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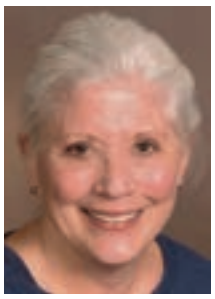
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Coalition opposes state Capitol annex demolition

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THIS 'n' THAT

by Carol Bogart

California Vaccinations – Moving Right Along

I'll tell you what. As you read this, I'm one day shy of two weeks past my second Moderna shot. Which means I'm about as close to being protected from the virus and one variant (UK) as it's possible to be right now. Might I need a 'booster' for extra infectious variants (mutations) in South Africa and Brazil? Maybe, and if I do, I'll sign right up to get them. Plus, there's now a new variant confirmed in New York City. As of this minute (3/9), I don't know much about it.

The CDC is reeeeeeeally pushing vaccination. On Monday, 3/8 the agency announced it's safe for small groups of vaccinated people to get together – WITHOUT MASKS! Also safe: gathering maskless (if you're vaccinated) with 'low risk' people – such as .. ? Sorry. Just who they are seems to be a moving target. Current testing, as far as I know, does NOT include more infectious viral variants. People with no symptoms still can spread it. Is political pressure to 're-open' prompting loosened guidelines?

I WANT to be optimistic. For one, I need to get my taxes done and I'm so thankful the VITA program has resumed. VITA stands for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance. Preparers are certified by the IRS. Local partners are West Sac's Family Resource Center/Yolo County Children's Alliance (YCCA) and the United Way. Qualifying seniors get their taxes done for free!! These tax preparers have been doing this for years in West Sac; God bless 'em. And God bless YCCA's Katie Villegas, too. She's a long-time workhorse for the disadvantaged, as is her husband, West Sac's county supervisor, Oscar.

The VITA program, around for 50 years, is a godsend for my low income self and others. To make an appointment, call 1-(916) 572-0560. Before the pandemic, the preparers helped you at the former senior center on Cummins Way. Here's the drill for this year: At your appointed time, wear your mask and drop off your documents at YCCA or the library (no appointments left, though, at Turner). The YCCA/Family Resource Center, 1200 Anna St., is now located behind Alyce Norman School in Broderick, 95605. Behind the school you'll drive through a gate, and that's the building.

You can wait in your car in the parking lot, if you like. But take your cell. If they have questions/your return is ready, they will call you. When you make your appointment, they'll ask you for your phone number(s).

Now, as promised, here's my personal experience with Moderna.

No pinch, let alone a 'jab' with Shot 1. The absolute 100 percent truth is, I didn't feel any different at any time in the weeks I waited for Shot 2.

Shot 2, in my dominant arm where the muscle is more developed – ow. But no immediate side effects, so I left and went to Raley's.

When I got home with groceries, something had begun to happen. A little unsteady on my feet. Vision a bit blurred, even with my glasses. Muscle pain was worsening, especially in my neck and shoulders. I wasn't worried. Everything I'd read said to expect your body to react most after the second shot – proof the vaccine was teaching your body to 'recognize' the virus and defeat it. No headache, though, nausea or other digestive .. issues. No chills, no fever. Everybody's different, though, so your side effects may include those.

The after-vaccination instructions said to drink a lot of water. So, I did. At bedtime, I took my usual nighttime meds and added half-a-Tylenol. Knocked me right out! Didn't get up once to use the bathroom!!

By the end of the second day after shot 2, I felt good! Honest! No aches, no pains, and even … ENERGETIC! By day three, being off balance and the blurry vision cleared.

The vaccinators caution that being vaccinated only protects you from severe illness and that you still can infect someone else. This is why the CDC's revised March 8 Covid 19 guideline leaves me bewildered:

"(Vaccinated) individuals can gather indoors with others who are fully vaccinated with no precautions (masks, handwashing) but must still adhere to masking and social distancing in public spaces. Additionally, vaccinated people can visit low-risk unvaccinated people from a single household without masks and physical distancing." (emphasis added)

Huh. Meaning what? You can hug them? Is Walmart a 'public space'? What happened to outdoor air is safer than indoor air?

