

# 2020 Year in Review

A year ago, I made the resolution to see things with clear 20/20 vision with the new year and to treat my little world with the most kindness I could give. Little did I know that the coronavirus I had heard about on the other side of the world would turn into a full-blown pandemic.

In these unprecedented times, we have seen death, unemployment, under-employment, growing homelessness, social unrest. Whether a pandemic, a natural disaster or any other traumatic event, the community always comes together. “It’s Us. It’s always us. We’re in this together. Etc.” The rallying cries for humanity’s survival.

We participated in the largest voter turnout in history and voted for the first woman mayor of West Sacramento.

Before the shutdown began on Friday, the 13th in March, the city saw some great events including the unforgettable Cirque du Soleil production of Amaluna in the Sutter Health Park’s parking lot, and the unveiling of the Barge Canal Trail (which couldn’t have come at a better time with shelter-in-place mandates).

I hope you enjoy some highlights from this year’s Ledger, and here’s to a happy new year and the health of the city.

**Martha wins; Christopher Cabaldon conceded**  
**BY MICHELE TOWNSEND**

Though the final votes have not yet been certified by the Yolo County Elections Office, at this point, it is just a formality. On Friday, November 20th, 2020 Mayor Christopher Cabaldon conceded to Martha Guerrero in the race for the next Mayor of West Sacramento. Mayor Cabaldon first joined the West Sacramento City Council in 1996. He was appointed as Mayor in 1998

by fellow city council members. The council chose him for three more, one-year terms, as Mayor. That was the policy for choosing a Mayor back then. In 2004 West Sacramento held its first direct election for Mayor and Christopher Cabaldon became West Sacramento’s first elected Mayor. He now holds the title of the longest-serving Mayor in West Sacramento’s history. Before the 2020 elections, the West Sacramento News-Ledger reached out to Mayor Cabaldon so that we could bring our readers some insight on who the Mayor is, and what his vision for the city’s future was. We were unable to obtain an interview. I had planned on including a summary of the work the Mayor has done during his time in office. However, during his time as West Sacramento’s Mayor, he has brought forth so much growth, so many changes, improvements, developments, and programs, that there is no way to be both accurate and brief. Therefore I plan on bringing you this information very soon. I am comfortable speaking for many when I say to the Mayor, Thank You for all that you have done.

Late Friday Morning (November 20th), right after the elections office posted their update, Mayor Cabaldon posted a letter on both Facebook and Twitter that read as follows: “After Yolo County released the latest vote count two hours ago, I called Councilmember Guerrero to congratulate (sic) her for winning the election. Her hill was steep to climb, and her effort unrelenting. My wish for her is that she is able to enjoy the same purpose—profound, awesome, challenging, and, ultimately, fulfilled—that has been such a source of joy in my own life. With the two dynamic, powerhouse city councilmembers elected at the same time, Quirina Orozco and Dawnté Early-West, and a

superbly talented and dedicated professional city staff, I’m optimistic for West Sacramento as my town chooses a different path. I’m so grateful to have had the chance to spend most of my adult life in service to the community that is nothing less than my family. Along the way, I’ve soared with my community higher than either of us could have imagined. I could not be prouder of what we’ve accomplished, of what we’ve built. What an awesome and special way for one man to spend his life. From the core of my soul and the bottom of my heart, thank you.”

On December 9th, 2020 Martha Guerrero was sworn in as the new Mayor of West Sacramento, Ca. Congratulations Martha. Martha did a lot of campaigning. She, herself (not just volunteers), spent countless hours going door to door and talking face to face with the community. She spoke to anyone that approached her and listened to whatever people had to say. Her promise is transparency. Openness to involve the community in decision making, project planning, and progress on projects that have been promised. (For example, we still don’t know if West Capitol Avenue will be repaved.)

**Elections are over and we’re still one member short**  
**BY MICHELE TOWNSEND**

Comprising five members, the West Sacramento City Council includes the Mayor and four council members. To fill a vacant seat, a council member is elected or re-elected into that seat. The term for being a council member is four years. Our council is set up so that two members come up for election at opposite times as the other two. When the four years of that member’s term is



up, they either leave that position vacant to be filled by someone elected, or they are re-elected and remain in that seat. Every two years, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes are elected into the seats. This year Quirina Orozco was re-elected and Norma Alcala was elected into the seat that Babs Sandeen retired from. The remaining two seats were held by Martha Guerrero and Chris Ledesma.

Typically, if someone leaves the council before their four year term is up, an application process is held and the council members appoint a person to fill the forfeited seat. This person can then run to be elected into that seat at its next term. If Cabaldon would have won the Mayoral race, it would be business as usual. But this

election is different for the West Sacramento city council. Martha Guerrero’s council member’s seat is empty. The question now is: did she forfeit her seat when she was elected Mayor, therefore opening it up to be filled by appointment through the application process? Or did she just change seats on the council, leaving her seat vacant by default? If vacant by default, should that seat be filled by the candidate with the next highest number of votes (this would be Dawnté Early-West), and then run for re-election in 2022?

Our current council is split on this topic. Quirina and Chris argue that because the election was so recent, the position should be filled by

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## THIS ‘n’ THAT Addicted to Social Media



**BY CAROL BOGART**

Learning early about cool stuff like the once-in-our-lifetime conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn is why I’m hooked on social media. I’m a news junkie, no doubt about it, and I read all kinds of stuff. English language news from the Middle East, for instance. Because the Middle East is 12

hours ahead of us, I read about the ‘Christmas Star’ days before it played big in U.S. media.

Same with bickering in Washington. And the Guardian in London had it first that the new, more infectious, strain of Covid had spread to Italy. A day later, Saudi Arabia closed ports and

airports to UK travelers. Interesting to me is how our news is viewed by media in other countries – and vice versa.

By now, of course, it’s old news that Congress passed a second stimulus package giving \$600 to most Americans. In fact, you may already have yours. The UAE takes great interest in

Trump and Biden. And our economy.

Thanks to the Internet skulking that I do, I’m a bit more cautious about Pfizer’s vaccine. Not a few people have had an allergic reaction to it. People who have no history of allergies. Bad enough, in some cases, to land them in the hospital. I also check

headlines in several U.S. papers, read the crawls on cable news, and get news alerts from all of them in my email. Besides news, I also like social media posts that touch me or make me laugh. Example: The Twitter observations of a Muslim man on

See This ‘n’ That, page 10

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# OBITUARY

**James Ellis Little**

James Ellis Little was born on November 20, 1961 and passed away on November 29, 2020. James is survived by his wife Eileen, 3 siblings Roberta (Dan), Donna & Damien, daughter Monique, nieces and nephews and loving family in OR/MA.



James was preceded in death by his parents Clarence and Karen, sister Teresa and daughter Staci. He leaves behind many lifelong friends he considered family. His family meant the world to him!

James was born in Eugene, OR and raised in Olivehurst and West Sacramento, CA. He graduated from River City High School class of 1980.

James was a skilled craftsman in woodworking making many memories for his special friends. He loved riding his Harley with friends on special runs and enjoyed working on construction projects to help others, oftentimes as a volunteer. In his spare time, he enjoyed restoring and working on older cars and engines as a mechanic.

James worked many years in West Sacramento at Sac. Redwood Lumber Company for 25 years with Haskell and Jeff who retired and closed the business and for Kirby at Radial Tire, at the time of James' passing.

Cremation arrangements were handled by River Cities Funeral Chapel of West Sacramento. Due to COVID-19 no service will be held. Memorial run and Celebration of Life possibly in 2021.



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Leave the empty council seat up to voters

Dear Editor,

On December 9, 2020 Martha Guerrero was sworn in as West Sacramento's newest Mayor leaving her previous spot on the council vacant and open for an appointment. Norma Alcalá, who shares the same goals of increased transparency and civic participation as Martha, was also sworn in. That leaves two remaining city council members, both quite vocal in their support for the previous mayor, who are in opposition to Martha's desire to take a more inclusive stance and see her seat filled by the application process which has long been the tradition for the city.

Martha, an original supporter of the previous mayor, made no secret of her concerns for the direction of the city feeling that things had reached a tipping point where the infrastructure of the city was becoming less and less a priority. She launched each of her bids for public office citing a need for more attention placed on addressing homelessness, affordable housing options, infrastructure, and making the city safer.

