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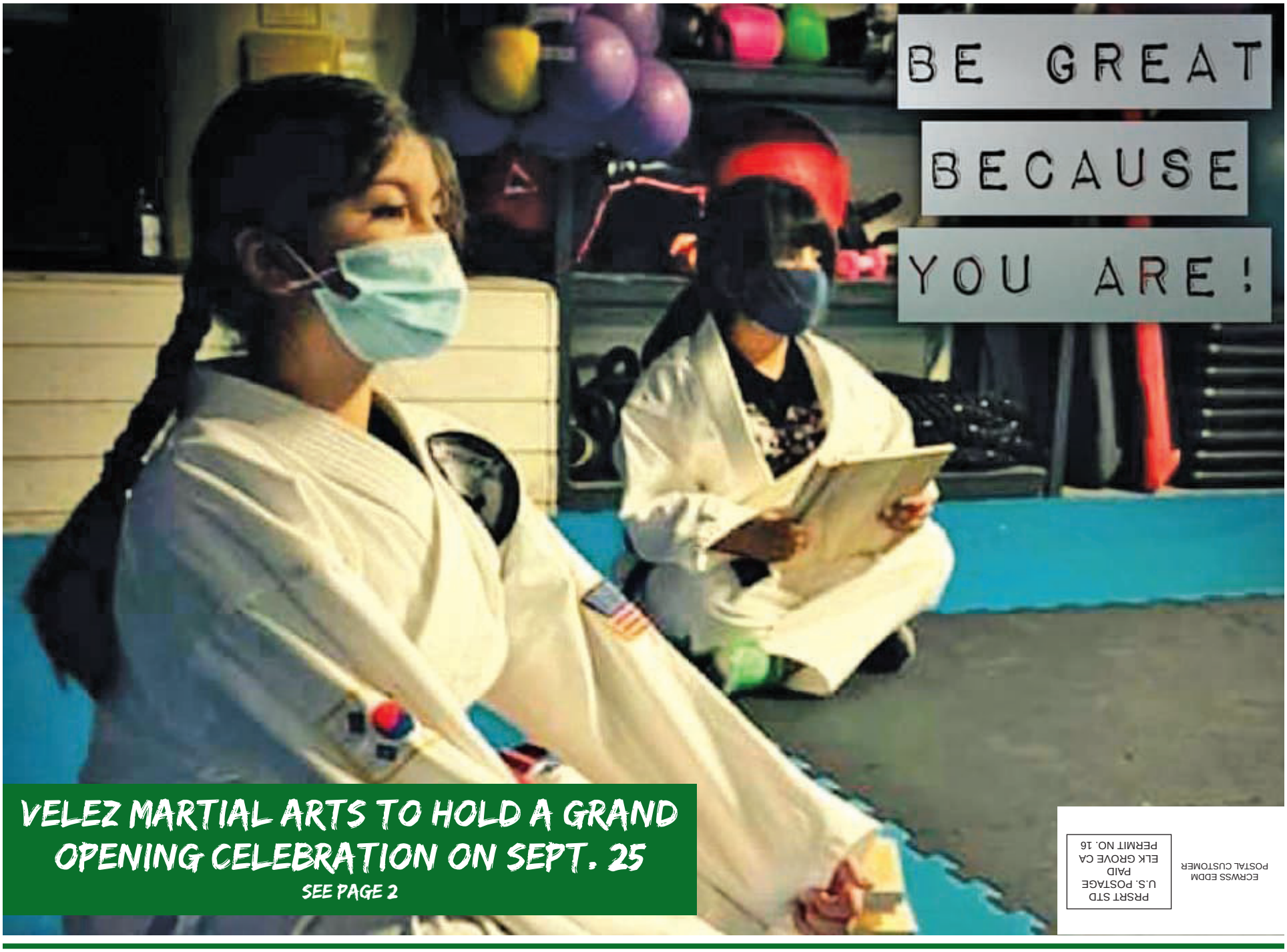

VELEZ MARTIAL ARTS TO HOLD A GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION ON SEPT. 25

SEE PAGE 2

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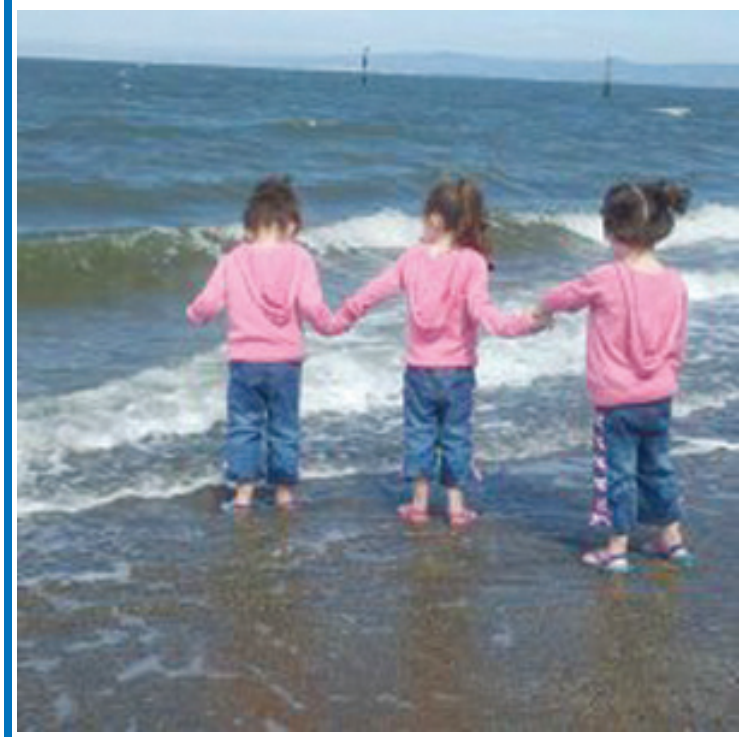

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Velez Martial Arts to hold a grand opening celebration on Sept. 25



By Monica Stark

Velez Martial Arts will be holding a grand opening on Saturday, Sept. 25 from 2 to 4 p.m., which will include prizes, raffles, and a demo performance.

