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The St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival

see page 2

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Faces and Places: The St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival

Photos by Stephen Crowley

The St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival returns on Saturday, Sept. 11 from noon to 8 p.m. with international food booths from cuisines of the world. There will also be games for the entire family including carnival-style games, 50/50, bingo, cake spin, a country store, pull tabs, wine spin, books, and more. The event also will include live entertainment and raffle prizes as well. Types of food included: Filipino, Italian, Mexican, Nigerian, Polish, Greek, American, desserts and snow cones. (Photos are pre-pandemic from 2019)





see Festival page 3

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Festival:

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Locals remember The Rolling Stones' Charlie Watts

Legendary drummer dies at the age of 80



Photo by Lance Armstrong

Dennis Newhall, a former KZAP radio station disc jockey, attended seven Rolling Stones concerts. He called the band's late drummer Charlie Watts a "great timekeeper" who was "steady as a rock."

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

With the Aug. 24 death of The Rolling Stones' Charlie Watts at the age of 80, various local residents shared their memories about this legendary drummer and his world-famous band.

During the same day, the band's publicist released the following statement: "It is with immense sadness that we announce the death of our beloved Charlie Watts. He passed away peacefully in a London hospital earlier today surrounded by his family.

"Charlie was a cherished husband, father and grandfather and also as a member of The Rolling Stones, one of the greatest drummers of his generation."

The cause of Watts' death was not disclosed.

Watts, who began his musical career as a jazz drummer and played in Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated, joined The Rolling Stones in 1963, upon the encouragement of Korner.

After never missing a performance with that group in nearly 60 years, Watts announced last month that he would not join his band for their upcoming North American tour.

Dennis Newhall, a former KZAP radio station disc jockey who grew up in West Sacramento, shared his reaction to Watts' death.

"I knew that he was sick and so, at 80, you never really know what that means," he said. "They were kind of secretive. They said that it was a medical procedure. So, I wasn't really surprised. But, obviously, it's sad. He was the motor behind the band."

Newhall, who attended seven Stones concerts, further shared his thoughts on Watts as a drummer.

"Everybody said Charlie was just a great timekeeper, steady as a rock," he said. "He didn't have a lot of flair, but he certainly had a lot of ability.

"(Stones vocalist) Mick (Jagger) and (guitarist) Keith (Richards) didn't want a flashy drummer. They wanted somebody that could keep time."

Mick Martin, who is best known locally for his band, Mick Martin and the Blues Rockers, and his Capital Public Radio program, "Mick Martin's Blues Party," recalled his impression of Watts.

"Charlie was so good at getting just the right beat," he said. "Now there's a lot of showoffs who play drums, but Charlie was so tasty.

"(The Stones are) pretty wild boys, even at the ages that they are now, but Charlie was always the sensible professional."

Martin mentioned that while attending Rolling Stones shows at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium in the mid-1960s, he was "often transfixed" on watching either Watts or (the band's founder and original guitarist) Brian Jones.

"I would always watch Charlie, because that's where the heartbeat of the band was coming from," he said.

"I always related to Charlie Watts as a musician would relate to a musician, and when I would hire a drummer, I would listen to the subtle things that they would do, because anybody can bash away. Even though he's been called a basher, there was a lot of subtlety in Watts' playing. And when it came to the rock 'n' roll image and all of that, he was just a gentleman and it seemed like he was far more approachable than the other people in the band."

Bill Just, a 1969 graduate of Rio Americano High School, described Watts' importance to The Rolling Stones.

"(Watts and bassist) Bill Wyman were always the quiet, reserved rhythm section that held the Stones together, while the rest of (the band members) were flying off at loose ends all the time," he said. "So, my one thing about Charlie Watts was not only was he a great drummer and a great jazz drummer and stuff, but him, along with Bill Wyman, really were the basis of The Rolling Stones."

Although Just praised Steve Jordan, Watts' replacement in the Stones, as a "really good drummer," he stressed that the band is not the same without Watts.

"It's not going to be even kind of the same, and to me it's sort of like the end of The Rolling Stones. And, as a matter of fact, Keith Richards and Mick Jagger

see Charlie Watt page 5

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Charlie Watt:

continued from page 4



Photo by Lance Armstrong

The Rolling Stones, with drummer Charlie Watts, performed multiple times at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium in the mid-1960s.

both had been quoted as saying, 'We're going to pack it in when Charlie leaves. If Charlie up and quits tomorrow, that's the end of the band.'

"I kind of doubt they're going to follow through with that, but that really tells you right there the importance of the guy."

Regarding the early years of The Rolling Stones, when fans debated whether they believed the Stones or The Beatles were the more superior band, Just mentioned that, to him, there was no true debate.

Just, who attended three Rolling Stones shows in Sacramento in the mid-1960s, described how he felt after viewing the Stones and The Beatles perform on the TV program, "The Ed Sullivan Show," in 1964.

"From that point on, I liked The Rolling Stones (a lot more than The Beatles)," he said. "In that case, it was kind of like the difference between a boy band and a real rock'n' roll band.

"There was a more primal sound to (the Stones' music), a less produced sound."

Mike Blanchard, a local musician and magazine publisher and editor who lived for many years in East Sacramento, referred to himself as a "huge Charlie Watts fan."

"Charlie Watts was always this kind of enigma back there, because he never talked that much, he wasn't super flashy, he wasn't out in front, but what he did was so good, and it was recognizably so good," he said.

