkeley and his graduate student Andrew Lawson and implemented by Urban Forestry. Their three-year study, which began in 1996, recommended monitoring and treatment. Selected elms were routinely monitored and, when elm leaf beetle populations reached a certain threshold, the elms in the immediate area were treated with a pesticide. IPM brought the pest problem under control, and the English and Siberian elms no longer lost their leaves during the summer. But the program, which reduced pesticide use by 70%, was discontinued.

I recently contacted the city parks department, which is responsible for all Sacramento park trees, about treatment for elm leaf beetle. I was informed



that due to budget constraints there would be no treatments now or in the near future. However, property owners experiencing an elm leaf beetle problem with the elm trees in the park strip on their block can contact the 311 Call Center at 311@cityofsacramento.org to request treatment.

Urban Forestry is responsible for the street trees and will treat elm leaf beetle. Now is the time to make the request; treatment must occur in January and February. A pesticide is applied to the soil, which is taken up by the tree to provide control throughout the summer. The city's Urban Forestry



Infested elms in Curtis Park Photos by Dan Pskowski

section will treat elm trees by request. If the elm is not treated during the winter, summer treatment involves injecting the pesticide into the trunk.

I plan to present a proposal to the SCNA Neighborhood Concerns Committee requesting that SCNA resume paying for the treatment of English elms affected by the elm leaf beetle.

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

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Oct. 14 – “Trust” by Hernandez Diaz
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Room 12
Oct. 17 – “Out of Africa” by Isek Dinesen and others

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

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Women's Friendship Group
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\$35
Optional paint kit: \$25
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SIERRA 2 CENTER

THEATER

24th Street THEATRE

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The Colossus West Jazz Orchestra

Oct. 12, 7:30 p.m.
Doors open at 7 p.m.

Tickets:
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The Colossus West Jazz Orchestra, a 20-piece ensemble, warmly welcomes you to join them for an exciting evening of original music under the direction of award-winning composer Levi Saelua. The concert marks the return of the ensemble after a four-year hiatus and features the group's classic repertoire as well as the world premiere of a new suite of music by Saelua.

PARK ARTS

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.

October Treat

Come visit me by and by
Said the spider to the fly.
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And keep you here until you're dead
And when there's nothing left to eat
I'll invite another to your silken seat.
I'll wrap him tight, so nice and clean
And chew him well on Halloween.

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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-\$25. Advance tickets available.

Saturday, Oct. 6: Richard March & The Air Merchants fundraiser for Sacramento Chapter of NAMI (National Alliance On Mental Illness). California Americana star

Thursday, Oct. 10: Henry Robnett, Sacramento jazz/fusion guitar legend

Friday, Oct. 11: Justin Farren, guitarist and grateful song warrior

Saturday, Oct. 12: MAU, rollicking jam band showcasing 3-to-4-part vocal harmonies

Thursday, Oct. 17: Jazz Gitan, gypsy swing jazz ensemble

Thursday, Oct. 24: Richard Smith, topnotch fingerpicker with a repertoire of classics, originals, fiddle tunes, blues, Joplin rags, jazz standards and more

Saturday, Oct. 26: John Green & the Side-dooros w/Bob Wood, tribute to New Riders of the Purple Sage, cosmic country rock-and-roll



Bob Woods
Courtesy Bob Woods

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Oct. 6: Ice Age Quartet

THE GUILD THEATER

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sthope.org/guild-theater-home

Oct. 8-13: Third Annual Oak Park Black Film Festival, a vibrant six-day festival of African American stories and history through cinema, panel discussions, exclusive events and receptions. Includes international, national and local talent. eventbrite.com/e/2024-oak-park-black-film-festival-tickets-847232925487

First Thursdays, 7 p.m.

The Guild Theater's monthly Poetry and Hip-Hop Night, POHOP, is hosted by J. Nash.

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Thursday, Oct. 3: Snap Dragon Jazz with Chris Hall from 7-9 p.m.

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.

1st Saturday: "Sactown Swings," 6-8pm

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

— Mindy Giles

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WHAT'S NEW AT SIERRA 2?



The Learnery's Art Club at Sierra 2

Photos by Sierra 2 staff



Cara Gregor and Angelina Sorokin gather women to create art together at Art Club.