Located in the Grocery Outlet shopping center on Riverside Boulevard at 6427 Riverside Blvd., Velez Martial Arts offers classes in Tae Kwon Do, kickboxing, life skills, leadership training, and general health and fitness.

Instructors are fully vaccinated. Masks are required for entry and a sanitary station at the front door will be offered and temperature checks will be taken.

Owned by Joseph Velez, a 4th-degree black belt with 20-plus years of experience, and Aileen Velez, the school's program director, instructor, and personal trainer with a degree in Kinesiology and 20 plus years of personal training experience, Velez Martial Arts actually opened for business in 2017 inside of the multipurpose room at Yav Pem Suab Academy (formerly Lisbon Elementary).

Over the pandemic, Velezes took the business virtually for one whole year through distance learning. They weathered the storm and have been holding classes in their garage and Garcia Bend Park since March 2021.

But even before Velez Martial Arts opened for business at YPSA, Joseph Velez, a Certified Head Instructor through the National Martial Arts Alliance, started teaching Tae Kwon Do there in 2012. "I was inspired by all the families and children I was able to impact over the years," he said.

The hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 4:30 to 9 p.m. and Friday-Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon and 4:30 to 9 p.m.

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E-mail stories & photos to: editor@valcomnews.com
Editorial questions: (916) 267-8992

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Editor ..... Monica Stark
Art Director ..... Annin Piper
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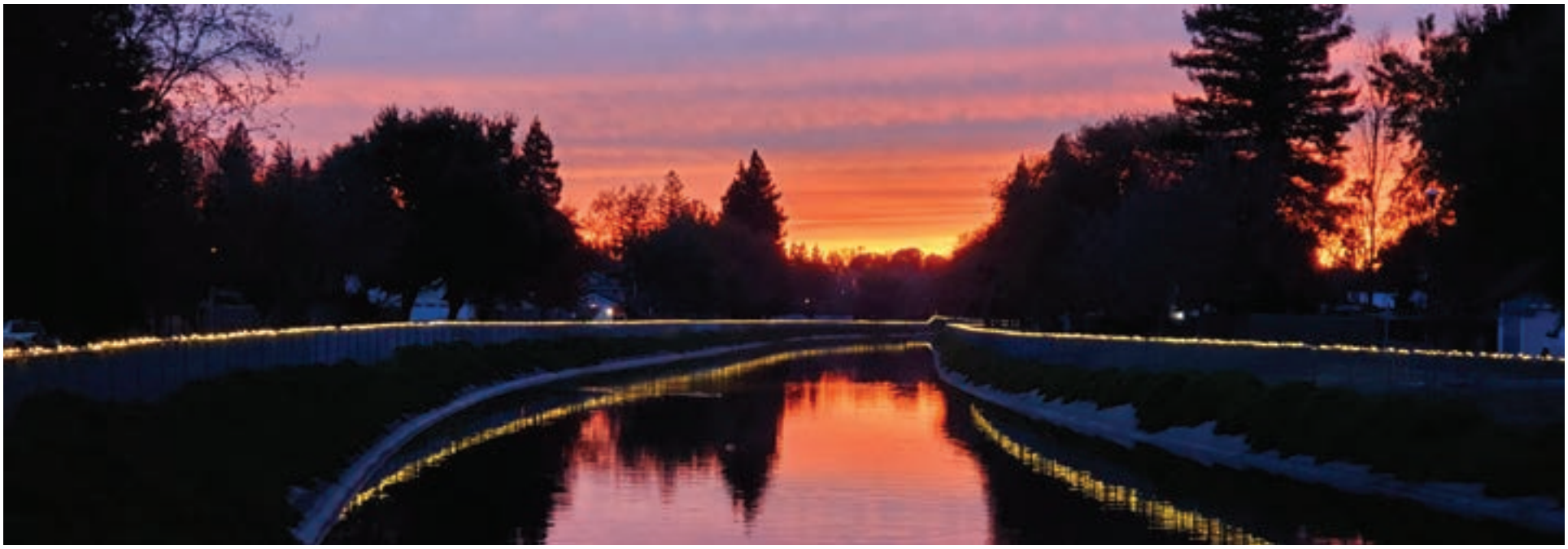
Cover photo by: Courtesy

Pocket Lights looking to extend beyond the canal this year into Portuguese Park and beyond



By Devin Lavelle

The stores are filling up with Halloween decorations and candy, which can only mean one thing, it is time to start looking forward to the Pocket Canal Holiday Lights! (An odd transition, I will grant you.)

I hear so often from neighbors how much they enjoy walking the canals and enjoying the lights with friends and families: lighting our neighborhood and spreading joy (and even a little exercise!) through the holiday season.

It is amazing to think our neighborhood tradition is already in its fourth year. And I know this year will be the very best year yet. Councilmember Rick Jennings is working hard to create the infrastructure for a major expansion!

With your help, we are hoping to extend the lights to Portuguese Park and beyond! The first priority will be extending the lights to Havenside, after that, we will start working towards Greenhaven. How far can we get? It is up to you!

