VIEWPOINT

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Meet SCNA's new executive director

By Patti Roberts

Danielle (Dani) Whitmore understood her first task when she landed the position as the new executive director of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association and Sierra 2.

"I'm dedicated to seeing issues through other people's eyes and their concerns, so my first job is to listen and learn," said Whitmore.

Whitmore replaces Kent Anderson, who resigned the position in May.

Whitmore is interested in the issues that affect Curtis Park neighbors and the concerns of the SCNA board and Sierra 2 staff. So far, she says she has felt welcomed by all.

"It's been my delight getting to know the neighborhood and neighbors – you are a friendly and passionate bunch," she said. "I have also found the staff to be incredibly nice and friendly. They are a community that serves a community."

Though Whitmore does not live in the neighborhood, she is familiar with Curtis Park because she has friends who live here.

"I'm drawn to the Old World feel of the neighborhood," she said. "And I love that the community has lots of passion for neighborhood issues, as well as a recognition of the importance of the arts, including The Learnery, The Senior Center and the Sierra 2 Center Theater."

Whitmore's background with nonprofits and the arts allows her to combine her dedication to a well-run organization with her interest in promoting the arts. According to Whitmore, she has been a nonprofit manager for 17 years, including 11 years as executive director of YoloArts.

"I believe strongly in the intersection of arts and community. It's my jam," she said. Whitmore, who lives in Natomas with "the love of my life, Jeff Johnson," is a mother of two daughters and a stepdaughter and has always been drawn to the arts. She has sung in choirs, frequents concerts and art shows, and loves to hike, cook and bake.

In addition to promoting arts, Whitmore acknowledges other import-

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Danielle (Dani) Whitmore Courtesy Danielle Whitmore

Trees in Curtis Park

A new threat to Sacramento's valley and blue oak trees

By Daniel Pskowski

Two Curtis Park residents contacted me at the end of June concerned about the health of the 68-inch diameter valley oak located in the children's playground on the Sierra 2 Green. As I walked toward this massive oak, the branches on the north side were dying. Upon closer inspection, I found light-colored sawdust and tiny holes in the bark crevices. These were signs of boring insects, but which one? My research determined it was Mediterranean oak borer (MOB) or *Xyleborus monographus*, a pest I have never encountered. Jodi Carlson, city parks arborist, followed up, and Curtis Ewing, an entomologist with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, confirmed the presence of MOB.

The University of California Cooperative Extension reported that this ambrosia beetle, native to the Mediterranean region, was first found in North America in late 2019 in Napa County. It soon spread to Lake and Sonoma counties, Citrus Heights and now Sacramento. So how did this insect get here? It was on a wood product imported from the Mediterranean region.

The very small beetle, just 1/8-inch long, could have big impacts. It attacks valley oak (Quercus lobata) and blue oak (Quercus douglasii). Their tunneling into the sapwood and heartwood interrupts the water transfer pathways, preventing the canopy from receiving water. The boring insect requires 5 to 8 weeks to develop from egg to adult and can have two or more generations per year. They attack the top portion of the

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New school coming to Curtis Park

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Open Studios in Curtis Park

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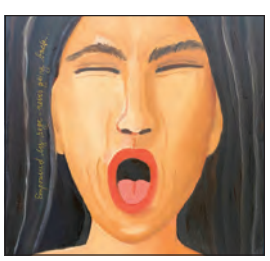

SCNA seeks new board candidates

The SCNA board's Nominations Committee is seeking applications for new board members. The committee is looking for neighbors who will help round out the board's perspectives, strengths and neighborhood representation. Ideal characteristics are leadership; racial, ethnic, geographic and age diversity; and the willingness to fundraise and volunteer time while working collaboratively with the SCNA board and others within the community. In addition, specialized skills such as finance, building management, event planning, human resource management and nonprofit leadership experience are desired.

If you want to learn more about being a board member and giving back to your neighborhood, please contact Danielle Whitmore, SCNA executive director, at danielle@sierra2.org with the subject headline "Nominations."

SCNA board busy with a new director, Sierra 2 lease, events planning

John Bailey
SCNA Board President

Danielle Whitmore began employment as our new executive director on July 22. She is off to a good start, with a "take charge" attitude and "can do" spirit, and she demonstrates knowledge and competency in non-profit administration. I am thrilled to have her on board.

With Danielle on the SCNA learning curve and much still to be done to present a wine-tasting event, it was determined there is too much to do in too little time to pull off a robust event. We plan to do so next fall. We also are exploring themes for a February event. In association with the Nov. 19 panel discussion about Sacramento's wine and food scene featuring Darrell Corti, Mike Dunne and Mary Ellen Burns, SCNA will host a reception offering fine wine and tasty tidbits. This will be a wonderful event you won't want to miss. (See story page 9)

Other upcoming events include children's music on Sept. 8 at the Sierra 2 Green and a speaker's bureau event highlighting the impact of Sacramento attorney Nathaniel Colley.

SCNA has negotiated a 10-year lease renewal with the City of Sacramento, with two options to extend for an additional five years, yielding a potential 20-year term. This is a significant achievement. An important improvement is that this lease specifies that the city is responsible for the cost of repairing damage from events such as storms and vandalism exceeding $5,000. Our previous lease terms were unclear, resulting in controversy and costs to SCNA. SCNA remains responsible for replacing major building components, such as roofing, when needed.

The lease also provides a framework for SCNA to proceed with its Zero Carbon Project, transitioning heat and air conditioning to heat pumps powered by on-site solar panels, for which we anticipate a payback period of roughly 15 years. SCNA's negotiations were led by our Facilities Committee, with Gerre Buehler, Miles Thorne and Dick Weng doing much of the heavy lifting. Kudos to them!

