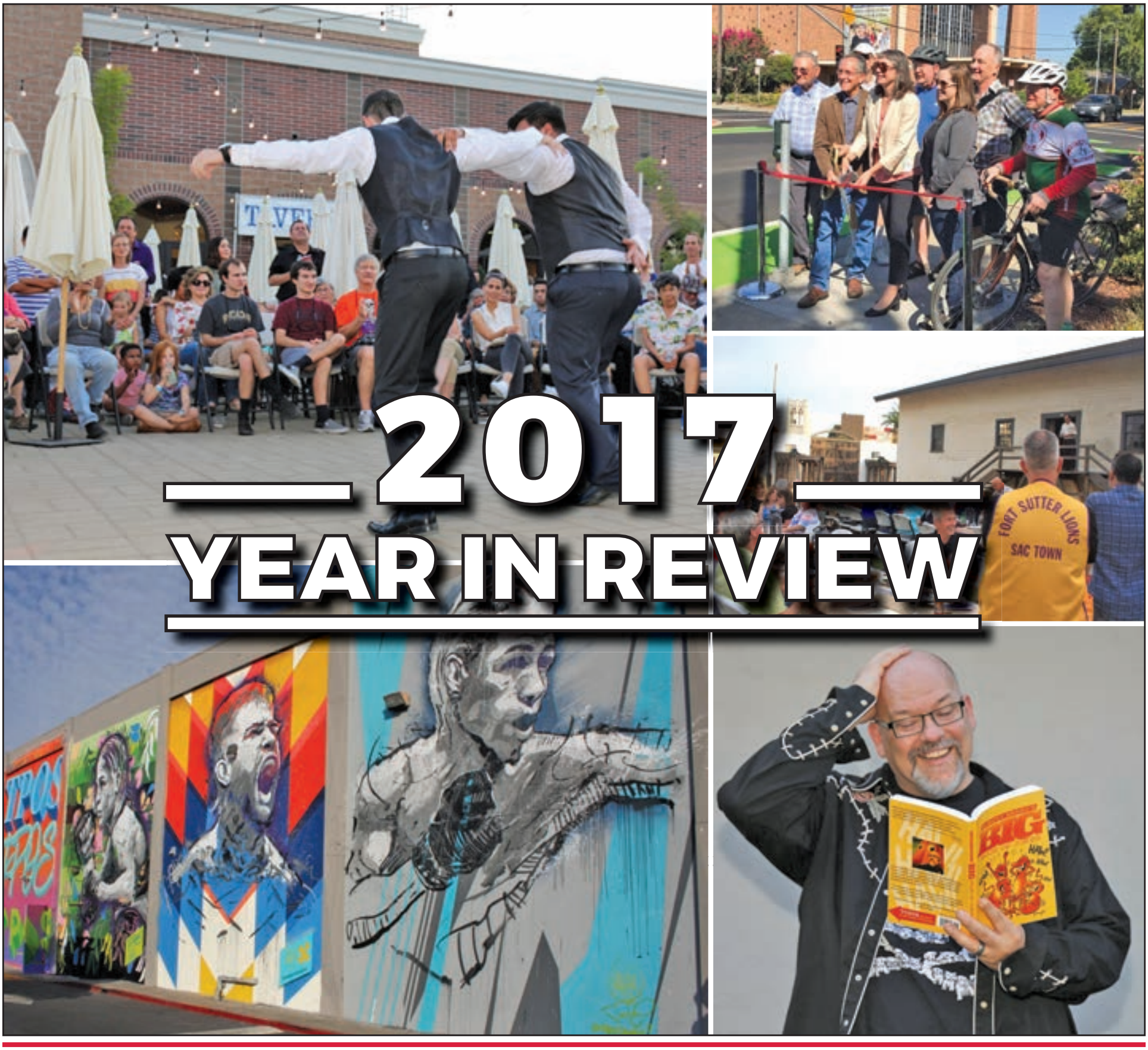
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Photo by Stephen Crowley

The Sacramento Greek Festival returned to the Greek Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church over the first weekend of October in 2017 after years at the Sacramento Convention Center. In addition to the delicious food, the event showcased the new event center and courtyard on Alhambra Boulevard.

Community celebrated return of Greek Food Festival to East Sac

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Sacramento's annual Greek Food Festival returned to East Sacramento on Oct. 6-8, 2017, as the event was held at the church's Alhambra Boulevard and F Street grounds for the first time in 37 years.

That return was made possible through the construction of the church's new 40,000-square-foot community center.

After leaving the church's grounds, this 54-year-old event was presented at Cal Expo for three years, before spending the last 33 years at the Sacramento Convention Center at 14th and J streets.

Terry Kastanis, a longtime member of the church, commented about what it meant to relocate the festival to the Alhambra Boulevard site.

"Well, it's like coming back home, because not only do we have the secular aspects of the festival, but we have the religion at the church, as well," he said. "And one thing about being a Greek and an orthodox, you're kind of both. So, it's kind of nice to bring the culture and the religion together and to bring that back home to our new facility. And it's an opportunity for us to show the community what a lovely facility we have now."

Kastanis added that he believes the event will become a "mainstay in East Sacramento."

As for the new building, Kastanis said that it is a very inviting and convenient place for the festival.

"We have a lovely new kitchen with every modern boiling pot you can think of, and ovens," he said. "It's a huge, commercial kitchen, so we (are) able to do a lot better job of cooking our food in that kitchen. And in the hall is where the food (is) served.