Blanchard, who attended three Rolling Stones concerts, recalled how Watts made use of a simple, jazz drummer-type drum kit.

"When you put restrictions on art, it oftentimes leads to creativity," he said. "It makes you be more creative. You don't have 48 drums. You need to make do with these five, and (Watts) was a master at that. And really, that's the key to the whole thing, is being creative, being inventive. But for the drummer to be perfectly there, the meter is correct, it's always good.

"If you look at (Stones songs such as) "Sympathy for the Devil," and some of these other (songs), the drumline is very creative, and it fits perfectly and moves the song. It's the sign of a musician, not just a drummer."

George Kostyrko, a local musician who grew up in the Arden area and East Sacramento, spoke about his reaction to hearing about Watts' death.

"I was really surprised," he said. "I knew he was sick, but I thought he would bounce right back, because he looked so dang healthy. But maybe he just knew his time was up. I'm not sure, but it's shock for sure.

"He lived a full life, and he was married all that time and he had great kids and he was an artist. He had great skills and he was able to exercise that."

Kostyrko, a 1981 graduate of El Camino High School, also described the impression Watts had on him.

"Charlie was just impeccable on so many levels," he said. "He just had such constraint in terms of his playing, but he was always there and always driving the music. In my opinion, he was probably one of the most important members of that band.

"Just the way he carried himself, the way he dressed and just his conduct. He was all about the music. He wasn't a personality; it didn't have to be about him. It had to be about what he contributed, and it spoke louder than words, to be honest with you."

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Sacramento Play Summit returns virtually on Sept. 11

Play is the most important work of childhood, setting the foundation for a child's physical, emotional and cognitive well-being. Yet there are growing threats and limitations placed on the time, resources and spaces devoted to play.

Presented by Fairytale Town and Sacramento Public Library, the Sacramento Play Summit will be held online this year on Saturday, Sept. 11 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It aims to highlight the importance of play, the many types of play, ways to incorporate play into daily and school life, and more. This conference is ideal for adults who work with children: preschool and elementary educators, early childhood education specialists, childcare providers, after-school program administrators and practitioners, parks and recreation professionals, physical education professionals, parents and grandparents.

Presented by Fairytale Town and the Sacramento Public Library, this conference highlights the importance of play, ways to incorporate play, and more. The conference also qualifies for seven hours of professional growth credit.

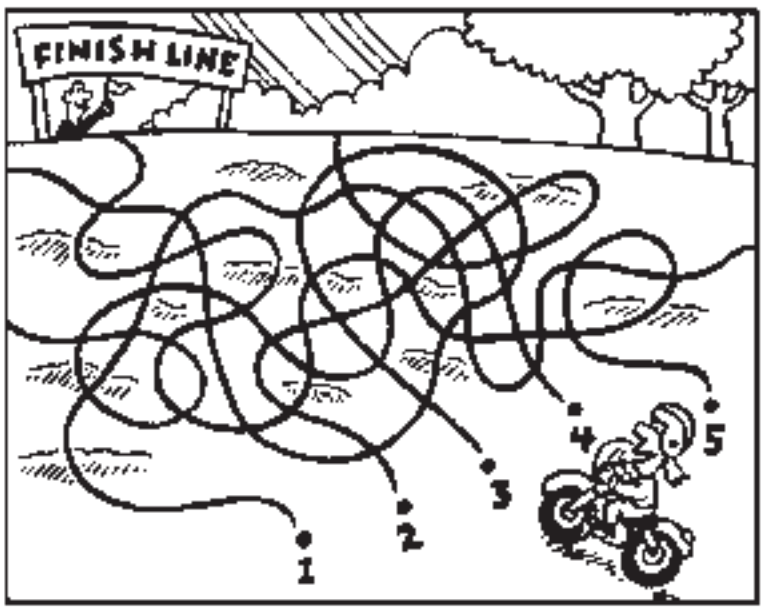
The following is a question and answer with event spokesperson Sacramento Public Library Youth Services Manager Christie Hamm and Valley Community Newspapers.

Valley Community Newspapers: Who are the speakers? Why were they chosen for the summit?

Christie Hamm: This year we have an amazing lineup of speakers. The virtual nature of the Summit this year allowed us to bring some much needed expertise that might not be possible if we were in person.

Our morning speakers Dr. Corliss Outley and Dr. Harrison Pinckney will highlight the experiences, concerns and opportunities that families raising Black children consider when engaging in play. Attention will be given to lessons learned through play and its impact on identity development and self-esteem. Tips will be provided for providing positive play experienc-

see Play page 7



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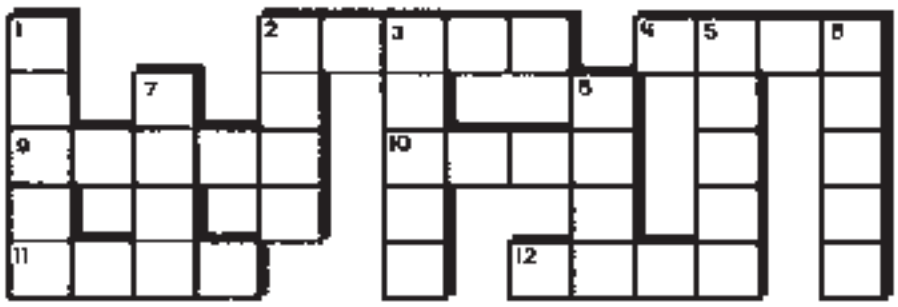
A BUMPY RIDE! Which route will take this trail biker to the finish line? You're a winner if your first or second guess is correct.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



A FILL-IN PUZZLE!

