March 23, 2023

Land Park News

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Broadway business operators, county health officer speak about current status of COVID-19

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Camellia society president wins 'Outstanding Flower of the Show' award at Sacramento Camellia Show

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

Julie Vierra won the top award – "Outstanding Flower of the Show" – at the 99th annual Sacramento Camellia Show, which was held at the Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 building on Riverside Boulevard during the first weekend in March.

Her winning bloom in this year's local show was a Frank Houser Variegated, a reticulata hybrid that was originated in Georgia in 1990, according to information provided by the American Camellia Society.

Vierra, who also happens to serve as president of the Camellia Society of Sacramento, told this paper that she is currently on a very fortunate winning streak.

"I was thrilled beyond belief (to win the top award at the Sacramento show)," she said. "I won (the same award the previous) week down in Redwood City. And that was the first (Outstanding) Flower of the Show I've won. I've been a member (of the local camellia society) for 40 years. Patience. I just kept plugging along and I won again, and when they announced my name, I went crazy."

Vierra added that winning the top award at a camellia show was one of her "bucket list" goals.

"That was one thing I wanted to do before I passed away was win (Outstanding) Flower of the Show, and I won two in two weeks, and I'm thrilled to death."



Photos by Lance Armstrong

Julie Vierra, president of the Camellia Society of Sacramento, holds her winning camellia bloom at the 99th annual Camellia Show at Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 on March 4. The bloom won "Outstanding Flower of the Show," which is the show's top award.

Wanting to give credit where credit is due, Vierra acknowledged her mentor, Carmichael resident Don Lesmeister, who has won

See CAMELLIA on page 6



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Broadway business operators, county health officer speak about current status of COVID-19

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

Several Broadway business operators shared their thoughts on the current status of COVID-19 with the Land Park News on March 11 – the three-year anniversary of the World Health Organization's declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic.

Eleven days earlier, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors voted to end the local COVID-19 state of emergency. That decision aligned with California's termination of its COVID-19 state of emergency, which also ended on Feb. 28.

Sacramento County Public Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye explained the significance of the county's order.

"Ending the local emergency declaration means (Sacramento County) Public Health has transitioned from an emergency response to routine monitoring of COVID(-19), as we do with other infectious diseases," she said.

Although the state and county COVID-19 state of emergencies were rescinded, the pandemic continues, Kasirye told this paper last week.

"The decision to extend or end a pandemic status for an infectious disease is made by the World Health Organization (WHO)," she said.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's director-general, mentioned last September that the end of the pandemic is "in sight."

"We have never been in a better position to end the pandemic," he said during a news briefing in Geneva. "We are not there yet, but the end is in sight."

Ghebreyesus added that it is necessary to "seize this opportunity."

"A marathon runner does not stop when the finish line comes into view," he said. "She runs harder, with all the energy she has left. So must we. We can see the finish line. We're in a winning position, but now is the worst time to stop running."

In addition to the state and

See COVID-19 on page 4



Photos by Lance Armstrong

While wearing a mask, Harrison Daly, a manager at The Avid Reader, stands behind a Plexiglas barrier inside this bookstore at 1945 Broadway.



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COVID-19

Continued from page 3

county's actions to end their COVID-19 state of emergencies, the California Department of Public Health announced on March 3 that beginning on April 3, masks will no longer be required in indoor high-risk and health care settings. Those places include health care, long-term care, and correctional facilities, as well as homeless, emergency, and warming and cooling centers.

During this paper's March 11 visit to various Broadway businesses, Mark Jefcoat, who owns P&M Tool Center with his wife, Debra, spoke about his current thoughts on COVID-19.

"It's so confusing," he said. "There are so many (opinions). Every person has got a different thing to say about it. We quit wearing masks in here a long time ago. Nobody down here is wearing them."

Debra noted that while Joe Shook, the business's manager, has never been infected with the COVID-19 virus, she and Mark were not so fortunate, despite getting all of their vaccination shots.

"We went for our fourth shot (on Friday, Dec. 2, 2022), and I (later) woke up at 4 (o'clock) in the morning, sicker than I've ever, ever been," she said. "Mark was OK until Sunday night. I tested negative a couple days later, but I was really sick. Both of us got it right after the shot. We're suspicious (that those shots gave us the virus)."