"We (are) able to have plenty of room for all the different kinds of food, the sweets, as well as the lamb dinners, and all the roasted chicken and all those wonderful Greek dishes. So, all of that (is) in the hall and then we eat outdoors, outside in the platia."

Four generations of volunteers – about 400 people total – worked to present the event, which also included live music, traditional Greek dancing, vendors' booths, cooking demonstrations, an eating contest, a Kids' Zone activity area, and appearances by local artist Gregory Kondos. And new this year were bike parking and a free shuttle service.

Peloponnese, Greece native Nick Kontos, another member of the church, said that the success of this year's edition of the festival exceeded expectations.

"Being in a new location and on a new date, we did not know how things were going to go," he said. "The only yardstick we had was what was happening downtown. We made some assumptions and what happened in reality is it exceeded those assumptions.

"The folks enjoyed (the festival) and they enjoyed the food and they had a good time. The community around here supported the festival and we are very appreciative about that."

Healon Knight, who was among the many non-Greek church member guests at the event, commented about what she likes about the festival.

"What I like most about the festival is the atmosphere and the music, the food and just people coming together," she said. "It's just a lovely, festive vibe and something to do in Sacramento. And I'm glad that they got their new facility and are back to their old place."

The grand unveiling: Compton's Market held grand opening celebration

By ELLEN COCHRANE

When Sunil Hans started the Compton's remodel in 2015, he had no idea it would take almost two years to complete. "I worked and worked on it, and then I worked more and more on it. And now I'm down to the nitty-gritty working even more on it!"

Finally, in February, 2017 construction on the new deli/pub/coffee house was finished and by April, Hans and his crew were busy putting on the final touches, getting ready for the grand

See Compton's, page 3

Compton's:

Continued from page 2

opening. Even though everything is brand spanking new in the addition, Hans knows the neighborhood and knows its tastes. He is keeping his 50-mile rule on the brews on tap (all local) and buy from vendors in the immediate Sacramento area for breads, meats and cheeses. His coffee bar is carrying one of Sacramento's best, Chocolate Fish. The team from New Zealand is supplying the coffee for sale and has trained the staff how to deliver the precision blend with the excellent customer service The Fish is famous for. And you can top off your lunch and coffee with ice cream from Gunther's and pastries from Freeport Bakery.

On Saturday, April 22, 2017, the doors opened. The butcher was ready to slice, as a fry basket dipped into hot oil to sizzle fries and Indian food aromas wafted out of the steam trays. A new "local boy" chef planned the menu and has been keeping the kitchen team hopping.

Sunil designed the whole project with two things in mind: honor the past and please the customers. Since he took over the business from the Compton family he has kept the store name and logo and now christens the new restaurant, brew pub Willy's Cafe, in honor of the store founder, Bill Compton. Family member and current Compton employee, Tammy Compton, is pleased with the direction the store is going. "Sunil is realizing many dreams that my family had for the store. These are great changes. We always wanted a full service deli."



Photo by Ellen Cochrane

Tammy Compton and Sunil Hans

Willy's has ample space in a sit down dining area with free wi fi. Neighbors have been filling the space with cheer and fun every night of the week.

Our city is changing quickly. It's all glass and stainless steel downtown. Here, deep in the neighborhood of East Sacramento you can still know your neighbors, walk to the store to get bread and coffee and eat out doors on sweet summer nights, and chat over a beer.

"Improvements" made to road conditions where River Park meets Sacramento State

By MONICA STARK

There's an old adage that if you wait long enough good things will happen. Well, River Park waited a long time for road improvements out of the neighborhood adjacent to Sacramento State University. Attributed from none other than Leland "Lee" Ruth, the unofficial mayor of River Park, the neighbors living near the gates of Sac State have seen it all when it comes to accidents and near accidents at the intersection of Carlson Drive and H Street. They have waited a long time for improvements there.

As Sacramento City Council Member Jeff Harris stated at a celebration of the completion of a $1.7 million street improvement project on Aug. 28, "It's a very complex intersection with many roads coming together, lots of turn pockets. It's been a very confusing place to drive, walk or bicycle for a lot of years. So the city realized they needed to do something; the neighbors organized."



Photo by Brenda Jew Waters

Road improvements were made on Carlson Drive over the summer of 2017. Local officials and River Park neighbors celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

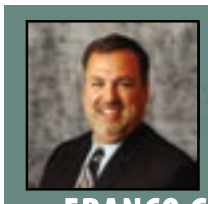
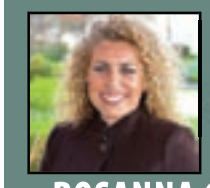
In an effort to make the streets safer for the heavily congested area, the city of Sacramento paved new crosswalks, upgraded pedestrian paths of travel on the west side of Carlson Drive, and paved a clear designation of bicycle rights-of-way through the use of colored and buffered bike lanes, and improved opportunities for cyclists to safely make left turns.

"The real benefit is for cyclists and pedestrians," Harris said. "The green bike boxes give cyclists a sort of a safety zone. It's the first in the city with a bicycle push button signal. The intersection will be manageable for anyone who chooses to use it."

The improvements include signal upgrades to improve visibility, additional signing, new crosswalks, marked green bike lanes to clarify lane channelization, bike boxes for left turns, and innovative new two-stage left turns for bicyclists.

The $1.7 million (planning, design, and construction) is funded primarily through Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program grant funds with matching funds

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River Park:

Continued from page 3

provided by local transportation tax measure dollars.

Because of community concerns over bicycle related accidents at the intersection and traffic studies, the city procured FHSIP grant funding and originally initiated this project to make safety improvements in the vicinity.

