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East Sacramento News

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River Park driveway concert brought neighbors together

see page 3

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Op-ed: Recommit yourself to establishing dignity for all humans, but most importantly people of color



Photo by Jose Rojas

Cardel Daniels

By Cardel Daniels

I hate talking about racial issues. I'm so embedded in white culture I often feel like I'm a poor messenger. However, I have to speak about the two most recent incidents in the media today. Please know the George Floyd incident is one of the worst I've ever seen, as bad as Rodney King. All of these videos or incidents are not created the same, but this particular one is an unmitigated murder. If this can happen in our society, significant changes need to be made with our government. I've seen or read all sorts of shades of gray about these incidents before but there can be no diffusion relating to what happened here. This cannot happen anymore.

It's not going be helped by protests or riots. The victims of these incidents need their dignity restored. People from a certain race or communities in a certain economic strata are not offered basic human dignity.

This I can speak to specifically. Somehow, I have been allowed to exist in a hugely white world. Currently, I live in East Sacramento, and before that I have always lived in upper middle class white environments. Those of you who know me can attest to the fact that I am self confident, and in some circles a beloved and respected member of a beloved and respected community. I have a high level of confidence, some would even say arrogance. Only in some small instances have I felt I've been discriminated against. That has been always in areas where I have traveled to where those allowances are not afforded. The problem with this is I've had to create or in some instances demand that within my immediate environment. I cannot imagine a life like Mr. Floyd experienced where everywhere you look indignity and danger is a potential at any moment. It makes me sad that he can't have the largesse I've been able to have for most of my life.

I will tell you when I was trucking across the country I got to see Detroit, Philadelphia, Newark, Gary, Chicago, East St. Louis and I have family in Arkansas. The despair and lack of dignity in these communities is hard to escape. I have guilt when I've been there and return to the life I am lucky to have. I feel shame that so many people who I probably am no better than live every day in a hopeless situation – not just them but their children are born into this same hopelessness. It's one thing to be in a hopeless situation; it's another to feel you will never be afforded a way out and experience it every day.

During this pandemic I've seen a lot of talk, from white people mostly, about rights – the right not to wear masks, the right to get your hair done, the right to shop, the right to have a graduation for your kids, etc. What about George Floyd's right to live another day? For some of you to click on a web page or news channels and get ingratiated with the notion your rights are being abridged is abhorrent and has to have some sort of karmic balance somewhere. And to be honest I hope you receive it if not in this life...

Lastly about the Amy Cooper incident... I do live in East Sac and I do have a modicum of safety where I live, but one of my jokes about NextDoor is "tell those (expletive) I've been living here since 2005 and I'm not casing their home." I was interested in seeing what a bird-watching black man actually looked like, and he did look just like Carlton from The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air just, like I suspected.

My son is 19 now, and I still have him located via the Find My Friends app on his iPhone. I don't do it because I don't trust

see DIGNITY page 5

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Editor ..... Monica Stark
Art Director ..... Annin Piper
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Advertising Executives: ..... Melissa Andrews, Linda Pohl

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1109 Markham Way
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f: (916) 429-9906

Cover photo by: Monica Stark

A teenager's perspective on racial injustice

By Akshaj Mehta, age 14

An influx of social media throughout the years causes everyone to be more aware of the world news. Unfortunately, it also brings light to negative situations. Remember the Exonerated 5 were kept in jail because of how everyone thought they were in the wrong. Social media is a blessing and a curse. As recent events unfold, it directly holds evidence to crimes and wrongdoings, which can be used to bring justice to those situations.

The When They See Us documentary brought light to the Exonerated 5 and told this story to a new generation. As I was watching it last year the relevance was being more and more as time went on. The facts of racial profiling still exists and it is quite surprising that When They See Us took place in 1990 and 30 years later similar problems are arising. It is terrible that people think racial profiling is almost gone and if it were not for Social Media and such, racial profiling wouldn't become a more of a prominent topic to discuss.

Even after a year of watching the documentary it's painful to see that it still is true now. Ahmed Arbury was shot because of his race. He was only out for a run. George Floyd was killed in custody of police officers after repeatedly yelling he could not breathe. It is shameful that we live in a society where the Racial Unjust is still prevalent.