The Learnery's Art Club connects women who make art

Our first-ever Kids' Music in the Park event featuring Jillian Van Ness was a huge success. Families enjoyed a morning of live music and community. Thank you to everyone who came out and supported Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association/Sierra 2 Center. Donations and community help these fun-filled family events happen. We hope to include more events like this in the future.

Sierra 2 has many exciting workshops coming up at The Learnery. If you have wanted to explore your creative side, now is the time. These workshops provide hands-on experiences designed for people of all levels. They include watercolors, abstract painting and how to bake sourdough bread. For a more casual experience, check out the Art Club with artists Cara Gregor and Angelina Sorokin, a creative space where women can build connections and make art. Art Club meets the last Thursday of each month, costs \$5 and requires an RSVP.

In addition to our workshops, Sierra 2 is on the lookout for instructors to join The Learnery. If you have a talent or passion you would like to share with the community, we would love to hear from you. The Learnery is a place where community members can gather for inspiration and engagement. To learn more about The Learnery and to apply to be an instructor visit our website, sierra2.org/teach-with-us/.

— Erin Gottis



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RIVER CITY TAPS

Qisa Coffee already thriving in Curtis Park

By Matthew Royal

Curtis Park’s newest coffee shop, Qisa Coffee, has been buzzing with excitement since its soft opening on Aug. 30. A representative of State Sen. Angelique Ashby’s office was on hand and presented a Certificate of Recognition to owner Abdul Aziz. Aziz, a Sacramento resident, has been hands-on every step, from overseeing construction to brewing the first cup of coffee. The shop, in the Amalia Development on 24th Street across from the Sierra 2 Theater, has quickly become a community favorite, offering an inviting space where culture and conversation thrive.

Aziz shared his insights after the soft opening, reflecting on the journey so far.

“What I’ve learned is how important it is to stay open to feedback and keep improving,” he said. “We’ve built strong connections with our neighbors and partnered with local vendors, which has really made us feel like a part of this beautiful community.”

The attention Qisa Coffee has garnered on social media has been notable, with shout-outs from

prominent influencers like Localis chef Scott Davis and Capitol Tuktuk. Aziz believes the secret to Qisa Coffee’s broad appeal is simple: authenticity.

“It’s all about being genuine,” he explained. “We’ve worked closely with local vendors, made real connections with the neighborhood and stayed open to learning from our mistakes. We also use social media to share our progress with the community and are always grateful for our customers’ support. Our goal with Qisa Coffee is to create a space like Qisa Khwani Bazaar in Peshawar, where people can sit together and share their stories. I think that authenticity shows, and it’s what people are connecting with.”

As Curtis Park residents eagerly await the grand opening celebration, Aziz focuses on ensuring everything is just right. “We’re really close,” he said, “but we want to make sure everything is ready so we can avoid any negative experiences. Once we’re confident that everything’s perfect, we’ll announce the grand opening. We’re just as excited as everyone else and can’t wait to share the date soon.”

For those looking to stay updated on the latest Qisa Coffee news, follow them on Instagram at @qisacoffee. With its rich cultural heritage and strong sense of community, Qisa Coffee is on its way to becoming a beloved Curtis Park establishment.



Qisa Coffee owner Abdul Aziz celebrates shop’s soft opening with a representative of Sen. Angelique Ashby’s office. Photo by Matthew Royal

Let's Get Social!

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A logo with the text "OPNA".
A logo with the text "ST-HOPE".
A logo with the text "ACCESS SACRAMENTO".



More than 300 people enjoyed the Sept. 8 event at Sierra 2 Green.

Photo by Karl Saddlemire

Inaugural Kids' Music event a rousing success

By Alysse Macaluso

The first-ever Kids Music in the Park event on Sept. 8 was a tremendous success, offering a morning of vibrant entertainment. The event drew a larger-than-anticipated crowd, with more than 300 people turning the Sierra 2 Green into a lively space with children dancing and singing all morning. The park was well-equipped to handle the large turnout and had ample seating for families to relax under the trees and enjoy the performance.

