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New Italian restaurant coming to former Español

see page 3

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- Crossword Puzzle.....4
- Crossword Puzzle Solutions.....5
- Home Improvement 6
- Classifieds 7



Sac Black Biz Community experienced 300% increase of followers

See page 5

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PHOTO BY CAROL BOGART

Doing dishes. Still not my favorite.

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East Sacramento News is published on the first and third Thursday of the month in the area bounded by Business 80 on the west, the American River on the north and east and Highway 50 on the south.

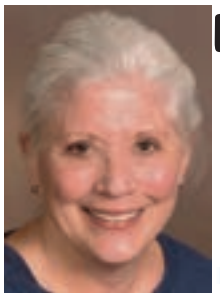
Publisher ..... David Herburger
Editor ..... Monica Stark
Art Director ..... Annin Piper
Advertising Director ..... Jim O'Donnell
Advertising Executives: ..... Melissa Andrews, Linda Pohl

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Vol. XXX • No. 4

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Cover photo by:
Lance Armstrong



THIS 'n' THAT

by Carol Bogart

Gender-Neutral Household Chores

I always aspired to be my mom. I thought she was perfect. The perfect mother, perfect wife, perfect seamstress, perfect .. everything.

Problem. Mom was a traditional 'girly girl'. I was not.

When I had Mike, I – who nearly flunked Home Ec – presented her with the first cross stitch I'd ever done:

There's No Place Like Home – Except Grandma's

Her eyes went wide. (Mom made quilt tops by hand. Tiny neat perfectly aligned stitches.) I laughed and said, "Don't look at the back."

Neat? Not hardly. A big tangled mess, but the front (a miracle) looked fine. I framed it.

She hung it by the stairs and, after Mike and I went back to Denver, she called her sister. "You have to come over," she said. My Aunt Mabel told me mom took her by the hand, pointed to the cross stitch and, eyes soft, a little moist, she said, "Carol doesn't do that." Pricked fingers, tangled knots, who cares. My mom was happy.

I'd never been a 'typical' little girl. As soon as I could walk, I liked 'boy' stuff. Climbing trees. Catching snakes. Not wearing shoes. Or dresses. Or clothes at all. I liked running around in my underwear ('Spanky' pants and T-shirt).

Mom, watching for dad's car at end of day, admonished my pre-teen self: "Run upstairs and put some clothes on. Your dad's home!" If I didn't, he'd roll his eyes and say. "It's a good thing we live on a farm. You act like you were born in a barn."

Dishes. Mom didn't have a dishwasher. Dishes were done by hand. Doing dishes was not my strong suit. When we had company, my mother made me. She washed. Grumbling mightily, I dried.

Aunt Mary (my father's brother's wife) on holidays helped clear the table. She was critical of this. "Carol doesn't like doing dishes," my mom would shrug. "Who does!?" snapped my Aunt Mary. (I never much liked Aunt Mary.) Mom told me what she said. I frowned. "Dad and Keith don't help," I pointed out. "They just watch football."

All this came to mind when I read a plug for Melinda Gates' updated book, The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World. She said, prior to her own enlightenment, her sons took out the trash. Her girls did dishes.

My mother knew it was easier to just do such chores herself than try to make me do them.

Which is not to say that I did nothing. If she wanted something fresh from dad's garden for dinner, I trotted off to pick peas or corn. Dad had a big pile of cut firewood delivered. Without complaint, I stacked it neatly in the barn. Never complained about mucking my 4-H horse's stall or hauling water to the barn. Or help with the mowing. And pick cherries for mom's pie.

She made all her pies from scratch. I have mom's pie plate. I've yet to make a pie.

One year I told mom I wanted a model train for Christmas. Her response: "Girls don't play with trains." It shocked me. I'd never heard 'girls don't' before. Allowed to be a tomboy; it hadn't occurred to me there were things I couldn't do.

In college in 1970, I decided I'd be a TV news reporter, even though I'd rarely to never seen a 'girl' reporter.

