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Land Park News

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Sacramento Zoo structures officially designated as city landmark

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Sacramento Zoo structures officially designated as city landmark

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

The Sacramento City Council, on Feb. 21, unanimously passed a motion to officially designate the Sacramento Zoo entrance structures as a landmark on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources.

That vote was preceded by the city Preservation Commission's unanimous vote, last November, to recommend to the council that the zoo entrance structures receive this official designation.

The urgency of this designation proposal was associated with the proposed plan to relocate the 95-year-old zoo from its current site in William Land Park to a designated 70-acre portion of a 100-acre Elk Grove city-owned site at the northwest corner of Kammerer Road and Lotz Parkway in Elk Grove.



Photo by Lance Armstrong
The Sacramento Zoo's historic entrance structures were recently designated as a landmark on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources.

Last year, a six-month feasibility study between the city of Elk Grove and the Sacramento Zoological Society 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 city of Elk Grove and the zoological society. The MOU outlines steps involved in the planning process and potential development of the project in Elk Grove.

Prior to the council's vote on the zoo structures' historic landmark designation, the city's staff determined that the nomination aligned with the city's 2035 General Plan goal to provide for the identification and preservation of historical and cultural resources.

According to a city staff report, the historic designation of these structures ensures that future development on the site will "undergo preservation review as part of the city's site plan and

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Cover by: Lance Armstrong



Photo by Bruce Marwick

The Coleman Memorial Fountain at Cesar Chavez Plaza is pictured last December.

Land Park's Swanston statue is among famous artist's local works

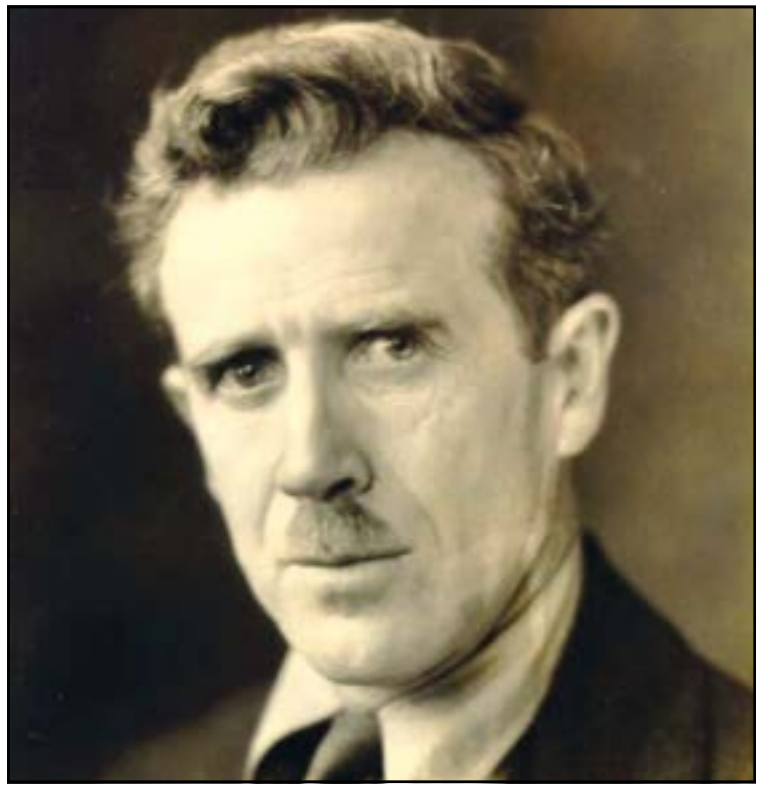
By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

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

The famous artist, sculptor, muralist, etcher and art educator Ralph Stackpole was recognized as San Francisco's leading artist during the 1920s and 1930s. But he also created works for California's capital city.

One of those works is a 96-year-old statue that sits

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Photos courtesy of San Francisco Public Library

Ralph Stackpole, pictured in 1932, created four Sacramento artworks, including the Swanston Memorial Fountain in William Land Park and the Coleman Memorial Fountain in Cesar Chavez Plaza.





