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Land Park News

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Land Park florist shop owner Marie Balshor celebrates 95th birthday

See Page 2

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Land Park florist shop owner Marie Balshor celebrates 95th birthday

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com



Photo by Lance Armstrong

Marie Balshor is pictured with her husband, Al, in front of their business, Balshor Florist, in 2010.

One of the Land Park area's longest term business owners, Marie Balshor, of Balshor Florist, recently celebrated a very special day at her business, as she was honored for her 95th birthday.

She was born near Dixon on March 26, 1928, and she would eventually open Balshor Florist with her husband, Al, in 1950. Al, who was a Sacramento native, died eight years ago.

Balshor Florist, which remains a family-run business, was originally located at 730 O St. It has been operated at 2661 Riverside Blvd. since 1972.

To celebrate Marie's milestone birthday, the Balshor Florist staff placed a birthday greeting sign to right of this business's entrance, had a birthday cake delivered, and invited anyone who happened to stop by the shop on that day to greet her and wish her a happy birthday.

The gathering, which was held on Saturday, March 25, was an informal affair, because Marie did not desire a large, festive party in her honor.

It was the same manner in which she approached the interview for this article, as she told the Land Park News that it is not her style to want to draw a lot of attention to herself.

"I'm just a plain folk, and that was Al's and my motto was we're just plain folk, and I guess I'll die being a plain folk," she said.

But with some mild arm twisting – in a figurative sense, of course – Marie agreed to share details about her 95 years of life for this article.

Marie, who is a longtime resident of South Land Park, said that she is proud of both her Portuguese culture and family.

She noted that, in 1911, her uncle, John Sequeira, became the first of her family members to immigrate to the United States from Portugal.

"I think I'm most proud of my uncle John," she said. "There were four brothers, and my uncle, John, was in the militia in Portugal. And I do not know where he traveled during his time (in the) service, but he got out of the service and decided there was something better than Portugal.

"Unbeknownst, he gets himself a passport – he didn't know how to read or write – and he gets himself to New York."

Marie mentioned that John's first job in America was working in a toilet factory.

"There weren't too many toilets at that time," she said. "So, you see, that was something new."

Marie added that after her uncle had his beard freeze during his first winter in New York, he decided there must be a better place for him to reside in the United States.

"He hops on a train, gets himself to Chicago," she said. "And, you know, Chicago is a

See BIRTHDAY on page 3

LAND PARK NEWS
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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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Birthday

Continued from page 2

hub. You've got to know where you're going or you can go the wrong way. So, somehow he got on the right train – yet he changed trains. And so, he got to Sacramento on the train."

After arriving in Sacramento, John headed north and obtained a job milking cows in Gridley.

By 1916, John saved enough money to pay for his brother, Joe, to travel from Portugal to meet him.

With John and Joe both working in California, they earned sufficient funds to pay for their other two brothers – Leonard and Marie's father, Salvador – Marie's mother, Maria, and Marie's brother, also named Leonard, to come to America.

The four brothers would establish their own dairy cattle business, which they named Sequeira Bros. They eventually settled with their business in an area between Dixon and Winters, where Marie was born.

Marie noted that the circumstances of her birth were unusual.

"It's time for me to be born (and it was raining) cats and dogs," she said. "How they got



Photo courtesy of Melissa Andrews

This birthday cake was served at an open house celebrating Marie Balshor's 95th birthday at Balshor Florist on March 25, a day prior to her actual birthday.

ahold of the doctor from Dixon, I do not know. He could get down the road, but he couldn't come down the lane. So, my father hitched up the horse and got him out to the house.

"And there (were) all these people in that shack (where the entire family lived), and that was in the afternoon. And at 9:05 in the morning on the 26th (of March), I was born."

Tragedy struck the Sequeira family when Marie was 3 years old. Her father died from double pneumonia, and her uncle and godfather, Joe, died three weeks later.

Unaware that at Salavador's deathbed, Marie's uncle, Leonard, promised him that he would take care of his family, Maria began packing her possessions to move back to Portugal with her children.

Upon encountering Maria preparing her belongings to leave the country, Leonard informed her of the promise he made to his brother. Maria and her children subsequently remained in America.

