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Dine Local, Please!

see page 2

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Dine Local, Please!



Story and photos by Devin Lavelle

COVID-19 has turned life on its head. It's a scary time. Many of our friends and neighbors have gotten sick, some have even died. Our hearts go out to everyone who is suffering from this terrible virus.

Many more have lost their jobs or income. It's an incredibly difficult time to be struggling with these transitions. One of the hardest hit industries are our local restaurants. While rent payments continue, restaurants struggle with limited and uncertain levels of business. They have been forced to develop new business models at the same time as revenue as plunged. Nearly all of them remain open, though. The Pocket Greenhaven Community Association has developed a list of Pocket-area restaurants that remain open, including ordering information at pocket-greenhaven.org/restaurants.

Restaurants are an important part of our community. They are a place to relax, enjoy time with family and friends, to gather with community. They express the diversity of our community. They give flavor to our local culture.

They also operate on the thinnest of margins. It's a business people go into out of a passion for food and for serving the community. Rarely do restauranteurs make more than a middle class income. Today they need our help. As Ken Anthony, owner of Device Brewing (devicebrewing.com/locations/#pocket) said, "Local businesses are doing everything they can to survive these closures and partial closures. By purchasing take-out food and beverages you are helping them continue some level of business operations during these challenging times." Ken and Melissa invested over a million dollars to open the new Device Taproom. They didn't do it because it was the best business investment, but because they wanted their neighborhood to have a fun place to gather. When you go, don't forget to bring home cans of your favorite local beer.

Many people around the neighborhood are already stepping up. Dozens of users on Nextdoor have posted about the delicious take-out meals they've enjoyed. The Pocket Greenhaven Community Association has been posting almost every day on its social media about takeout options around the neighborhood.

Katie Kinner, who runs Cacio (caciosacramento.com/) with her husband Jonathan, reflects, "We are seeing the best in humanity right now. If anything comes from all of this, I am proud to see humans being so kind, generous, patient, understanding, flexible and genuinely worried and supportive of small business. We're very grateful." And, personally, I'm grateful for the top notch Italian food they've brought to our neigh-

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Cover photo by:
Devin Lavelle





Dine:

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borhood. When you go, be sure to bring home a quart of Bolognese to enjoy for a second delicious dinner a few days later.

It has been a challenge for many of these restaurants to pivot to takeout. They are paying rent on hundreds of feet of dining space that's going completely unused. They also typically only have a single phone line and may not have the technology to easily use new app-based services. If you call and the line is busy, just give them a couple minutes and call right back.

I assure you, they will appreciate it. Rich & Ray from A Taste Above Café (bit.ly/ATA-Pocket) say they are "Grateful to weather the storm during these hard times, and grateful to our loyal customers who continue to help keep our doors open as we need their support now more than ever. Come on by and let us take care of your meals!" When you go, don't forget dessert, Gunther's ice cream combined with a fruit freeze makes for a tasty treat!

These are difficult times for all of us. But for those of us who are blessed with good health and continuous income, this is a time to step up and support the community around us – a job made all the easier by the checks headed our way from the Federal relief package.

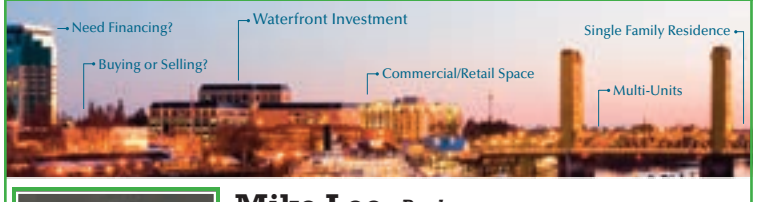
We all have restaurants we care about, where we make favorite family memories or hang out with friends. Places where we go for comfort when down and where we celebrate the good times. Whether in a few weeks or a few months, social distancing is going to end. How sad will we be if we can't celebrate at our favorite restaurants when it does?

Get yourself a nice dinner tonight! And maybe tomorrow too? Order from all of your old favorites. Try that place you've always been meaning to get to. I promise you, it will taste great and feel great! Then maybe share the word on social media and encourage your friends and neighbors to #TakeoutPocket!



Whether your buying, selling or investing - call me, because "knowledge always pays the best interest."

