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Best of 2019 Land Park News

(Editor's Note: Thanks to the talented team of writers at Valley Community Newspapers, I am proud to present the Best of 2019 for the Land Park News. -Monica Stark)

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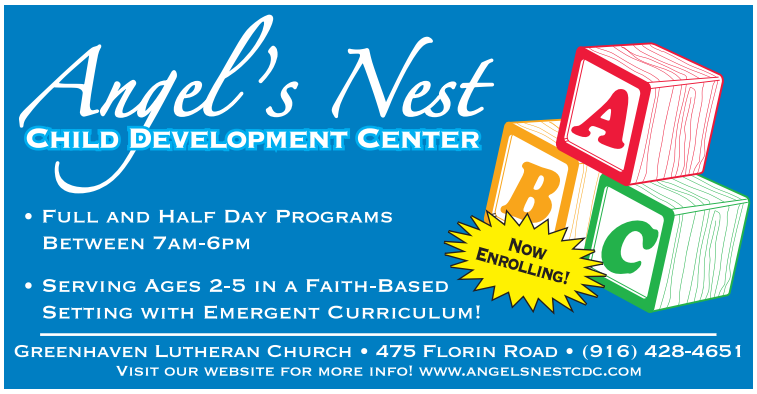
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Annin Piper



Dimple music stores closed

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

The longtime operating Dimple music stores called it quits.

John Radakovitz, the business's founder, explained his decision to close all seven of his stores, which include two locations at 16th Street and Broadway and another store on Arden Way.

"I've been selling records for 53 years, 40 of which have been under the Dimple name," he said. "It's just time. I want to go work in my garden.

"Another factor for my decision is there is also the aspect of declining sales. A lot of the artists aren't even releasing (their music) in the physical world. Online sales are another issue that's big."

In an attempt to sell the remainder of their inventory of CDs, DVDs, vinyl records, games, books and other items, Dimple stores remained open until August, John noted.

All Dimple stores began running a sale of 20% to 40% off their merchandise on June 19, the day after it was publicly announced that the stores would be closing. John said that greater reductions in prices will occur as the sale progresses.

In addition to inventory stored inside Dimple stores, the business also maintains merchandise in three warehouses.

John, 74, told this publication last week that he believes his retirement was well earned, given that he has been selling records since the days of the British Invasion of the mid-1960s, when such bands as The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Who were introduced to America.

The birth of a career

In 1966, following his four and a half years of service in the Navy during Vietnam, John launched his career in the record selling industry as a distributor for the Pasadena-based wholesale/retail record business, Canterbury Records. The company had established a northern branch store at 1715 Arden Way in the Arden Fair Mall.

John recalled his work for Canterbury Records.

"I was delivering records to various drugstores and supermarkets up and down the San Joaquin Valley in small towns (and other areas)," he said. "I put in records by (Herb Alpert and the) Tijuana Brass, (and) whatever (else) was popular at the time."

John said that his second career venture began in January 1969, when he was hired as a distributor for the Emeryville-based wholesale record business, Pic-A-Tune, which had a store on Del Paso Boulevard.

"I was a salesman for them on the road and (traveled to) Redding, Chico, down south to Modesto, Lodi, Stockton," he said.

John's earliest stores

In about 1971, John began his own wholesale record company, called River City Record Distributors, and his own retail store, called Cordova Records. Both operations were located at 10653 Folsom Blvd. in the Rancho Cordova Shopping Center.

One of that wholesale company's accounts was the Raley's supermarket chain.

Three years later, John sold Cordova Records and opened Roseville Records (later renamed The Record Shop) at 1022 Douglas Blvd. in Roseville.

The first Dimple Records store

With its relocation to Harding Boulevard, The Record Shop was renamed Dimple Records.

Regarding that name change, which occurred when the business was incorporated, John noted that music has and continues to bring smiles to the faces of many people, resulting in many "dimples."

Other Dimple stores

About 14 years after the establishment of the Dimple Records name, John expanded his business to include a second store at 313 East Bidwell St. in Folsom.

He opened a third store at 2433 Arden Way in about 1996, and a fourth store at 6099 San Juan Ave. in Citrus Heights about two years later.

A Dimple store was located at 9692 Elk Grove-Florin Road in

see DIMPLE page 3



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Dimple:

continued from page 2

Elk Grove from about 2005 to 2017.

Following the late 2006 closure of Tower Records, John Radakovitz closed the San Juan Avenue Dimple store, and in March 2007, he opened a store in the old Tower Records building at 7830 Macy Plaza Drive in Citrus Heights.

He also opened a Dimple store in the former Tower Records site in Davis in the summer of 2007. That store remained in operation until the summer of 2012.

During that same summer, Dimple Books (aka Dimple Books & Records) opened in its own building at 2499 Arden Way.

That store also features a mostly used vinyl records section, which was previously housed at the north end of the main Arden Way Dimple building. Dimple Vinyl was established at that site on Record Day on April 17, 2010.

On May 26, 2014, Dimple Outlet opened in the former Dimple Vinyl site.

The first Dimple Books were established in the Folsom and Citrus Heights stores, and other locations followed.

A family affair

In addition to John, his wife, Dilyn, and their sons, Oliver "Ollie" and Andrew "Drew," are also involved in the daily operations of Dimple.

John and Dilyn, who currently reside in Loomis, were married at the Carmichael Presbyterian Church on Feb. 25, 1967.

The couple met following John's service during the Vietnam War and his subsequent arrival in Sacramento.

After graduating from Mira Loma High School, Dilyn – who was then known as Dilyn Dearing – was a candidate for Miss Sacramento in 1965, while she was attending American River Junior College, as American River College was then known. She was also a song leader at that institution.

John said that Dilyn was working in the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. building at 2277 Watt Ave. when they met.

Celebrity visits: Robin Williams, Prince, Merle Haggard, others

John mentioned that one of the joys of having operated music stores for so many years was the occasional, random, in-store visits by celebrities.

He recalled that on one such instance in about 1998, comedian-actor Robin Williams stopped by his Roseville store.

"(Williams) just came in one day and I think he wanted to buy a Pink Floyd album," he said. "We had a line at the cash register and the little girl standing in line with her mother behind Robin Williams recognized his hairy arms and then she looked at his face and she pulled on her mama's dress and said, 'Mama, Mama, that's Robin Williams.'

"So, Robin Williams turned around, picked the little girl up, danced around the store with the little girl. He was ready to go with a moment's notice. He's off and entertaining and running. He was great and he obviously liked little kids."

It was also at the Roseville store where country music star Merle Haggard arrived to purchase a few CDs, John recalled.

"Years ago, I was opening the store out (in Roseville) and there was a big RV out in front with the diesel engine running and out pops a pretty girl who was driving the RV and then followed by Merle Haggard," he said. "I opened the store, of course, and let them in.

"He (asked), 'Where's my Merle Haggard section?' So, I took him over there and said, 'What are you doing buying these CDs?' He said, 'Well, I've got a concert down in Stockton tonight and between now and then I forgot some of my lyrics and I want to brush up on some of the lyrics of my old songs when I'm going down there.'"



Another famous musician who stopped by the Roseville store was Chubby Checker.

As for Dimple's Broadway store, which previously housed Russ Solomon's Tower Records and R5 Records, John said that Prince once visited that store and browsed its recorded music selection and chatted with some of the employees.

In addition to random, unscheduled celebrity appearances at Dimple stores, scheduled celebrity events at Dimple stores have included a performance and autograph session with guitarist Joe Satriani and a book signing by John Densmore, former drummer of the band, The Doors. Both of those events were held at the Arden store.

