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See page 15



- Faces and Places....4
- Arts & Activities....8
- Home Improvent Guide....12
- Classifieds....13
- What's Happening....14



East Sacramento Little League Opening Day

See photos page 4



Lady Bird's Blue House to be featured in this year's East Sac Garden Tour Mother's Day weekend

See page 11

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Stamp Out Hunger

Annual letter carrier food collection to be held May 12

By BILL LAWS



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Another big, brown package waits for stamps. The flags outside local post offices fly at half-staff in memory of Barbara Bush.

Meanwhile, a poster announces the National Association of Letter Carrier's national food drive on Saturday, May 12. Stamp Out Hunger, the poster explains, is a one day event where letter carriers pick up bags of nonperishable food items left on their porch by residents.

On Saturday, states a fanciful cartoon character on the poster, letter carriers pick up more than just the mail.

Mr. Perez, a supervisor at the Arden Post Office, points out the poster to a customer. "90 percent of our letter carriers participate in the event," says Perez. "Even my wife and three kids come down to the office to help bring in the bags of donated food."

According to Kelly Siefkin, Vice President of Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services, her nonprofit has participated for three years in Stamp Out Hunger. "We're tasked to deliver locally the food picked up on that day." She explains that the food collected on May 2 is less than 2 percent of the millions of pounds of edibles the Food Bank collects annually. The food from Stamp Out Hunger, though, is significant because "it is all done in one day and all the food is only delivered to local recipients."

Nationally, Stamp Out Hunger began 26 years ago. The former organizer, Senior Gleaners, was Sacramento's nonprofit responsible for collecting and distributing food to the needy. During its tenure in Sacramento, the Senior Gleaners started an alliance with the U.S. Postal Service and the National Association of Letter Carriers. The idealistic goal was to help put an end to the problem of malnutrition and hunger.

These days, however, some things have changed. According to Siefkin, the last two Sacramento sponsors of the event have "missed the deadline" for applying for participation in the largely national food drive.

"Nonprofit participation is always cyclical," explains Siefkin. According to her, the local sponsors may or may not elect to participate in future years. In addition, the food bank's logo has been removed from the grocery bags which are delivered to the various Post Office branch offices in the Sacramento area. These bags explain on their sides the rules and requirements for donating food items. They are sent to Sacramento area residents approximately a week in advance of the May 12 event. Helping to remind residents to set out food, the bags are usually printed with the logos of the various sponsors who help to cover some of the cost of the event.

These days, The Food Bank's web page helps to advertise the food collection event. On a web page (www.sacramento food bank.org/supporter calendar) a large picture features the Food Bank's popular Thanksgiving Day's Run to Feed the Hungry. Some information is given about the national May 12 food program. "Fill a bag with non-perishable food items and leave it by your mailbox! Your letter carrier will pick it up on their normal mail run!" Links are given, as well, for more information concern the Stamp Out Hunger drive.

Last year, according to Siefkin, 13,000 pounds of food were collected from the Arden Branch post office.

Twenty six years ago, when the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive first started, nonprofits were structured to compliment the social service missions of government agencies or nationwide projects. These days, of course, nonprofits such as the Food Bank have gone on to develop their own unique and sometimes very complex service identities.

At the Arden Branch, however, according to Perez, the Stamp Out Hunger food drive is still a big, straightforward, one day event. In fact, according to a representative from the National Association of Letter Carriers, some participating post offices will be officially recognized at the Association's annual conference in Detroit.

Hopefully, Sacramento will also find a way to honor the letter carriers who make Stamp Out Hunger a very important day. As well as collect some needed food, the volunteer event clearly serves to connect neighbors to the needs of less fortunate in the community. And, perhaps just as important, it connects neighbors in the Sacramento area to the service providers who make so many of our critical deliveries.

Holistic cancer support program branches out to Midtown

By KERIN GOULD



In a sunny studio at the CLARA Auditorium on 24th Street, John Brewer led a group in an introduction to Qigong, each participant in a different stage of dealing with cancer — whether at the end of a run of chemotherapy, post-mastectomy, in remission, or accompanying a loved one with cancer. On April 12th Wellness Within, a Roseville-based cancer-support organization, offered a sampling of their classes, featuring meditation, qigong, and art therapy, as a first step toward extending their program to downtown Sacramento.