-Ben Franklin





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Community association president addresses coronavirus situation

He urges residents to bond together through difficult times

By LANCE ARMSTRONG



Photos courtesy of PGCA

A chalk drawn COVID-19-related message along the Pocket Canal Parkway suggest that people "be safe."

Will Cannady, president of the Pocket-Greenhaven Community Association, last week told the Pocket News that his organization is doing whatever it can to assist and provide encouragement to the community during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

"(The pandemic) is hitting people really hard, and whatever we can do, especially here in the Pocket-Greenhaven community, to support one another, to get the word out that now is the time to come together as a community to stay strong," he said.

As new cases of this highly infectious respiratory disease continue to be reported locally, throughout the nation and other places globally, general methods for taking caution against it have commonly become known.

Measures to prevent the spread of this virus include frequently washing one's hands with soap and water, avoiding touch one's eyes, mouth and nose, covering coughs and sneezes, and practicing social distancing by maintaining a 6-foot separation from other people.

The new coronavirus primarily spreads through droplets from an infected person when they sneeze or cough, or via droplets of saliva or discharge from noses of infected persons. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

Among the ways that the Pocket-Greenhaven Community Association is assisting the community during this pandemic is promoting Pocket area businesses that remain open, and offering direction for obtaining important coronavirus-related resources.

As of press time, the association was developing a web page of resources for Pocket neighbors. That page can be visited at www.pocketgreenhaven.org/pocketstrong.

Included on that page are city and county government websites and telephone numbers for obtaining reliable COVID-19-related information.

Accessible through these sources are details pertaining to getting tested for coronavirus, if one believes they might have the disease. The most common symptoms of this disease are fever, tiredness and dry cough. Difficulty breathing occurs in severe cases.

The web page's contacts also inform people how small businesses can obtain financial support and which local restaurants currently offer take-out food for their customers. The page listed 33 such eateries as of last week.

As part of Sacramento County's stay-at-home order, restaurants can remain open, but dining on the premises is prohibited. Those businesses are instead limited to providing food through take-out or delivery orders.

Cannady stressed a need for local residents to help restaurants in the community to stay in business.

"We keep hearing over and over again how restaurants around here are struggling to stay afloat and we are encourag-

see CORONAVIRUS page 5

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Will Cannady, president of the Pocket-Greenhaven Community Association, urged people in the community to work together in the fight against the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).



This chalk written message on a Pocket Canal Parkway pathway encourages people to not worry and be happy.

Coronavirus:

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ing all of our community members to eat out as much as possible," he said. "Of course, follow the county guidelines, everything of that nature. At the same time, we want to make sure that these restaurants are still around when this crisis is over."

Other types of businesses that received exemptions from the stay-at-home order, under the "essential businesses" category, include grocery stores, banks, gas stations, post offices, breweries, wineries, dairies, hardware stores, airlines, taxis, and newspapers, radio and television services.

Among the prohibitions in effect in Sacramento are public gatherings of 10 or more people, exercising in fitness gyms, and patronizing bars in a typical visiting manner. However, bars are permitted to sell alcohol to go, as long as they also offer food for sale.

Cannady told the Pocket News that it is especially important to the association to keep neighbors updated during this pandemic.

"The last thing we want in a time of crisis like this is for people not to be sure what's going on," he said. "The more we can do to get out there and provide them with information, so that they understand not only what's going on, but where they can seek out help, I think our community will be stronger for it."

Cannady also responded to the situation at the Pocket's Faith Presbyterian Church, where one member died from COVID-19 and multiple members of the congregation tested positive for the disease.

"I want to make sure that it's pretty clear that we support Faith Presbyterian Church," he said. "They've been going through an awful lot. One of the things (is) not only our association, but the community, in general, supports them."

Although Cannady is well aware of many people's struggles related to the coronavirus situation, he said that he also recognizes that the community has maintained much of its spirit.

Cannady noted that many people are assisting neighbors in need or keeping active exercising in the community, while practicing social distancing.

He additionally mentioned that he is impressed by messages written in chalk that have appeared along the Pocket Canal Parkway.

"If you walk down (the) parkway right now, all over the place you see so many positive messages," he said. "Maybe they were kids or parents or a combination of both just writing really nice things in chalk, like 'Don't worry, be happy,' or 'Everything is going to be fine.'

