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see page 6

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Steve Crowley

Locals remember The Rolling Stones' Charlie Watts

Legendary drummer dies at the age of 80

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

With the Aug. 24 death of The Rolling Stones' Charlie Watts at the age of 80, various local residents shared their memories about this legendary drummer and his world-famous band.

During the same day, the band's publicist released the following statement: "It is with immense sadness that we announce the death of our beloved Charlie Watts. He passed away peacefully in a London hospital earlier today surrounded by his family.

"Charlie was a cherished husband, father and grandfather and also as a member of The Rolling Stones, one of the greatest drummers of his generation."

The cause of Watts' death was not disclosed.

Watts, who began his musical career as a jazz drummer and played in Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, joined The Rolling Stones in 1963, upon the encouragement of Korner.

After never missing a performance with that group in nearly 60 years, Watts announced last month that he would not join his band for their upcoming North American tour.

Dennis Newhall, a former KZAP radio station disc jockey who grew up in West Sacramento, shared his reaction to Watts' death.

"I knew that he was sick and so, at 80, you never really know what that means," he said. "They were kind of secretive. They said that it was a medical procedure. So, I wasn't really surprised. But, obviously, it's sad. He was the motor behind the band."

Newhall, who attended seven Stones concerts, further shared his thoughts on Watts as a drummer.

"Everybody said Charlie was just a great timekeeper, steady as a rock," he said. "He didn't have a lot of flair, but he certainly had a lot of ability.

"(Stones vocalist) Mick (Jagger) and (guitarist) Keith (Richards) didn't want a flashy drummer. They wanted somebody that could keep time."

Mick Martin, who is best known locally for his band, Mick Martin and the Blues Rockers, and his Capital Public Radio program, "Mick Martin's Blues Party," recalled his impression of Watts.

"Charlie was so good at getting just the right beat," he said. "Now there's a lot of showoffs who play drums, but Charlie was so tasty.

"(The Stones are) pretty wild boys, even at the ages that they are now, but Charlie was always the sensible professional."

Martin mentioned that while attending Rolling Stones shows at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium in the mid-1960s, he was "often transfixed" on watching either Watts or (the band's founder and original guitarist) Brian Jones.

"I would always watch Charlie, because that's where the heartbeat of the band was coming from," he said.

"I always related to Charlie Watts as a musician would relate to a musician, and when I would hire a drummer, I would listen to the subtle things that they would do, because anybody can bash away. Even though he's been called a basher, there was a lot of subtlety in Watts' playing. And when it came to the rock 'n' roll image and all of that, he was just a gentleman and it seemed

see Watts page 3

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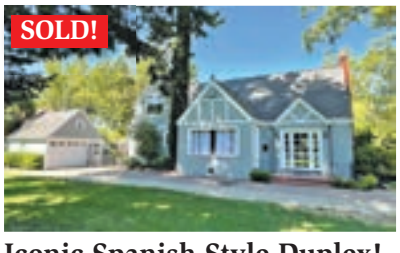


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Watts:

continued from page 2

like he was far more approachable than the other people in the band."

Bill Just, a 1969 graduate of Rio Americano High School, described Watts' importance to The Rolling Stones.

"(Watts and bassist) Bill Wyman were always the quiet, reserved rhythm section that held the Stones together, while the rest of (the band members) were flying off at loose ends all the time," he said. "So, my one thing about Charlie Watts was not only was he a great drummer and a great jazz drummer and stuff, but him, along with Bill Wyman, really were the basis of The Rolling Stones."

Although Just praised Steve Jordan, Watts' replacement in the Stones, as a "really good drummer," he stressed that the band is not the same without Watts.

"It's not going to be even kind of the same, and to me it's sort of like the end of The Rolling Stones. And, as a matter of fact, Keith Richards and Mick Jagger both had been quoted as saying, 'We're going to pack it in when Charlie leaves. If Charlie up and quits tomorrow, that's the end of the band.'

"I kind of doubt they're going to follow through with that, but that really tells you right there the importance of the guy."

Regarding the early years of The Rolling Stones, when fans debated whether they believed the Stones or The Beatles were the more superior band, Just mentioned that, to him, there was no true debate.

Just, who attended three Rolling Stones shows in Sacramento in the mid-1960s, described how he felt after viewing the Stones and The Beatles perform on the TV program, "The Ed Sullivan Show," in 1964.

"From that point on, I liked The Rolling Stones (a lot more than The Beatles)," he said. "In that case, it was kind of like the difference between a boy band and a real rock'n' roll band.