So how can we, as West Sacramentans, support our newly elected mayor? With a current 2:2 split, we need an appointment process that opens up the field to choose someone who supports the vision and ideals we voted for when we elected Martha to lead our city. We need to appoint someone who can place their loyalty to the working class people of the city above politics-someone who cares about improving access to city services and supporting our long-underserved communities. We need a critical thinker who shares our new mayor's commitment to accessibility, transparency and who will support moving to a city council of single member district representation.

At the December 9th city council meeting, there was a push to make a direct appointment of the city council candidate who came in 3rd in a two seat election to fill Martha's seat instead of opening up the process to the entire city through the application process. This candidate, unlike the other two

in the race who placed 4th and 5th, ran on a slate with the previous mayor as did the candidate who placed 1st in the two seat race.

Many feel that a direct appointment of the 3rd place candidate is owed to her supporters. But what is owed to 52% of the electorate who voted for a change in the mayor and by extension a change in the direction of the city? The math of a direct appointment paints a clear picture and one that was rejected by 52% of the electorate.

Please join me in writing to our city council that what is desired and what is needed, is an open and inclusive process carried out before the public to fill the vacant seat. We cannot have that unless we have an open application process. Politics and personal bias must be put aside to do what is best for the people of West Sacramento.

Here is the email to the city clerk! clerk@cityofwestsacramento.org The subject line should be Public Comment and make sure to address it to the city council!

Sincerely,  
Danny Thirakul  
Student Senate for California Community Colleges

## In favor of council appointment of Dawnte Early-West for empty council seat

Dear Editor,

When Mayor Guerrero assumed her new duties, the West Sacramento City Council had two options for filling her vacant seat: (1) appoint someone OR (2) keep the seat empty and hold a special election in November of 2021.

While we might hope the council avoids all 2-2 ties on any crucial matter arising before next November, watching Congress makes clear how deadlocking can devastate those in need. In addition, bearing the cost of well over \$100,000 for hold an off-year election seems foolhardy during a pandemic.

For these reasons, I favor appointment by our council.

But who should serve? Just last month, we held an election in which all candidates with the courage to put their names on a ballot for City Council ran their campaigns, shared their visions, and were vetted, challenged, and considered by our citizens.

Fulfilling their civic duties, those West Sacramentans re-elected me, welcomed Norma Alcalá, and gave Dawnte Early-West over 8,100 votes, the 4th highest vote total in our city's history.

Dawnte's appointment would shatter a glass ceiling by bringing not only the first African-American woman to our council but one who is eminently qualified via her work in public health and equity research. I cannot fathom another time when Dawnte's skills are more indispensable than now.

But, ultimately, I favor Dawnte's appointment because I cannot shake the words of civil rights titan, John Lewis, who said the vote is "the most powerful tool we have in a democratic society."

If we give life to this spirit, we have to ask which approach does justice to our democratic ideals in every sense of the word:

1. Four councilmembers who appoint a candidate that represents the will of the voters; OR
  2. Four council members who silence those voters in favor of their own personal preferences?
- Yes, voters expect their elected representatives to exercise their own judgment on complicated matters voters lack the time or expertise to resolve.

Who serves our city is not such an issue, and I will not be party to a cavalier disregard of the public will when the highest number of voters in our history exercised their most fundamental right to speak and did so loudly and with absolute clarity.

I believe very strongly in the right to vote, and I believe that despite whether I agree or disagree with the outcome, the will of the voters must be respected and their voices heard.

It just so happens that I am actually listening.

Sincerely, Quirina Orozco  
West Sacramento City Council Member

**Tanya Aguilera**  
West Sacramento Specialist

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# A year in Review

Continued from page 1

the voters' choice. Martha and Norma say that the person who came in third, lost the race and the seat should be opened up to the application process someone that may not have been able to afford the expense of running a campaign can have a chance. Furthermore, Martha says that the council represents the entire city, not just those that vote. However, all of the council members are in there because they were elected, and this election had the biggest turnout of voters in the history of West Sacramento.

It was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to help make this decision. However the subcommittee is Martha Guerrero and Chris Ledesma. So it's just one against one, instead of two against two? The ironic thing is that if a decision cannot be reached between opposing sides, a special election will be held in November of 2021 and the person will be elected anyway. This person will then have to go up for re-election in 2022. The city council is trying to have a decision by the beginning of January, so that if they go with the application process, a selection can be made by February. If that is not the case, then we can look forward to November.

## Sutter Health Park transformed into the world of Cirque du Soleil's Amaluna

The iconic large blue and white striped Cirque du Soleil tent took shape at the parking lot of Sutter Health Park with a team of more than 60 team pounding pegs, unfurling the canvas, and pushing more than 100 supporting poles that make the intimate tent take its shape. Ready-ing the ballpark for the transformation, the Cirque du Soleil team brought Amaluna to West Sacramento from Wednesday, January 22 through Sunday, February 23, 2020.

Written and directed by Tony Award-winning director Diane Paulus, Amaluna is a celebration of love and a tribute

to the work and voice of women, featuring a cast that comprises mostly women with an all-female band. The show's title is a fusion of the words ama, which refers to "mother" in many languages, and luna, which means "moon," a symbol of femininity that evokes both the mother-daughter relationship and the idea of goddess and protector of the planet.

## Washington Unified School District virtual graduation event aired live on June 12

Washington Unified hosted a virtual graduation event that aired live on June 12, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. The event featured the graduating classes from River City High School, Washington Middle College High School, Yolo High School, the WUSD Transition to Adult Living (TAL) Program, and the Washington Adult Education program.

Additionally, starting at 5:30 p.m., the event featured a virtual waiting room showcasing "then and now" photos of this year's graduates, including an opportunity for friends, families, and members of the public to submit congratulatory messages or pictures.

Heartfelt images played in a slideshow before the start of the virtual graduation ceremony.

## Barge Canal Trail celebrated with ribbon cutting ceremony

Mayor Christopher Cabaldon, Yolo County Supervisor and Port of West Sacramento Commission Chair Oscar Villegas, council members, staff and neighbors celebrated the completion of the Barge Canal trail on Thursday, February 13. The bike/pedestrian trail is 3/4 of a mile long and stretches along the south side of the Barge Canal access. The trail features bench seating, upgraded trash bins and lighting. Replicas of historic artifacts were installed in the seating areas to honor the Port of West Sacramento's heritage. *Source:* City of West Sacramento

## I Street Bridge final design revealed

The new I Street Bridge across the Sacramento River will feature benches for pedestrians to relax, a glass floor so they can see the water below and a graceful arch that will lift to allow boats to pass underneath. Designed by T.Y. Lin International Group, the \$200-million bridge was the first span erected across the Sacramento River since 1966 when the Pioneer Bridge began carrying cars across the river to Interstate 80. The primary architect is Noel Shamble of T.Y. Lin. The final design was unveiled Friday, Feb. 21, 2020.

By the time the bridge is finished in 2023, the surrounding landscape will be strikingly differ-

ent, with a new Major League Soccer stadium in The Railyards, new entertainment venues and green spaces along the Old Sacramento Waterfront. The Powerhouse Science Center will be operating just up the river in Sacramento. Kaiser is also planning to build a new hospital in The Railyards. Built 108 years ago, the existing I Street Bridge is too narrow to serve buses, has no bicycle lanes, and has sidewalks that don't meet accessibility standards. It will continue to operate for trains, which cross on the lower level of the span. The cities of West Sacramento and Sacramento are exploring whether to turn the upper deck into a pedestrian park.

The design was the result of an extensive public process that included input from more than 3,800 people. It includes car lanes, bike lanes, and a broad pedestrian walkway with built-in benches to take in the view. *Source:* City of Sacramento

## Riverbank principal metamorphized struggling campus to information powerhouse

**BY FORREST GARDENS;**  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-LEDGER

At Riverbank Elementary, Principal Kristin Rodriguez has sunk her "Otter Claws" into the beast of education in West Sacramento. While the school is north of the tracks, she is also taking learning northward, em-

barking the entire community on a journey to destination education.

Our school isn't just a place for instruction by gifted teachers: it's the glue, the motor, the spokes of the community. Families across the Bryte/Broderick neighborhood face so many challenges due to the "just trying to survive" routine — the school provides the stability so many kids yearn and need.