In order to fully meet all of our goals for this year, we need to raise nearly $10,000.

I expect new and returning sponsors may cover about half of that, but we are counting on the community to step up as well. We cannot do this without your help. No donation is too small! Whether you can give ten or twenty dollars or if you are able to give fifty, on hundred, several hundred, every donation helps. (Donations can be made at lights.devinlavelle.com, select "District 7 Canal Holiday Lights")

Twenty dollars will buy one strand of lights.

One hundred dollars will buy five strands.

Five hundred would be enough to string one side of the canal from Portuguese to Havenside.

It is going to be a beautiful thing! And I think we could all use a little more beauty; a little more joy; a little more community togetherness in our lives right now.

Thank you in advance for your generous donation! (Donations can be made at lights.devinlavelle.com, select "District 7 Canal Holiday Lights")

And if you have read this far and want to know how you can help even more, shoot me an email at parks@devinlavelle.com and you can join the Canal Holiday Lights Committee.

Get free mulch at this event to keep your trees and landscapes healthy during the drought

Sacramento City Utilities staff are inviting people to attend its "Mulch Mayhem" on Sept. 25 to get free mulch, which helps improve soil health and prevent weeds and water evaporation.

The event is part of the City's efforts to keep trees and landscapes healthy during severe drought.

"We had many trees die off during the last drought," said William Granger, City water conservation coordinator. "Adding two to three inches of mulch around shrubs and four to six inches around trees can lock in moisture and keep them healthier during hot and dry conditions."

People must register to attend the event from 8 a.m. to noon, which is limited to City of Sacramento residents.

"Trucks and trailers can easily drive through to pick up there mulch, and we will have enough mulch for about 300 truckloads," said Granger. "People should plan to practice social distancing."

He also recommends that people who come to get free mulch bring a tarp to prevent it from blowing away while driving.

The City currently is under a "watch alert" and is asking people to reduce their water use by 15 percent as drought conditions persist.



Faces and Places: St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival



Photos by Stephen Crowley

The St. Anthony Parish Annual Fall Festival returned on Saturday, Sept. 11 with international food booths from cuisines of the world. There were 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 included live entertainment and raffle prizes as well. Types of food included: Filipino, Italian, Mexican, Nigerian, Polish, Greek, American, desserts and snow cones.

see Festival Photos page 5





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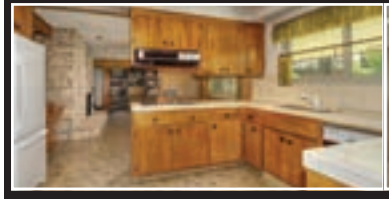

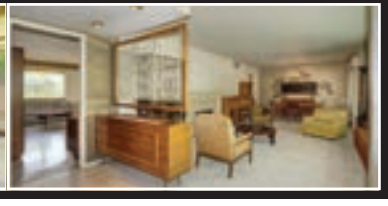



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Festival:

continued from page 4















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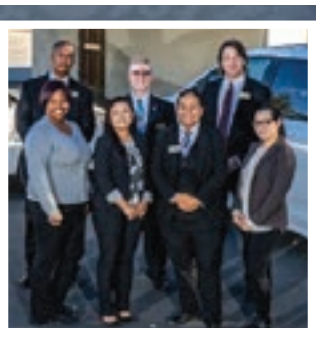

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1. Name the group that started out as Chocolate Hair.
2. Which Neil Diamond song is often heard at sporting events?
3. Who originally released "I'll Be There"?
4. Which duo had a hit with "I Can't Go for That"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Like a sweet magnolia tree, my love blossomed tenderly, my life grew sweeter through the years."

Answers

1. Sugarloaf. They'd formed with members from The Moonrakers, which had originally been called The Classics. The switch to the name Sugarloaf came about after the record company legal department feared that the name Chocolate Hair could have racist overtones.
2. "Sweet Caroline." The U.S. (especially at Fenway Park), Canada (Ontario Hockey League), Australian football (Sydney Swans) and the Northern Ireland national football team have all used the song as their anthem or for singalongs.
3. The Jackson 5, in 1970. The song was their fourth No. 1 hit in a row.
4. Daryl Hall and John Oates, in 1981.
5. "I Was Made to Love Her," by Stevie Wonder, in 1967. The song, like several other Wonder hits (including "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours"), was co-written by his mother, Lula Mae Hardaway.