"There was a more primal sound to (the Stones' music), a less produced sound."

Mike Blanchard, a local musician and magazine publisher and editor who lived for many years in East Sacramento, referred to himself as a "huge Charlie Watts fan."

"Charlie Watts was always this kind of enigma back there, because he never talked that much, he wasn't super flashy, he wasn't out in front, but what he did was so good, and it was recognizably so good," he said.

Blanchard, who attended three Rolling Stones concerts, recalled how Watts made use of a simple, jazz drummer-type drum kit.

"When you put restrictions on art, it oftentimes leads to creativity," he said. "It makes you be more creative. You don't have 48 drums. You need to make do with these five, and (Watts) was a master at that. And really, that's the key to the whole thing, is being creative, being inventive. But for the drummer to be perfectly there, the meter is correct, it's always good.

"If you look at (Stones songs such as) "Sympathy for the Devil," and some of these other (songs), the drumline is very creative, and it fits perfectly and moves the song. It's the sign of a musician, not just a drummer."

George Kostyrko, a local musician who grew up in the Arden area and East Sacramento, spoke about his reaction to hearing about Watts' death.

"I was really surprised," he said. "I knew he was sick, but I thought he would bounce right back, because he looked so dang healthy. But maybe he just knew his time was up. I'm not sure, but it's shock for sure.



Photo by Lance Armstrong

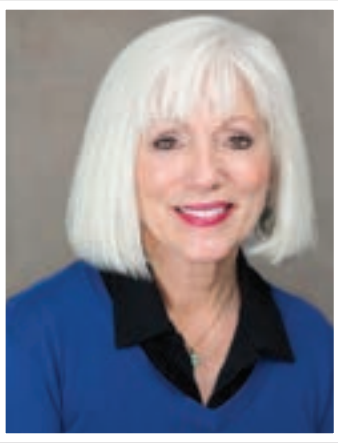
Dennis Newhall, a former KZAP radio station disc jockey, attended seven Rolling Stones concerts. He called the band's late drummer Charlie Watts a "great timekeeper" who was "steady as a rock."

"He lived a full life, and he was married all that time and he had great kids and he was an artist. He had great skills and he was able to exercise that."

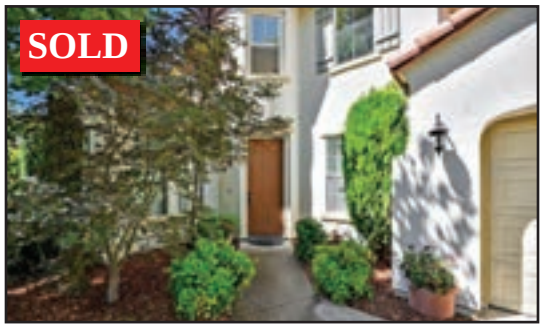
Kostyrko, a 1981 graduate of El Camino High School, also described the impression Watts had on him.

"Charlie was just impeccable on so many levels," he said. "He just had such constraint in terms of his playing, but he was always there and always driving the music. In my opinion, he was probably one of the most important members of that band.

"Just the way he carried himself, the way he dressed and just his conduct. He was all about the music. He wasn't a personality; it didn't have to be about him. It had to be about what he contributed, and it spoke louder than words, to be honest with you."



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COVID-19-related hospitalizations on the rise, says county health officer

She urges more people to get vaccinated, observe mask mandate

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Sacramento County Public Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye, on Aug. 17, said she is greatly concerned with the rise in COVID-19--related hospitalizations.

"Our greatest concern right now is with our hospitals," she said. "Today, we got a report that we have 482 hospitalizations due to the COVID(-19), and 98 of those are (in) intensive care units."

Because of this status, Kasirye encouraged people to use emergency rooms and ambulances "sparingly."

"Those should only be used for emergency situations, because we are seeing a huge impact, not only from the number of people that are needing those services, but also the hospitals are reporting difficulty with capacity, as well as with staffing," she said.

Kasirye shared those comments during a telephone town hall with U.S. Rep. Ami Bera, D-Elk Grove, whose Congressional District 7 includes part of the coverage area of Valley Community Newspapers.

Kasirye joined that meeting for the purpose of providing an update on how COVID-19 and the delta variant are impacting people within Sacramento County.

She noted that as of Aug. 17, the county had 124,604 reported cases of COVID-19.

Kasirye added that during the same day, reported COVID-19 cases exceeded the daily average of 400 to 500 new cases per day.

"We did get quite a huge bump of 751 in just one day," she said. "The case rate is about 30 per 100,000. It has been going up pretty steadily, increasing by one point every single day.