Thinking back on the early part of the pandemic, Mark recalled his decision to temporarily close his business.

"When the general order was given by the governor to close everybody, we closed that day," he said. "I could have called myself an essential business, but my concern was all the homeless down here. I thought that COVID(-19) was going to wipe them out, and I thought they would be all infected. I was wrong.

"Anyway, for two months, we stayed closed, and then after that, we opened up again and the business that we lost came back within a few months."

Mark added that a key factor in his business's survival was that he was operating it debt-free.

"In small business, stay the hell out of debt (in case) something like (COVID-19) comes along," he said. "Everything in here is paid for, so I had no worries."

Silvia Alvarado, owner of Sancho's Mariscos & Mexican Food restaurant, which opened on March 1 in the old Pancho's Cocina Mexicana restaurant location at 2026 Broadway, mentioned that she likes that most people are much more comfortable in their lives than they were during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"People, they're not afraid, they're not scared like before," she said. "It's more calm. Yeah, I think so. We can't live being afraid of everything. I really believe in that. So, if God is going to take me today, he's going to take me no matter what."

Alvarado recalled teaching her children to live responsibly during the pandemic.

"I told my kids, don't panic, just wash your hands (after) every time you go out and touch everything, and wear your mask over your (nose and mouth)," she said. "Be responsible and don't be panicked either."

Harrison Daly, a manager at The Avid Reader, told this paper that while most local businesses have ended their employee mask-wearing policies, this bookstore continues to uphold their policy.

"Ultimately, (this policy is) for the health of our patrons, most of whom are disproportionately elder(ly)," he said. "So, we take all that into consideration. We should still treat it seriously. COVID(-19) hasn't gone away, and, of course, we still need to figure out ways to live with it.

"But for today, for the benefit of our patrons, staff is required to wear masks. Patrons are encouraged to wear masks. It's still like a weird, liminal phase we're in, so we don't know what the future will look like; hopefully a maskless one. But we're taking things one step at a time."



Silvia Alvarado, owner of Sancho's Mariscos & Mexican Food restaurant at 2026 Broadway, mentioned that she likes that most people are much more comfortable in their lives than they were during the height of COVID-19.



P&M Tool Center owners Mark and Debra Jefcoat were among the local small business owners who managed to survive the economic challenges they faced due to temporarily closing their business during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sacramento County spokesperson provides COVID-19 update

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

With the state and county's recent termination of their COVID-19 state of emergency declarations, Samantha Mott, a Sacramento County health department spokesperson, provided an update regarding COVID-19 in this county.

In an interview with this paper, Mott recognized the end of the county's COVID-19 state of emergency.

"It coincides with the ending of the state emergency declaration, and in anticipation of the federal government ending their emergency declaration (on May 11), as well," she said.

"Over the last six months or so, probably longer than that, actually, we have really been following state guidelines. We have not had a public health order in place for some time now. We've been following state public health orders."

To show the progress that Sacramento County experienced with COVID-19 in the past year, Mott noted that on March 1, 2022, the seven-day average COVID-19 case rate in the county was 9.5 people per every 100,000 residents, compared to the latest March 1 update, which shows a case rate of 7.6 per 100,000.

"So, our case rate has gone down a bit compared to last year," she said. "And the reality is that there are vaccines available now, there are boosters available now. I think folks are far more educated around how to protect themselves from (COVID-19).

"You know, the ending of the public health emergency doesn't mean that COVID(-19) is going away. It simply means that (Sacramento County) Public Health is now monitoring COVID-19 the way they do with other infectious diseases. We, for example, monitor flu every year. Every year, it's a different strand of flu."

Mott additionally spoke about the topic of masks.

"We currently, locally, do not have any masking orders in place," she said. "We have been following the state guidelines. I believe they still have some masking orders for specific situations in place at a state level."

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced on March 3 that beginning on April 3, masks would no longer be required in indoor high-risk and health care settings.

