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Publisher ..... David Herburger
Editor ..... Monica Stark
Art Director ..... Annin Greenhalgh
Graphic Designer ..... Annin Greenhalgh
Advertising Director ..... Jim O'Donnell
Advertising Executives ..... Linda Pohl, Melissa Andrews

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1109 Markham Way
Sacramento,
CA 95818
t: (916) 429-9901
f: (916) 429-9906

Cover by:
Joe Perfecto

Mighty Kong muffins available at Curtis Park Market

By Joe Perfecto

Ensconced in the dark recesses of a small defunct corner eatery at the west edge of Tahoe Park, a hulking brute of the simian sort stands perennial guard, stationary and silent, some 20 feet from the shackled and shuttered entryway, its steely gaze fixed on the cluttered, dormant space. If suddenly illuminated by a flashlight beam, this massive charcoal-gray monster would likely shock a would-be burglar into the next county. The beast in question is a full-grown ape who bears great resemblance to a much larger version who, once upon a time, snatched up Fay Wray and proceeded to scale the Empire State Building and generally rain terror on the hapless denizens of New York City. But far from a scaled-down King Kong bent on mayhem, this particular gorilla happens to be an acrylic statue named Willie that hails from Atlanta, and like a typical Southern gentleman, is always well-behaved.

Willie spent much of a decade perched above one corner of this space during its days as the bustling Mighty Kong Café. A replica of the late Willie B., a western lowland gorilla who resided at the Zoo of Atlanta for 39 years, the statue is an in-the-flesh (so to speak) version of the logo of the renowned café—which operated at this Stockton Blvd. site from 2008 to 2013—and the muffin company of the same name located on the second floor.

The Mighty Kong Muffins brand is likely unfamiliar to most, despite its local roots and deep history, a product line that includes 24 varieties of bran-packed, all organic muffins, and the distinction of what may be the longest pre-market R&D period of any product, ever. This state of obscurity is mostly a result of marketing primarily by word-of-mouth through a customer base that, while both enthusiastic and loyal, is apparently also pretty tight-



Photos by Joe Perfecto
From left, Lance Smith, Willie and King Smith pose in the one-time Mighty Kong Café.

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Muffins:

Continued from page 2

lipped. Plus, company founder King Smith's many efforts to get retail shelf space just never got traction. Hence, the brand's nowhere to be seen at the Co-Op, Corti Bros., Costco, Whole Foods, Nugget and just about every other grocery "where fine foods are sold." Taylor's Market on Freeport Blvd. and Kobasic's Candies on Riverside Blvd. did stock some for a time, but most recently the brand has only available at Curtis Park Market and via the company's Website.

It certainly has nothing to do with product quality, as Smith is quick to explain. "We have a super product," he said. "It's a real bran muffin; most bran muffins don't have any bran in them—or they have a minuscule amount—because it costs too much. It's usually wheat flour and chemicals. Ours are 100% bran." According to Smith, because of their high bran content, the use of only healthful, organic ingredients, and customized production techniques, his products stand alone in the industry. This is all the more impressive given the brand's humble—and somewhat haphazard—origins, which can partly be traced back to a buddy's kitchen in the City by the Bay.

It was October, 1968. Smith and some friends were gathered at the TV, watching the Packers lose 14-16 to the Rams (one of the first—but by no means the worst—of the numerous defeats Green Bay would endure in what would prove to be a 23-year slump with just four winning seasons). Now, it's been known to happen, in connection with football and television, that somebody gets a craving for munchies. So, naturally, it's time to make muffins. At least that's what Smith and company decided to do. Baking was already a hobby for Smith (he'd been making them for family for a while), and thus his oven acumen was above that of a typical twenty-something guy of the time. And yet, his approach to the project was… substantially unfettered by culinary constraints.

"My friend's wife and I grabbed a box of All-Bran or something, and I think one of us called our mom and asked for some advice, and we whipped up some muffins, threw some blueberries in 'em," Smith recalled. "It was pretty good."

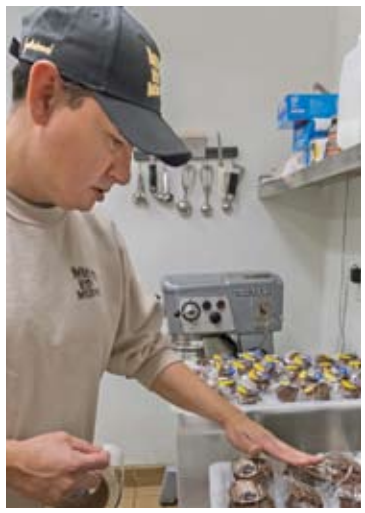
And so it went, in that devil-may-care, mad-scientist-like fashion—batch after batch, year after year. The recipe did change, gradually—but not in a controlled fashion. "We'd run out of one ingredient and substitute something else," Smith said.

Despite their somewhat arbitrary ingredients, the muffins were popular items at family breakfasts and in bag lunches Smith's son Lance took to school. Unfortunately for Lance, he seldom got to actually eat them at noontime; classmates tended to raid his locker during the morning break and wolf them down.

Fast-forward to the 80s, when Smith was regularly taking batches of muffins to the employees of the department he managed at CalTrans. Although the treats continued to be well received, Smith started to take a hard look at what was in them. "I started buying wheat bran—I thought I'd try it out. And then I saw oat bran, and I thought, that's even more nutritious, and I tried that," Smith said. "And then I tried them 50/50, 75/25, and finally came up with what made sense—the texture was right, the moisture level was right." By the 90's he had dumped buttermilk in favor of whole milk and skim milk; during the balance of the decade he found substitutes for the rest of the high-calorie ingredients he'd been using.

At the time of Smith's 2001 retirement, the "customer base" for his muffins had expanded beyond family, friends and employees to friends of friends and day care centers—and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Yet despite his products' popularity, he still wasn't envisioning a commercial enterprise. But his associates had other ideas—including his then-girlfriend, a caterer who repeatedly encouraged him to take the plunge—and he finally conceded that maybe going pro was feasible.

"People were telling me, hey, you ought to sell these," he said. "You know, [when] you have your ego stroked enough about how good your muffins are, pretty soon you start believing it—you think, hey, maybe I do have something that's worthy of puttin' on the market."



Photos by Joe Perfecto
Lance Smith labels a few batches of muffins.

So, no longer seeing the business as a half-baked idea, Smith decided to give it a go. But there were challenges ahead. First, he had to create a large enough market—which meant producing more volume to give to more people who would then spread the word. But success on that front would mean the possibility of being hoisted on his own petard, as he had only the one oven at home for production. When he attracted the interest of local wholesaler Tony's Fine Foods, he re-

See Smith page 7



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Fundraisers organized for Sacramento music promoter Jerry Perry

Former Cattle Club operator, Chalk It Up director in need of assistance for medical bills

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Jerry Perry, who spent many years promoting local bands and bringing live music to venues in Sacramento, is in need of assistance.

After having a stroke on July 27, Jerry was hospitalized and has undergone daily physical therapy in hopes of having a full recovery.

As the cost of his medical expenses continue to rise, the former Cattle Club operator and current Chalk It Up to Sacramento! festival executive director, is experiencing the reward of building a life of giving to musicians and music fans.

Recognizing Jerry's need for financial assistance, musicians and others have bonded together to raise funds for Jerry.

Among those efforts is an upcoming benefit concert featuring bands that played at the Cattle Club, which operated on Folsom Boulevard, between 65th Street and Howe Avenue, during the 1990s.

The concert will be held at Harlow's Restaurant & Nightclub, 2708 J St., on Dec. 22, from 3 to 10 p.m.

The featured bands will be Kai Kln, Little Guilt Shrine, 99 Tales, Nothing But A Nightmare, The Trouble Makers and The Rosebuds.

The event will also include solo sets with Jonah Matranga, Kevin Seconds, Anton Barbeau, Gillian Underwood and Hannah Lingrell, as well as disc jockeys, Dennis Yudt ("The Master Bastard"), Larry Rodriguez ("Flower Vato"), and Grant Hudson.

