February 9, 2023

Land Park News

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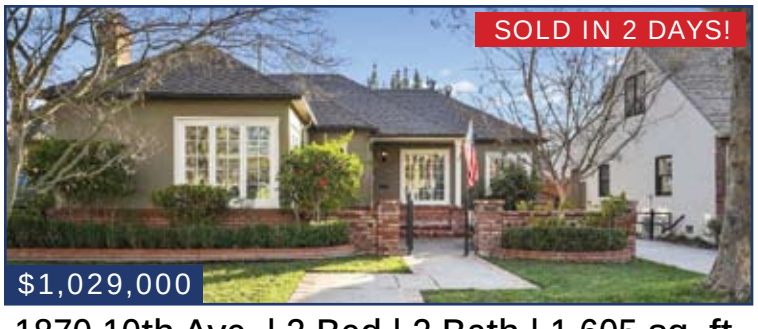
Restoration plan developing for vandalized William Land Park statue

See page 4

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Charcoal the dog seeks new home

Hello, my name is Charcoal. I am a handsome gentleman looking for a loving new home. I am potty trained, crate trained, and I love to meet new people.

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I need my new family to help me work on my leash training. I get so excited when I see other dogs and I will pull toward them.

I am energetic and I love to play with my toys. In my foster home, I lived with a small dog, so I may do well with your friendly dog with a good introduction.



Photo courtesy of Front Street Animal Shelter
Charcoal is a 5-year-old, male, black, Labrador retriever mix. His animal identification number is A653277.

I find cats too interesting, so I need a home without them.

To meet me, make sure I'm still available at www.FrontStreetShelter.org, then ask for me at the shelter from noon to 5 p.m. seven days a week."

Doggy Dash to celebrate 30th anniversary

Registration for Doggy Dash, the Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' (SPCA) 2K/5K walk and pet festival is now open.

On Saturday, April 22, join thousands of walkers at William Land Park as we lace up our shoes and leash up our pups for Doggy Dash, our largest fundraiser of the year and an opportunity to celebrate the amazing commitment of our community to healthy, happy and unconditional relationships between dogs and their people.

Your registration and participation in the Doggy Dash helps the Sacramento SPCA provide direct care to more than 40,000 animals each year in our community.

The cost to register for this event is $30.

For general event information and vendor interest, contact Jessica Miller at (916) 504-2868 or jmiller@sspca.org.

February events at the Italian Center

FILM BIOGRAPHY, "RUDOLPH VALENTINO"
Sunday, Feb. 12, 1 to 3:30 p.m.

FRIDAY NIGHT FILM, "THE TRUFFLE HUNTERS"
Friday, Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m.

TRAVEL FILM, "THE GREAT LAKES OF ITALY"
Sunday, Feb. 26, 2 p.m.

The Italian Center is located at 6821 Fair Oaks Blvd. in Carmichael. For more information, call the Italian Center at (916) 482-5900 or visit website, www.ItalianCenter.net.

Women's fitness festival coming to downtown Sacramento June 4

Gather your mothers, daughters, sisters and friends and register today for the Kaiser Permanente Women's Fitness Festival.

The event will be held on June 4 on 9th Street, between L Street and Capitol Mall. This is a one-of-a-kind, all women's event that includes medals and a beautiful race T-shirt for 5K/10K finishers.

Each participant of the Princess ½-Mile Fun Run will receive a medal.

After the event, there will be a breakfast and celebration with friends in the mimosa garden. Complimentary health screenings will be available at the Kaiser Permanente Thrive Pavilion.

To register, visit www.RaceRoster.com, and search for the "Kaiser Permanente Women's Fitness Festival."

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Email stories and photos to: vcneditor@gmail.com
Editorial questions: (916) 267-8992

The Land Park News is published on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month in the area bounded by Broadway to the north, Interstate 5 on the west, Florin Road on the south and Freeport Boulevard/21st Street on the east.

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Cover by: Lance Armstrong

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Photo courtesy of Eastley family

The Eastleys are pictured on their wedding day in Bali, Indonesia in 2005.

Pocket resident shares her story as 'China's first transgender'

By Joe Perfecto

However well a married couple may know each other, it's commonplace for spouses to keep a few secrets. Often enough, such things – which run the gamut from probably trivial to potentially tumultuous – are taken to the grave, given that the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach is the path of least resistance, and generally in the best interest of preserving household harmony. And, honestly, how many people know everything about his/her spouse anyway?

That was the approach taken by Sasha Eastley, née Zhang Kesha, who resides in the Pocket area with Bruce, her husband of 17 years.