The lease covers only the western half of the block occupied by the Sierra 2 Center complex. The eastern half of the block, known as the Sierra 2 Park, is not leased by SCNA. To my mind, the name "Sierra 2 Park" is unfortunate, as some people infer that the park is managed by the Sierra 2 Center. This is not true. The city has 100% control of Sierra 2 Park. Decisions about the park, its use, conditions and improvements are all made by the city. Park rangers are dispatched by the city, not SCNA. SCNA has no authority over the park. When SCNA wants to use the park for an event, we must get a permit, like any other user. When SCNA has a concern about the park, we communicate our concern to the city, like any other neighbor. SCNA can request, plead, beg, lobby and advocate, but the city decides. If you have a concern about Sierra 2 Park, you must take your concern to the city. You are welcome to inform SCNA of your concern, but

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Surprise city dog park survey could revive discussions on possible Curtis Park site

By Jim Miller

Following months of silence on the matter, the city recently conducted an online survey of dog-park preferences in the Land Park and Curtis Park neighborhoods.

The city announced the survey on July 11 in an online newsletter sent to area residents and made it available through July 24. *See sacramentocityexpress.com/2024/07/11/*.

The surprise survey, also promoted on a poster in Curtis Park, came seven months after the City Council sidelined a lengthy process of community meetings and other discussions on possible locations for a dog park in Curtis Park, and the closure of a temporary dog park at the Sierra 2 Green.

The December council vote called for researching and piloting an unfenced, off-leash park in Land Park and created a capital improvement project to pay for outreach and a potential site plan. Officials said they would also continue exploring potential dog park sites in Curtis Park.

Since then, the summer survey is the first public indication of city work on the issue.

"We feel strongly about considering the community's level of support for dog park locations and types of dog parks," the city's Youth, Parks, & Community Enrichment Director Jackie Beecham said in a press release announcing the poll. "One option is a pilot program in William Land Park for an off-leash, unfenced dog park, something new to Sacramento but not new to some cities in California and around the country."

City parks spokeswoman Gabby Miller said 1,661 people responded to the survey, and staff are reviewing the responses and comments. The city will release results of the survey "in the coming weeks," she said.

Curtis Park resident Trish Davey is active in Common Ground, a group supporting an off-leash dog park in the Curtis Park community.

Davey said the city survey came "out of the blue." She said she has heard nothing from city officials on dog park issues since the December vote.

The survey seemed to focus on possible dog park locations in Land Park, she said. One of the Curtis Park locations, the north end of William Curtis Park, had already appeared in a previous city dog park survey.

"It was very confusing," Davey said of the survey.

A July 2023 city-hosted open house to get feedback on possible dog park sites asked attendees to rank possible locations. The city released the results months later; there was little support for locations at the southern or northern ends of William Curtis Park. The city also conducted a dog park-related online survey in December 2022.

"I don't understand these constant surveys — without meeting face-to-face and letting people express their preferences and concerns," said Curtis Park resident Dan Bernstein, another Common Ground member. He believes the area of William Curtis Park south of the tennis courts has potential as a dog park location.

The city did not respond to a question about why it conducted an online survey instead of holding an event similar to the July 2023 open house or other meeting. The Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association has not had any official contact with the city in recent months.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Kids' Music in the Park: Sept. 8 from 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Desegregating Sacramento: Oct. 17 at 7 p.m.

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

Angel Tree: Early Nov. to mid-Dec.

SCNA Membership Meeting: Nov. to Dec. (TBD)

visit sierra2.org

Bailey

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SCNA cannot implement the desired change. I hope this clarifies misunderstandings about SCNA's role.

This brings me to SCNA as an advocate for the neighborhood's interests. SCNA has been regarded as an effective advocate when there is significant neighborhood consensus. I believe SCNA has established a reputation around City Hall for sending advocacy letters grounded in reality that are measured and pragmatic. SCNA has successfully advocated for the cleanup of the Union Pacific brownfields, improvements to the design of Petrovich's development of that site, protecting the urban forest and canopy as well as addressing traffic-safety concerns, Broadway-corridor concerns and many more. Such efforts are managed and led by SCNA's Neighborhood Concerns Committee.

When there has been a strong divergence of opinion, however, with competing factions demanding that SCNA take a stand, SCNA has suffered. The losing faction is understandably aggrieved and upset. I believe that, while SCNA may appropriately sponsor forums for each side to make its case to neighbors, unless SCNA has a financial interest in the matter, SCNA should avoid getting embroiled in contentious issues that divide the neighborhood. Many neighbors are highly effective at organizing and lobbying and can ably represent their interests at City Hall, independent of SCNA.

Board Notes

Historic Registry Update

Sean de Courcy, preservation director for Sacramento, discussed the implications of adding Sierra 2 Center to the National Register of Historic Places and the state's sister register. Being listed on these registers is mainly honorary, and once registered on the national level, the center would automatically be registered on the state register. Neither state nor national register would restrict the property's use or design. Sierra 2 has been on the local register since 2005, which does impose some use restrictions.

President's Report

Danielle Whitmore began as SCNA's executive director on July 22 and has been doing a great job. Whitmore and **John Bailey** have signed off on Sierra 2 Center's new lease with the city. Bailey expressed concern about the relations among board members, especially in light of the July board meeting when individuals were presented to fill board vacancies without first notifying Bailey of an intent to present nominees. Bailey said he does not feel that attempts to circumvent the bylaws or Robert's Rules improve board member relations.