However, regardless of COVID-19 community levels, CDPH recommends:

Wearing a mask around others if you have respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, a runny nose and/or a sore throat; the consideration of wearing a mask in indoor areas of public transportation, such as in airplanes, trains, buses and ferries, and transportation hubs, such as airports, stations and seaports; and wearing a mask if you have had significant exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Mott mentioned that Sacramento County Public Health encourages people to continue taking steps to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.

"That includes staying up to date on vaccinations, testing for COVID-19, if they have symptoms, and staying in contact with health care providers about treatments, if you do test positive for COVID-19," she said.

"Just a reminder, vulnerable people, including those who are at greater risk for severe illness, should consider wearing a mask indoor(s) and (in) public places."

As for Sacramento County's COVID-19 dashboard reports, Mott noted that with the ending of the county's state of emergency, that dashboard will no longer be updated. The final update was released on March 1.

"Folks can find out the most up-to-date information – post-March 1 – on the California Department of Public Health('s) 'Tracking COVID-19 in California' dashboard," she said.

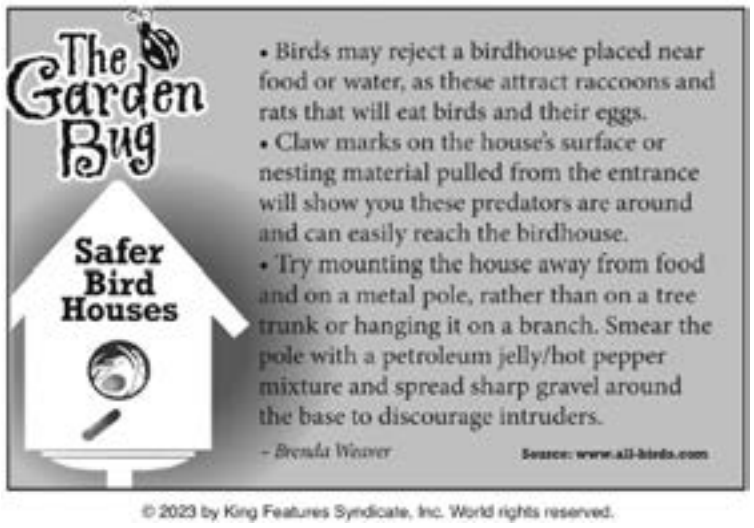
Available through this online resource is COVID-19-related data for each of California's 58 counties, as well combined information for the entire state.

The link for the state's online dashboard is www.COVID19.ca.gov/State-Dashboard.

Mott also provided details about COVID-19 testing sites, mentioning that underutilized state-funded testing sites would begin to wind down their operations in the coming months.

"It will depend on the utilization, so some of them will stay open for some time," she said. "But if they're being underutilized, the state has indicated that they will wind down operations of some of those testing sites."

According to the county's website, as of March 23, no dates for such closures had been announced.



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Camellia blooms are aligned on a display table at the show on March 4.



This Sacramento Camellia Show entry features five award-winning camellias, which were entered in the competition by Don and Mary Bergamini.

Camellia

Continued from page 2

many top awards at camellia shows.

"Don is one of my mentors and he taught me a lot," she said. "And so, I think because of me winning, he feels good about it, because he helped me get where I am."

Altogether, it has been a very good year for Vierra, as well as her daughter, Megan, who won this year's Sacramento Camellia Show button contest. Every year, artwork for the button is created to represent the show for that year, and copies of the button are sold at the show.

Vierra noted that this year's show was affected by less than desirable camellia-growing weather.

"The weather has been horrible, and we are so thrilled to get as many camellias as we did this year," she said.

Knowing how to care for camellias in such weather is important to a grower's success, Vierra noted.

"When it's freezing weather, if you have any in containers, you need to make sure they're watered well," she said. "Otherwise, if they dry out, the freeze will kill them or really hurt them."

Vierra mentioned that quality soil can be very beneficial for a camellia plant's growth.

"Sandy loam soil (is good for the plants)," she said. "I live in West (Sacramento), and the weeds are easy to pull, because it's not clay. And camellias absolutely love sandy loam. So, that's a lot of what they use in their potting containers. They put a lot of sand in them. So, it's a good luck thing for me."