Getting my foot in the door. That, I knew, was everything. So, I worked as a receptionist at a radio station and kept looking for my big break. I got it. Newsroom secretary at the NBC O&O (Owned and Operated station) in Cleveland. Its investigative reporter recommended me to a guy he'd worked with ("who you know"). The friend, a news director, hired me as a reporter/producer/weekend anchor.

Back when I was getting started, stories weren't done on private family issues – such as 'disciplining' children, or anything involving animals.

I fought to do them. In that first job, I won a First Place Community Service Award for my self-assigned child abuse series. A 4-year-old had been beaten to death by his step-dad. Later working in Chicago (WLS-TV), the Humane Society of the United States recognized me for my story on a dog shot by an arrow. Pennsylvania now has a Child Abuse Reporting Hotline.

The dog lived. His adopters named him 'Bogie' – my Chicago nickname.

A voice for the voiceless. That's what I aim to be. Have I 'changed the world'? I don't know, but I'm still trying.

Interested in 'The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World' by Melinda Gates (philanthropist and wife of Microsoft founder Bill Gates)? Buy it online at www.thriftbooks.com. Questions, comments? Contact Carol at carol@bogartonline.com.

New Italian restaurant coming to former Español

Eatery has ties to iconic Biba Italian restaurant

by Lance Armstrong

A new high-end dining, Italian restaurant is coming to East Sacramento's former Español Restaurant site this spring.

June Chang, who worked as a bartender at midtown Sacramento's Biba Italian restaurant until its closure nine months ago, told this paper that he intends to open Mattone Ristorante inside this historic building at 5723 Folsom Blvd.

"A few months back, I (thought) 'Why don't I open a restaurant (in that vacant building) and get (former) staff from Biba and try to make a nice restaurant?'" he said. "The idea was (a restaurant) inspired by Biba (Caggiano, who operated her locally renowned restaurant from 1986 until her death in 2019).

"We learned lots from her; not only food, but how to be good people, how to treat other people, how to share, how to care, a lot of things. So, then I thought, 'Why don't I make one restaurant where we could work together and make (a) good restaurant where we could share the caring and (serve) good, quality food?' Then we found a place: (the) Español location."

To clear up misinformation that he said has already developed, Chang stressed that his business – although inspired by Biba restaurant – has its own independent identity.

"Please try not to connect this (restaurant) to Biba (or that) Mattone is under Biba or the next Biba," he said. "It's two different things, really. It should be separated."

Chang, 55, noted that he was in negotiations with the property's owner, East Sacramento resident Mercedes Aguilera, for three months before signing a lease to operate his business in that building, on Feb. 5. He added that he is the principal owner, and that he was joined by six investors.

Mattone, Chang said, is the Italian word for brick. He noted that it was a name that was selected in recognition of the brick structure that will house his eatery.

Although Chang recognized that opening a restaurant during the pandemic comes with challenges, he added that he has a positive outlook.

"I think I can do it," he said. "Things get better; always have. March will get better, April will get better. So, there's a lot of bright side in the near future.

"Whatever kind of business you do, there's a risk, always. How you manage that is up to, I guess, the person that owns the business."

Chang mentioned that because the restaurant will open during the pandemic, he does not yet require a full staff.

"A limited staff (is) needed when I open the restaurant in April," he said. "I'm expecting 13, 14 (employees), and then most of them (will be) from where I used to work at Biba. So, servers and some managers and kitchen chef, pasta chef, they will all work together."

Chang, who has been working in the restaurant industry for 29 years, told this publication that he strongly believes in the correlation between a restaurant's success and its operators' relationships with their customers.

"I've already experienced restaurants – not in kitchens, but in front – always (having) good communication (and) relationships with the patrons," he said. "Eight years (with) Biba. Before that I worked (at) Miyagi Japanese restaurant and Zinfandel Grille, Scott's Seafood, Slocum House.

"I don't know how to cook, but relationships with the customers, I'm really good at that. That's very important, I think, like as much as the food."

As for the food that Mattone will serve, Chang mentioned that he is not yet prepared to speak in specifics, but that, "of course, there will be (many traditional dishes such as) spaghetti."

Chang, who immigrated to the United States from Seoul, South Korea in 1986 and currently resides in Folsom, said that although he fell in love with the restaurant industry, he once pursued a very different career.

