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City Council Delays Vote on Zoo Relocation

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City Council Delays Vote on Zoo Relocation

Study Identifies North Natomas Regional Park as Preferred Site

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

The Sacramento City Council on Dec. 8 unanimously agreed to delay their vote until March on whether the Sacramento Zoo should be relocated to the city-owned North Natomas Regional Park.

This action will allow the council additional time to consider alternative sites, including the grounds of the old Sleep Train Arena, which opened as ARCO Arena in 1988 and is currently being utilized as a COVID-19 field hospital. That site is owned by the Sacramento Kings.

The council's discussion on this issue began after the release of an in-depth, expansion/relocation feasibility study, which determined that North Natomas Regional Park is the preferred site for a new location of the zoo. A 50-acre area at the park is designated as a potential zoo site, and an additional 10 acres would be available for parking.

A city staff report for this Dec. 8 council meeting agenda item notes that although the study determined that both North Natomas sites are feasible locations for a zoo, the North Natomas Regional Park site received the nod in the study over the Sleep Train Arena site, because of the city's ownership and control of that property.

Also reviewed as a possible zoo site – and ranking third in the potential sites of this study – was the Bing Maloney Golf Complex, at 6801 Freeport Blvd.

The staff report mentions that this golf complex "could serve as a backup location; however, it is currently under consideration for Major League Soccer practice fields." A zoo at that site would eliminate the golf complex.



Photos by Lance Armstrong

At its future site, the Sacramento Zoo will increase the number of its large animals. Giraffes are the largest residents of the current, 14-acre zoo site in William Land Park.

It is additionally noted in the report that the city's staff recommends the council's approval of North Natomas Regional Park as the preferred site.

The six-month feasibility study began following the council's May 28, 2019 direction to have selected sites reviewed for a potential relocation and expansion of the zoo. The council approved $150,000 for that study, which examined the economic, conservation and traffic impacts for those properties.

Prior to that approval, the zoo's board unanimously voted earlier that spring to have the zoo relocated from its current, 14-acre location in William Land Park to a 50- to 60-acre site in time for a grand opening during its centennial in 2027.

see RELOCATION page 3



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Cover by:
Lance Armstrong

Relocation

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With the zoo having outgrown its current Land Park location, the zoo board recognized a need for expanded accommodations to create a world-class zoo with larger animal exhibits, better promote conservation programs, and maintain the zoo's accreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Elephants, hippopotamuses, tigers, polar bears, gorillas, sea lions and grizzly bears are among the large animals that are no longer housed at the Sacramento Zoo due to this zoo's continuous elimination of large animal exhibits.

Following the completion of the feasibility study, on Dec. 4, a letter of endorsement was sent to Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and the City Council.

In that letter, Elizabeth Stallard, board president of the Sacramento Zoological Society, described why the board supports the city staff's recommendation.

"When benchmarked against other similar-sized zoos, such as (in) Houston, Portland and Salt Lake City, we are also confident that the North Natomas Regional Park site will support our mission to protect and conserve animals, serve as an educational and community resource to the entire region, and be financially successful for many years to come," Stallard wrote.

Steinberg Makes His Request for Delayed Review, Vote

During their Dec. 8 meeting, the council was prepared to address and vote on the feasibility study, including the preferred North Natomas locations, with a preference for North Natomas Regional Park. But that plan quickly changed when Steinberg asked for the council's support in delaying that action.

Steinberg noted that he and Council Member Angelique Ashby had spent the past few days in discussions with the Sacramento Kings regarding a further exploration of the Sleep Train Arena site.

see ZOO page 8

Zoo Undergoes Temporary Closure Amid State's Stay-At-Home Order

Sacramento Zoo Director Jason Jacobs on Dec. 9 told the Land Park News that the zoo will be closed for at least three weeks during the government-mandated stay-at-home order and the shutdown of certain businesses.

Sacramento County was one of 13 counties in the greater Sacramento region that were placed under a lockdown, which began on Dec. 10 at 11:59 p.m.

A day earlier, state public health officials moved to activate the order in response to the region's available intensive care units (ICU), which reportedly dropped to 14.3% while COVID-19 cases continued to increase. The state requires that regions be placed under this order order whenever ICU bed availability falls below 15%.