Today, as I wrap up my column, it's March 9. My 72nd birthday. Restaurants are

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PHOTO COURTESY YCCA/FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Tax time. A conundrum for some this year. Which preparers are doing taxes where?

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Editorial questions: (916) 267-8992

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. 6

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This 'n' That:

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open for indoor dining. This year, though, like last, no Raku Sushi with my son, Mike, and his now-fiancé, Ashley.

When they can get their vaccines and it's been two weeks, that's when we'll do it.

Low income seniors: To make an appointment with West Sac VITA for free preparation of your taxes, call the Family Resource Center at 1-(916)-572-0560. Leave a message if no one picks up. If you don't get a call back that same day, keep trying; they're super busy. Call Yolo Health's Covid info line, 1-833-965-6268, for updates on West Sac's planned mass vaccination clinics at City Hall. If you volunteer to help out at a vaccination clinic, you can get a vaccination, too. Comments? Contact Carol at carol@bogartonline.com.



PHOTO/CAPTION COURTESY U.S. DEFENSE DEPT.

Sailors preparing syringes of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine aboard the USS Essex in San Diego, Feb. 3. This marked the first time personnel received vaccines aboard a U.S. Pacific Fleet warship.



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Coalition opposes state Capitol annex demolition

Local assemblyman defends project

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

A local coalition known as Public Accountability for Our Capitol (PAOC) is currently fighting to put a halt to the state's plan to demolish the nearly 70-year-old California State Capitol annex.

The California Legislature, in 2018, approved spending $755 million to demolish and replace the Capitol's east annex and to construct a visitors' center and parking garage. It was also planned for an additional $432.6 million to be spent on designing and constructing a 10-story "swing space" building that would temporarily house the offices of legislative and executive officials and their staffs, at 1021 O St.

Construction on the latter building began in March 2019, and that structure is scheduled to be completed this fall.

Upon its completion, the new annex will house the legislative and executive officials and staff members that had temporarily occupied the swing space building.

The Public Accountability for Our Capitol website – SaveOurCap.org – notes that the new annex project would result in the "leveling (of a) historic building, destroying upwards of a hundred trees – including rare species – erecting a new visitor center that keeps the public away from the steps and halls of our state Capitol, and building a new parking garage, exclusive to politicians and bureaucrats."

Among the most active PAOC members are Sacramentans Paula Peper and Dick Cowan, who both resigned from the Historic State Capitol Commission due to their opposition of the annex project.

Peper, in an interview with this publication this month, noted that she and Cowan left the commission because they felt the annex project lacked transparency.

"By March of last year, any meetings that our historic commission held to get more information, people involved with the project who attended the meetings told us that they didn't even know the answers to our questions or they were under nondisclosure agreements and could not discuss them," she said.

"Yet here we were supposing to advise the (Legislature's) joint rules committee. Then I began realizing that no one in the public knew anything about the project. So, I told Dick Cowan, our chair, 'I'm going to resign.'"

By April 2020, Peper and Cowan had both left the commission, and later became involved in the organization of Public Accountability for Our Capitol.

That coalition's efforts are supported by such organizations as the California Preservation Foundation, the California Garden & Landscape History Society, Trees for Sacramento, and the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

Peper mentioned that history shows that constructing a new, larger Capitol annex to address a growing legislative staff is not the best approach.

"The folly of believing a bigger building will solve the problem of (a) growing legislative staff is proven by the fact that the 1860s Capitol was built to hold all of the state government," she wrote in a statement.

"The 1920s library and treasurer's buildings solved the space problem, the 1950s annex solved the space problem, the 1960s Capitol Mall office buildings solved the space problem. No one building will ever keep up with the growth in population and complexity of the state or its legislative staff."

The current, eight-story annex, which replaced a semicircular apse, was completed at a cost of about a $7.6 million in 1952.

Peper, a retired urban ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service, said that she conducted her own analyses on the options that were presented for a new annex and parking for the Capitol.

"Depending on which plan they use, anywhere from 200,000 to 610,000 pounds of stored carbon in the trees would be lost," she said.

Peper concluded that with the removal of trees, the public will lose access to shade, health and the beautifying benefits of those trees.