At the Aug. 28 celebration, Ruth discussed the importance of the changes to the intersection as well as some of the history of the project. A member of the River Park Garden Club which takes care of this area, Ruth and friends frequent the intersection. "We see a lot," he said. "There's a lot of near accidents that occur. There were a lot almost every day. I used to see people come down here, turn right, go down H Street, and that's a no-no. That doesn't work. On this side, people have a hard time making that right hand turn because as you come out of River Park, you look down H Street and it's really shady and it's hard to see the cars. Well, narrowing that down to one lane over there slows them down and it will make it a lot easier, a lot safer for people to come out of the dark."

Ending with a joke, he said, "I've been around for 40 years; I've been watching people jaywalk there. I've done it myself a number of times. Now, I can do it legally."

At the end of August and the beginning of the school year for Caleb Greenwood Elementary School, extra traffic flooded many Sacramento streets, and neighbors reported that traffic on H Street heading east towards River Park, was backed up at 48th Street. Besides the long wait on the roads during commute time, traffic reportedly couldn't turn onto Carlson Drive to Sacramento State, preventing traffic from moving into the neighborhood. Neighbors questioned how the traffic would improve without an extra merge lane. Many neighbors suggested patience was key as the traffic is always busy this time of year. Whether it's objectively worse than previous years, has not been studied yet but has been a topic of conversation among River Park neighbors.

Fort Sutter Lions Club celebrates 90th anniversary

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Members of the Fort Sutter Lions Club celebrated a special milestone in their organization's long history in the capital city, as the club turned 90 years old in 2017.

In officially recognizing that anniversary on June 24, Lions from different areas gathered together for a pioneer dinner at a very fitting location for such an event: Sutter's Fort.

Prior to the dinner, which benefited the Friends of Sutter's Fort and Lions' causes, representatives of the fort provided a special salute to the club with a non-cannonball firing of a cannon.

The Fort Sutter Lions Club represents a very rich part of the Lions Club International, which is currently celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding. And Lions clubs collectively make up the largest service organization in the world.

In tribute to the Fort Sutter Lions Club, several Lions commented on the club and its rich history.

Andy Thielen, a member of the Fort Sutter club, shared details about this club's service.

"A lot of the activities that (the club) did were geared toward the blind and visually impaired, but now our club has veered off and helps underprivileged kids with backpacks for schools, helps Boy Scouts," he said. "Any other kind of organization that needs our help, we're willing to do that. We do the Walk 4 Literacy for the Sacramento (Public) Library Foundation, and (assist other organizations)."

Thielen's work with the club has included running in a marathon with blind athletes to provide them with guidance.

Thielen, who is among the younger members of the club, said that he joined the club in 1994. And he noted that he was recruited to help save the club from its then-potential future extinction.

"My grandfather invited me to join the club, because all the members were 70-plus years old, and they knew if they didn't get younger members, the club was going to die off," he said. "Some other younger members joined and that's what kept the club up until the present."



Photo by Lance Armstrong

Fort Sutter Lions Club members and guests celebrate the club's 90th anniversary with a pioneer dinner at Sutter's Fort on June 24, 2017.

Thielen stressed that it is important for the club to continue adding new members.

"We have about 23 members," he said. "Obviously, the more members we have, the more work we can do, and the easier it is for all of us (to continue)."

Thielen also expressed his appreciation for the club's history.

"It's great to have the history of our club and be able to look back and see all that they've achieved," he said. "And it's good to be a part of an organization that's been so productive in Sacramento."

East Sacramento comedian released "Big Book of Jokes"

By MONICA STARK

When he was just a wee lad, Robert Berry was the shy kind of class clown. Writing jokes on his homework for his teachers to read, while passing around joke books among his classmates, Berry shied from the spotlight of school-day showmanship. "I wasn't a noisy and boisterous class clown that wanted all the immediate attention. I was pretty shy in a lot of ways," he says today.

And yet, where are you likely to find him today? The stage.

From the Punchline to Laughs Unlimited, to dive bars like On the Y, as well as Bay Area venues and spots in towns like Gustine, Turlock, Mill Valley and Arcata, Berry has made a career out of performing those comedic one-liners, those groaners, those laugh-out-loud, out of left field cheese-ball jokes.

And now, this East Sacramento comedian has added another trick to his bag – a collection of sorts, a tribute to the dirty and tasteless joke books he grew up with. Aptly titled, "Robert Berry's Big Book of Jokes," the collection, is chock-full of nearly 1,000 jokes. If the Motion Picture Association of America were to give it a rating, they'd likely give it PG-13 or R rating.

Going old-school with the release, Berry and his wife put the books out in the mail themselves upon a customer's payment. With some good pre-order attention, the mom-and-pop operation sold about 80 copies before they came out. A biased friend endorsement goes as follows: It was the last time he ever saw his dad reading a book.

Enjoying the performance of the "little quick jokes", Berry says it's great when you can get an audience behind that format, as most comics perform longer-form comedy. Comparing the two, he says, "If you got an hour to perform and you're doing little jokes that could be 120 jokes that you gotta tell (versus) six or seven longer bits of the traditional comedy form. It's different. So there are a lot more chances for people to laugh or not laugh when you're done. So, it's definitely a skill-building thing. Bill Cosby – the long form is his bread and butter; Rodney Dangerfield does the quick ones. I love them both, I just happen to be better at the quick ones. Just like some people can run a marathon better than a 100-yard dash. There's a silliness to the one-liners that you got to get into and you have to power through them. If you tell 20

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Comedian:

Continued from page 4

jokes and some of them don't get the biggest laughs, you got to believe there's the best jokes that you're telling."