Rodriguez has metamorphized (ah, I can remember my 3rd grade science terminology) from a struggling campus into the up-and-coming information powerhouse we need to get these kids from the poverty-inheriting environment we have now.

The woman is handling so many issues, on so many fronts, and holding it all together. If I spent 10 minutes in her mind, I'd have to take a nap.

For all you folks who want to see the numbers, the grades, the statistical differences, I can't provide that. I can tell you, the kids are calmer, nicer to one another, and were more "wide eyed." These intangible "upgrades" are setting the foundation for a long-haul approach. Which goes against the grain of the parent-entrenched and albeit, misplaced value of immediate gratification of quid pro quo.

Yes, we've had some pain, but that's expected when we grow, it's part of the process. Pain? Let me explain. We have such a diverse community that school meetings look like a United Nations summit. Just about everything she does is seven-fold. English to

Spanish, Spanish to English, English to Russian, Russian to English, Russian to Spanish, Spanish to Russian. I almost forgot...translating all that into Soval Phare (i.g. Hobbit speak) for the kids.

Who must capture all this? Who must incorporate all the community needs? Who must implement them? Who has to say no, to some things? Yup, you guessed it: Principal Kristen Rodriguez.

## Raiders athletes sign Letters of Intent to attend Cal State Monterey Bay

Two athletes from River City High School recently gathered for a socially distanced ceremony in the football stadium to sign Letters of Intent to attend California State University at Monterey Bay. Ally Ainsworth will compete in the school's water polo program and Lindsey Dewitt will play for their soccer program. Both of these athletes have worked so hard for River City in multiple sports and are both excellent students. Congratulations to you and your families and your journey continues.

## Over 100 people facing eviction from Westwind Estates mobile home park

**BY MICHELE TOWNSEND**

Residents at Westwind Estates Mobile Home Park, located on Sacramento Avenue, have been in "panic mode" af-

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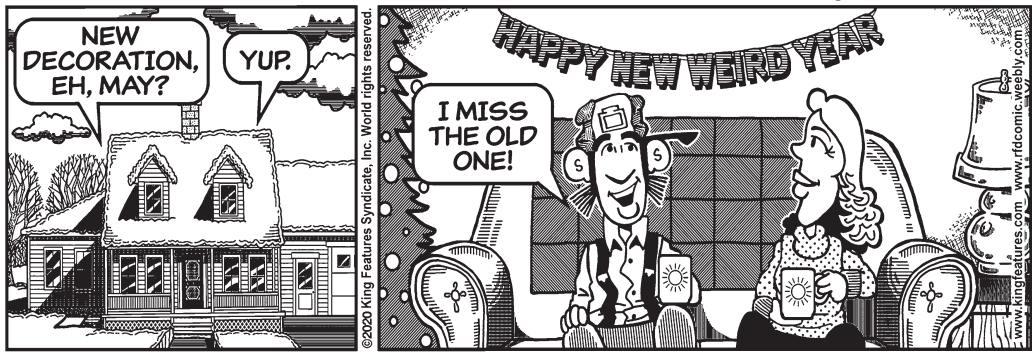




# PUZZLES & COMICS

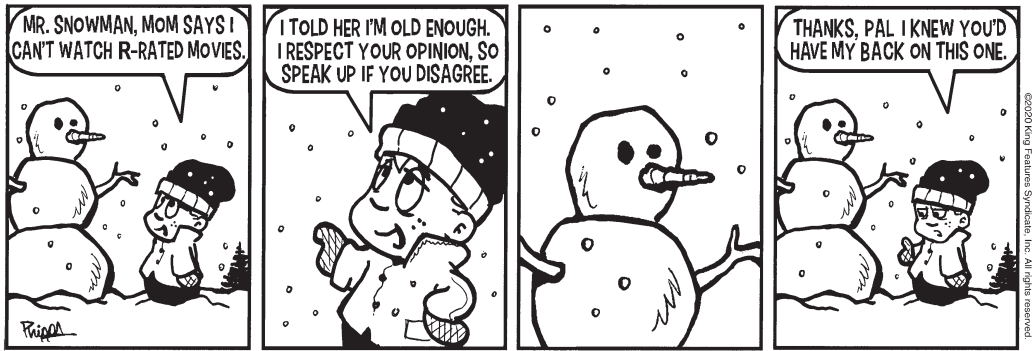
R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



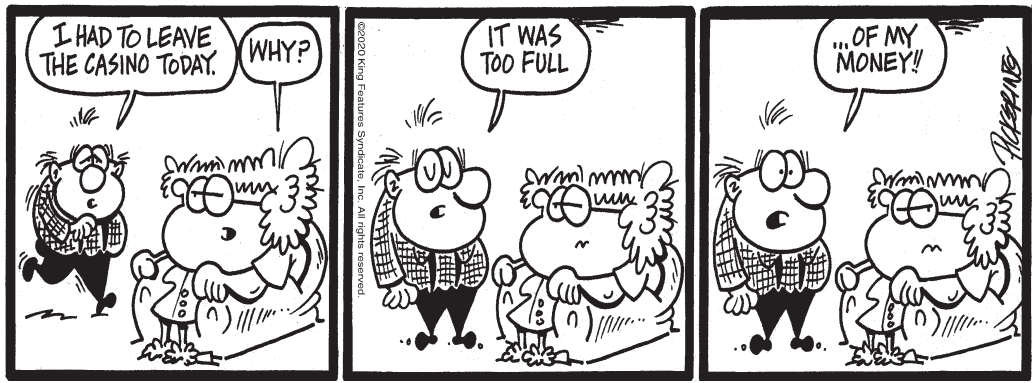
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

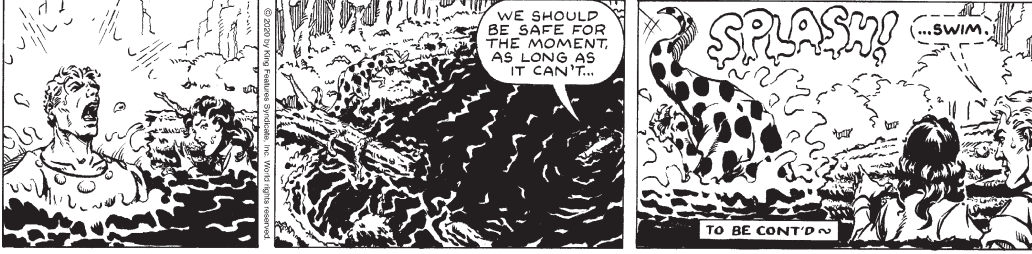
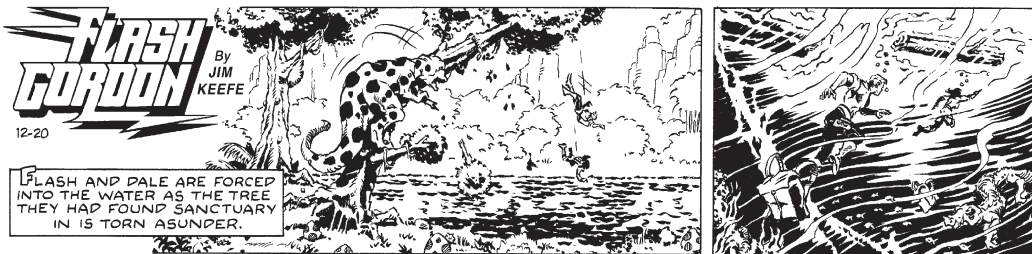
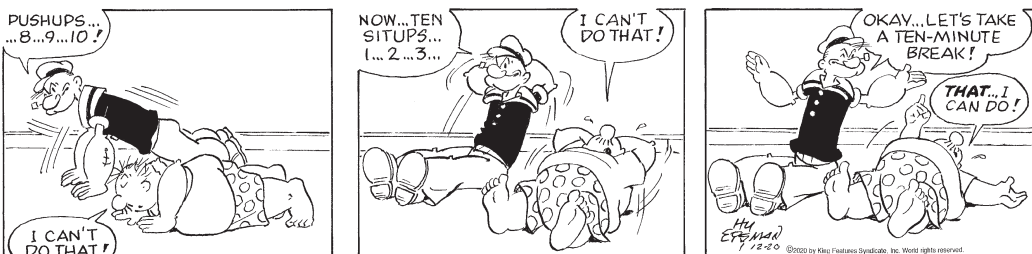
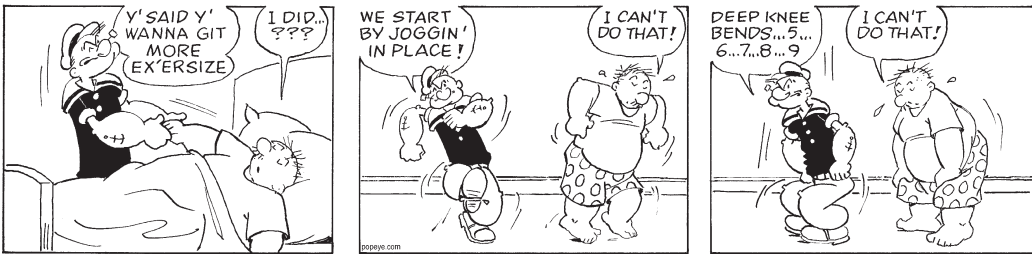