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Swanston

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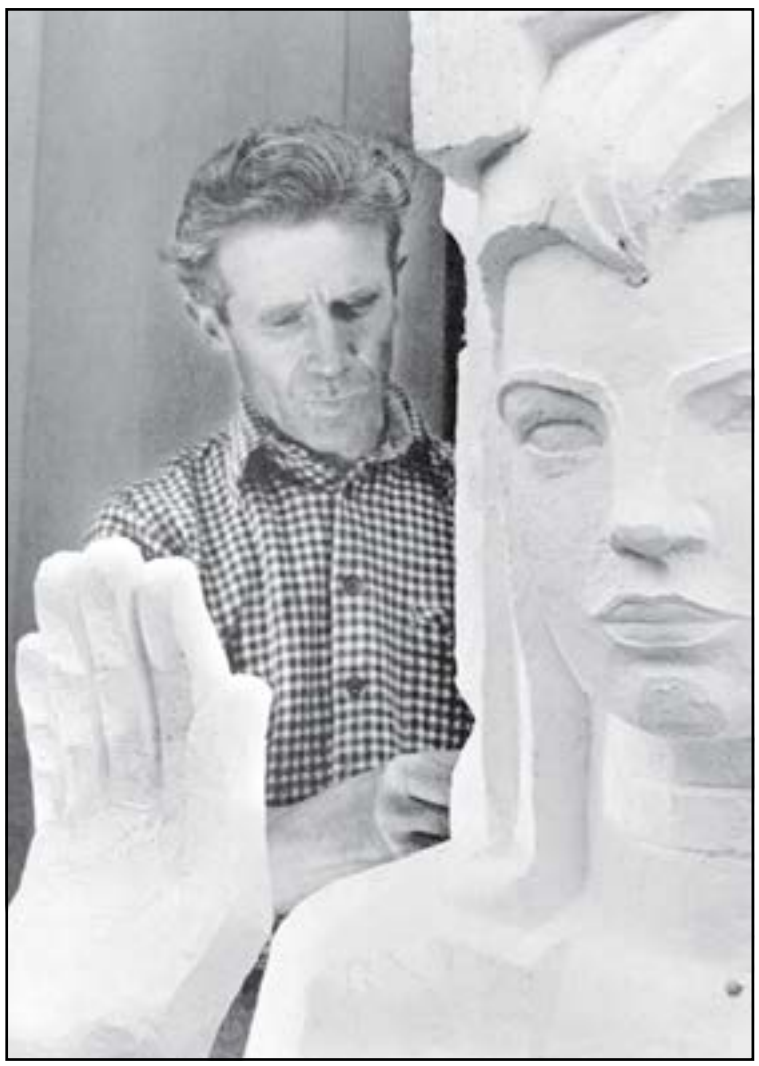
just north of the Sacramento Zoo in William Land Park. The statue is the focal point of a larger work known as the Charles Swanston Memorial Fountain – a physical tribute to former Sacramento resident Charles Swanston (1833-1911), who was a renowned cattleman and the owner of a meat packing plant, which was founded on Riverside Boulevard.

This more than 7-ton, carved granite creation made news two months ago after the Sacramento Police Department was informed that this artwork was a victim of vandalism. The head of the statue was knocked to the ground on or about Dec. 26.

Land Park resident Bruce Marwick told this paper last week that the late December vandalism was preceded by an earlier attack of the statue during the same month.

"Sadly, (the earlier December 2022) attack (occurred), probably from I'm assuming the same person or people, and then it was, of course, decapitated (on) I think Dec. 26 is the date," he said.

"(In early December 2022), I was walking by (the statue) with my daughter (Isabel), and I looked up and I saw that the rim of the hat worn by Swanston had more damage. And I looked at the ground and realized there were shards on the ground."



Sculptor Ralph Stackpole works on his "Pacifica" sculpture for the Golden Gate International Exposition, which was held on Treasure Island in the San Francisco Bay in 1939 and 1940.

Marwick later returned to the park to gather the fragments, which he ultimately delivered to the city's Department of Youth, Parks & Community Enrichment.

In a letter, dated Jan. 9, 2023 and addressed to Joey Zaokopny, the city's park maintenance superintendent, Marwick wrote: "The fragments were gathered on Sunday, December 11, 2022, after the statue was vandalized the previous week. I noticed visitors to the Swanston memorial were walking on the fragile fragments and, in some cases, breaking them into smaller pieces without knowing it.

"There are 10 pieces that range in size from 2 (inches) to 5 (inches) in width. Most of the fragments appeared to be from the statue's hat brim. This vandalism predates the assault and decapitation of the statue that occurred around December 26, 2022."

At the bottom of the letter, Zaokopny signed his name in acknowledgment of receiving fragments from the first December 2022 vandalism of the Swanston statue.

The statue's significantly damaged head and shards from the late December vandalism of the Swanston statue are currently in the possession of the Center for Sacramento History.

The December 2022 attacks on the statue may not mark the only times that the statue was vandalized, considering it had already been missing its nose for many years.