"I'm an older comedian and there's a lot of young ones that are starting out. I turn 48 this year. So, my 20-year plan at this point is just being alive."

Find Robert Berry online at retrocrush.com.

Longtime East Sacramento guitar store on the move

By MONICA STARK

Because of the likes of corporations like Amazon, John Green, the owner of the Fifth String says he's winding down the store's retail operations to focus more on teaching and to offer performance space – something that only a personal touch can offer.

Green said he was in the process of securing a location near Broadway that will provide more space for live performances and will benefit customers with adequate parking. (*Update: The address is 2900 Franklin Blvd.*)

"I like it down there (on Broadway) because it's between city college and Sac State and it's a really great location – it's just a wonderful building."

While he's leaving a charming 1920s building at 3184 N St. in East Sacramento, the price is high for what's he's been getting. "The problem with this building is the archaicness of how old it is in terms of its heating, air, plumbing and electricity. And the rents are high. The building doesn't have adequate heating and air for the really hot days. All of that is a little bit of a problem."

With a passion of teaching, he's bringing along his seasoned staff to Broadway. "They are very happy with it. They love the feel as I do."

And with that, he says it doesn't feel weird to leave East Sac. "My passion and that of everybody here is teaching... It's just crazy how long this business has been around, but retail changed. Retail's pretty much a dying market. Everything about the store is great. It's just time to move on. Going to the teaching side, that's one thing you can't get online very well, although I have a bunch online. God, I've been teaching the world how to play guitar the last three years on YouTube."

A Certified Public Accountant, Green makes his money "fighting the IRS and tax preparation." Many musicians in town receive accounting services from him and he plans on moving his CPA practice, along with the music school to the Broadway location. "Catch you all on the flip side," he wrote in an announcement on his personal Facebook page.

Mom and Pop Garcia reflect on four years of hard work and fun at Blue Lamp

By LAURA I. WINN

Not many mom and pop shops boast of burlesque comedy shows, punk rock fundraisers and hip hop concerts, but for the Garcia's, an eclectic lineup of performing arts paired with some good, strong drinks is just what they're selling. Their shop just happens to be Blue Lamp, a live music venue and bar on Alhambra Boulevard, and the Mr. and Mrs. happen to be Gabi, 43, former manager of Limelight Bar & Cafe, and Ben, 40, former frontman of the hardcore band Hoods.

On Halloween 2013, the couple combined their respective talents and purchased the longstanding 21+ venue with the goal of bringing more bands to town and revitalizing the scene. "We noticed bands were skipping Sacramento. Bands we wanted to see would play San Francisco, Portland and Reno, but not here," explains Gabi.

So the couple invested in their venue. They revamped the sound system and created the type of space they knew musicians liked to play. From the guy at the soundboard to the security at the door, all of the staff have had their own music projects at one time or another.

The upgrades on the inside fostered changes to the names on the marquee outside. Two Ramones (Richie and CJ), Rapper Layzie Bone of Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, and a number of legendary bands, including MDC and The Dictators, have since graced the stage with opening support from local bands in the 160-capacity club.

All genres of music are welcome "as long as it's not derogatory. This is a safe space," states Gabi. "Anyone and everyone is welcome," adds Ben.

That welcome extends beyond concerts. At the monthly MoxieCRUSH Variety Show every third Friday, there's dancing from Midtown Moxies Burlesque and jokes from a revolving lineup of comedians. The venue has hosted

See Blue Lamp, page 7

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Blue Lamp:

Continued from page 5

circus performers and art receptions. Last year's "Life on Mars" reception showcased 60 local artists' interpretations of David Bowie lyrics.

No two shows are alike. "We had three hip hop shows one week, and it was a different crowd every night," explains Gabi. When The Ataris, a band popular for their pop punk love songs of the late 90s played in 2015, "It was date night. All the guys were here for their wives," laughs Ben.

A "chill" East Sac teen space: Teens can be teens at The Silver Orange

By LAURA I. WINN

The teen center in East Sacramento, The Silver Orange, is a place where teens can be teens and parents don't have to worry about what that means.

Open for ages 11 to 17, The Silver Orange (922 57th St.) is a "chill space" for teens to hang out, play video games, shoot pool, sing Karaoke, jam with the band, create some art or play any number of board games. As an affiliate of AxIS (Applied Integrated Services), certified behavior analysts Will Morris, Emily Weller and Christina Huggett own and run The Silver Orange with a mostly hands-off approach. Tuesday through Saturday from 2 p.m. to 10 or 11 p.m., they open their doors to the teens, but it's up to the teens to take responsibility for themselves once inside.

Morris' own teens were the inspiration for the center. At ages 13 and 15, they love to play in their band, Wise Anna, and shoot pool, but finding teen-friendly music venues, as well as billiards tables outside of bars was a challenge. The Silver Orange was the solution.

"We saw a niche in the market that wasn't being filled," explained Weller, 26, a former special education teacher.

In addition to serving as an alternative to an after school program, the center has a special focus on the arts. Every fourth Friday is open to the public for Open Mic, and every public Second Saturday concert showcases a local artist's work for sale.



Photo by Lance Armstrong

This 100-foot mural is located on the west side of the building that houses Urijah Faber's Ultimate Fitness. It was painted by Sacramento artist David Garibaldi and several other artists.

20,000-square-foot facility offers workout equipment, classes, training, more

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

East Sacramento resident and mixed martial artist (MMA) pioneer Urijah Faber held the grand opening of his new gym, near California State University, Sacramento, on Sept. 16.