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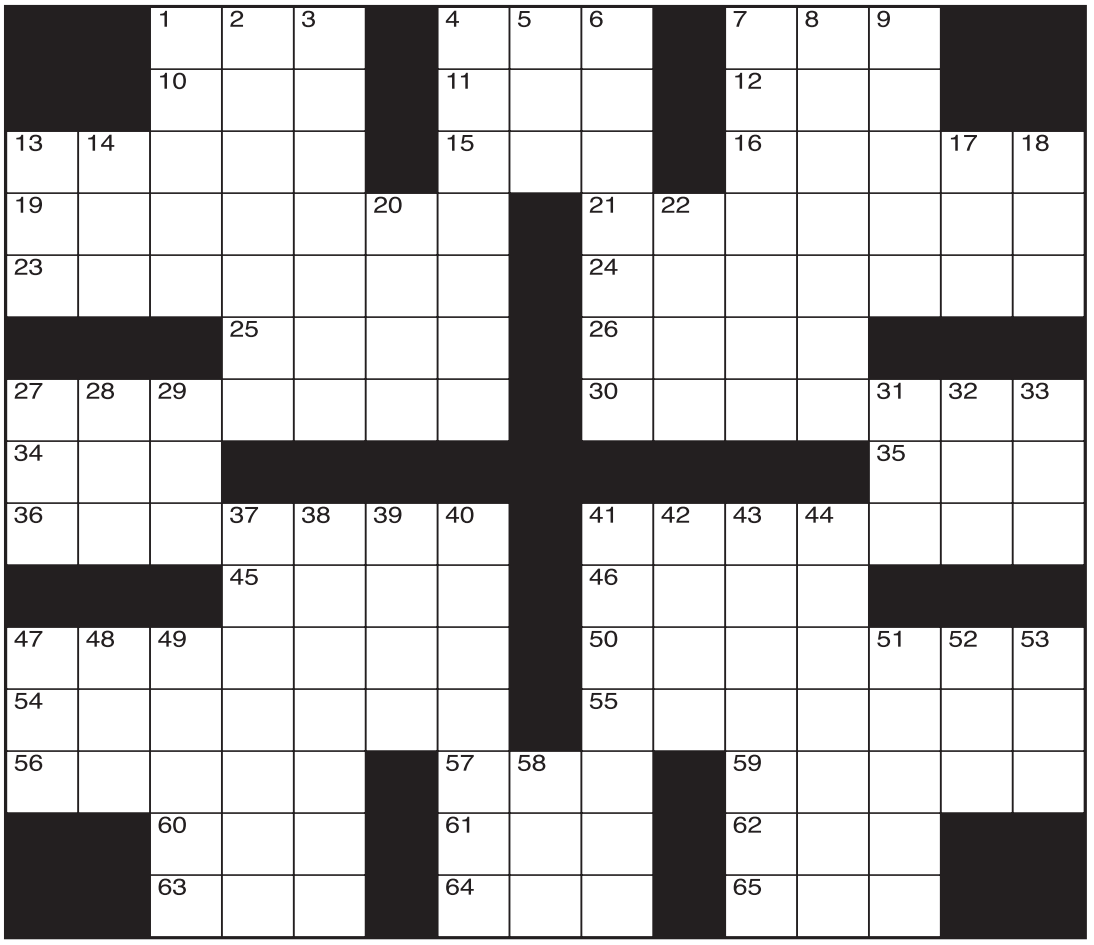
CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. Pouch
4. Cooling device
7. Corporate exec (abbr.)
10. Antidiuretic hormone
11. South American plant
12. Adult female bird
13. Type of snake
15. Soak in water
16. Emerge
19. Church tower
21. Having solidified from lava
23. Eye parts
24. Natural
25. Swiss river
26. Require to live
27. Obstruct
30. Immobile
34. Expression of satisfaction
35. Moved quickly
36. Popular cocktail
41. Dish detergent brand
45. Waxed finish
46. Kyrgyzstan mountain range
47. A place to get clean
50. Able to be rescued
54. Large, open grassland
55. Expressions for humorous effect
56. Hindu goddess
57. Beverage container
59. Long narrow hilltop
60. Sir (abbr.)
61. Data executive
62. Doctor of Education
63. Car mechanics group
64. Autonomic nervous system
65. "The Partridge Family" actress

CLUES DOWN

1. Cavalry-sword
2. Gland above the kidneys
3. Hat
4. Predict
5. A team's best pitcher
6. Countries
7. Substitutions
8. Peruses again
9. Popular food
13. Reciprocal of a sine
14. Of or relating to the ears
17. __ juris: Independent
18. Keyboard key
20. Fat from a pig
22. AC manufacturer
27. Organization of N. and S. Ameri can countries
28. 22nd star of a constellation
29. Scoundrel
31. A way to save money
32. Boy or young man
33. Midway between northeast & east
37. Egg-laying mammal
38. Salt of citric acid
39. Barbary sheep
40. Actress __ de Mornay
41. Gambling hotspots
42. Wing-shaped
43. Basked in
44. Poison
47. Beats per minute
48. Macaws
49. Military vehicles
51. Elderly woman
52. Body part
53. Midway between east & southeast
58. Forearm nerve (abbr.)



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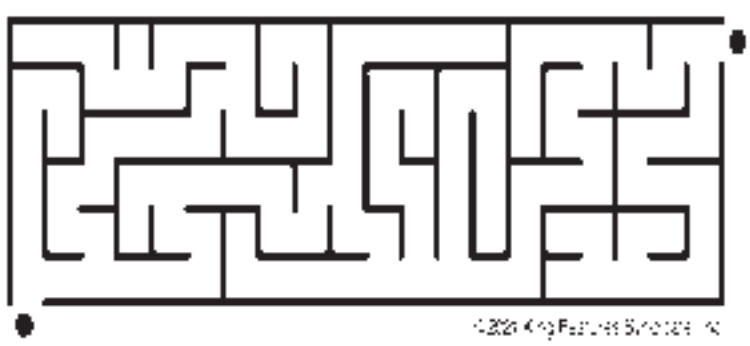

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Juvenile Hall Students Learning Construction Trade Basics

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.



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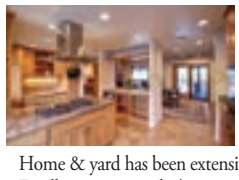

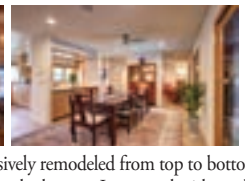

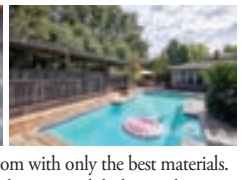

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International fest draws large crowd to Broadway



Photos by Lance Armstrong

A model displays festive Indian clothing during the event's fashion show.