The social justice system in America certainly needs to be revised and needs to be fixed. It is most definitely unfortunate and I hope justice will be served to those in these situations. As Martin Luther King Jr. said which heavily applies to this situation, "Injustice is a threat to justice everywhere". If those in wrong do not get the justice they deserve, who's to say that justice is still prominent or if it still exists?

River Park driveway concert brought neighbors together









By Monica Stark

Enjoying live music during this pandemic has mostly been nonexistent, but local musicians Skylar Thomas and Mike "Laz" Lozano of River Park have entertained neighbors in front of Thomas' front yard on Jerome Way in a sort of block party approach on both Friday, May 15 and Saturday, May 23 with possible future dates to be announced on NextDoor and the River Park neighborhood Facebook group. The catch: the audience was asked to practice social distancing and many wore face masks.

Banging on her portable grand piano on the driveway of her home, Skylar played the keys and sang as Laz rocked out on his electric guitar as members of the audience sat in lawn chairs six feet apart on the blocked-off street. Skylar brought out her pet tortoises –Wanda and and Rorschach (the latter is named after the anti-hero from the movie "Watchman" or just Rory for short) – for children to play with and banana and Nutella popsicles for people to enjoy.

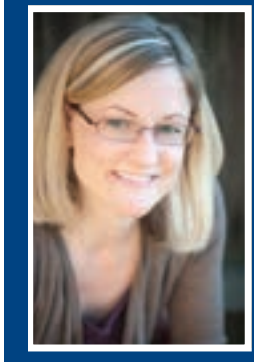
"You can't go indoors anywhere and listen to music. I think this is a great idea," Laz said.

Talk about making the most out of the Covid-19 crisis.

A few of the songs included: Chaka Khan's "Tell me Something Good; Stealers Wheels' "Stuck In The Middle With You";"Love on the Brain" by Rihanna; "Could You Be Loved" by Bob Marley & The Wailers; "Some Kind of Wonderful" by Grand Funk Railroad; "Fooled Around and Fell in Love" by Elvin Bishop; "Can't Find My Way Home" by Blind Faith; and "Superwoman" by Alicia Keys, which was dedicated to the superheroes of our time: our medical workers and doctors. "If you are one it goes out to you," Skylar said.

While Skylar said the set was really spontaneous and that a lot of the songs had not been rehearsed, they just did what they could. "We just

see CONCERT page 5



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How to prepare for a big alligator arrival to the Sacramento Zoo

By Jason Jacobs

Despite our closure over the past two months there have been several new additions to the Sacramento Zoo. The most exciting is the transformation of our front pond habitat to house a group of alligators.

The zoo's pond is divided into two sections; the larger of the two continues to house our flock of Caribbean flamingos while the lower section formerly housed several species of waterfowl, including a lot of what we at the zoo call "free-loaders." These birds included hundreds of wild mallards that made the zoo their home.

Zoo staff was looking to make a more exciting first impression for our guests, so about a year ago after consulting with expert colleagues, we made the decision to start the process of converting the lower pond to an exhibit to house alligators.



The species we decided to focus on was the American alligator. The decision process was rather easy. Globally, there are 23 species included in the order Crocodylia often referred to as crocodilians. This order includes the alligators, crocodiles, caimans and gavial. The majority of these species are found in tropical areas and only two are found in habitats where temperatures fall below freezing: the American alligator and the Chinese alligator. The two species of alligator are very different; the Chinese alligator is a Critically Endangered species that is found in eastern China and numbers less than 200 individuals in the wild. Reaching lengths of less than five feet, this is one of the smallest species of crocodilian and is known for its reclusive behavior. Many zoos throughout the world have devoted considerable resources to breeding this animal, so there is a stable and thriving zoo population. The American alligator grows considerably larger than its Chinese cousin. American alligators can reach 13 feet in length and are perfectly adapted for Sacramento's climate. You might be surprised to learn that the American alligator's range includes Florida and Louisiana but also more northern states such as Virginia, Georgia and other areas within the southeast that receive cold winters. The American alligator goes into hibernation during the winter and as long as their body slows down, they do not eat over the cold months. Their large size and adaptability to our climate made the American alligator our choice to bring to Sacramento.