"A majored in chemistry as a freshman (in college) and then I moved to America," he said. "I needed a job to make a little money, so I started working in restaurants and that (was) it. I (thought) I would go back (to studying chemistry), but it never happened. I don't regret it, because I found my passion in this business and I'm doing what I love."

Chang noted that he is eager to get his restaurant opened as soon as possible, and that it could possibly open earlier than expected, in March.

"I can't wait to see people, hang out and mingle," he said.

New eatery continues building's longtime Italian restaurant history

Chang's decision to open his restaurant in this East Sacramento structure will resume the building's nearly 75-year existence as the site of an Italian restaurant.

see Español page 4



Photo courtesy of June Chang

June Chang is the owner of Mattone Ristorante, which is scheduled to open in April.



Español:

continued from page 3

The building began housing the Square Deal Café in March 1946. A 1960s advertisement for that eatery reads: "Italian foods-cocktails. Dinners from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Closed Mondays. Square Deal Café, 5723 Folsom Blvd."

Following the closure of the Square Deal Café, the Español was relocated to that location in 1965. It remained in operation at that site until last August, when it became one of the small business casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perry Luigi, co-owner of the Español, told this publication shortly before closing his restaurant that he could no longer justify operating that business due to ongoing financial losses during the pandemic.

"I noticed the really fast decrease in my checkbook and kind of made a decision that we really can't stay open another month or everything will be gone," Luigi said in an interview with the East Sacramento News last July.

The closure of this restaurant by Perry and his sister, Paula Serrano, marked the end of an era for their family's ownership of that business.

Babe and Mario Luigi purchased this dining establishment in 1959, when it was located at 231 I St., near the old Southern Pacific depot.

But long before that time, the restaurant began at the Hotel Español – aka the Spanish Hotel – in today's Old Sacramento.

The Hotel Español, which primarily operated as a Basque boarding house, was initially home to sheepherders who were hired out to local ranchers. The hotel was in operation as early as 1911.

On the ground floor of the hotel, food such as oxtail stew, pig knuckles, lamb fries, lamb chops, tripe, chicken and veal were prepared and cooked for the Basque tenants.

It was not until Babe and Mario purchased the business that this eatery began serving Italian food.