Pictured at left is a crossword puzzle grid. Below are the words that you'll need to complete the puzzle, using the trial-and-error method. Keep an eraser handy!

4-letter words	5-letter words
CHIN	ABASH
DASH	EARTH
ECHO	KHAKI
HALO	LATHE
ICON	RADAR
KNEE	TANGO
PLOT	

Answers: (Across) 2. Earth. 4. Plot. 9. Abash. 10. Dash. 11. Icon. 12. Knee. (Down) 1. Khaki. 2. Echo. 3. Radar. 5. Lathe. 6. Tango. 7. Halo. 8. Chin.

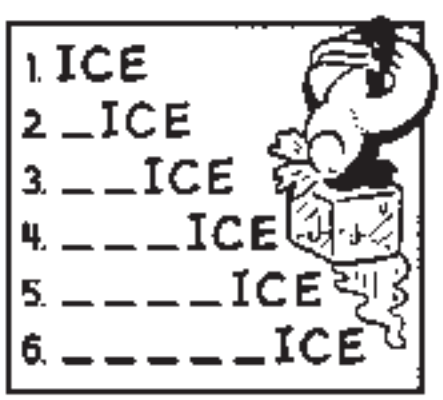
THICK AS A BRICK! Barney, a local bricklayer, asks the following question: "If a brick weighs 9 pounds and half a brick, what does a brick and a half weigh?"



27 pounds. One brick weighs 18 pounds, and half a brick weighs 9 pounds.

A COOL PROBLEM! Don't slip up on this one. In this puzzle, all of the words get progressively longer, and they all end in ICE. Use the following definitions:

1. **ICE (in place).**
2. **Mickey and Minnie.**
3. **Fruit drink.**
4. **Place of business.**
5. **Ornamental molding.**
6. **A candy flavor.**



Illustrated by David Coulson

1. Ice. 2. Mice. 3. Juice. 4. Office. 5. Cornice. 6. Licorice

Play:

continued from page 6



es for families raising Black children.

Our afternoon will close with a presentation from Dr. Ariana Blazer and Juli Blazer, two play educators on sustaining cultural identity through play, promoting play as an avenue to celebrate, learn, and be in relationship with one another across all spectrums of life. And in between we have breakout sessions from local experts on a variety of topics – playing with books, outdoor play, play for children with special needs, weapon and fantasy play, and more.

VCN: How many years has this event gone on? How has it changed over the years?

Hamm: This is the 9th year Sacramento Public Library and Fairytale Town have presented the Play Summit. The Summit has changed some over the years. While we missed being together in person, we were able to pivot very successfully in 2020 to a virtual environment, which we will do again this year.

VCN: What do you hope attendees get out of the event? What are you looking forward to most?

Hamm: Since its inception, it has brought together members of the community for a combination of practical hands on sessions, inspiring keynotes, some silliness, and networking, all with the aim of making sure Sacramento has access to the very best resources to support our community's children.

VCN: What role does the library play in putting together the play summit? Tell us about the partnership between Fairytale Town and the library in getting the summit underway.

Hamm: Sacramento Public Library is committed to making sure children and families have the supports they need to be ready to learn.

There are five early learning practices which help prepare children for learning – Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing, and Playing. The Play Summit is a way to help develop this important learning practice.

The Play Summit began in 2013 because of Library Director Rivkah Sass, and Fairytale Town's former director Kathy Fleming. The two of them saw the need in our community for this kind of discussion and celebration and learning opportunity. It was clear that first year that this was something much needed, and it has attracted a sell out crowd every year since. The good part about the virtual space is there's room for everyone!

For more information, visit: https://www.fairytaletown.org/calendar/sacramento-play-summit/

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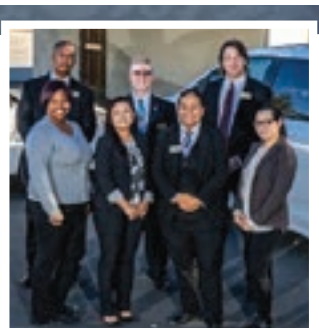

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Scout Troop 259
summer camp recap

This July, Scout Troop 259 went to summer camp near Willits, California. For the 10 scouts attending, none had been to summer camp before and one of these scouts had never even camped before.

The adults attending with them were excited for these young men at trying new things (albeit a little scared of the "what if…" possibilities). The camp provided various activities for our scouts including mountain biking, mountain climbing, swimming, kayaking, astronomy, and horseback riding.

There was no downtime because there was so much they wanted to do. Altogether, they earned 65 merit badges which are applied toward their personal rank advancements.

Two highlights are the 6 o'clock in the morning "Wooly Wash" which was a daily swim in the lake, and a relay race against the other 25-plus troops in attendance. We will just say, "we finished the race"; you will have to come to one of our troop meetings to hear the rest of THAT story. We were surrounded by nature every day; deer, fox, giant squirrels, lizards, and more were frequently in our campsite. Overall, this year's summer camp was fun and fantastic and we look forward to more adventures. For more information about Troop 259 visit, www.Troop259.org.







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Sacramento County reintroduces indoor mask mandate

Community responds to order

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

With the July 29 announcement that Sacramento County public health officials reinstated the mandate requiring people to wear face coverings in indoor, public spaces, local residents shared their thoughts on that order.