Kelly Cruchley, outreach and marketing director, said, "It's been a want and a need for a long time to be in Sacramento…They want to see how much of an interest and draw there is." Asked if today's turnout indicated they should go forward, she said, "Definitely, yes."

Patricia Brown, the director and heart of the organization, says she hopes to find someone in Sacramento who will be excited about what Wellness Within offers and help them find a regular space to use. Her broader vision is to convey the truth that a person can have a great deal of wellness, even while facing cancer or other illnesses, through movement, nutrition, meditation and expressive arts. She advocates for an integrative approach where people honor what works for them and whatever is "enabling them to have a little more freedom in the midst of the chaos."

"My expression always is that I want to give people the pen back, so they can be the authors of their own life again. I think that's important, because when you have cancer, you don't feel like your life is your own any more…But medicine has a say, and YOU have a say."

One of the strengths of the program is the sense of community and the space to talk about things they can't discuss with family and close friends, because they try to protect them and don't want to burden them. "And they learn from each other. What are you doing for your neuropathy? What are you doing for your lymphodema? What are you doing for the metal taste in your mouth?"

"The most satisfying and rewarding thing is the relationships I get to have with people who come to the center. And I feel honored that people trust the center with their vulnerabilities and trust the tools we are supplying to them. It is the most honoring work I've ever done, because I feel you are truly in the trenches with people and you are truly able to share your compassion.

The most difficult part of this work, Brown explained, is the fundraising needed to keep these programs free of cost and accessible to all, "so people don't have to worry about debt or bills or another check they have to write. It's about being a respite."

Between classes, the participants ate lunch, swapped stories and tips and laughs in a frank and feisty conversation. Just before they went on to the next class, I asked Donna Cowen, who attends the Qigong and Farm to Fork cooking classes, what she sought from Wellness Within that was different from other aspects of her cancer treatment. "What I find at Wellness Within is that I'm with other people like me that are understanding what I'm going through. And it's been a huge, huge healing process for me."

Marge Crawford explained that, "When I go for all my physical treatments, that's one thing, but there's so much of psychological and spiritual things that go into a diagnosis that you're shocked by and taken aback by. It really plays havoc with your thoughts and your feelings. To try to rectify that, I went to Wellness Within, because I needed that kind of support…I learned a lot and changed a lot. I'm very happy, even though I have a diagnosis that's non-curable…Wellness Within provides all kids of avenues to help with your spirit and your mind and to reconnect again and not hate your body." Asked how she felt after a session at Wellness Within, she smiled and said, "I feel invigorated and excited and full of gratitude for the opportunity."

Hopefully, Wellness Within will find the partners and location to bring this compassionate, supportive, and holistic program to Sacramento soon. Until then, visit http://wellnesswithin.org/, call 916.788.0333 or visit the center at 609 Oak St. Roseville, CA 95678 for more information.

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East Sacramento Little League Opening Day

Photos by STEPHEN CROWLEY
stephen@valcomnews.com

Baseball season began with its usual ceremonies in East Sacramento on Saturday, March 3 at 60th and M streets. The East Sacramento Little League operates baseball and softball programs for children ages 4 through 12.

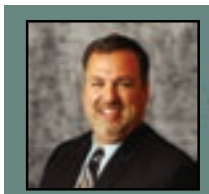
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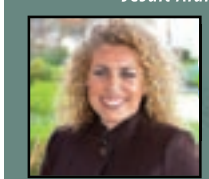
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Sacramento style



By MICHAEL SAELTZER

Al Tirapelli saw opportunity and his story of growth is not only a reflection of America but also the city of Sacramento itself.

The story begins in late 1950. Great Balls of Fire, Jailhouse Rock, and the Folsom Prison Blues were permeating the airwaves. The Poodle Cut, Bouffant, Duck Tail and the Pompadour were the coiffures on some of the biggest stars like James Dean, Lucille Ball, and Sophia Loren.