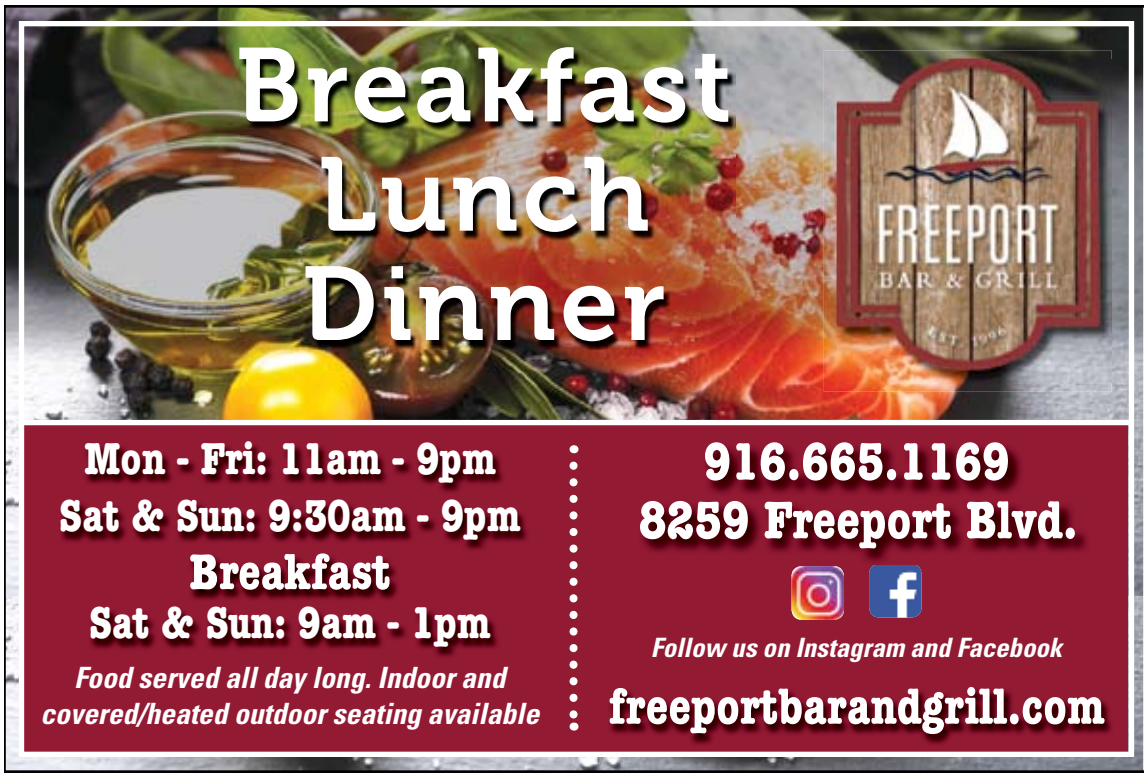
Preliminary stages of a developing plan to restore the statue are underway, and details of that proposed project are presented in the first article of this series.

At the time that Marwick discovered the initial December vandalism to the Swanton statue, he was coincidentally preparing for an online lecture on Stackpole. He gave that speech last January.

Stackpole, who was a native of Williams, Oregon, moved to San Francisco when he was 16 years old, and he became a student at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute of San Francisco two years later.

At that institution, he was a student of painter Arthur F. Mathews (1860-1945), and at the same time, he was an apprentice of sculptor Arthur Putnum (1873-1930). Although the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 destroyed the Mark Hopkins Art Institute in the Nob Hill dis-

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Swanston

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trict, a new building was opened on the site a year later, and the institution was renamed the San Francisco Institute of Art.

Stackpole next studied art in Paris, and, in 1911, he returned to the United States, spending a year studying in New York under the Ohio-born artist Robert Henri (1865-1929). Stackpole then made his way back to San Francisco, where he established an art studio at 728 Montgomery St., and, for many years, taught sculpture classes at the California School of Fine Arts (former San Francisco Institute of Art/ later San Francisco Art Institute). He also spent two years teaching the same subject at Mills College in Oakland. It was during that era of his life that Stackpole created many sculpted works, including those for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco and the1939-40 Golden Gate International Exposition. His works also include murals in Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco and in the foyer of the Sacramento City College auditorium, and the Coleman Memorial Fountain at Cesar Chavez Plaza on the block bounded by 9th, 10th, I and J streets.

The Coleman fountain, which was accepted by the city 96 years ago, was a gift to Sacramento from Florence (Craft) Coleman (1847-1910), who bequeathed the necessary funds to the city for the creation of the fountain. Through investments following her death, that sum totaled about $30,000 – an increase from $26,298.50 in 1914.

This fountain is a memorial to Florence's husband, Kentucky native and California pioneer William Coleman (1826-1901), who she married in 1897. William lived in Sacramento from 1851 until the time of his death 49 years later.