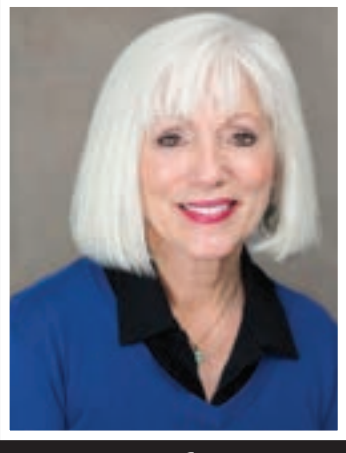
John recalled a time when the band, The Smashing Pumpkins, visited the Arden store and performed a publicity stunt in that store's parking lot.

"They rented a 90-foot tall lift out in back and they had a bunch of pumpkins out there and they just kept dropping the pumpkins down on the parking lot," he said. "That was kind of fun."

A big thank you from John and Dimple

While pondering his decision to close his Dimple stores, John expressed his gratitude for his many customers throughout the years.

"I thank all the customers from all the communities, primarily because of their loyalty," he said. "And I love them all, because of their love for music."



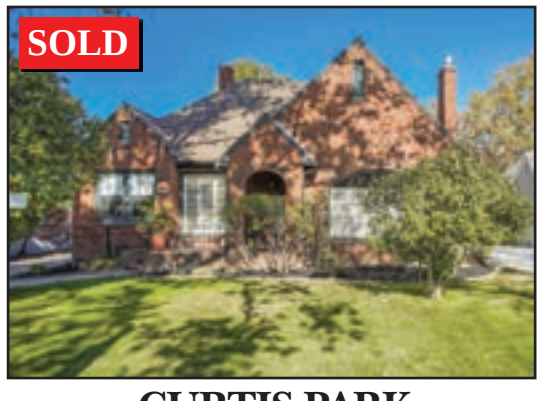
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'Sowing Solidarity':

Hollywood Park urban farm provides more than just produce



By Kerin Gould

Urban farms always seem to provide more to the community than just fresh produce, and Sowing Solidarity in Hollywood Park is no exception. Their first farm stand opened at the St. Robert School at 23rd Street and Anita Avenue, and they offer picked-this-morning veggies every Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m.

Attracted to the chard kale, turnips, lettuce, beets and sugar snap peas, neighbors almost immediately turned up to shop delightedly, and many also volunteered to help out, feeling a need to work in the soil, in nature, which is something urban dwellers too rarely get to enjoy. Families were excited to find they could walk to this location with kids pulled along in the wagon, and the event allowed neighbors to connect and children to explore the compost pile.

Though many urban farms are located in food deserts, Sowing Solidarity's stand is near two supermarkets, but the produce quality here stands out as "hyper-local, never refrigerated, field to table", with no transportation involved, according to Gina Anderson, head of this fledgling non-profit farm.

At the end of the day, any leftover produce was donated to the River City Food Bank. All the proceeds from the farm stand are donated to a fund that provides mosquito nets to prevent malaria in Africa, as Anderson and her husband find that this cause is a direct and tangible solution to one of the world's big problems.

Anderson was formerly the director of Community Service at Jesuit High School, helping students "grow compassion and understand bigger social issues in the world." At an environmental justice conference she organized in that capacity, an urban farmer's presentation convinced her that, "…you could solve some of the day's biggest social issues through urban farming, namely eating locally and eating seasonally, so therefore reducing our carbon footprint…"

With that inspiration in mind, when the opportunity arose to create a garden on the St. Robert School property only

see FARM page 5

July 30 Groundbreaking Held for Caltrans I-5 Corridor Enhancement Project

By Patricia A. Clark

"This project needed to think big," Caltrans District 3 Director Amarjeet Benipal exclaimed to the assembled crowd at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Interstate 5 Corridor Enhancement Project on July 30. Mr. Benipal acted as the Master of Ceremonies for the one-hour ceremony, held under Highway 50 at the corner of 6th and X Street to take advantage of the shade on the warm July day.

The scope of the project runs approximately 15 miles, from one mile south of Elk Grove Boulevard to the American River Bridge crossing near downtown Sacramento. The $370 million project rehabilitates 67 lane miles of the roadway, relieve congestion through the addition of 23 lane miles of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, replace the outdated pedestrian overcrossing between Fruitridge and Sutterville Roads, construct two new sound walls, install new fiber optic lines and extend some entrance and exit ramps.

In his introductory comments, a jubilant Mr. Benipal emphasized that the project planning benefitted from numerous partners, including local agencies. He expressed thanks and appreciation to all of those individuals and agencies that took an interest in moving the project forward.

Among the speakers, Susan Bransen, Executive Director of the California Transportation Commission (CTC), noted that the existing pavement is 44 years old and original to when the freeway first opened in 1975. Ms. Bransen also noted that this stretch of I-5 sees about 150,000 vehicles through the corridor each day, including about 15,000 trucks. Exemplifying the values of the SB 1 program, she itemized the various sources of funding for the project including $48 million from SB 1, $280 million from the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOP), $33 million from Sacramento Transportation Authority's Measure A funds, and $8.5 million from Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). She closed by saying that the CTC sees this as a "transformative project" with noticeable improvements in safety, rehabilitation, and congestion relief.

Beaming with a broad smile, U.S. Representative Ami Bera shared his view that infrastructure investment is good for communities. "This is a smart project," Bera said. Bera represents the 7th House District in California and lives in Elk Grove.

Other dignitaries speaking at the event included David Kim, Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency, Assembly member Jim Cooper, Steve Hansen, City of Sacramento Councilmember District 4, Darren Suen, City of Elk Grove Councilmember District 1, Vince Mammano, Division Administrator Federal Highway Administration, and Brent Newman, California Highway Patrol (CHP) Chief Valley Division.

Secretary David Kim said this project will be the largest highway project in the Sacramento area since I-5 was originally completed back in 1975.

Brent Newman, the CHP representative, highlighted safety concerns in his speech. This stretch of I-5 sees large numbers of both local and long distance motorists, he began. Safety benefits from the project will include improved response time for CHP, less accidents due to potholes and deteriorating pavement, and improved real-time traffic information from the new fiber optic cables that will provide better information to dispatchers, Newman said. Specifically calling out an incident many readers will remember, Newman recalled that it was approximately one year ago that large chunks of deteriorating pavement formed massive holes in the freeway in the northbound lanes near downtown, creating huge traffic jams and requiring days of emergency repairs.

The rehabilitation project is scheduled to last 3 and one-half years, wrapping up in December 2022. Caltrans District 3 Public Information Officer Dennis Keaton commented that most of the traffic-interfering work will not begin until next year, with this fall devoted to preliminary preparations like drainage and electrical work.

Granite and Teichert Construction Companies, who were awarded the bid for the project, said they plan to recycle the existing concrete pavement on site to provide environmental benefits. The new pavement is expected to have a 40-year life.

The Casilada Way Pedestrian Overcrossing, between Fruitridge and Sutterville Roads, needs to be replaced with a similar structure that meets current American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The existing structure has a steep grade that is non-compliant. The proposed replacement structure has an attractive design, unlike the plain existing overpass. The two new sound walls will be built on the west and east sides of the freeway just south of Pocket Road. This includes the South Pocket neighborhood on the west side. These areas do not currently have sound walls and, in South Pocket's case, the neighborhood association has advocated for a sound wall since 1994.

South Pocket Homeowners Association's Treasurer Sue Ruiz recalled, "When my family moved here in 1995, we heard about how the sound wall was imminent. Now, as a member of the South Pocket Homeowner's Association Board, I am closely watching the progress and advocating for it as I know it will significantly benefit our neighborhood. It cannot come too soon!"

Following the ceremony, dignitaries with shovels turned over a small mound of sand established for the event, and then participated in a host of media interviews. To stay informed about the project, you have many choices. You can follow Caltrans District 3 on Facebook or Twitter. Currently, there is a project page located at the Caltrans Public Website under District 3 at http://www.dot.ca.gov/d3/projects/ , including weekly roadwork schedules at http://www.dot.ca.gov/d3/roadwork/ and the latest news at http://www.dot.ca.gov/d3/press/ .