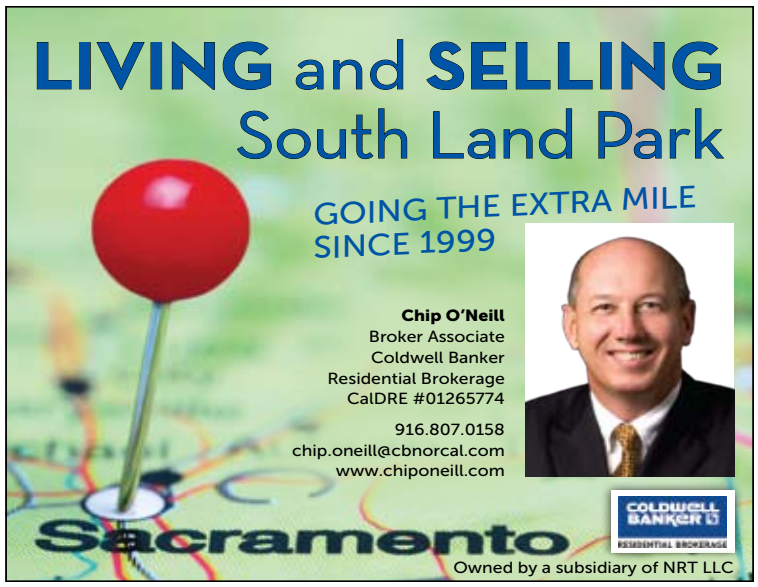
For four decades, she kept a core aspect of her past hidden, not only from her previous and current husbands, but almost everyone else. Early on, word did leak a few times, initially bringing celebrity, but later subjecting her to a blackmailing scheme that she escaped only through repeated relocations.

By the time of the Eastleys' 2005 marriage, all that was long behind Sasha. She was beginning a new life in a new country, with a new community of friends. But no one, least of all her husband, could ever know her story – for not only might she become a social outcast, it was possible that if Bruce ever got wind of it, it could spell the end of their relationship.

For about 15 years, all was well. Then in 2019, she learned via a journalist friend that a TV documentary about her, made in a long-ago time and a faraway land, could be found on YouTube, laying her past bare. She decided that if people were going to find her out anyway, she would rather be the one to tell them.

But first, in case her friends or

See TRANSGENDER on page 10





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LAND PARK

Adorable Land Park home with Art Deco features. Living room features a lovely fireplace with Deco design, wood floors, large picture window and two additional windows that allow light to filter into the spacious room. Open archway to formal dining room with double windows and wood floors. Kitchen has white tiled counters with blue tile accents, dishwasher, stove, refrigerator and breakfast area. Laundry area is behind louvered doors. Spacious bedrooms, wood floors and ceiling fans. Many dual paned windows throughout and central heat and air. Landscaped front yard and covered porch entry. Backyard has a larger patio for outdoor dining. Separate detached garage. One-and one-half blocks distance to Chocolate Fish, Marie's Donuts, Freeport Bakery, Taylors Market and Transportation. Don't miss this Cutie! 1765 Vallejo Way



LAND PARK

Charming two-bedroom Tudor in the heart of Land Park. This adorable home features many original built-ins like entry with leaded glass window in front door, formal living room with decorative ceiling, fireplace, mantel and hardwood floors. Formal dining room opens to a spacious kitchen with engineered floors that look like slate, granite counter tops, tile backsplash, stainless appliances and classic white cabinets. Original built-in hutch with leaded glass cabinet doors in breakfast room. Hall bath has original tile, pedestal sink and shower over tub. Inside laundry room with door to yard. Wood floors in both bedrooms, wall sconces and lots of windows. Partial basement is currently set up as an extra bedroom. Backyard is an Entertainers Dream! Several dining areas and a large mural on back of garage. Built-in BBQ, brick, crushed granite and flagstone add to the landscape, including two fountains. Don't miss this one! 1620 4th Avenue



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Project developing for restoration of vandalized Land Park statue

Historic sculpture of cattleman, meat packing magnate beheaded last December

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

Editor's note: This is the first article in a series related to William Land Park's Charles Swanston Memorial Fountain, which was vandalized in December 2022.

Although it is in its preliminary stages, a plan to restore a recently vandalized, nearly century-old statue in William Land Park is being formalized.

The statue, which is located on a knoll just north of the Sacramento Zoo, pays tribute to an early area resident: the rancher and meat packing magnate Charles Swanston (1833-1911).

Known as the Charles Swanston Memorial Fountain, it was designed and sculpted by the famous sculptor, painter, muralist, etcher and art educator Ralph Stackpole (1885-1973). The fountain was officially accepted by the city on June 18, 1926.

The statue bears the inscriptions: "To the pioneers" and "Erected by George Swanston in memory of his father Charles Swanston." George Swanston donated $10,000 for the creation of the statue.

During the early morning of Dec. 27, 2022, the Land Park News was informed by one of its readers that the statue had become the victim of an act of vandalism.

"I wanted to let the Land Park News know that the Swanston fountain has been significantly damaged/beheaded," she wrote in an email message.



Photos by Lance Armstrong
The headless statue of Charles Swanston at William Land Park is pictured last month. This sculpture, which was designed and created by Ralph Stackpole, was vandalized in December 2022.

The reader added that she had learned about the incident through a social media posting by a Land Park resident who discovered the damaged statue at about 10 a.m. the previous morning while she was jogging in the park.

In their response to receiving a report about this vandalism on Dec. 26, the Sacramento Police Department announced that the incident was being investigated

See SCULPTURE on page 5





Sculpture:

Continued from page 4

and that the department is seeking any information that may help their investigation.

Using their Twitter account, the department noted: "Any witnesses with information regarding this investigation are encouraged to contact the Sacramento PD dispatch center at (916) 808-5471 or Sacramento Valley Crime Stoppers at (916) 443-HELP (4357). Callers can remain anonymous and may be eligible for a reward up to $1,000. Anonymous tips can also be submitted using the free "P3 Tips" smartphone app."

While there have been no announcements regarding any suspects or leads pertaining to this crime, efforts to have this memorial fountain – which includes the statue – restored have been occurring behind the scenes.