American alligators are also a conservation success story. At one time, poaching led to a decrease in their population and the alligator was listed as an Endangered species. Conservation measures in the 1960s included commercial captive-farming of the species which allowed wild populations to begin to increase. The plan worked so well that in 1987 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service announced the status of the species to be recovered. The population of American alligators within the United States is now estimated to number in the millions.

Before the arrival of the alligators, there was a lot of preparation needed to transform the lower pond to house the gators. First and foremost, the pond's liner had eroded over the past 30 years. A new durable liner was selected that weighed several thousand pounds. Anthony Bailey, our facilities director, led his team to shape the liner and shift it in the perfect position to start the process of building the pond. It took well over a dozen facilities employees just to move the bulky liner. A new pump and filter system were also added to the pond to recirculate the water and clear debris. The facilities team also started the fabrication of safety barriers. A simple fence that was used to contain the waterfowl was not enough to keep the toothy alligators inside their new habitat and away from our guests. Alligators have been known to climb a straight six-foot chain link fence, but as they get older and heavier their climbing ability diminishes. The facilities team fabricated a fence that is placed at an angle inside the perimeter. The cantilever design prevents an alligator from climbing out.

While work was going on in Sacramento, a team of three zoo staff traveled to Florida to learn more about caring for alligators. They visited the Everglades Alligator Farm in Homestead as

see ZOO page 11

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Concert:

continued from page 3

wanted to bring joy to people," Skylar said.

A professional musician, Skylar received her bachelor's degree in music from Sacramento State University in 2016 and is looking to go back to obtain her teaching credential.

A longtime member of the Sacramento music scene Laz recalls when after he got out of college, live music filled such places as Spanky's, Press Club, Melarkey's, the Fox and Goose. "Cake came out of there. It was an amazing time and I'm still around, a lot of us are still around. I had a family and dropped out but now I am back playing music again at Old Ironsides, Fox and Goose.

"I just love playing music and as soon as I met my neighbor it turns out she knows people that I know and we just came down and started playing, and it's that magic of communication – that connection. It's a neat thing," Laz said.

A piano teacher in the neighborhood, Skylar threw out the idea on NextDoor, partially to motivate herself, she said. "Being that I can't perform, I need to motivate myself. If you want to hear me, I'll put on a free concert. If you want to be generous, I'll put tips out too, but, I just really want some happiness and joy in the neighborhood because of the whole pandemic. It was also to promote my piano lessons."

Laz saw the post and reached out to her and said he just really wanted to jam.

While the two only just met each other before their first performance and hadn't really practiced together before, but the professionals that they are, they were able to just jump in and rock out together. They mentioned a couple of times that they could use a drummer … If there's anyone in the neighborhood....



Dignity:

continued from page 2

him; I do it because I don't trust the society he exists in. Think of this: I have to keep track of my son and train him specifically how to interact, not just with the police but also the random white woman in yoga pants and a fitness hoodie. And, he looks like Carlton as well. When I was young man growing up in Pasadena I had to get an I.D at 15 primarily because I would get calls and accosted by the police because I may have not lived there.

In closing I'm going to ask all my friends to recommit yourself to establishing dignity for all humans, but most importantly people of color. For those of you who consider yourselves liberal, please know you are not beyond being a part of the problem and keep an awareness of the times of omission where you allow for these indiscretions to occur. Voting for Obama was not a pass to absolution.

Regarding the riots... In my view, it costs us the high road and gives people an out for addressing the important issues. The public has long learned how to ignore protests and too often the same ignored people lead these movements. We have to find a different way to get justice. It has not worked for the homeless here in Sacramento; it has not worked for police indiscretions. Yelling and screaming is not the way and violence will not prevail. One of the things destroyed in Minneapolis was low income housing.

For my conservative friends to have compassion for dignity is a acknowledgment of the freedom for all. If you believe you have a right not to wear a mask tomorrow you must believe all people of every stripes have the right to live in freedom or dignity every day.