In 1946, Marie moved to the capital city to attend Sacramento Secretarial School at 1301 15th St. She later graduated from that institution, and at that time, she could type 105 words per minute in a one-minute test.

Marie mentioned that she met her future husband, Al, when he was 9 years old and she was 6 years old, as a result of the friendship of their mothers, who were both widows and of Portuguese descent.

"I hated (Al)," she said prior to telling why she felt that way.

She recalled how Al visited her family for a week, and that she began to resent how he was treated so special as a guest.

During his visit, Al mocked Marie for having the duty of cleaning manure out of the cow barn.

As a result, Marie turned a running water hose on him, and then Al turned it back on Marie.

"(Al) was supposed to stay two weeks, (but) he only stayed one week," Marie said. "I don't know how he got home. I could (not) care less."

It was not until Marie was a young adult that her attitude changed about Al on one night.

While Marie was at a nightclub on North 16th Street, Al came up to her and asked her if she would like to dance, she recalled.

"Well, he was such a smooth dancer and at the end of the dance, he kissed me right here (on one of her cheeks)," she said. "And I melted right there. That was it."

Al and Marie were married on New Year's Day in 1948, and they began their venture together as business owners of Balshor Florist two years later. During their time as business owners, they raised two sons, Al Jr. and Jerry, and their daughter, Judie.

Thinking back on her seven decades in business, Marie cherishes the many friends she has made and the milestone anniversaries of Balshor Florist, including its 70th anniversary in 2020.

Marie told this paper that she never imagined that she would live to be 95 years old.

"I never in my wildest dream ever thought I'd get this far and be as well as I am," she said. "I think it's (that) God has got me here for a reason or purpose, and when he's ready to take me home, he'll take me home.

"I tell people now that I know I'll never see again, if I never see you again on Earth, I will see you in heaven."



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Nestled on one of Land Park's most charming streets this Squeaky Williams' Tudor boasts many desirable features throughout. Spacious formal entry with wood floors lead to a lovely living room with gas log fireplace, mantle, and bookshelves. The living room has French doors opening to a spacious formal dining room. The kitchen features a breakfast bar, built-in classic hutch, stainless steel appliances and window overlooking the backyard patio. The knotty pine family room has a wall of closet storage, two bookshelves and a Dutch door that opens to one of the backyard patios. Downstairs has a full bathroom, side door to driveway and basement fully ready for wine storage. The wood staircase leads to three large bedrooms upstairs and a full bathroom with a unique arched ceiling. The primary bedroom has a drop-down staircase that leads to a very large, paneled storage room in the attic. The front yard has mature landscaping, new walkway and sod. The backyard features two patio areas great for entertaining, one off the family room with sitting area and the other with a BBQ, sink and refrigerator for your summer dining. The garage has been converted and can be used as an office/playroom and features vaulted ceiling, additional storage closets and wall A/C. Don't Miss This One! 1153 Marian Way $1,229,000



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Car show returns to the Pocket

Event to continue through October

By Lance Armstrong
vcneditor@gmail.com

After a one-year absence, the Pocket's twice-monthly classic car show is making a comeback in the parking lot of the Device Brewing Company in the Promenade Shopping Center.

This four-hour, family-friendly event, which was first held in 2020, features vintage cars ranging from a 1929 Ford Model A to cars from the 1980s, as well as beer and food.

The event will be held most first and third Thursdays, with a few exceptions, from this month through Oct. 26. Each show begins at 4 p.m.

The final date will be a trunk-or-treat Halloween event for kids, with candy available from the trunks of the exhibitors' decorated cars.

Andrew Vassallo, general manager of this brewery at 7485 Rush River Drive, Suite 650, told the Pocket News that after a decision was made to discontinue this event, its return was arranged due to its popularity.

"We had a lot of people that would call and (say), 'Hey, why don't you guys do the car shows anymore?'" he said. "So, obviously, from a business standpoint, this was something that we (desired to) figure out how to get it going again.

"I think doing it on a Thursday – which isn't typically our busiest night of the week – helps us, but at the same time, that was part of the issue was Friday nights are already busy. And then you add 200 to 300 people for the car show, and things just kind of went a little sideways. So, I think (Thursdays are) going to be kind of better for everyone."