A brief biography about William Coleman, in the 1890 book, "An Illustrated History of Sacramento County, California," notes: "He is a public-spirited citizen, of generous impulses taking a practical and leading part in all matters conducive to the public welfare, and a large contributor to all worthy and deserving causes.

"Personally, he is one of the most large-hearted, jovial and companionable of men, a favorite with all classes of the community, ranking justly as one of our most worthy, as well as most representative, men."

An article in the Aug. 4, 1923 edition of The Sacramento Bee includes the following words: "City Manager H.C. Bottorff today entered into a tentative contract for the Coleman memorial with Ralph Stackpole, noted sculptor, who returned recently from Paris, France, and is here to design the Swanston memorial fountain to be constructed in the William Land Park at a cost of $10,000."

Stackpole was awarded the contract for the Coleman fountain in January 1924.

That fountain, which was unveiled and dedicated on Feb. 26, 1927, features the images of three women, who represent the Sacramento, American and Feather rivers.

Furthermore, Stackpole likened the fountain's pool of water to the Sacramento Valley.

In 1922, Stackpole became friends with the famous Mexican muralist Diego Rivera (1886-1957), who he would bring to San Francisco eight years later. Rivera was married to another famous Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo (1907-1954).

Stackpole spent the final two decades of his life residing in Chauriat, France. He died at the age of 88 on Dec. 13, 1973.

Marwick, who also serves as the preservation chair of the Sacramento Art Deco Society, spoke to this paper last week about Stackpole's local artistic works.

He referred to the Swanston and Coleman fountains as "important additions to the public fabric of Sacramento."

"It's easy to forget, as the decades go forward, the different art pieces that were created for the city," he said. "I'm just trying to bring attention that these (fountains) helped tell the story of Sacramento in wonderful ways.

"The Swanston (memorial) is associated with this family that came from the Midwest and was very successful in the cattle industry, and left a mark on Sacramento through their beef businesses.

"In the terms of (the Coleman fountain), I understand William Coleman was a successful banker and developer. His widow left that fountain as a memory (of him)."

On the same topic – water – Marwick hopes that the city will turn the Coleman fountain's water on, noting that the fountain has not been in operation for possibly two years, because of concerns about the overusage of water by public entities, and general activities in the park.

"Our thought, the (Sacramento Art) Deco Society, is that it is a shame that the water can't run, because the fountain just has a different kind of vibrancy when the water is running," he said.

"In addition, the fountain has a terrific story, because it is not only an honor to William Coleman, who it is dedicated after, but it was also designed in such a way to honor the new filtration system for the city of Sacramento that was dedicated

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Landmark

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design review process, prior to the granting of any entitlements, thereby protecting the historic resource, which would be considered part of the environment."

In the same report, the zoo structures are referred to as "a fine example of the Googie (architectural) style developed out of mid-century modern architecture."

The Sacramento-based architectural firm, Rickey & Brooks, was commissioned to design these structures, which feature a hyperbolic paraboloid roof design. The project was completed in 1961.

In providing background to the nomination, Sean de Courcy, the city's preservation director, noted that a 2011 survey of historic resources at William Land Park – conducted by the Sacramento-based architectural and engineering firm, Mead & Hunt – represented the first time that the zoo's entrance structures were identified as potential historic resources.

He added that the nonprofit organization, Sacramento Modern, later sponsored an additional evaluation of the zoo's entrance structures by Mead & Hunt.

"(Sacramento Modern) prepared a National Register (of Historic Places) nomination for these structures, which has formed the basis for this local nomination," de Courcy said.

Prior to voting in favor of the Sacramento Register designation for the zoo's entrance structures, Sacramento City Council Member Katie Valenzuela expressed her support.

"The zoo is beloved for many a reason and anybody who's been on Land Park Drive knows that entrance and knows what that entrance looks like," she said. "It is so much a part of Land Park that having this marked as (a) historic resource makes just all the sense in the world," she said.



'Please adopt me'

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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Photo courtesy of Front Street Animal Shelter

Charcoal is a 5-year-old, male, black, Labrador retriever mix. His animal identification number is A653277.



UK's Loving Earth Project coming to Sacramento, Carmichael this spring

Schedule to include exhibit at St. Anthony Church

An exhibition of artwork from around the world will be on display in Sacramento in April.

The Quaker Arts Network has invited people to create 12-inch by 12-inch fabric panels that express their love and concern for a world endangered by environmental change.