Al was young, newly married, and taking it all in while dreaming about what to make of himself. He had finished two years of service to our country and the GI Bill lay before him. If he chose to use it, it would pay his tuition plus living expenses to attend a college or vocational/technical school. The GI Bill would also provide low-cost mortgages, and a low-interest loan to start a business. Not a shabby deal, nor a shabby piece of legislation.

So Al, being inspired by the idea of cutting hair for a living, made his way down to the local hair cutting schools where he soon encountered a big problem. There was a waitlist of no less than 1 1/2 years to get into a school, at least in Michigan where Al was currently residing.

However, Al's wife had relatives who lived in Sacramento and there he could immediately enroll in a vocational program. That settled it. They moved and by 1960 Al had his license. Believe it or not he eventually grew his business to include ownership of an entire commercial building and even became involved in large investment contracts including a residential housing development in Colfax. Not bad for clipping hair.

What was the secret to this success? In order to know that one needs to get to know the man himself. Al is gregarious, sharp, and even in his 80s you can tell he has an incredible work ethic, eye for detail, and appreciation for doing things the right way. Mostly, Al knows how to make a customer feel good and come back for more.

The profession was and to some degree still is similar to being a bartender or therapist. Al knows how to listen, when to speak, what to say, and just as importantly when to say nothing. After all he is still working Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at his current location on 5031 Stockton Blvd. in none other than Tirapelli Plaza. Tirapelli Plaza, all of it, was owned by Al. He eventually sold the plaza about 14 years ago but he has managed it ever since.

Al started in a small 4 chair outfit owned by a man named Hank Shelly on Jansen Drive off Stockton only about 3 blocks away from where he is now. When Hank

See Barber, page 7









Barber:

Continued from page 6

sold the place to the other two barbers Al walked in the very next morning and was told he was fired. Not a quitter Al walked over to the next closest barber down the street owned by a guy named Charlie.

Charlie's place had 6 chairs, but only 3 fellas working. Al took the 4th chair and promised to service only his own already established clientele. Charlie had another shop nearby that he soon offered Al a chance to work in. Charlie said Al could rent a chair for $100 a month. Al took him up on the offer.

However, when Al showed up he was told the price was now $125 a month. When Al tells this part of the story he emphasizes that he immediately told Charlie, "OK, fine $125. BUT, that is it!" And, this is what Al payed from 1963-1966. Al's reputation as a great barber continued to grow rapidly. Soon he was cutting the hair of not only neighbors, but also well-heeled businessmen, and even local politicians. There was haircutting, swank, smoking, and guy talk during the days and bocce ball at night. Things were good!

By 1966 Al started doing business with two very successful Sacramento gentlemen named Joe Rapatoni and Al Silk. Eventually, Silk and Tirapelli partnered exclusively in ownership of what was to become the still operating Tirapelli Plaza. By 1970 Al was the owner of his 6 chair barbershop for the men as well as an 8 chair beauty salon right next door for the women.

After obtaining additional licenses Al went on to win large competitions at large trade shows and his shop to this day displays all the trappings of his successes including trophies, pictures, awards, and a really awesome historical collection of items from his industry such as a completely original old 1800's chair and spittoon.

Flash to the present day. Now, we have curtain bangs, the tousled lob, man buns and beards as the latest trends. As far as popular tunes we have Strip That Down, Shape of You, and God's Plan pumping through our electronic devices. Times have changed for sure. Al is retiring, selling his joint which is sort of a place out of time. But, Sacramento is still here as is the GI Bill. And hey, the Rolling Stones are still touring. I guess there's still hope for us all and for the American Dream.

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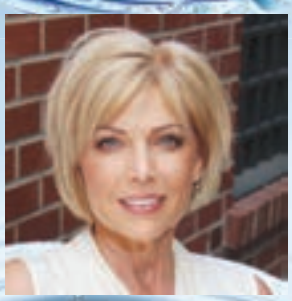
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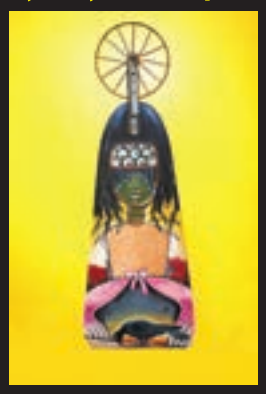
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Mother's Day Memories: The Gifts That My Mother Gave To Me

By JAN DALSKE

It is almost Mother's Day. And, once again, I will not be able to celebrate this special day with my mother. This is because she passed away 7 years ago. But, even though she is not here with me in person, I am sure that she is still here with me in spirit.