Photos by Jeanette Valencia

Shown from left are Pocket resident Tony Antonucci, with his 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Coupe; Elk Grove resident Dave Cox, with his 1934 Ford; and Pocket resident Ben Valencia, with his 1955 Chevrolet Delray.

Vassallo noted that the car show adds to the family-friendly approach to this business, which is owned by Pocket residents Ken and Melissa Anthony.

"It just kind of aligns with our vision that we opened this place up (three years ago) to be a community asset," he said. "We're super family-friendly. We've got games in here for the kids, we've got pinball and Skee-Ball, (various events) and things like that."

Classic car owners Ben Valencia and Tony Antonucci, who also live in the Pocket, founded the car show three years ago as a way to bring more entertainment to their neighborhood.

Both men were already accustomed to exhibiting their cars at car shows, including a Tuesday night car show at Original Mike's Diner in Elk Grove.

Antonucci is the owner of a red, 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Coupe, a photograph of which is currently featured on a flier for the Pocket's upcoming car show. He bought the car about 10 years ago.

Valencia owns a 1955 Chevrolet Delray, which he purchased in 1972 and regularly drove until 1990.

After his retirement in 2009, Valencia spent about two and a half years restoring that car.

He shared his approach to that restoration.

"When I bought the car, everything was original except the tires and rims," Valencia said. "I mean, the Delrays had the checkered interior and stuff and I was going to just restore it stock. (However), me and my wife decided, well, we want to have (air conditioning) in the car and stuff, and so I decided to modify it."

Valencia and Antonucci share similar stories, having grown up in car-centric eras in Sacramento.

A Sacramento native and a 1968 graduate of C.K. McClatchy High School, Valencia recalled his early automotive adventures.

"We used to cruise downtown, J and K (streets)," he said. "I had

See CAR SHOW on page 6

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C. K. McClatchy ecology movement driven by Eco Club efforts

By Kennedy O'Gilvie Joplin
C. K. McClatchy High School student

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

The C.K. McClatchy High School Eco Club is on a mission to battle climate change.

The club has been fighting the environmental crisis in their own community by picking up trash around the school and informing students about the harmful effects of climate change, which include melting ice caps, rising oceans and increased poverty. Members also are teaming up with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to plant as many trees as possible around Sacramento.

One way they want to inform students about the climate crisis is through JamEarth, a celebration in which students can participate in games that raise awareness about environmental issues.

Eco Club Secretary Sarah McEvilly, a senior, said, "I think the general attitude of the club is just doing what we can to be eco-friendly, whatever that means for you. I mean, not all solutions are realistic for everyone, but I think we have more of a discussion of what we can do."

Junior Juliette Allayaud, the club's vice president, said, "There is kind of like a perception of what being eco-friendly is. A lot of people think it's being vegetarian or recycling, ya know, that kind of stuff. Anyone that cares about the Earth and wants to do something to save it is eco-friendly."

"It's like we are forming a community at McClatchy to get people who care about the environment and to take note of the state of things," added club president and senior Monica McCallin. "How we can have ideas about how we as a school can make a difference, or just to spread ideas and talk with like discussions or guest speakers."

Regarding what McClatchy High itself does to stay eco-friendly, the club as a whole says, "The school has water bottle refilling stations, as a way to reduce single-use plastics, but the school does not have a good trash system. There is no school-wide composting, even though the school waste is extremely high."

"Taking small actions and taking small steps is how we try and make sure that being eco-friendly is something everyone can do regardless of their socio-economic status because a lot of the time it is portrayed as 'Oh you have to buy all these things,'" said McEvilly. "'Oh, you have to be on this diet that is kind of expensive.' Just small things like recycling, water saving, stuff like that, that is really easy to do and encouraged."

The school announced in early November that in the 2023-24 school year, there will be a new Advanced Placement (AP) environmental studies course offered to students. Eco Club members express their excitement and their opinions about the new class.

"I think that could be a potential major for a lot of people in this club or just a potential interest," McCallin said. "So, just having that class as an option is important, because people are going to be able to learn more than what they care about. So, it is just more opportunity for people in McClatchy to learn more and get informed more."