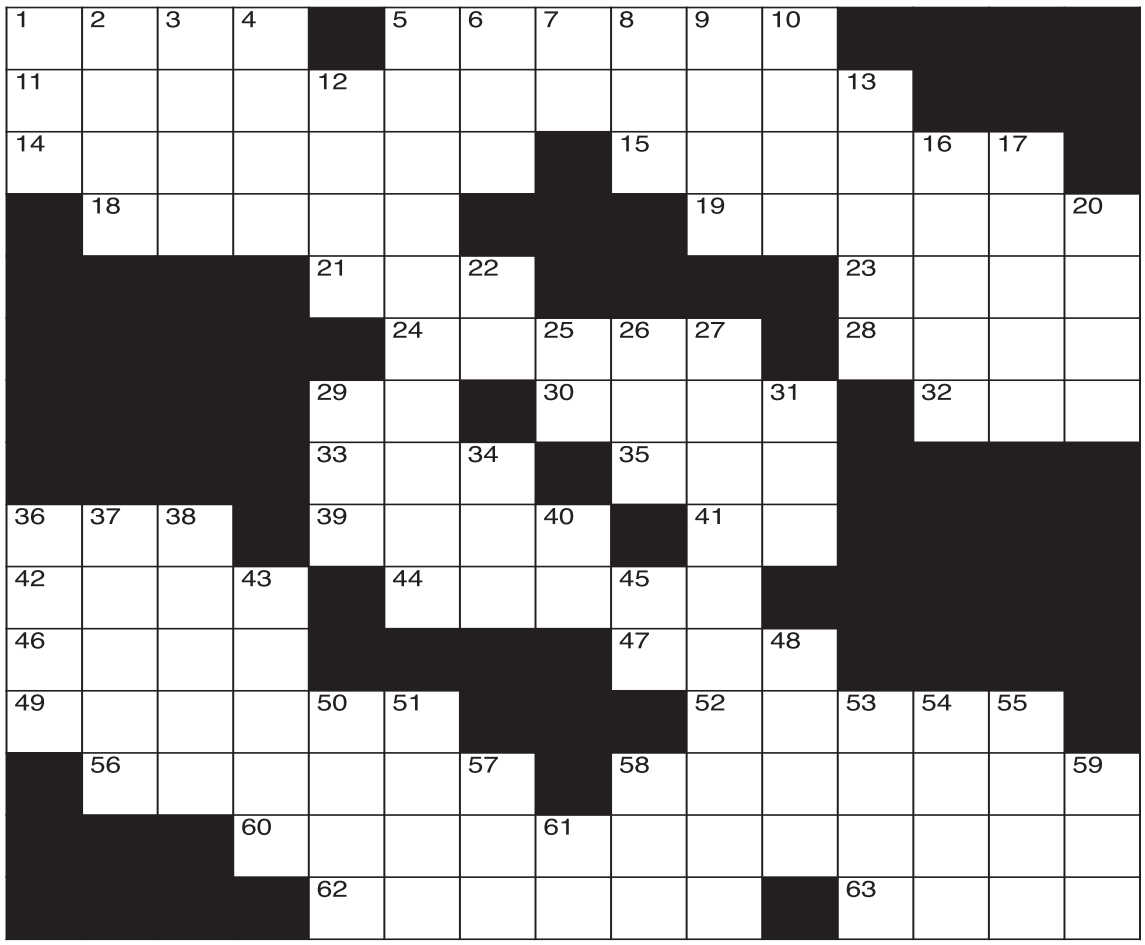
The Luigi siblings, Perry, Paula and Karen (1945-2011), purchased the Español from their father, Babe Luigi, on Jan. 1, 1988, and Babe passed away three months later.

In addition to ending the Luigi family's longtime history as a local restaurant owner, the Español's closure also marked the end for the city's oldest restaurant.

Perry Luigi told the East Sacramento News last week that he was glad to learn that another restaurant will be opening in his former business site.

"I'm glad there's a restaurant moving in," he said. "That's great. I would hate to see it sit there empty."

CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS
1. One of Noah's sons
5. Openings
11. Rising from the dead
14. Expressions for humorous effect
15. North American country
18. Flowed over
19. Tags
21. Long-lasting light bulb
23. Off-Broadway theater award
24. Khoikhoi peoples
28. Beloved movie pig
29. South Dakota
30. Tai language
32. Get free of
33. Afflict
35. Transmits genetic information from DNA
36. Commercials
39. Digits
41. Expression of sympathy
42. Bleats
44. Swiss Nobel Peace Prize winner
46. Vegetable
47. Turf
49. Disorganized in character
52. Takes
56. Rules over
58. More fervid
60. Sweet drink
62. Cry loudly
63. A friendly nation

CLUES DOWN
1. A title of respect in India
2. His and __
3. Employee stock ownership plan
4. A type of bond (abbr.)
5. Acting as if you are
6. Affirmative
7. Not caps
8. Type of medication
9. Monetary unit
10. Private school in New York
12. Small stream
13. A person of wealth
16. Exclude
17. Someone who vouches for you
20. Vegetable part
22. Gov't lawyer
25. Term to address a woman
26. Swiss river
27. About senator
29. __ Paulo, city
31. Native American tribe
34. "Titanic" actor
36. Campaign for students' rights (abbr.)
37. Capital of Senegal
38. Slang for military leader
40. Football's big game
43. Women who threw themselves on funeral pyres
45. Equally
48. Forest animal
50. Heavy stoves
51. Releasing hormone (abbr.)
53. Song
54. Type of pickle
55. Offer in return for money
57. Soviet Socialist Republic
58. Burns wood (abbr.)
59. Beloved singer Charles
61. Three-toed sloth

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Sac Black Biz Community experienced 300% increase of followers

By Chris Lodgson
Special to Valley Community Newspapers

Black History Month celebrates the contributions of the Black community and presents a timely opportunity to support Black owned businesses that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. While many Black owned businesses in our community and throughout the country have gone out of business, I encourage the Sacramento Community to support our Black community by investing their dollars into Black owned businesses, especially this month.