Land Park resident Rick Stevenson told this paper last week that those efforts emerged through his work with the Land Park Volunteer Corps, which was founded by neighbors in that area in 2010 to assist with the maintenance and care of William Land Park.

Stevenson, who is also a board member of the Land Park Community Association, mentioned that he has been dedicated to an ongoing project to preserve and enhance the memorial and improve its landscaping.

He mentioned that this work, which began about a decade ago, includes getting the fountain's stream operating again, performing a complete cleaning and sealing of the statue, and installing a 1926 drinking fountain, which is similar to a drinking fountain that was originally part of the memorial.

But what Stevenson and other members of the volunteer

See SCULPTURE on page 8



The statue portion of the Charles Swanston Memorial Fountain, with its head intact, is pictured in 2014.



Charles Swanston Memorial Fountain is pictured last month.

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Elk Grove City Council approves additional $800K for proposed zoo

Sacramento Zoo could potentially relocate, expand in Elk Grove

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

The Elk Grove City Council on Jan. 25 unanimously adopted a resolution to allocate $800,000 toward that city's proposed zoo project.

This funding comes through the council's approved amendment of the city of Elk Grove's fiscal year 2022-23 annual budget, allowing the $800,000 to be transferred from the city's General Capital Reserve Fund to its General Fund.

If this proposed plan becomes a reality, the 95-year-old Sacramento Zoo would move from its current 14-acre site in William Land Park to a designated 70-acre portion of a 100-acre city of Elk Grove-owned site at the northwest corner of Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway in Elk Grove.

Last year, a six-month feasibility study between the Sacramento Zoological Society and the city of Elk Grove identified a potential relocation of the Sacramento Zoo to Elk Grove as a viable option.

That study was followed by the adoption of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the zoological society and the city of Elk Grove. The MOU outlines steps involved in the planning process and potential development of the project in Elk Grove.

In February 2022, the city of Elk Grove provided the initial funding of $500,000 for the preparation of the environmental analysis of this proposed project's master planning efforts and the impact report (EIR) for the Elk Grove site.



Photos courtesy of city of Elk Grove

An artist conceptual rendering shows a possible scene for the proposed Elk Grove zoo.

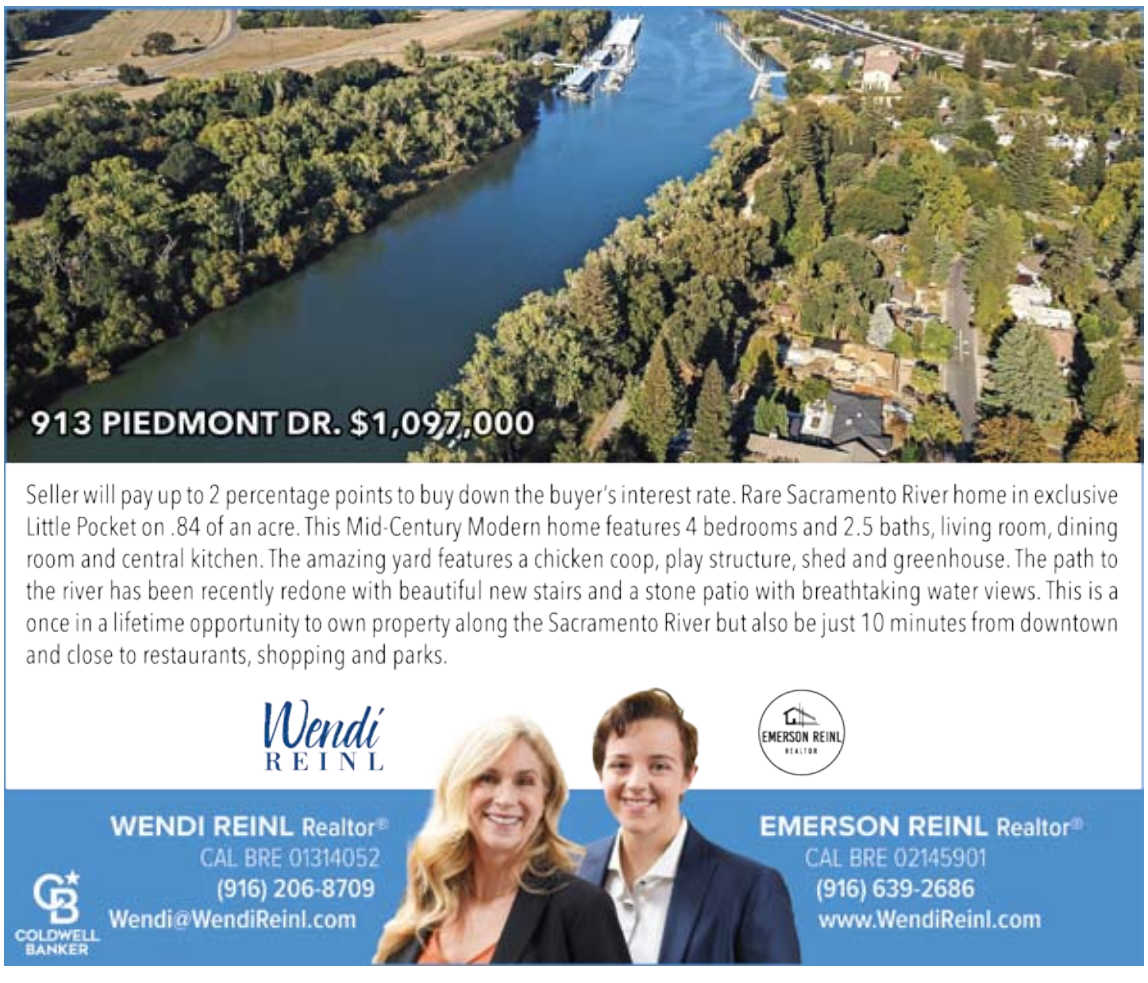
An additional $33,000 was combined with that amount from the city of Elk Grove's fiscal year 2021-22 budget from department operations in that city's strategic planning and innovation, and economic development.