Every year when we all celebrate our mothers on the special day in May that is set aside just for them, I cannot help but think about my mother. And, I must admit that I think about her often, not just on Mother's Day, but almost every day.

And. when I think about her, I remember all of the gifts that she gave me. Even though she had eight children to raise, she treated each one of us as if we were her favorite, and showed us how special we were to her. And, she took some time every day to spend with each one of us, even if it was just for a few stolen minutes.

She gave birth to eight children within the time span of ten years. She had four boys and four girls. She had no multiple births. The oldest children helped take care of the younger children so our mother could get her house work done.

Sometimes she asked her children to help her with her house work. If she was hanging the wash on the clothesline in our backyard, she would ask the younger children to hand her the clothes pins. When the house needed sweeping or dusting the "middle" children could easily complete that task without too much effort.

Doing the laundry was easier with everyone gathering their bedding and clothing and carrying it to the garage where the washer and dryer were both located. The older girls, like me, would help with doing the ironing. She let them do the easier pieces, and watched us to make sure that we did not burn ourselves on the hot iron.

The boys could wash the car and sweep the patio. They usually made it into a game. Everyone picked up their own play toys, made sure their dirty clothes were deposited in the clothes hamper, and stripped their bedding when it needed washing.

When each day was coming to a close it was time for reading a story. Our mother liked to do that, and we enjoyed listening to her while she read. When she was young she only got to finish the eighth grade and never went to high school. But, I know that all of us learned to love books because she shared them with us. When we were old enough to learn how to read ourselves, we would take turns being the one to read the story.

My mother grew up with nineteen siblings, and they had to learn to share. Sharing was always emphasized and encouraged in our house. Most of the children had to share a bed with a sibling. Since we only had four bedrooms, and one of them was our parents' bedroom. So, eight children had to sleep in three bedrooms, No one had their own room.

Taking baths was always an organized endeavor. The girls went first, two at a time, and the boys followed. We all had one bathroom to share, so there was a line in the hallway most of the time when we were all at home. If you were smart you planned to get up earlier than your siblings to be the first one in line in the morning.

The dining room table had assigned seating. The littler ones shared a long bench, and the older ones were each assigned a chair. Our parents were at the head of the table. When the meals were finished we all helped with the dishes. The older ones did the actual washing and drying and the little ones helped carry the dishes to the sink.

We all watched television together in the evening. Our dad was in charge of the channel selection, and we never complained about what he selected. Sometimes we listened to the radio shows. They were always interesting. If you closed your eyes while you were listening you could imagine what the characters were doing.

I think growing up with such a large family taught me a lot of things. My mother was the teacher. By simply doing what a mother should do to take care of her children, she showed us how much she loved all of us. With everything that she did, she taught us what love was. Our mother and father both demonstrated how parents should care for their family.

Our father never complained about going to work every day because he knew that was what fathers did for their families. He was always the first one up in the morning and usually left the house before we had breakfast. It was our mother's job to wake us up and feed us breakfast and make sure we left the house in time to walk to school.

My brothers and sisters and I learned that kindness was always the best way to treat other people, and that people of different colors were just like us. We learned that hope was a good thing to have and that all things were possible if you believed that they were. We learned that a mother's love is the best thing in the world. It was unconditional and forever.

And, so, as another Mother's Day approaches, I think about my mother. She never complained. She was always there for us no matter what our needs might be. I hope that my daughters feel the same way about me. Maybe I should ask them sometime. I tried to be a good mother to them, I tried to be like my mother, so that I could pass along the gifts that my mother gave to me. There are too many of them to list.



Lady Bird's Blue House to be featured in this year's East Sac Garden Tour Mother's Day weekend

Join Sacramento in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the East Sac Garden Tour on Mother's Day weekend, May 12 and 13. Seven gardens will be open to public viewing, including the star of the tour this year, "The Blue House" garden from the Oscar-nominated movie Lady Bird. During your walking tour, you can buy locally-made crafts at the Artisan Boutique, visit the ChalkTop featuring David Lubin Elementary students' chalk art, enjoy a Tea Garden lunch at Sutter Lawn, visit the Sweet Stop for refreshments, and see cars on display from the California Auto Museum.