Farms:

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a mile from her home, she and her family decided to pursue their dream.

Anderson balances her lofty, global ideas on one hand, while on the other she finds that an urban farm builds close community. "I've met so many more neighbors. I've only been doing this the last two years… and I've met quadruple the amount of people. And people want to know how they can get involved…It builds community in a time when there is a lot of isolation and polarization, and I find the farm can be a real healing place. It's therapeutic…And then it promotes healthy eating, fresh eating, and seasonal eating."

Asked how an urban farm affects the kids in the neighborhood, Anderson said that especially parents of small children want to have them involved with the farm, have them see where food comes from and restore that connection. "When our pediatrician says 'how many hours of television the kids watch' in our annual check-up, that's telling you something!... I want every child in Sacramento to have an urban farm!"

Sowing Solidarity has many plans to expand, support other urban farmers, and provide educational programs on video and in collaboration with the school (but also open to the public). For now working this small farm mostly by hand is a big job. "Being on a farm…it really does force you to slow down in a lot of ways. I think that would serve our society well, to reconnect with one another, with your neighbors, and reconnect with your food system."



Council votes in favor of eminent domain proceedings to further Sacramento River Parkway: Paving expected to begin in 2 years



By Monica Stark

On May 21, The Sacramento City Council unanimously voted to use eminent domain on six properties from Garcia Bend to Arabella Way in the Pocket neighborhood whose owners have not sold their levee easements, marking a big step for cyclists who have advocated for over 50 years for the extension of the Sacramento River Parkway. They hope to one day connect the two river bike trails but this is a big step in that direction.

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Eminent domain is not anything they take lightly.

While City Councilman Steve Hansen's district, which includes Little Pocket, will not be included in this stretch of the Parkway, the contingency is that there will be a protective two-way cycle track from Scott's Seafood to where the trail will connect again in the Pocket. While Hansen has shown support for the Parkway in the Pocket, he has not supported it in his district.

Then, on May 30, just days later after that critical eminent domain vote, Mayor Darrell Steinberg held a news conference, announcing his budget proposal for 2019-20, which included more than $2 million for the Sacramento River Parkway.

According to the Sacramento River Parkway Coalition, that will fund planning, permitting, and environmental review necessary to complete the Parkway in the Pocket, and it will include acquisition of easements from all properties between Northpoint Way (behind the Elks Lodge) and Zacharias Park.

The coalition expects the city will be able to fund the remaining acquisitions in next year's budget, meaning the Parkway will be ready to be paved as soon as major levee work is complete in the Pocket, which will take about three years.

At a budget hearing on June 4, the council voted in favor 8 to 1 (Jeff Harris dissenting) to approve the mayor's budget priorities, which included the $2.03 million for the Parkway.

During the public comment at the May 21 meeting, speaking on the side of the property owners Billy Garza fears vandalism and undue stress. "The lack of a bike trail may be an inconvenience, but how is our injury addressed?" Urging the council to vote no on the eminent domain proceedings, he suggested a ballot measure or holding off on the vote.

Speaking on behalf of the Jones family, attorney Brian Manning who represents property and business owners in eminent domain cases, called the action putting the "cart before the horse."

"It's desirable, but that's not contest to take private property." He told council that the city better have "everything lined up" before proceedings begin. Also, he questioned the uncertainty of patrols and the millions of dollars that will be needed for maintenance. "Are there better places to spend that money?" he asked.

"I don't understand the rush. You need to find funding. You don't have it....there are a lot of factors."

In response, Sacramento River Parkway Coalition member Jim Houpt, said in an interview with this publication, "let's say he's right that we can wait to take this vote, are we going to wait until we are in the position of the city conducting 69 or whatever eminent domain proceedings all at the same time they are doing planning, permitting, and environmental review?

"It takes time to get these things done. If we don't start now, we won't be in a position to finish the parkway when the levee work is done. That's why funding coming in at this time is so critical. We can't do everything at once. If we could, we could wait," Houpt said.

On a public Facebook post, the Sacramento Parkway Coalition stated, "As we understand it, landowners face the risk that they will get less money in eminent domain proceedings than they would get from voluntarily accepting an offer from the city."

Property owners who sell get 10 percent of the appraised value of their entire property. In 2014, Jeff and Diane Omand sold their easement for $80,000 and that same year Richard and Irene Ryder sold their Little Pocket easement for $49,000.

Land Park centenarians honored at special event



By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Fifteen centenarians from mostly the Pocket and Land Park areas were celebrated during a special event held at the Sacramento Asian Sports Foundation in Elk Grove, was presented by the Pocket area's ACC Senior Services.

A highlight of the event was the presentation of Keys to the City to the attending centenarians by a representative of the office of Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg. One of the honored guests was unable to attend the event.

Among the highlighted centenarians was Pocket area resident Fran Jaksich, who was impressed by the number of people at the event who were born 100 years ago or more.

"I have never even seen 20 or 10 or five (centenarians at the same time)," she said. "I didn't know there were that many around."

Jaksich was asked to share her secret to longevity.

"It's a hard thing," she said. "I think just being (healthy). Take care of your body."

Those who know Jaksich the best also recognize her positive attitude. One of her close friends told this paper that Jaksich just "loves life and everything is fun and happy."

Jaksich, who was born as the youngest child of Albert and Bessie Lueth on Feb. 1, 1919, grew up on a ranch in Sutter County.

As a teenager, she earned 33 1/3 cents per hour working at roadside orange juice stand operator in Roseville. She later came to Sacramento, where she was hired to work at the Capital National Bank.

She was married to Jerry Jaksich in 1942 and has two children: John Jaksich and Barbara Mikacich.

Mikacich recognized the importance of celebrating the lives of centenarians.

"It really is an honor, it really is," she said. "I don't know how many of us are going to reach 100."

Another centenarian, Land Park resident Tomako Mori, was born in Loomis and partially raised on a 100-acre fruit farm in Lincoln. She was one of seven children.

On that farm, the family handpicked fruit and hauled it via horse-drawn buggies.

Mori's father was born in Hiroshima, and would return to his native country on occasions to assist with the care of his family's property.

Mori lived in Japan during her junior high and high school years, and during that time, she learned how to arrange flowers.

With her dual citizenship, Mori also worked for the U.S. federal government as an interpreter.

Because she was still living in Japan during World War II, Mori was not

see CENTENARIANS page 8

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Centenarians:

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placed in a wartime Japanese internment camp.

"I was in Japan," she said. "I had a rough time in Japan, because I was born (in the United States). I couldn't do anything. They had eyes on me. They thought I was a spy. I don't know anything about (being a spy)."

Mori recalled nearly being killed by a piece of a warplane that fell from the sky during World War II.

"Airplanes were shot up in the air and fell into pieces, and all of the pieces started to fall on the ground," she said. "(One piece) almost hit me. It was that close, coming from the sky. (Someone said), 'Look out, look out, look out.' And good thing I didn't move, because (it) was coming right after me. That was in Osaka in 1942."

Another approach to survival was Mori and her family's decision to not hide away in bombing shelters. She mentioned that the shelters were the first places that were bombed during raids.

Mori added that following the war, she returned to the United States with her father, her mother and two of her brothers.

"They wouldn't let you (return to the United States during wartime)," she said.

Fast forwarding in her life, she has grown to have a large family, and a very fulfilling life.

"I feel so great," Mori said. "I can't (believe) I'm 100 years old."

While sitting next to her father, Nai Chin "Nelson" Koo, Teacy Koo described what it is like to have a father who has lived for 100 years.

"It's a journey for sure," she said. "Now he lives with me. It's quite a job to take care of an old dad, but I love him."

Nelson, who was born in the Zhejiang province of China was the son of a medical doctor.