The additional $800,000 in funding allows for the payment of expenses totaling $1.3 million.

An itemized list of current and anticipated costs for the proposed project include $400,000 for the completion of the EIR, $142,000 for preliminary concept designs for roads and cost estimates, and $35,000 for a water supply assessment.

Prior to the council's deliberation and vote on the resolution to add $800,000 toward the city's proposed zoo project, Elk Grove resident Felipe Martin, who unsuccessfully ran for an

See ZOO on page 7





Zoo:

Continued from page 6

Elk Grove City Council seat last November, expressed concerns about the request for additional funding for the proposed zoo.

"We're spending a lot of money, putting the cart before the horse," he said. "We need to understand how we're going to do this, and understand how we're moving forward.

"We're spending a lot of money, the economy is changing. As you know, the state is having financial issues. It will start trickling down. So, we need to understand where we're spending our money before we go spend it."

Elk Grove City Council Member Darren Suen responded to Martin's comments by stressing the need to spend money prior to making an informed decision on the zoo proposal.

"We are going to have to spend a little bit more money to make sure we have a full picture from environmental standpoint, from our utilities, to our sewer, water, storm drain, all these other things before we can make an informed decision to go forward," he said.

Elk Grove Vice Mayor Kevin Spease mentioned that while he supports Suen's position to take this next step, he wants to avoid burdening Elk Grove taxpayers with this project.

"For me to be interested in continuing this in a further step, I'm going to need to see a significant portion of the support come from private funds," he said. "I'm not interested in doing this on the back of Elk Grove taxpayers. So, I'll leave that there. That's my warning signal for the future, but I will vote in favor tonight."



Potential Elk Grove zoo guests could have the opportunity to spend a night in one of the proposed zoo's luxury tent-cabins, which could have views of a hippopotamus lake.

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Sculpture:

Continued from page 5

corps were not anticipating was the vandalism that occurred last December.

In his attempt to find any sort of association with the vandalization of monuments and memorials associated with racial injustice in America following the 2020 murder of George Floyd, Stevenson noted that he was unsuccessful.

"I keep asking and nobody knows anything that was controversial about (Charles Swanston)," he said.

With his desire to have the statue restored, Stevenson did not have to search for someone with such expertise.

Three years prior to the vandalism, Stevenson had been in contact with Molly Lambert, who he described as "the best known conservator of Stackpole statuary, from Berkeley."

"(Lambert) had done some work for the Crocker (Art Museum in) years back, and that's why they put me in touch with her, because they were very impressed with her work," he said. "And then when I originally called her, I learned that she had previously done Stackpole works and was very familiar with the sculptor.

"And she will be coming up (to Sacramento to evaluate the statue), and we hope she will be doing the restoration job on it."

During Lambert's visit to the capital city, she will also spend time at downtown Sac-

See SCULPTURE on page 14

SMUD Powering Futures college scholarship application period now open

The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) announced that the application period for its Powering Futures college scholarship program is now open.

The program awards as many as 21 scholarships of up to $4,000 each to undergraduate students who are enrolled or plan to enroll in an accredited two- or four-year college or university. Students must live in SMUD's service area or have a legal guardian who is a SMUD customer.

The awards are based on academic merit and financial need.

Preference will be given to students who have declared a major relevant to a career at SMUD. Some scholarships may also include a paid internship at SMUD for eligible students.

"The Powering Futures program supports access to education and opportunities for high-paying jobs within our communities," said Paul Lau, SMUD CEO and general manager.

"Investment in the next generation is crucial to the long-term success and vitality of the Sacramento region and to SMUD's vision for a clean energy future, which is ushering in new opportunities for education, training, workforce development and exciting careers in zero carbon innovation and technologies."

The deadline to apply for the scholarships is March 1. Scholarships are for the 2023-24 academic year.

For more information about SMUD's Powering Futures college scholarship program, visit SMUD.org/Scholarships.



CBS Neighborhood Concert

March 12, 4 to 5 p.m.

Congregation Beth Shalom is offering concerts for all ages. Michael Neumann, artistic director emeritus of the Sacramento Youth Symphony and music director emeritus of the Folsom Lake Symphony is the host of this concert.

Come and see world-class musicians perform live works from Mozart, Philip Glass, opera and Broadway.

Neumann will be facilitating a question-and-answer session after the performance, and a reception will be held after the performance with refreshments.