Among the businesses affected by this order are local zoos, aquariums and some park facilities.

Jacobs noted that he was disappointed that the zoo received an order to temporarily close.



The Sacramento Zoo has been located in William Land Park since 1927. An expansion/relocation feasibility study identified North Natomas Regional Park as the preferred site for a new location of the zoo.

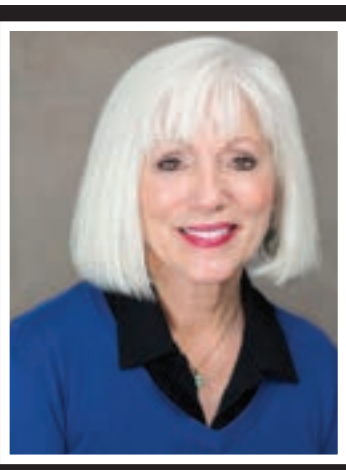
"Obviously, we're going to comply with the governor's mandate, but as a zoo, we feel that we've proven that we can effectively keep the zoo open due to the safety precautions that we take," he said.

Jacobs added that remaining open is essential for funding the care of the zoo's animals.

"We cannot furlough the animals and more importantly the care that they receive," he said. "And the method in which the zoo is financed is that we are open as a cultural amenity. People pay admission to come into the zoo and those funds go right back into taking care of this institution, primarily the care of these animals."

Jacobs mentioned that he hopes that Gov. Gavin Newsom will reconsider the order on zoos and allow for their reopenings.

"We would love that," he said. "We do hope (that's the case), because last week the governor talked about that mental health is physical health. And parks and beaches and skiing is allowed, and we feel that the zoo is just as safe as those activities that are currently allowed under the modified stay-at-home order."



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LAND PARK

Charming remodeled Tudor in the heart of Land Park. Exterior has mature trees, stone paver driveway and iron gate. Features include dual pane windows, hardwoods, porcelain tile, stone and carpeting. Spacious and light-filled living room with fireplace. This leads to adjacent dining area w/ large windows and built-in hutch. Light and bright kitchen, custom white and walnut cabinets, granite counters and recessed lighting. Eating area has four large windows and separate breakfast bar. Mudroom with pantry, sink and wine fridge. Family room opens to kitchen with French doors to backyard. Two beds & full bath are adjacent to family room. Upstairs master suite plus two additional rooms, high ceilings, three wardrobe closets and a huge walk-in closet. Master bath includes over-sized shower, jetted tub, double vanity sinks and granite counters. Upstairs laundry has storage, granite counters and 1/2 bath. Lush backyard is beautifully landscaped with brick and flagstone patios.
1776 10th Avenue



LAND PARK

Old World Charm is showcased throughout this beautiful Land Park Tudor. Vintage fixtures and hardware, Portuguese tiles, beamed ceilings and random plank floors have been treasured and preserved by the homeowners. Amenities include 3 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms, 3 fireplaces and a 3-car garage. Both the formal living and dining rooms have beautiful original built-in cabinetry. Spacious kitchen has wood cabinets, tiled counters and built-in appliances. The upstairs study has built-in office cabinetry and a French balcony with a copper awning. The upstairs master bedroom has a spacious walk-in closet with separate water closet and master bath. French doors open up to a large brick patio for outdoor dining with friends. The private yard has a lemon, orange and camellia trees, a fountain, all accented by a vintage city street lamp. Lots of storage in home and garage. A Real Gem!
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A Nutty Lunch Visit: Meals on Wheels Sacramento Participants Got a Special Trip Down Memory Lane

By Monica Stark

The Planters Peanuts NUTMobile shadowed Meals on Wheels Sacramento deliveries in the Pocket on Nov. 17, as part of a nationwide tour, greeting seniors in different cities and regions while supporting Meals on Wheels in those areas.

An ambassador for Planters and the NUTMobile driver, Tyler Towne said they've been working with Meals on Wheels because they were looking for creative ways to get involved in communities. And, "What better way than with our our giant peanut shaped wheels! It also gives people who have been trapped in their homes due to COVID and their immobility, a chance to break up the day a bit and put a smile on their face," Towne said.