The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



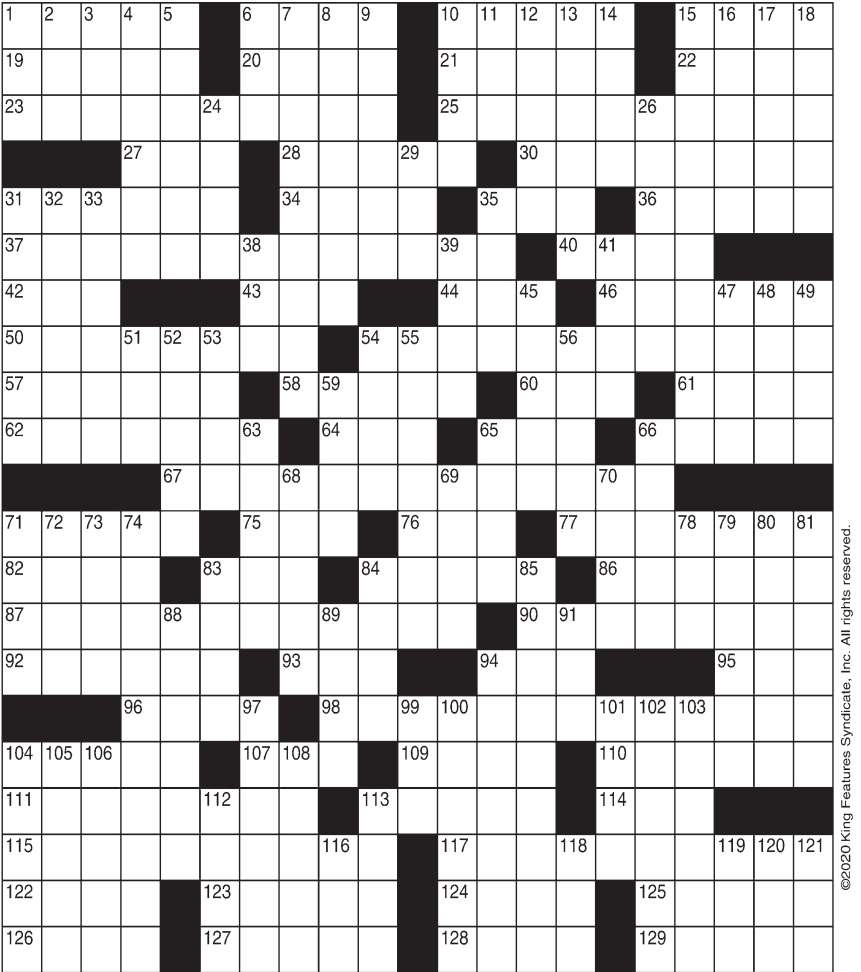
## Puzzle Answers are on page 8



## Super Crossword

AUTO SUGGESTION

- ACROSS
- 1 Halo sporter
  - 6 Nest nuggets
  - 10 Had no being
  - 15 "Vamoosel!"
  - 19 "I wanna try!"
  - 20 Cameo, e.g.
  - 21 Lend — (pay attention)
  - 22 Poi source
  - 23 Participants in a guided discussion
  - 25 Longtime kids' nature magazine
  - 27 Spanish for "bear"
  - 28 McDonnell Douglas jet
  - 30 Refuge
  - 31 Thelma's cohort, in film
  - 34 Use an entryway
  - 35 Velvet or Hallow ender
  - 36 — hop (jitterbug)
  - 37 14- to 18-year-old in a British youth association
  - 40 Source copy: Abbr.
  - 42 "BTW" part
  - 43 You, in Berlin
- 44 Road given a no.
- 46 Pop-rock singer
- 50 Kind of sheet metal
- 54 Border illumination on some smartphones
- 57 Mini-whirlpools
- 58 What bran provides, to Brits
- 60 Grads.-to-be
- 61 Basso Pinza
- 62 Outfits anew
- 64 "No" voter
- 65 "— culpa!"
- 66 Slender nails
- 67 Large cosmological aggregate
- 71 Imams' God
- 75 U.S. tax org.
- 76 Berlin article
- 77 Ejected lava
- 82 Waste time
- 83 Party game
- 84 "— not lost"
- 86 1980s TV's Remington
- 87 1966 Wilson Pickett hit
- 90 The "I" of 75-Across
- 92 Show up for
- 93 Farm female
- 94 Abbr. for those with only one given name
- 95 Mil. unit
- 96 Tooth anchor
- 98 First extended stay on the International Space Station
- 104 Spiny plants
- 107 With 103-Down, didn't know at all
- 109 Radio knob
- 110 Loin steaks
- 111 Put in order
- 113 Writer Franz
- 114 "Y" athlete
- 115 Annual Arizona football game
- 117 New York City fashion-industry agency whose name is apt for this puzzle
- 122 Shoe fillers
- 123 Conical tent
- 124 Comics' Kett
- 125 "Peachy!"
- 126 Sommer of Hollywood
- 127 Lauder of fragrances
- 128 Asian nation
- 129 Garish
- DOWN
- 1 TV title alien
- 2 Natal lead-in
- 3 Yukon maker
- 4 Avian-based skin care product
- 5 To a smaller degree
- 6 Botch it up
- 7 "Sheesh!"
- 8 Biochemical sugar
- 9 Erma Bombeck's "The Grass Is Always Greener Over the — Tank"
- 10 Alert
- 11 Actress Ortiz
- 12 Pick up on
- 13 1998 Winter Olympics city
- 14 Nonkosher wine
- 15 More direct
- 16 — terrier
- 17 Curved
- 18 Sweet white
- 24 Word after film or play
- 26 Frank topper
- 29 Musician Brian
- 31 Vowel, e.g.
- 32 Bull leather
- 33 Capsizes
- 35 Ending for major
- 38 Conn. hours
- 39 Compulsion
- 41 Inferior mags
- 45 Someone — problem
- 47 Tony winner
- 48 Writer Blyton
- 49 Huge heads
- 51 More, in music
- 52 "Psycho" co-star Janet
- 53 Dog in "The Thin Man"
- 54 Bidding site
- 55 Common battery type
- 56 Infuriated
- 59 "What You Need" rock band
- 63 Injured-arm supporter
- 65 Actor Paul
- 66 Yahoo
- 68 Left the bed
- 69 Kin of a tulip
- 70 Once, once
- 71 Mater lead-in
- 73 Rearmost
- 74 It lingers in the mouth
- 78 — annum
- 79 Bodily band
- 80 Benes on "Seinfeld"
- 81 Investigates
- 83 Annul
- 84 Author Haley
- 85 A lot like
- 88 Rub oil on
- 89 Wowed
- 91 Future louse
- 94 Bismarck is its cap.
- 97 Realm of Oedipus
- 99 PalmPilot, e.g., in brief
- 100 — Tower (Paris sight)
- 101 Agenda part
- 102 Like an oval or rectangle
- 103 See
- 104 — latte
- 105 Disney's "Little Mermaid"
- 106 Streamlet
- 108 Become a parent to
- 112 Fence "door"
- 113 Swiss painter Paul
- 116 Really small
- 118 Berlin article
- 119 Water, to Somme folks
- 120 "Inc." cousin
- 121 — latte



## Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

7				6				9
	1		8					2
			2			7	4	1
4				7		2		
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		5	2			8		
6				9		3		
	7				1		5	
	5	9	3					8

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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# Principal

Continued from page 3

ter 62 of the mobile home lots received final notice violations and eviction notices.