The reinstated mandate went into effect the following day and pertains to most people, regardless of whether they have been vaccinated against COVID-19. The mandate does not apply to people who are medically exempted from wearing face coverings.

Face masks are also not required for those working alone in a room or exercising.

Indoor public settings, according to the mandate, include restaurants, retail stores, movie theaters, gyms and offices.

The mandate's return occurred nearly two months after being lifted, following the end of California's color-coded tier restrictions for businesses and public buildings.

Dr. Olivia Kasirye, the county's public health officer, stated in her July 29 order that the rise in COVID-19 cases led to the reinstated order.

"Since June 15, 2021, when most restrictions from the state of California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy were lifted, the average daily incident case rate of COVID-19 in Sacramento County has increased 5.5-fold to reach the 'high-transmission' level of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's indicators for levels of community transmission," she wrote.

"The testing positivity rate in Sacramento County has also risen 4.3-fold since June 15. Hospitalizations from COVID-19 in Sacramento County have risen from 60 patients on June 15 to 175 patients on July 27."

Kasiyre additionally stated that the "significantly more transmissible" COVID-19 Delta variant is the predominant strain in the United States, and has accounted for 64.8% of positive specimens collected from county residents and genotyped, since June 15.

As of Aug. 4, the county reportedly had a COVID-19 case rate of 25.6 per 100,000 residents. In contrast, the case rate was reportedly 5.2 cases per 100,000 residents on July 1.

Kasiyre did not provide a date for when the order would be lifted.

Land Park resident Melanie Davis mentioned that she believes in following the county's mask mandate order.

"I'm all for contributing to whatever the solution is, and if that means we all have to wear masks now," she said. "I work in the medical setting, so I've had to wear one from the beginning. So, it's not much of a change for me."

Curtis Park resident Kathy Strawser also believes in following the order.

"I always wear the mask (in public)," she said. "Everyone in my family is vaccinated, so when I'm at home, I don't wear the mask. If I go to Safeway or (in a gas station), paying cash for my gas, then I put the mask on."

Former Land Park resident Lisa Santos, bartender at the XO Lounge, noted that she does not agree with the mandate's requirement for vacci-

see Mask page 11

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Mask:

continued from page 10

nated people to wear masks indoors in public places.

"I think if you were (vaccinated), I don't think it should apply to you," she said.

"I do think that it's unfortunate that people still have to wear (face coverings). I'm not about government at all, and I think you should do what you want to do."

Stefon Love, who identified himself as a homeless man who lives in the area, believes that it was not necessary to reinstate the mandate.

"On this pandemic and things that are going around with the mask, even though the government says we don't have to wear the mask ever since June, but we have to turn back around and wear them, to me I can understand the panic," he said. "But this is something that if 1,000 people ain't dying in one city to the other to the other, I really think they overregulate.

"I understand the concern, because I'm concerned about it, but I don't think the government or the city where you live (needs) to go this far."

While sitting inside a Land Park business, Gerry Kushida shared his thoughts on the mask mandate.

"The variant is so powerful, I guess, it really effects everybody," he said. "So, we're going back to square one (with face coverings), I think. So, we've got to be careful. Hospital rates are high. I'm concerned about it. What can we do? Everybody's rebelling against wearing masks, and they don't want to get vaccinated.

"I think it's up to you. If you want to wear your mask, fine. If not, fine."

Little Pocket resident Lein Shanahan said that he is frustrated with the "flip-flopping" of the mandate.

"To me, it's like, we got vaccinated, trying to get back to normal life and you want to flip-flop and say, 'Oh, now that you're vaccinated, you've got to go (back) and wear masks.'"

Steven Quarles, a 1975 graduate of John F. Kennedy High School, mentioned that he questions the recent mask mandate.

"I don't give (an expletive) what the government thinks," he said. "I'll be damned if I'm going to follow anything they say. I've always felt suspect. You know, conspiracy theorist."

Asked about the mandate, Meadowview resident Sam Gevara noted that he has grown frustrated with Gov. Gavin Newsom.

"We should have (continued to wear) masks before the second opening," he said. "Our governor. He don't care. He would rather have us get sick and die. So, I would rather have people inside the stores or buildings have masks on, because you don't know who got sick, who's not.

"Personally, I think (the mandate) is a good idea, but most people, they don't realize that. It's really stupid all these people sitting around not wearing a mask. It's dumb. I believe the real-life science. I don't believe the fake news stuff."

Oak Park resident John Williams told this paper that he supports the reinstated mask mandate.

However, he noted that although he is very concerned about the spreading of COVID-19, he does not attempt to promote his view with others.

"A grown man or woman has to make their (own) choice," he said. "I don't judge. Just don't give (the virus) to me."

Katie, a nurse in the community who did not want to share her last name, supports the reinstated mask mandate.

"I'm all for the mask mandate," Katie said. "Our hospitals are being overflowed again. We don't have the means to keep up with the rate that it's going up, and if masks can help cut that down even a little bit, I think it's an easy concession to make for the betterment of everyone around you."

She also commented on the COVID-19 variant.

"We're already seeing it mutate so far, and we're already seeing it become smarter than us at this point," she said. "So, I think wearing masks can keep us smarter than mutations. If wearing masks cuts down the ability for it to further mutate, so our vaccine might not even work anymore, I think we've got to do our part."

West Sacramento resident Melissa Gomez mentioned that she especially supports the mask mandate, due to her medical issue that prevents her from getting vaccinated.