Kasirye mentioned that there are two reported COVID-19 deaths in the county per day, and that the county's death total had reached 1,822.

Regarding the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccinations, Kasirye pointed to statistics pertaining to county residents who are not vaccinated.

"About 90% of our (reported) cases are among people that are not vaccinated," she said. "When you look at the case rate for those that are not vaccinated, the case rate is actually 44 per 100,000. For those that are vaccinated, the case rate is 11 per 100,000. So, we are seeing breakthrough cases, but those tend to be milder, and the severe cases and the deaths are predominantly from people that are not vaccinated."

As for the delta variant, Kasirye told listeners of the meeting that 80% to 90% of the reported COVID-19 cases in the county are from that variant.

Kasirye added that vaccination rates are gradually on the rise.

"(They) continue to go up slowly, but surely," she said. "From the last state report, we have at least 60% of our residents fully vaccinated. We still do have a ways to go and we have been working really hard with community-based agencies and other stakeholders, such as the hospitals and the schools, to especially make sure that we have pop-up clinics in areas that are underserved."

She noted that the county is also conducting a lot of outreach in those underserved areas.

Per a question from a caller who inquired about the availability of free COVID-19 testing sites, Kasirye mentioned that there are still free testing sites in the county, and that additional testing sites will be added due to the increased demand.

"The best is to schedule an appointment for those clinics, but we do have walkups, as well," she said. "And it's free of charge, whether somebody has insurance or not."

Another caller, Ruby from Sacramento, asked about several COVID-19-related topics, including booster shots.

Bera followed Ruby's inquiries by sharing information about booster shots.

"It's our anticipation that the (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the White House is going to recommend booster shots

see COVID page 5

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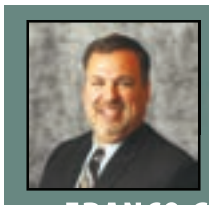


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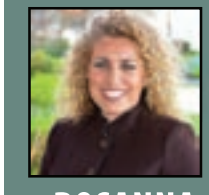
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COVID:

continued from page 4

for anyone whose been vaccinated eight months ago – so, that would be back in January and shortly February," he said. "And those booster shots may start becoming available to folks who were vaccinated eight months ago, starting in September.

"I think that approval is coming. Certainly, they've already approved booster shots for particularly vulnerable patients – people who have weakened immune systems or other coexisting conditions that would make them particularly susceptible."

Bera added that it is recommended that people receive the same shot, as a booster, that they previously received.

"If you had (Johnson & Johnson), get the J&J booster; if you had Pfizer, get the Pfizer booster; if you had Moderna, get the Moderna booster," he said. "They should all be coming shortly and be readily available."

Bera, who is a physician, supports the current mask mandate that requires most people to wear face coverings in indoor, public spaces, regardless of their vaccination status. The mandate does not apply to people who are medically exempted from wearing face coverings.

"Even if you're vaccinated, there's still some evidence that you can still have a breakthrough infection and have a viral load that may be giving you mild symptoms," he said. "But you still, potentially, could spread it to other folks that are not vaccinated.

"So, my recommendation is when you are in an indoor setting or in settings where you're going to be closely sitting by individuals, it's always going to be safer to wear a mask at this particular point, even if you're fully vaccinated."

Bera added that his support of the mandate is much greater due to "how contagious the delta variant is."

Kasirye mentioned that although masks are required in public, indoor settings in Sacramento County, it is the responsibility of business owners to enforce that mandate.

"Probably, that's why you're seeing the differences with the different restaurants' (support of the mandate)," she said.

Kasirye further described the state of COVID-19 in the county.

"We're looking at the numbers right now," she said. "I gave a summary of where we're at and we have surpassed the peak that we had in July of 2020. If we do continue at this rate, it's looking like we're getting close to where we were at with the peak at the beginning of this year. So, there's a lot of concern, and right now we are not closing any businesses, we don't have social distancing.

"So, we only have a few tools that are available – tools that we know are effective – but we are dependent on the general public to take heed of the warnings and the advice that we're giving, and take care of themselves and of other people – so vaccinations and wearing masks."

For more information on current COVID-19 testing sites, vaccinations or other details pertaining to this virus, visit the website SacCounty.net.



Photo by Lance Armstrong

Sacramento County Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye last week noted that the county's greatest concern pertaining to COVID-19 is the increasing number of COVID-19 patients in hospitals.