However, it's not as simple as people letting their homes get run down or having messy yards. What a lot of people don't know, is that mobile home parks are run by the state. Since they are run by the state, the parks don't fall under city or county jurisdiction. Because of this, periodically a state inspector will walk through the park and post "violations"/repair orders on the homes in which they see things they don't like. Sounds fairly simple. In this case, however, it's not.

Last February, the HCD (HCD is the agency that oversees mobile home standards, rules, etc) went through Westwind and did just as described above, a walkthrough inspection. However, the inspector was not clear on many of the notices about what exactly needed repair and was inconsistent with who got violations of the same matter. Normally, this is where the residents would be able to go to the park manager for clarification.

However, Westwind doesn't currently have a park manager. It is reported (but not verified) that the maintenance man is currently the "acting manager." He is quick to say no comment to any questions from the press, and "it's not my call" to the residents. But this isn't the only challenge. The violations themselves were crazy... and petty.

Rhoda, 91, received a violation that her external wheelchair lift could not get power from an extension cord (it was a proper, heavy-gauge cord).

Steve, who is visually impaired, didn't even know that he had a violation notice because it was attached to his mobile home and he didn't see it. In addition, it was in plain print. Steve's violation was an extension cord and his lawn wasn't mowed. (Really!)

One gentleman is expected to move his home over 6 feet because he is too close to his neighbor. (It is exactly where it was when he moved into it!) This will cost him approximately \$16,000.

There were violations because an outside outlet cover was cracked (and he was told he would need a permit to change it). One family had to replace the railing on the porch that they already replaced because they were previously told they had to put carpet down on their wood porch and when it got wet from rain, it caused dry rot. The railings however were undamaged and secure. The inspector wanted the railings to be stronger, so they have to replace the perfectly good existing railings. It's costing roughly \$2,000. The list goes on.

In July, the inspector came back to Westwind for a re-inspection. Many of the violations had been repaired but were not removed from the violation list for some reason. Anyone that did not have these repairs done... and many that did... received a final notice. The second notice was the final notice. However, the second/final notice didn't necessarily match the first notice in violation items. In addition, more violations were handed out. On October 6th, the inspector came back for another reinspection. Again, more final notices and violations were handed out. On October 30th, the park handed out eviction notices. Those that received notices in February, including those that were fixed but not removed from the list, got a 7-day eviction notice. Those that got their violations in July got a 30 eviction and those that received their violation notice 3 weeks prior received a 60-day eviction. There are families that have recently moved in, did not know about any of the above, and are now facing a 7-day eviction.

The residents of Westwind have been coming together and scrambling to get clarification as well as help from volunteers to get these repairs made.

## Councilmember Sandeen retires from 15 years of service to the City of West Sacramento

City Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem Beverly "Babs" Sandeen is retiring after 15 years of service to the City; the past six as a member of the City Council, and before that as a Planning Commissioner from 2005 to 2014. During her final City Council meeting on Nov. 18, fellow Councilmembers and City staff thanked Sandeen for her tireless work on behalf of the City and lauded her many contributions to the West Sacramento community. She was presented with the following proclamation:

Whereas, Beverly (Babs) Sandeen was appointed to the City Council in December 2014 and elected in 2016; and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen served on the City's Planning Commission for nine years from 2005 to 2014; and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen used her background in higher education, philanthropy and social ecology to help navigate complex City projects and initiatives; and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen received the 2016 Cultural Engagement Recognition Award from Russian Speaking Community Partners, 2014 Women Who Mean business Award from the Sacramento Business Journal and the 2013 Mayor's Civic Leadership Award for her dedication to the community; and

Whereas Ms. Sandeen played a huge role in implementing the West Sacramento Home Run program through the Universal Preschool for West Sacramento Executive Committee; and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen served as Vice Chair of the Port District Commission, overseeing the completion of the Lake Washington cleanup project which removed and

disposed of hazardous material from the Port; and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen sat as Vice Chair for the West Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency and help implement strict flood standards, including the massive Southport Levee Protection Project; and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen served on multiple other outside bodies during her time as Councilmember including City/County 2x2 Committee, West Sacramento Housing Development Corporation, Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, River City Regional Stadium Financing Authority, Reclamation District 900, EIFD Public Financing Authority, Delta Protection Commission (alternate), Executive Commission Yolo County Homeless Plan (alternate), Riverfront Joint Powers Authority (alternate), Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (alternate), Yolo County Transportation District (alternate), and Streetcar Policy Steering Committee (alternate); and

Whereas, Ms. Sandeen is retiring from the City Council, leaving behind a legacy of good work and accomplishments spanning 15 years that have improved the quality of life for countless West Sacramento residents.

Now, therefore, be it proclaimed that the City Council of the City of Sacramento recognizes Beverly (Babs) Sandeen for her enormous contribution to the City of West Sacramento and wishes Ms. Sandeen health and happiness in her future endeavors.

Proclaimed this 18<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020.

## Takeout dinners offer "A Taste of the Mediterranean" in West Sac

BY STACY GROW

Many members of the West Sac community have attended the Mediterranean Food & Music Festival over the years,

an annual event hosted every September at the Holy Virgin Mary Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church (HVMC). This year, due to Covid, this event is one of three fundraisers the Church has had to cancel.

Father Paul and Jean Baba, who have served as the Church's Priest and Priestwife for the past 16 years, decided to take the setback in stride by creating a curbside pickup dinner fundraiser called "A Taste of the Mediterranean" in May. The event was so well received by the community that the Church now offers a curbside pickup dinner every other Tuesday from 12pm-6pm. According to Jean Baba, "As long as the community wants it and we can do it, we will continue. This is our normal for right now."

So far, each takeout event has sold an average of 100-150 meals. The Baba family and a few additional volunteers from the congregation prepare the food and deliver it to the cars, carefully adhering to current Covid-related health and safety standards. Pickup times are staggered to avoid any crowds. With four events under their belt so far, Jean says the whole system now runs like a well-oiled machine. "People appreciate the organization and the freshness of the meals."

The menu varies from week to week. Fan favorites include the gyro, garlic chicken, and falafel sandwiches and barbecued beef kifta (meatball) and lamb. "People really like that the sandwiches come deconstructed with veggies and sauce on the side, so they don't get soggy. And we provide heating instructions, so it's interactive." For dessert, baklava and Father Paul's famous donuts are popular items.

For information on future takeout meals, visit the Church's Facebook page, "Holy Virgin Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church."

See Trapped, page 8

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# Trapped

Continued from page 7

**West Sac man trapped in his house for nearly two years**  
**BY MICHELE TOWNSEND**

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept over the world and people began staying at home to reduce their risk of catching it, phrases like “shelter in place” and “the new norm” began to become a regular part of our vocabulary. People have adopted different degrees of compliance to sheltering in place.

Some people simply work from home, but still leave their house to purchase essential needs.

Others now order groceries and other needs online.

Nearly any type of business that needs to be conducted is done via the Internet. Many people only leave their homes to go for walks or to get some form of exercise.

The reality is that we can leave our homes; we’ve just made the decisions not to.

Furthermore, when we start to feel the walls closing in, or are experiencing some other forms of cabin fever, we simply step outside for a little while.

West Sacramento resident, Chuck Wood, has been trapped in his home for nearly two years. He is not sheltering in place. He’s been unable to leave his home because he can’t

get out of it. Just under two years Chuck developed a blood clot in his leg and ended up an amputee. When Chuck got out of the hospital, he was brought home to heal, and he’s been there ever since. You see, Chuck is now wheelchair bound, and his mobile home does not have a wheelchair ramp. In addition, the lip and drop off of the sliding glass door prevents him from even going onto his porch. He pays a friend to bring him groceries.

Chuck served in the Coast Guard during the Cold War. His unit was in charge of inspecting every ship that came into San Francisco to make sure they were not carrying any atomic bombs.

You would think that would mean that the VA would take care of a necessity such as a wheelchair ramp. Shouldn’t that be included with insurance? How is that legal? What about the mobile home park? Don’t ADA (American Disabilities Act) laws come into play here?