"I think (the additional kindness is) a sign of our strong neighborhood, that we're willing to do what we can for our neighbors."

Cannady, who is a U.S. history teacher at the School of Engineering and Sciences, also shared his personal experiences related to the closure of local schools due to the pandemic.

"Unfortunately (schools are) on a break right now," he said. "I've personally still been teaching my students on a daily basis by posting assignments to Google Classroom, as well as Google Drive. In addition, I also produce daily videos to guide my students."

Cannady added that he hopes to be permitted to return to his job in a few months.

As residents of the Pocket area continue their fight against coronavirus, Cannady urges people to bond together.

"We're all going through this as a group, as a community, as a neighborhood, and through (bonding together), we'll be stronger as a community," he said.

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Daily Mass: 8:00am Monday-Saturday

By Devin Lavelle

It is really hard being home with kids 7 days a week. We can talk to them about why they can't play at the playground or see their friends at school, but they don't really understand. Even if they do, it doesn't do anything to burn off the massive amount of energy the wake up with each morning.

COVID-19 has brought out so much good in humanity. Neighbors helping neighbors. Strangers helping strangers.

One of the really cool things that we've seen is people finding ways to connect creatively, while staying safely socially distanced.

We have seen great chalk art, in front of homes, in the parks and along the canals. It's a fun, uplifting thing to see while walking around the neighborhood with our kids.

The Pocket Moms group and Nextdoor have been full of art projects. Children made shamrock decorations to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, which their parents then hung on their doors or front windows. Families could then walk around the neighborhood, getting some great fresh air and exercise, while looking to spot these fun decorations.

Next up were flowers to celebrate the start of spring!

Most recently families went on bear hunts around the neighborhood. Families that weren't scared could enjoy the beautiful day (and possibly circumvent wavy grass, rivers, mud, our wonderful urban forest and so forth) and find stuffed bears placed in the windows for neighbors to enjoy. We saw a bear wedding, a bear dressed as a bunny, even Chewbacca! All, of course, with a

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Distancing:

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shiny wet nose, big furry ears and big goggly eyes!

As Rowna Lopez, a South Pocket neighbor says, "The Bear Hunt has given families the chance to do something fun together and bring camaraderie in the community!"

Next up is Easter! Families are planning egg hunts for early April all the way through the Holiday on April 12! Get those kiddos cutting and coloring! Don't have kiddos? Who says adults can't color too? Having kids made me rediscover the joy of coloring!

If you want some ideas, I have posted some community-themed Easter egg coloring sheets at facebook.com/DevinLavelleD7Parks/!

Have fun!

Share your art on social media (#PocketEggHunt) for everyone to enjoy and find!



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Sacramento mom invites families to join her FB group: "Draw with Stacey"

By Monica Stark

Local mom Stacey Ball offers art sessions on Facebook for families to enjoy.

If you look for Draw with Stacey on Facebook you will see art classes by West Sacramento mom Stacey Ball.

Each weekday there is a theme that she draws live and explains how it's done. Parents and kids can watch live or they can go back to the videos later and watch. Ball encourages people to post the art they create so everyone can enjoy the variety of styles that come in. Each class takes about 30-45 minutes. She recently started a Saturday evening class geared towards adults.

"I have always loved art and when kids were sent home and parents sent home I thought starting up an activity that gave people 30-plus minutes to not have to worry about anything and just create could be fun. I asked friends if they would be interested and figured I'd get about 50 people joining in."

To sign up, you can go to the Facebook group Draw With Stacey and request to join; it is approved typically within an hour of the request. Once you are in, you will see the live videos when they start posting or you can find them all archived for watching after. For those that do not have Facebook you can also view the videos on a YouTube page.

Her background in art? She has none! "I keep saying, 'I'm not a professional, I'm just a mom.' I never took art classes or went to school for it. I have always loved to draw. As I got older I did it less." Then her son took a trip to stay with his grandma and was gone for a week. They both would doodle together and with him gone she started drawing for him each day and posting it on his grandma's Facebook for him to see.

People started following and she started doing drawings for others and illustrations to sell. She'd taken another step back from it recently and this was a way to do it again while also getting others involved in it. There's more joy in me sitting and drawing with 150-plus people online and not making a dime than there is drawing and selling one piece.