Allayaud said, "With AP classes, the learning gets lost, and it's more focused on the test and stuff. So, I really hope that is not what happens with that class, because it is so much more important than that."



Photo courtesy of Pixabay

"Maybe it will give future Eco Club (members) things to talk about and more things to address," said Johnson. "It gives a formal setting to what we do and it will give people more knowledge, so they can be more focused club members."

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Car Show

Continued from page 4

a '56 Chevy back then, with a Corvette engine. Yeah, and we used to do a little racing."

Antonucci, who moved from Pittsburgh to Sacramento during his childhood, spoke about some of his memorable cars.

"I had a '53 Chevy when I was in high school," he said. "And then later I got a '59 Impala, then I had a '62 Corvette. So, I've had a lot of cars. And yeah, we did a little drag racing in between."

Also popular in that era were drive-in restaurants, recalled Antonucci, who graduated from C.K. McClatchy High School in 1958.

"There was one (drive-in restaurant at 2995 Freeport Blvd.), over by (C.K.) McClatchy High School, called Ed's (Drive-In)," he said. "Then there was another one downtown, a big Mel's (Drive-In at 1901 J St.), which would have been across now from where The (Old) Spaghetti Factory is, which used to be the (Western Pacific) train station. So, yeah, that was a great era. I don't think there will ever be another era like that."



Shown above is the engine of Pocket resident Ben Valencia's 1955 Chevrolet Delray.



On display is the engine of Pocket resident Tony Antonucci's 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Coupe.

Antonucci hopes that more younger people become involved with classic cars.

"We encourage it," he said. "Like at our cruise nights, we always tell them – the older guys – we're not going to be here forever. Try to get younger guys to come on out. Get a car, you know, whatever."

In addition to classic cars, all of the shows at the Device Brewing Company, with the exception of the final show, will include raffles for prizes.

Valencia mentioned that little kids always win a certain raffle prize.

"When little kids come and stuff, they're going to win a free Hot Wheels car," he said. "And we say it's a raffle prize. Well, you know, they don't know if they're going to win one or not, but they're going to win one."

Also co-organizing this event with Valencia and Antonucci is Elk Grove resident Dave Cox, who serves as the show's master of ceremonies.

Cox, 78, has another connection with Antonucci: He is also a native of Pittsburgh.

As a hot rod fan, Cox owns a 1934 Ford with a 540-cubic-inch, big block engine in it, and a 1947 Ford Coupe with a 383-cubic-inch stroker engine in it.

He mentioned that the first car he ever owned was a 1949 Chrysler Fluid Drive hearse.

In addition to their involvement with the Pocket's car show, Cox and Antonucci have been operating the Tuesday night car show at Original Mike's Diner in Elk Grove for the past six years.

Cox commended the site for the car show in the Pocket.

"I think it's really a good spot for the community as a whole there," he said. "We've got a lot of good vibes from the two years before that we did it, that the people really liked it, they supported it."

The classic car show's upcoming dates at the Device Brewing Company are April 20, May 4 and 18, June 1 and 15, July 6 and 20, Aug. 10 and 24, Sept. 7 and 21, and Oct. 5, 19 and 26.

For additional information about this show, call (916) 594-9043.





Pictured is the 540-cubic-inch, big block engine of the 1934 Ford owned by Elk Grove resident Dave Cox.

Scenes from Land Park Volunteer Corps 'Park Work Day,' April 1



The Land Park Volunteer Corps (LPVC), on April 1, spent its first Park Work Day of the year weeding and trimming planter beds and cleaning up from previous storms along 11th Avenue, from Riverside Boulevard to Freeport Boulevard.

More than 100 people, including students from C.K. McClatchy and John F. Kennedy high schools, participated in the event.

The Land Park Volunteer Corps was founded by neighbors in that area in 2010 to assist with the maintenance and care of William Land Park.





Photos courtesy of Land Park Volunteer Corps

LPVC volunteers typically meet on the first Saturday of March through November to help maintain the park. Last month's Park Work Day was canceled due to rainy weather.

For more information about this organization, visit www.Facebook.com/LandParkVolunteerCorps.



Let the games begin!