What a sad time and I haven't even spoken on the incident in Georgia...

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Hair salons, barbershops reopen

By Lance Armstrong
Valley Commnity Newspapers Staff writer



Photo by Jordon Harris/Will Model 4 Toyz

Jessica Alyse cuts her client's hair on her first day back on the job at Jessica Alyse Salon, on May 27.

Hair salons and barbershops began reopening throughout Sacramento County on May 27, following impacts of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the government stay-at-home orders on local businesses.

A day earlier, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced that these types of businesses could reopen in most of the state's counties.

Sacramento County revised its health order on the same day to allow for those openings, effective May 26 at 11:59 p.m.

Those reopenings come with various requirements, including that both workers and clients must wear face coverings.

Clients will be screened at the door and will have their appointments canceled or rescheduled, if they show any symptoms of COVID-19. Workers showing the same signs must also stay home.

A new smock or cape will be given to each customer, and working stations and high-traffic areas will be sanitized on a regular basis.

To avoid congregations of people, customers will not be allowed to wait for their appointments inside of the places of business, and workers will not be allowed to serve more than one client at a time.

Additionally, magazines and books will no longer be placed in areas for clients to read, and coffee and other beverage dispensers must be removed from the public areas.

With the reopening or scheduled reopenings of many of these businesses within the coverage areas of Valley Community Newspapers – East Sacramento, Pocket, Land Park, Arden and Carmichael – this publication spoke with representatives of some of those businesses on May 27.

East Sacramento

Briana Burster, owner of Details Salon, at 1675 Alhambra Blvd., has grown accustomed to big changes with her business.

"My larger salon is actually under construction, because a car drove through it in East Sac on 32nd (Street) and Folsom (Boulevard)," she said. "So, that's been under construction for a year."

Burster described the emotions she experienced in returning to work on May 27.

"I had a little, minor breakdown this morning – a little emotional, because you're excited, you want to see your clients, but there's just a lot of this underlying stress," she said.

Burster noted that she is well prepared for protecting her clients against the spread of this coronavirus, noting that she has plenty of masks, hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.

Burster added that in terms of financial stability, she is fortunate that her husband, Jay, works in real estate.

"He's also taken a hit in his business, but we're fine," she said. "It's good to get back to work and get some income rolling and be as safe and careful and cautious as possible," she said.

Michele Scarberry, owner of Hair to Eternity, at 729 56th St., told this paper that some of the hairstylists at her business were able to obtain unemployment checks.

Scarberry mentioned that she is currently figuring out the most effective ways to operate under the new guidelines.

"(The guidelines) will certainly make our business different than it was," she said. "We just can't have people just sitting in there reading magazines, having coffee, sitting at our community table. It's one client at a time in a chair 6 feet apart from the other workers. Everything has got to be sanitized in between clients.

"So, trying to even make the money that we would normally be making is going to be more difficult, unless we work much longer days, like 12- to 14-hour days. So, that will just take some time getting back into the scheduling and getting everyone back on to a regular schedule., and just hoping that we don't see a phase two of this."

see SALONS page 7





Salons:

continued from page 6

Pocket-Greenhaven

Sandy Huand, owner of Simone Salon & Spa, at 1024 Florin Road in the Lake Crest Village Shopping Center, said that the temporary closure of her business was a challenging situation.

"(Being closed) was very difficult, because we stopped (working) for two and a half months," she said. "It was pretty hard. I can't get away from paying my rent. I still have to pay the rent. I can't (pay the rent), because we (were not) working, so I don't have money to pay. Now they can't kick me out (due to the city's tenant eviction moratorium)."

Although Huand, who opened her business in 2014, applied for financial assistance, she said that she was unable to obtain that aid.

Sophia Tran, manager of Artistry Salon & Spa, at 6405 Riverside Blvd., said that she was happy to return to work.

"I'm really happy to see all the regular customers," she said.

Tran mentioned that this salon is also behind on their rent payments, yet protected by the city's tenant eviction moratorium.

She added that her business's future is uncertain.

"We actually don't know, because we just (re-) opened," Tran said. "That's why we actually don't know. Maybe in a couple months we will know. By that time, we will see if we can stay long enough or not."