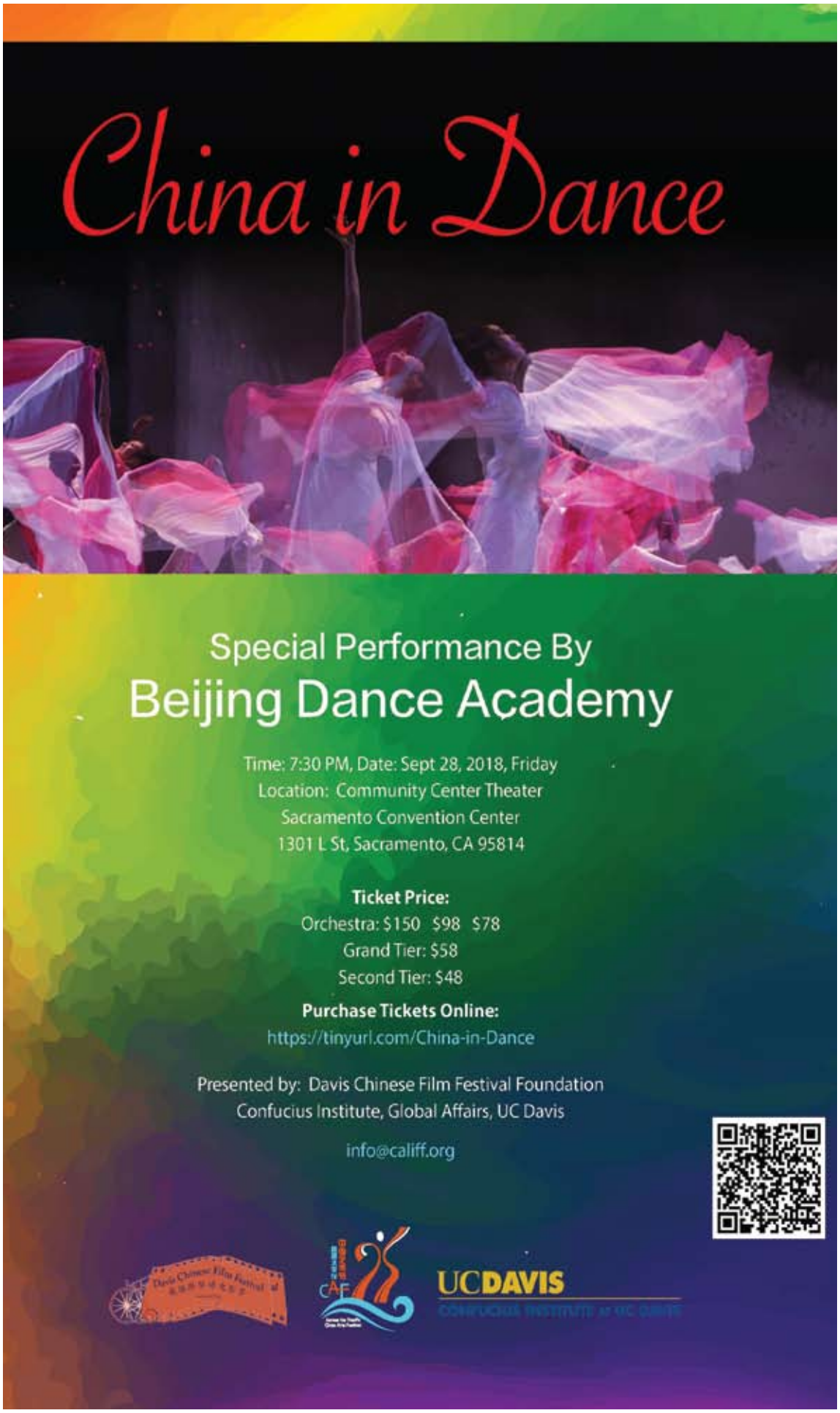
Eric Bianchi, who worked as the sound man at the Cattle Club, will be the event's master of ceremonies.

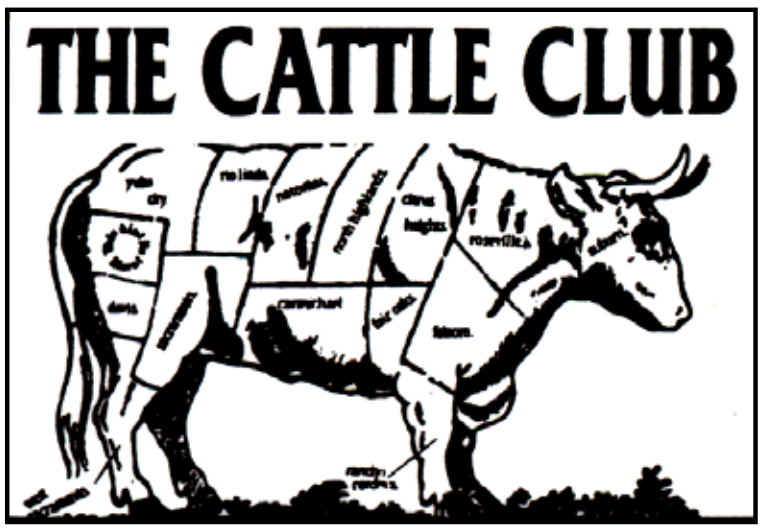
Advance tickets are currently available for $25 through the website, ticketfly.com. Tickets will also be sold at the door for $30, if available.

See Jerry page 5



The Cattle Club logo was a very familiar sight for many music fans in Sacramento during the 1990s. Photo courtesy of the Lance Armstrong Collection





Jerry:

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Bianchi, who remains one of Jerry's best friends, said that the establishment of the upcoming benefit began with Marc Malakie, former manager of Kai Kln.

Working with Malakie to present the show is Brian McKenna, who assisted Perry in booking bands at the Cattle Club and is the owner of Abstract Entertainment, which promotes concerts in Sacramento and other cities.

John Rudgers, who played guitar in the Groovie Ghoulies and now lives in Detroit, said that he played at the Cattle Club.

John, who compared the Cattle Club to having been a sort of out-of-town "roadhouse," said that he was happy to hear that a benefit will be held for Jerry on Dec. 22.

"It shows a lot of love from the music community – the old school people, the newer school people," he said. "There are so many bands (he worked with) over the decades in Sacramento. It's what he loved to do and still loves to do and will get back to doing it."

Don Neil, a local tattoo artist who performed at the Cattle Club with the band, Dead Penny, said he was glad to hear that people are coming together to assist Jerry.

Neil also expressed appreciation for Jerry's dedication in keeping the doors of the Cattle Club open for so many years.

Neil shared his memories of that venue.

"It was a great place to go play and was a very cool place to go see a band, and they had all these great acts coming through there that were national acts," he said. "A lot of them were underground still. It was cool to see these underground giants. The mainstream hadn't gotten ahold of them yet. So, it was cool to see that and be able to play on the same stage."

Among the bigger name bands that played on that stage were Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Primus, the Cranberries, No Doubt, the Deftones and Cake, as well as a lot of legendary bands of the punk rock scene.

Dave Rudgers, who is John's son and the best friend of Jerry's son, Eli, said that he has admired Jerry for many years.

"Jerry is a walking dictionary," he said. "He knows so much about everything. It's kind of amazing. I can't believe he has so much information just banked up in his brain.

"He knows so much about bands, the musicians in the bands, movies, directors. Like, you name it, he knows like everyone in town."

Dave, who is 24 and works at Harlow's, said that he appreciates how committed Jerry has been to helping bring attention to local bands.

"I feel like that is basically Jerry's main goal is to give the smaller bands the spotlight, even for 15 minutes," he said.

Dave also described Jerry as a very likeable person.

"Everyone around him loves him," he said. "I've never really met anybody that doesn't like Jerry."

Eli, 26, said that he grew up around the Cattle Club.

"I was definitely at the Cattle Club," he said. "I have small memories of it, running around, standing on stage, hearing microphones. But I was only like 3 or 4 when it closed down."

Because Jerry was also the publisher and editor of Alive & Kicking newspaper, which was founded to promote bands at the Cattle Club, Eli recalled seeing many local band members at his home.

"They just did (the paper) in the front office," he said. "We always had local artists coming in to do interviews. We had Mickie Ratt from (the band) The Secretions all the time. Kepi, (lead singer of the Groovie Ghoulies) did his own newspaper and got help from my dad at one point."



Jerry Perry stands at a microphone at a show at Luigi's Fun Garden in 2013. A live music benefit featuring bands that played at the Cattle Club during the 1990s will raise funds for his medical expenses. The event will be held at Harlow's Restaurant and Nightclub on Dec. 22. Photo by Rich Hoffman

Because of his father's condition, Eli booked bands for this year's edition of Chalk It Up, which is held annually on Labor Day weekend in Fremont Park at 16th and Q streets.

In addition to his work with the Cattle Club and Chalk It Up, Jerry has also booked bands and assisted with shows at various other local venues and events, including Friday Night Concerts at Cesar Chavez Plaza, Hot Italian Hot Lunch Concert Series at Fremont Park, and Luigi's Fun Garden in midtown Sacramento.

As funds continue to accumulate to assist with Jerry's medical bills, Linda Perry, Jerry's wife, expressed appreciation for the people who make those donations.

"Our community is coming together and we've been thankful about that," she said. "Jerry has done a lot for the music community in Sacramento, and they've definitely been generous in returning the favor and supporting Jerry."

Linda added that another live music benefit show was played for Jerry, but that she did not find out about it until she received funds from that show, which she was told featured only one band.

As for Jerry's current progression, as of last week, he was scheduled to move into temporary housing this week, and continue to undergo occupational and physical therapy.

Linda told this publication that Jerry is showing "all the signs" of making a full recovery.

She added that people can obtain updates on his recovery status through the website, CaringBridge.org.

Those interested in contributing to the fundraising efforts to assist with Jerry's medical bills, can make a donation through the website, GoFundMe.com.



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The Opioid Epidemic:
Introducing the Forum Panelists

By Terry McSweeney

Editor's Note: Terry McSweeney will host "The Forum on the Opioid Crisis" with the support of the Valley Community newspapers on Saturday, September 15 from 1:30-4:30pm at the Pocket Library. September is Pain Awareness Month. This is the 4th of the 4 part series on various aspects of the opioid crisis.

We believe we have found the best panelists possible who will present their points of view and answer questions from the audience. Let me introduce each of them to you in alphabetical order.

Richard Alacala: Clinic Manager for the Transitions Clinic in Oak Park. He has been with the clinic since its inception 10 years ago. He believes he has the best job ever helping people take their lives back from addiction and seeing the results.