As a sign that spring is here, the seasons of Land Park Pacific Little League and Land Park Softball opened on Saturday, March 25. Pictured are several scenes from that day.

Photos by Kate Pohl





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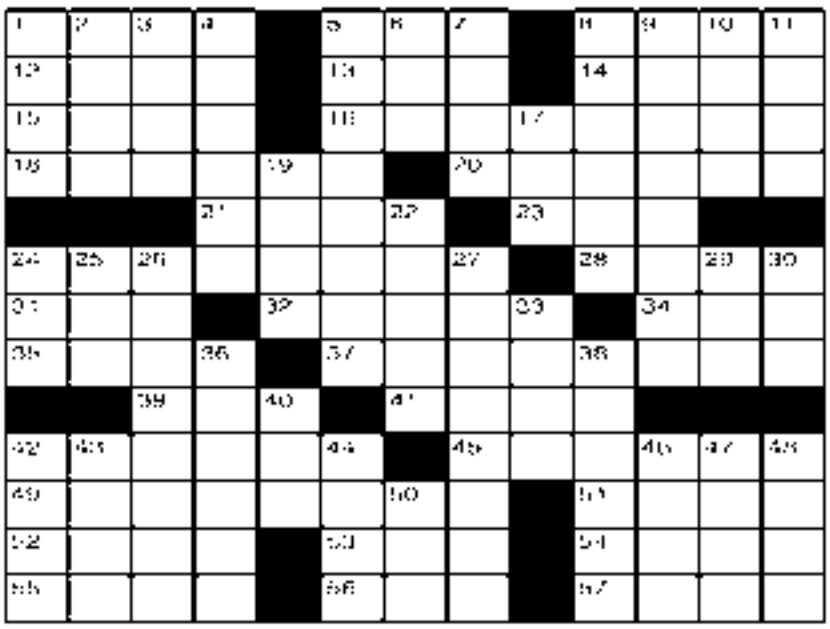
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Those who already speak some Italian and are uncertain which class is best for them can contact the program's director, Patrizia Cinquini Cerruti, at (916) 482-5900 for assistance.

Registration is now available through the website. www.ItalianCenter.net.

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.

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.





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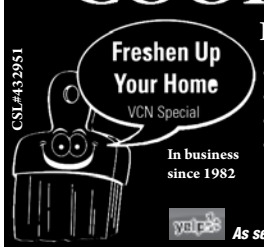
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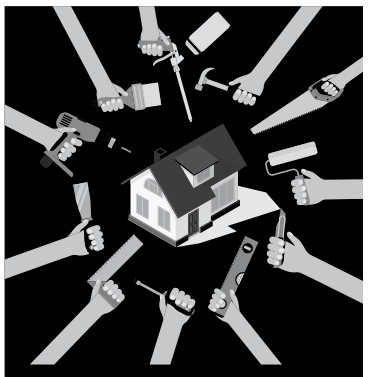
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Dozens of dinosaurs descend on Sacramento Zoo

The Sacramento Zoo is thrilled to announce the opening of an exhibit 65 million years in the making. Dinosaur Safari is currently open and will run through March 2024.

Gather the family, take a journey back through time and experience awe and wonder as more than 20 life-size, animatronic dinosaurs have migrated from the Mesozoic Era to the Sacramento Zoo.

Hold your ground against a 65-foot-long Brachiosaurus as she cares for her young. Beware of the towering Tyrannosaurus rex. Stare up in awe at the Quetzalcoatlus as you enter the zoo, and avoid getting head butted by a Pachycephalosaurus.

The zoo's Dinosaur Safari exhibit is included with the price of admission, and is free for Sacramento Zoo members.

Dinosaur Safari was created by Dino Don, Inc., a leading supplier of animatronic dinosaurs to zoos and museums across the globe, and the only creator of full-sized robot dinosaurs.

These dinos were designed and created under scientific supervision. Lessem, aka "Dino Don," advised Steven Spielberg on the 1993 film, "Jurassic Park," and he has advised both the Universal and Disney theme parks, as well. This exhibit is generously presented by First 5 California.

Plan your visit today. Don't miss this DINO-mite exhibit.

For additional information, visit the website, www.SacZoo.org.