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Faces and Places: Land Park Community Association Meet and Greet



Photos by Stephen Crowley

It's not always business-ness time with the Land Park Community Association. While they are on top of safety and traffic issues, as well as the good and the bad facing local businesses and neighbors, they also take the time to have a little fun. They hold occasional meet and greets and photos here are from the last one, which was held Friday, Aug. 6 at Vic's Coffee Shop.

see Great page 7

















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Greet:

continued from page 6









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Sacramento County reintroduces indoor mask mandate

Community responds to order

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

With the July 29 announcement that Sacramento County public health officials reinstated the mandate requiring people to wear face coverings in indoor, public spaces, local residents shared their thoughts on that order.

The reinstated mandate went into effect the following day and pertains to most people, regardless of whether they have been vaccinated against COVID-19. The mandate does not apply to people who are medically exempted from wearing face coverings.

Face masks are also not required for those working alone in a room or exercising.

Indoor public settings, according to the mandate, include restaurants, retail stores, movie theaters, gyms and offices.

The mandate's return occurred nearly two months after being lifted, following the end of California's color-coded tier restrictions for businesses and public buildings.

Dr. Olivia Kasirye, the county's public health officer, stated in her July 29 order that the rise in COVID-19 cases led to the reinstated order.

"Since June 15, 2021, when most restrictions from the state of California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy were lifted, the average daily incident case rate of COVID-19 in Sacramento County has increased 5.5-fold to reach the 'high-transmission' level of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's indicators for levels of community transmission," she wrote.

"The testing positivity rate in Sacramento County has also risen 4.3-fold since June 15. Hospitalizations from COVID-19 in Sacramento County have risen from 60 patients on June 15 to 175 patients on July 27."

Kasiyre additionally stated that the "significantly more transmissible" COVID-19 Delta variant is the predominant strain in the United States, and has accounted for 64.8% of positive specimens collected from county residents and genotyped, since June 15.

As of Aug. 4, the county reportedly had a COVID-19 case rate of 25.6 per 100,000 residents. In contrast, the case rate was reportedly 5.2 cases per 100,000 residents on July 1.

Kasiyre did not provide a date for when the order would be lifted.

Land Park resident Melanie Davis mentioned that she believes in following the county's mask mandate order.

"I'm all for contributing to whatever the solution is, and if that means we all have to wear masks now," she said. "I work in the medical setting, so I've had to wear one from the beginning. So, it's not much of a change for me."

Curtis Park resident Kathy Strawser also believes in following the order.

"I always wear the mask (in public)," she said. "Everyone in my family is vaccinated, so when I'm at home, I don't wear the mask. If I go to Safeway or (in a gas station), paying cash for my gas, then I put the mask on."

see Mask page 9

Mask:

continued from page 8

Former Land Park resident Lisa Santos, bartender at the XO Lounge, noted that she does not agree with the mandate's requirement for vaccinated people to wear masks indoors in public places.

"I think if you were (vaccinated), I don't think it should apply to you," she said.

"I do think that it's unfortunate that people still have to wear (face coverings). I'm not about government at all, and I think you should do what you want to do."

Stefon Love, who identified himself as a homeless man who lives in the area, believes that it was not necessary to reinstate the mandate.

"On this pandemic and things that are going around with the mask, even though the government says we don't have to wear the mask ever since June, but we have to turn back around and wear them, to me I can understand the panic," he said. "But this is something that if 1,000 people ain't dying in one city to the other to the other, I really think they overregulate.

"I understand the concern, because I'm concerned about it, but I don't think the government or the city where you live (needs) to go this far."

While sitting inside a Land Park business, Gerry Kushida shared his thoughts on the mask mandate.

"The variant is so powerful, I guess, it really effects everybody," he said. "So, we're going back to square one (with face coverings), I think. So, we've got to be careful. Hospital rates are high. I'm concerned about it. What can we do? Everybody's rebelling against wearing masks, and they don't want to get vaccinated.

"I think it's up to you. If you want to wear your mask, fine. If not, fine."

Little Pocket resident Lein Shanahan said that he is frustrated with the "flip-flopping" of the mandate.

"To me, it's like, we got vaccinated, trying to get back to normal life and you want to flip-flop and say, 'Oh, now that you're vaccinated, you've got to go (back) and wear masks.'"

Steven Quarles, a 1975 graduate of John F. Kennedy High School, mentioned that he questions the recent mask mandate.

"I don't give (an expletive) what the government thinks," he said. "I'll be damned if I'm going to follow anything they say. I've always felt suspect. You know, conspiracy theorist."

Asked about the mandate, Meadowview resident Sam Gevara noted that he has grown frustrated with Gov. Gavin Newsom.