Before the event, SCNA board members and staff passed out noisemakers to the children in attendance, who ranged from newborns to 7-year-olds. The SCNA board also set up a table to pass out Marie's donuts and information on upcoming events, and receive donations from those in attendance.

The SCNA was honored to have Jillian Van Ness, founder of Grow Resilient Families, perform at this inaugural event. Jillian is a local sensation known through-

out Sacramento for her music classes and frequent appearances at kids' birthday parties and other private events. Jillian also creates original music designed to engage and entertain young audiences.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many praising the event for its organization, entertainment quality and family-friendly atmosphere. A small team of SCNA board members and SCNA staff planned and supported the event. Among them were: Alysse Macaluso (donor); Karl Saddlemire (donor); Annie Linton (donor); Noah Bench, Jaclyn Teofilo and Jimmy Krey. Additional donations came from Matthew Royal and the Sierra 2 Center.

The kids' music event, which SCNA plans to hold again next year, was a highlight for the community, successfully bringing people together for a day of joy, creativity and celebration and reflecting the strong sense of community spirit and enthusiasm for supporting local talent and family-oriented activities.



Jillian Van Ness of Grow Resilient Families performs at Kids Music in the Park.

Photo by Karl Saddlemire

Focusing on paradise

By Judy Green Scheible

For some people, a vacation in the South Pacific means beach time and snorkeling. For Peter Andrews, an ophthalmologist, and Kelye Lotz of 24th Street, it meant significant eye clinic work.

In late August, they flew to Fiji, where Peter spent four days performing cataract surgery, corneal transplants and removing eye growths (pterygium). Kelye, a teacher, stepped up to help the local staff organize the more than 50 patients; many had waited a year for the procedures.

Although this was Peter and Kelye's first time in Fiji, the pair have organized similar missions to Jamaica yearly since 2008. They made the trips family adventures by including their son and daughter.

"We wanted them to know how privileged they are," Kelye said. Even now, as adults, they join in the clinic work.

In Sacramento, Peter works at the NVision clinic in midtown. Its founder, Tom Tooma, started the clinic in Fiji. Called Mission Natuvu, it operates year-



Kelye Lotz of 24th Street (in black scrubs) sits with three Fijian patients who have returned to the clinic for checkups after cataract surgery by her husband, Dr. Peter Andrews. Photo by Elysse Andrews

round.

"It's a state-of-the-art facility," Peter said. "It employs many locals." The clinic does various medical treatments, includ-

ing dentistry and surgery.

"The patients are so lovely and grateful," Peter said of both locations. "There are just too many people in need of care.

We can't help them all."

To top off the trip, the family enjoyed three days at a nearby resort for beach time and scuba diving.

Oct. 6 street party and animal shelter donation drive honors Mr. Pickles

By Dorsey Griffith

Mr. Pickles, Donner Way's treasured tabby, almost didn't join the Ewing family nearly 19 years ago. If it hadn't been for daughter Romy, then 10, bereft after a motorist killed the family cat, Mr. Pickles might have languished – or worse – at a local animal shelter.

"She said to her dad, 'Dad, can we get a new kitty that looks like the kitty that's gone?'" recalled Diane Ewing. "'And, could I have one more?' Dad said, yes. It was such a good decision."

"They told us that this cat is the most popular cat on the block," Ewing said of Mr. Pickles, then a kitten. "I was thinking they might be trying to get rid of a troublesome cat. I was wrong. He turned out to be wonderful."

A longtime feline fixture on Donner Way, Mr. Pickles has a reputation for playful naughtiness, hopping atop cars unbeknownst to their drivers, fraternizing with every Spot, Sparky and Patch who passes, and charming pedestrians from eagerly anticipating his antics.

"He does the meet-and-greet," Ewing said. "People say, 'I just love your cat.' And I think, I love you, because you're keeping our cat very happy. It's just a win-win."

Although elderly by feline standards, Mr. Pickles still possesses a lot of pep. Other than a couple of recent scares, including a too-close-encounter with a neighborhood canine, he's still putting on the charm for Curtis Park people and their pets.

In honor of Mr. Pickles, his endurance, jaunty disposition and congeniality – and to remember cats and dogs without loving homes – Ewing, her husband Jim, and her neighbors are hosting a street party on Donner Way between 24th and 25th streets from 10 a.m. to noon on Oct. 6.