"I think the mask mandate is a good thing to do, and I think we should be wearing them," she said. "I haven't gotten sick since we had to (wear them)."



Photo by Lance Armstrong

Meadowview resident Sam Gevara is among the supporters of Sacramento County's reinstated mask mandate.

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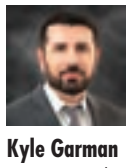
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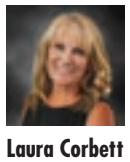
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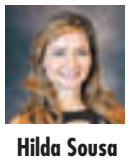
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Local church extends homeless assistance to Southside area

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

A local church's ongoing project to assist Sacramento's homeless was recently introduced at a homeless camp along W Street, in the city's Southside area.

While wearing blue T-shirts bearing the words, "Capital Dream Team," and the acronym, CCC, a group of male members of Capital Christian Center carried bags and boxes containing food and other essential goods from their vehicles to the camp.

Capital Christian Center is a longtime operating Sacramento church, which is located in the Rosemont area, near Highway 50 and Bradshaw Road.

The church's effort to bring food, clothing and other essentials to homeless camps in Sacramento was established by the church's men's group, which is known as the Capital Men.



This homeless camp on W Street is among many such camps with border streets in Sacramento.

Michael Paschenko, one of the coordinators of the church's homeless assistance program, told this publication that this group's deliveries are an extension of the church's larger food assistance program for the homeless.

"We put together about 200 bags of food for people to just drive through – and as they come through, we would be COVID(-19) compliant and have our masks on and such – and (the volunteers) hand over two bags of food to each car that came through. And that was (held on) Sundays. And now we're continuing it and increasing the number of bags."

The group recently handed out 200 bags of essentials at their church grounds and then distributed additional bags of food and other items directly to homeless camps.

"'Tent city' deliveries are made by the Capital Men on the fourth Sunday of every month.

Although the area for these deliveries currently extends from the Rosemont area to the homeless camp across from Southside Park, Paschenko noted that the church hopes to eventually expand its deliveries into other nearby areas.

"As long as we (have) grocery bags to hand out, time on our hands," he said.

The bags of food and other essentials are supplemented with any available clothing, shoes and toiletries, Paschenko said.

In addition to delivering food and other essentials to people experiencing homelessness, Capital Men members also pray with them and listen to their personal stories.

In speaking about people who live on the streets, Paschenco said that among the top things that they desire are an address, which will allow them to apply for jobs, and a home where they can comfortably lay their heads at night.

He also mentioned that many homeless are sick, have dependencies and have no way of obtaining professional assistance.

"They're on the streets and they're just surviving," Paschenko said.

Paschenko noted that the church's efforts to help the city's homeless is not new.

"It started with the (church's) Winter Sanctuary (in 2012)," he said. "It allowed the homeless to be bused to our church for a week or two at a time as an overflow when (Sacramento) County had run out of spaces to house them during the winter months."

As part of that program, during those winter evenings, the church's gymnasium was opened with sleeping quarters, and tables were set up for feeding the homeless. Many were shown movies, while others played games, prior to going to sleep for the night.

Each morning, the group was awakened at 5 a.m., provided with breakfast-to-go, and then they were transported back to Loaves and Fishes, a longtime provider for the homeless, on North C Street.

At the time of the church's beginnings with its food distribution program, CCC Senior Pastor Rick Cole was part of that county program, which united more than 30 churches to assist local homeless people.

Cole spent two weeks living with homeless people in Sacramento in 2014 to raise awareness and funds for the Winter Sanctuary program.

Capital Christian Center's involvement with the Winter Sanctuary continued for several years, until funding became an issue.

Paschenko told this paper that although the possibility of reintroducing that program is contemplated, it is not currently an option due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He added that almost every homeless person aided by his church is very appreciative of that assistance.

see Homeless page 13

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Juvenile Hall Students Learning Construction Trade Basics

SCOE and NCCT Partnership Teaching Students Job Skills



Construction teacher Jack Maberry closely watches his students as they work to build shelves as part of a class project. His job: part instructor, part motivator.

"You know how to read the tape. You guys just did it. You aced it!" Maberry encourages loudly above the racket of hammers. A few minutes later he compliments a student who is gaining confidence using power tools. "There you go. Good job!" he shouts.

Maberry is not a conventional trades instructor working in a conventional school. He works for Northern California Construction Training (NCCT), and the students he teaches attend El Centro Jr./Sr. High School—a Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) juvenile court school program inside the Sacramento County Youth Detention Facility (YDF).

The closely supervised NCCT pre-apprenticeship program helps students learn the basics of the construction trade. Through this program, students can eventually join trade unions in fields like welding and carpentry following their release. The full support of the Sacramento County Probation Department makes it possible for SCOE to offer this Career Technical Education inside the YDF.

"The kids love it. It's one of our most in-demand programs, and it will help these young men and women earn a sustainable wage when they leave us," said Barbara Modlin, El Centro Jr./Sr. High School Principal.

Students learn construction basics, such as how to properly use tools, how to work in teams, how to create budgets, and how to plan projects. They also gain hands-on experience that teaches them how to use applied math.

"They're learning real-life applications," the principal explained. "It teaches the kids so many transferable skills that they can take with them once they leave us."

"Out of all the years I've been teaching," added Maberry, "there's something that just doesn't compare to teaching youth. To be able to access these students at the age they are and to expose them to something like this, something I'm very passionate about, which is building. Nothing can fulfill that. I can't buy that in a can or a bottle."