Photos by Stephen Crowley

Meals on Wheels Sacramento Marketing and Outreach Coordinator Angela Roberts said the visit from the NUTMobile was an exciting experience. "When the Planters NUTMobile team contacted us, we were very surprised to learn that they have been on a national road trip so to speak, with the mission of supporting Meals on Wheels programs throughout the country. So to learn that Sacramento was one of their destinations was very exciting for us," Roberts said.

Driving the NUTMobile has been the best job Towne could have asked for coming out of college, he said. "It gives me so much great real world experience, and of course making people smile every day is incredibly rewarding."

With six custom embroidered, blue and yellow seats with Mr. Peanut on them, Towne said the inside of the NUTMobile is "totally nuts!" It also has a Peanut shaped dashboard, TV, and cashew closet which can hold up to 400 pounds of nuts. "The best part is our timeline of Mr. Peanut that is featured on the ceiling that shows how he has changed since he was born all the way back in 1916," Towne said.

Due to the pandemic, Meals on Wheels Sacramento is serving more seniors throughout Sacramento County than ever before.

Describing some of the changes at Meals on Wheels Sacramento, Roberts said they normally have 20 congregate cafes located throughout Sacramento County, where seniors over 60 can come and have lunch every weekday for no fee. They've had to suspend those cafe operations. Additionally, they have had to adjust home-delivered meal operations and schedule, and have put into place strict safety protocols when delivering to our participants, and also in everyday operations in order to protect participants, volunteers, and staff.

"Our participants still continue to receive meals on a regular basis, and our staff remains committed to helping them remain safe and well while following safety protocols that minimize risk and exposure," Roberts said.

She said support from the community and supporters allows Meals on Wheels Sacramento to ensure that home-

see MEALS page 5

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Meals

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bound and vulnerable seniors continue receiving the meals, safety net services and community connections they need in order to stay safe and well during these challenging times.

"As for volunteer efforts and interest, we were so grateful to hear from so many who wish to help seniors in their community, especially at the start of the pandemic. However, per our safety guidelines and restrictions, we have suspended onboarding new volunteers, and plan to contact prospective volunteers as soon as we know that we can safely resume normal operations and normal volunteer orientations," Roberts said.

Therefore, the best way for people to help is to make a donation. They launched the annual Holiday Meals campaign, which allows them to provide meals for seniors in need throughout the holiday season, as well as special meals on holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. "We anticipate that the demand for home-delivered meals will continue to increase, especially since so many seniors will be away from families and loved ones this holiday season. So many of those we serve have no safety net and struggle to make it day to day, and many of them also live in food deserts, which are areas with limited access to fresh and healthy food. For so many seniors, the home-delivered meal they receive is the only consistent and healthy meal they eat all day, and during these tough times, we want to show them that we remain committed to serving them."

On that special NUTMobile visit, seniors received their regular frozen meal boxes and shelf-stable meals and received fun-sized bags of peanuts and cashews from the Mr. Peanut crew.

"A lot of the seniors we serve grew up eating Planters products, and saw how the brand and Mr. Peanut has changed over time. I hope this partnership allowed them to walk down memory lane a bit," Roberts said.

On the web:

To check out Planters events and where the NUTMobile will be next, visit plantersnutmobile.com

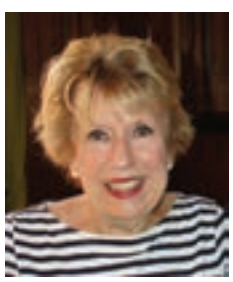
To learn more about Meals on Wheels Sacramento, visit: www.mowsac.org

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Lighting Up the Town

Local Business Brings Joy to Land Park, Other Communities Through Holiday Lights

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

During a recent afternoon, Jerry Balshor prepared a string of holiday lights to be hung on a Sacramento home.

Balshor, who grew up around his parents' Land Park business, Balshor Florist, and graduated from Christian Brothers High School in 1973, now operates his own business: Clean as a Whistle.

That business was established in 2001, and its services include gutter cleaning and fence work.

But come this time of the year, he adds holiday light installations and removals to his offerings.

This year, Balshor's business installed lights on 124 houses, including 35 houses in the Land Park area.

While observing his workers on a roof high above the ground, Balshor mentioned that he began hanging lights for customers in 2001 or 2002.

The first of those installations was for East Sacramento residents Bob and Carolyn Granucci.