"I think it is hugely important to stay connected right now. Even for those that are 'introverts.' Being with people helps you get outside of your own head and detox and enjoy company. Since we are stuck in our homes we have to find other ways to do that. I thought at first I'd create a YouTube and draw....but there are millions of those. I wanted a community. A place for people to not only interact while I'm drawing but also be able to share their art after," Ball says.

"The kids get excited to be involved like that. They get excited to see their other friends and I think the parents do as well. You feel connected, a part of something bigger and for that moment while you are drawing you aren't worried about everything else that is going on right now. We need moments like that."

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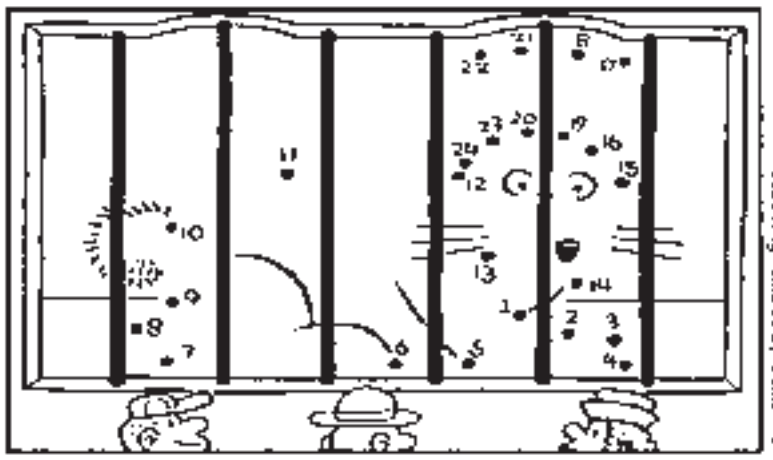
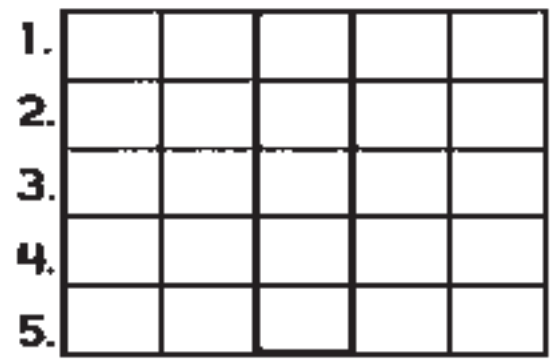


IS THIS THE NEW KING OF BEASTS? Join the dots and find out.

Answer: No, it's only a Giant Bolivian Bashful Bunny



Illustrated by David Coulson

BIG TOP BAFFLERS!

IN THE GRID, at left, there is room to enter five five-letter words pertaining to the circus world. The following definitions should help you:

1. To put up a circus tent.
2. What acrobats do.
3. Type of clown pants.
4. Performers in the World's Smallest Circus.
5. Found in animal cages.

There is a dark frame around the center column of letters. If you correctly solve the puzzle, the letters in this frame, top to bottom, will spell out the name of a circus animal.

Answers: 1. Pitch. 2. Flips. 3. Baggy. 4. Fleas. 5. Straw. The center column word is "Tiger."

READ THE FOLLOWING sentence once and state how many "f's" are in it.

"To be genuine, every package of Kellogg's Corn Flakes must bear the signature of W. F. Kellogg."



Answer: There are four "f's" in the sentence. The "f's" in "of" are often missed.

DOUBLE TROUBLE! Below are six partially spelled words. Four letters are missing from each word. In each case you must find a two-letter word that can be used to fill in the missing letters. Below you'll find some hints.

1. A favorite food.
2. A king or prince.
3. An Asian disease.
4. Type of headgear.
5. Used for cooking.
6. A crucial situation.



1. P__T__
2. M__ARAJ__
3. __RI__RI
4. __RD__T
5. __BAC__
6. CR____

Answers: 1. (AS) Pastas. 2. (AH) Maharajah. 3. (BE) Beriberi. 4. (HA) Hardhat. 5. (HI) Hibachi. 6. (IS) Crisis.