Land Park

Tracy Kwong, owner of Shear Beauty Hair Salon, at 1049 Broadway, said that she delayed the reopening of her business until June 1.

"Because we have to make everything distant (with 6 feet separations), we have to rearrange the salon," she said. "I just want to make sure everything is the right way."

Kwong shared her frustrations with having her business temporarily shut down.

"It was really hard and frustrating," she said. "I tried to get a loan and was not approved. It's really tough."

Kwong, who has worked as a hairdresser for more than 30 years, noted that she is in a position in which she owes rent that she cannot currently pay.

"I'm just getting an email (message) from the landlord (for) two months rent," she said. "You know, I don't even open the business, right? How can I have income to pay rent? I don't even have any help. If I could get some loans from the bank. Pretty much, small businesses, they don't get much help.

"I don't know. We might have to raise the price a little bit on the haircuts, whatever to try to make up for it to pay rent. So, it's very tough."

Jessica Alyse, owner of Jessica Alyse Studio, at 2416 18th St., said that she is glad to be back in business.

"It's very exciting," she said. "It's honestly something that kind of looked like it wasn't going to happen for a while. So, we're taking what we can right now, but we are excited to start making money, and pay for all the rent that has been accumulating."

Alyse noted that her business is surviving despite her lack of success in obtaining grants and unemployment benefits.

She has instead been spending part of her savings that she had set aside for a second location of her business in Elk Grove.

"I just opened my salon last year, and so my savings I had started, I wanted to have a second salon in Elk Grove as of the year anniversary, which would be at the end of August," Alyse said.

Alyse added that the temporary shutdown of her business delayed that plan.

"The idea of a second salon, which is where my business was going, is not going to happen for a while," she said.

Arden, Carmichael

Libbee's Hair Salon, at 6916 Fair Oaks Blvd. in Carmichael, reopened on May 30.

Linola "Lynn" Frandrup, owner of Libbee's, said that she would have liked to receive more advanced notice that she could reopen her business.

"How they handled it that all of a sudden one day (to) say we're going to be weeks out, and then, 'Oh, you can open tomorrow,'" she said. "No warning, no pre-planning. They could have gave us a heads up. That really messed up a lot of people."

Frandrup also addressed the new requirements for salons and barbershops.

"They are good rules," she said. "They are stepping up to make sure we keep people safe. We have to implement. We've always been sanitary, but this is just stepping up the game more."

Hang Pham, manager of Hair Pros Beauty Salon, at 3075 Arden Way, returned to work at this business on June 2.

Pham acknowledged the changes that had to be made to reopen the business.

"(There are) a lot of guidelines we have to follow," she said.

She additionally commented on the financial struggles that this salon has experienced due to the stay-at-home order.

"It's the small business," Pham said. "We don't get any loans. I applied for a loan, but I don't get approved for it. It's a payroll (issue) and I don't have any employees. I work for myself. (The bills) had to be delayed until I go back to work.

"We've been away for a long time and now we want to go back to work."



Photo courtesy of Jay Burster

Briana Burster, owner of Details Salon, reopened her Alhambra Boulevard business on May 27.

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Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

My emotions have swung wildly over the past 3 months, sometimes hour-to-hour – despair, hope, disgust, profound sadness. I attempt to stay grounded not only emotionally but mentally. I strive to live in a state of gratitude and grace. I am open-minded, a lifelong learner, a seeker of truth, and never have these qualities been more important to me.

Mostly right now, I am angry. Instead of coming together against a 'common enemy', this virus has further polarized our beleaguered country. Name calling, shaming, even physical assaults have occurred. Those not wearing masks have been termed selfish, immature and irresponsible – my personal favorite was 'disease vector,' I guess like mosquitoes and ticks. People are COVID weary, edgy, reactive, and fearful. For the first time in history, healthy people have been forced to quarantine. I have questioned people's seemingly blind compliance and the ease with which they have given up so many of their civil rights.