"We should have (continued to wear) masks before the second opening," he said. "Our governor. He don't care. He would rather have us get sick and die. So, I would rather have people inside the stores or buildings have masks on, because you don't know who got sick, who's not.

"Personally, I think (the mandate) is a good idea, but most people, they don't realize that. It's really stupid all these people sitting around not wearing a mask. It's dumb. I believe the real-life science. I don't believe the fake news stuff."

Oak Park resident John Williams told this paper that he supports the reinstated mask mandate.

However, he noted that although he is very concerned about the spreading of COVID-19, he does not attempt to promote his view with others.

"A grown man or woman has to make their (own) choice," he said. "I don't judge. Just don't give (the virus) to me."

Katie, a nurse in the community who did not want to share her last name, supports the reinstated mask mandate.

"I'm all for the mask mandate," Katie said. "Our hospitals are being overflowed again. We don't have the means to keep up with the rate that it's going up, and if masks can help cut that down even a little bit, I think it's an easy concession to make for the betterment of everyone around you."

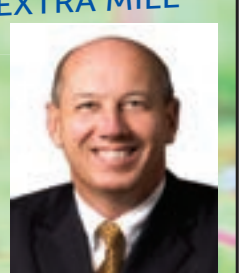
She also commented on the COVID-19 variant.

"We're already seeing it mutate so far, and we're already seeing it become smarter than us at this point," she said. "So, I think wearing masks can keep us smarter than mutations. If wearing masks cuts down the ability for it to further mutate, so our vaccine might not even work anymore, I think we've got to do our part."

West Sacramento resident Melissa Gomez mentioned that she especially supports the mask mandate, due to her medical issue that prevents her from getting vaccinated.

"I think the mask mandate is a good thing to do, and I think we should be wearing them," she said. "I haven't gotten sick since we had to (wear them)."

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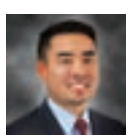
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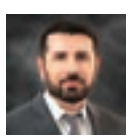
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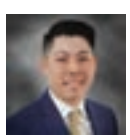


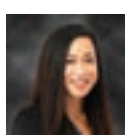
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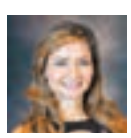

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The St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival returns on Saturday, Sept. 11



Photos by Stephen Crowley

The St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival returns on Saturday, Sept. 11 from noon to 8 p.m. with international food booths from cuisines of the world. There will also be games for the entire family including carnival-style games, 50/50, bingo, cake spin, a country store, pull tabs, wine spin, books, and more. The event also will include live entertainment and raffle prizes as well. Types of food included: Filipino, Italian, Mexican, Nigerian, Polish, Greek, American, desserts and snow cones. (Photos are pre-pandemic from 2019)

see Festival page 11



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Festival:

continued from page 10

















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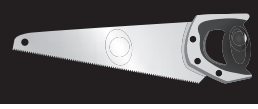
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Scout Troop 259 summer camp recap



This July, Scout Troop 259 went to summer camp near Willits, California. For the 10 scouts attending, none had been to summer camp before and one of these scouts had never even camped before.

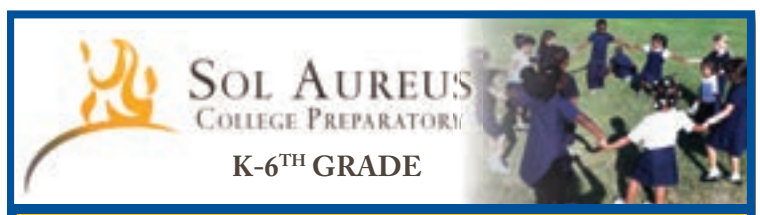
The adults attending with them were excited for these young men at trying new things (albeit a little scared of the "what if…" possibilities). The camp provided various activities for our scouts including mountain biking, mountain climbing, swimming, kayaking, astronomy, and horseback riding.

There was no downtime because there was so much they wanted to do. Altogether, they earned 65 merit badges which are applied toward their personal rank advancements.

Two highlights are the 6 o'clock in the morning "Wooly Wash" which was a daily swim in the lake, and a relay race against the other 25-plus troops in attendance. We will just say, "we finished the race"; you will have to come to one of our troop meetings to hear the rest of THAT story. We were surrounded by nature every day; deer, fox, giant squirrels, lizards, and more were frequently in our campsite. Overall, this year's summer camp was fun and fantastic and we look forward to more adventures. For more information about Troop 259 visit, www.Troop259.org.

see Camp page 15





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Camp:

continued from page 14





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