Bailey received two more constituent dissatisfaction letters in addition to the two previously received and discussed with the board. He continues to respond to these letters, noting misconceptions about what transpired around the dog park issue. One of the more recent letters suggested that SCNA exerts a great deal of influence over Sierra 2, and that the Neighborhood Concerns Committee is too small and insulated to properly represent the neighborhood. One of the letters suggested that the board voted against DogX's morning and afternoon use of Sierra 2 Green. DogX is a group that supports an off-leash dog park in or near Curtis Park consistent with how Sierra 2 Green was used before it became controversial. The board did not vote against the morning and afternoon use of Sierra 2 Green. The board voted against the city's Option 1, which would have put a dog park next to Sierra 2 Center. Bailey asked board members to attempt to correct misconceptions of what transpired when speaking with neighbors.

Executive Director's Report

Whitmore has met with many board members and would like to meet with each one to understand their vision for Sierra 2. She has conducted one-on-one meetings with staff and finds them all delightful and engaging. She and Bailey have discussed ways to streamline operations and reduce duplication. Whitmore is working with SCNA Treasurer **Ryan Marenger** to update accounting practices and procedures.

Board Vacancies

The Executive Committee created a Nominations Committee to fill the two current vacancies on the board left by **Kinsley Earl** and **Jack Foster**. At the July board meeting, **Christian Muller** moved to fill the vacancies with two nominees who were also present, **Janet Hesch** and **Michael Oates**. Neither the Executive Committee nor the president was made aware of the motion before the meeting. A discussion ensued about the proper procedure for filling the vacancies, with some board members arguing that nominating candidates at the meeting without the full vetting process was extrajudicial. Bailey ultimately prohibited the vote on Muller's motion as out of order but agreed to create a Nominations Committee to vet candidates. The board also voted to prioritize candidates who ran in the last election but lost. The newly-formed Nominations Committee will contact them to determine if they are still interested. The board and the membership may change the bylaws to reduce the number of board members from a maximum of 23 to 15. If that occurs, the board will need to determine how to reduce the number of seats without prematurely ending the term of any serving member.

Board Rejects Ad Hoc Committee on Neighborhood Dissatisfaction

The board has rejected two attempts to create a formal ad hoc committee to address perceived neighborhood dissatisfaction with SCNA. Board member **Andrea Rosen** originally suggested an informal committee to discuss the concerns. **Lily Harris** then connected Rosen with Board member **Madelyn Gelpi**, who had proposed a neighborhood survey to address concerns to the NCC. At the July meeting Rosen brought a formal motion to create an ad hoc committee tasked with addressing neighborhood dissatisfaction and utilizing Gelpi's survey as one tool to gauge it. Citing Robert's Rules, Bailey stated the motion was improper because the issue of the survey was in the hands of NCC, and the Rules do not allow the board to consider another motion involving practically the same issue. While Rosen's motion was to create an ad hoc committee and not to approve the survey, the board did not approve the motion. Muller brought a similar motion at the August meeting, with **Karl Saddlemire** moving to postpone the motion as improper because NCC was currently considering the survey. The board voted to postpone Muller's motion by a vote of seven yeas, six nays and five abstentions.

The next meeting is on Sept. 4 at 6:30 p.m.

– Submitted by Lily Harris

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WHAT'S NEW AT SIERRA 2?

Sierra 2 alive with activities for all

As summer sizzles in Sacramento, the Sierra 2 Center has been a haven to beat the heat. The hallways have been alive with kids participating in a musical theater camp, including many excited to learn the rich history behind the 24th Street Theatre and Sierra 2 Center.

The Learnery in the Sierra 2 Center is a hub for creativity and self-enrichment. Sierra 2 is excited to welcome new classes this fall including Sourdough Bread for Beginners, which focuses on learning the fundamentals of baking sourdough at home. The course is taught by local bread baker Michelle Ojovan, who created a curated kit to allow beginner bakers to master the art of bread baking from scratch.

If art is your passion, check out the Meaningful Marks series of watercolor classes. This course is instructed by award-winning artist, a former teacher of the year and Crocker Art Museum instructor Larry Ramos.

If you are seeking wellness, Sierra 2 Center offers classes that will hone your skills and make you sweat. From dancing to Zumba, each class is tailored to your skill level. The Wellness Program is a great way to relieve stress and rejuvenate your spirit.

– Erin Gottis

Merryhill to open school on Franklin Boulevard

By Anne Da Vigo

Merryhill Schools, which operates 13 private schools in the Sacramento area, has purchased the former Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints site in Curtis Park as the location for a pre-kindergarten program.

The brick church building at Eleventh Avenue and Franklin Boulevard, which had been vacant for several years, is under renovation and scheduled to open in January 2025, according to Katie Noone, director of marketing for Merryhill Schools.

"With the increased demand for a Merryhill education, the new Franklin Boulevard site will provide a pathway for younger siblings of our Midtown students to start early and grow with us, all the way through the 8th grade," Noone said in an email.

The Curtis Park location, slated for a capacity of 150 students, is less than two miles from Merryhill's K-8 school at 2600 V St.

Merryhill has a long-term lease on the property and is working with a development partner to build the school.

The city's Building Department has issued permits for work at the site. Noone said the build will include interior infant and pre-K facilities and a new playground with large shade structures for the summer months.

The 373-student school in Midtown is headed by Principal Rachel Kennedy. She will oversee the Curtis Park school along with an onsite principal, who is yet to be hired, Noone said.

Merryhill's infant/pre-K program joins other two other educational institutions along Franklin: Franklin Park Private School (K-6 school at 3031 Franklin Blvd.) and Bret Harte School, a K-6 public school at Ninth Avenue and Franklin Boulevard.

Merryhill opened its first school 75 years ago in a Sacramento church. Today, it operates 24 schools in California, Colorado, Nevada and Texas, Noone said. A school in Davis is also scheduled to open in 2025.

The new Merryhill School location in Curtis Park is scheduled to open in January 2025
Photo by Anne Da Vigo

"Demand in Sacramento has been high," Noone said. "We offer a rigorous, technology-rich curriculum combined with a nurturing environment."