The PAOC website notes that the state may claim that only 30 trees would be lost with the new parking garage, but more than 100 trees could be "removed or severely damaged."

It is also mentioned in the website that because the final plans of the project have yet to be approved, the project is not a "done deal."

"The plan is far from set, and considering the state's COVID(-19)-related humanitarian and economic crises, it is the responsibility of our elected officials to revisit and revise the project, so that precious resources can be directed to where they are needed most – helping struggling Californians," the website notes.

Although Peper said that the Public Accountability for Our Capitol does not support the demolition of the current annex, she added that there is still "need for change."

"There's definitely a need for change and a new, renovated annex – but renovate the historic annex to solve code and life safety issues and protect the shared entry for all," she said. "Don't get rid of it. It's an Alfred Eichler building, and it is historic in its own right.



Photo by Lance Armstrong

The California State Capitol's east annex was built between 1949 and 1952.

"(Eichler, who was a notable architect, desired) to honor the old, historic Capitol by making sure that the annex did not dominant. So, from the front, (west side) of the Capitol, you do not see the annex, and that was part of his plan."

Peper noted that the PAOC coalition, which includes architects and engineers, determined that if the current annex was rehabilitated, it would be a much more affordable project.

Cooley speaks about annex project

Assembly Member Ken Cooley, D-Rancho Cordova, who serves as the chair of the Legislature's joint rules committee, described the plan to demolish the current annex and replace it with a new one as a necessary project.

"The problem with the (current) annex is the floors don't match with the historic, (19th century) state Capitol, (which was restored from 1976 to 1982)," he said during an interview with this paper last week. "This (annex) building has a lot of issues and it was never built for a full-time legislature."

Cooley noted that the structure is not safe for emergency evacuations, has security, earthquake stability and asbestos issues, is not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, and does not have a fire sprinkler system.

"The building has issues of safety for legislators and staff, but (also) the public who is here," he said. "If you were here on your own as a citizen and an alarm goes off, you don't know where to go, you don't know how to get out."

Cooley explained why there is a need to have a larger Capitol annex.

"In general, as lawmakers looked at this, you cannot improve mobility around the building without increasing the size of the corridors," he said. "But you increase the size of the corridors (on the existing annex), you reduce usable space.

"So, (the new annex project) is about an updated Capitol, one without ADA barriers, so any Californian who wants to come, can participate. The design will allow for more mobility through the corridors."

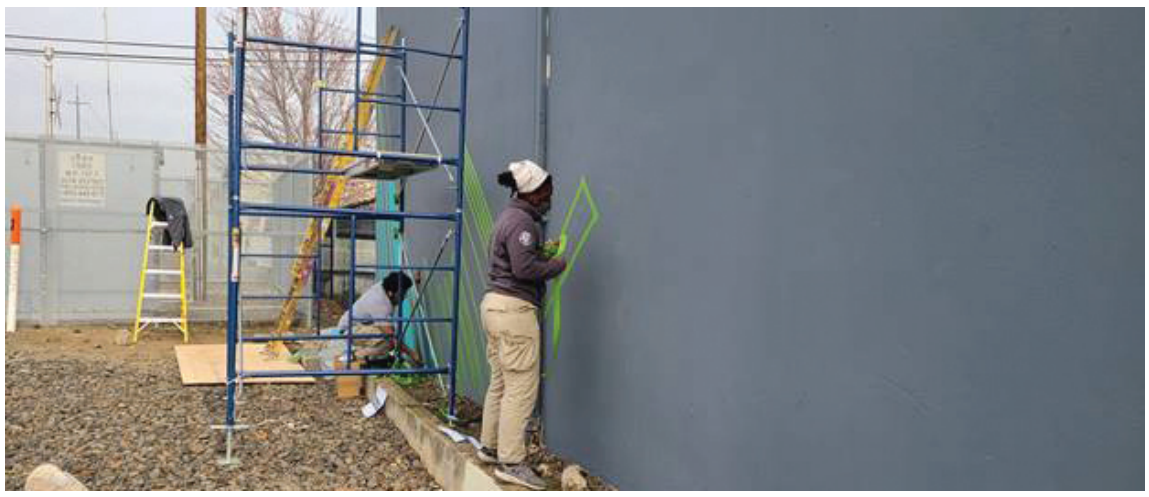
He also said he believes that the annex project, visitors' center and parking garage can still be completed for $755 million.