Vierra added that she also had luck on her side when it came to her top award-winning bloom.

"I have one plant of it and it's a really ugly plant," she said. "And this was the only bloom on it. So, it was bent down all week and I waited until Friday night and I pulled it up, and I looked at it and I go, 'Oh, this is pretty nice.'"

Vierra also won several other Sacramento show awards, including an award for a tray of 11 Pink Perfection camellias.



The artwork for this year's Sacramento Camellia Show button was created by Megan Vierra, daughter of "Outstanding Flower of the Show" winner Julie Vierra.



UK's Loving Earth Project coming to Sacramento, Carmichael in April

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.





Photos courtesy of Cindy Fowler

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

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.

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.LovingEarthProject.uk. For additional details about related planned activities for Sacramento and Carmichael, visit the event's individual location websites.

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.

Participants of the Princess ½-Mile Fun Run 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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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.

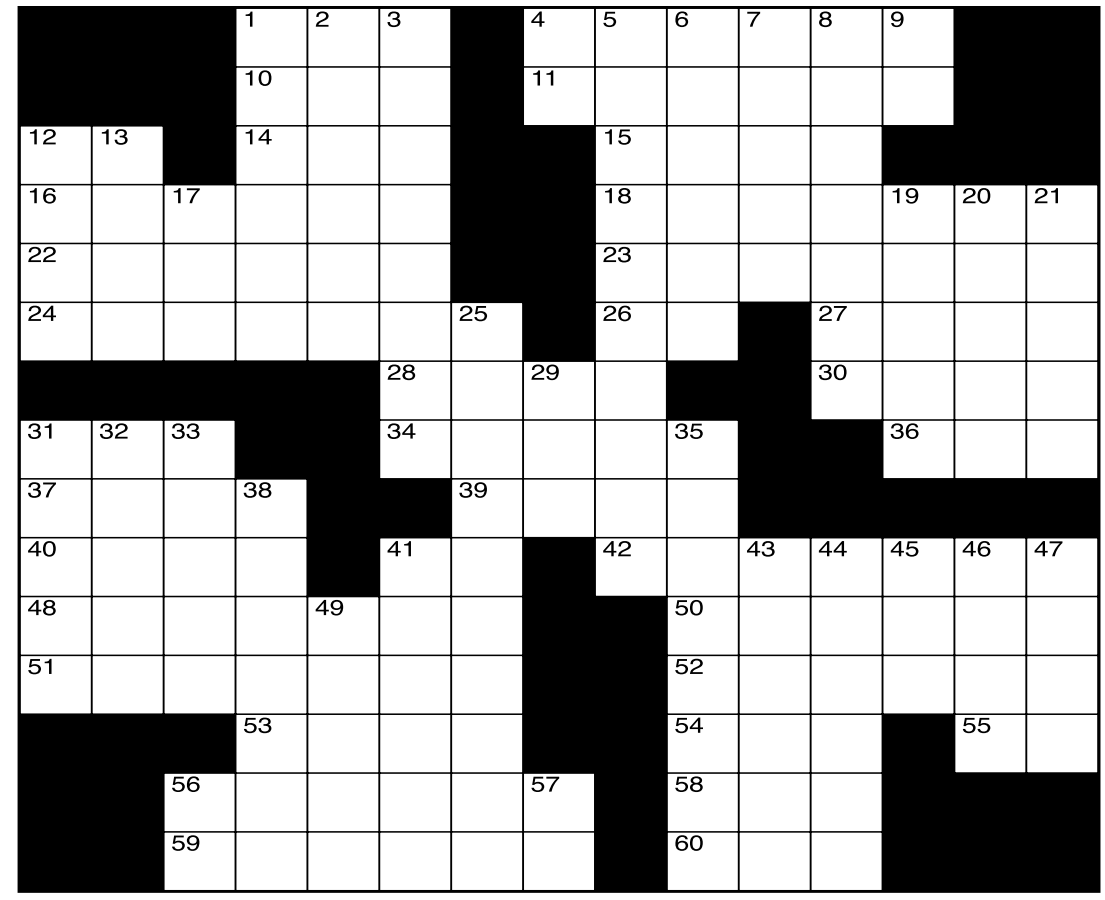
On Saturday, April 22, join thousands of walkers at William Land Park as we lace up our shoes and leash up our pups for Doggy Dash, our largest fundraiser of the year and an opportunity to celebrate the amazing commitment of our community to healthy, happy and unconditional relationships between dogs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