He studied agriculture in college and eventually became an expert in tea production.

During the 1970s, he was sent to Bolivia by the United Nations and the Taiwan government to work on the development of tea plantations and other crops.

He came to the United States following his retirement, and he currently lives in Orangevale.

Nelson shared his secret to longevity.

"I eat, sleep, rest, work hard, and help others," he said. "I'm happy every day, all the time."

Ted Fong, director of development for ACC Senior Services, said that he discovered that all of the honored centenarians are generally happy about their lives.

"Even though, learning from their children, many of them had very difficult lives and difficult family situations, when they look back, it was all worth it," he said. "It's amazing."

Fong placed great emphasis on the support that these centenarians receive from their families.

"I think the strong family support is a big deal, and you saw that by the turnout of the families (at the event)," he said. "There's a big correlation between family support, socialization, getting seniors out of isolation that really contributes to them living longer, lasting longer, living happier."

Fong noted that it is ACC Senior Service's intention to not only hold this event on an annual basis, but to also increase its size every year. And he added that it should become easier to find more centenarians in Sacramento County as the years go by.

"There are 75,000 centenarians in the U.S.," he said. "That number will grow to 600,000 by mid-century. At this rate, 40% of the residents at ACC Care Center will be centenarians. One can only imagine how big the celebration will be at the 66th annual care center fundraiser in 2050."

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Tommy Kono inducted into Sacramento Sports Hall of Fame

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

The Sacramento-born Tamio "Tommy" Kono, who gained worldwide fame in the sport of weightlifting, received special recognition.

Tommy, who died at the age of 85 in 2016,was inducted into the Sacramento Sports Hall of Fame on Jan. 26, 2019 at Thunder Valley Casino Resort's Pano Hall.

Also inducted into the 2019 Hall of Fame class were Chris Bosio (Major Baseball player and pitching coach), Lance Briggs (seven-time National League Football Pro Bowl linebacker with the Chicago Bears), Aaron Garcia (19-year Arena Football League quarterback and 1-year San Francisco 49ers quarterback) and Geoff Jenkins (World Series champion and MLB All-Star).

During his storied career, Tommy was a two-time Olympic champion and six-time world champion.

His Olympic gold medals were won in Helsinki in 1952 and Melbourne, Australia in 1956, and he earned an Olympic silver medal at the Olympic Games in Rome in 1960.

He was also a three-time Pan American Games champion and set 26 world records and seven Olympic records. His world records came in four separate weight classes.

Tommy, who is recognized as the sport's most decorated lifter, won 14 international medals.

Adding to his legacy, Tommy won body-building titles, the first of which was the Mr. World title in 1954. He also earned the title of Mr. Universe in 1955, 1957 and 1961.

In hearing the news about the Hall of Fame's decision to induct Tommy into its 2019 class, the Kono family expressed their gratitude.

"We are excited and humbled that Tommy will be inducted into the Sacramento Sports Hall of Fame," the family said. "We are grateful to the fans of the sport of weightlifting for their support and remembrance of him. It is a very special feeling to know that his hometown of Sacramento has bestowed this honor upon him."

Prior to becoming a legendary weightlifter, Tommy grew up at 217 M Street (now Capitol Mall) in Sacramento's Japantown.

The 1940 federal census lists Tommy's parents as Kanichi and Ichimi Kono, and his brothers as John, Mike and Frank Kono.

During his childhood, Tommy's physique was far different than what it would become in his young adult life.

When he was 11 years old, he stood 4 feet, 8 inches tall and weighed 74 pounds.

The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 led to a much different life for Tommy and his family.

On Feb. 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which allowed for the assembly, evacuation and relocation of more than 100,000 men, women and children of Japanese ancestry residing on the West Coast.

While living at the Tule Lake internment camp with his family during World War II, Tommy began lifting weights from a barbell set that was purchased with money raised by interned Japanese residents.

Following the war, the Kono family returned to Sacramento, where Tommy continued to workout with weights at the YMCA at 505 J St.

During his senior year at Sacramento High School in 1948, Tommy participated in his first weightlifting competition.

An article in the Nov. 30, 1949 edition of The Sacramento Bee refers to Tommy as the "Pacific Coast champion and state record holder in the 148-pound class."

Tommy continued to strengthen his body and enter competitions while attending Sacramento Junior College – now Sacramento City College.

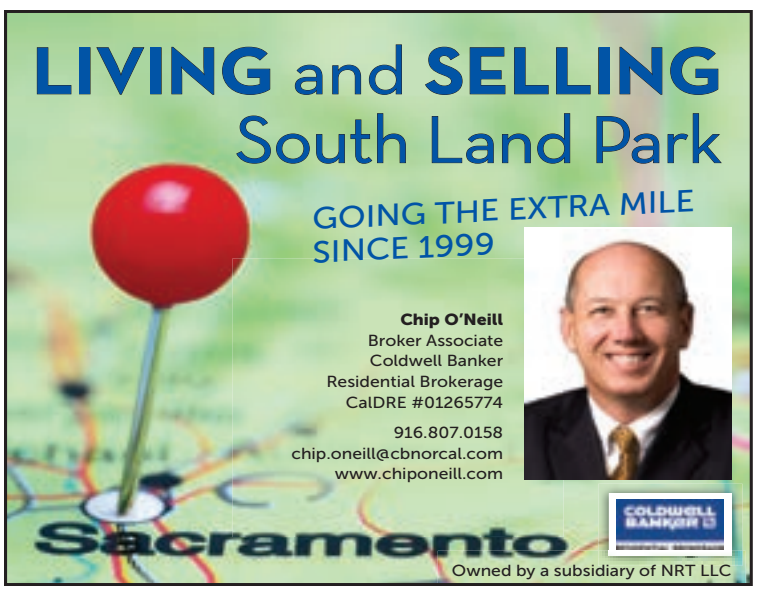


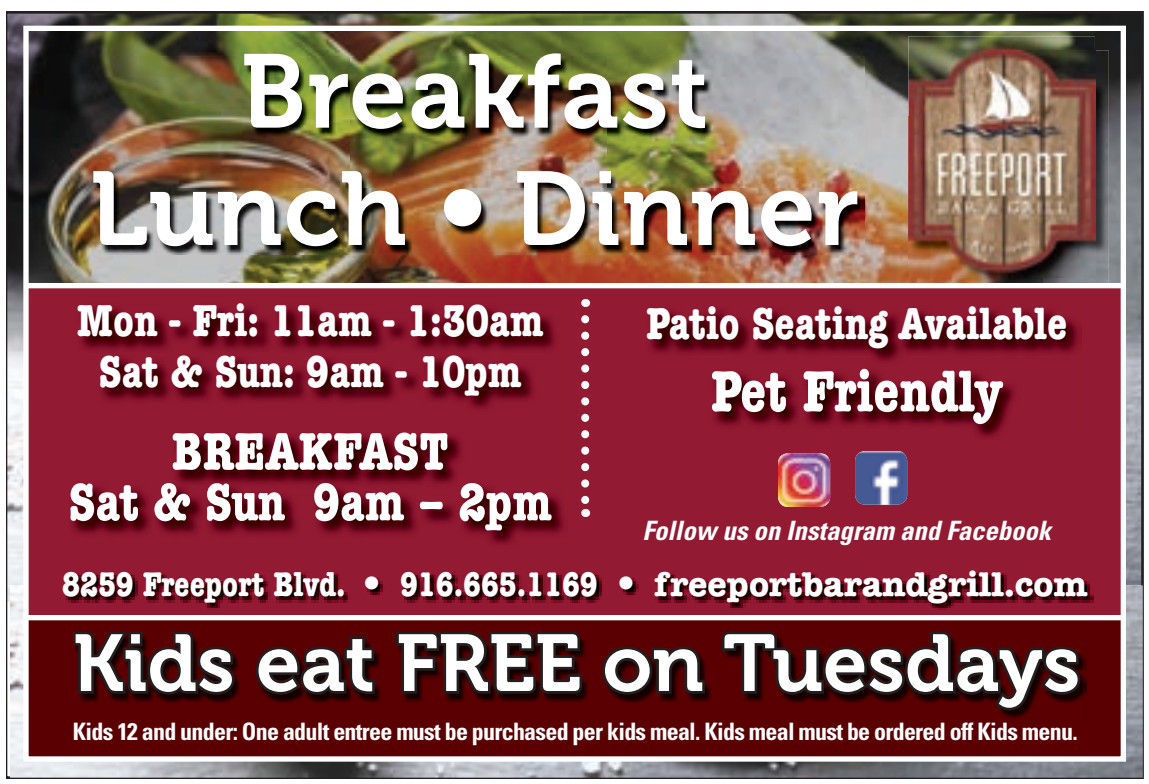
Tommy was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, but was allowed to remain a civilian in Sacramento due to his status as a potential Olympian.