Cooley summarized the current annex as "an undersized building" for the work that is performed there and the increased, pre-COVID-19 pandemic numbers of visitors it was regularly attracting.

He added that he is looking forward to having a new annex with floors that match the original, 19th century Capitol, and having visitors enter the Capi-

see Annex page 5

New Mural in Sacramento to be Painted at Sacramento YMCA Child Development Center



The YMCA of Superior California is announcing a new mural has been commissioned, with work already started, at the Sacramento Central YMCA Child Development Center at 2021 W Street in Sacramento. The mural will be 120 feet long, and 16 feet high. The mural, designed by Adinah Hopkins, will begin to emerge in the coming days. Mural themes will include social responsibility and youth development, while also celebrating the nature that is native to California. The mural will greet commuters each day along the Sacramento RT Blue Line between W Street and V Street, and 19th and 20th streets.

The mural is made possible thanks to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento and AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region, Team Gold 3. Team members from AmeriCorps began preparing the wall for the project on Friday, February 5. The mural project collaboration came about through outreach from Jennifer Moore, YMCA Sr. Director for Youth Development. Jennifer Moore can be reached at jmoore@ymcasuperiorcal.org.

"This mural reflects what we do here at the Y. We create beautiful change," said Sharna Braucks, President & CEO, YMCA of Superior California. "Our child care center specifically is helping to develop young children and our future depends on them… and you, the public at large. We are grateful to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento and AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region Team Gold 3 for creating something beautiful on the outside of our walls that conveys the work that we do inside of them. This mural is not just a gift to the YMCA, but a gift to the people of Sacramento."

"The mission of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento is to bring people together to build hope, homes, and community" said Leah Miller, President & CEO, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Sacramento. "We are proud to be able to play a small part in helping make this collaborative community project possible."

"As an artist I am elated to push my work out into the public" said Adinah Hopkins, Team Gold 3 Member, AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region. "But I really enjoy interacting with the community instead of being cooped up in a studio. The mural adds to the plethora of community's other public works further beautifying the neighborhood."

Annex:

continued from page 4

tol through its historic west side, near Capitol Mall.

Other planned enhancements for the annex are wider corridors, larger elevators, stairwells and restrooms, and the elimination of driveways and fencing that prohibit people from continuously walking east and west through Capitol Park.

Asked if the annex plan is a "done deal," Cooley mentioned that the project is moving forward and people will soon vacate the old annex.

He also described his desire to share information about the annex project, and that the public can learn about this project through the state's website, www.annex.assembly.ca.gov.

Cooley additionally responded to comments he has heard regarding the possible need to remove more than 100 trees to build a new annex.

"The idea that we would tear down 100 trees is just preposterous," he said. "Where that came from, you kind of ask, 'How did this assertion get made?' For purposes of California law, you have to conduct an analysis of the project. This requires that you tell them what area of ground will the project involve.

"They end up with this sort of exaggerated (area) of the impact, because that is the project boundary, but it's not the building boundary. The building will be slightly larger than the current one, but not vastly larger."

Cooley noted that the annex cannot be built to protrude beyond the north and south ends of the historic Capitol, and that its height cannot be taller than the current annex.

"It has to be below the rotunda, so you don't effect (the view of the Capitol from its west side)," he said.

Although the new annex is planned to be constructed as a more secure building than the current annex, Cooley noted that it would not have a "fortress feel."

It is anticipated by Cooley that the entire, new project will be completed in time to hold a grand opening of the building on Sept. 9, 2025 – the 175th anniversary of California's admission into the union. The visitors' center would open prior to the completion of the annex.

In summarizing the new annex plan, Cooley referred to the project as "taking California back to its original values" of welcoming its visitors.

"This project will welcome all people back into the people's house," he said. "They will find roomy corridors, bathrooms that are not a trial to use, a place to welcome schoolchildren to learn about the nature of our democracy. It will safeguard our Capitol Park."



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