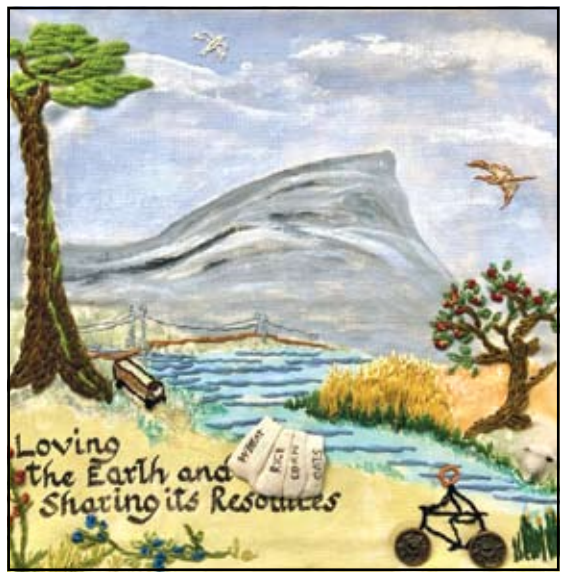
The United Kingdom's Loving Earth Project has helped people of all ages engage creatively and constructively with climate change issues without becoming overwhelmed. The exhibit also shares positive examples of how people are taking action.

This project has grown to include more than 400 panels. It is now on tour in communities around the world and was listed as one of the "best cultural events in Scotland for COP26" – the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The community is invited to explore some of the issues and how to reduce threats to the world.

Selected panels from the Loving Earth Project will be on display in Sacramento and Carmichael in April in recognition of Earth Day, and then move on to locations in Fresno and Chico.





Photos courtesy of Cindy Fowler

The traveling event features fabric panels designed to express love and concern for a world endangered by environmental change.

Sacramento exhibit calendar

April 1-30

• Sacramento Municipal Utilities District Museum of Science and Curiosity, 400 Jibboom St. — This is a venue with interactive exhibits for children of all ages. The panels will hang in the main corridor leading to the museum's nature and environment wing.

• Atrium 916, 1020 Front St. – This creative innovation center for sustainability in Old Sacramento offers a circular economy marketplace for Sacramento-made products. Visitors can enjoy the display and have time to respond with drawings or poems to add to the exhibit.

• Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento, 2425 Sierra Blvd. – Panels will be on display in the main hall.

April 15-16

• Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael – Panels will be accompanied by weekend educational programming and activities for children.

• St. Anthony Church, 660 Florin Road – A smaller traveling exhibit will be on display before and after Masses.

April 23

• Sacramento Earth Day 2023 – A full day of activities and exhibits in Southside Park at 2115 6th St.

Further information about the Loving Earth Project can be obtained through the website, www.LovingEarth-Project.uk. For additional details about related planned activities for Sacramento and Carmichael, visit the event's individual location websites.

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Swanston

Continued from page 5

around the same time.

"(That system's beginning marked) the first time Sacramento had filtered water from the three rivers that feed Sacramento, predominantly, which are the Feather, the Sacramento and the American, and that's why there are three female figures on the Coleman fountain representing the rivers that feed Sacramento."

Furthermore, in bequeathing the funds for the fountain through her will, Florence Coleman wrote that the fountain "should be in the form of a drinking fountain for thirsty birds and beasts."

Marwick also desires that arrangements be made for regular maintenance of both the Swanston and Coleman fountains.



Ralph Stackpole, right, is pictured with another famous artist, his good friend, Diego Rivera.

"There has to be some thoughtful reflection on how to maintain these public art pieces," he said.

Marwick also spoke about the Stackpole mural, which was completed in the foyer of the Sacramento Junior College – now Sacramento City College – auditorium in 1937.

"At City College, we have this mural from the 1930s, the New Deal era," he said. "That particular mural honors education at City College and, in particular, the professions that were important in Sacramento Valley at that time, which included aviation, development of electrical plants, mining, agriculture, and that is all reflected in the mural."

Marwick also commented on the Stackpole-created bas relief decoration that once hung in front of the Sacramento Bee-owned KFBK radio station building at 708 I St. That structure was built in 1936.

"One of the research projects, personally I've been doing, is trying to determine if that (bas) relief was saved by anyone," he said.

The old 7th and I streets KFBK building, as well as the structures that housed The Bee and offices of the McClatchy Broadcasting Co. and McClatchy Newspapers at 7th and I streets were sold in 1955, and those buildings were demolished in preparation for the construction of a parking lot.

KFBK began operating in its then-newly-built headquarters at 21st and Q streets in 1957.

Although he does not know the whereabouts of the bas relief decoration, Marwick mentioned that he would be surprised if it was not preserved when the 7th and I streets buildings were razed.

With this December marking the 50th anniversary of Stackpole's death, the current efforts to preserve his existing artistic works in this capital city can be considered a very timely endeavor.



Shown in 1938, Ralph Stackpole works on a model of his statue of the mythical, Pacifica, which would grace the Court of Pacifica on Treasure Island for the Golden Gate International Exposition.