Come enjoy the Sacramento Mother's Day tradition. Stroll through the beautiful streets of East Sacramento and get ideas for your own backyard paradise at The East Sac Garden Tour. Tickets are available online: www.eastsacgardentour.com/tickets. Tickets are also available at participating East Sacramento businesses.

Visit the website for locations: eastsacgardentour.com. Tickets purchased through May 11 at noon are $20. Tickets purchased on Mother's Day weekend are $25 and can be purchased at David Lubin Elementary (3535 M Street). Children 12 years and younger are free.

All proceeds from the tour directly benefit children's education at David Lubin Elementary, the first STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) elementary school in the Sacramento Unified School District.

Frequently asked questions

Where does the tour start?

This is a self-guided event that you can enjoy at a leisurely pace. You may begin at any garden, as long as you have your ticket. Maps are provided on each ticket and in the program. The tour hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Is there transportation?

No. The tour can be walked at your own pace or you can drive from garden to garden if you choose. The tour can be enjoyed on both Saturday and Sunday, as long as you have your ticket. The ticket is good for one entrance into each garden.

Can I purchase tickets with a credit card?

Yes, through the East Sac Garden Tour Online Ticket site. Or you may purchase tickets with cash at any of our partner location listed here. You can also purchase them with a credit card or cash in front of the school during tour hours the weekend of the tour.

Luncheon tickets are separate. They can be purchased on line through the Thursday before the tour. On event weekend, luncheon tickets are only available at Sutter Lawn Tennis Club from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Can I purchase tickets on tour days?

Yes, you may purchase tickets at David Lubin School at 3535 M Street. Ticket prices will be $25.00 on event days.

How about tickets for children?

Children 12 and under are free.

Where do I pick up my tickets if I purchased them online?

Tickets purchased online can be picked up on the days of the tour at our Will Call Booth, located at David Lubin Elementary School at 3535 M Street, Sacramento.

Where is the Tea Garden Lunch?

Lunch will be served in the Tea Garden at Sutter Lawn (3951 N Street) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. Tickets may be purchased at the Tea Garden Saturday and Sunday of the event or online through Thursday, May 10.

If I don't finish the tour on Saturday, can I finish it on Sunday?



Yes, please take the time to enjoy all of the gardens. You may complete the tour on Sunday, as long as you have your ticket. Ticket provides one time admission to each garden.

Where are the restrooms?

Restrooms are located at David Lubin School and Sutter Lawn. Look for the notation on your program.

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What's happening East Sacramento?

SATURDAY, MAY 5

ASIAN FOOD BAZAAR: The Sacramento United Methodist Church, 6929 Franklin Blvd., presents its annual Asian Food Bazaar from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Food items include teriyaki chicken, Korean short ribs, chow mein, udon and sushi. Boutique handmade items include: handcrafted cards, raffle, games and entertainment.

FRIDAY, MAY 11

GET YOUR TRI-TIP AT THIS KIWANIS DINNER: Tri-tip, check; salad, check; beans, check; baked potatoes, check; rolls, check; cookies, check. This is the menu for East Sacramento Kiwanis' first tri-tip dinner of the year to be held Friday, May 11, (The Friday before Mother's Day.) The pickup will be at the Kiwanis Family House, 2875 50th St., north of Broadway. Patrons can designate a time from 3 to 6:30 p.m. for pick-up. The cost of the dinner, which feeds four, will be $45. "It's a great way to start the Mother's Day Weekend, a great deal (on a) great meal," said Charlie Bussey, the event chair. This dinner is just one of the fundraisers the club conducts throughout the year to support their activities in the community including, Key Club at St. Francis, Hiram Johnson, West Campus, and Florin; Circle K, at CSU, Sacramento, a free community Easter Egg Hunt, reading programs at two elementary schools, gifts at Christmas to those in need and the list goes on. For more info, or to order a tri-tip dinner, call Charlie at 916-837-0162. *Submitted by Tom Ontis.*