With that deferment, Tommy would enter into international weightlifting competitions.

In 1963, the Teenage Open Amateur Athletic Union Weightlifting Tournament at Sacramento High School was renamed the Tommy Kono Championships.

see KONO page 12





Train advocates continue fight to protect train tracks on Del Rio Trail site



By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Train advocates continued their fight to prevent the removal of portions of a historic railroad along that project site for the Del Rio Trail.

The city's proposed, 4.8-mile, inner-city trail would run south through the Land Park, South Land Park, Freeport Manor, Z'Berg, Pocket and Meadowview neighborhoods, between Interstate 5 and Freeport Boulevard.

The purpose of the trail would be to provide a convenient thoroughfare for cyclists, pedestrians, joggers and dog walkers to travel to parks, retail centers, schools and jobs.

Its creation also supports the city's goal to increase possibilities for Sacramentans to be more active and healthy, while protecting the environment. The trail would allow for alternative transportation outside of driving on freeways and boulevards.

Included among the plans for the trail project is the removal of segments of the historic Sacramento Southern Railroad's Walnut Grove Branch Line.

Historically, this railroad operated in the area of the present day, proposed trail, and altogether extended about 33 miles from Old Sacramento to the town of Isleton. That line began its operation in 1909. It was extended to Isleton in 1929, and was abandoned entirely in 1978.

The existing tracks along the proposed trail are not currently suitable for train use. The mostly intact tracks include sections that have been paved over and damaged, and in other cases removed.

At one point along the site, near Del Rio Road and Normandy Lane, a steel, railroad rail protrudes above the ground.

California State Parks currently runs an excursion train along the old Sacramento Southern route from Old Sacramento to just north of Sutterville Road.

A proposal to have excursions depart from near the town of Freeport to the town of Hood is part of the approved Old Sacramento State Historic Park General Plan.

Sacramento attorney Osha Meserve, counsel for the rail proponent group, said that the railroad line's heritage extends beyond railroad history.

"The rail group is asking the city to protect the Walnut Grove Branch Line as a working railroad to help keep this region's farm-to-fork heritage alive, as emblazoned on the Freeport water tower," she said.

Paul Helman, a docent for the California State Railroad Museum, which is a unit of the Old Sacramento State Historic Park, is among the proponents of the preservation of the historic railroad.

Helman described the difficulty that those train proponents are facing.

"(The state) doesn't own the property (along the trail), so we can't make a plan for something we don't own," he said. "All you need is 1 foot (of the track) removed and (the plan to carry out the proposed southern excursion train) is rendered useless."

Volunteers repaired about 3,000 feet of track of the railroad, north of Sutterville Road, in 2017 and 2018.

Helman said that if the council approves the Del Rio Trail project in the March 12 meeting, proponents of preserving the railroad along the proposed trail and beyond will continue their fight.

"We're not going away," he said. "We'll look at our other options."

Brian Ebbert, president of the South Land Park Neighborhood Association, told the Land Park News last week that his organization is opposed to any future train traffic on the old rail corridor.

"We've issued letters to that effect, and we have letters from Assembly Member (Kevin) McCarty, Assembly Member (Jim) Cooper and Congresswoman (Doris) Matsui also opposing any future train traffic on that corridor, and supporting conversion of that corridor to a biking and walking trail," he said.

Ebbert added that the community at-large is also opposed to reactivating the old rail corridor.

He claimed that that train activity in that area would result in "huge negative impacts" on the community.

"(The operation of trains in the area would introduce) air pollution, ground vibration, install crossing arms across eight streets in South Land Park, 110 decibel horn blasts at intersections," he said.

"We're talking about an abandoned rail corridor that now travels past preschools and very

see TRAIL page 12

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Joe Flores became the first Mexican American president of the South Land Park Neighborhood Association

By Monica Stark

On March 20, the South Land Park Neighborhood Association hosted its annual neighborhood meeting at Pony Express School, ending the 3-year presidency of Brian Ebbert. The SLPNA board voted their new executive team at the April board meeting. At that time, current SLPNA Vice President Joe Flores officially became the next president, while simultaneously into his second year as the Chair of the Parks & Recreation Commission. He is the first Mexican American to hold these seats.

Living in a progressive community where the church on the corner makes national headlines, promoting the message of 'love ALL of your neighbors,' becoming the first Mexican American Neighborhood Association President where African Americans and women have previously served, Flores says, is a reflection of how diverse our neighborhood truly is.

"At the Mayor's State of the City, he shared a story of past racism within South Land Park during a time that I wasn't even born yet," says Flores. "This is not the South Land Park I know of today. I love that I live in a neighborhood, where many cultures are celebrated and supported. Every Friday night, I enjoy dinner with my family, while mariachis play."

Last October, Barrio Café hosted a Día de los Muertos themed block party, where his son got his face painted like Miguel from Pixar's Coco. (Weeks) ago, my family enjoyed the fire crackers and Dragon Dancers at SF Supermarket in celebration of Chinese New Year."

Honored that both the SLPNA Board and Park Commissioners have chosen him to represent them due to his advocacy in South Land Park and across District 5, Flores says it is also a badge of honor to be the first Mexican American Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission when he is in spaces where the topic of diversity is discussed. In fact, he wrote the City's benchmarks on diversity back in 2016.

When he first joined the board in 2016, he became the Communications Sub-Committee Chair, where he's in charge of all social media and email messaging platforms. Proud to have organically grow the number of subscribers to these feeds to keep our neighbors informed across all issues that affects our neighborhood, he also curates and publish the SLPNA Annual Newsletter. He's the man behind the whimsical fun neighborhood 'Yard of the Month' contests, where neighbors win South Land Park Business Area gift cards and social media postings. In October, 2018, he co-hosted the Reichmuth Park Disk Golf Appreciation Day to highlight the City of Sacramento multi-use Parks and its amenities. The Appreciation Day also sought to highlight what a successful example of an 'Adopt-a-Park' by a community group looks like. The Capitol City Flyers Disk Golf Club players are our extra eyes and ears at Reichmuth Park, and last summer, there were several trees that caught fire in the Nature Area, they were the first to run across to Fire Station 13 for the fire fighters to extinguish. The Sacramento Police Department released a report last October that indicated since the installation of the disk golf equipment, calls of service and other negative crime statistics have reduced, a direct a correlation to the many disk golfers that come and play at our park. "Changing the perception that Reichmuth Park is not safe has been rewarding," he says.

Under Ebbert's tenure as President where he sought to raise SLPNA's profile, Flores plans to expand it and to permanently establish as an exemplary example of what a neighborhood association should be. During his vice presidency, he sought and created partnerships with other neighborhood associations including the Land Park Community Association and the Pocket Greenhaven Community Association. "Brian and I cohosted a Beer Summit at Giovanni's Pizzeria last year with the Presidents and Vice Presidents of the Hollywood Park Neighborhood Association and Golf Course Terrance Estates Neighborhood Association where we discuss our top three issues affecting our neighborhoods and

see FLORES page 17





Trail:

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close to homes that were built right up next to the tracks. And, quite frankly, (the tracks) have been abandoned for over 40 years and (the proposed trail area is) utilized as a community greenbelt and walking path, biking path and jogging path, currently."