Dr. Neil Flynn MD, MPH: Dr. Flynn is an internist and infectious disease specialist. He received his MD from Ohio State, did his residency at Lorna Linda University in 1976. He also did training in infectious diseases at UC Davis. He now concentrates his efforts on improving services offered by the Transitions Buprenorphine Clinic in Oak Park. He realized the potential that Buorenorphine had in treating opioid-dependent people and so has continued to improve the programs at Transitions Clinic.

Suzanne Jarret: Fibromyalgia patient who was diagnosed 12 years ago. She said, "My legs hurt so much I cried myself to sleep." While getting her Masters her pain became widespread. When she finally got a state job and insurance she continued her search for answers. Eventually she found a doctor who didn't know what was wrong, but prescribed opiates anyway. She began taking 4 Norcos , 180mg of Morphine, and 90mgs of Oxycontin daily. She didn't know what she would do if she ran out. In 2017 she entered a detox facility, and quit cold-turkey, almost dying.. Now she takes marijuana which kills the pain 100%, but can't use it more than once a week because of what it does to her mind. Now all that really works for her are hot baths.



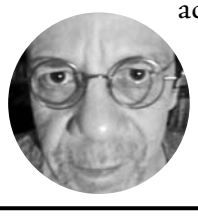
Jennifer Kroplin: Director of Marketing and Sales, Parkside Compounding Pharmacy: Jenni regularly en- gages with customers regarding their prescriptions, as well as building relationships with many practitioners in the region. As a member of PCCA, Professional Compounding Centers of America, she participates in ongoing training and education with the newest scientific developments for patients in every area. This includes educating our community and practitioners about compounding for chronic pain, autoimmune diseases, and non-narcotic compound, Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN). Jenni is excited to offer our community an alternative to traditional opioid therapy.



Chuck McGee III: He is a Wim Hof instructor who has used this method to turn his life around, man aging diabetes, losing weight, and improving his athletic and mental performance. This method helps him give others the tools to help manage their pain to avoid stress and pills.



Susan McKee: Chief of Staff for County Supervisor Patrick Kennedy-Susan is a member of the Bar in Washinton D.C. and California. She has worked for elected officials off and on since 1980. She worked for Congressman Vic Fazio from 1994-1998 and was District Director for Assemblyman-then-Senator Darrell Steinberg for 15 years.



Nick Mori: Program Planner Sacramento County Public Health: He has been with Sacramento County Health since 2001. He works on many public health issues including homelessness, alcohol and drugs, mental health, and public health accreditation. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Animal Physiology and Neuroscience from UC San Diego and his Master of Public Health from Emory University.

Michael Perez- He is an activist for the chronically ill and injured who is permanently disabled. He wants the chronically ill and injured to receive the medication they need to survive. His main concern is that doctors are being pressured to not prescribe, pharmacies to not dispense, and insurance to not cover opioid medications over the amounts recently imposed on them for fear of prosecution. This is all despite the patient's condition, which is obviously not being considered in the solutions being proposed. What and how many doctors decide to prescribe is being over ruled. Those with the power to enact these limits are neglecting the legitimate need for pain medication.



Dr. Christopher Zegers: He joined Kaiser Northern California Department of Psychiatry in 1991. After joining Kaiser, he became boarded by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in 1993. In January 2006 he joined the Chemical Dependency Department. He then became double boarded in Addiction Medicine. He now works out of the Chemical Dependency Department in a special intensive day treatment program. He works as the Psychiatrist/Addictionologist on a team where we help people who have serious difficulties with co-occurring Psychiatric disorders and substance abuse problems. This month long program has had remarkable success in keeping people out of the hospital and changing their lives for the better. His philosophy is to partner with the patients by giving them all of the knowledge he can and help them make the best informed decisions that they can. Medications are a frequent part of treatment but need to be supplemented with healthy life styles and wisdom.

There may be more panelists joining us so please join us to find out who. If you know of any more, such as legislators, caregivers, chronically ill patients, nurses as well as others who may have experience with the opioid crisis, including those addicted or their families who might be interested, please call or text Terry at 916-204-7199. Also if there are any medical marijuana experts who have experience with cannabis aiding in the elimination of opioid addiction, please call Terry or Monica. (916) 267-8992)

Terry McSweeney is a Certified Fibromyalgia Advisor, Graduate of the International Fibromyalgia Coaching Institute, Founder of FibromyalgiaPathways.com, Founder of the Sacramento Fibromyalgia Support Group, Member of Leaders Against Pain in conjunction with the National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association, and Chairperson of the Sacramento Together Walks for Fibromyalgia Awareness held at the Capitol each May.



Smith:

continued from page 3

alized that to produce commercially-sufficient volume he needed a proper shop. In 2004 he searched for a space to lease but came up empty. Then he learned from a friend that the famous Capitol Boxing Gym had closed after 35 years of producing prize-winning pugilists and the building was on the market. The 50-year-old structure was in rough shape, but he saw its potential as a production facility and signed on the dotted line. "It was falling down—literally," Smith said. "We had dope addicts living here, 'cause you could break in really easily, so I spent a lot of time kicking people out." Plans were drawn up in 2005 and the bell rang on the first round of restorations in 2008.



Adding lemon zest to a blueberry batter at the insistence of King Smith's daughter resulted in Kat's Meow. Photos by Joe Perfecto

A full kitchen was installed on the second floor, and at street level, where the boxing ring long stood, a promotional vehicle for the Mighty Kong product line in the form of a retail shop/café was set up; patrons could pick up muffins to go or nosh on-site with a mug of coffee. About four years later, Smith's daughter, who had just graduated from the prestigious Cordon Bleu culinary school, surveyed the operation and saw a lot of untapped potential. She sold Smith on the idea of expanding the café into a full breakfast/lunch spot, and a second round of restorations ensued. The bakery counter was pushed back and booth seating was brought in.

Now they needed a bar. Nothing large or fancy—just something nice that would fit into a corner. So Smith was dispatched to an Atlanta auction to get something appropriate. He found one he really liked—a circa 1902 Cuban mahogany piece that originally stood in Ann Arbor, MI. It was the size of a small motorhome. The café would have to lose a few tables.

When the barroom behemoth arrived, it was accompanied by a somewhat smaller container, which held a serendipitous discovery—a 3-D, large-as-life version of the company's logo mascot. "When I bought the bar, the guy knew I was interested in gorillas, so he said, I have a statue." Smith was hooked… and before Willie knew it, he was en route to sunny California. (One can envision this encounter as akin to the stereotypical scene in which lovers run in slo-mo toward each other, arms spread, through a field of daisies while glorious music plays. Or, maybe not.)

Although the expanded café had just a two-year run, it developed a loyal following. "We had really good cuisine here—American food," Smith said. "But we didn't charge enough. It's just hard to know; I didn't grow up in the food business—I was a state employee for 40 years. As a family we decided that we didn't want to do that anymore." With the café's closure Smith reverted to strictly production. "The muffins were something where we knew what we were doing; we had an excellent product. [We decided] we're not gonna sell retail anymore." This left the company to rely ultimately on one local retailer and their Website for sales.

In 2017 the company reached a crossroads on several fronts. At 76, Smith was at a point where he really wanted to "retire and play golf all the time." While sales were reasonable for a small-time operation, he wanted to have a presence in the large retail sector before handing the company over to son Lance, but those contracts were still proving elusive because word-of-mouth advertising just wasn't cutting it. So Smith decided it was time to call in the big guns and enlisted the help of a PR firm. Today things are looking up a bit. "We didn't make a good enough effort to market these muffins, but we're doing it now, and I'm very optimistic that we're gonna have some success," he said. "Whole Foods is interested."

Then there was the matter of that dormant café downstairs. Smith felt that although it was no longer of use to Mighty Kong, there was no reason it couldn't be revived under new ownership. The time had come to downsize, to sell the building and find a new facility. "It breaks my heart to have to sell it, but.... I mean, we can stay here forever, but it's not a good way to do things, and we don't need this much space," Smith said. "I'd like to see somebody make this into a thriving restaurant, because I think it could be; it's nicer than a lot of places that are doing really well."

The building was listed for $600,000, and finally went into contract in July. The bakery is now relocating and production is suspended. But the ovens should be fired up again sooner or later, and if all goes well the "Gorillalicious" products could appear on grocery shelves before long.

And that would be no mean feat; competition for shelf space is fierce, as even the largest retailer hasn't enough room to stock everything on the market. Products have to stand out, whether through marketing gimmicks, price point, a unique recipe, outstanding quality or some combination of these. Smith believes his products cover several of those bases. For starters, they're healthy, energy-packed, and—gasp—kids love 'em.

The core recipe, which has been fine-tuned by Smith's son, Lance, contains no chemical, preservative or trans-fat. "We have a basic batter, which is wheat bran/oat bran, cane sugar, cage free eggs, skim milk, sea salt, baking soda [and canola oil]," Smith said. "The proportions determine what the moisture level's gonna be. [The mixture] has a unique texture; it's a little denser; it's nice and moist. We don't use paper wrappers, 'cause the way our pans are, they make the bottoms of the muffins crunchy like the tops; I like that and most of our customers do too."

Compared to other products, the muffins are a bit compact. "It's 2.5 ounces, but it's very filling; it's not a fluffy, cake-like type of product." Smith said. "If you go to Costco, you get a football—but if you read the ingredients, you need a chemistry book. Everything in this muffin is organic." Different varieties incorporate fruits, berries, chocolate, nuts or other additives and offer low-cal, low/no-fat and low-carb options.