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

The Broadway International Festival, an event that its organizers hope to "put Broadway on the U.S. and world map as one of the greatest celebrations of culture and unity," drew a large crowd during Labor Day weekend.

This new event, which closed Broadway from 16th to 19th streets for eight hours on Sept. 5, attracted attendees that collectively reflected this capital city's recognition as one of America's most diverse cities.

While walking along Broadway during the event, Haile Itraits, a native of Kingston, Jamaica, spoke about what brought him to the festival.

"We're representing the Rastafarian community, playing reggae music in California, which is an international place," he said. "And to be here on Broadway to see an international festival, I feel very welcome and happy to be here.

"The multiplicity of cultures and the love and the respect is always a joy to represent and see. We are moving along, enjoying the times. So, we appreciate Sacramento for having us."

Itraits was just one of several live music performers who entertained guests of the event on four stages.

Another musical entertainer was vocalist and Sacramento native Marquita White – aka Marquita Kianna – who performed the Whitney Houston pop song, "I Wanna Dance with Somebody," and her own original song, "A Situation."

Kiana, a 2001 graduate of Natomas High School, mentioned that she also enjoyed the event.

"(The event drew) loving families, (and) the kids are here, so it's like a family event," she said. "It's for everybody. It's a positive event. (The local, black-owned, FM radio station, KDEE) 97.5 FM is here and I was a part, working with them."

There were also dancers, art, food, a vintage car show, and a wide variety of vendors who joined together in this event that united many cultures.

Mario Benton, one of the event's organizers, told the

see Broadway page 9

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Marquita Deechell, a vendor from Vallejo, shows off her handmade jewelry.



A trio of drummers provides rhythmic entertainment at the event.

Broadway:

continued from page 8

Land Park News how the event was organized.

"I was one of the organizers (of the) Oakland First Fridays (festival), and when I came to Sacramento seven years ago, I saw potential in Broadway that would be a great place to bring people (together)," he said.

With that thought, Benton had weekly meetings for three months with two Broadway business owners: Zion Taddese of Queen Sheba Ethiopian Cuisine, and David Gull of the New Helvetia Brewing Company. Together, they organized last weekend's festival, which also included an international fashion show that showcased the works of Indian, African and Asian designers.

Essential for the organizers was drawing attention to many Broadway businesses and other businesses that set up booths along the boulevard.

Benton noted that he was pleased with the overall success of the event.

"I felt that it was an amazing event with the short amount of time that we had to develop it," he said. "It was an amazing and successful event and it was a beautiful event."

Benton also credited Courtney Thomas of the festival's marketing team for the event's success.

Ife Saint, an attendee of the festival, mentioned that he appreciates events that celebrate diversity.

"(This event is important) just so people know that people are still for (diversity)," he said. "We don't get to do stuff like this all the time. It's just like you can have your own little communities here and there, of course.

"That's one thing, but for it to be public and here in the neighborhood for everyone to see and enjoy, and the music and the drums, just to be able to show our culture and stuff like that, that's important for me."

Saint added that he is proud of his Haitian and Samoan heritage.

Leonard Harris, who also attended the festival, told this publication that he was pleased to be a part of such a large gathering of people.

"COVID(-19) has actually impacted us to such a point that having a good time (with a lot of people) really, really was needed," he said. "The food is smelling good, everybody is smiling. There is no negativity at all. Everybody is just having a good time."

Kara Leoung also expressed excitement for the festival.

"We haven't had a street fair in a while, had to come out," she said. "Love this, a little bit of everything. I think (this event) shows wonderfully how diverse we are as a city. We're just an amazing city. Look, there's just a little bit of everybody here. Can't not love that."

Anna Marie said that she learned something about Broadway during the event.

"I never realized how much diversity there is in this corridor," she said. "It's cool. I hope it's a big success."

Orangevale resident Kelsey Knorp, who attended the event with two of her friends, Olympia Ortiz and Jamie Foster, referred to the event as "really great and community oriented."

"(There are) a lot of diverse products and experiences," she said. "Bought some earrings (from a jewelry vendor). I love events like this, because, obviously, you get to know the community better."

Also drawn to the diversity of the event was Davis resident Gina Murphey.

"I came out just to expose my daughter to the International Festival and everything that goes on here," she said. "(There are) a few cultures (in Davis), but not the wide array that you will get to meet and understand a little bit better here."

April Meszaros, who attended the event with her brother-in-law, Roman Stollenwerk, and a dog named Ichibod, described why she believes an event like the Broadway International Festival is important.

"It's an opportunity to bring together the community, as well as people from different backgrounds, cultures, demographics, and everybody gets to communally enjoy the festivities of everything, and become one.

"It's fantastic. I live in the neighborhood and I'm so excited to see this (event). I honestly hope this becomes a more permanent tradition along Broadway, where we have a more walkable, usable space for all of our community to enjoy."

Asked about the future of the Broadway International Festival, Benton noted that he would like to hold the event monthly, but at least annually.

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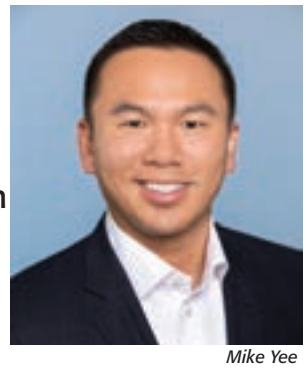

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Locals remember restaurateur Randy Paragary

By LANCE ARMSTRONG

Randy Paragary, one of the city's all-time most successful restauranteurs, died at the age of 74 from pancreatic cancer on Aug. 14.