Carolyn insisted on putting an advertising sign for Balshor's business in front of her home the following year. The sign led to the business stringing lights for the Sacred Heart Holiday Home Tour.

Balshor mentioned that the number of these installations have continued to grow since that time.

Since Balshor established his holiday light service, his business has expanded that service from 10 houses in its initial year to more than 100 houses per year. The demand is so great that he no longer needs to advertise.



Photo courtesy of Clean as a Whistle

Lights shine brightly on this Sacramento home.

"I have a waiting list," Balshor said. "People call me (and ask), 'Are you taking new people?' If I have a cancellation, yeah. But otherwise, it's (a) seniority, priority list.

To assist him with this service, Balshor has two em-

see LIGHTING page 7





Photo courtesy of Clean as a Whistle

A Sacramento home is decorated with holiday lights installed by the local business, Clean as a Whistle. This business installed lights on 35 houses in the Land Park area this year.





Photos by Lance Armstrong

1) Elijah "Ace" Wright installs lights on a Sacramento home on Nov. 12.
2) Jerry Balshor founded the local business, Clean as a Whistle, in 2001. The business provides gutter cleaning, holiday light installation and removal, fence work and miscellaneous services.

Lighting

continued from page 6

ployees: Elijah "Ace" Wright and Aidan "Spiderman" Ferguson.

Balshor noted that he takes pride in the happiness that his holiday lights bring to the community.

"People have been paying us compliments as we're going through the neighborhoods (installing lights) and telling us what a joy that we're bringing to them with this pandemic going on," he said. "It's a lot of work and we're tired when we go home. You feel it, but you know you're bringing some satisfaction to (people)."

Balshor also enjoys the smiles that his lights bring to children.

"God knows this is going to be one hell of a holiday as far as putting a smile on people's faces," he said. "Everybody is so holstered in and they're dying to get out. So, we're out there bringing some lights and the little kids have been sequestered. They can't get out, home schooling.

"We at least make their fantasies (come true) a little bit. Light that up. OK, Tinker Bell is out there delivering. We have a couple elves. I'm Santa Claus sometimes."

With the reputation that his business has acquired, Balshor noted that he has many return customers and has received many referrals.

"(Referrals) are the best complaints you can receive," he said. "'Hey, you did so and so's house. Can you come over and do mine? We want something like that. Make my house look nice.'"

Balshor mentioned that his holiday lights are custom created to fit each house.

"I carry a spool of lights on my truck, 1,000 feet," he said. "I cut it specifically for (each) house. You figure out all the nuances, maybe have to cut a splice here to make things custom. You don't want to have a bunch of lights just hanging out in nowhere land."

Customers that already have their own holiday lights are only charged an installation and removal cost.

The business, which has also installed lights in such areas as the Pocket, Arden Park and Carmichael, performs this service from mid-October to the third week in December. This year's schedule began on Oct. 19 and continued until Dec. 17.

Customers have the option of clear bulbs or colored bulbs.

The business also accommodates customers who have items such as nativity scene figures and plastic snowmen that they would like incorporated with their lights.

Balshor noted that he charges $115 per hour for his team of three workers to set up and take down lights. Those lights become the property of a home's owner and can be stored away by each owner until the following year when the business will be available to reinstall them.

This business, which has a two-hour minimum, features a package that includes both gutter cleaning and holiday light installation and removal.

Balshor mentioned that his holiday light service brings him much satisfaction.

"I feel a sense of accomplishment, because I'm delivering a positive situation," he said. "We follow up with customer service, because we want to make sure that house is sparkling. You create a positive picture and you run with it."

For more information about Clean as a Whistle's holiday light service and other services, call (916) 451-0877 (message) and (916) 849-6637 or write to j.balshor@comcast.net.

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Zoo

continued from page 3

"We've had these conversations – not just about the potential of the zoo, but the entire land use plan," he said. "And while the Kings are making no commitment, we think an additional 90 days to speak with them about all of the possibilities would be a very helpful and useful thing."

The council unanimously supported that proposal.

Steinberg also asked that the public speakers who signed up to speak on this agenda item reserve their comments for a future discussion on this issue.

Jeff Dorso, senior vice president and general counsel for the Sacramento Kings and a former Sacramento Zoo board member, expressed his support of the mayor's motion to delay this agenda item.