The Merryhill Schools organization will host open houses throughout October to celebrate its 75th anniversary. Information is available at DiscoverMerryhill.com.

Trees

Continued from page 1

canopy, and then, as the population increases, move to the lower trunk. It takes 3 to 5 years for the oak to wilt and die. The native oak most prevalent in the Curtis Park neighborhood is the valley oak.

Because this is a new pest, experts are studying its behavior in Northern California. There are known chemical treatments for insect borers, but I'm not sure they have been tested on the Mediterranean oak borer. Infected trees should be removed, and the wood chipped into pieces one to three inches in diameter. The information bulletins published by public agencies recommend the logs be covered with clear plastic. However, at a July online seminar, Ewing indicated that the solarization of the wood to kill the beetle and larvae was ineffective. Therefore, the logs should be buried in a landfill. Using a tub grinder is possible, but the chips would have to be reprocessed through a regular chipper to get to the recommended size of one to three inches in diameter.

The city has tagged the tree for removal.

Firewood is the pathway that can artificially spread the pest to other areas. To prevent the spread of this and other insect pests, the Nature Conservancy urges consumers not to move their firewood. Let's hope the Mediterranean oak borer does not gain a foothold in Sacramento. Report suspect valley and blue oaks.

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

How do I report a potential infestation?

Pest Hotline: 1-800-491-1899

Report a Pest: cdfa.ca.gov/plant/report a pest

Valley oak in the Sierra 2 Green playground dying from Mediterranean oak borer. Photo by Daniel Pskowski

Director

Continued from page 1

ant concerns, including managing the facilities of a 100-year-old building, overseeing staff, collaborating with government officials, overseeing finances and expenses, including the Sierra 2 rental space, and promoting community events such as the Curtis Park Wine Tasting, Curtis Park Home and Garden Tour, Curtis Fest and Music in the Park.

Whitmore looks forward to working with staff, the SCNA Board, the nonprofit organizations housed in the Sierra 2 buildings and various vendors and addressing issues and ideas brought up by Curtis Park neighbors.

"I feel so lucky and privileged to be given the opportunity to serve as your new executive director," she said.

Dog park

Continued from page 2

It's also unclear how much money the city, which faces a budget shortfall, can spend on the effort.

"As funding is available, staff will continue to evaluate additional locations throughout the city for off-leash dog parks, including the expansion of Partner Dog Park at Belle Cooledge Park and further exploration in the Curtis Park neighborhood," the December staff report said.

Whatever happens, last winter's council vote seemingly eliminated Sierra 2 as a potential off-leash dog park.

Disagreement over unleashed dogs at Sierra 2 grew during the pandemic as dog owners from around the city learned of the unofficial dog park online.

Dog owners said the location offered a place for people and their dogs to gather and meet neighbors. But critics said the dogs destroyed turf, left waste and deterred other park users.

In the December staff report, city officials said the Sierra 2 temporary dog park was too small and had become a "significant maintenance burden."

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dancingwithheidi@gmail.com

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Room 12
Sept. 9 - "All the Sinners Bleed" by S.A Cosby

Nonfiction Book Club
3rd Thursday, 11 a.m.-noon
Room 12
Sept. 19 – "Season of the Witch" by David Talbot

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

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

CARDS & GAMES

Pinochle
Fridays, 1-3 p.m. Room 12

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

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

Women's Friendship Group

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2nd and 4th Wednesdays,
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Room 11

ZUMBA GOLD
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Saturdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Studio 1
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EDUCATION
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$30 per class
Optional paint kit: $25
This class is for adults at all levels. We will learn fundamental skills and explore the limits of this fascinating medium and beyond to paint diverse examples of unique animals, figures and places using a wide variety of techniques that reflect your authenticity and meaning. Award-winning artist Larry Ramos teaches it.
Supplies can be purchased from the teacher or bring in your own watercolor pads, paints and brushes.

CRAFTING AND MODELING WITH LIGHT CLAY
Thursdays, Sept. 5-26
10-11 a.m.
$25
Optional paint kit: $25
This course with award-winning instructor Zimei Gao blends artistry and fun while stimulating your imagination and creativity. Students will create charming and visually appealing clay sculptures through a few simple steps. There are tons of benefits to clay sculpting, such as mental focus and relaxation, clearing distractions and ease of stress, which relaxes the brain, enhances manual skills and enriches spiritual and cultural life. It is especially beneficial for seniors by promoting brain circulation and delaying aging through hand movements. Bring your own clay and tools or purchase a kit from the instructor.

VIBRANT EXPRESSIONS PAINTING CLASS: BROWN
Thursday, Sept. 12
6-7 p.m.
$35
Optional paint kit: $25
Welcome to "Vibrant Expressions," a painting class that explores our intuitive expressions with color. This class is not your typical color theory and mixing class; it is an artistic adventure to immerse yourself in the emotional and cultural dimensions of color, discovering the unique ways each hue can evoke feelings and tell stories. One 10"×10″ canvas and sample paints are included. Each participant should bring their own paint set and brushes. A paint kit is also available to purchase with your class reservation. Taught by Cara Gregor.

SOURDOUGH BREAD FOR BEGINNERS
Saturday, Sept. 14
11 a.m-3 p.m.
$135 per class
Class price include all the materials necessary to make your delicious bread.
This course will lead you through the fundamentals of maintaining a sourdough starter, mastering the fermentation process and crafting your own loaves from scratch. Hands-on instruction and expert guidance will give you the skills and confidence to bake flavorful sourdough breads at home. With hands-on practice mixing and shaping your own loaves, everyone goes home with a loaf ready for the oven. Expert local bread baker Michelle Ojovan teaches the class.
*Students will need a Dutch oven at home to bake the bread. Please bring a notebook and pen or pencil.