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS
1. Belonging to a thing
4. Pass or go by
10. Partner to cheese
11. Subjects
12. U.S. State (abbr.)
14. Bits per inch
15. Forest-dwelling deer
16. Illinois city
18. A salt or ester of acetic acid
22. Wholly unharmed
23. Cuddled
24. Bane
26. Global investment bank (abbr.)
27. Oh my gosh!
28. Arrive
30. Famed Spanish artist
31. Home of "Frontline"
34. Group of quill feathers
36. Keyboard key
37. Army training group
39. Detail
40. Pole with flat blade
41. Football play
42. Makes unhappy
48. Island in Hawaii
50. Back in business
51. Of an individual
52. Painful chest condition
53. Tropical American monkey
54. Matchstick game
55. For instance
56. Even again
58. Popular beverage
59. Evaluate
60. Time units (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN
1. Stain one's hands
2. Nocturnal hoofed animals
3. Back condition
4. Popular movie alien
5. City of Angels
6. Peaks
7. Infantry weapons
8. Left
9. Atomic #99
12. Told a good yarn
13. Vale
17. Resistance unit
19. Aquatic plant
20. Bluish greens
21. About some Norse poems
25. Reinforces
29. Egyptian mythological goddess
31. Supportive material
32. Subatomic particle
33. Expired bread
35. Cereal grain
38. Goes against
41. Walkie __
43. One who does not accept
44. Beliefs
45. Indicates near
46. Brazilian NBA star
47. Grab quickly
49. Romantic poet
56. College dorm worker
57. Set of data



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

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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."

C.K. McClatchy's female water polo team achieves success

By Juliana Castro
C. K. McClatchy High School student



Editor's note: This article was made available through the Sacramento Student Reporter Program.

C.K McClatchy High School's girls' water polo team, in 2022, had one of its most successful seasons in seven years. The Lions went undefeated in Metro League play, won the Metro League tournament, and advanced to the second round of the California Interscholastic Federation Sac-Joaquin section playoffs.

The key to a strong team, water polo coach Xanthe Plescia said, "(is) many of these athletes spent some time in the offseason playing polo on a club team. There are only so many improvements you can make during the regular season, so any time spent in the offseason playing has shown to help our success significantly."

The team was led by its two captains, Kelly Gray and Karina Clark. Both players were on the team for four years.

"On the surface, captains are expected to lead warmups, set an example for the younger girls and communicate with the coach," Gray said. "On a deeper level, my and Karina's role as captains served as a huge responsibility for us.

"We were the voice of the girls on the team and had to use our positions to demonstrate how the team should act. I took this role more seriously than I thought I would, and I think it reflected positively upon the team."

Clark also spoke about her role as a captain.

"I would be someone that our team could look to, no matter what," she said. "I like to think that beyond just being captain, I am close friends with every single one of my teammates.

"As captain, I would bring our team up when we lost, and cheer with them when we won. Trying to bring a positive perspective even on the longest of tournament days or challenging games. Being captain is wearing two hats, one of leadership and one of friendship, both equally important."

Gray and Clark said that although water polo is not one of the more popular sports, they still felt supported.

"I think the biggest thing I noticed, being a female playing water polo, is that our sport often goes unnoticed, along with many others," Gray said. "People really only show (up) at football and basketball games. When my friends came to my games, their opinions were only positive.

"The game itself is so intense and fun to watch (that) there's never a dull moment. As for being a girl(s') team, I think we experienced similar attention and value as the boys."

Reaching the second round of section playoffs was the highlight of the season, because it hadn't been done since 2015.

"The best way I can describe it is electric," Clark said. "When the final buzzer went off in the first round and we knew we were moving on, everyone lit up and the energy was contagious. You could feel how happy and proud everyone was.

"Despite the second-round game not having the outcome we would have liked, we were all content knowing that we had fulfilled our goal of giving this season our all."