Smith compared them to the popular Spunkmeyer brand, of which he's had more than a few. "It's chemically derived like a Twinkie; that's not food. I took one home and stuck it in my window. A year later—this is with the sun beating down on it—it never spoiled. If we did that [with ours], we'd start getting mold in about four days."

OK, so Kong muffins are healthy. But how do they taste? "Kids'll eat these, and that's the acid test," Smith said. He's used this fact as a marketing point. In keeping with the company's lighthearted gorilla/jungle theme, its Website brags that kids—referred to as "young primates"—love their prod-

See Gorilla page 8

Gorilla

Continued from page 7

ucts, and explains it thusly: "It's because these muffins deliver an upbeat, chest-beating, 'junglely' energy level experience without the necessity of flossing bark, leaves and other heavy cellulose fiber from between your teeth."

All levity aside, do children really care about a snack's energy content? Not so much. And it's clearly significant that unlike the typical "junk food" snack, which is long on flavor and unhealthy ingredients but short on nutrition, these muffins are possibly the most healthful thing those "young primates" will consume all day. But it's a rare child indeed who's swayed by what's listed in the label's Nutrition Facts box. No, these muffins pass the kid acid test because they're as flavorful as the competitors. If they weren't, wholesomeness and energy be damned; they'd have all the appeal of puréed broccoli.

So these things tick the toddler-to-teen taste checkbox. But lest anyone suspect the flavor profiles cater primarily to the comparatively uneducated juvenile palate, Smith points out that many grown-ups find that some varieties pair well with port, Madeira and Armagnac.

Although King Smith created most of the varieties, Lance, who's been in charge of bakery operations from the company's founding, has come up with a few of his own. At the beginning there were about eight products; since then the line has tripled in size. Many varieties are based on unusual combinations of ingredients King dreams up.

"My father always comes up with crazy ideas for different flavors, like the ginger-cranberry-walnut—which is actually a really popular flavor," Lance said. "He was, like, hey—make this muffin with ginger, and throw some cranberries and walnuts in it. And I was like, what? That's insane. So then I made it and everybody liked it, and I was kinda eatin' crow. He keeps makin' up more flavors, different fruit and nut combinations."

One variety involved a "sister act." "When my sister was training to be a chef, she said hey, you should make a lemon zest blueberry muffin. And I was like, lemon zest? I'm not gonna zest anything—that sounds crazy. She said, alright—lemme just throw some zest in there and see what happens. So I said, OK, what's to lose, but I was thinking, I'm just making my sister happy, but I'm not gonna like it. But then I ate it, and I was like, oh, dang, that's my favorite muffin." The variety is called Kat's Meow, after Lance's sister.

Occasionally a variety is inspired by another product, such as Lance's Nutty Dr. Zook. "I ate some zucchini bread that had chocolate chips and walnuts in it, and I thought it would be good in a muffin, so I ripped that idea off and it worked," he said.

A noteworthy one-off custom variety—sweet potato zucchini raisin—was produced for the White House in honor of the then-First Lady. "[King] made that up because he heard that Michelle Obama liked sweet potatoes, and he thought it was something we could play off," Lance said. "We sent the White House some muffins and we got a letter back saying that they liked them. We called [the variety] Michelle Our Belle."

The products' wacky names are the brainchild of the elder Smith. The "Beta Breakers" involves a play on words; this variety, which incorporates carrot, was originally produced for San Francisco's Bay to Breakers run. Another name involves an inside joke. "We've got one called Beaver's Bro," King said. "I used to watch 'Leave it to Beaver,' and one of Lance's friends looks exactly like Wally. They went to high school together, and he ate all of Lance's muffins. He told Lance he wanted us to make a muffin for him; it's walnuts and golden seedless raisins."

Speaking of wacky names, the origin of "Mighty Kong" goes back to King's time as a student at San Jose State in the early 60s. "I had a friend who used to call me Mighty Kong as a joke, because he thought I was a humorous person," King recalled. "When I was young, I was pretty wild, so that was, I think, a part of why this guy thought it was a crack-up to call me that. In 1998 I needed an E-mail address; I tried to use my own name, but somebody had already used it, so I used Mighty Kong. And when the time came to figure out what we were going to call our muffins...."

Currently the timeframe and locations for retail placement of Mighty Kong products are not determined, but for information about availability as well as the brand's "Gorillalicious" lineup of "Willie Approved" goodies, visit https://www.gorillalicious.com.



Lance Smith prepares to bake an experimental recipe. Photos by Joe Perfecto

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Land Park Volunteers Needed for United Way's Day of Caring



Volunteers are needed at Sacramento Children's Home in Land Park on Sept. 21 from 9 a.m.-noon as part of United Way California Capital Region's Day of Caring happening across the region. Thirty to 40 volunteers are needed to help plant and revive the landscaping of the new picnic area in front of the counseling center. For more information and to sign up to volunteer, visit www.yourlocalunitedway.org/dayofcaring.

One thousand local residents will spend a day caring for the community Sept. 21-22 by signing up for nearly two dozen volunteer projects happening at nonprofits and schools across the region during United Way's annual Day of Caring, sponsored by Nationwide. Since United Way California Capital Region held its inaugural Day of Caring in 2013, 3,692 volunteers have donated 18,054 hours of service for 182 projects benefiting nonprofits and schools across the region.

"This is the single largest volunteer event in our region," said Stephanie Bray, president and CEO, United Way California Capital Region. "This is our opportunity to volunteer our time and energy as we dig our hands in to help the nonprofits and schools that do so much for our community every day."

Day of Caring is part of United Way California Capital Region's Square One Project, a 20-year promise to significantly increase the number of local students who graduate from high school ready for success in college and beyond. Through nine decades of work and research across Amador, El Dorado, Sacramento, Placer and Yolo counties, United Way believes ending generational poverty starts in school and is working to ensure kids meet important milestones and their families receive support and resources. For more information or to donate or volunteer: www.yourlocalunitedway.org.

Since 1867, the Sacramento Children's Home has been dedicated to caring for the community's most vulnerable children and families. With a mission to open doors to the future by maximizing the potential of children and families, Sacramento Children's Home offers a comprehensive spectrum of prevention, early intervention and mental health treatment programs to strengthen families and stop the generational cycle of child abuse and neglect. From educating parents of infants and toddlers to teaching independent living skills to young adults, the organization serves more than 6,900 children and 4,600 families each year. For more information, visit www.kidshome.org.

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Celebration of Inclusive Communities 2018 set for Sept. 28

With the mission "to provide opportunities for people with developmental disabilities which promote dignity, respect, and inclusion so that all our lives and communities are enriched," local non-profit, Progressive Employment Concepts and Community & Employment Services, began its employment service for individuals with developmental disabilities in 1995. Specializing in customized employment, PEC and CES work with businesses to carve out mutually profitable roles for their clients. The organization assists their clients in finding meaningful careers and value in their communities, not just jobs.

The nonprofit invites the public to a fundraising event, aptly named Celebration of Inclusive Communities 2018, which will be held at the Warehouse Artist Lofts on Sept. 28 at 6 p.m.

The event will include dinner, beer, wine, a variety of art vendors, an amazing raffle and a silent auction. Local band According to Bazooka will be featured, as well as an assortment of musical and comedic entertainment. The event will also honor local businesses who are investing in diversity and hiring individuals through PEC and CES. Inclusion Awards will be presented to leaders in diversity hiring as well as individuals who live inclusion every day. Last year's event helped raise funds to make employment a reality for five additional people and open the door to seven new individuals seeking services. The nonprofit also further invested in their dedicated staff by providing increased training opportunities.

You can purchase tickets at the door for $30 but we strongly recommend you go online to the PEC website at www.progressiveemployment.org and purchase your tickets ahead of time for just $25.

Jake Beckett and David Diab III

Launching an assisstive tech company

Jake Beckett and David Diab, III are life long members of the greater Sacramento community, and passionate about technology. They are turning their passion into service with Beckett&Diab Assistive Devices, making locally sourced and affordable aids for people with communication, learning, and dexterity challenges. Jake worked as

See Celebration, page 11



Jake Beckett (right) and David Diab, III (left) owners of Beckett&Diab Assistive Devices - Photo by David Seybold



Jake Beckett inspecting prototype of 3D printed text isolator for reading with dyslexia - Photo by David Seybold



David Diab, III (left) showing Jake Beckett (right) product design plans - Photos by David Seybold

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Celebration:

continued from page 10

an intern for three years fixing computers and David took mechatronics courses before they connected through their supports at Progressive Employment Concepts.

Bryan Koyasako Works at SMUD

Progressive Employment Concepts client Brian Koyasako has been working at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District since 2015 performing quality control with digitized documents. He works closely with the Low Income Energy Assistance Program in the Remittance Department. A resident of the Pocket, Brian is active in his community and loves



Brian Koyasako is a proud employee of SMUD. - Photo by David Seybold

events at the Sacramento Public Library.

About the photographer

David Seybold is an outgoing person who likes to socialize with friends and family. David has passion for photography it has pushed him to success and given him a keen eye for photos. David considers himself to be a excellent photographer and loves what he does. David started his curiosity with photography at the age of 8 years old when he found an old Polaroid camera at a yard sale. He was so fascinated by the camera that it could capture a moment in time and preserve it. Later on, David follows his dream with photography at Sierra College. He started his first semester in the fall of 2012 and finished in 2016. He learned the darkroom process and studio lighting plus alternative process. He learned how to use Adobe CC software such as Lightroom Photoshop and more, like After Effects and Premiere Pro. These programs let David manipulate and make works of art with his photography. He has even photographed the 36th annual Sikh festival in Yuba City and got two of his images posted on the Sac Bee website. Call, email, or book him online to capture a moment today.