The instructor says he hopes the construction course will give students a level of comfort so that, upon their release, they will enroll in adult classes with NCCT, find a career in the construction trade, and earn a good wage.

Homeless:

continued from page 12

"They are so appreciative," he said. "They feel like they're invisible. Nobody sees them, they just walk by them. They don't stop and talk to them. They cross paths by going across the street to avoid them. They don't look at them.

"So, they're everyday people, just like you and I. They've gone through some difficulties and some of them are brand new on the streets and they're learning (about that lifestyle)."

Paschenko mentioned that some of the homeless people who the Capital Men served expressed astonishment with the kindness of these volunteers.

"(They are impressed with) the fact that we would take our time to go to a desolate area where they have their tents set up, and the fact that we took our time to over there and recognize them and help them with food and clothing and such. We find areas that are so desolate that we were the first ones to ever come (visit) them.

"I can't even describe how much they appreciate that we come to them and recognize them and let them know that they're valued and that we love them. And that's why we're here."



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The Brickhouse Gallery & Art Complex returns with their first "Oak Park First Friday event since the pandemic, featuring "DINORAH" in the outdoor patio with J Beezy Stage Truck providing the sound and stage for all First Friday events. This is a free event from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 3.

Acclaimed multi-award winning singer, songwriter and musician, Dinorah has performed for audiences throughout the U.S. and Mexico for over 25 years.

Born and raised in Mexico City, Dinorah started her musical education at age of eight years old when she learned to play guitar and quickly developed a passion for Flamenco, Salsa, Bolero, and Ballads.

Dinorah has performed with legendary artists such as Stevie Wonder, Mariachi Vargas, Mariachi Sol de Mexico, Patti Labelle, Celia Cruz, and many more.

Based locally, she manages a traditional Latin American and Spanish group, Las Brujas; a salsa and blues band, Crosswinds; and performs music from all over the world as a soloist with her inseparable guitar.

Dinorah is also involved in the production of shows and festivals, including Sacramento's own Annual Mariachi Festival.

The Brickhouse is located at 2837 36th St. in Oak Park.

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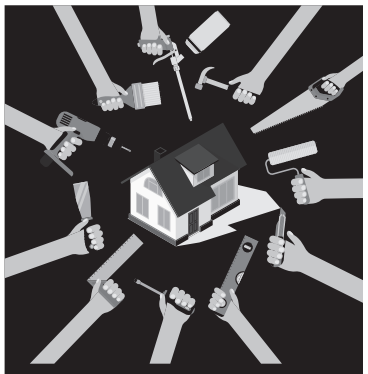

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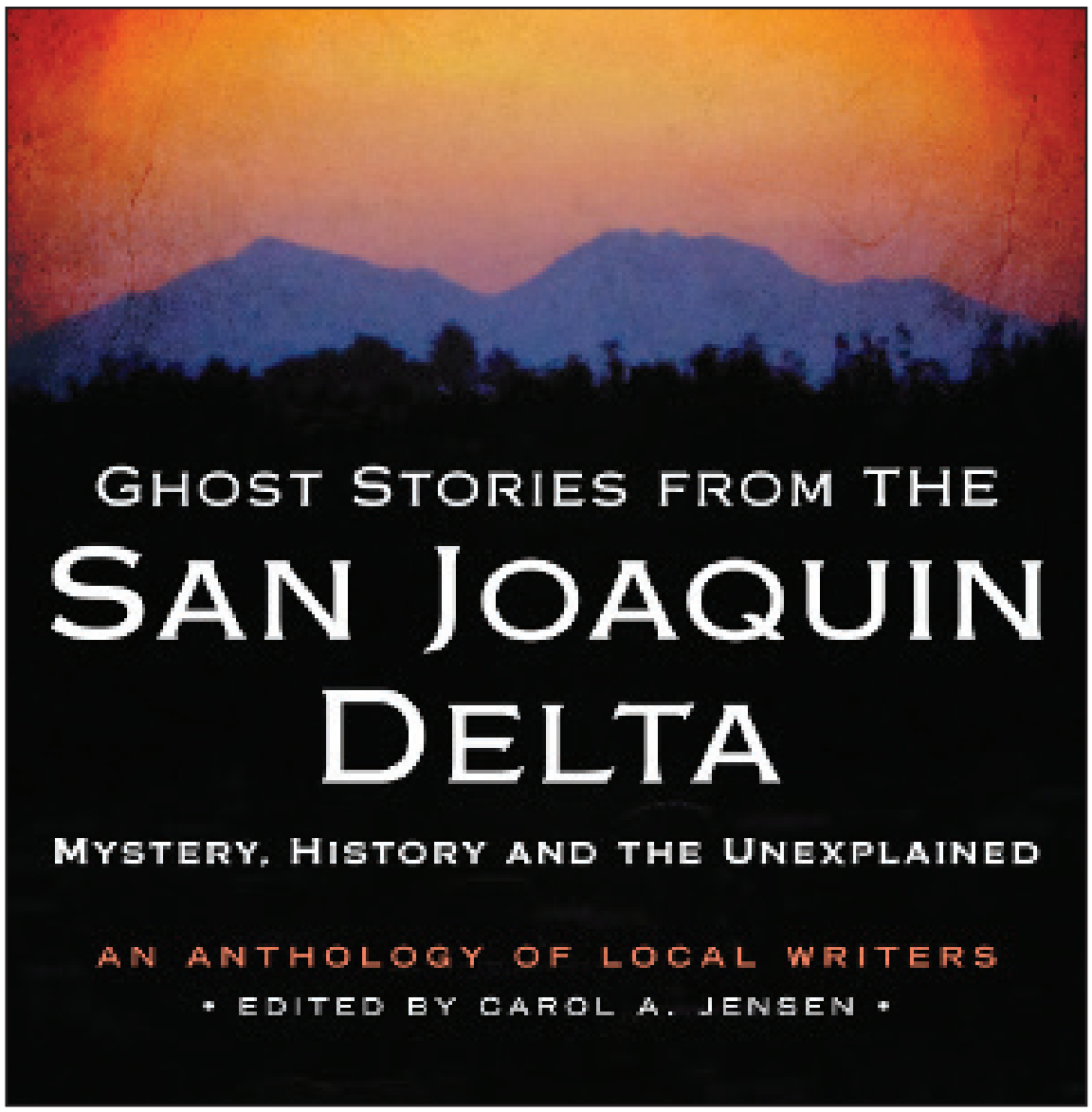
A new book resurrects ghost stories from the San Joaquin Delta