"It really seems like something that doesn't merit rushing," he said.

In providing her own support for the three-month extension on this agenda item, Ashby noted that the additional time to consider the Sleep Train Arena site was a good idea.

"I think the 90 days is good for us," she said. "Let's give it a little chance here and see what happens."

Council Member Steve Hansen recalled approving the term sheet for the Kings to move from the Sleep Train Arena site to the downtown site, where the Golden 1 Center was later built.

Hansen referred to a particular part of that decision.

"A key piece of that motion was that there be a good successor use to this (Sleep Train Arena) site," he said. "We haven't yet seen the former ARCO Arena site come forward with a beneficial plan for the community to replace what was there, the activity, and I think that the council in thinking about this has to put it in that particular context."

Hansen also welcomed the 90-day extension as an opportunity to consider what might replace the zoo at its current, Land Park site.

"There have been some ideas about a botanical garden, maybe some other things," he said. "There are historic buildings at the forefront – midcentury modern buildings that have been landmarked – and it is a critical piece of (former Sacramento Mayor and hotel owner) William Land's gift to the city of a major regional park that is one of the crown jewels in our park system."

With the feasibility study concluding that the top two sites for the zoo are in North Natomas, Council Member Larry Carr expressed disappointment that the Bing Maloney Golf Complex ranked third in potential zoo sites in the feasibility study.

"I was disappointed, because of the very reason that we talked about in the previous (council agenda item), that whenever we have an opportunity to invest in an underserved community, we somehow find a reason not to," he said.

"We developed some criteria that will eliminate the site, we developed some rationale that will make us feel good. But in the end, we don't invest in underserved communities. We don't put attractions that will lure people from all over the region to that community."

Although this golf complex does not lie within an underserved community, it is located a short distance from the underserved Meadowview neighborhood.

However, in the same manner, the non-underserved community of North Natomas lies a short distance from underserved neighborhoods in North Sacramento.

Carr concluded that had the study been approached through the consideration of underserved communities, "there would have been a different result" pertaining to the ranking of Bing Maloney as a potential zoo site.

Echoing Carr's comments, Harris referred to the Bing Maloney Golf Complex as a "very viable site."

"If you put a racial equity lens on this and an inclusive economic development lens, that site would score higher," he said. "So, I feel exactly the same way.

"I think Larry's absolutely right, that it pays to invest in underserved communities and especially with a large amenity like this. It could be a real boom to the south area. But Bing Maloney Golf (Complex), we own it and it's a beautiful environment for a zoo. It could also co-locate with soccer fields, as well, for (Major League Soccer)."

Harris asked that the city's staff take another look at the Bing Maloney site through an inclusive economic development lens.

Council Member Allen Warren also called for considering racial equity when making a decision on the zoo site.

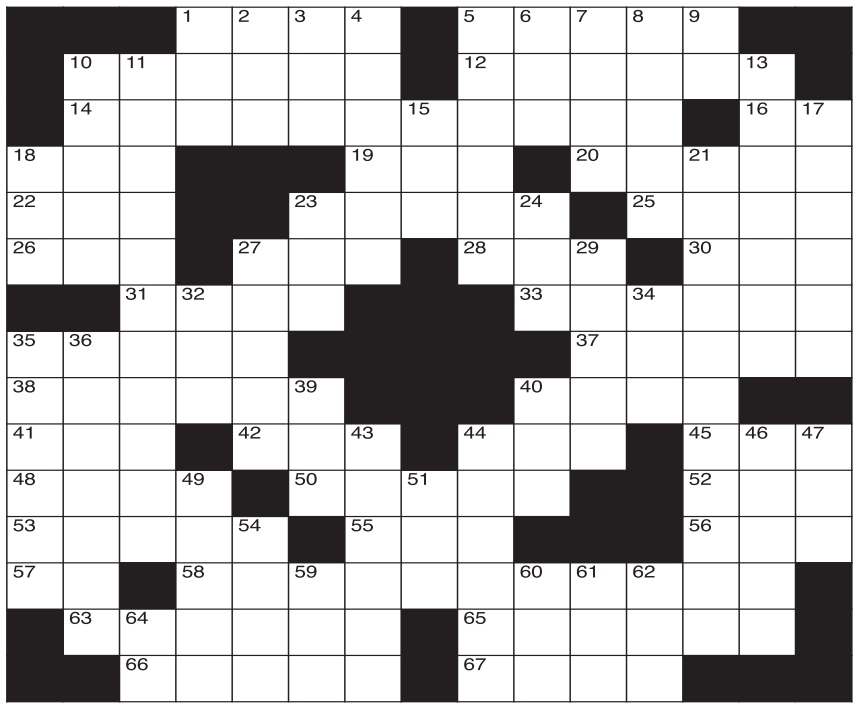
"I'm not certain which location is the best location, but I think that when we make major investments and we continue to bypass underserved communities, we really (are) speaking out of both sides of our mouths," he said. "We do not get to the kind of city that we say we want without making major focused investments in these communities."