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Cook Realty Charity Golf Tournament Returns for a 26th Year!

Their autumn event has raised over $400,000 for local non-profits and charities…

The 26th Annual Cook Realty Charity Golf Tournament happens Friday, Sept. 21st at William Land Park Golf Course. The nine-hole 'just for fun' golf follows with an all charity dinner and prize raffle that attracts hundreds of guests and golfers.

Since inception in 1992 the Cook Realty Charity Golf Tournament has raised almost $400,000 for local charities. An important characteristic of this unique event is that over 90% of the earnings are turned over to several local non - profits, schools and churches.

Cook Realty Broker Trey Bonetti says the event is successful in raising needed funds for many local nonprofits and valuable community assets. "We understand how important these funds are and how many groups have come to rely on our help", said Bonetti. "We're proud of the accomplishments of our agents and the part they play raising money for charity in a challenging economy."

Golf Director Ed Daniels knows it doesn't happen without the help and hard work of literally hundreds of vendors, merchants and service companies from both within and outside the local real estate industry. "Each year we ask folks to donate time, money or goods and services and they respond overwhelmingly," says Daniels.

Jocelyn Yap, event coordinator, agrees; "We are grateful beyond words to the many participants large and small that make our event so significant to so many people," says Yap.

Meena Chan Lee plays a vital role, heading up a roster Cook Realty agents, who each play a part in securing ample gifts and prizes for the event dinner that evening. It is estimated the raffle helps to bring in as much as half of the total proceeds. "We have been so fortunate to be surrounded by so many fine business people in our community," she says, and "Each year they are thrilled with the result of participating. The return on their investment exceeds expectations".

Cook Realty wants to thank major sponsors that include Steve Larson of Farmer's Insurance, Bouey Termite & Construction, Ken Perry of State Farm Insurance.

Generous contributors include Scott Filby of Guild Mortgage, MetroList Services, Castro Insurance, Nathan Sibbet of Loan Depot , Sushi Café, Parker Foundation, People Finders, Yee Law Group, Full Circle Home Inspections, Phillips Painting, Hammond Paint, Zajic Appliance, Unger Construction, Nelson's Locksmith, A Superior Electric, Fidelity Home Warranty and Silver Lining Staging.

The late Charles Covey, then a Cook Realty agent, began the fundraiser in 1992. Each year an award is given in his honor to a community member who has exhibited selfless work and sacrifice on behalf of those less fortunate. Who will be this year's winner?

Play, donate or just come eat and enjoy the fun. Secure your spot at this year's Cook Realty Charity Golf Tournament, Dinner & Raffle. Call Cook Realty at 916-451-6702 for tickets and details.

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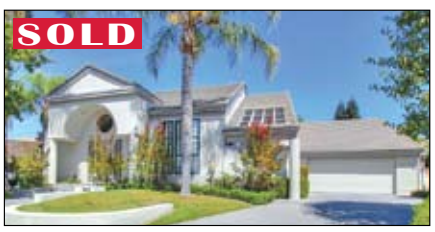
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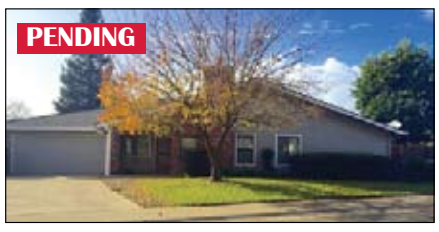
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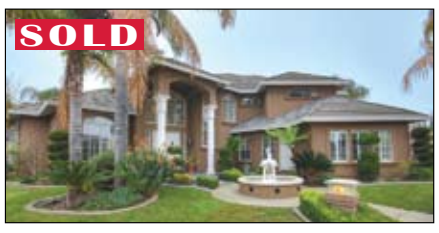
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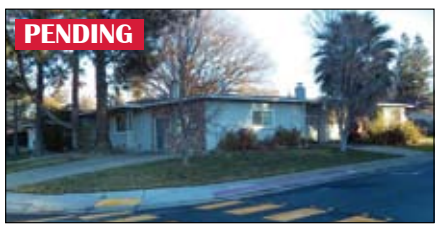
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Restored Tower Records mural unveiled on K Street

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

A vibrant, colorful, psychedelic art mural hovering above the entrance of the former Tower Records store on K Street was celebrated last week as a crowd gathered for the unveiling of this recently restored, iconic piece of Sacramento history.

Forty-five years ago, graphic artist Frank Carson was commissioned by Tower Records founder Russ Solomon to create the mural on the ceiling and sidewalls above his business's front windows at 726 K St.

The building, which now has the address of 730 K St., was then home to the Solomon-owned record store, The Sound Peddler. It would become the site of a Tower Records store two years later.

After designing the mural, Carson worked with another graphic artist, Mitch Aronson, to paint this large art piece, which includes such images as the heads of females with blue hair, ships, ferns, butterflies and an oval-shaped area with a blue sky and clouds at its center.

As age and elements took their toll on the mural, the paint from this eye-catching artwork gradually began to deteriorate, and its future was ultimately in jeopardy.

It eventually became an uncertainty whether the building itself would be saved, as efforts to revitalize the 700 block of K Street moved forward.

Three years ago, while the artwork continued to deteriorate with fading and peeling paint, Ali Youssefi, of CFY Development, co-developer of the 700 Block project, launched the mural restoration project. But he would not see it through to fruition, since he died of cancer last March.

As part of his preliminary work, Youssefi met with Dennis Newhall, of the Sacramento Rock & Radio Museum.

During that meeting, Newhall showed Youssefi some of Carson's artwork, including large calendars he had created for Tower Records during the same era that he worked on the K Street mural.

Newhall said last week that he "kept Frank up in the progress" after someone from Youssefi's team informed Carson about the project.

Shaun Burner, lead artist of the mural restoration, said that it was also three years ago when he was approached by Youssefi regarding the possibility of restoring the vintage mural.

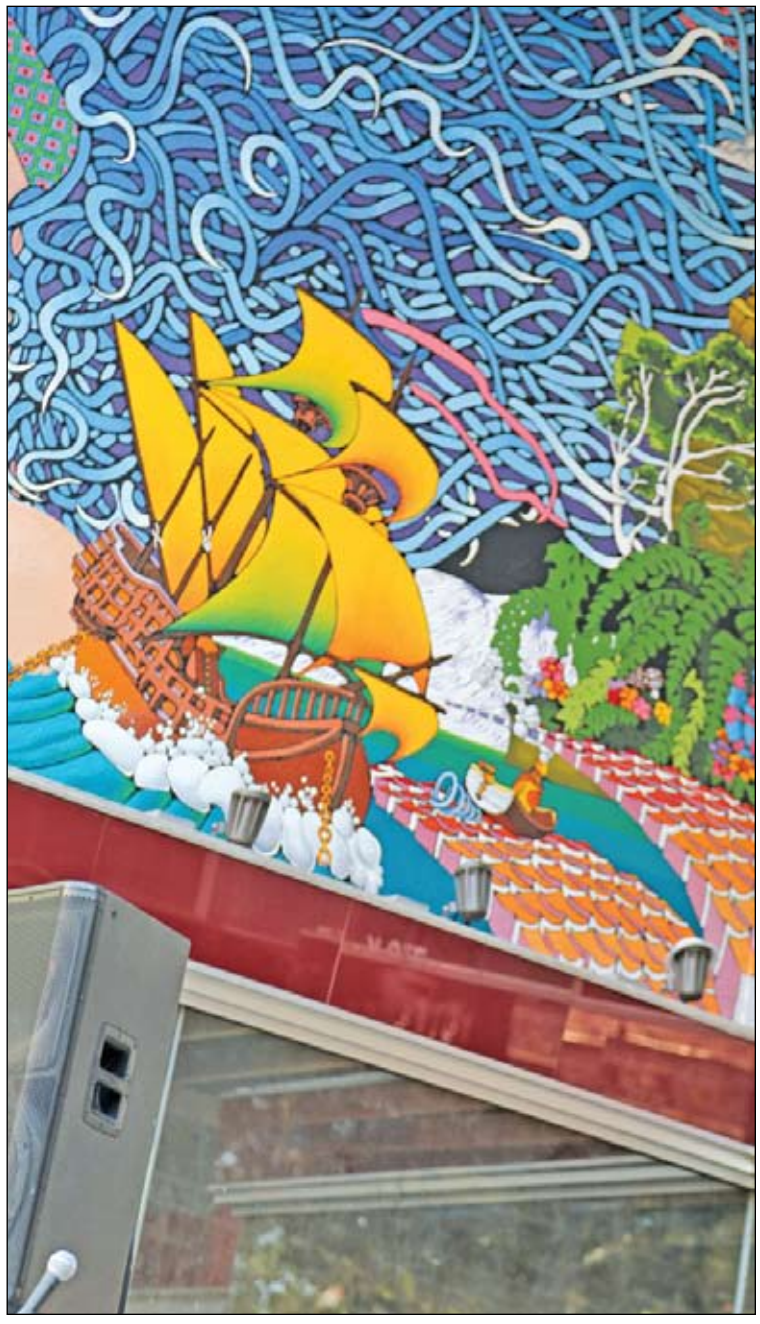
Having grown up in the Sacramento area and admiring this mural during his youth, Burner soon agreed to take on the project.