A new book out -- "Ghost Stories from the San Joaquin Delta" -- provides an introduction to local history through stories that reflect our culture and identity. Tule fog, railroads, waterways and remote homesteads provide a rich canvas upon which local legends are built. Once home to the wealthiest pioneers in California, few today remember John Marsh.

Point of Timber, populist political wars, and ritualistic murders were once known in far eastern Contra Costa County. Truth is stranger than fiction as creation stories, cultural myths, extraordinary deaths, and unsolved mysteries from the California Delta heartland are revealed. You will find hair-raising stories of escaped anaconda snakes, missing wives, lone horsemen, train wrecks, fire and wistful love.

The communities of Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, Oakley, Discovery Bay, Bethel Island and the Far East Islands were settled by agribusiness pioneers, exported more grain in the 1870s than the entire Mississippi Valley, and welcomed the San Pablo and Tulare railroad—and they were scary! The bandit Joaquin Murrieta stole horses here, ritualistic murders occurred on Jersey Island and Hispanic folklore brought the La Llorna legend to the waterways. Do not forget the ghosts at the Byron Hot Springs! Today, these communities are safe and secure San Francisco Bay Area suburbs. Or are they? Do not underestimate the unexplained apparition of Sarah Norton, the "White Witch," lurking just outside your home.

With 65 images and 128 pages, author Carol A. Jensen delights in discovering the history of the California San Joaquin Delta and collecting early 20th-century ephemera and documenting the cultural history of the area from those who lived, farmed, recreated and visited the beautiful California Delta. The fruits of her historical search can be found at the East Contra Costa Historical Society & Museum, Knightsen, California. She is pleased to compile and edit this anthology of Ghost Stories from the East Contra Costa County communities.





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Avoiding Chronic Disease Through Plant-based Eating, September 9, 23, and 30, 2:00-3:00 pm
Robin Withrow-Wong, MS, RDN, teaches participants easy ways to incorporate more fruits, veggies, whole grains and legumes into their daily diets to reduce risk of developing chronic diet related disease such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and high cholesterol. Cooking demo on September 30th. Join on Zoom.



Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs), September 16, 2:00-3:00 pm
Tax law modifications have changed the way that we need to take RMDs from our retirement accounts, as well as how they will impact our beneficiaries. Financial advisor Mark Pratt will lead a discussion on how to be proactive in dealing with these changes. Join on Zoom.

Yoga Bodhisattva with Joaquin Ngarangad
Mondays, 11:00 am-12:00 pm, Zoom

Zumba Gold with Linda Taylor
Tuesdays, 11:40 am-12:40 pm, Zoom

Gentle Yoga with Jeani Kim-Slesicki
Tuesdays, 1:00-2:00 pm, Zoom

Writing Your Life Story with Lora Connolly
Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00 pm, Zoom

Tai Chi for Those with Limited Mobility
Robert Nakashima, Fridays, 11 am-12 pm, Zoom

Movin' On with Joaquin Ngarangad
Fridays, 1:00-2:00 pm, Zoom



COVID-19-related hospitalizations on the rise, says county health officer

She urges more people to get vaccinated, observe mask mandate



Photo by Lance Armstrong

Sacramento County Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye last week noted that the county's greatest concern pertaining to COVID-19 is the increasing number of COVID-19 patients in hospitals.

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Sacramento County Public Health Officer Dr. Olivia Kasirye, on Aug. 17, said she is greatly concerned with the rise in COVID-19-related hospitalizations.

"Our greatest concern right now is with our hospitals," she said. "Today, we got a report that we have 482 hospitalizations due to the COVID(-19), and 98 of those are (in) intensive care units."

Because of this status, Kasirye encouraged people to use emergency rooms and ambulances "sparingly."

"Those should only be used for emergency situations, because we are seeing a huge impact, not only from the number of people that are needing those services, but also the hospitals are reporting difficulty with capacity, as well as with staffing," she said.

Kasirye shared those comments during a telephone town hall with U.S. Rep. Ami Bera, D-Elk Grove, whose Congressional District 7 includes part of the coverage area of Valley Community Newspapers.

Kasirye joined that meeting for the purpose of providing an update on how COVID-19 and the delta variant are impacting people within Sacramento County.

She noted that as of Aug. 17, the county had 124,604 reported cases of COVID-19.