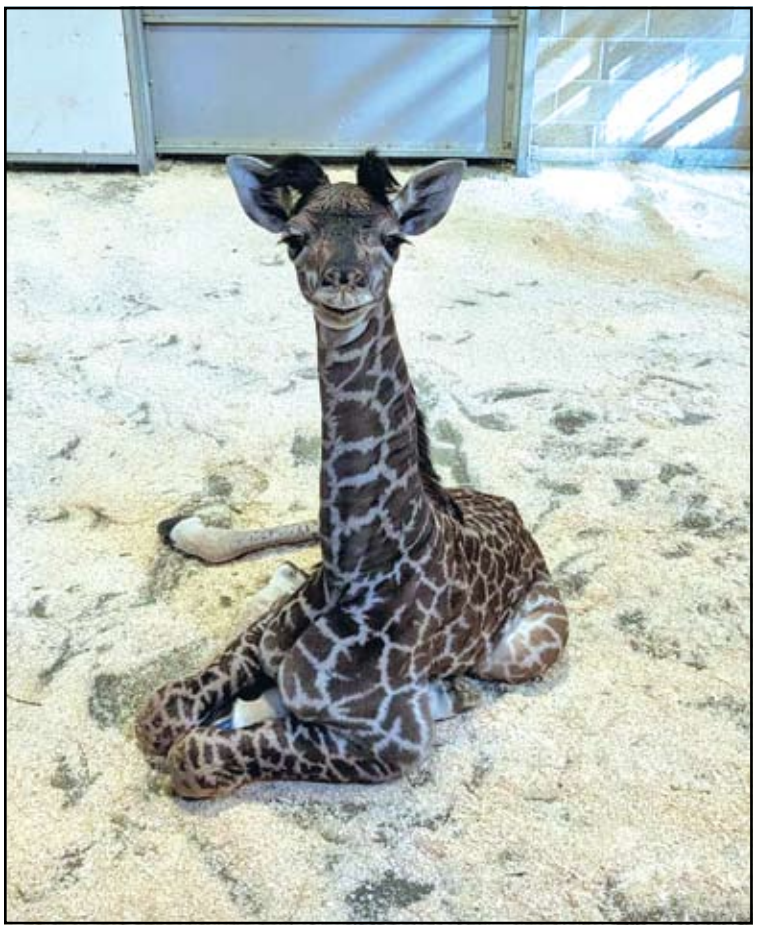
The event will be held at Congregation Beth Shalom at 4746 El Camino Ave. in Carmichael on March 12, from 4 to 5 p.m.

Ticket prices are $18 for families, $10 for adults and $5 for students.



Tickets can be purchased through the website, www.cbshalom.org.

For more information, call (916) 485-4478 or write to the email address, lorinalangan@yahoo.com.



Photos courtesy of the Sacramento Zoo

The Sacramento Zoo's newest resident, this female Masai giraffe calf, poses for the camera. She was born at the zoo on Jan. 22 at 12:28 p.m.



The zoo's new giraffe calf is the 21st giraffe calf born at the Sacramento Zoo since 1954, when giraffes were first housed at this facility.

Giraffe calf born at Sacramento Zoo

Shani the giraffe gave birth to a female calf at the Sacramento Zoo on Sunday, Jan. 22 at 12:28 p.m.

Her zookeepers noted signs of an impending birth on Jan. 18, and Shani was moved into the maternity stall of the giraffe barn to be monitored. Although animal care and veterinary teams were suspicious that she might still be pregnant, just not on her original timeline, there were no definitive signs until very recently.

The zoo's staff is thrilled to announce that Shani's calf is healthy and nursing well from her mother. The pair will be given bonding time, but may be visible at their habitat's side yard periodically over the next few weeks.

The official debut date will be dependent on the health and welfare of the mother and its calf. Keep an eye out on the zoo's social media pages for when this new addition to the herd will be visible.

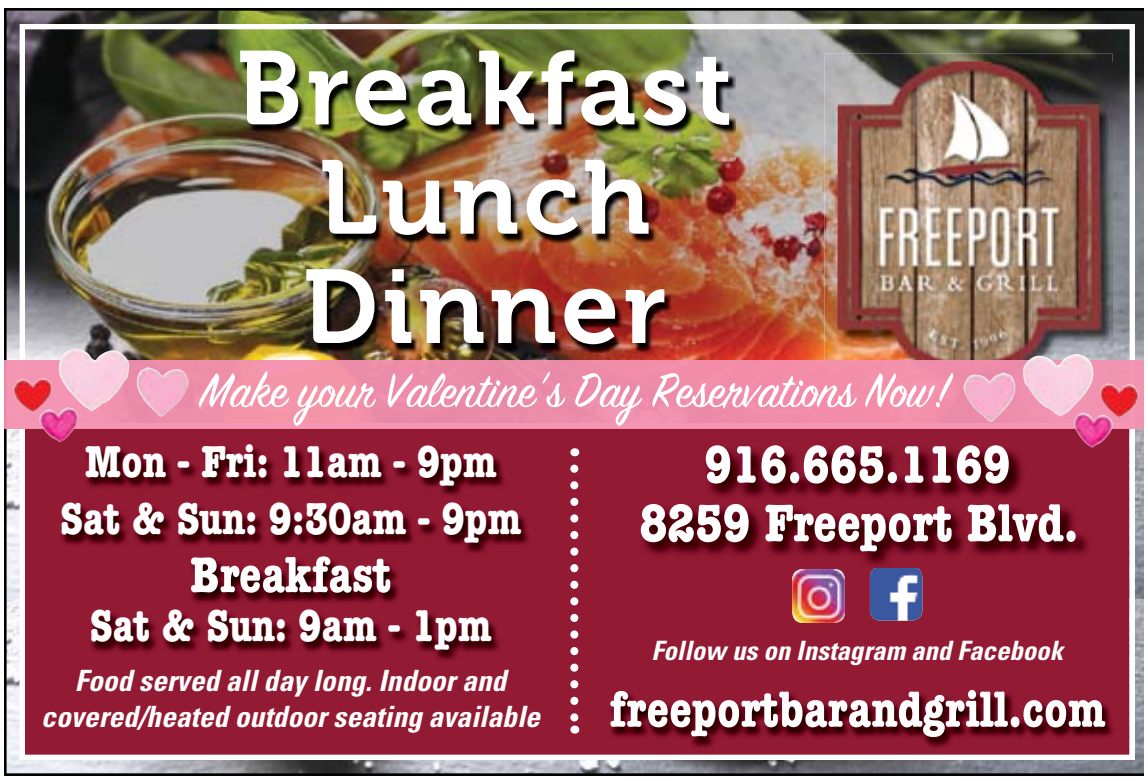
The Sacramento Zoo is now home to six giraffes: one post-reproductive female reticulated giraffe, one male Masai giraffe, three female Masai giraffe, including Shani, and now the new calf. This is the 21st calf born at the Sacramento Zoo dating back to 1954 when giraffes were first housed in Sacramento.