INTRODUCTION TO DRAWING WILD & WHIMSICAL
Tuesday, Sept. 17
10 a.m-12 p.m.
$30 per class
Do you love the illustrations found in children's books? Do you delight in flower fairies and trees that look like lollipops? Do you believe artmaking can be fun? Join us in September when we enter the world of whimsical art that is intuitive, colorful and playful, limited only by your imagination. We'll use pictures and stories for inspiration and let our inner child free to explore a world of magic and color. Introduction to Drawing is a series of informal monthly workshops ideal for beginners or those wishing to refresh their drawing skills and color work. Local artist and teacher Marie Taylor is the instructor.

ABSTRACT INTUITIVE PAINTING WORKSHOP
Saturday, Sept. 28
10 a.m.-12 p.m.
$30
Optional paint kit: $25
Explore the wonderful world of art, where the focus is not solely on the result but on the joy and fulfillment of the creative process. Whether novice or experienced, this class welcomes individuals from all levels of painting expertise. Discover the power of self-expression and the therapeutic nature of painting. Every aspect of the artistic journey will be explored and celebrated, from mixing vibrant colors to experimenting with different brush strokes.
Under the guidance of instructor Cara Gregor, you will learn various techniques and approaches to painting. The class will cover composition, color theory and the use of light and shadow to create depth and dimension in your artwork. The supplies list is on the Sierra 2 website.

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.

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Friday, Sept. 13: David Luning, pensive and concise, North Bay Americana artist inspired by John Prine, loved by Keith Urban
Saturday, Sept. 14: Chris Webster & Nina Gerber, deep soul from folk-music royalty
Saturday, Sept. 21: Richie Lawrence & Katie Thomas, tribute to Paul James Lacques (1954-2024), honoring lifelong friend and songwriter from their accordion-led LA Cajun, Zydeco/Norteño band, Rotondi
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Thursdays: Black Yacht Club presents "The Acoustic Circus," 1st Thursday, 7-9 p.m.
"On the 2 & the 4," Jazz with Kent Lacin & Two Rivers Trio," 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 6-9 p.m.
Fridays: "Local Sounds" acoustic showcase hosted by Four-Eyed Whale, 6-9 p.m.
Saturdays: Ukulele class with Gurukulele (Jim Coats), 4-5 p.m.
"Sactown Swings," 1st Saturday, 6-8 p.m.

– Mindy Giles

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Dad's Kitchen had a long and delicious run

By Diana Sunseri

Dad's Kitchen, a Freeport Boulevard standout for delicious comfort food with modern twists served in a funky environment, celebrated its last day of operation July 28 after 14 years serving Land Park and Curtis Park regulars.

Owner Sukhy Collins said it closed because, "despite a great run" and fabulous customers, the restaurant faced a lease increase and "never fully recovered after the pandemic." She said that California's minimum wage increase – "a $6 increase in five-and-a-half years" – also was a factor. The Dad's Kitchen in Fair Oaks remains open – and busy.

At the height of its popularity, the local Dad's Kitchen was featured on television personality Guy Fieri's "Diner, Drive-ins and Dives." Guy went bonkers over the signature "Dad's Burger" created by then-chef Luis Becerra, calling out the "holy crustification" of its bacon-and-blue-cheese-infused patty. A few years later, Food Network celebrity chef Stuart O'Keefe exulted the same burger on an episode of "The Best Thing I Ever Ate." The onion rings were to die for, as was the off-menu posole that was said to be the recipe of someone's abuelita (grandma).

Dad's Kitchen first opened as a spin-off of a tiny sandwich shop that still exists (with different owners) at 1310 S St. The original "Dad" was Sam England, who opened the 800-square-foot S Street location in 2006 with his son, Zac, and Zac's wife, Alison.

That original Dad's – where popular sandwiches such as the Hot Blonde, Bikini Kill, Fat Elvis and Angry Roadman were birthed and reigned – was a trendsetter at the time, offering blaring rock 'n' roll and elevated sandwiches crafted by tattooed sandwich makers armed with sizzling panini makers. Its success allowed the Englands to open Dad's Kitchen on Freeport, and local rockers DJ Rogers and Mick Stevenson, who met in the kitchen, eventually took over the business before it closed and was re-opened by current owner Collins with then-partner Julio Peix.

Despite its somewhat grubby exterior, the interior, with its lively bar and covered patio, was fun and upbeat and helped build community with events such Brunch Bingo and Trivia Monday. The narrow, craft-beer-centric bar was welcoming, and chatting with longtime bartenders Dave, then Matt, felt easy even if you went solo. Drop in, and there were always neighbors perched on stools to talk to, sports to watch and an interesting rotation of local beers to check out.

Before it closed, the menu at the Freeport location had changed and shrunk, disappointing many, as Collins and her dedicated team tried to make the economics work – until it didn't. Its Instagram page very sweetly featured long-time employees in its final days.

"We had a good run," Collins said. "What I really want people to know is that those customers from Land Park and Curtis Park are some of the best people I've ever met. Really."

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Don't miss Tapestry of Tastes, 175 Years of Sacramento Food and Wine

Nov. 19 event benefits neighborhood newspaper Viewpoint

By Bruce Pierini

Mark your calendars for Nov. 19 for the Sierra-Curtis Neighborhood Association's "Tapestry of Tastes, 175 Years of Sacramento Food and Wine," a panel discussion with three of the Sacramento area's best-known food and wine experts. The event at the 24th Street Theater will include an optional wine reception with small bites.

The panel discussion and reception will benefit *Viewpoint*, Curtis Park's monthly newspaper edited, written and distributed by volunteers.