Fear is an amazing way to control people. But fear, along with anxiety and social isolation, also suppresses the immune system. The Administration, struggling with an unprecedented pandemic, has been condemned at every turn. The alleged scientists, without any historical perspective, have speculated. Their models, projections and mitigations are educated guesses. And data now shows they have been way off. People continue to die each day from the flu, cancer, diabetes and host of other maladies. Nevertheless, the media has perpetuated the worst-COVID-scenarios, sometimes in spite of more accurate information. I am angry about the loss of precious lives, seniors dying alone because their loved ones were prohibited from visiting, masks inside-outside-in cars-walking-on bicycles – people who have chosen to re-breathe their own carbon dioxide over air that is cleaner now than in decades.

I am angry that people will line up to receive a vaccine, thus serving as the largest clinical trial in history. Thousands die each year from the seasonal flu and we've had vaccines every year. Vaccines aren't cures, they are prophylactic. My heart aches for all the losses that will never be counted – suicides, depressions, destroyed families and relationships, lost businesses and livelihoods that won't come back. While I honor people's choices, I can't help but ask what happened to common sense, to intellectual curiosity, to taking personal responsibility, to asking questions and critical thinking? Instead, we cast blame, criticize and judge, lash out at anyone who does not share our current world/political views. My fervent hope is that we WILL come back from this stronger, more conscious, more grateful, kinder and more compassionate. This is an opportunity for positive change because our country will never be the same.

Sincerely, Melissa Andrews
Sacramento

Dear Editor,

I'm a retired state employee who has lived in Greenhaven-Pocket for several decades. I didn't vote for Pres. Trump, and I'm not a Trump supporter. At the same time, though, I think on occasionTrump has gotten some things right, despite many in the media and elsewhere not acknowledging that possibility.

Reading Pat Lynch's column in the May 22 Pocket News entitled "Covidiocy," I was disappointed to see she engaged in some of the same hate-filled rhetoric she accuses proponents of opening up the economy early of doing. Name calling ("covidiots" and "asshats"—really?) and implying Nazis, Confederate sympathizers, and alleged gun nuts dominate the ranks of those desiring the economy to reopen perhaps prematurely ("So that's the opposition") hardly is a constructive means of furthering the discourse in this area.

Yes, I believe it's time or maybe even past time in some jurisdictions to reopen the country, which is underway already in varying degrees everywhere, and not just because I need desperately to get a haircut! It's because if millions of workers are forced to remain inside any longer, serious and tragic social problems are likely to be exacerbated. Moreover, millions of small to medium businesses are threatened with disaster if they are not up and running as soon as practicable.

I doubt I'm the only person who thought the various stay at home orders would last just long enough to flatten the curve and prevent overwhelming the hospital system. The evidence suggests those goals were satisfied some time ago, including even in the New York Metro area, from where a disproportionately high number of viral infections originated. So to me, it is hardly surprising that many people, not just a few Nazis and Confederates!, might wonder why some arguably want the shutdown to continue seemingly indefinitely, despite evidence many already vulnerable people are suffering catastrophically and despite more and more evidence that being outside actually is a good thing. Skeptics on this last point should check the numbers of infections reported of homeless people in Hawaii and young beach goers in Florida.

Few got the pandemic right. A glance at statements made by WHO, Dr. Fauci, Gov. Cuomo and Nancy Pelosi among others persuades me that many people besides Pres. Trump at least until early March failed to comprehend the seriousness of Covid 19. However, that lack of prescience on the part of many, including at least one renowned medical expert who advised the President, hardly justifies "overcompensating" by bashing one side and suggesting the shutdown continue interminably.

Nobody's perfect—not myself and not Pat Lynch. In recent months we've had to learn some painful lessons. On several occasions I have heard Dr. Fauci assert that Pres. Trump has listened to Fauci and in most respects taken the latter's advice. These facts taken together cause me to believe people can change as circumstances change, and that dialogue and vigorous disagreement can lead to beneficial results. On the other hand, painting with too broad a brush, as I believe respectfully Pat Lynch has done, and employing the use of name calling and bitter invective, as she also did in her column, risk interfering with accomplishing our goals and helping to end this crisis humanely yet expeditiously, despite what I assume are her good intentions.