It seems there should be an entire list of reasons why and how this man, a veteran who served our country in a time of need, should have received a wheelchair ramp. Apparently, that is not the case.

Chuck has been a West Sac resident since 1966. He has contacted several organizations for help, including the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) and Habitat for Humanity. Chuck said, “A couple of places came and looked at my place,

said they would be in touch, and then I never heard from them again.” So still, Chuck remains inside his home.

In February of 2020, Chuck’s request made it to the Veterans of All Wars Riders Corporation. The VAW Riders is a 501c3 non-profit organization with the primary goal is to fill the gap in support services that exist for veterans, their spouses, and family members of veterans. The organization intends to become that bridge of resources that provide support for veterans and their families. (You can learn more about the VAWRiders.org/About/)

The Riders have been working on getting this project completed. However, one contractor gave them a quote of \$7,000, and another gave a quote of \$7,000 to 12,000. A GoFundMe campaign was established to raise the funds. Home Depot has agreed to donate all of the materials for this project. This will relieve a massive burden of fund raising for the Riders. Since Chuck lives in a mobile home park, permits must come from the state rather than the city. It usually takes months to get a permit from the state for construction. However, there is a small list of items that are pre-approved and once you submit the paperwork online, you may start construction. It shouldn’t be long before Chuck is able to sit on his porch, go shopping, visit friends and simply get his life back.

bors. Multiple neighbors had contributed to the project by building the structure, donating materials, and sharing books they thought others would enjoy. The City Department of Parks and Recreation installed the library for us after collaborating on placement.

The Gateway Park Little Free Library project has been a true community collaboration from the start. I have been proud to serve as the library’s steward for the past two-and-a-half years, curating the books and maintaining the structure. I am thrilled to share that last week, a new feature was installed on the east side of the Little Free Library: a weatherproof “literature holder” that will serve as a free seed exchange.

With the seed exchange, gardening can become a source of community connection. Local gardeners are invited to share extra purchased seeds, or to harvest seeds from what they grow to pass on to neighbors. The posted rules for the seed bank are simple:

1. Please take only seeds you can grow in the next year.
2. Please label seeds with the date of harvest. Most seeds can be stored 2-3 years on average.
3. Share your extra seeds (and what you grow) with your friends and neighbors!

While sheltering in place, many people are engaging in home-based hobbies, especially gardening. But due to the high demand, it has been challenging for everyone who wants to grow a garden to access the materials to do so. Seed companies including Burpee, Park Seeds, and Johnny’s Selected Seeds have all reported an exponential increase in customer demand for their products



in the past two months, leading to slower shipping times and even closing online orders. Locally, many would-be gardeners wait in long lines at nurseries to purchase seeds and starts. Hopefully the seed exchange will provide more opportunities and easier access to seeds.

The appeal of growing a home garden at a time like this is evident. Home gardens provide a connection to nature when many of us are now isolated in our homes working “virtually”. Gardens offer tangible, visible, delicious, and beautiful results for the labor invested. They provide an added measure of food security when some parts of our food system have incurred shortages.

Within a day of posting on the Gateway Park Little Free Library’s Facebook page about the new addition, the seed exchange was already being stocked by neighbors with vegetable, herb, and flower seeds. Early contributions included lupine, Red Russian kale, heirloom pumpkins, calendula, California poppies, romaine lettuce, Chinese long beans, and Genovese basil. My children couldn’t resist a packet of Rainbow Radishes we found deposited by a generous neighbor.

Whether we choose to grow food, medicine, pollinator plants, or flowers, let’s remember that gardens are community assets. They enhance the health of our local population and our local ecosystem. Please stop by the seed exchange to share your extra seeds and see what your neighbors have to offer! Happy growing.

**Police reform in West Sacramento: What is planned and what is wanted**  
**BY MICHELE TOWNSEND**

Police reform is currently the talk of the

nation. It is a complex situation with no simple solutions. Many of the citizens of this country don’t care about that. They want changes and they want them now. And since it’s an election year, politicians are scrambling to get something in place that will show forward movement to the satisfaction of the public/voters.

Those who are in office, are in a time crunch to initiate a change that can immediately be seen and very little sympathy for the announcement of “future” plans. Those running for office have the time to expand their thoughts and plans to what is being put into play right now.

As for the community -- they just want change. It is a very complex issue though.

The term “Defund the Police” is used a lot.

In a Zoom meeting held on September 24th, Yolo County Public Defender Tracie Olson said that the term “Defund Police” does not mean abolish the police department. What it means is “putting in place resources that lead to the best outcome possible.”

In other words, if someone is having a mental health crisis, then you send out someone trained to handle that issue. However, who is trained to determine what a mental health crisis is? Will that become the job of the dispatcher? What will be the criteria for him/her to determine if it is a mental health call? And will the mental health workers sent on these calls be trained in physical restraint or other skills that the police have and are often the reason the police are called to a scene to begin with? Often that person was violent, or there was fear of violence. That is why the police were called. Also, will mental health workers be available 24/7

Domestic violence calls are commonly referred

See Reform, page 9

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**Free Seed Exchange open at Gateway Park Little Free Library**  
**BY STACY GROW**

In October 2017, the Gateway Park Little Free Library opened to the public, facilitating a book exchange between neigh-

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# Puzzle Solutions

Super Crossword

Answers

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LEMME	ROLE	ANEAR	TARO
FOCUS	GROUP	RANGERRICK	
OSO	DCTEN	SAFEAREA	
LOUISE	GOIN	EEN	LINDY
EXPLORERS	SCOUT	ORIG	
THE	SIE	RTE	ASHLEE
TIN	PLATE	EDGE	LIGHTING
EDDIES	FIBRE	SRS	EZIO
RESULTS	NAY	MEABRADS	
	GALAXY	CLUSTER	
ALLAH	IRS	EIN	ERUPTED
LOAF	UNO	ALLIS	STEELE
MUSTANGS	ALLY	INTERNAL	
ATTEND	EW	NMI	DIV
	ROOT	EXPEDITION	ONE
CACTI	HAD	DIAL	TBONES
ARRANGED	KAFKA	ELI	
FIESTABOWL	FORD	MODELS	
FEET	TEPEE	ETTA	NEATO
ELKE	ESTEE	LAOS	GAUDY

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

7	4	3	1	6	2	5	8	9
5	1	6	8	4	9	7	2	3
8	9	2	5	3	7	4	6	1
4	6	1	9	7	8	2	3	5
2	8	7	4	5	3	1	9	6
9	3	5	2	1	6	8	4	7
6	2	8	7	9	5	3	1	4
3	7	4	6	8	1	9	5	2
1	5	9	3	2	4	6	7	8



# Reform

Continued from page 8

to as the most dangerous calls for police to go to. Will the dispatcher now be required to figure out if the actions of the people involved are due to mental illness? Will our social workers be armed, if those calls turn violent and even deadly?

Another issue is that community members are concerned with is that the police will keep records of people deemed mentally ill, and therefore not respond to emergencies, or perhaps make premature assumptions. They don't want the police to "profile" someone, yet they want someone to be able to determine when a call will need the police and when a call will require a social worker.

Currently, the West Sac PD does not store that information, according to Olson. The police, as well as city and county governments, are aware of this topic.

In fact, Yolo County is the first district attorney's office in the nation to offer life-saving de-escalation technology to first responders. <https://yolo-da.org/yolo-county-becomes-first-district-attorneys-office-in-nation-to-offer-life-saving-de-escalation-technology-to-first-responders/>.

Profiling is another word that gets used often.

If dispatch gets a call that there is a man with a gun, they ask if you can describe the man. If the caller does not know the man with the gun, the quickest, most efficient way to describe them is gender, race, size, what they are wearing or driving. This is not to profile them. The problem is not that there is a person of a certain race with a gun, the problem is that someone has a gun. However, by using that description, it helps the police to quickly eliminate others so that they can focus on who has a gun and why. There is absolutely no question that there are far, far too many incidents of use of too much force by police, nationwide!

People everywhere see that, including other police. Just remember that there are a lot of heroic acts as well. By holding grudges against all police, aren't we now profiling? There is a definite change coming, and change is good... we hope.

So how is police reform taking place in West Sacramento? The city of West Sacramento

released an explanation and current plan of what is to take place in our police department so far.

These "Guiding Principles" can be read online at [www.cityofwestsacramento.org/government/departments/police/guiding-principles](http://www.cityofwestsacramento.org/government/departments/police/guiding-principles).