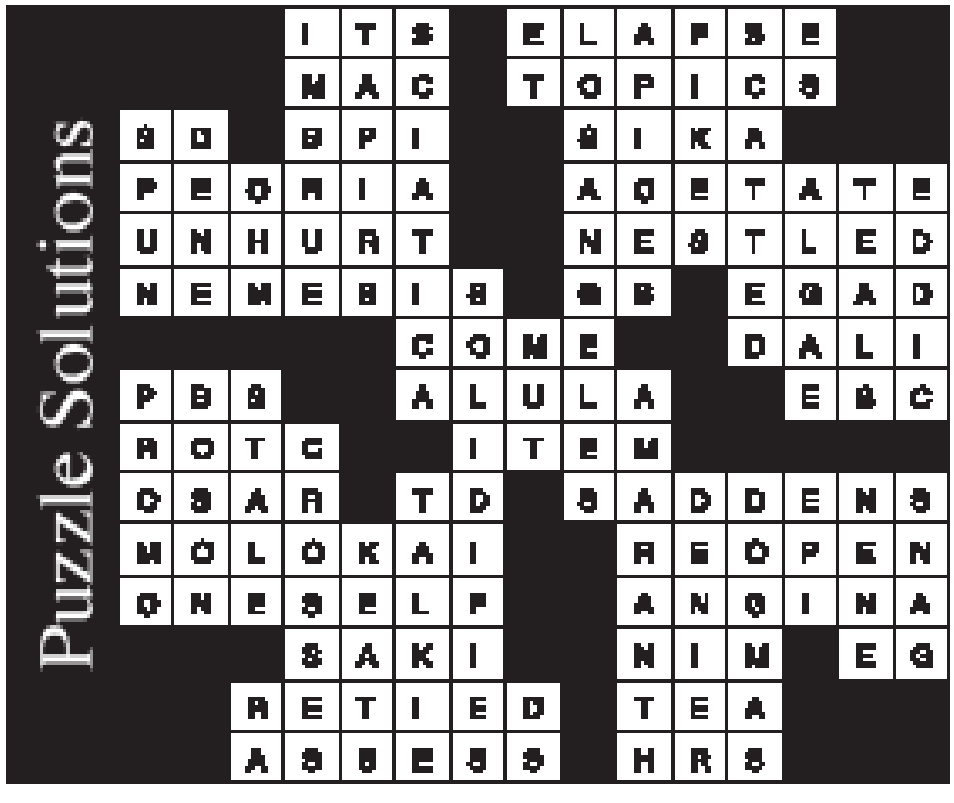
Gray pointed to some strategies the team used to be successful.

"I know from personal experience that when you get worked up about smaller things that happen in games, the outcome is never positive," she said. "As a team, we had to look past seeing just one thing in the pool. Whether that was one player or one mistake we made, success only came when we saw beyond that. We also worked as more of a unit and helped each other out in the pool."

Plescia said she tried to encourage her athletes to believe they had more potential than they realized. And with the encouragement from their coach, a lot of athletes had the opportunity to rise and fill important roles on the team, and it created a full lineup of athletes that could generate offense.

"Some advice I would give to someone wanting to play in the future would be, don't give up," Clark said. "While the sport might seem daunting at first, if you stick with it, you will find a sport that you love and make some of the best friends."

Gray added, "Don't knock it until you try it. Even if you do try it, still don't knock it. I came into water polo my freshman year knowing nothing, except how to swim. After the first practice, I begged my parents to let me quit, but they made me stick it out for a few days. After giving it a real shot, I stuck with it. If I had quit, I would've never recognized my talent in the sport."



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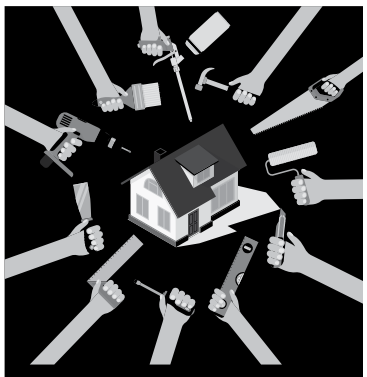
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