SATURDAY, MAY 12

FRIENDS OF SUTTER'S FORT TO PRESENT DELICIOUSLY DELIGHTFUL "TOUR BY CHOCOLATE" EVENING EVENT: In partnership with California State Parks and Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, Friends of Sutter's Fort is excited to present a delicious and all-new "Tour by Chocolate" event on Saturday evening, May 12, 2018 at 6 p.m. Fort visitors who participate in this inaugural walking tour will learn about the fascinating history of Sutter's Fort and its interesting connections to chocolate, such as how it was used for medicinal purposes, the role it played in the Donner Party rescue, and more. During the 45-minute walking tour, knowledgeable Fort staff, volunteers and docents will lead guests through five to six rooms to learn interesting nuggets about the Fort while sampling chocolates, many of which are locally made and graciously provided by amazing Northern California chocolatiers and candy companies such as Ginger Elizabeth, Tombo Toffee and Z Cioccolato. At the end of the tantalizing tour, guests will be treated to a slice of chocolate cake along with other tasty sweets. All proceeds from this rare evening event will support the ongoing efforts of the Friends of Sutter's Fort, a nonprofit 501 c 3 organization who works every day to provide critical funding for the educational programming, and restoration efforts at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park. Admission to this special "Tour by Chocolate" walking tour at Sutter's Fort SHP start at $25 per person for limited early bird pricing available through 4/30 (for adults and children ages 12 and over) before they increase to $40 on May 1. Additionally, members can enjoy discounted tickets for $20 through 4/30. For advance tickets or more information, please call 916-445-4422 or visit www.suttersfort.org.

SATURDAY, MAY 12-SUNDAY, MAY 13

EAST SAC GARDEN TOUR MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND: Join Sacramento in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the East Sac Garden Tour on Mother's Day weekend, May 12 and 13. Seven gardens will be open to public viewing, including the star of the tour this year, "The Blue House" garden from the Oscar-nominated movie Lady Bird. During your walking tour, you can buy locally-made crafts at the Artisan Boutique, visit the ChalkTop featuring David Lubin Elementary student's chalk art, enjoy a Tea Garden lunch at Sutter Lawn, visit the Sweet Stop for refreshments, and see cars on display from the California Auto Museum. Come enjoy the Sacramento Mother's Day tradition. Stroll through the beautiful streets of East Sacramento and get ideas for your own backyard paradise at The East Sac Garden Tour. Tickets are available online: www.eastsacgardentour.com/tickets. Tickets are also available at participating East Sacramento businesses. Visit the website for locations: eastsacgardentour.com. Tickets purchased through May 11 at noon are $20. Tickets purchased on Mother's Day weekend are $25 and can be purchased at David Lubin Elementary (3535 M Street). Children 12 years and younger are free. All proceeds from the tour directly benefit children's education at David Lubin Elementary, the first STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) elementary school in the Sacramento Unified School District.

ONGOING

LOW-COST VACCINATION CLINICS AT THE SSPCA: Mondays and Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for vaccines; no appointments necessary. Vaccines include:
1) DAPP vaccine ($20) — DAPP stands for Distemper, Adenovirus, Parainfluenza, and Parvovirus. While important for dogs of every age, puppies are susceptible to the Parovirus.
2) Bordetella ($20) -- often referred to as the kennel cough vaccine, this helps protect against a strain of bacteria that can cause kennel cough. Many boarding kennels and groomers require this vaccine for services,
3) FVRCP vaccination ($20) prevents three potentially deadly airborne viruses: rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia in cats,
4) Rabies shot ($6) -- this vaccine is required by animal control or to license your dog. The first vaccine is valid for one year, subsequent vaccines if given on time will last 3 years.
If you are 65 or older, vaccinations are free! The Sacramento Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is located at 6201 Florin Perkins Road, Sacramento.