Randy, who was born on Nov. 8, 1946, was a nearly lifelong Sacramento resident who grew up in this city with his parents, Sam and Charmaine, and his brother, Bruce.

Prior to making a name for himself in the restaurant world, Randy began his longtime involvement in boating and water-skiing.

At the age of 13, he set a world record in water-ski jumping for junior boys, as he jumped 69 feet at Lake Lodi. He was also a regional champion in jumping, slalom, tricks and overall competition.

Randy's legacy in the restaurant and bar industry in the capital city spanned more than a half-century. He built that legacy on such establishments as Paragary's, Café Bernardo, Centro Cocina Mexicana, Berkley Bar, and Harry's Bar and Grill.

His debut in that industry dates back to the 1960s.

While attending C.K. McClatchy High School, Randy obtained his first job, working as a dishwasher and busboy for Pinecrest Lodge, about 30 miles above Sonora. His father was that business's manager.

Randy was later employed at Bill Christie's Elbo Room at 2000 K St., where Faces nightclub is now located.

In the fall of 1969, Randy and his high school friend, Pat Powers, opened the Parapow Palace Saloon in the former location of Ritz Market, at 3000 O St.

In an interview with this publication in 2010, Randy recalled the conversation that led to the opening of that business.

"Pat Powers and I were really good friends and like friendship conversations go, he said, 'Wouldn't it be great to open a bar? There's no place for us to go to have the music we like to hear,'" Randy said. "The (music) scene was bowling alley types of bars. I said, 'Well, we can open a place. Shoot, I've been a busboy before. I know a little bit about it.' And Pat said, 'We can do it.'"

Opting to keep their business simple, as well as lower their establishment's operating costs, Randy and Pat decided to maintain a beer-only bar.

After chuckling a bit during an interview with this paper last week, Pat shared how the decision to serve only beer and soft drinks led to an interesting scene at the western-themed Parapow.

"In the interview (announcing the bar and nightclub's opening, Randy) says, 'Come on over. We have nickel drinks.' He didn't say nickel beers. He said nickel drinks. We were only a beer bar, so our soft drinks were a nickel, our beer was a nickel.

"That went out in the media and every alcoholic in town heard about 5-cent drinks at this new saloon. We had people riding in taxi cabs. It was an unbelievable evening, and that was the start of the Parapow Palace Saloon."

Pat added that as a music venue, the Parapow presented live music shows seven nights per week.

"We had bands, all kinds of stuff, and that lasted for me for about a little bit more than a year," he said. "I ended up in a cast on my leg from a bar brawl. And at that point, I had like four weeks to kind of think about this whole episode. I said, 'Hey, Randy, do you want to buy me out?' He said, 'Yeah.' So, he bought me out."

No longer associated with the Parapow, which was sold in 1972, Randy attended McGeorge School of Law, where he passed the bar in 1976.

It was also in the mid-1970s when Randy joined Jim Moore in the opening of The Arbor, an Italian restaurant at 2730 N St., and Lord Beaverbrook's, a bar at 1401 28th St. The latter site has been home to Paragary's fine dining restaurant since 1983.

It was at the latter eatery – which was then known as Paragary's Bar & Oven – that Randy had a brick oven installed, in 1983, for the cooking of pizzas that were inspired by the famous wood-fired, brick oven-cooked pizzas of San Francisco's landmark Tommaso's Ristorante Italiano.

Randy's many other food and drink-serving establishments have included the Monkey Bar at 2730 Capitol Ave., Esquire Grille at 1213 K St., R15 Bar at 1431 R St., and Cosmo Café at 1000 K St.

Two years ago, Randy opened the Fort Sutter Hotel, a boutique hotel near Sutter's Fort State Historic Park and the Sutter Medical Center.

Pat recalled another one of Randy's business ventures: an unsuccessful restaurant in San Francisco.

"After that, I told Randy, do not open up a restaurant more than you can throw a rock," he said. "You know, keep them close. As you notice, in midtown (Sacramento), he kept them all close."

In reminiscing about his nearly six-decades-long friendship with Randy, Pat remembered him as someone who was diligent about his work and a person who was "always smiling."

Pat also recognized Randy for the kindness he showed to his customers and employees.

"The guy was always willing to buy a customer a drink," he said. "If he saw a couple who was obviously celebrating something, he would go over and talk to them and say congratula-

see Paragary page 11

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Photo by Lance Armstrong

Randy Paragary sits at the bar of Café Bernardo in 2010.

Paragary:

continued from page 10

tions and stuff, and sometimes he would pick up the tab or he would have a bottle of champagne for them. He was always the ultimate hospitality guy.

"Another thing, when he only had like 50 or 60 employees, he was really empathetic to all their problems. If their battery was dead and (that employee) didn't get paid until Friday, he would go over to the battery place and say, 'Give me the bill.'"

Kevin Cunningham, who worked for Randy for about 25 years, told this publication last week that he was always impressed in Randy as a businessman.

"Working with him side by side in his storage and he would get dirty for hours, and we would be moving stuff here, moving stuff there," he said. "And just watching him as he pulled up to his work every day in the mornings, multiple occasions, he would just get out of his car and start picking up the trash in his parking lot before he went up to the office.

"It's just the little things that you just don't see a lot of business owners doing. I never worked inside the restaurant, so I always was kind of able to see Randy from the outside, him hanging out with his friends, and talking to people (in his restaurants). It was constant. He would always play that role throughout the 25 years that I've known him. Yeah, he knew a lot of people."