Business owner, Ayesha Ransom-White

Black-owned businesses have the highest start rate, yet they also maintain the quickest closure rates. This was a problem I wanted to help address throughout Sacramento County to help uplift our Black businesses and keep them open. In 2016, I created Sac Black Biz Community, a local Facebook group, which has become a central hub where Black owned business, entrepreneurs, and the community are able to receive free financial information, education on government COVID-19 assistance programs, learn about free marketing opportunities, and work as a referral network.

A recent report from the National Bureau of Economic Research found that 41% of Black-owned businesses have had to close their doors since March 2020. Although these numbers are grim, I believe that our community can help reverse these numbers and help Black owned businesses keep their doors open.

Through the power of Facebook, Sac Black Biz Community experienced a 300% increase of followers and traffic that has been a springboard for our local Black entrepreneurs to help expand their businesses and thrive. This uptick was due to the renewed interest in supporting the Black community last summer after the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and the countless Black lives that have been lost at the hands of police brutality. The outrage led the community to mobilize by not only taking to the streets to express public outcry but by finding local Black owned businesses and supporting them.

With nearly 7,000 members, Sac Black Biz Community has become a valuable resource that acts as a pipeline connecting the community with Black owned businesses. The group has helped create a large online database of Black-owned businesses located in Sacramento County that is available to everyone.

Business owners like Ayesha Ransom-White, owner of Suggested Eyewear, have had to adapt to the changing business environment during the pandemic and have also stepped up to help local Black entrepreneurs.

Through the Sac Black Biz Community, Ayesha was able to connect and collaborate with other Black entrepreneurs by reconfiguring her glasses shops into a local pop-up shop that included products and services from other businesses.

This collaboration has allowed many Black owned businesses who do not have a brick and mortar shop to get their products out in front of a new customer base. These are collaborations that Sac Black Biz Community was meant to create and we hope to continue to support our Black community and Black businesses.

I encourage the community to follow the Sac Black Biz Community and share their favorite Black-owned businesses or help support Black-owned businesses by shopping or utilizing services provided by Sacramento's Black entrepreneurs. Together, we can continue the momentum we've experienced over the last year and help see our Black business owners through this crisis and into a more prosperous future.

Chris Lodgson is the Creator of Sac Black Biz Community.

Locast brings free streaming service to Sacramento

By Bruce Hartzell

Locast, America's only nonprofit local broadcast streaming service, is now delivering 60 local TV channels via the internet – for free – to the more than 4 million residents living in the Sacramento region.

For the first time, residents in Sacramento and the greater metro area – including Stockton and Modesto – will be able to watch all of their local TV stations via the Internet on their phones, tablets, laptops, or streaming media devices.

Locast has more than 2.3 million registered users nationwide in 29 markets. In 2020, Locast added more than 1 million users, making it one of the fastest-growing live TV streaming services and was named the 2020 most-improved streaming service by TechHive.

Locast is now delivering 60 local TV channels in the Sacramento-Stockton-Modesto designated market area (DMA), including KCRA, KTXL, KXTV, KOVR, Univision, PBS and PBS Kids, as well as Azteca America, CourtTV, Mystery, MeTV, TrueCrime, QUBO, Telemundo, Circle, The CW, BOUNCE, Movies!, LAFF, COMET, MyNetworkTV, ION, GRIT, Charge!, and more.

Locast is available via www.locast.org, app stores, TiVo, streaming service providers Google Play, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon, and ROKU, and on DISH Hopper/Wally receivers or select DIRECTV receivers.

For those who cannot afford pay TV or cannot receive an over-the-air signal, Locast is a great, free way to access local broadcast news, emergency information, weather, sports, and entertainment.

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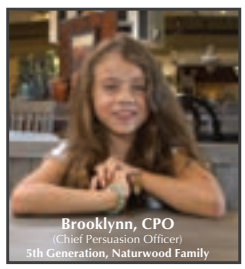
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