Known as Urijah Faber's Ultimate Fitness, the 20,000-square-foot facility at 6700 Folsom Blvd. is a one-stop gym for workouts, classes, and training with notable trainers. Faber previously had a smaller gym in midtown Sacramento.

Members of the new gym can participate in indoor cycling, yoga, wrestling, boxing, kickboxing, cardio, boot camp, Muy Thai, jiu jitsu, and more than 50 classes per week.

The place also offers saunas, massage, physical therapy, a café and outdoor and upstairs areas.

Faber, who won the World Extreme Cagefighting Featherweight Championship in 2006 and held that title for more than two years, commented about the grand opening of the business, which held its soft opening on June 12.

"Today was our official grand opening," he said. "We've been open to the public and taking memberships for a while, but this is just a big, kind of finished product celebration.

"People know about Sacramento, they know about me, they know about mixed martial arts, but having this gym showcased was a great day for all of us. It's one thing to hear about something or know about something, but it's another to experience it, and I felt like people were really able to experience the new facility and what we're all about."

Attendees of the grand opening were presented with opportunities to meet Faber, tour the gym, participate in games and activities, listen to live music, view live, interactive demonstrations and martial arts exhibitions, and observe Sacramento artist David Garibaldi's unveiling of a 100-foot, six-frame wall mural.

The event also included membership specials and meet-and-greet sessions with Team Alpha Male, the mixed martial arts team that is based out of Faber's gym.

Faber said that the new gym is a very significant upgrade from his former facility.

"It has the same energy and the same kind of mentality (as the previous gym), but it's a brand new, state-of-the-art facility," he said. "All the finishes are top notch and the people that are here are doing a bunch of different things to get in shape, whether it be mixed martial arts related or general fitness. We have TRX (Total Resistance eXercise), we have CrossFit and we have yoga. There are so many things that we are offering at this gym that we didn't necessarily (have) at the other, and so that's making it pretty unique."

Former East Sacramento resident Dustin Soderman, who was visiting the gym with his children, Chloe and Cooper, said that he appreciates the family atmosphere of the place.

"I think that Urijah has done a great job with bringing the community together and I think that this is a gym that's not only just for MMA fighters, it's for people who just want to get fit, and kids also can come work out, so it's a good family atmosphere."

Josh Espley, the gym's general manager and CEO of Team Alpha Male, said that the community's excitement for the new gym is very apparent, as the facility already has about 1,500 members. And he noted that further growth will lead to an expansion of the place.

"We're going to expand once we get to 2,000 (to) 2,500 members," he said. "We will expand in this structure, taking over some of the neighbors here and working it that way."

Faber extended his invitation for people to come to his new gym.

"I would love for anybody in the greater Sacramento area, whether it takes a little commute or you can just ride your bike, to just come and check us out," he said. "Try some classes, bring your friends, bring your family, check out the café, and enjoy the fine finishes that I take a lot of pride in with the wood and the curriculum that we offer. (Come) be a part of what we created – something that's very unique and it's right here in Sacramento."

Compassion Village: A tiny home village underway for homeless in Sacramento

By MONICA STARK

A scalable, grassroots, privately funded, tiny home community focused on temporary, interim and permanent homes for chronic homeless known as Compassion Village has made its way to Sacramento. The first village consisted of 20 temporary tiny homes, 15 interim bedrooms house two to a room and a 1 acre lot where a permanent version of the homes was in the plans to be built, explained Tammy Vallejo, President, CEO of E49 Corporation, With Purpose, Inc. "We expect to have 10-15 Village sites in the Sacramento Region. The focus of the Village will be building community, mentoring and employment."

E49 is asking churches to commit to building the home with their congregations and support the Village with a team of 5-10 volunteers for three years, Vallejo said. Additionally, they are asking for a financial commitment for the 3 years as well to insure sustainability. The cost for each home is $7,500 per home and $7,500 per person annually for services and site coordinators.

Not only the CEO of E49 Corporation, Vallejo also is a member of Restoration Life Church. She said E49 Corporation has been around for seven years mobilizing churches into collaborative strategies to solve social issues. In 2016, Pastor Dan Axtell of Restoration Life Church and an E49 Board Member, came to Tammy to let her know that God was calling him to build a tiny home village. Pastor Dan started by asking mem-

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Compassion:

Continued from page 7

bers of his congregation to attend a meeting to see if there was interest. There was a ton of interest. So Dan asked E49 Corporation to drive the initiative and ask churches from around the region to join in.

E49 launched Compassion Village officially in February, 2017 and had working meetings every Monday night at E49's co-working and incubator space. There are teams for building, social services, fundraising, social media, admin, web/branding and land. Each team has two leads who are experts/licensed in their respective area's. This is a volunteer, grass roots effort that has gained momentum very quickly.

Civil rights musical: Local filmmaker's documentary on Sacramento Hyers Sisters aired on PBS

By LAURA I. WINN

Sacramento's own Hyers Sisters are the civil rights and musical theater pioneers most people have never heard of. But thanks to local filmmaker Susheel Bibbs, the story of these African American sisters and their history-changing musical works of the late 1800s has been retold in the award-winning documentary, "Voices of Freedom: The Hyers Sisters' Legacy," which aired Friday, Nov. 17 and Sunday, Nov. 19 on PBS.