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Vernardos Circus returns to Sacramento via the world wide web



Venardos Circus family is grateful for West Sac's past support when they visited Vierra Farms last May. Live shows are currently on hiatus due to social distancing recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they miss their audience terribly. In a written statement, ringmaster Kevin Venardos, said, "Once we determined we need to pause the tour, we immediately starting planning how we could continue our mission to bring joy, positivity and light, as well as some comfort and distraction, to our circus family during this uncertain time via social media."

On Thursday, March 26 at 10 a.m., they posted their first weekly video of Venardos offering some fun and engaging content to bring positive energy and fun into your home. New content will be available once per week on Thursdays. Content is meant to entertain the whole family, as do our shows, but a great resource for the kids to enjoy some high quality, trustworthy entertainment.

You'll find these videos on our YouTube channel - https://www.youtube.com/user/kevinvenardos

Dealing with the quarantine, a student perspective

By Akshaj Mehta, age 14
writetolead.com

Let me set the scene for America about a month ago. Our community was not taking this situation seriously. The deciding government did not take any actions as of yet but cases continued to rise. Fast forward to today? Well we have low testing kits and other supplies are in need for our health professionals. We could have been more prepared for this situation considering the time we had.

Now, COVID-19 has had a direct impact on me and my family these past few weeks. We have been stocking up on supplies but have not crossed the threshold of panic buying. I am unsure why so many Americans find the urgency to over take supplies they very well do not need. Many elderly are not able to go out and get such supplies and others are taking away that opportunity.

Me and my brother's school have been closed till August. We will start distance learning soon. This may affect my grades as I have been working really hard towards my classes and was disappointed for the closure. During self quarantine, I now realize how important school is and have started to find out how true the phrase "Be careful what you wish for" is. My teachers continuously send out emails to parents and students to inform us about details for the situation regarding our school, and I am really grateful for that fact. My brother on the other hand has been enjoying his break as he cannot fully grasp what is happening right now.

A bright side to this whole situation is it definitely brings you and your family together or at least what I have experienced. I have noticed changes with me and brothers and my whole family's attitude toward each other. The shutdown leaves a lot of time to truly reflect on everything that's going on in our lives.

To all the readers, please take precautions for your safety. There is a reason why there have been shutdowns and closings etc. Stay safe and healthy. Take this time as an opportunity for ourselves to grow. There is a lot we can learn from all off this.

Matsui applauds passage of third COVID-19 aid package

Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA), a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Subcommittee on Health, issued the following statement on the passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented uncertainty and created new challenges for all Americans. This virus has threatened the health and livelihood of countless families and we owe it to them to provide a strong and direct response" said Congresswoman Matsui, Sacramento's voice in Congress. "This bill provides new resources to contain the virus, support workers, and keep our economy moving. I will continue to fight to get the full power of the federal government behind the Sacramento region during this difficult time."

The CARES Act includes the following provisions:

For fighting the coronavirus, this bill includes a $200 billion investment in hospitals, health systems and health research, and $150 billion for state and local governments.

For workers, this bill secures a $260 billion investment in Unemployment Insurance benefits to match the average paycheck of laid-off or furloughed workers. It also secures an additional 13 weeks of federally-funded benefits to be made available immediately.

For small businesses, this bill includes a $377 billion infusion of fast relief for small businesses and makes rent, mortgage and utility costs eligible for SBA loan forgiveness.

For students, this bill directs $30 billion to emergency education funds and eliminates the income tax on student loan repayment assistance by an employer.

This third package builds on two bills already signed into law:

$8.3 billion the House passed for preparedness, prevention and more, and

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, to help families stay healthy and make ends meet during the crisis.

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Marilyn Best, longest standing Board Member of the Sacramento Youth Symphony



"Her love, dedication, positive outlook, and generosity have had a lasting impact on the Sacramento Youth Symphony and its thousands of students over the course of three decades of service."

- Sacramento Youth Symphony

By Nida Spalding

Marilyn Best, the longest standing Board Member of the Sacramento Youth Symphony (SYS), has served the organization tirelessly with her wisdom and calm presence. Over the years, Marilyn has supported the SYS with her time, experience, counsel, financial support, and has opened up her home for charitable events and meetings. "The SYS musicians are a blessing to the community," she said. "They are special and doing something good through music." Her status as a long-standing Board member and generous donor puts her in a unique position to garner support from others. She is a fundraising dynamo! Each year she rallies support from many local businesses to support the goals of the Sacramento Youth Symphony and secure funding for its scholarship program. Marilyn considers it a privilege to support the students who dedicate their time to music education and appreciation.