The Masai giraffe is the largest giraffe subspecies and is found in southern Kenya and Tanzania. Gestation is 14 to 15 months. When a calf is born, it can be as tall as 6 feet and weigh as much as 150 pounds. Within minutes, the calf is able to stand on its own.

The Sacramento Zoo is one of 34 institutions managing 131 Masai giraffes in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums population. The zoo partners with and supports the Wild Nature Institute (WNI), a field research organization that is currently studying Masai giraffe demographics and the African savanna ecosystem with photo recognition software. The zoo's partnership with WNI is critical to giraffe research and conservation efforts.

Wild giraffes are experiencing a silent extinction as their populations continue to plummet due to poaching and habitat loss. It has been estimated that this mammal's numbers have fallen by more than 40% in the last 30 years.

About 150,000 wild giraffes existed as recently as 1985, but it is now estimated that there are now fewer than 97,000, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In 2016, the IUCN moved giraffes from the designation of "least concern" to "vulnerable" on its Red List of Threatened Species.



Transgender:

Continued from page 3

husband rejected her, she had to arrange for housing and employment in a new locale. That done, she told all in her predominantly Chinese social circle, and found that many had seen that video – but to her relief, no one shunned her. Now all that remained was to finally tell Bruce.

It took three years for her to summon up the courage to make that confession – which she did last June by sending Bruce an email message containing a 40-year-old photo of a young Zhang Kesha wearing an army uniform.

"He asked me, 'Is that your father or your brother?' Sasha recounted. "I said, 'That was me.' He said, that's a man!' I said, 'Yeah, I was a man before (I was) 20. (When I was) 20 years old, I had my surgery."

Sasha next related the tale of how she became China's first transgender.

It all began on May 23, 1962 in Dalian, China, when Zhang Kesha became the newest member of a group of siblings comprised of one girl and five other boys. His mother had hoped for another girl – and got one in a sense, as Kesha was not a typical boy.

Kesha had fair skin with delicate features, and he displayed an affinity for girls' clothing and toys from the age of 3, and for playmates, he chose girls over boys.

Observing his mother as she prepared meals, he became skilled in the kitchen by the time he began school. His "sissy" behavior encountered static from his peers – one of whom would occasionally give him a beating – and his family.

But to Kesha, nature had clearly made a mistake. His gender identification persisted, and throughout his school years he wore both boys' and girls' clothing. By his middle teens, his determination to live as a woman was so apparent that his father and brothers relented.

Still, his situation created stress, which likely contributed to health issues that became so pronounced in 1978, during his second year of high school, that some tests were done.

A doctor ordered rest, and Kesha went to spend time at a hospital. Soon after, his father went to that hospital for treatment of a lung condition; they would be together there for a month.

There Kesha formed a friendship with another boy, Chiang Zhang, who knew of Kesha's dilemma. "You are famous," he said.

The boy said that not only did gender affirmation surgery exist elsewhere, but that he planned to attend medical school, and would perform the procedure on Kesha, after which they could be married.

Kesha, feeling validated and armed with this new knowledge, elatedly agreed.

When Chiang Zhang left the hospital a few days before Kesha and his father, he presented a symbolic parting gift – a tube of lipstick to be used once Kesha's dream was realized. Soon after, the two began exchanging letters.

A short while later, Chiang Zhang wrote that he would join the army, and would soon enroll in the army's medical school. By late 1978, he was in boot camp.

As Kesha's father was an army general, Kesha praised military life often, and he believed this influenced Chiang Zhang's decision. The news gave Kesha further hope, as it seemed that concrete plans were in motion.

See TRANSGENDER on page 11



Sasha Eastley signs a copy of her book at her Jan. 8 event at the Elks lodge on Riverside Boulevard.

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Transgender:

Continued from page 10

Then, in early 1979, the letters stopped coming.

At school, months later, Kesha learned why: In March 1979, Chiang Zhang had been killed in the Sino-Vietnamese War – a border war that was fought between China and Vietnam.

Devastated, Kesha left school to return home, haunted by the idea that discussions of army life prompted Chiang Zhang to pursue what proved to be a fatal path.