The Hyers Sisters, Anna and Emma, were young opera singers who at only 9 and 11 years of age debuted at Sacramento's Metropolitan Theater in 1867. Heralded for their talent, they toured the United States in 1871 and then had plans to perform in Europe when as Bibbs tells it, "all Hell broke loose" after President Rutherford B. Hayes pulled troops out of the south and African Americans became disenfranchised and subjected to violence and lynchings by the Night Riders and other groups. The Hyers Sisters, children of the 1860s Civil Rights Movement, felt they couldn't leave their country and instead had to act. In response, they created the first American musicals, humanizing African Americans to white audiences through "stories of dignity, hopes and dreams," says Bibbs.

During this tumultuous time, the Hyers Sisters used humor to poke fun at negative stereotypes and "as a testament to their bravery" were the first to have an integrated cast. "They wanted to showcase how African Americans had real stories of real people, not cartoons of minstrels. They showed how they wanted the American dream like anyone else," explains Bibbs.

Bibbs, an accomplished opera singer in her own right, learned of the Hyers Sisters story while on tour in 2009. For the next seven years, Bibbs immersed herself in research, reading American musical theater history books, interviewing descendants still living in Sacramento, tracing genealogy records and visiting the gravesites at the Sacramento City Cemetery.

In "Voices of Freedom," Bibbs draws from that research to bring the story and the music of the Hyers Sisters to life with help from internationally-acclaimed mezzo soprano Tichina Vaughn and hip-hop narrator WolfHawk-Jaguar, among others. Bibbs says she chose a hip hop artist for one of the narrators to make the connection to the negative issues that continue to face African Americans today. "I wanted to show a very positive way of addressing these issues from this current vantage point."

Noting how music connects people, Bibbs adds that spirituals, like the ones sung in the Hyers Sisters' drama "Out of Bondage," have an especially effective way of uplifting and inspiring everyone, regardless of color. "When people get caught up in that music, they could steel themselves against the dogs after them. They help transcend problems. I call them spirit songs because they raise the spirits of all people."

Door to Door: Love Wins

By PAT LYNCH

We put a sign in our front yard. It says, "In Our America, LOVE WINS, All People are Equal, Back Lives Matter, Immigrants and Refugees are Welcome, Disabilities are Respected, Women are In Charge of Their Bodies, People and Planet are Valued Over Profit." I know, it's a chatty sign, garrulous even, but that's how free speech works. You don't have to like the sign, but you have to leave it alone. It's our sign and we freely planted it in the lawn. Did we do it to provoke people? No. We did it to take a small but determined stand against the verbal bullying we're starting to see everywhere: on the news, on the street. Yes, here in sunny, serenely blue California.

Do you remember Milosevek who died in prison for war crimes? He used local media to revive ancient hatreds among Bosnians and Serbs. He ordered inflammatory commercials made. The ads reopened long dormant ethnic wounds. Influenced by the ad bombardment, friendly neighbors(people who barbequed together) became political opponents, then outright enemies. They ended up fighting and killing one another. That's how tyrants manipulate people. Remembering this, and aware of the resurgence of immigrant bashing and racial abuse in our country, we put out our sign.

Many people on 43rd street said they liked it. So there it stood, out in the open and under the sun—a reaffirmation of humane and civic values. But early one morning a woman walking her dogs paused, angrily pulled out the sign out and threw it on the grass. Another neighbor watched her do it. "I let her know I was watching," our neighbor said.

We came home and replanted the sign in the same space. Days later it went down again. We put it back up. The woman (we assume it was the same woman) tore it out again. We replanted it. This went on for some time.

Then she, or somebody, broke it. Whoever it was stepped hard on the bottom rung, snapped it, left it bent and crooked on the grass. We stuck it back in the ground, and there it stood, brave and tilted: Refugees welcome, Black lives matter, Planet over profit. Really, what was not to like?

The next day (or night) the sign stalker/breaker ripped it from the ground and threw it in the gutter. Another neighbor happened by, retrieved the sign and placed it carefully behind our wheelbarrow. Some neighbors now took a kind of custodial regard for it. They weren't sign people themselves, but they protected ours.

I peered out the window one morning, fantasizing what I'd do if I caught the woman in the act. Maybe I'd yank her hair, good and hard, and bring the sign down on her head. She'd scrunch up in shame and I'd whack her. 'You never heard of the First Amendment?' Whack.'A lawn sign is freedom of speech, you dumb thug.' Whack. 'You stupid (whack) authoritarian (whack) tyrannical (whack) two-bit, mob-minded, sleazy, spineless twit (whack! whack! whack!). It was an immensely satisfying reverie.

I told my friend, Joan, about the fantasy.

"What about LOVE WINS?" Joan said.

"Oh."

Joan's fantasy was that she'd stop the woman and say, "The Constitution protects free speech. This is in the Bill of Rights." She'd explain that what the woman did repudiated America's highest ideals.

It turned out that a few people had been thinking about this. Ray said he'd holler at her, "Hey! This is private property! Hands off!"

Ellen's fantasy was that she'd film and photograph the culprit in the act, then tell her: "We have evidence. Keep away or I'll report you, post your picture on Next Door, and file a legal complaint against you.

Eileen said simply, "I'd call the police."

So, Joan would try to educate the woman, Ray would invoke the sacrament of Private Property, Ellen would threaten to bust her legally, Eileen would call the cops, and I…well, I would have to delve a little deeper to find a few drops of that LOVE WINS juice.

Then another neighbor said she knew who the sign stalker was and where she lived. Enter fantasy number two: I'd sneak over to the stalker's house at 3 a.m. and plant a sign in her front lawn. Wouldn't that be delicious? Imagine when she got up to make her venom tea or whatever, glanced out and saw it. Better yet, I'd plant it where she wouldn't notice it from her window. Then when she went out to walk her dogs she'd see it and realize she'd been promoting black lives, refugees and birth control all morning.