Sincrely,
Michael Kappos

Dear Editor,

What a brave and terrific article by Pat Lynch. I think too many in the media are cowardly about the foolish, dangerous and dishonest Covid-19 deniers. Thank you for having the courage to print it.

Sincerely,
Carol Voyles



Our pandemic plans must make space for young children

By Amy Greenlee
Special to Valley Community Newspapers

Planning for how society should operate during a pandemic involves a large number of complex factors. And yet, midst all the discussion of reopening and regulation, there is one factor that remains largely unaddressed: young children.

In many of the official details and guidelines for moving forward, there is little to no discussion of children. Instead, there is an overwhelming preoccupation with the adult economy of restaurants, retail, workplaces, and entertainment. Little to nothing is said about the fate of children's spaces, such as playgrounds or play places, many of which seem to be closed for the indefinite future. Indeed, even when public places that could include children (such as parks, malls, zoos, etc.) are mentioned, they include blanket regulations (such as mask wearing and social distancing) that effectively exclude young children from participating. I should note that when I say "young children", I am specifically thinking of toddlers and preschoolers, who do not understand the importance of such rules, nor how to follow them correctly. In addition, even the small family gatherings that are now allowed appear to require all children (including babies and toddlers) to maintain social distancing--a large, maybe even impossible, ask of a young child who may be seeing a beloved grandparent for the first time in months.

The unspoken message of these rules, then, becomes one in which children are effectively not allowed to partake in any of these activities. And, as the unique needs of this age group continue to be omitted from each new announcement and update, it becomes hard not to read between the lines and infer that young children are viewed as an insignificant (read: unprofitable?) part of the planning. Furthermore, by making no allowances for children, the plans simultaneously exclude many primary caregivers from participation as well, as it becomes near impossible for a single adult to manage multiple children in this manner.

One of the only times children are directly mentioned is the conversation around school, which almost always comes to the conclusion that either distance learning will continue or schools will open with strict social distancing measures and masks. Yet both of these options still fail to account for young children (especially preschoolers and kindergarteners), who are developmentally capable of neither. In addition, they seem to assume that you can remove the socializing from school and still have the education, when in reality, the socialization itself is a primary educational objective for this age, and altering the way children are instructed to socialize during these early experiences will have significant, possibly harmful, impacts on them.

As they currently stand, the proposed plans seem to implicitly suggest that there is no place for very young children in the "new normal" of masks and social distancing, which is expected to continue for quite some time. While it may be true that the only way to keep this age group completely physically safe is to continue keeping them cooped up at home, this is not a sustainable way to keep them psychologically safe. Of course, the more likely reasoning for excluding young children from life outside the home is the potential risk they pose in spreading the virus to more vulnerable adults. And, while this is an important concern that needs to be addressed, it should not require the indefinite barring of all physical contact with their peers or extended family members.

What this compromise will look like is unclear. This is in no way an appeal to throw all caution out the window and release all children without restraint. Perhaps it involves encouraging families with young kids to select another family with whom they can have playdates, while still keeping vector creation to a minimum. Or maybe it means putting young students into small cohorts in which they can travel around and still have developmentally appropriate interactions. Whatever the possible accommodations may be-- at the very least--there needs to be more thoughtful discussion of our littlest (and most psychologically vulnerable) members of society.

Zoo:

continued from page 4

well as Zoo Miami. Alligators are managed much differently than other large and potentially dangerous animals, and our staff would have to learn how to work around these animals. For instance, veterinary procedures would require Animal Care staff to physically restrain these large animals. This includes working in a team using ropes to safely restrain a large alligator for inspection or perhaps transport. Our team spent several days learning these techniques in Florida so they could teach others here in Sacramento.

Just obtaining the alligators was also going to be a major task. Within the state of California, the possession of any species of crocodilian is highly regulated. The zoo's Animal Care team worked with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to ensure the exhibit would meet permitting requirements for holding American alligators. The strict regulations are due to the fact that if alligators were to get loose within the state of California, they could potentially establish an invasive population which would be detrimental for our local ecosystem. California might no longer be known as the Golden State but perhaps the Gator State.

Jason Jacobs is the Executive Director of the Sacramento Zoo.

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