He also stated that locomotives running alongside a trail with children is not a positive combination.

"(There would be) unsafe conditions that would be created by having huge locomotives lumbering next to children as they're biking to school or to their neighborhood playground or to the library or to (William) Land Park or to the zoo," he said.

Also a concern to the association are potential impacts on traffic.

"(There are) concerns about tying up traffic on these major arteries – Pocket Road, Florin Road, Fruitridge Road, Sutterville (Road)," he said.

Ebbert mentioned that the association also rejects the proposal to operate train excursions (along the trail site), as opposed to running a train for transportation purposes.

"It's for an amusement ride," he said. "So, you want to impact thousands of lives to have a government sponsored tourist attraction in people's backyards, and that's just not acceptable."

Helman noted that there is no intention to run excursion trains through South Land Park.

"(Excursion trains run) through the stretch that goes to Sutterville Road, but not excursions on this four and a half mile (area of the proposed trail)," he said.

Helman added that the trail route would only be used for maintenance trains that would run through the area about every two to three weeks.

"The easiest way to have a completed rail is go right down on a very infrequent basis to take the locomotives and equipment to the Freeport area, and that's where they store it," he said.

Despite their opposition to having trains run through the trail area, the association supports rail history, Ebbert said.

"We would like the 5-mile-long bike and pedestrian trail to (celebrate) the old rail history," he said. "We can have historical signage along the way, maybe even some old rail artifacts included as part of the exhibits or public art.

"We have all sorts of ideas to honor the rail heritage of Sacramento without running vintage locomotives next to preschools and homes."

Kono:

continued from page 9

Another annual competition, the Tommy Kono Open, was first held at Sacramento High School in 2006.

Among Tommy's other activities in Sacramento was working for the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

Tommy's time as a professional weightlifter came to an end in 1965, a year after he experienced a knee injury that kept him out of the 1964 Summer Olympics.

However, he remained with the sport, coaching the Mexican Olympic team in 1968, the West German Olympic team in 1972 and the U.S. Olympic team in 1976.

After becoming a resident of Honolulu in the 1970s, Tommy acquired employment as a fitness coordinator with that city's parks and recreation department.

Bill Kutzer, a former football coach at California State University, Sacramento, said that he met Tommy while working with a weightlifting team on the campus of that institution.

"Whenever he came over from Honolulu, he would always come by our weight room and visit and share advice with me and some of my lifters," said Kutzer, whose 1978 dissertation at Brigham Young University was on the history of Olympic weightlifting in the U.S. "He was generous and sharing of his information and time, and just a very gracious man."

Despite his death, Tommy's legacy continues through various honors, including being inducted into the International Weightlifting Hall of Fame and the Hawaii Sports Hall of Fame.

Additionally, the International Weightlifting Federation, in 2005, named Tommy the "Lifter of the Century."



Chinese Community Church presented food festival Oct. 12

Church established in Sacramento nine decades ago

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

The Chinese Community Church held its 36th annual Fall Fellowship and Food Festival on Oct. 12, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

This free admission event, at 5600 Gilgunn Way, will present freshly cooked Chinese food, baked goods, and activities for kids.

There was also live entertainment, with special performances by Sac of Soul, CCC Ukulele and Hula Fellowship, ACC Pocket Pickers, and Teens Create Dreams.

A free parking and complimentary shuttle service will be available at the Belle Cooledge Community Center at 5699 South Land Park Drive. The shuttle service will be provided through ACC Senior Services.

Church began nine decades ago

Although this event is approaching its fourth decade, the church itself is much older.

The church's local roots date back to 1924, when a Chinese language school, known as Kwai Wah, opened in a converted house at 5th and P streets. The school provided education for American-born Chinese children.

Ed Wong, whose family dates back to the founding of the church, said that the school was established in a part of the city where Asians were allowed to purchase property.

"It was tantamount to a lower income district," he said. "It was not exactly a ghetto, but in those days, if you were Asian, you could not buy property in certain areas."

Wong, 93, mentioned that the church was established (at 519 N St. in 1927), sometime following the beginning of Kwai Wah.

"It was a language school first, then later on it became the church," he said.

At that time, the church was known as the Reformed Chinese Church of Christ.

Wong noted that the church originated in Holland.

"It's part of the reformation of Martin Luther," he said. "There's a group that went to Germany – the Lutherans – and a group that went to Holland. In fact, the Reformed Church was the first Protestant church to come to the United States, (in 1628). It landed in New York (City), which used to be called New Amsterdam.

"That church backed our church and it became the (Reformed Chinese Church of Christ)."

Wong, who attended Kwai Wah and was a trumpet player in the school's marching band, recalled the local church and language school's founder, the Rev. Wai Sing Kwok, who immigrated to the United States from China in 1920.

"He was a disciplinarian and he was a good speaker," he said. "He was conversant in both in English and Chinese. He was the primary teacher of the school. (He taught language classes) in one big room, and that one big room was the sanctuary.

"(Kwok) was the teacher, preacher, the janitor, the housekeeper. He was everything."

During a storm in February 1938, the church received major structural damage from a tree that fell on it.

As a result, Kwok arranged for the church's meetings and other activities to be held at the YMCA at 505 J St.

On April 26, 1941, Kwok announced that a new, $15,000 church building would replace the old church building and educational center at 519 N St.

The building project was funded through the assistance of the Reformed Church in America, and a capital campaign by members of the local church.

With the construction of the new, two-story church building – which was designed by architect Herbert E. Goodpastor – the old church building and an educational center on the same site were demolished.

The new church building's cornerstone was laid on July 9, 1941, and the structure was dedicated on Nov. 11, 1941. Features of this building included three rooms for language courses on the first floor, and an auditorium for church services and other meetings on the second floor.

Kwok and his family resided in quarters at the back of the auditorium. He had a wife named Ko Po Young Kwok, and five children: John, Andrew, Alice, Sarah and Esther.

In addition to his work with the church, the reverend also participated in community functions.

For instance, during the Sacramento Camellia Planting Drive, in 1942, he presented a Chinese proverb to the committee. It reads: "It is good luck to plant a camellia."

During World War II, Kwok was a member of the war bond committee of the Chinese division of the Fifth War Loan.

In about 1951, the Rev. Theodore M. Tang replaced Kwok as the church's pastor, and Kwok spent his retirement in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles County until his death in 1959.

Another notable figure in the church's early years was Sacramento native Mary Fong Shew, a local piano teacher who was the congregation's organist for a decade and also played the organ at Chinese weddings and other activities. She died at the age of 35 in 1954.

During research for this article, the earliest reference to the church's current name was discovered in the Oct. 23, 1954 edition of The Sacramento Bee. That reference reads: "The Chinese Community Church, 519 N Street, is the only Chinese work in the Reformed Church in the American denomination."

In the same edition, it is noted that the church's pastor at that time was the Rev. Gilbert Lum. A Sunday morning service was then regularly presented in English, followed by an evening service in Cantonese.

Due to redevelopment in the area of the church's building, the congregation's current church structure on Gilgunn Way was built by the Charles F. Unger Construction Co. in the late 1950s. It was constructed with a 120-seat sanctuary and an educational unit.

A unique feature of this building is its split roof, which allows for indirect, natural lighting within its interior.

Like the 5th and N streets church, the current church was built through funding from the Reformed Church in America, and a capital campaign by members of the local church.

The first services in the Gilgunn Way church structure were presented, with Lum speaking to the congregation, on Sept. 27, 1959.