But of course nobody would accompany me on this mission and I was too chicken to go alone.

Then another neighbor said she'd put up a sign too. Fantasy three: the sign crusher turns on our block and sees thirty identical signs sparkling under the sun. That ought to throw her into a conniption so epic you'd pay to see it.

One Saturday afternoon I came home to see the sign standing neat and straight, no more screwy tilt. "It's the gardeners," a neighbor said. "I watch them. They take it out to mow, and they put it back so carefully."

It's been two weeks now since the woman has been seen on our block. The sign still stands. Unmolested by multiple strangers walking to medical offices on the corner, Amazon delivery drivers, neighbors' visitors, salespeople, other dog walkers and random strollers; it's become part of the fabric of the street.

This morning I read in the Bee about the Durstons from Gold River. They displayed the same sign, and got a letter from Homeowners Association Board of Directors. The Board doesn't want the area to be "littered with signs" which could cause a "negative impact to the value of our homes." Here's the typical clash of values with which we always have to contend: monetary value vs. moral value. The Durstons made the moral choice and got flack for it. (What if they'd put up a sign saying, God Bless the Almighty Dollar?)

Here in East Sac we don't have a Homeowners Association, just the occasional crazed dog-walker. But we know what's happening in the world beyond our block, and it matters to us. Some neighbors don't approve the import of our sign, but they respect our right to display it. In turn, we appreciate their tolerance. If they put up a contrary sign, we won't like it, but we'll let it stand. Democracy is hard, and messy, but it's all we've got. We believe: use it or lose it.

What's happening East Sacramento?

FRIDAY, JAN. 5-SATURDAY, JAN. 6

LIBRARY FRIENDS TO HOST WAREHOUSE CLEARANCE SALE: The Friends of the Sacramento Public Library are hosting a Warehouse Clearance Sale at the Book Den Warehouse, 8250 Belvedere Ave., Suite E, on Saturday, Jan. 6, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A preview for Friends members only will be held Friday, Jan. 5, 5 to 8 p.m., and nonmembers who wish to attend may join at the door for $20. The warehouse is currently overstocked with a wide variety of books which must be sold so that room is available for incoming new donations. Proceeds benefit the Sacramento Public Library system. All books and other materials in the warehouse will be priced at $6 for each grocery bag, and customers are encouraged to bring their own paper bags, though bags will be available. Because of the reduced prices, the Friends members' usual discount will not be offered at this sale. The Book Den store, which specializes in better books and is located at the same site, will be open during the same hours with materials offered at regular prices. For more information, call 916-731-8493 or email bookden@saclibfriends.org. Regular Book Den store hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursdays and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

SATURDAY, JAN. 6

CUB SCOUT XMAS TREE PICKUP: If you hate to see you old Christmas tree looking sad and lonely on the curb waiting for the claw to take it away, let the Cub Scouts take it to the Recycling Center! East Sacramento's own Cub Scout Pack 128 is raising money, through their annual Christmas Tree Recycling fundraiser at 8 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 31 and Saturday Jan. 6, and will take your tree away for $10. Eligible for East Sacramento and River Park residents. Be sure to include your address and chosen pick-up day. For details or to arrange pick up, contact Meredith Harvan, the committee chairman at meredith@mharvan.com or 838-5842 payments can be made by check, cash or PayPal. Send check to 221 Meister Way, Sacramento, CA 95819.

SATURDAY, JAN. 20

FREE PRESENTATION ON STANDARDIZED TESTS: Strategies and Prep: Sacramento Library with AP College Consulting presents this free workshop at Belle Cooledge Library, 5699 South Land Park Drive at 2 p.m. High school students and families encouraged to attend.
Topics covered include: PSAT :
What it means, why take it?
ACT vs SAT: Which is right for you?
When to take and how many times?
AP tests: How to use them
Subject Tests: Who requires them and for what?
Test Prep: To pay or not to pay
Super Scoring: What it means.
Questions: contact@apcollegeconsulting.com.

SATURDAY, JAN. 27

FREE PRESENTATION ON STANDARDIZED TESTS: Strategies and Prep: Sacramento Library with AP College Consulting presents this free workshop at at Sacramento Library Elk Grove, 8900 Elk Grove Blvd. at 11 a.m. High school students and families encouraged to attend.
Topics covered include: PSAT :
What it means, why take it?
ACT vs SAT: Which is right for you?
When to take and how many times?
AP tests: How to use them
Subject Tests: Who requires them and for what?
Test Prep: To pay or not to pay
Super Scoring: What it means.
Questions: contact@apcollegeconsulting.com.

SHRIMP AND TRI TIP DRIVE THRU DINNER-- KIWANIS CLUB OF EAST SACRAMENTO: The dinner will be held from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Hellenic Event Center, 614 Alhambra Blvd. This is a major fundraising event for the Kiwanis Club. A community service organization sponsoring student service leadership programs at St. Francis Catholic High School, Hiram Johnson High School, West Campus High School, Florin High School and Sacramento State University, the Kiwanis provides support to Kiwanis Family House, elementary school reading programs, provide an annual community Easter Egg Hunt, provide student leadership training through Key Leader, contribute to maintenance and improvement of East Sacramento parks and other worthy programs. For more information, contact 837-0162 or visit https://squareup.com/market/kiwanis-club-of-east-sacramento/
Sponsorship/advertising $50.
Table of eight tri tip and shrimp feed $360.
Ticket only tri tip and shrimp feed $50.
Ticket and donation tri-tip and shrimp feed $55.
Child ticket (under 12) $25.