Burner said that the project had a variety of challenges, including the peeling paint on the ceiling, which had been left exposed to elements during a then-recent construction project at the building.

"When they were working on the building the last three years, they had to redo the roof completely," he said. "That ceiling was left exposed to the elements for two years and they had some holes in it to retrofit the ceiling.

"By the time we got to it and actually started to restore it, we had to just take off what little bit of the paint was left, because we couldn't just paint

See Mural page 15



The mural features the head of a woman with Medusa-like, blue hair.





Mural:

continued from page 14

over this already crumbling paint."

Eventually, the only original paint preserved was on the two upper, back corners of the mural.

Burner noted that attempting to match paints for the mural was one of the project's greatest challenges, since the original paints had picked up a lot of grime and faded so much throughout the years.

But as far as the original pattern and imagery of the mural, Burner said that it is "definitely spot on."

Burner, whose experience in art includes creating other murals and working as an artist in various parts of the world, said that he first saw the K Street mural when he was about 13 years old when he came to the Thursday Night Market on his skateboard.

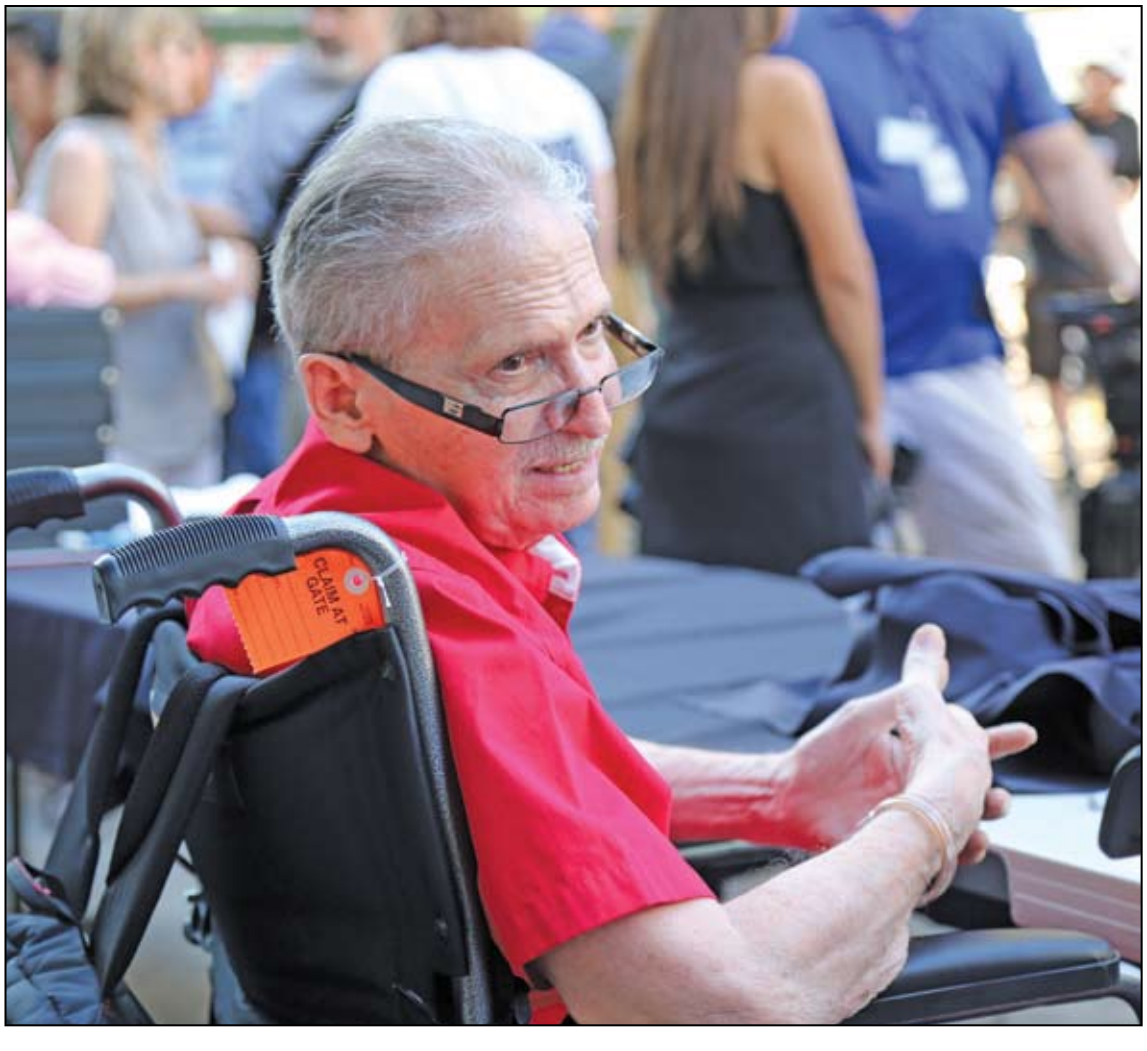
"I was always kind of mesmerized by (that mural)," he said. "So, looking back after working on this thing for the last two or three months, I realize how much it kind of influenced my own style."

Those assisting Burner in restoring the mural included Franceska Gamez, Jeff Musser and Mitch's daughter, Sophie Aronson.

Another name that Burner made sure to mention was Seamus Coutts, who he said he brought in as the project manager for the mural restoration project.

During last week's unveiling event, which also highlighted the upcoming opening of Solomon's Delicatessen at the former Tower Records K Street site, Carson sat at a table signing original copies of his Tower Records calendars. The calendars were sold for $50 each, but Carson's autographs were free.

See Restoration page 16



Photos by Matias Bombal - Frank Carson, the artist who painted the original mural in 1973 with Mitch Aaronson

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Restoration:

continued from page 15

Also offered were pieces of paint that were removed from the mural during its restoration.

In an interview with this publication, Carson said that he was never around to view the mural's deterioration.

"The day I finished it, I never came back," he said. "I didn't want to remember it. It was a very hot summer."

Carson recalled beginning the mural with the blue sky on the ceiling, and working on scaffolding for 10 hours a day and seven days per week during a three-month period to complete the job.

Occupying tables alongside Carson were Solomon's Delicatessen employees, Jared Serviss and Fiona Heenan, who offered food samples and merchandise of this Jewish deli, which was inspired by Tower Records and Russ Solomon. Another location of this locally-owned business is operated in Davis.

Adding to the artistic ambience of the event was live music by the band, Black Yacht Club.

The event drew a variety of Sacramentans, including artist Bob Rakela.

While standing near the mural, Rakela said that he appreciates the preservation of this artwork.

"I think it's really important to our community to have this street art thing that's happening right now," he said. "To have one that has this kind of history to it and has been around this long – and Frank's still around to enjoy us and for us to enjoy him – is very, very, very special."

Kay Iannucci recalled seeing the mural for the first time when it was only about a year old.

"We started coming down here to (K Street) back then," she said. "Then we started going to the (Tower stores) on Broadway and Watt (Avenue).

"I think it speaks for the time that Russ was opening these stores and the kind of commissioning (Solomon) was doing for art and to make the city a little more lively. (Solomon) made a huge impression on this whole area, and then look what he did, (establishing Tower) stores all over the country and (world)."

Melissa Uroff, a local artist and photographer, expressed her concern for the longevity of murals, and said that she is well aware that murals are constantly in danger of being painted over.

"(A mural is) such a temporary piece and when you're a muralist, you kind of know that," she said. "I have a few murals under my belt and almost all of them have been painted over."

Uroff also lamented over the loss of a mural by the artist Skinner that was located on the alley side of the former Javalounge coffee shop's building on 16th Street, north of Broadway.

More recently, Burner and Gamez's mural on the former Awesome Video building on Freeport Boulevard was painted over.

Because of her understanding that murals are often temporary artworks, Uroff said that she was pleased that the old K Street mural has been preserved.

"It's nice to see something that's so historical and kind of magical come back to life," she said. "The artists that worked on it were a really good choice, for sure. So, I think they did it justice."



Photos by Matias Bombal



Photos by Matias Bombal



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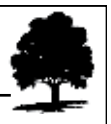
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The dad navigates choppy waters: KD makes the call



By STEVE DEBENEDETTI-EMANUEL

(Note: First, I want to share with you that my next 10-week men's counseling group begins on Sept. 10, at my Midtown office. It will give men an opportunity to talk about the stuff we often keep to ourselves: relationship challenges, parenting, job stresses, etc., without the pressures of outside influences. If you're interested, my contact information is below.)

If you read my last piece, "The Bubble Team Meets Dr. Doom and Gloom," you know that my 10-year-old boy, KD, had an extremely rough entrance into the world. It was not what we expected, and it almost turned out really badly. That was an extremely difficult period of our lives, and it's hard to write about. So, I'm going to take a break and get back to the story later.

A couple weeks back we hit the wall. The heat had turned us into a monster family. KD wrapped himself in icepacks and headed to his room. Captain Mommy (my wife Stephanie) and I sat and bickered about stupid stuff for no good reason. It was not looking like a good day. Or a good weekend!

Around 11 a.m., KD skipped into the living room and said with a tentative smile, "Can we go to the City?" Captain Mommy looked at me, and I looked at her. Without a good reason to say "no," she headed into the garage and raided her secret stash. I locked the bedroom door and did the same. KD chipped in a few bucks. And we hit the road at noon.