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Skip's Music founder's legacy to continue at new location

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com



Photo courtesy of Melanie Reibin

The future Skip's Music location at 4614 Madison Ave. is currently being renovated in preparation for its opening.

In a fitting tribute to its late founder, Skip's Music will fulfill his dream when it opens its new location in a 31,000-square-foot former Office Depot building at 4614 Madison Ave.

Skip's Music was founded in 1973 in a shopping center on Florin Road by Skip Maggiora, who lost his long battle with kidney disease on Feb. 23. That store closed in 1980 and the business has operated its main store at 2740 Auburn Blvd. since 1979.

With plans to relocate all of the business's operations under one roof, Skip's Music, this week, began closing its Elk Grove store, which opened in 2005.

The founder's son, Creed Maggiora, told this paper that while the soft opening for the new store is planned for sometime in May, it has not been determined what month its grand opening will be held.

"We're going to have a separate party there (later), a grand opening," he said. "We're not sure (when). It's not mapped out yet, so stay tuned."

The new, Madison Avenue store will include retail sales, private lesson rooms, repair services, equipment rental and a much-anticipated museum of Skip's extensive, private collection of rare and notable instruments.

Those instruments include the first manufactured electric guitar, from the 1930s, a guitar played by B.B. King from 1961 to 1967, a prototype of guitarist Eddie Van Halen's Kramer guitar, and a collection of guitars of the western swing musician Billie "Tiny" Moore.

Creed mentioned that the museum portion of the building will likely not be completed by the time the new store opens.

"His museum is going to probably be delayed a little while longer until we can really put some finish polish on it and build all these displays," he said. "There's a bunch of local musicians he wanted to build tributes to in that museum besides showing his collection. So, (there is) a lot to do in there."

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Skip Maggiora made indelible impact on local music world

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

Arthur "Skip" Maggiora, founder of Skip's Music, died at the age of 75 on Feb. 23, and in his passing he left an immeasurable legacy as a legend of the local music world.

Skip, who was born and raised in the Arden area, dedicated his life to his greatest passion: music.

While his diversified involvement in music included performing in rock bands, teaching guitar lessons and promoting live music concerts, he is most known as the man who founded Skip's Music, which has been providing new and used musical equipment, rentals, lessons and repairs in Sacramento since June 16, 1973.

Skip's son, Creed, told this paper that his father's early involvement in music led to his job at Southgate Music Center at 4516 Florin Road in the Southgate Shopping Center.

"He worked at Southgate Music (Center) out there, too, as a guitar teacher and salesman," said Creed, who has been on the payroll of Skip's Music since 1984. "The gentleman that owned that store, John Collette, didn't make a lot of business savvy deals. He wasn't too business smart, and Skip realized that he didn't really know how to run a business. And Skip thought he could do a better job, so he went down the street and opened up his own store."

It was with that decision that Skip's Music debuted at its original location at 2324 Florin Road, next to the old Alpine Alley bowling alley, in south Sacramento.

Mick Martin, a well-known local musician and radio show host, told this paper that he became familiar with that store prior to its opening, noting that he helped Skip move into that 900-square-foot business space.

"I just got a call from a (band mate) named Robbie Smith," he said. "He told me that Skip was setting up a music store on Florin Road. And so, I drove out there and I brought in boxes. I think I was there about three, four hours. We were putting the stuff that he had ordered in the store.

"Musicians are family, and its best people in the music (scene) locally in Sacramento, maybe more than other people, maybe less (in) other cities, we get together and we help each other. And that certainly was the way it was back in 1973. So, I got the call and I went down there and helped. Didn't think anything more of it, and Robbie and I went out to practice our band."

Nearly a half-century later, Martin finds it interesting that he played a role in the beginning of Skip's Music.

"It was ironic that I was there at the birth of the music store," he said.

In pondering the first location of Skip's Music, Martin believes that Skip made a wise decision to open that shop within the Florin Square Shopping Center.

"The teen centers were all in the south area, so there was a concentration of music activity in the south area," he said. "So, it only made sense to me that Skip opened up there the first time."

As a sign of his determination to succeed, Skip began operating his music store as a seven-days-per-week operation, and he did so as a solo venture for the business's initial six months.



Photos courtesy of Skip's Music

Skip Maggiora raises a glass during a celebratory moment.

During that time, Skip served as owner, salesman, guitar instructor, bookkeeper, repairman, purchaser and janitor.

Skip's Music was serving as a site for people to purchase tickets to local concerts as early as 1975. Other ticket vending sites in Sacramento at the time included Southgate Music Center and multiple Tower Records locations.

By September 1975, the store was experiencing insufficient space issues, and subsequently began running advertisements with the words, "Running out of room. All used amps must go."