SATURDAY, MAY 19



Courtesy of FotosDeColie

SUTTER'S FORT TO PRESENT "HANDS ON HISTORY: CELEBRATE COMMUNITY": Continuing a popular series of interactive and fun "Hands on History" activities each month, Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (SHP) and Friends of Sutter's Fort are proud to present a special "Hands on History: Celebrate Community" event on Saturday, May 19, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fort visitors will have the opportunity to step back in time to the 1840s and learn about some of the communities and cultures in Mexican California. The Swiss John Sutter came to Alta California and joined an already thriving rancho society. He received a vast Mexican land grant in an area with established trade networks and a diverse Native population. Sutter influenced the cultural diversity at the Fort and California. He tapped into the Native population as a source of labor, brought Hawaiians to California, and encouraged immigrants from the United States to make California their new home. The discovery of gold had an even greater impact on the culture in California when tens of thousands of people came from all over the world. On this special "Hands on History" day, representatives from the Hawaiian community will be giving presentations about California's earliest Hawaiians and their role in the history and culture of the Sacramento Valley and early California. In addition, there will be various presentations happening that day, including by the Aztlan Ballet de Folklorico dance troupe performing at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., rancho culture demonstrations as well as French and English fur trappers demonstrating how traps work. Interactive and fun hands-on craft making will be available for kids of all ages who are interested in creating special keepsakes to take home. And, of course, demonstrations of black powder weapons in action will take place including the crowd-favorite firing of Sutter's cannon. Admission to this special event at Sutter's Fort SHP is $7 per adult (18 and older), $5 per youth (ages 6 to 17) and is free for children 5 and under (regular admission pricing is $5 per adult, $3 for youth). For more, call 916-445-4422 or visit www.suttersfort.org. Subscribe to California State Parks News via e-mail at info@parks.ca.gov or via RSS feed.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP: Every first Monday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m. Location: Sacramento. Call 916-428-3271 for exact location. Description: Is your friend or family member in a domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking situation? This free, drop-in group is for you. Learn how to support your loved one, and receive some support yourself among people who are in the same situation. Feel free to call My Sister's House for more information: 916-428-3271.

#METOO SUPPORT GROUP: Every third Monday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m. Location: Sacramento. Call 916-428-3271 for exact location. Description: This drop-in support group is free, confidential, open to all genders, and available to sexual assault survivors at any point in their healing. Feel free to call My Sister's House for more information: 916-428-3271.

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.

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.





Benefit concert aids first local steel pan orchestra

Provides empowering music education to high school students

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

The public is invited to a benefit concert for Hiram W. Johnson High School's Youth Empowerment Steel Orchestra featuring the Shawn Thwaites Rebel Quartet on Saturday, May 19 at the Guild Theatre, 2828 35th St. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; the event begins at 7 p.m. The net proceeds from ticket sales, sponsorships and donations at the event will go to maintaining and adding additional steel pan instruments thus enabling the YES Orchestra to expand.

The concert is sponsored by the non-profit Pan United Youth Movement. The Pan United Youth Movement was founded in 2004 by Shawn Thwaites and is currently supporting its third youth orchestra. The YES Orchestra is an all steel drum ensemble directed by Shawn Thwaites in cooperation with the After School Safety and Enrichment for Teens program at Hiram W. Johnson High School. Shawn is a Trinidadian-American musician and educator originally from Washington, DC residing in Sacramento.

The Shawn Thwaites Rebel Quartet will be headlining the show playing songs off their album NEW LIFE. STRQ was born out of an exploratory effort to fuse intricate masterpieces of Caribbean, African, American, and European composers. With the steel drum at the helm, STRQ is undoubtedly the world's most eclectic ensemble. As a steel drum musician, Thwaites' vision was to compile a cadre of talented musicians in a manner that would authentically present the steel drum and its deeply rooted history, while simultaneously pushing the instrument to uncharted territories.

The YES Orchestra will be making their first public appearance. As Sacramento's first steel pan drum orchestra, they will be playing at local cultural festivals, street fairs, and high school events in the future. Royal Tribe Dance Crew, also part of Hiram Johnson's ASSETs program, will open the evening.

Forrest Reed, a board member of Pan United Youth Movement and also TunesWork, that are the two presenting sponsors for this concert, suggested to Shawn and the board that they combine the talents of his fine jazz group Shawn Thwaites Rebel Quartet with the Y.E.S. Orchestra and make their first public appearance a fundraiser at the Guild.