Marilyn was born to a family with great appreciation for music. Franklin Morris Rowles, her father, was one of the Sacramento Symphony Association's first presidents. Shortly after, he advocated for a youth symphony in Sacramento and underwrote the first series of concerts called "Symphony Concerts for Young People." Clare Rowles, Marilyn's mother served on the Association for many years and re-

see SYMPHONY page 13

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Revere Court Memory Care offers a Day Club, Respite & Residential Care for those with a memory impariment, also offering Support Groups and Monthly Seminars for caregivers and loved ones.

Symphony:

continued from page 12

ceived several "Distinguished Service" awards.

As a child Marilyn learned to play the piano and later made sure to foster a love of music in her children. Her son, Glenn, and two daughters, Lonnie and Cindy, all received piano lessons when they were growing up. Glenn plays the clarinet and saxophone for his community orchestra in Germany, and several of her grandchildren play orchestral instruments. Marilyn is a proud grandma. Smiling broadly, she admits she is spoiled by her thirty-four grandchildren and great-grandchildren living in California, Boston and Germany.

In 1960 she and her three young children moved to Geneva, Switzerland, after her husband's passing. She planned to live there for only a year but ended up staying for twenty-three years. Her children had the opportunity to study at the Geneva Conservatory of Music and she learned to play the pipe organ from one of its teachers. In Geneva, she served as Assistant Committee on Publication for The First Church of Christ, Scientist throughout Switzerland. She was also a substitute organist. Marilyn knew the pastor of the World Council of Churches in Geneva and got to know people from that organization. "Getting to know people from 10 -15 different countries was quite the privilege," she said.

An active person all her life, Marilyn has enjoyed playing tennis, swimming, and ballroom dancing. She loves the company of people and personifies the perfect community volunteer, giving her time, talent and treasure.

Marilyn is a woman of humility, strong faith in God and is full of love for everyone. She lives a life of service to the community, always believing there is more she can do. For Marilyn, being a Board member "is an opportunity to help young people share their musical talents and focus on a life of giving," adding that "a life of giving is worthwhile."

The SYS surprised Marilyn earlier this year by dedicating their winter concerts to her. Marilyn was very surprised by the public recognition of her service, and when invited to say a few words, shifted the attention away from herself, thanking the young musicians, the parents, and the audience. Marilyn later remarked that she was "touched by the recognition of her faithful support to the organization and was truly overwhelmed by all the attention she had received."

Marilyn Best loves orchestral music. She loves the Sacramento Youth Symphony. And the feeling is mutual. She is widely respected and admired.



Marilyn Best at her home with Sacramento Youth Symphony musicians

Founded in 1956 as a 55-member youth orchestra, the Sacramento Youth Symphony now in its 64th year, has five orchestras/ensembles and serves more than 400 talented young musicians from all over the Sacramento Valley region. SYS offers beginning through advanced orchestral ensembles and presents more than 20 concerts per year under the baton of some of the best music educators and conductors in the region. Marilyn hopes to see more students enrolled in the different ensembles and more community support for the organization.

The Sacramento Youth Symphony could not offer the same level of service without the dedication and support of Board members and volunteers such as Marilyn Best. We are forever grateful to her.





Our City of Trees grows its NeighborWoods



Photos by Steve Harriman

By Ellen Cochrane

It was an unusually hot and sunny Saturday when the Sacramento Tree Foundation held the annual NeighborWoods Summit at the Fruitridge Community Collaborative. More than 100 people gathered to learn how to support and grow our urban canopy through the Sacramento Tree Foundation's NeighborWoods Program.

Attendees broke into groups to discuss the benefits of trees and how a healthy canopy creates not just shade and cools the city but contributes to health, economic prosperity and environmental justice. Participants collaborated on existing projects and new ideas on how to get more trees planted.

Keynote speaker, Fayzah Mughal of Rancho Cordova, explained how anyone can help. "I don't have any special credentials. I'm just a mom, but I've helped my community increase our trees through the NeighborWoods Program."