Photo courtesy of Diane Ewing

All are welcome to join the celebration. Guests are asked to donate supplies such as dry or wet cat or dog food, collars, leashes, pet treats, kitten formula, towels or blankets for the Front Street Animal Shelter in Sacramento. Folks can bring a folding chair and human goodies to share, as well.

Although invited, Mr. Pickles has yet to decide whether to attend the festivities, but if past experience is any guide, an appearance is likely.

"When We Were Colored" returns to the stage

"When We Were Colored, A Mother's Story," Ginger Rutland's heartwarming play about a Black family that moves from the Deep South to Sacramento in the early 1950s, is returning.

Adapted from her mother Eva Rutland's memoir of the same title, the play chronicles the lives of Ginger's family, an ordinary Black family that lived through extraordinary times.

The play has special significance for Curtis Park. Not only is Ginger Rutland a long-time Curtis Park resident, but much of the play's action took place in Curtis Park, where the Rutland family moved in 1952. The play opens at Oak Park's Guild Theater on Nov. 9 and runs through Nov. 24.

For tickets visit: [eventbrite.com/o/when-we-were-colored-a-mothers-story-85557921253](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/when-we-were-colored-a-mothers-story-85557921253).

Proposition 28 helps expand Bret Harte's music program

Last spring, boxes of musical instruments began arriving at Bret Harte Elementary. Before opening the boxes, music teacher Alan Cunningham asked students to guess what was in them to build anticipation for the big reveal in the fall.

Starting this school year, Michael Rule's combined fifth/sixth grade class was the first to use the brand-new instruments, now set up in a separate space across from the music room. Colorful waist-high African drums are organized in a large circle around the middle of the room. New wooden ukuleles, marimbas and xylophones cover multiple tables. Maracas and percussion instruments, such as boom whackers, occupy recently opened boxes throughout the room.

"This is an expansion, it's evolving," Cunningham said of the longtime music program at Bret Harte.

Cunningham introduced the drums and ukuleles to Rule's class. "They were the first ones to enter into this room because they're the leaders of the campus," he said. They'll move on to the marimbas in mid-October, while the fourth-grade class will start on the drums. The new instruments will expand students' knowledge of music and enrich popular school performances, such as the winter and spring concerts. Students also will learn about the instruments and their places of origin, while adding new songs to their repertoire.

The additional instruments represent a portion of the funding Bret Harte received from the Sacramento City Unified School District's Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) office, administered by Charles DeAngelus. According to the District's webpage, VAPA is responsible for "curriculum and enrichment programs that focus on students' skills, knowledge and abilities in dance, music, theater and the visual arts in grades K-12." Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, VAPA received its portion of Proposition 28 funds, which increased the visual and performing arts budget from approximately \$1 million to \$6.5 million.

Passed by voters in November 2022, Proposition 28 requires 1% of the Proposition 98 funding guarantee be used for arts curriculum in K-12 schools, equivalent to around \$1 billion annually statewide. Bret Harte's allocation of approximately \$38,000 can be used for staffing, supplies and materials for art and music.



LAUREN
GOTHARD
and
LINDSEY
SIN



New ukuleles are ready for student use.

For many years Cunningham was the only certificated elementary music teacher in the district. With the additional funding, DeAngelus can hire and train more teachers in the performing arts, significantly expanding opportunities available to students. Seven new music and art teachers were recently hired. He hopes to hire about 24 teachers in total.

"The goal is to slowly and systematically expand music in schools, especially in K-6," DeAngelus said. The next step will be creating and implementing a district-wide curriculum for music, dance and theater and a separate K-6 visual arts curriculum. He also hopes to start instrumental instruction at the elementary level with grant funding from the Save the Music Foundation.

The addition of music and art programs within the district, along with the expansion of current programs, will create many new and exciting opportunities for students to learn about the arts. Bret Harte is grateful to be a part of it.

Bret Harte's annual Fall Festival will take place from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 25. This event is a great way to support the PTA and meet the Bret Harte community.



African drum and ukulele are among the new musical instruments at Bret Harte.
Photos by Lindsey Sin



A new instrument awaits the young musicians.

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