Looking forward to the May 19 benefit, Reed says he looks forward to seeing the Hiram Johnson students perform for the first time in public knowing that each one will experience something special.

"Music is powerful and can be transformative. And making music together in collaboration is beautiful and rewarding. To see this group go from being introduced to the idea in January to being a performing group just five months later has to feel magical for them. It is empowering, hence their name. Shawn makes this possible. I know this is going to be an exciting concert to attend. And I'm glad we are showcasing his virtuoso talent, along with the two groups he is leading."

Reed hopes the business community steps up to financially support the expansion of the YES Orchestra. All the money they raise will go to maintain the 12 sets of steel pans he brought to Sacramento, and purchase more instruments so they can grow the Orchestra at another school.

"This enables us to empower more students one note at a time. It has been fulfilling to be a part of birthing this unique student Orchestra and know there will be many more performances around the metro area in the future."

Teaching the youth at Hiram Johnson is not a job, says Shawn. "It is pure fun and rewarding. When you work with kids who can put on concert in 3 months of learning a new instrument is just amazing."

With STRQ, Thwaites is actively reviving the birth of cool contemplated by Miles and realized by those who have used this approach as their musical foundation, such as Robert Glasper, Christian Scott, Esperanza Spalding, and Kendrick Lamar. Joining him include Patrick Anderson, drummer extraordinaire and funny man of the group; Ben Kopf, bass player and fellow Berklee alum and also one of Sacramento's leading Upright and Electric Bass player; Alex Raymond, awesome energetic pianist with the million dollar smile; Aaron Smith, trumpet player and probably plays in every band in Sacramento; and Levi Saelua, alto saxophone, musical director and brilliant musician.

Thwaites' move to California from Virginia is the inspiration behind New Life. "My life changed for me and my two kids, Kamari and Jayvyn. It took about 1 and a half years to complete the album. I performed the music live with STRQ for one year until we perfected the sound we were looking for."

Shawn says the future is bright for YES with plans on expanding the program to other schools and performing throughout the metro area. PUYM has taken two steel drum orchestra's to Disney World and Universal Studios. YES' vision is to continue to give great opportunities through music that will expand the minds of our youth.

"YES will give orchestrated sound with all five sections of the steel drum family. Which give listeners the ability to hear all the different timbre," Shawn says. "(The audience) can always expect a surprise. We are also preparing some classics songs and original material (for the upcoming fundraiser)."



Reed learned of Shawn through an article written in the News & Review over a year ago about his musical background and his vision to re-create a student all steel pan orchestra after moving to Sacramento. He went to see STRQ play at the Shady Lady Saloon and offered him assistance in making the YES orchestra a reality. He called a number of high schools until the ASSESTs After School Program at Hiram Johnson decided to offer to host his music program in their curriculum.

Reed was so impressed by Shawn's talent and being a percussionist, he was inspired to buy a steel pan drum from Trinidad and began studying with him. Reed joined the PUYM Board and with the help of his wife arranged a performance by Shawn and his adult students at Delta College in Stockton last fall. "He is a very patient teacher, and being a father of two he is wonderful with kids. He does not require his students to read music, but instead works with them to learn the notes on the steel pan, study all the scales and then memorize pieces of music. I have had a personal experience of the joy it brings to do a public performance with others, not long after beginning to study with Shawn. Being 67 and with 29 notes on my steel pan drum, I know that this challenge for my brain has to be good for me. I encourage others to join his adult classes," Reed says.

Reed began producing benefit concerts in 1993. Together Hunger Ends raised $15,000 and 4,000 pounds of food. At that time, Reed was the district manager with Wherehouse Entertainment and spent 10 years in music retail, opening the local Virgin Megastore as Manager. He co-produced the benefit concert for Music & Memory recently For The Arts with Steelin' Dan and they raised $8,000 to help those with Alzhiemer's in Nevada County. That show was for TunesWork which is a new non-profit he joined last year whose mission is to transform lives through the power of music (www.TunesWork.org).

If you go:

What: Youth Empowerment Steel Orchestra concert featuring the Shawn Thwaites Rebel Quartet
When: Saturday, May 19; doors open at 6:30 p.m.; the event begins at 7 p.m.
Where: Guild Theatre, 2828 35th St.

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