Next thing we knew it, we were at the top of Mt. Sutro, where it was a misty and windy and a balmy 59 degrees. A temperature check in Sacramento showed 101, a 42-degree difference. Sure, a picnic would have been nice, but we got cold quickly and headed to the car.

Needing a warm up, we drove frantically to Ritual Coffee, one of my favorite spots in the city, for a steaming latte. Sadly, it closed two minutes before we got there. Fortunately, before the tears rolled down my face we turned around and discovered Weaver's Coffee, which is really solid. It's worth a visit…

I looked at my phone, and it was still too hot to go home. So it was time for a burger at Calibur Burgers. We discovered it a couple of weeks ago and knew it was worth another visit. And after a leisurely and delicious burger and garlic fries, it was cool enough to head home.

To summarize: we got out of dodge when it was brutally hot, had a perfect hike, a delicious cup of coffee, and a yummy burger. I had everything I needed for my article on the perfect day trip to San Francisco. However, since I'm a parent, spouse and therapist, I suppose I should have a larger point. And I think I do.

As much as our kids want to make significant decisions, their thoughts, feelings, and suggestions are often devalued or ignored, and parents make the decisions. This makes sense most of the time. If your kid says, "Hey dad, I'm only 15, but since you don't drive, can I get behind the wheel next time?" or "Dad, can we share a beer next time we're in the City?" the answers should be a resounding "NO!" However, when we can allow our kids to suggest and make reasonable suggestions, the answer should be a resounding "YES!" In this case, KD threw out an idea, and there wasn't a good reason to say no. So we shouted, "Yes" and hit the road.

Postscript: Sunday hit, and it was a cool morning. Captain Mommy and I got up and announced that it was time to do the yard work we'd been putting off for the last month. With newfound courage, KD tried to change directions and suggested we go out for brunch. We immediately nixed it and told him to put on his grubby clothes. We got to work…

Until next time…

Steve is a Marriage and Family Therapist, working in Midtown. He can be found at www.rivercitycounseling.com or on Facebook at River City Counseling and on Twitter @ rivercitysteve.

Back to School Message from Superintendent Aguilar

Dear Sac City Families,

Welcome back to the new school year! I hope you enjoyed the summer break and are ready for another memorable year as we begin a new chapter in our work to help all students reach grade level readiness so they are prepared to graduate from our schools with the greatest number of postsecondary choices from the widest array of options.

We have much to look forward to as we launch our school year! For some of our students, today is the start of an educational career in Sac City schools. For others, it marks the transition from one grade level to the next—another milestone reached in their academic journey. Whether today is the beginning of year one or year twelve, we owe it to our students to continue committing ourselves to work together with a focus on their success.

Preparing for the new school year is one of the most critical steps we have taken as a school district to help our students be successful. Over the past few weeks I have been honored to be in space with so many of our educators and site leaders as they worked together to get schools ready for classes. One of my most memorable visits was with our teachers at Fern Bacon Middle School. There, I met Michelle Desmond, Ryan Fernald, Grace Gunderson, Chris Matthei, Stephanie Smith, Michelle Voelker, Ghazala Bahramzi, Sarah Horn, Maria Johnson, Janise Linnane, Mariah Martin, Julia Morris and Nital Wenell, all of whom were collaborating with one another to provide first tier teaching to our students.

Please take a moment to watch this video of the Fern Bacon team in action preparing for the school year alongside their Principal, Mary Coronado. *(http://www.scusd.edu/post/video-welcome-back-school)* I was impressed with how well this team of new and returning educators worked with site leaders to make sure that students today would start off the year in a positive and high quality educational environment.

I am confident that despite our budget challenges, we will find a way to ensure that our students' needs are met and we provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn. On that note, I want to thank our facilities team for the wonderful job they have done over the summer in completing a number of important renovation projects, including but not limited to, replacing the roofs at Susan B. Anthony Elementary, O.W. Erlewine Elementary and The Met; remodeling the restrooms at Ethel Phillips Elementary and Woodbine Elementary; and replacing the playground asphalt at A.M. Winn Elementary, among many other important projects. I toured the gym at John F. Kennedy High School and saw new irrigation work taking place at Earl Warren Elementary. With everything that is going on in the world, it was important to us that we put significant time, effort and care into preparing for the first day of school. Our students need this positive energy and attention from us now more than ever.

Thank you to all of our families for your commitment to making our schools a positive place where our students can grow and learn. We look forward to serving your family this school year and working our hardest to make a difference in the life of your student. Let's have a great year!

Sincerely,
Jorge A. Aguilar
Superintendent

Source: Scusd.edu

What's happening, Land Park?

FRIDAY, SEPT. 14

END OF SUMMER STREET PARTY IN SOUTH LAND PARK: The South Land Park Neighborhood Association and Barrio Cafe Sacramento, 1188 35th Ave., invite you to an end-of-the-summer block party, which will include food, music, a kids corner and a beer and wine garden in the South Hills Shopping Center from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m..

SATURDAY, SEPT. 15

MEDICINE IN THE OLD WEST: ---- The Old City Cemetery Committee presents a tour of Gold Rush era medicine starting at 10 a.m. at the Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, 1000 Broadway. The doctors of the Gold Rush Era worked exhaustively to not only take care of their patients, but also to give to the community through their roles in improving public health, education, and maintaining important records. Many needed to find other sources of income, as their patients often were unlucky in finding gold, as were most of the physicians. Some suffered exciting lives, including being on a ship full of gold that sunk off the eastern coast of the United States. A number of the physicians worked together to form the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement, now the Sierra Sacramento Valley Medical Society, the oldest such Society in California. The cemetery is located at 1000 Broadway, Sacramento. There is free street parking on surrounding streets. Tours are free; however, donations are appreciated and benefit cemetery preservation. For more information, call 916-448-0811.

SATURDAY, SEP. 22

ELDERLY SCAMS—HOW NOT TO BECOME A VICTIM: A full day of training with Sierra Pacific Communicators Network, a public speaking training organization. Presenting the following training: Elderly Scams—How Not to Become a Victim—presented by the Sacramento District Attorney's Office; Estate Planning—Ensure Your Desires are Followed presented by—Attorney Donna Shioya; Effective Use of Members Voices by Faye Corrin. Optional Buffet Lunch $25, Tri-tip & Chicken with Mushroom, Mashed Potatoes, Rice Pilaf, Vegetables and Coffee and Tea. Executive Airport, 6151 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento 95822, first floor conference room. Registration and morning snacks 8:15 to 9a.m. Training from 9am to 2pm. Must have a reservation, call Liz Richardson at 916-422-1354.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 29

HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH PARKING LOT SHRED EVENT: The Fall Shredding Event will take place on September 29 in the Holy Spirit Church parking lot at 3159 Land Park Drive. to shred from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Iron Mountain provides the equipment for secure on-site shredding.

ONGOING

SOL KIDS DAY! EVERY SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: From 2 to 4 p.m., families are welcome to enjoy a day of cultural arts, crafts, and music., Sol Kids Day provides different hands-on arts and health activities every Second Sunday like nature creation labs, healthy snack assembly stations, yoga for kids and everyone's favorite, slime-making. Engaging performances for kids include hip hop theatre production, beat-making workshops, and guest appearances from some local unicorns and magicians. Sol Kids Day also hosts a gently used toy/clothing exchange every month as well! Sliding scale donations. No one ever turned away for lack of funds. Funded in part by the Cultural Arts Award Program of the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission with support from the City and County of Sacramento. Sol Collective is located at 2574 21st St, Sacramento, California 95818.

LADIES GOLF CLUB IN LAND PARK: Did you know there is a women's golf club that regularly plays at William Land Park? Women can discover the joys of golf, build new social relationships and get fit the fun way by joining the William Land Women's Golf Club. This 9-hole group meets Thursday mornings. It's open to women of all ages and golf abilities. Questions....or want more information....please call 916-422-0831 or email gretjen@comcast.net

MUSIC AND MOTION AT BELLE COOLEDGE LIBRARY: Rowena Alverto brings exercise classes for seniors with a combination of yoga, tai chi, zumba, for seniors on Wednesdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. $5. 5600 South Land Park Drive.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP: Every first Monday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m. Location: Sacramento. Call 916-428-3271 for exact location. Description: Is your friend or family member in a domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking situation? This free, drop-in group is for you. Learn how to support your loved one, and receive some support yourself among people who are in the same situation. Feel free to call My Sister's House for more information: 916-428-3271.

#METOO SUPPORT GROUP: Every third Monday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m. Location: Sacramento. Call 916-428-3271 for exact location. Description: This drop-in support group is free, confidential, open to all genders, and available to sexual assault survivors at any point in their healing. Feel free to call My Sister's House for more information: 916-428-3271.

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NatureFest logo by Ariel R. age 11

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Faces and Places:

Chalk It Up 2018

Photos by MONICA STARK

Chalk-It-Up! to Sacrament a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization created to benefit children's arts education programs, which raises money through various events held its annual Art & Music Festival at Fremont Park over Labor Day Weekend.Proceeds fund grants in support of Youth Arts Programs throughout the Sacramento region. Chalk-It-Up! is led by a volunteer Board of Directors, supported by hundreds of dedicated volunteers and funded through the generosity of our extraordinary community. Shown here is a collection of photos from the weekend's festivities.