Panelists include Darrell Corti, a nationally known grocer and wine expert; Maryellen Burns, author of several cookbooks on local home and restaurant cooking and Mike Dunne, a former Sacramento Bee wine editor and author of "The Signature Wines of Superior California."

Burns will discuss the development of local cuisine, including bakeries, restaurants and specialty grocery stores, pulling from several of her books, including "Lost Restaurants of Sacramento and Their Recipes." Dunne, with 50 years of writing about Northern California wines, will talk about major developments in winemaking, from the original vines of the Gold Rush to the wide variety produced today. Corti will add to both Burns' and Dunne's perspectives on the evolution of cuisine and winemaking across the region's history.

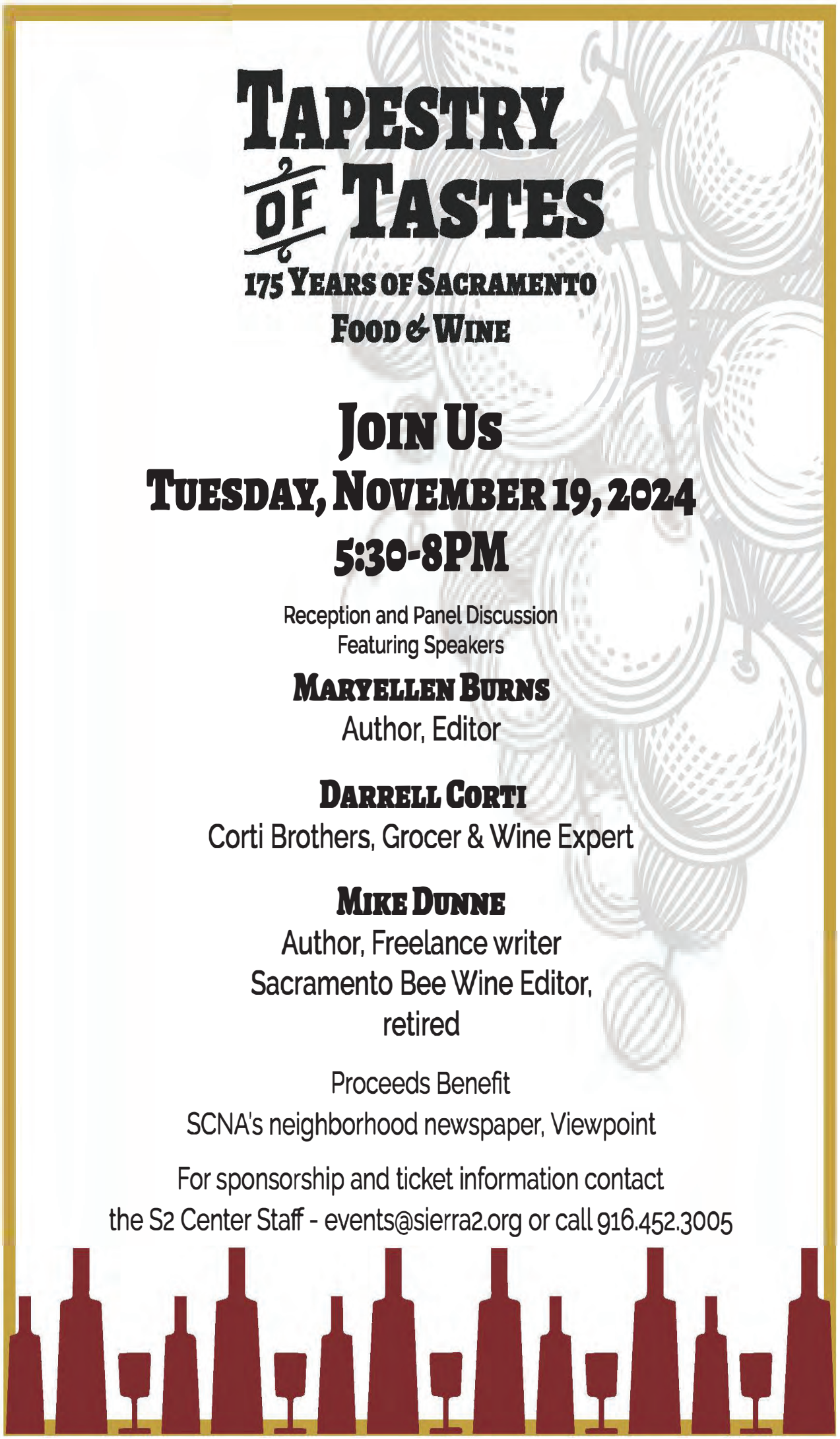
Burns also will address how artisanal breads developed, considering, for example, how many people grew up knowing little else but Wonder Bread, without access to home-baked loaves or New York-style bagels.

Why Motherlode Zinfandels were so heavy and syrupy in the late 1970s and 1980s and how they evolved into their lighter, sprightly descendants will be another topic addressed by Dunne and Corti.

The audience also will learn why and how many wineries in the greater Sacramento area began producing specialty wines, including the single Rhone varietals of Lodi, Tehama County's award-winning Old 44, and Portuguese varietals, such as those produced at St. George's Winery in Lodi.

The wine tasting reception will be held in the Sierra 2 Center Garden Room and Courtyard from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and the panel discussion will begin at 7 p.m.

Tickets for the panel discussion and wine-tasting reception are $75 per person. Tickets for the panel only are $50 per person. Tickets can be obtained at the SCNA Office in the Sierra 2 Center or online at sierra2.org.



Curtis Park art studios on tour Sept. 14 and 15

Four Curtis Park artists are participating in Weekend #1 of the annual Sac Open Studios art tour from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 14 and 15. The free tour offers a peek inside the studios of local artists and, in some cases, demos or activities.