At year's end, Kesha told his family something no one foresaw.

"I'm going to join the army, he said. "I want to be a man."

They were overjoyed, as were his classmates and teachers the following fall. But, in truth, when Kesha enlisted on Dec. 4, 1979, his desire to life as a woman was unchanged.

After basic training, Kesha was stationed at an army hospital, where he befriended a hospital nurse who gave him two female hormone injections a month apart. However, the hospital director observed the second shot.

After the third injection, Kesha noticed hair sprouting on his formerly bare arms and above his upper lip. He concluded that the director made the nurse administer male hormone instead. Kesha compensated by growing his hair long and getting the occasional perm. As he had been working in the hospital kitchen for some time and thus never wore his gender-specific uniform, his appearance was not questioned.

Upon his discharge in early 1982, the local government and the army disagreed over his gender – the government asserting that he enlisted as a male, but was discharged as a female, and the army insisting that he was always a male who just took the appearance of a female.

This denied him the job placement the government provided discharged soldiers. So, he secured a job at a toy factory in another city after meeting with one of the owners.

His appearance was often discussed between that owner and a person named Chiu Tak Chi.

The latter, a well-to-do Hong Kong-based businessman 30 years Kesha's senior, became interested in Kesha, and over about a half a year made monthly factory visits, during which time he would shower Kesha with gifts, and the two would spend time together.

Of course, Kesha couldn't tell this marriage-minded man that such a union was not yet possible, or why.

But then, in November 1982, shortly after that suitor's final visit for the year, Kesha was seen by U.S.-trained surgeon Dr. Da Mei Wang in Beijing, who examined him and ordered tests, and soon it seemed that China's first gender affirmation surgery would occur – except that no law allowing it existed.

Against all odds, this and other hurdles were cleared, and the surgery was performed on Jan. 10, 1983. Two weeks later, Kesha left the hospital, finally comfortable in her own skin.

Kesha and Chiu Tak Chi were at last wed in September 1984. But moving to Hong Kong required a visa, which was finally granted in September 1987.

Kesha joined her husband the following month. There followed 14 eventful years that ended with his death in early 2002, leaving Kesha widowed at just 40 years of age.

Desiring a new mate and a new life, Kesha registered with an online matching service in 2004, and was inundated with inquiries, including one from Bruce, who would be the sixth and final candidate to meet her in Hong Kong, in February 2005.

Just four months later, they were married in Bali, Indonesia. Since the U.S. immigration process was then still ongoing, a second ceremony was conducted in Sacramento at year's end, about a month after Kesha – now known as Sasha – arrived.

Sasha's story now told, her future hinged upon Bruce's reaction.

Although her friends – who knew Bruce well – said he would not respond negatively, Sasha was prepared for the worst. But her friends were right; the moment was decidedly anti-climactic.

"It was just like a ho-hum attitude on my part," Bruce said. "I just thought, OK, that's the way it is – so what? If I was a bit younger, there could have been a big difference, could have been a divorce. But at this point, it's just not important."

Bruce, who is 20-plus years Sasha's senior, isn't bitter about being the last to know, either.

"I think about her friends in the Chinese community; it seems that a sizeable number knew by 2019 from the YouTube video – three years before I did – and I am amazed that it never leaked out," he said.

"They were really true to Sasha. They were protecting her, (and) I can't blame them. But I kept thinking, if it was a Caucasian group, it would have been altogether different. They would be mentioning it; they'd be talking about it. The Chinese community? Silence."

Now fearless, Sasha decided to share her story with the world on her own terms, and, at her insistence, Bruce began writing what by early December 2022 would become the book, "The Life & Times of Zhang Kesha: China's First Transgender" – an account of the years prior to the surgery and the often turbulent events of the ensuing decades, that in places reads like a novel.

At 99 pages, it's much shorter in both length and detail than Bruce would like, but it had to be in print in time for

See TRANSGENDER on page 15



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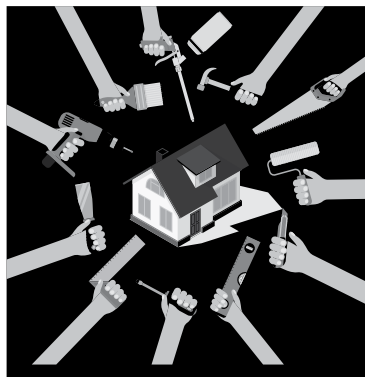
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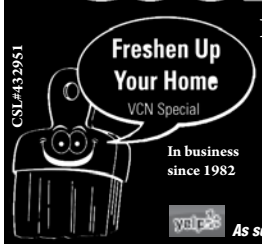
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Sculpture:

Continued from page 8

ramento's Cesar Chavez Plaza, observing the Coleman Memorial Fountain, which was also designed and created by Stackpole. That fountain was officially accepted by the city on Feb. 26, 1927.

Although Stevenson is involved with the formation of the Swanston statue restoration plan, which includes working with the Center for Sacramento History, he envisions a greater version of that plan.

"Well, that whole Swanston stream, statue and garden area, personally, I would like for it to, the way I put it, be back (to) the way it was born," he said. "You know, so it looks like it's 1940, (and) everything is just the way it was."

The project would also include the installation of a camera surveillance system.

But Stevenson does not expect progress on the Swanston project to occur quickly.

"The problem is right now, we have a lot of unknowns," he said. "(It is) doubtless we'll know more in a month."