It states, in part, "The West Sacramento Police Department shares in the outrage and sorrow regarding the criminal actions of police officers that led to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. We understand that events like this undermine public confidence in law enforcement, and we are committed to continually building the community's trust in our department through our ongoing community engagement and adherence to the highest professional standards, and through our commitment to transparency.

"Recently, we have received many inquiries from the community about our police department and whether our policies are consistent with recommendations and advocacy being put forth by police reform initiatives. We have re-examined and will continue to evaluate our policies and approaches to policing in consideration of those initiatives. While we believe that we are heading in a good direction as a department, at this moment, we must pause to listen and understand the diverse perspectives of our community.

"We acknowledge that we are at an inflection point in which we must leverage the immense community interest in policing to better inform our mission, direction, and the tactics we employ as we strive to maintain a safe environment for everyone in West Sacramento."

It explains that WSPD is using the principles of "President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing" from the Obama-era, as a guide. It also states that "On June 3, 2020, former President Obama called on Mayors to pledge to address police use of force policies in their cities as part of an initiative known as the My Brother's Keeper Alliance. Mayor Cabaldon recently signed onto this commitment on behalf of the City of West Sacramento. Participation in the initiative includes committing to take the following actions at the local level: Review police use of force policies, engage the community by including a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories in the review, Report the findings of the

review to the community and seek feedback, Reform the community's police use of force policies".

The plan lists "8 can't wait" initiatives that include: Ban chokeholds and strangleholds, Require de-escalation, Require warning before shooting, Exhaust all other means before shooting, Duty to intervene and stop excessive force by other officers, Ban shooting at moving vehicles, Require use-of-force continuum, Require comprehensive reporting each time an officer uses forces or threatens to do so. It goes on to show the use of force statistics for 2019 by the WSPD, as well as the racial demographics of the population of West Sac and of the WSPD. The document also mentions the training standards that our officers get and gives a link to the WSPD training manual, which has been available online since 2017.

As part of Mayor Chris Cabaldon's plan on police reform, he is using the money that the city had to hire 5 police officers to create a community outreach task force. This is still in the development stage, but they are confident in its ability to create better outcomes in many situations. I reached out to Mayor Cabaldon for any additional input he may want to give but got no response.

In Camdon, they defunded the police by getting rid of the entire force and then rehiring those they felt should still be police officers in their town. But again, who decides that?

Some believe that there should be an independent police review commission for basic quality control of the actions that the WSPD takes.

Mayoral candidate and current city councilmember Martha Guerrero would like to establish this with the purpose to continue guiding the council as well.

Former Police Chief Tom McDonald was forced out of his job for pushing for this very topic. However, Guererro agrees with this idea and would like to see it implemented. She is pushing for some additions to be added to the current reform plan. Guerrero would like to see, and plans on bringing this before the city council: More training, furthering the goals of the NAACP (Latino community has been welcomed, now bring in the Black community), work with the county to have social services more in-

volved, but within Health and Human Services, not under the police. She would also like to see "a more robust lateral police hiring process to strengthen our police force with experienced officers."

Betty White, President of the local chapter of NAACP, and Guerrero both believe that police officers with 5 – 7 years on the job are still learning on the job.

Guerrero said: "After a few years of training they transfer out as lateral trained to other police departments because we cannot compete with wages and benefits in the region. It costs our city more to train and subsequently pay for their pensions when they retire."

She said, "I would like to see more diversity and recruitment among our youth for a career in the police department". In addition, she believes it would be a good idea to pair the newer police officers or those that are not from our city, with locally experienced officers. Police reform has no quick fix, but our city is currently looking for better policies, that will help our community to not only feel safe but to be safe. WSPD welcomes changes that will keep everyone safe and happy. Everyone wants to go home at the end of the night! Interim Police Chief Rob Strange states on the Guiding Principles, "We shall honor the dignity of ALL members of the community, no matter the circumstance. We shall maintain a mindset of service to ALL that exudes professional self-control and that never dehumanizes anyone in our diverse community."

## An old-school approach to homeschooling during the pandemic with a dash of modernity

BY MONICA STARK

No alarm clocks, no rushing to school or

work. I have somehow managed to tell my daughter, Sophie, that cuddles until 9 a.m. are required. And that we have ALL DAY to do the things we need to do. We don't need to adhere to any 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., schedule, but the daily cuddle fest is required. Above all, I want her to have good memories of this pandemic. Of course, she misses her school and friends and she's definitely not learning as much from me as she does her beloved teacher. She's been writing letters to those she misses. She steals my phone for hours at a time to talk with her best friend. It's as sweet an experience as it can be.

I am grateful for the job and school flexibility. So many parents are stressing out because of all the Zooming that has to be scheduled for. I am sad for children who have to spend hours a day in front of a computer screen.

The digital divide has long existed prior to the pandemic, but what school closures have shown school districts is how tech equity is needed at home. Fortunately, the school district has provided Chromebooks to those who need them and they are a big help, however, I have heard from some families how difficult it is to do the distance learning because they can't afford the high-powered wifi that other families are accustomed to.

There are other ways children can learn the standards required by schools.

While my second grade daughter attends a Title 1 school where more than half of the students are on free or reduced lunch and many have needed to pick up Chromebooks provided by the school district, the curriculum at least for the younger grades includes a very limited amount of "Zooming" or distance learning. Each day her teacher provides

a 15-minute math lesson and has worksheets that go along with it. Besides that, daily book reading and writing is required. Again, not too much time is spent behind the computer.

But what really sets her school apart are weekly family projects that require creative thinking, creativity, teamwork and maybe even some blood and tears. The first said project was fort building; the second, imagination (imagining a perfect vacation and bringing it home-bound); the third was an animal project and this week we're making an art display in our front yard out of materials found in the natural world. With these projects, students had to collect all their materials from their quarantined home, write them down the list of materials, tell a story about their creations and draw what it looks like. While they are family projects, they are child led and directed. She's my boss and I am her worker bee and also her photographer. I have enjoyed photographing the projects and sharing them with other parents and children in the class. Truly, the community has tried to stay together as much as possible under these strange times. The crossing guard at the school has fallen ill and students have knitted squares that the handwork teacher sewed together into a quilt. She then delivered it to him and shared a video of his reaction. Touched by how many hands went into the quilt, he said he didn't realize he mattered that much.

This quarantine situation has highlighted the love that was already in our community. Seeing the video and photos of the crossing guard brought tears of joy and love to many of those who have seen it.

Remember parents: You are your child's first teacher, after all, and don't forget to treat yourself just as kindly as you do your precious students.

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News-Ledger Directory  
of Local Places of Worship

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<b>Seventh Day Adventist Church</b> <b>Sasa Andelkovic, Senior Pastor</b> 2860 Jefferson Blvd., W. Sac. PO Box 447, W. Sac. 95691 Sat. Sabbath School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. 372-6570	<b>American Buddhist Seminary Temple</b> Learn how to practice mindfulness meditation for your everyday happiness in small groupsetting. Free Community Service. Sundays - 8:30-10 a.m. 423 Glide Avenue, West Sac 916-371-8535 <a href="http://www.abstemple.org">www.abstemple.org</a>	<b>New Seasons Church</b> Your Church in West Sacramento <b>Pastor Ron Jackson</b> Sunday 10 a.m. service Westfield Elementary School 508 Poplar Ave., West Sacramento 916-265-4025 <a href="mailto:pastorron@newseasonsws.com">pastorron@newseasonsws.com</a> <a href="http://www.newseasonsws.com">www.newseasonsws.com</a>
<b>West Sacramento Baptist Church</b> Sun. School - 9:30 a.m. Sun. Worship - 11 a.m. Wed. Prayer Meeting & Bible Study - 6:30 p.m. 2124 Michigan Blvd. 371-2111	<b>Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church</b> 911 Park Blvd, West Sacramento Office: 916-371-4814 Fr. Matthew Rappu, Pastor Mass: Mon, Tues, Wed 8:30 AM Fri 8:30 AM at OLG school during school year Sat: 5:30 PM vigil Sun 9 AM, 11 AM	<b>Looking for a place to worship?</b> Check here first! To find out how to list your place of worship in this directory, call 916-371-8030 for more information.