The local artists include:

• Thomas Fillebrown, painting, 2981 Franklin Boulevard near Portola

• Jen Beckman, painting, and Sandy Fong Whetstone, interdisciplinary, at Triple Exposure Studios, 2998 Franklin Boulevard near Fifth Avenue

• Diana Sunseri, "Women with Something to Say" show, painting and collage, 2514 Montgomery Way

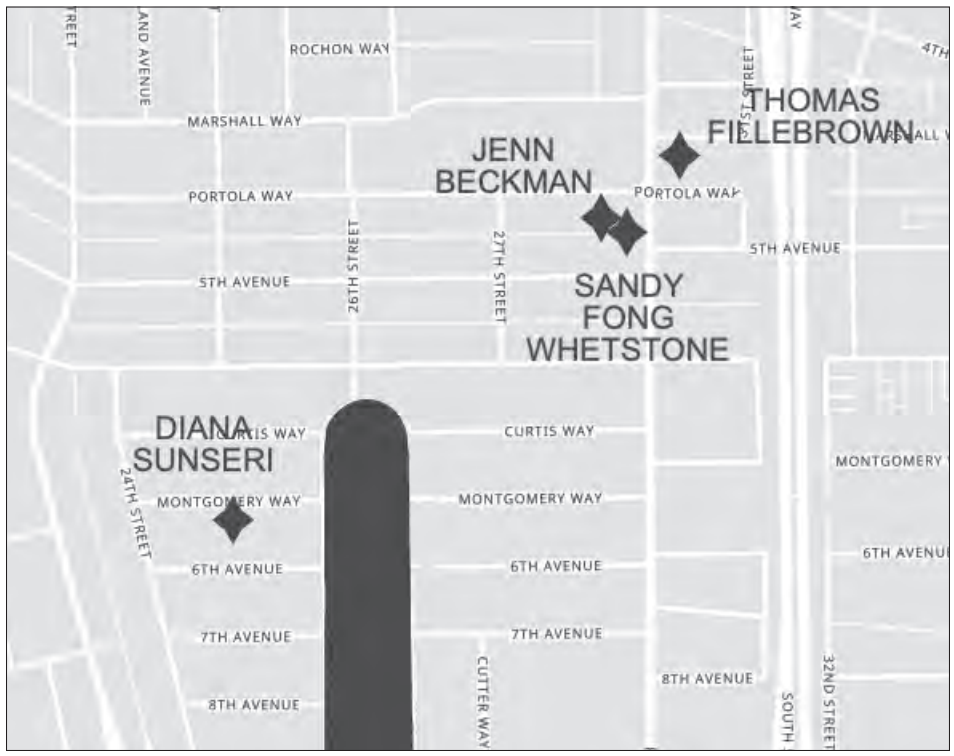
Thomas Fillebrown, a Sierra College professor emeritus, works in acrylic on paper, canvas and wood and, more recently, turned to collage and digital printmaking to explore how small manipulations influence our perceptions. Many know him for his vibrant work of layering, spreading, pushing and removing colorful acrylic paint on large canvases.

Jen Beckman is a professional landscape architect whose art focuses on landscapes that are neither purely abstract nor totally realistic. She captures California landscapes in painterly renditions using the dynamic relationships between form and color, rhythm and shapes, lights and darks. Her art also is influenced by the lyricism and freedom of music.

Sandy Fong Whetstone is a ceramic sculptor, painter, printmaker and mixed-media artist. Her work reflects the beauty and humor found in nature and explores our oft fraught relationship with it, along with our struggle to impose our will on nature contrasted with our efforts to preserve it.

Diana Sunseri will show her newest paintings and collages, "Women with Something to Say," as a collective commentary on today's tumultuous, exasperating and exciting political and cultural landscape. A few of her memorial altars, which are designed to be personalized, also will be on display. Visitors also can add a few dabs (or many) to a community abstract painting that will evolve as the tour unfolds. No painting experience required.

"The first year I participated I had 180 visitors," Sunseri said. "I've heard artists say that nothing matches this event in terms of sharing their art with the public. People are genuinely interested in what inspires you in the subjects you choose; the stories behind the painting or the technical 'how to' in achieving the results you do."



Sac Open Studios is presented annually by the southside Sacramento arts organization Verge Center for the Arts. This year's show features 244 artists over two weekends throughout Sacramento County, West Sacramento, Davis and Woodland. Tour attendees can pick up an event guidebook when visiting the Curtis Park artists, and advance copies also have been spotted at Sierra 2.

Verge also hosts a free and popular Kickoff Party. Tourgoers can meet the area's premier artists, grab the tour guidebook, view works by all of the Sac Open Studios artists and plan their tour from there. The Kickoff Party is set for 6-9 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 12 at Verge, 625 S St., Sacramento.

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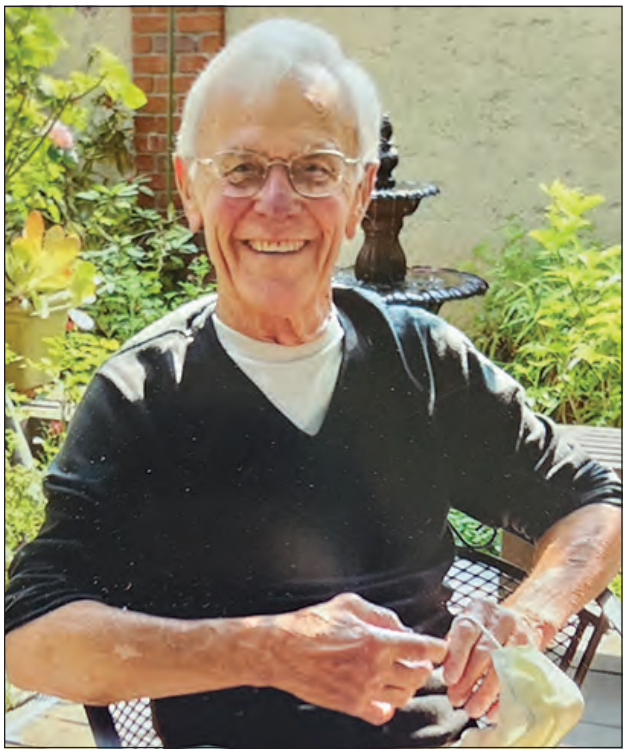