As for the financing for the project to restore the Swanston statue, Stevenson mentioned that the Land Park Volunteer Corps may eventually decide to create a GoFundMe account to solicit donations.

Stevenson is currently seeking photographs of the statue that were taken prior to the vandalism.

His greatest interest are photographs that show the statue's nose, which was broken off many years ago.

Photographs of the statue can be sent directly to Stevenson at the email address, stevensonrichard@sbcglobal.net.



The statue bears the inscriptions: 'To the pioneers' and 'Erected by George Swanston in memory of his father Charles Swanston.' George Swanston donated $10,000 for the creation of the statue.



Photo courtesy of Center of Sacramento History
The statue's head and pieces of granite from that head were gathered near the statue and are now stored at the Center for Sacramento History.

Transgender:

Continued from page 11

the upcoming 40th anniversary of Sasha's surgery. Copies rolled off the press with days to spare.

This work drew much interest at a book signing held on Jan. 8 – just two days shy of that anniversary – at the Elks lodge on Riverside Boulevard.

Among the 125 or so attendees were Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg and state Assembly Member Stephanie Nguyen, and one unexpected guest: that fellow who used to deliver the occasional beating when Kesha was a preschooler. He happened to be visiting relatives in the Bay Area.

Steinberg, who described the book's story as "amazing," suggested that attitudes and conditions encountered in the past by transgender people in the U.S. were perhaps not too different from those found in China.

"Imagine what she went through in China in 1970s, in the 1980s, and having the courage to become who she was, and to undergo all of the harassment and the discrimination, and to end up in this country where for a long time, it wasn't so easy to be a member of the LGBT community," he said. "And it certainly wasn't easy to be a transgender person. Here we are in 2023, gathering together to celebrate the very essence of being who you are.

"The message is very simple: Take pride in who you are, love one another, speak out against anybody who seeks to demean or diminish anyone else because of who they are."

Nguyen praised Sasha for her service to community organizations, closing her remarks by presenting to Sasha an Assembly certificate of recognition for being "a symbol of courage" and "an outstanding advocate for the rest of the transgender community," in reference to Sasha's work with an LGBTQIA+ group.

This was just the latest in a series of related awards. Community service has been a major aspect of the Eastleys' lives since 2008, largely via the Sacramento Capitol Lions Club – which was in danger of folding until Sasha revived it – and the Sacramento Camellia Lions Club, which she co-founded in 2017.

Her history with the LGBTQIA+ community is a relatively short one, dating to just last year.

For much of Sasha's life, nonconformity to gender norms was not well accepted in Chinese society, and only in the years following her surgery did the concept of a transgender person begin to take hold.

Sasha's sense is that things are good there today.

"It's easy to get a job, and there's no discrimination," she said. "They can do whatever they want."

The existence of high-profile transgender celebrities and a long abundance of transgender-related topics in Chinese media would seem to support that view. Plus, laws are in place regulating the surgery, and a large codified set of requirements came into being in 2009 that must be met by candidates.

But there are downsides. While transgenderism enjoys much media presence, since most well-known transgenders are artists, dancers or performers, few other sectors are represented by role models. In fact, many transgender people are drawn to the entertainment industry due to difficulty in finding other employment.

State-imposed requirements, designed to ensure surgery applicants are suitably prepared, are so restrictive that most people can't meet them all, and go to other regionsthat have more lax requirements.

As of 2014, out of China's estimated 400,000 transgender people, just 800 transgender patients underwent in-country surgery during the previous 30 years. Those having surgery outside of China find themselves in legal limbo upon their return, as officials refuse to grant a change in gender status.

Society's views are still mixed. Studies show that 60% to 90% of families are unaccepting of transgender family members, 60% of parents of transitioning transgender people were unsupportive, and up to 90% of transgender people can experience extreme conflict with parents.

As Chinese law doesn't address transgender rights, various forms of discrimination have been observed. Per one survey, versus other minorities, "trans people face the highest levels of discrimination, especially within the family, schools and workplaces."

Another study found that unemployment among transgender people is nearly three times that of the general population.

But there are signs of hope. Study participants showed more positive than negative attitudes toward transgender people, with most agreeing that they are a natural occurrence and are brave, and disagreeing that they are sinful or mentally ill. Plus, most think China is becoming more tolerant, and want more done for the transgender population.

While the U.S. seems to be far ahead of its Asian counterpart with regard to transgender rights and acceptance, Bruce opines that some current policy trends, while well intentioned, are misguided.

"'Transgender' is (in the U.S.) an umbrella term for a number of different sex (orientations), and a lot of them don't make any sense," he said. "We have people listed as transgender (who really aren't transgender people).

"Say I'm a student in a school and I let everybody know I feel that I'm a female. The authorities in many states have gone along with that, and allow those people – those men/boys – to use the girls' restroom or locker room. It's sheer stupidity; they're not female. They're not transgender just because they feel that way. In my opinion, you're not a transgender unless you have that surgery."

Still, Bruce acknowledges the complexity of the topic of transgenderism overall.

"Legally, (Sasha) is recognized as a female, because of the operation," he said. "But biologically she's still a male. It's a very gray area."

Although no means is in place to facilitate sales of Sasha's book to the public, an e-book is planned and a two-hour video consisting of the author reading the entire text while a series of personal photos appears can be found on YouTube by searching for "Kesha Zhang China First Transgender."









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