Photos courtesy of the Sacramento Zoo

The dinosaur exhibit at the Sacramento Zoo will be open through March 2024.



This life-size, animatronic Tyrannosaurus rex dinosaur is among the exhibit's attractions.





Elks 6 offers vocational grants

Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6, on the behalf of the California-Hawaii Elks Association, is offering vocational grants ranging from $500 to $2,000 for the first year.

There is an option to renew for a second year to anyone residing in the Sacramento area who is a citizen of the United States and planning to pursue an eligible vocational/technical course resulting in a certificate or two-year degree and leading to employment opportunities.

To fill out the application, visit www.chea-elks.org.

The program is open to male and female applicants, who will be judged on an equal basis. While graduating high school seniors may apply, it is not limited to high school students – in fact, it is open to all prospective students who require training or retraining to compete in the workplace.

The vocational grant is for one academic year, with an option to renew for one additional academic year. This grant may be used only for usual and required costs of a student's course of study; that is, for tuition and fees, room and board (if living on campus) and books and supplies. Payment will be made to the school. Awards will be between $500 and $2,000 for an academic year, depending on the length of the course.

The definition of an eligible program shall be comparable to that contained in the federal vocational legislation. That is defined as a two-year or less vocational/technical program culminating in a terminal associate's degree, diploma or certificate, but less than a bachelor's degree. Students planning to transfer to a four-year school to pursue a bachelor's degree are not eligible to apply.

Examples of courses approved recently are six-month police academy, 13-month cosmetology, three-month electrical line worker, 13-month veterinary technology, and two-year fire science.

A student must plan to attend school on a full-time basis for a minimum of 60 days. An academic year is determined to be a minimum of nine months (about 39 weeks) of continuous full-time study.

Payments may not be used to cover retroactive charges and may only be applied to expenses in the academic year.

Applications for Sacramento residents must be filed with the scholarship chairman, exalted ruler, or secretary of Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 at 6446 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95831. An application may only be filed with one lodge.

For additional information, call (916) 422-6666.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL SUPERHERO DAY AT FAIRYTALE TOWN

Calling all superheroes. Come dressed in your capes and masks for a day of fun at Fairytale Town from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 29: National Superhero Day.

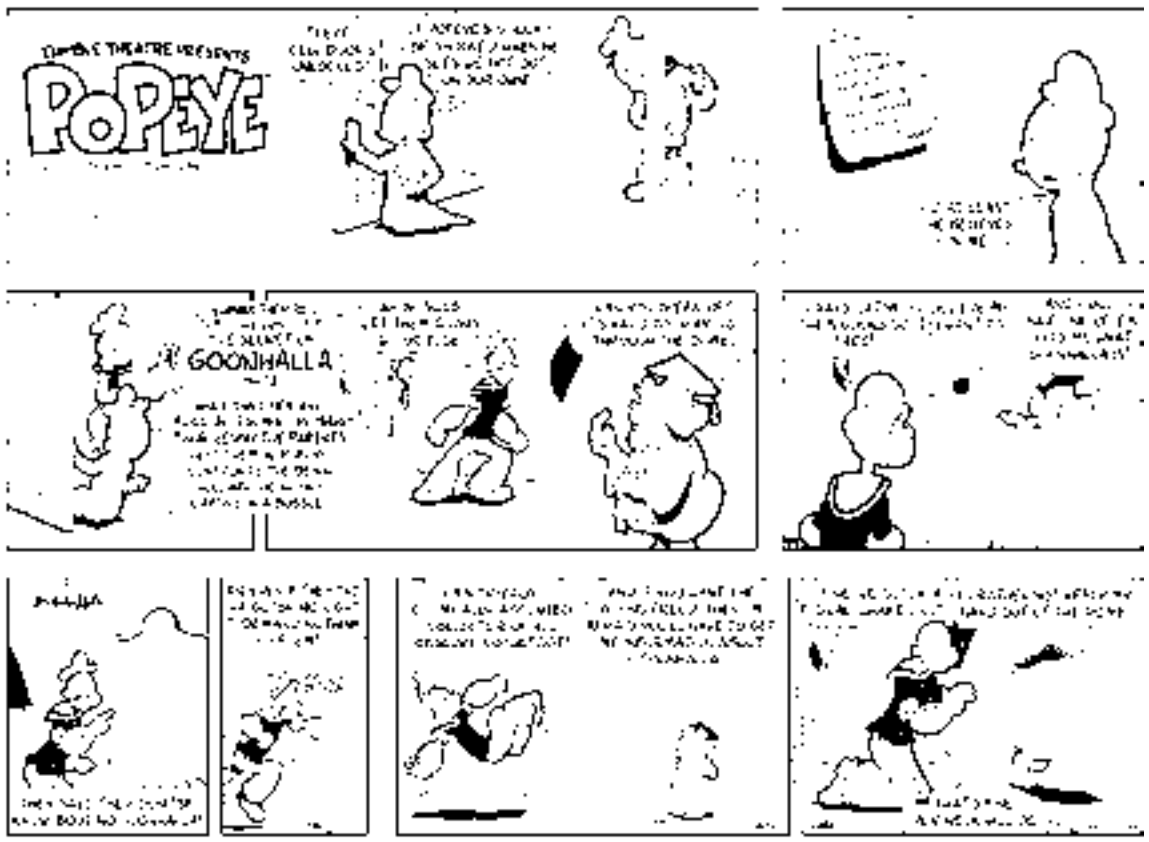
Have your child wear their superhero costume when you visit Fairytale Town and receive half off one child admission with one paid adult admission.