Further evidence of the increased inventory at Skip's Music is a November 1975 advertisement that notes that the store then had the largest selection of Fender guitars in Sacramento.

The inventory also included Gibson and Yamaha guitars, Ludwig, Pearl and Slingerland drum sets, Fender, Marshall, Sunn, Peavey, Roland, Kustom and Ampeg amplifiers, Hammond organs, Moog, Korg and ARP synthesizers, Peavey public-address systems, and Reynold's trumpets.

Skip's decision to offer trumpets for sale in his store was quite fitting, considering that he traded in his elementary school trumpet for a guitar.

Skip, who graduated from Encina High School in 1965 and later majored in engineering at Sacramento State College – today's California State University, Sacramento – would experience early success as a musician and concert promoter.

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Skip's Music

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As a promoter, he brought both The Jimi Hendrix Experience and Big Brother and the Holding Company, featuring Janis Joplin, to Sacramento.

Among his Sacramento bands was The Creators, who opened for Hendrix and his band at a concert held in the men's gymnasium at Sacramento State College on Feb. 8, 1968.

Melanie Reibin, who was Skip's significant partner for the past seven years, told this paper that Skip's band, Charlotte the Harlot, was discovered by the road manager of guitarist Johnny Winter in 1969, and made their way to New York, where they stayed at Winter's estate.

"Skip has been gloating about this forever; they were the first theatrical band, way before KISS," she said. "They were going to come out and they were going to have a bed and there was going to be theatrics and makeup and the whole bit," she said.

Although the band was never signed, its members had several memorable adventures during their time in New York.

Those adventures included working as stage crew members for Winter's band at the historic Woodstock Music & Art Fair.

Because the band, Led Zeppelin, was also staying at Winter's estate, Skip was in the position to be asked to listen to a demo recording of the upcoming album, "Led Zeppelin II," to see what he thought about it.

Reibin noted that Skip was very impressed with the album.

"He put a blanket over his head with the headphones on, lit up the doobie, joint, smoking it and listening to (the album), and he came out and he goes, 'Oh my God, this is fat, this is awesome.'"

The album was released in the United States on Oct. 22, 1969.

Back in California, Skip promoted concerts at Kings Beach Bowl on Lake Tahoe's north shore for bands such as The Doors, the Grateful Dead, Buffalo Springfield, Canned Heat, and Country Joe and the Fish.

After establishing Skip's Music, Skip presented at least one free, live music show at his store's original location: an April 30, 1977 performance by jazz musician Emmett Chapman (1936-2021), inventor of the Chapman Stick musical instrument, and percussionist Stan Lunetta (1937-2016).

Skip opened his "north area" Skip's Music store in a two-story, 14,000-square-foot building at 2740 Auburn Blvd. on Dec. 15, 1979, and promised the "most fantastic musical instrument values ever seen in Sacramento." The "south area" store closed three years later.

Martin praised Skip's Auburn Boulevard store as the largest music store he had ever seen in Sacramento, and a "one-stop dream shop" for musicians.

"Skip's Music was about state of the art during the time," he said. "I mean, everything was going on in that building all the time, everywhere all the time. And he actually acquired the buildings next door for the Weekend Warriors (performance program). To me, Skip's Music was what Tower Records was to the mall record store that only had the hits of the day.

"When I needed an F-sharp harmonica, I could go to Skip's Music, and if they didn't have it, they would get it for me. And that wasn't always true of retail stores when it came to that kind of specialty thing. I've never heard anybody complain that they couldn't get what they needed at Skip's Music."

The history of Skip's Music also includes its Modesto store, which operated from 1985 to 2015 (with the exception of 1996 to 1997 due to the fire that destroyed the original building), and the Elk Grove store, which opened in 2005 and began closing last week.

Also significant in the business's history are the Stairway to Stardom summer music program for kids, Skip's Music's own newspaper, Valley Music News, and Skip's Music & Sound Expo, which became recognized as the nation's largest consumer music show.



Skip Maggiora, bottom center, is pictured with some of his 1960s bandmates.

Additionally noteworthy is that Skip was a founding member of The Alliance of Independent Music Merchants.

Mike Snyder, Skip's vice president of operations, spoke about Skip's approach to running his business.

"As a business person, (he) carefully cared for all of the relationships that he had inside of business," he said. "He had a very old-school approach to business;

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Skip's Music

Continued from page 11

you know, living up to his end of deals and things of that nature. At the same time, he was a very shrewd businessman, but (he) did it in a way that was classy."

Snyder added that Skip's business approach extended well beyond making sales.

"That's always been his vision, and I'm sure that's the legacy he would like to see carried on," he said.

And it is no secret that Skip was appreciated by a countless number of musicians throughout the years, Martin noted.