Today, five generations of families have attended this church, which has maintained a consistent membership and plans to continue to progress toward its milestone centennial anniversary and beyond.

A Christian church with open doors for anyone

Maybelle Whang, a longtime member of the church, noted that despite this church's name, its membership includes people who are not of Chinese descent.

see FESTIVAL page 18



South Land Park residents look to current Zoo site, Bing Maloney for future botanical garden

By Monica Stark

Bruce Ritter and Linda Ching live in a tropical South Land Park Shangri-la. Sunshine filters through the palms, as their dog Kiwi frolics among the cycads, the palmettos and the leucospermums. A pond sits nestled in the back as gingers and staghorn ferns dot the landscape.

A garden 10 years in the making, and the pair wants to push the limits and give back to Sacramento with a public, large-scale botanical garden that they hope will not only be a place of respite and enjoyment for locals but a destination for travelers, as well.

Bruce, a botany major turned optometrist, met Linda in optometry school at SUNY College of Optometry in New York City years ago, but never lost his love for Linda or for plants. As they lived cross country from each other, Bruce spent much of his free time working in his own yard and at a local arboretum. He even built his own 500-square-foot greenhouse with a 16-foot peak, cold running water, and banana trees inside.

"I loved all the tropical stuff, especially in New York where you don't see any of that stuff. And then I got here and I said, 'wow, I can do all these cool things.'"

A fairy tale come true in the decades-long courting, they reunited and Bruce moved from Mt. Sinai, New York to sunny Sacramento about 10 years ago. And Linda finds it quite ironic that it took a New Yorker to get a botanical garden started in Sacramento.

Replies Bruce: "It's in her blood, she just didn't realize it."

Growing up on South Land Park Drive, Linda's father had 17 fruit trees, grafted oranges and convinced the then-city council to use the land behind the retaining wall on his back property line to grow long Chinese beans, giant melons and an almond tree.

After two marriages, she met Bruce on 24th Street and Park Avenue in Manhattan and suffice to say he wasn't going to let her go this time. Meanwhile, he's never lost his love for plants, and now, they've been at this botanical garden planning for about a year, Linda says.

But really, she would be the first to tell you that's she's generally not all that interested in plants. And yet, despite her ambivalence, she is all in. She sees having a botanical garden in Sacramento as a gift to the community and also to visitors. She is particularly thrilled with the idea of creating a Chinese garden, similar to the Lan Su Chinese Garden in Portland, which will recognize the great contributions of the Chinese to our city.

Relatively new on their radar, the idea of a botanical garden first surfaced over a good meal with friends who asked Bruce, "Why doesn't Sacramento have a botanical garden?" And they went on, and on dreaming about what kinds of plants and exhibits they'd have, as well as the events they'd hold. An orchid ball? Weddings? Intimate concerts? Field trips? Giant waterlilies? Tactile gardens? A ceremonial cutting of the "stinky plant"? Seemingly endless, plans for the world-class botanical garden feature a half-acre solar-powered conservatory with an orchid collection, palms, a farm-to-fork gourmet restaurant, a gift shop featuring work of local artists and craftsmen, an annual "art in the garden" event,

water features, a formal garden, demonstration garden, a plant nursery, and as Bruce said, all those "amazing things you'll see in Hawaii or Burma but not here."

To facilitate the materialization of their vision, in February, 2019, the couple formed a board of directors, including a financial director, Jesse Avitia; a landscape architect/head of American River College's Horticulture Department, Cielo Sichi; and Marlene Simon, the "Plant Lady," from Good Day Sacramento. They have formed a non-profit and have received federal nonprofit approval and have started a website, www.SacBo.org, and a Facebook page (Sacramento Botanical Gardens).

Now, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, donations to The Sacramento Botanical Garden will pay for the building of the garden and structures as well as the acquisition of plants.

"Listen," Bruce says, "I like plants, I want a botanical garden, but I also look at it as they're always talking about making Sacramento a destination city. We need destinations... We want to create a place for tourists, for them to see and for people who live here to have a place to go and enjoy themselves and maybe go try and grow it in their own backyard."

It's only fitting the Camellia capital of the world since 1910 will have a botanical garden someday. Members of local garden clubs are drawn to hear Bruce and Linda speak about their vision. They spoke to a crowd of 33 members of the Land Park Garden Club and were invited to a South Natomas Urban Greenery meeting at former mayor Heather Fargo's house.

Their original excitement was fueled by an article in the Sacramento Bee which stated that the nine-hole Land Park Golf Course was not turning a profit. Because it already had rolling hills, big trees, parking, water, and a well, they began to envision a garden paradise in the perfect spot. Linda was running into gardeners on the streets, at the elementary school where her children had attended.

Bruce and Linda believe the fate of the Sacramento Botanical Garden is tied to that of the Sacramento Zoo. As the Zoo considers sites like the old King's arena or Bing Maloney Golf Course for its relocation, Bruce and Linda are raising funds so that when the time comes for the Zoo to move, they'll be ready.

They said if the Zoo moves to North Natomas, they hope to end up in the current Zoo spot, but if the Zoo moves to Bing Maloney, they hope to share the acreage, giving them about 40

see GARDEN page 17

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Garden:

continued from page 14

acres, a much larger lot than if they took over the current Zoo location.

Asked if he had a preferred location, Bruce said, "The reality is I want the place the city is willing to give me. Where the city wants to put it, that would be my favorite place. The zoo is great because it's got all the buildings, it's got the restaurant, the restrooms, a canopy of trees. But at 14 and a half acres it's relatively small. Most botanical gardens are 30 to 100 acres, and some are 300 acres."

While there would be more acreage at Bing Maloney, the current Zoo location features a restaurant, landscaping, multiple buildings, and its own well on site which combined would save millions of dollars. They estimate if they moved to Bing Maloney, they'd have to raise $50 million for the construction of needed buildings. On the other hand, an estimated cost for opening the garden at the current Zoo location would amount to $25. "Some unnamed sources have said we could do it for a lot less than $25 million (at the current zoo location) but if we keep a budget for $25 million, we could make this phenomenal garden," Bruce says.

A major cost saving measure would be to tap into a volunteer gardener powerhouse. Bruce points Whangarei Quarry Gardens, a subtropical oasis created by volunteers in the remnants of a former quarry in Northland, New Zealand. "Volunteers built that garden into a really nice botanical gardens. They had to get money for its structures, but otherwise all volunteers," he said. "The City does help pay the salaries for the employees. Admission is free. And it only has six employees; everyone else is a volunteer and it works."

Garnering grassroots financial support they hope with the thousands of gardeners in our city, people will contribute to latte a month club, whereby $5 gets taken out of your account each month and goes to the general fund. "If we get 10,000 people doing that, that amounts to real money. I figured at the end of the year that they get a coupon for coming



into the coffee shop and getting a free latte," adds Bruce.

Financials aside, the biggest hurdle is finding a place to put in a breathtaking garden. In conclusion, as Linda says, "99% of the people we have talked to are supportive of the concept of bringing a botanical garden to Sacramento. We hope that your office will become our advocate to turn our dream into reality."

Payments are accepted through Pay Pal if you're interested in donating to the Sacramento Botanical Garden nonprofit 501(c)3. For more information, visit www.SacBo.org or email info@sacbo.org.

Flores:

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to assist each other in our endeavors. Turned out, our adjacent three neighborhoods have more issues in common that we initially thought and that lead to partnerships to address them like the Freeport Boulevard Transportation Safety Committee with Hollywood Park. I seek to create new partnerships, for example an upcoming Coffee Summit with the new President of the Sierra Curtis Neighborhood Association to collaborate on co-hosting hiring events for our neighbors for the new Curtis Park Safeway grocery store and the upcoming flagship Raley's grocery store on Freeport Boulevard."