Kurt Spataro, who was Randy's business partner since about 1992, noted last week that he initially knew Randy as one of his employees at Zito's Pasta & Grill in about the late 1980s. Randy opened that Italian eatery at 2384 Fair Oaks Blvd. in 1985, and that site has been home to the Zinfandel Grille since 2001.

In 1991, Spataro, who had served as Paragary's executive chef, and Doyle Bailie, who owned Jammin' Salmon restaurant at 1801 Garden Highway, became part owners of Paragary's restaurant.

Spataro referred to Randy as a businessman who was "very hardworking, unflappable, a hard negotiator and smart, savvy."

"He loved the business and he loved the restaurants and he loved having a good time," he said. "He (also) loved his family, loved traveling with them."

Randy, who resided in the Sierra Oaks area of the city, had a wife named Stacy and two children, Lisa and Sam.

Spataro noted that the success of Randy's restaurants has led to many of his former employees' advancements in the restaurant industry.

"Thousands of people have come and gone from the restaurant, and many of whom learned the business, have stayed in the business or started their own business," he said. "So, I think that's maybe the most important legacy."

A celebration of Randy's life will be held on Sept. 21. Additional details of that gathering were not yet announced as of press time.

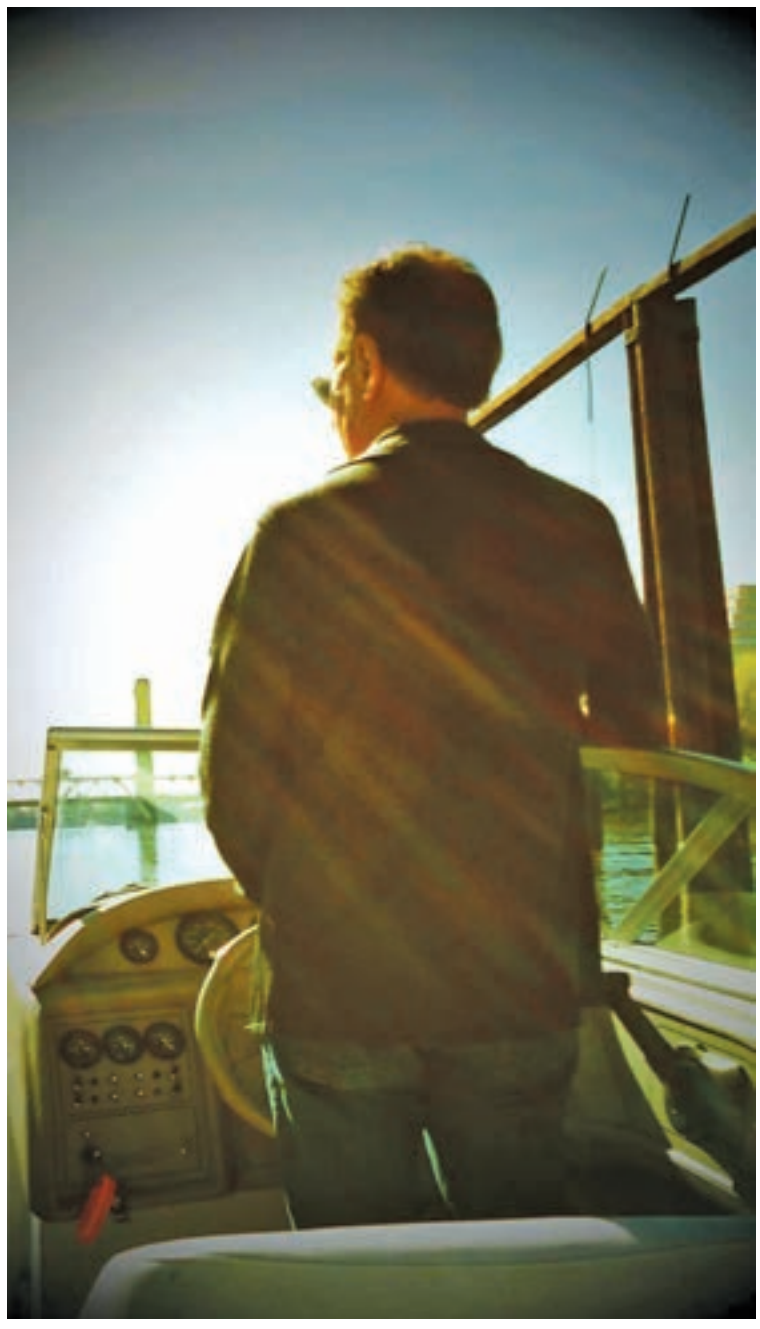

Photo courtesy of Kevin Cunningham

Randy Paragary steers his boat toward Sacramento's iconic Tower Bridge. Among Paragary's various passions in life were boating and water-skiing.

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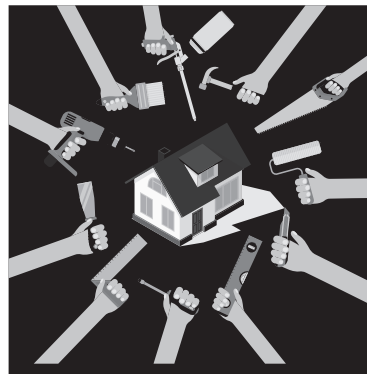

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2020 changed book publishing: SNR's relationship advice columnist Joey Garcia to be the keynote speaker at a local writer's conference



Local writers of all experiences, backgrounds, and talents are invited to learn how to master their craft at a conference that will be held in Elk Grove on Saturday, Oct. 9. Registration opened this week.