Meet your favorite superheroes and complete a superhero craft activity.

Weekend admission is $8 for adults and children, ages 2 years old and older. Members and children, ages 1 and younger, will be admitted for free.

Adults must be accompanied by children, and children must be accompanied by adults in order to gain admittance to the park at 3901 Land Park Drive.

For additional information, visit the website, www.FairytaleTown.org.



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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.

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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.

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."



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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 "Kaiser Permanente Women's Fitness Festival."



UK's Loving Earth Project to be held locally throughout April

An exhibition of artwork from around the world will be on display in Sacramento and Carmichael this month.

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.

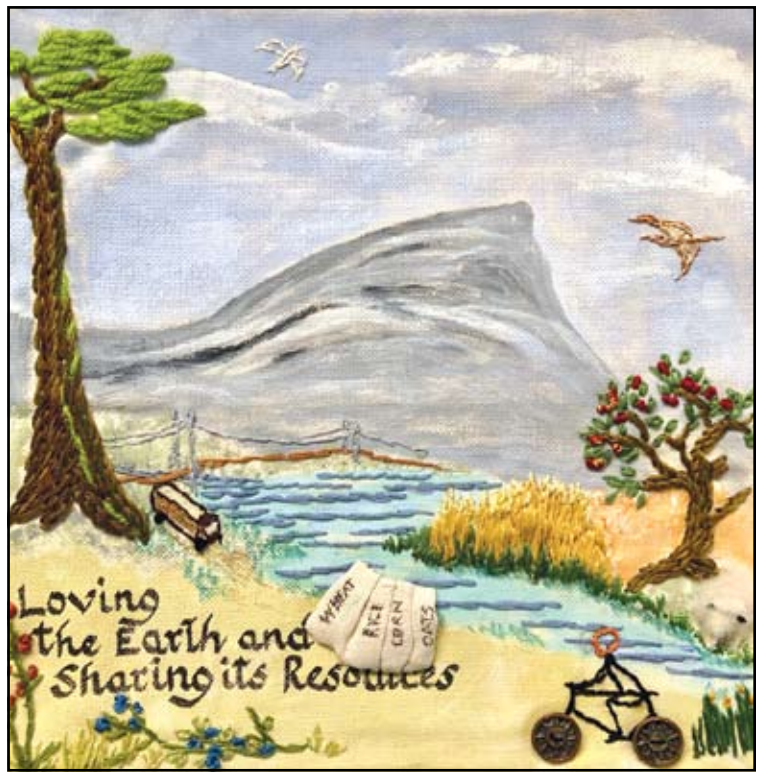
The United Kingdom's Loving Earth Project has helped people of all ages engage creatively and constructively with climate change issues without becoming overwhelmed. The exhibit also shares positive examples of how people are taking action.

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

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