# This ‘n’ That

Continued from page 1

experiencing his first Christmas.

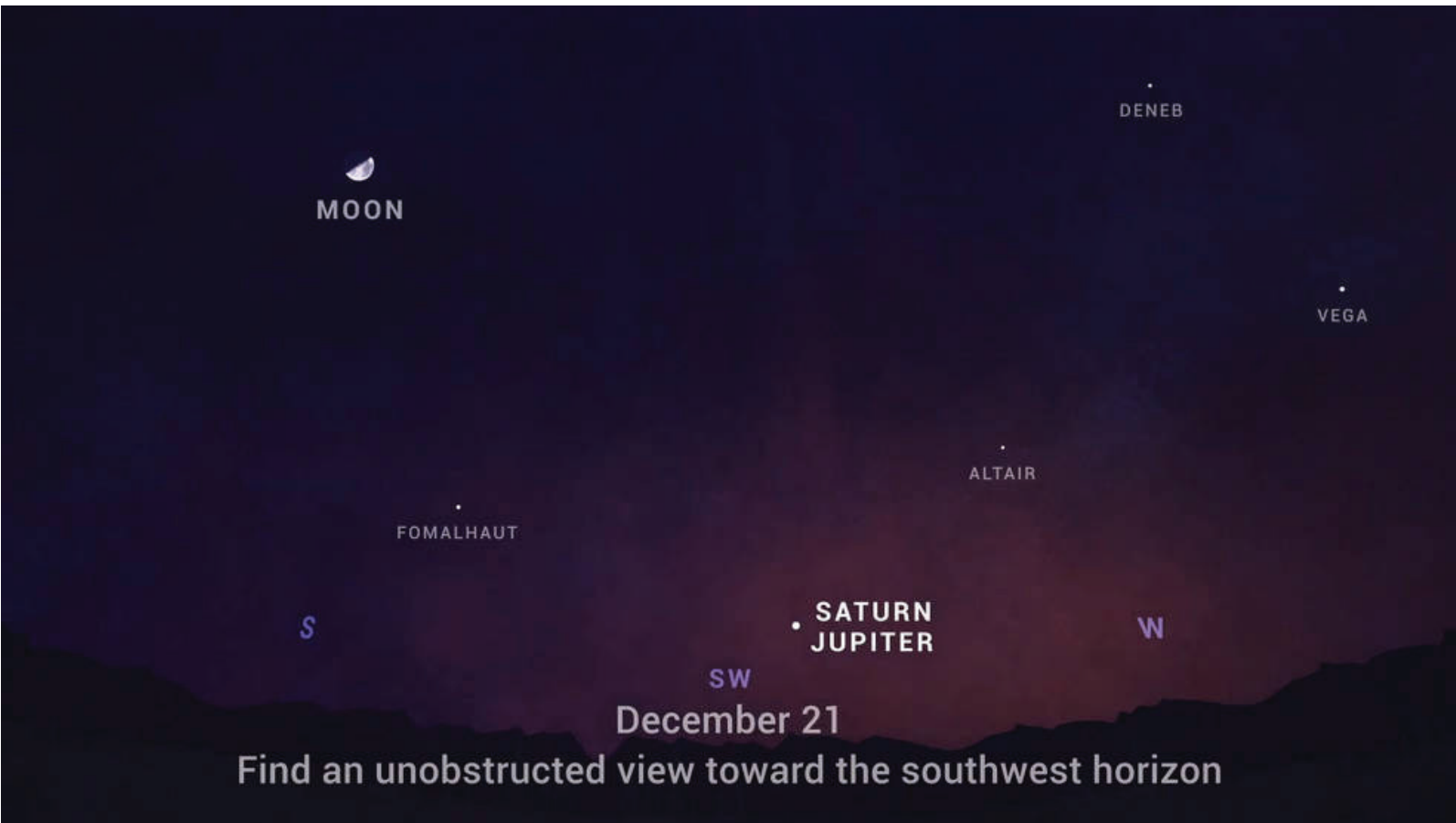
Mohammad Hussain says: “Growing up, my Muslim family never celebrated Christmas. This year I am not going home, because (of the) pandemic, so my roommates are teaching me how to have my first proper Christmas. I am approaching this with anthropological precision. Here are a few observations.

**Observation 1:** Christmas is a part time job that you have from mid-November to the end of December. From the outside looking in, Christmas always seemed pretty simple. I always thought you put up a tree and then gave gifts to family. This is a lie. Do you want to sleep in on a Saturday? Too bad. Go put up some lights inside the house. Oh you want to sleep in on Sunday? Too bad. Go put up some lights outside the house. Next weekend? Nope. Every free moment you have will be spent agonizing over the gifts you must buy.

**Observation 2:** People have very strong feelings about their Christmas traditions. If someone is insisting that \*certain food\* is what you have to eat Christmas morning, because that’s their family tradition, DO NOT SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES. They will stab you in the neck.

**Observation 3:** You can buy yourself a gift but you can’t stuff your own stocking. I don’t understand this one but I told my roommate I bought stuff for my stocking and they said that’s not a thing. I don’t care. I bought myself mint Chapstick and I will fake surprise.

**Observation 4:** Your gift budget does not



matter. You can set this budget as high as you want but the perfect gift will always be \$10 too expensive. There is no winning. Just give up.

**Observation 5:** There are two streams of Christmas ornaments. The “fillers” and the “keepers.” The fillers are the generic ones. The keepers are meant to be more special and unique. This second stream is stored in your family’s reliquary to be one day passed on to the children.

**Observation 6:** ORNAMENTS ARE EXPENSIVE. My roommates encouraged me to buy my own keeper ornament. They told me to find something that made me smile and that was special to me. I bought ... an ‘everything bagel’ ornament. That cost me \$15.99. That’s more than three (real) everything bagels. I am furious. For what it cost, you best believe that I am insisting that it be passed on to my great grandchildren. If they break it I will haunt them.

**Observation 7:** The religious aspect of



PHOTO BY NASA/Bill Ingalls  
Seen only twice in the last 800 years, this bright light (below the moon) appeared in our night sky Dec. 21. Beneath it (faintly) is the Big Dipper. The brilliant light appears when Pluto and Saturn pass close together. Around the globe the 2020 conjunction of the two is being called “the Christmas Star.” This is how ‘the star’ looked this month to sky gazers in Virginia.

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NASA/JPL-CALTECH  
Missed it but want to see it? NASA says the ‘star’ will be visible to the naked eye until, roughly, Jan. 3. (Look for the Big Dipper and the moon, and then the brightest ‘star’.) For more planetary tips from NASA, go here: <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/whats-up-skywatching-tips-from-nasa>.

Christmas is optional. I really like this one. If I was to suggest having a secular Ramadan to my mother she would have a heart attack. I will however be trying to get my family to do a Secret Santa for Eid (a Muslim holiday). The name’s being workshopped.

**Observation 8:** You need a “menu.” Yeah... This one is where they lost me. Last Christmas my family ordered Popeyes and watched a movie. My roommate has an entire menu with

wine pairings and desserts planned.  
To wrap things up I want to applaud longtime Christmas celebrators. This is a lot of work and very tiring. I will say I am having a very pleasant time. I am learning that I enjoy Christmas music and gift purchasing. I am also learning that I do not enjoy peppermint.”

He has a point. Do we buy candy canes to eat them?

And finally, a recent Tweet from Arab News: “Spotlight: Small acts of kindness can

go a long way. @PayForwardSA is a Saudi (Arabia) social initiative that encourages people to perform good deeds, and for the beneficiaries to repay the kindness to others.” Read more: <https://arab.news/bkzgg>.  
We’ve been ‘paying it forward’ in America for many years. Imitation in the UAE is both encouraging and flattering.  
The varied and many Twitter replies to Mohammad’s post by those of assorted faiths are great, I thought. I especially liked the ornament post-

ed by a Christian woman married to a Muslim man. If you’d like to read the comments, go here: <https://twitter.com/MohammadHussain/status/1340737907750014977?s=15>.  
Wishing all of us a safe relaxed new year.

*Carol Bogart is proud to inform you that she has now written more than 100 columns for the West Sacramento News Ledger! Comments? Column ideas? Complaints? Applause (haha) ? Contact Carol at [carol@bogartonline.com](mailto:carol@bogartonline.com).*

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