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Carnaval de Quebec, Quebec City Offers the Most Amazing Winter Family Travel Opportunities

By CARMEL L. MOONEY

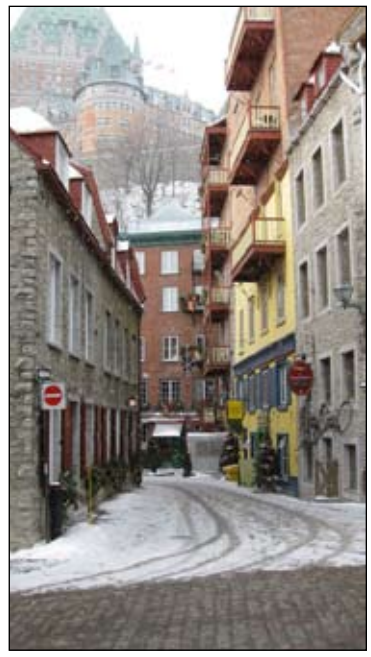
If you want to experience one of the most unforgettable family travel experiences in North America then look no further than Canada for something that will be a lifelong memory that is completely unsurpassed.

Every year thousands of visiting families from around the world come to Quebec City to enjoy the festivities of one of the world's most enormous winter festivals. Quebec Winter Carnival is ranked among the world's top ten best winter festivals and is considered one of the world's 1000 must-see destinations. Parades, rides, attractions, sporting events, dog sledding, dining, ice sculptures, ice buildings, skating, skiing, snow shoeing and more create a world class vacation destination in one of North America's most majestic and thoroughly magical cities.

Flying into Quebec City at Jean-Lesage International Airport is hassle free even with kids. The magical and historical city of Quebec is transformed into a winter wonderland worthy of a movie or fairy tale. Music, events, dining and activities abound that celebrate Carnaval. Bonhomme, the snowman, is the mascot whom visitors revel in spotting and meeting throughout the city during the Carnaval festivities. We stayed at the Hilton Quebec which was within walking distance of everything the picturesque city offers. This proved invaluable. We enjoyed dog sled races and show shoe races and live bands on the Plains of Abraham. The Carnaval Day Parade rivals the Macy's Parade and is a must see with dozens of gigantic inflatable characters including Bonhomme.

Also one magical evening we were enchanted by a lovely ice skating session just blocks from our hotel at Place D'Youville where folks of all ages skate under gently falling snow to music. Bonhomme arrived and everyone went wild with excitement. It was just like a scene out of a movie with the beautiful and historic buildings and lights framing the rink. One highlight was a guided Snowshoer's Walk on the Plains of Abraham where our entertaining guide dressed in period costume, narrated and sang with us while weaving a tale of the history of the area.

Continued on page 23



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Carnaval de Quebec

Mural continued from page 22

Just a few beautiful miles from Quebec City is Le Nordique, a gorgeous spa retreat where couples and families can enjoy massages, hydrotherapy pools and more, all amongst majestic mountain backdrops and frozen rivers and lakes. A beautiful hotel property nearby, Le Manoir du Lac Delage offers sumptuous meals and gorgeous views. We spent the afternoon eating a simply wonderful lunch and partaking in a fun outdoor activity called Rand Orientation where, on snowshoe, participants hunt for markers in the forest from coordinate clues and a compass. It was a wonderful way to see the back country and exercise while testing our skills.

Also nearby is the Wendake nation's hotel and museum. Home of the first inhabitants of the Americas, this village is very intriguing. The four star hotel, Hotel-Musee Premieres Nations, blends tradition and culture of the Wendake native people. The food is a cultural experience where delicious native foods like smoked sturgeon and seal are extraordinary. And home baked breads made by native grains like bannique bread made with wild berry corn andt flour are tantalizing. The foods are prepared by native peoples or by elders using generations-old techniques. Local cheese and locally crafted adult beverages make this so unique and delightful. Even the herbs used to prepare the foods, over 90 of them, are locally produced. The entire community is full of historic and educational buildings and a walking tour is a must.

Also just outside the city of Quebec we enjoyed Montmorency Falls Park where we took the grand cable car ride up the mountain to a spectacular historical and natural wonder. These falls are higher than Niagara Falls and simply amazing. The entire experience is nothing less than breathtaking. We enjoyed it more than Niagara Falls. Quebec City is an immensely exquisite destination and perhaps there is no better time to visit than during Carnaval. Another novelty of the Quebec City area is the Hotel de Glace just a few miles from the city where a wonder of frozen water brings visitors from around the world into a mesmerizing world of sleeted chandeliers, indoor polar slide, ornate frozen furniture, and refrigerated artistry.

In just a matter of weeks this engineered spectacle is redesigned and re-constructed each winter season from hundreds of tons of ice and tens of thousands of pounds of packed snow. No two years are alike as several dozen uniquely themed rooms and suites, glacial nightclub, a majestic wedding chapel, and an unforgettable lodging experience are created for brave adventure seekers looking to be awed for a day visit or an overnight extravaganza.

For those of any age, brave enough to take the class and prepare adequately, sleeping in the Hotel de Glace is successful only with the help of arctic rated sleeping bags, and meticulously planned pre-sleeping organization. If sleeping in a room where cell phones freeze, cameras malfunction, and even boots and sweaters must be protected, sounds doable, get ready to slumber, or not, on top of a mattress placed on a block of ice as a bed foundation. When we stayed even families with infants braved the cold and had a successful visit.

However, less adventurous families just visit for the day to tour and the Hotel de Glace partners with the Four Points by Sheraton Quebec about a mile away. Check-ins take place through the Sheraton, where typical hotel amenities, and warmth are only a 2-3 minute complimentary shuttle away and a warm and cozy room is waiting, just in case. As locals say, "There is no shame in not making it through the night."

Overnighters at the ice hotel might enjoy an ice cocktail in the Ice Bar, complete sleeping equipment, access to the hot tubs and sauna area, a hot wake-up beverage, and breakfast.

Some suites at the Hotel de Glace even boast fireplaces that are strictly for ambiance and eye appeal, since they are specially designed to not emit heat.

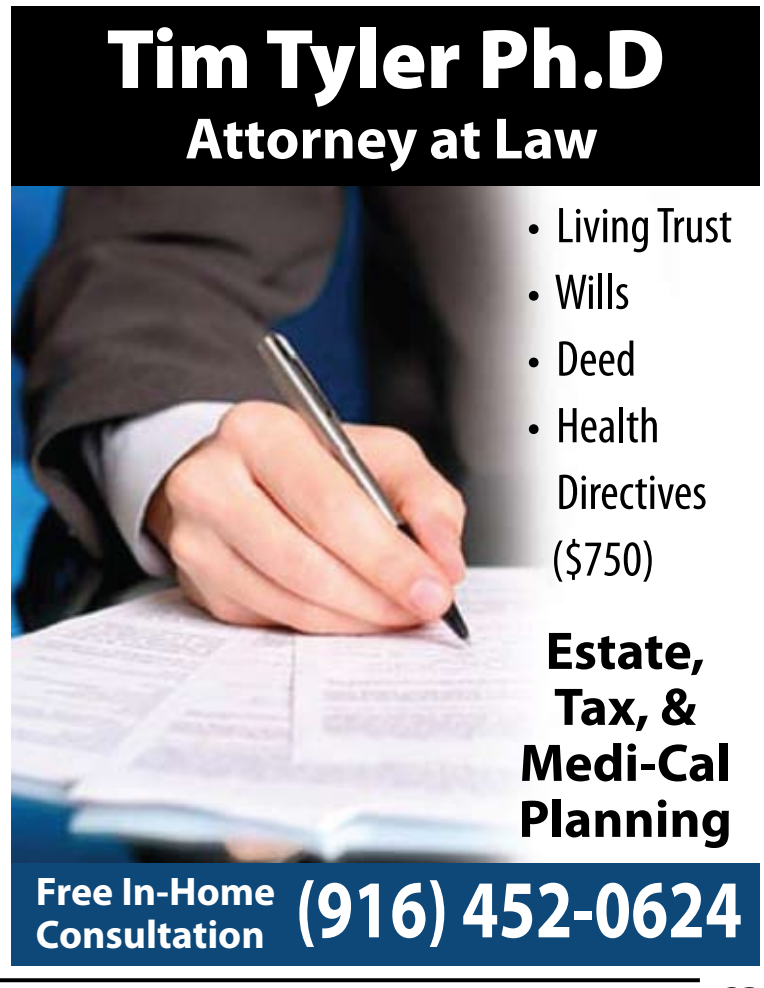
In order for the arctic sleeping bags to function correctly your clan must wear the correct synthetic fibers and socks and have clean, dry, and unworn clothes separately reserved just for sleeping, as moisture is the enemy.

One amazing attribute is the extreme insulation and acoustic property of the ice structure. Even with the blaring music from the disco, the suites and rooms are supremely quiet and serenely peaceful at night. So quiet in fact, that some guests comment on the eerie stillness, even with no doors on the rooms.

A day or early evening visit and tour may be more enjoyable if you aren't into preparation and gear. The crystalline ice sculptures and intricately designed walls, indoor ice slide, bars, and discotheque are an unforgettable sight to see and experience. In fact, well over a half million visitors have experienced this wonder just since 2001.

So whether you are a more tame and less risk-taking traveling family or like to live life on the icy edge, Quebec City and its environs offer the absolute best for families looking to make the most spectacular winter vacation plans imaginable! Dust off your passports, and start planning now in the Autumn if you plan to visit this Winter wonderland as families from all over the world will be joining you in the fun.





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