SUNDAY, JAN. 28

RECITAL AT ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH: Harpsichordist and organist Nancy Metzger will perform a recital at St. Paul's Episcopal Church (15th and J streets) starting at 2 p.m. $10 suggested donation.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7

THE SACRAMENTO FLORAL DESIGN GUILD IS OFFERING A BEGINNER CLASS IN FLORAL DESIGN on Feb. 7 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Shepard Garden and Art Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., Sacramento. The fee, $20.00, includes instruction in a basic floral design, flowers and container. You will make an arrangement and take it with you. Please reserve your spot today. Send your check, with name, email address & home address and phone number to Sacramento Floral Design Guild, 4 Park Vista Circle, Sacramento, CA 95831.This course is taught by Frankie Raymond, an experienced designer and National Garden Club Flower Show Judge. Frankie's team of assistants will insure each participant receives individual instruction. Participants need not have any floral design experience.For further information contact Guild President, Jan Goehring, at Jgoehring5329@yahoo.com.

ONGOING

SPLINTER GROUP THEATRE PRESENTS BEOWULF, THE PANTO!: Splinter Group Theatre presents Beowulf, the Panto!, by John Savournin and the Charles Court Opera, opening Thursday, Dec. 14 and playing through Saturday, Dec. 23. Performances are Dec. 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 22, and 23 at 7 p.m., and Dec. 16, 17 and 23 at 2 p.m. Performances will be held in the Black Box Theatre at the West Sacramento Community Center, 1075 West Capitol Ave. Ticket prices are $15 general admission; $10 for students with IDs, seniors, and persons with disabilities; and $5 for children under 6. All details and tickets are available online at www.splintergroupetheatre.com.

STATE FAIR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS ANNOUNCED: The Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship Program is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2018 - 2019 academic year. The program offers 14 categories of scholarships ranging from $1,000 - $2,500 each with varying eligibility requirements. Categories include: agriculture, art, academic excellence, business, culinary/hospitality/event management, education, international relations, trade school, viticulture and enology. Applicants may apply for one scholarship category of their choice per year and will be evaluated based on academics, community service, quality of essay and recommendation. Top scholarship winners in select categories may be invited to compete for the $5,000 Ironstone Concours Foundation Scholarship Scholarships are not renewable; however, students may reapply each year as long as they continue to meet the eligibility criteria. The Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship Program is a collaboration between the Friends of the California State Fair, the California Exposition & State Fair, the California State Fair Agricultural Advisory Council, the Ironstone Concours Foundation, Blue Diamond Growers and Western Fairs Association. International Scholarship and Tuition Services, Inc. (ISTS), an independent scholarship management company, hosts the online application process and disburses awards for the program. The deadline to apply is March 2, 2018. Learn more at CAStateFair.org/scholarship. For questions about the Friends of the California State Fair Scholarship Program, please email scholarship@calexpo.com.

SAC UNIFIED POETRY SLAM: Jenny Lynn and Joe Montoya's Poetry Unplugged present The Sac Unified Poetry Slam every third Friday at Luna's, 1414 16th St., starting at 7:30 p.m. The show is unpredictable. The special guests and judges won't be known until they sign up. The slam is three rounds. This is a FREE show with purchase at the cafe, donations are encouraged to cover PSI venue dues and show staffing. $5 to slam (except youth 18 and under) winner takes the whole pot. Luna's Cafe will be serving the freshest juices and licuados in town, nothing frozen or concentrated. The menu also includes sandwiches, salads, our famous quesadilla, fresh-ground coffee, mochas, and other espresso drinks. A nice selection of beer and wine is also offered. Enjoy it all in the comfortable atmosphere of Luna's, one of this area's original cafe galleries. Supporting artists of all kinds for over 30 years.

JANE AUSTEN READING GROUP AT ELLA K. MCCLATCHY LIBRARY: This monthly group reads the works of Jane Austen and meets the third Saturday of each month in the Ella K. McClatchy library from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. All Austen fans are welcome. 2112 22nd St.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION IS SEEKING LOCAL HOST FAMILIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL EXCHANGE STUDENTS: ASSE International Student Exchange Programs (ASSE), in cooperation with your community high school, is looking for local families to host boys and girls between the ages of 15 to 18 from a variety of countries: Norway, Denmark, Spain, Italy, Japan, to name a few. ASSE students are enthusiastic and excited to experience American culture while they practice their English. They also love to share their own culture and language with their host families. Host families welcome these students into their family, not as a guest, but as a family member, giving everyone involved a rich cultural experience. The exchange students have pocket money for personal expenses and full health, accident and liability insurance. ASSE students are selected based on academics and personality, and host families can choose their student from a wide variety of backgrounds, countries and personal interests. To become an ASSE Host Family or to find out how to become involved with ASSE in your community, please call the ASSE Western Regional Office at 1-800-733-2773 or go to www.host.asse.com to begin your host family application. Students are eager to learn about their American host family, so begin the process of welcoming your new son or daughter today!

KNITTING CIRCLE AT MCKINLEY LIBRARY – Any adult interested in knitting — even an absolute beginner — is invited to join. Participants can learn to knit, or get help on current projects and advice from expert knitters. Don't forget to bring your knitting needles and yarn. Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at McKinley Library, 601 Alhambra Blvd, Sacramento.

TEEN SPACE AT MCKINLEY LIBRARY – Looking for something fun to do after school? Need a place where you're free to hang out with your friends and have a snack? Come to the McKinley Library Teen Space, Wednesdays from 3p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at McKinley Library, 601 Alhambra Blvd, Sacramento.

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