As for his overall view on the future relocation and expansion of the Sacramento Zoo, Warren said, "A world-class city like Sacramento deserves a world-class zoo."

Sacramento Zoo Director Jason Jacobs told the Land Park News that he is looking forward to the council's discussion on the feasibility study.

"Obviously, it's been deferred for 90 days and we look forward to having that conversation with council 90 days from now," he said.

CROSSWORD

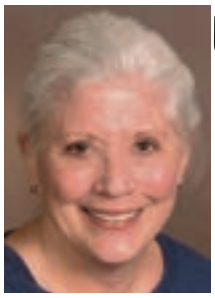


CLUES ACROSS

1. Upright post on a boat
5. Sentimental person
10. Native American tribe
12. Wear away
14. Where you're going
16. Doctor
18. Popular Chinese dialect
19. One point east of due south
20. Northern sea duck
22. Note
23. Wives (law)
25. Trigonometric function
26. A way to communicate (abbr.)
27. Swiss river
28. No (Scottish)
30. Commercials
31. Large instrument
33. __ Chantilly, __ de Menthe
35. Small, saclike cavities
37. High and thin in tone
38. Treat extremely well
40. Famed track star Usain
41. Secure web connection (abbr.)
42. Rob of energy
44. Paving material
45. Cool!
48. Tip of Aleutian Islands
50. Indicates silence
52. Water in the solid state
53. Security interests
55. Popular hoopster Jeremy
56. Shed tears
57. Low frequency
58. Harmful bacterium
63. Common language: lingua __
65. Standards of perfection
66. They consist of two parts
67. A detailed description of design

CLUES DOWN

1. More (Spanish)
2. A subdivision of a play
3. Japanese title
4. More jittery
5. Fabric
6. Luke's mentor __-Wan
7. Cleaving tool
8. Ancient city of Egypt
9. 36 inches
10. Farewell
11. Second to last
13. Improved by critical editing
15. Defensive weapon (abbr.)
17. Fancy attire
18. __ Farrow, actress
21. Completely opposed
23. Supervises flying
24. Pouch
27. True firs
29. Mistake
32. Computing platform (abbr.)
34. Snakelike fish
35. Greatly horrify
36. Despicable person
39. Tell on
40. Ballplayer's tool
43. Central Brazilian town
44. Court game
46. Land
47. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
49. Retract a statement
51. Data executive
54. Capital of Yemen
59. Portable computer screen material
60. Electronic data processing
61. "Matt Houston" actor Horsley
62. Resinous substance
64. Rural delivery



THIS 'n' THAT

by Carol Bogart

A Not-So-Merry Christmas?

I have to say I admire the … optimism … of those who refuse to allow Covid to dim their Christmas spirit. Who they are is evident by whether this year, like any other, they've put up their outdoor lights.

I'm grateful as I look around and see them. Within my apartment complex, you can tell which tenants expect Christmas company, such as grandchildren. A few have wound lights through the railing of patios and balconies. Good for them. Definitely cheery and I like it.

I, however, haven't even put up my Christmas flags and banners. Nor have I so much as briefly considered dragging home a tree.

Even though a smallish shipment of Pfizer's vaccine rolled our way last week and is now at UC Davis Med Center where, initially, health care workers were being vaccinated, I'm worried. Worried Covid-weary families who host Christmas gatherings will make such vaccinations necessary. So far, there isn't enough vaccine for all of us.