Photo courtesy Brazil family

Neighborhood loses longtime resident Eric Brazil

Eric Brazil, a Curtis Park resident since 1977, passed away last month at the age of 90. Brazil, who lived on 26th Street, will be missed by his family and neighbors, including his wife of 67 years, Mary Jo. He was described as "a journalist, outdoorsman, husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather."

Neighbors remember him as a walker and talker, always ready for a friendly conversation with passers-by and their dogs, his bike riding and tending to the community garden.

Brazil had a distinguished 50-year career as a journalist for various outlets, including San Francisco papers and *USA Today*, before retiring to enjoy time with his family, traveling, hiking, pie-making and rooting for the River Cats.

– Patti Roberts

Capitol Optometry grand opening on July 30, 2024. Pictured from Left to right are Aaron Orozco (optician), Nichole Moos (optometrist/president), Spencer Fairgrieve (associate optometrist), Brittany Moore (optometric technician), and Kirsten Padley (office manager/licensed optician).

Photo by Matthew Royal

Capitol Optometry hosts grand opening in the Amalia Development

By Matthew Royal

Capitol Optometry, a downtown Sacramento business, has expanded its presence with a new location in Curtis Park, marking the occasion with a grand opening celebration on July 30. The practice is accepting new patients.

Located in the Amalia Development on 24th Street across from the Sierra 2 Theater, the new office offers a welcoming atmosphere designed with families in mind. The waiting room features a dedicated kids' area with coloring books, a craft table and sample frames for young patients. Vibrant artwork decorates the walls, and the bathroom features colorful skull-themed wallpaper, a nod to the owner's Mexican roots.

Nichole R. Moos, owner and lead optometrist, expressed her excitement during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "It's been a long time coming. I've been thinking about this since before going to optometry school," she shared, acknowledging the support of her family. Her mother and grandmother were at the celebration, and Moos described them as "very strong women I look up to," and dedicated the opening to them.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce also attended to celebrate the new location. "We're so thrilled to have you open this location in the community," said a representative. "Congratulations to Dr. Moos and her entire team, the family, friends and community. We know it takes everybody and we're just so excited for you."

"Watch out, these scissors are incredibly sharp," Moos joked as she prepared to cut the ribbon. "We're so happy to be part of the community, and we are so excited for what's to come," she said.

For more information, visit capitoloptometry.com or call 916-237-1407.

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SCNA president touts Sierra 2 Center on ABC 10

SCNA President John Bailey appeared on ABC 10's "Your California Life" program on July 18 to talk about the neighborhood's vibrant Sierra 2 Center. During the two-minute segment with interviewer Desiree Sheppard, Bailey talked about the 45-year history of Sierra 2, its unique relationship with the city and its various tenants and program providers. With about 30 organizations using the center weekly or monthly, between 500 and 1,000 people visit the center on any given day. To view his appearance, visit sierra2.org.

Early start for Bret Harte students and teachers

LAUREN GOTHARD *and* LINDSEY SIN

School started two weeks earlier for students in Sacramento City Unified School District, which includes Bret Harte Elementary. In May, families and students were notified that the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years would each include eight additional instructional days. The announcement change helps make up for the days missed during the teachers' strike in spring 2022.

State law requires that districts meet requirements for school days and instructional time. To avoid penalties and having to return $39 million to the state, the district obtained a waiver from the State Board of Education. A stipulation of the waiver was to double the number of instructional days missed and add them over two academic years. "The recovered funds will be used to hire additional certificated staff to support students at our schools," an announcement on the district website noted.

While families were given ample notice of the earlier start date, it was not welcome news for some students. "I feel angry because we don't have more summer, and it's been two years since the teachers went on strike," said incoming fifth-grader Maxwell Sin. School let out for summer on June 15, making the break only two months long and two weeks shorter than usual.

Bret Harte teachers also returned to the classroom earlier than normal to take instructional classes, which is part of their preparation to begin the new school year. "There was a wide variety of classes: science, math, classroom management, SEL (Social Emotional Learning)," said Bret Harte Principal Roxanne Wolfe. Teachers could choose which classes to focus on to utilize in their classrooms.

Despite the shortened break, Wolfe is excited for the start of the new school year. Given last school year's academic gains, she said she looks forward to building on that momentum this year. Students showed significant progress in English Language Arts, raising test scores by 7%. Wolfe said a 5% to 7% increase in one year is very good.

"We have several new partnerships with vendors to help increase student performance. We also have other opportunities for field trips and are looking to continue partnering with our PTA," she said.

Community events for the fall include the Principal's Tea on Sept. 6, the Grandparents' Tea on Sept. 9, the Welcome Back Dance on Sept. 13, Back-To-School Night on Sept. 18 and Garden Work Day on Sept. 21. An annual neighborhood favorite, the Fall Festival, will take place on Oct. 25.

Though feelings about the early return to school are mixed, there is much to look forward to at Bret Harte this academic year. For Wolfe, seeing all the students and building a stronger community with new staff and families is at the top of her list.

Teagan Gothard walks into her first day of kindergarten.
Photo by Lauren Gothard

Second grader Charlie Sin and Fifth Grader Maxwell Sin pose for their first day of school picture.
Photo by Megan Campbell-Miller

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