Kasirye added that during the same day, reported COVID-19 cases exceeded the daily average of 400 to 500 new cases per day.

"We did get quite a huge bump of 751 in just one day," she said. "The case rate is about 30 per 100,000. It has been going up pretty steadily, increasing by one point every single day.

Kasirye mentioned that there are two reported COVID-19 deaths in the county per day, and that the county's death total had reached 1,822.

Regarding the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccinations, Kasirye pointed to statistics pertaining to county residents who are not vaccinated.

"About 90% of our (reported) cases are among people that are not vaccinated," she said. "When you look at the case rate for those that are not vaccinated, the case rate is actually 44 per 100,000. For those that are vaccinated, the case rate is 11 per 100,000. So, we are seeing breakthrough cases, but those tend to be milder, and the severe cases and the deaths are predominantly from people that are not vaccinated."

As for the delta variant, Kasirye told listeners of the meeting that 80% to 90% of the reported COVID-19 cases in the county are from that variant.

Kasirye added that vaccination rates are gradually on the rise.

"(They) continue to go up slowly, but surely," she said. "From the last state report, we have at least 60% of our residents fully vaccinated. We still do have a ways to go and we have been working really hard with community-based agencies and other stakeholders, such as the hospitals and the schools, to especially make sure that we have pop-up clinics in areas that are underserved."

She noted that the county is also conducting a lot of outreach in those underserved areas.

Per a question from a caller who inquired about the availability of free COVID-19 testing sites, Kasirye mentioned that there

see COVID page 19





Chautauqua Playhouse presents Peter James' "The Perfect Murder"

Chautauqua Playhouse will open its new season with the murder mystery "The Perfect Murder", by Peter James, adapted for the stage by Shaun McKenna, beginning on August 27 at the Playhouse. The show will run on Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00 pm and Sundays at 2:00 pm through September 26. The performances are held at the Chautauqua Playhouse, 5325 Engle Road in the La Sierra Community Center in Carmichael. Admission is $23 General, $21 Seniors/Students and SARTA members. Premium seating is an additional dollar. Tickets at the door are general pricing.

Have you ever wondered how you commit the perfect murder? Victor Smiley and his wife Joan have been married for a long time. But their marriage has reached a crisis point, and Victor has decided there is only one way to get Joan out of his life forever... but he's about to get a nasty surprise. You'll be on the edge of your seat! *

*This show is rated R, for language, violence and sexual situations.

Patrons will be required to follow CDC, local and state requirements and must be masked during the performances. Proof of vaccination or a recent negative covid test may be requested.

The direction is by Patricia Lee Schmeltz, with set and light design by Andrew Fiffick. The cast features Lynnette Blaney, Warren Harrison, Said Noori, Destiny Syftestad, and John Goodin.

Information and tickets are available through the Chautauqua Playhouse website: www.cplayhouse.org or call the box office at (916) 489-7529, during business hours.



COVID:

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are still free testing sites in the county, and that additional testing sites will be added due to the increased demand.

"The best is to schedule an appointment for those clinics, but we do have walkups, as well," she said. "And it's free of charge, whether somebody has insurance or not."

Another caller, Ruby from Sacramento, asked about several COVID-19-related topics, including booster shots.

Bera followed Ruby's inquiries by sharing information about booster shots.

"It's our anticipation that the (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the White House is going to recommend booster shots for anyone whose been vaccinated eight months ago – so, that would be back in January and shortly February," he said. "And those booster shots may start becoming available to folks who were vaccinated eight months ago, starting in September.

"I think that approval is coming. Certainly, they've already approved booster shots for particularly vulnerable patients – people who have weakened immune systems or other coexisting conditions that would make them particularly susceptible."

Bera added that it is recommended that people receive the same shot, as a booster, that they previously received.

"If you had (Johnson & Johnson), get the J&J booster; if you had Pfizer, get the Pfizer booster; if you had Moderna, get the Moderna booster," he said. "They should all be coming shortly and be readily available."

Bera, who is a physician, supports the current mask mandate that requires most people to wear face coverings in indoor, public spaces, regardless of their vaccination status. The mandate does not apply to people who are medically exempted from wearing face coverings.

"Even if you're vaccinated, there's still some evidence that you can still have a breakthrough infection and have a viral load that may be giving you mild symptoms," he said. "But you still, potentially, could spread it to other folks that are not vaccinated.

"So, my recommendation is when you are in an indoor setting or in settings where you're going to be closely sitting by individuals, it's always going to be safer to wear a mask at this particular point, even if you're fully vaccinated."

Bera added that his support of the mandate is much greater due to "how contagious the delta variant is."

Kasirye mentioned that although masks are required in public, indoor settings in Sacramento County, it is the responsibility of business owners to enforce that mandate.

"Probably, that's why you're seeing the differences with the different restaurants' (support of the mandate)," she said.

Kasirye further described the state of COVID-19 in the county.

"We're looking at the numbers right now," she said. "I gave a summary of where we're at and we have surpassed the peak that we had in July of 2020. If we do continue at this rate, it's looking like we're getting close to where we were at with the peak at the beginning of this year. So, there's a lot of concern, and right now we are not closing any businesses, we don't have social distancing.

"So, we only have a few tools that are available – tools that we know are effective – but we are dependent on the general public to take heed of the warnings and the advice that we're giving, and take care of themselves and of other people – so vaccinations and wearing masks."

For more information on current COVID-19 testing sites, vaccinations or other details pertaining to this virus, visit the website SacCounty.net.

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