"You can talk to whoever you want, even talk to Roger Smith of (the band) Tower of Power, or Frank Hannon of (the band) Tesla," he said. "He touched all of our lives. If you played music, inevitably you ended up at Skip's Music."

A celebration of Skip's life will be scheduled in the coming weeks. His loved ones ask that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.



Arden area native Arthur 'Skip' Maggiora founded Skip's Music in 1973.



Skip Maggiora's band, The Creators, are featured on this vintage advertisement for a concert at Kings Beach Bowl on Lake Tahoe's north shore.



Skip Maggiora grew up in the Arden area and ultimately built his legacy as the owner of Skip's Music.



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Remembering former Kings executive Greg 'Dutch' Van Dusen

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com



Photo courtesy on Van Dusen family

Greg "Dutch" Van Dusen, who died on Feb. 21, played a role in the negotiations to purchase the NBA franchise that would become the Sacramento Kings. He served as the first manager of ARCO Arena, and was known for his expertise in public relations.

A phone call came into the Pocket News on Feb. 22, with the news that a significant figure in Sacramento Kings and ARCO Arena history had died: Greg "Dutch" Van Dusen.

The man who called was Gregg Lukenbill, one of the six Sacramento businessmen who purchased the National Basketball Association franchise, the Kansas City Kings, in 1983. He is also the owner of the historic Pocket structure that houses The Trap bar.

In 1985, Lukenbill and his partners moved the team to California's capital city, marking the beginning of the Sacramento Kings.

Heading the team's 10,333-seat temporary arena, ARCO Arena, in North Natomas, as vice president and general manager was Van Dusen. He was also the original manager of the second North Natomas ARCO Arena, a 17,317-seat venue that opened in 1988 and was replaced by downtown Sacramento's Golden 1 Center in 2016.

The second North Natomas facility – the "permanent arena" – was last known as Sleep Train Arena. It was demolished last year in preparation for the construction of California Northstate University's new medical campus, which will feature a 13-story teaching hospital.

Lukenbill's phone call was brief, given that he was preparing for a Sacramento history-related speech he would be presenting that evening. He currently serves as vice president of the Sacramento Historical Society.

The following day, Lukenbill dedicated time to speaking to this paper about Van Dusen, a 1968 Sacramento High School graduate and former California State University, Sacramento student who died at the age of 72 on Feb. 21.

Lukenbill recalled meeting Van Dusen, who had been involved with the Sacramento Solons Triple-A baseball team and the Sacramento Gold professional soccer team. The latter team won the American Soccer League championship in 1979.

"The guy who introduced us was (Sacramento Bee sports columnist) Bill Conlin," he said. "So, we ended up (meeting) in 1979.

"(Van Dusen) had a sports background with the Solons, and a huge stadium and sports background with the Sacramento Gold. So, he was looking for a place to land in the sports business, and I was about the only sports scene going at that point."

Lukenbill hired Van Dusen, who would play a significant role with the team in both Kansas City and Sacramento. His work included playing a role in the negotiations to purchase the Kings and assisting in their relocation to Sacramento.

As for Van Dusen's legacy, Lukenbill noted that he should be remembered as "a guy that was trying to raise the bar on Sacramento sports from minor league to major league."

And his dream became a reality through his involvement with the Kings, which became Sacramento's first major-league sports team in 1985.

Rick Benner, who served as the Kings' president from 1989 to 1999, praised Van Dusen for his work with the Kings.

"(Van Dusen) was like Gregg's voice," he said. "He was his (public relations) guy. He was good at getting the word out and dealing with people. He was a good public speaker. Those were the types of things that he really excelled at.

"I think probably his forte was if you needed to get the word out or if you needed to have positive relationships with the media, he was a good person to do that. He could get people excited in the media."

Benner also referred to Van Dusen's strong desire to make Sacramento more of a sports city.

"He was someone who really loved Sacramento, and was a big advocate of Sacramento, and of bringing sports and entertainment to Sacramento," he said.

Although neither Lukenbill nor Benner knew the cause of Van Dusen's death, they both told this paper that he had been experiencing some health issues.

Van Dusen had three sons, Adam, Brett and Kyle, as well as four grandchildren. His last place of residence was in Rocklin.

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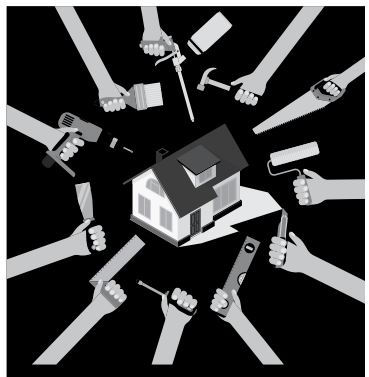
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