For years, the Del Rio Trial Project has been a positive catalyst project that has engaged neighbors where they have become knowledgeable on the many aspects of the process with City and State. "As we are headed toward the endgame of the project, I don't want to lose the momentum of our neighbors' engagement and to create and maintain new annual neighborhood events, for example the well-attended Block Party we hosted with Barrio Café last September. We are working with other South Land Park partners to host the next community Block Party this May and again in September," he says.

Asked about top issues facing the neighborhood, he says cannabis and the incoming businesses to the Industrial Park area of our neighborhood will continue be an issue as businesses begin to fully operate. "We will have to keep a vigil eye and respond to any unforeseen externalities of this emerging business and to also be ready to celebrate the positives as well."

Some cannabis business representatives have visited SLPNA Board Meetings and they indicated that they want a positive relationship with the neighborhood, and this will be an aspect of SLPNA to monitor their accountability, he says. He assures that SLPNA will continue to have open dialogue with the City to make recommendations and policy requests for the cannabis industry to operate within South Land Park appropriately.





Sac Zoo's lion pair back on exhibit with twice the space and closer than ever

For the first time ever, you can get nose-to-nose with an African lion at the Sacramento Zoo. The grand reopening of the expanded lion habitat was unveiled for exhibit donors over the weekend and officially launched for zoo guests today. After months of renovation, the zoo's resident lion pair, Cleo and Kamau are back on exhibit in double the living space and closer than ever!

African lions have been a part of the zoo experience in Sacramento for over 90 years. Lions have lived in the same space since the exhibit was built by the City of Sacramento in 1961. What was a state of the art exhibit in 1961 was in dire need of an update due to the evolving standards in animal care and welfare. In 2018, zoo staff made the difficult decision to send the zoo's last tiger to the San Francisco Zoo. The departure of tigers, a species the zoo had cared for since 1927, cleared the way for an initiative to double the living space and improve the quality of life for the zoo's two lions.

River City Glass took a leading philanthropic role in assisting the Sacramento Zoo in these efforts by working with the zoo's facilities department to create a glass barrier at the front of the exhibit. A crossing area that doubles as a shelter for the lions allows the cats to move between the two spaces. The shelter includes heat lamps for the winter and will also provide shade during the summer. Training panels were added at opposite ends of the habitat, so animal care staff can demonstrate operant conditioning and husbandry techniques in front of zoo guests. As the zoo looks forward to a potential relocation, the glass frames could be repurposed at a new location.

Kamau and Cleo have lived at the zoo for several years. Both cats were born at other AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) institutions. At ages 14 and 13, they are an older pair of lions that serve as ambassadors for their species. Since 1961 when the zoo's lion grotto was built, the population of lions in Africa has declined by over 70 percent. The zoo has made a commitment to assist wild lions by supporting CLAWS (Conservancy Communities Living Among Wildlife Sustainably) with its Quarters for Conservation program. Lions face challenges such as habitat loss, poaching and poisoning from farmers where lions



encounter livestock. A portion of the Sacramento Zoo's admission fee goes towards the mitigation of challenges facing lions in Northern Botswana.

The zoo's lion exhibit expansion is just one of the many projects at the zoo, including the addition of a mob of meerkats (November 2018), a new habitat for okapi – an endangered relative of the giraffe (February 2019) and a temporary exhibit of dinosaurs (September 2019 through January 5, 2020).

Sacramento Zoo wishes to thank River City Glass as well as the other generous donors who made it possible to double the space for our lion pair.

Source: Sacramento Zoo

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Festival:

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"We have blacks, Hispanics/Latinos, whites and Asians," she said.

Whang added that the church's name can cause confusion, since it doesn't tell people that its members are Christians.

"We are a Christian church," she said. "People have asked me: 'Is that a Buddhist church.' They can't tell by our name what religion it is."

Pastor Louis Lee retires

Wong noted that the church has had other pastors during its history.

"We've had both Caucasian ministers and Chinese ministers, and most of the Caucasian ministers that we hired were Dutch," he said. "Well, they were Americans, but their (ancestry) was Dutch."

The church's most recent pastor was the Rev. Louis Lee.

With Lee's recent retirement, the church is currently without a pastor.

Lee, who converted to Christianity when he was 12 years old, left a strong legacy with his more than 10 years of service to the church.

Adele Din, who serves on the church's board, expressed appreciation for Lee, whose parents emigrated from China.

"Pastor Louis has been a blessing," she said. "He brought so much diversity and spiritual growth to our congregation."

Wong also fondly recalled Lee's service to the church.

"Louis was a highly educated, very conversive," he said. "In fact, he's a very eloquent public speaker. He is also very outgoing, and when I was in the hospital, he would often visit me and give me strength. We would have our prayer sessions, and I really appreciated him. I like Louis. Now we have a vacant pulpit and we're searching for (his replacement)."



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Children's Receiving Home and Sacramento Theatre Company Celebrating 75 Years

By Sally King

What better way to get into the holiday mood than going to see the Charles Dickens classic, 'A Christmas Carol,' put on by the Sacramento Theatre Company and the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento.

The play was performed from Dec. 4 to Dec. 29, 2019 at the H Street Theatre Complex. This is the same location where the Children's Receiving Home (CRH) was originally founded 75 years ago.

The Sacramento Theatre Company also celebrated 75 years and decided to partner with CRH for the 2019 production of "A Christmas Carol."

In a press release issued by the Children's Receiving Home, they explain the theatre collected donations for the youth served by CRH in the lobby prior to each performance.

According to CRH, they have provided a safe place for children and young adults with nowhere to go and no one to turn to since 1944. A.G. Block, a member of the Board's Community Relations Committee, who also serves as an at-large member of the Executive Committee said there are always children that are victims of trauma, abuse and neglect who need a safe place. Block said that was the motivation of the Women's Junior League who started this program 75 years ago.

Janeen Dodson, a current CRH board member, is one of the many CRH success stories. She said she was abused for many years by her stepfather and afraid to tell anyone. She finally confided to her school principal about the abuse and was taken directly to the Children's Home. She explains she arrived there shortly before Christmas and expected no visitors or gifts on Christmas Day. She said her heart felt heavy because she thought no one cared about her.

Then, two girls she had just met a few days before brought a small package saying it wasn't much, but they wanted her to have something to open on Christmas Day. When she opened it, she found a small necklace with four gold hearts on it. She said she choked up, thrilled to receive such a thoughtful gift. "In my time of loss and isolation it was a gentle token of love, compassion, and generosity that has stayed with me to this day," Dodson explains. Dodson credits CHR for helping her through this rough period in her life with a positive outcome.

In the CRH press release they describe how they have expanded over the years as the needs of youth and families have grown, expanding the diversity and scope of solutions.

David Ballard, CEO of CRH, said in the press release, "The kids we serve feel lost, abandoned, and discarded by the people who were supposed to love them and care for them." "Our ability to provide nurturing counselors, individualized care, skills training and therapeutic programs around the clock is really only possible because of each and every one of our supporters who partner with us, and we thank the Sacramento Theatre Company for its incredibly generous investment in these youth."

The press release points out how the Sacramento Theatre Company (STC) began in 1945 and is one of the oldest and largest theatre companies in the region. It was originally known as the Sacramento Civic Repertory Theatre. They provided entertainment for locally stationed troops during World War II and it was incorporated in 1945. During the Gold Rush era, it opened as the Eaglet Theatre, honoring the Eagle Theatre. It progressed to become the Main Stage of the not-for-profit Sacramento Theatre Company and is now part of the H Street Theatre complex.

In the press release Michael Laun, Sacramento Theatre Company's Executive Producing Director said, "Sacramento Theatre Company is proud to partner with CRH during our production of 'A Christmas Carol,' recalling a time when want and need were keenly felt."

There is still a need today for CHR children and youth. By supporting both of these wonderful institutions, we can all help in that need.



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