East Sacramento will soon be joining our nearby neighbors in River Park and Arden Park with a NeighborWoods plan. The neighborhood group East Sacramento Preservation (ESP) is forming an environmental committee that will include tree projects. ESP Treasurer Will Green taps into the heart of the program. "This is positive care taking of our community. Trees are essential to our neighborhood's health. We need to care for our trees and plant more."

Studies identify that more tree canopy increases general health and adds to social cohesion. Many other benefits directly help the environment. Trees improve our watershed, filter air and reduce air pollution and, of course, produce oxygen.

The Sacramento Tree Foundation program engages with specific neighborhoods to grow the best urban forest for our region. It offers a tool kit for any neighborhood to begin a tree planting program. Their main focus is not on the already "treesy" communities. Some of Sacramento's streets have more than 40% total tree coverage and others only 1 %.

"We have a mature canopy in East Sacramento," said Green. "We need to keep it healthy, but also pitch in to help other neighborhoods, and share our successes and challenges."

The Tree Foundation offers a comprehensive Community Tool Kit to launch a program anywhere in the city. Businesses and schools can also start programs on just their campuses. The Tool Kit shares concepts and action plans and lays out specific tools community members can use to launch a program or organize a single planting event.

To find out more information contact the NeighborWoods Program Manager: Rachel Patten at 916-417-7139 or email: rachelp@sactree.com



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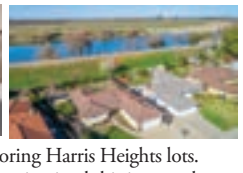

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Building community and connectivity through sound, music, and communication



Local recording studio owner offers sound healing

By Monica Stark

In the current social climate it is vital that we stay connected as one human family, says Kriss Walas, who is holding sound healing, meditation, and yoga events for wellness, community and communication at The Continuum Music Studio, a local recording studio that he owns. Open to the public with RSVP to keep groups small and connected, the sound healing, yoga, meditation, open communication, music therapy and chakra healing sessions are vital modalities for us all to realign with health, peace, love, and unity during these turbulent times, Walas says.

"Group gatherings are capped at 6-9 people to ensure gatherings are connective. This gives all who attend a chance to heal from within and make new connections with other like-hearted people," he says.

Walas explains sound healing as the practice of using music, sacred tones, tuning forks, crystal bowls, chimes, guitars, pianos, acoustic instruments, and worldly spiritual instruments to change the DNA structure in the body. "Sound and vibration is the foundation of our world. When using sound mindfully, with a pure and loving intention, it has been scientifically proven that healing miracles occur within the body, mind, heart, and soul," he says.

Each session is different and based on a wide range of healing modalities. "The universal need for all human beings is love. We all seek love outside of ourselves. We strive to gain a sense of purpose through our identity. Self-love is an inside job, and the most important job we will ever have. No one will be able to offer us the love we crave until we can love ourselves in the most profound ways," he says.

Sound healing stems from the science of Cymatics which is a form of sound therapy that is not applied through hearing, but by instruments that send audible sound waves directly into the body through the skin.

Walas is a graduate of CSUS with BA degrees in Psychology, Philosophy, and Audio. Kriss is a certified Reiki 2 practitioner in Holy Fire. Kriss is an innovator in the fields of sound, intimacy, healing, bioenergetics, Tantra, Reiki, mindfulness, meditation, epigenetics, breath work, relationship coaching, body therapy, communication, connecting with nature, and personal growth/expansion. Kriss is a student of life and has merged timeless teachings of the East with New Age teachings of the West to guide people to self-realization within their own being and bodies.

The Continuum Music Studio is the largest commercial recording studio in the greater Sacramento area and has been in business helping people heal through music, passion, and creativity since 2010.

To learn more about all the modalities offered visit https://krisswalas.com/ to learn more about the wide variety of offerings. Walas can be reached at 916-532-1683. Gatherings are on a first come first serve basis.

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Alone Together: Closed Facebook support group for mental health issues



A beautiful flower



Photos by Laura Bemis

Sheep mowing down Laura's backyard

By Monica Stark

Alone Together, a closed Facebook support group for mental health issues, has been started by Laura Bemis, local photographer and co-founder of "Journey of Hope Exhibit," the annual collaborative project that pairs writers with local artists to share stories of hope and recovery.