And how about those who travel to such gatherings elsewhere in America. Not wanting an aged parent, perhaps, to be alone. Concerned it could prove to be the last time the kids see grampa. Will they encounter the virus in their travels? And bring it back with them?

Yes, I admit it. These ponderings bring out the Scrooge in me. "STAY HOME!" says everyone from the CDC to politicians (who occasionally neglect to set a good example). We're told by our folk hero, Dr. Fauci, this winter will be our darkest season if we ignore the virus danger in America.

Listen, as recently as the Christmas before last, I put out the Christmas decorations. No tree, I didn't have the energy or will for that. But with Mike and his girlfriend coming, I tried to make it festive. When Mike was a kid, we'd go to a tree farm, tramp through the Colorado snow, choose a tree and tag it.

In Denver, after Mike was born, Christmas meant a visit from my mom and dad. (A new grandchild/darling toddler is, as we know, a magnet.)

Mike was born in October 1985. That December, in front of his first Christmas tree, was an old fashioned varnished wagon: slatted sides, red hubcaps and handle. Dad, notorious for frugality, SHIPPED it to Mike from Ohio! At 2+ months, Mike was too young for it of course. By the next Christmas, though, grampa could pull Mike in his "wangey."

For dad's last Christmas – Mike was 4 – I shipped Mike's presents, and dad's, to Ohio. Christmas morning belonged to an eager child. Christmas afternoon was grampa's. That past spring, we'd lost gramma. Dad's caregiver. Worn out from his Alzheimer's. The farm was sold. Dad went to a nursing home near my brother.

When I called my dad he'd sometimes ask, "Carol, is your mother there with you?" His last Christmas I said a prayer of thanks that he remembered Michael.

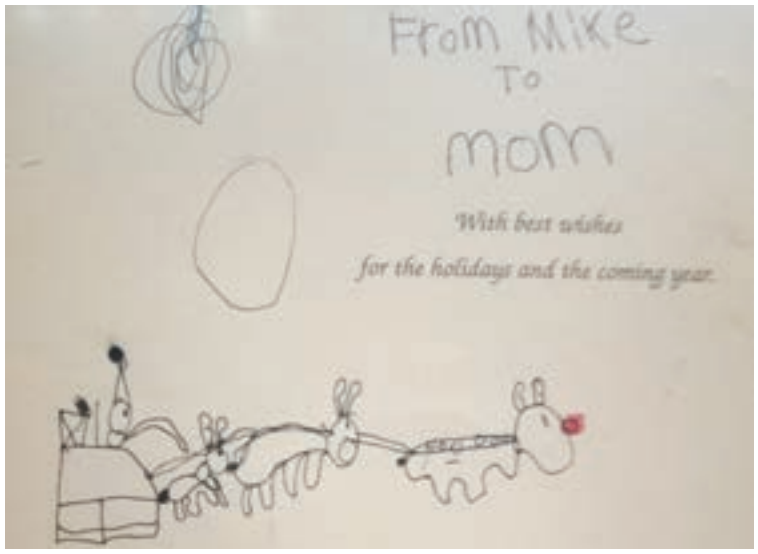
Mike turned 35 this fall. He told me last month he and Ashley would spend Christmas with me; Thanksgiving with Ashley's family.

Last week, I told them not to come. I know someone quarantining with the virus in West Sac. Am I an A-symptomatic spreader? I don't know. I hope not. But why take chances?

And no more Christmas travel for me, either, with or without the virus. Nope, that's done. Crowded airports? Changing planes? The baggage claim? Oh no, no way.

Unless, of course, Mike gets a job far away … and I learn I have a grandchild.

This holiday season Carol wishes you as much merriness as you can muster. Maybe, if we're very, very good; Santa will leave no lumps of Covid coal in our Christmas stocking. Questions, comments, glad tidings? Contact Carol at carol@bogartonline.com.





Photos by CAROL BOGART

1) Mike, age 5, excited about Santa and his reindeer. No Covid Christmas with my now-grown son. 2) Santa at the mall with Mike, age 9. For this year's kids, maybe next year.



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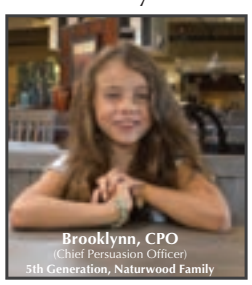
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