The group is for anyone who experiences a mental health challenge due to the isolation from the novel coronavirus. Bemis said she's keeping the group by either invitation or special request to ensure some sense of confidentiality. "If somebody wants to get into it, they can get into it. It's not open to the public so not everyone can sit and browse to read what's written," she said.

Bemis said the shelter-in-place ordinances have increased her depression because by helping others, she helps herself. "For me, the reason why I started it was because I have depression as one of my problems to deal with challenges. To keep me so I don't get depressed I get very involved in the community and I help other people with mental health challenges," she said.

Social distancing and health mandates can also be triggering for people with obsessive-compulsive disorder. "They are told they are to wash their hands and use sanitizer, that could be very strenuous because they already have that disorder and (the mandate) compounds it." She also explained that those who suffer from anxiety can be suffering more with all the latest coronavirus apocalyptic news. "A lot of people don't have anywhere to go or call to talk to somebody about it because it's such a personal thing and people don't want to share that they are hurting in that way."

Bemis started this group and has 12 members so far. Every now and then somebody will ask if they can join.

Each day, Bemis posts a photograph she's taken as a sort of conversation starter. Topics range from pretty flowers to the five sheep brought in to mow down her grass. As she writes on the page: "Even though we are in isolation we can still find beauty."

She said the requirements are pretty basic – that you be at least 18 years old, appear to have a lived experience of a mental health challenge, or are a caregiver with serious mental illness and be willing to share and participate in the group. "We're not asking anyone to prove their mental illness but if want to share this is a safe environment for that," she said. Bemis hopes to offer a Zoom or FaceTime session where members can login and join in on fun activities like coloring or art. "It's not group therapy," she said, "But, I'm looking for people to lead those things – someone who wants to do a craft or something online.

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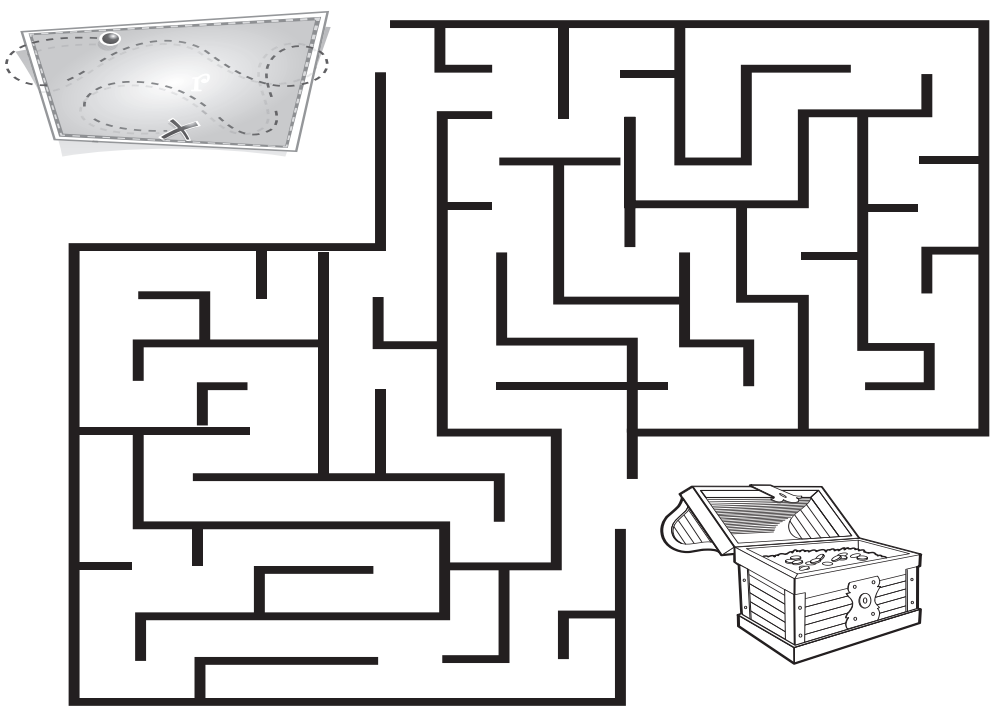

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