The Elk Grove Writers Guild invited 10 authors to speak at this gathering that also features a literary agent and a publisher who will be available to interact with attendees. Joey Garcia, an author and a longtime relationship advice columnist for the Sacramento News & Review, will be the keynote speaker.

Loy Holder, the president of the Elk Grove Writers Guild, said that Garcia will address how the year 2020 was a "plot twister," and how writers can still preserve and upgrade their writing skills.

The conference is being held simultaneously with the Great Read Book Faire that's being held at the District56 center, 8230 Civic Center Drive. This is the guild's first writers conference since 2018 when 80 people attended the gathering at the Holiday Inn Express.

What will be some of the topics you will discuss at the conference and why those topics?

My keynote address for the Elk Grove Writer's Conference is titled: 2020 Was A Plot Twist: What You Need To Know About The Next Chapter. The pandemic disrupted every aspect of our lives. It also changed the book business forever. The publishing industry is not going "back to normal." The present—and future—belongs to authors and writers who can deliver an audience who will buy their book. In the past, publishers would build an audience for a book and foot the cost of marketing and publicity. That's rare these days and so are big advances. Today, most authors must cover the costs of promoting their own books—whether they publish through a well-known New York publisher or self-publish or pay a company like SheWrites Press to publish their book. In my keynote, I'll share insights about industry changes along with specific strategies authors are using now to successfully build a platform, sell books, and create a satisfying career.

What have you been up to since your book, "When Your Heart Breaks, It's Opening to Love," came out? Do you have a sequel?

For 30 years I've been a life coach for adults and teens who want to strengthen communication, meet personal goals, and create better relationships, especially with themselves. My book tour resulted in a regular gig as a featured Relationship Expert on Fox40 TV. The morning show team is fabulous and it's such an honor to chat with them about relationship trends and the tools available to all of us for self-healing and improving our interactions with others. I've also been sought out by reporters at HuffPost, USA Today, Deutsche Welle, KVIE public television, Global Woman TV Sweden, and Australia's Ticker News to provide expert advice.

In 2018, I began coaching authors on effective strategies to boost their platform and following to ensure that their books, once published, will sell. My clients have been featured in CNN.com, Ms. magazine, the Today Show parenting blog, and the Tamron Hall show, among other places. It's super-exciting to help authors succeed.

I'm delighted that my book continues to sell well on Amazon and at indie bookstores. I'm at work on a novel. After 24 years of writing a relationship advice column, and discovering a lot about myself in the process, I definitely have more insights to share! I expect to publish another relationship book in the near future.

How has the pandemic affected your speaking engagements, workshops, etc?

In 2018, I was a featured speaker at a women's conference in Sweden. The following year, I spoke at a women's conference in Albania. In addition to international speaking engagements, I was speaking to groups in San Francisco, Pennsylvania, New York and other fun-to-visit U.S. cities. I was having such a blast that I increased my speaking commitments. So, when the world shut down in March, I lost 75 percent of my work! After an emotionally dark 24-hour period, I said to myself: Well, you wanted more time to write. Now you have it! During that time, I wrote several essays. One was selected for (Her)oics: Women's Lived Experiences During the Coronavirus Pandemic, an anthology published by the highly-respected Pact Press. The anthology made Buzzfeed's list of best indie books. Soon enough, and without any effort on my part, people began emailing to request my

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Sacramento Public Library celebrates Latino Heritage with virtual event series

This month, Sacramento Public Library will kick off a 5-week long series of virtual events celebrating Latino Heritage starting with an Authors Uncovered poetry reading and panel on September 22. Learn more and register at www.saclibrary.org/LatinoHeritage.

Authors Uncovered with LAX to SAC Poets (September 22 at 6 p.m.)
Authors Uncovered will feature a virtual poetry reading and panel Betty Sanchez, Aideed Medina, and Yago Cura. The poets, who represent a wide range of Latinx/Chicanx identities, histories, and regions will share their work and discuss the great joy and the complexities of Latino/a/x heritage.

Virtual Bilingual Family Painting with El Comalito Collective (September 25 at 2 p.m.)
This bilingual painting workshop will include step-by-step guided instruction with positive reinforcement and validation. It will also include breathing exercises and coping strategies that will promote social, behavioral, and mental wellness. El Comalito Collective is an art gallery and community space in Vallejo, CA that showcases underrepresented artists through a variety of media that spark consciousness.

Virtual Piñata Making Workshop with Patty Botello (October 2 at 2 p.m.)
Create a mini piñata sculpture of a mango on a stick with Tajín seasoning. These mangoes will be three-dimensional in form, using various piñata making techniques. This workshop will also focus on using recyclable items like cardboard and newspaper and giving these ordinary objects a new purpose.

Virtual Bilingual Music Time with Mariela! (October 6 at 10:30 a.m.)
During this interactive bilingual performance, Mariela's Music Time will share rhythms and multicultural sounds, along with the rich traditions of our region.

Authors Uncovered with Maceo Montoya (October 6 at 6 p.m.)
Meet California-based author, artist, and educator Maceo Montoya during Authors Uncovered. His first novel, The Scoundrel and the Optimist, was awarded the 2011 International Latino Book Award for "Best First Book" and Latino Stories named him one of its "Top Ten New Latino Writers to Watch." In 2014, the University of New Mexico Press published his second novel, The Deportation of Wopper Barraza, and Copilot Press published Letters to the Poet from His Brother, a hybrid book combining images, prose poems, and essays. Montoya is also the author and illustrator of Chicano Movement for Beginners a work of graphic nonfiction, and 2021's Preparatory Notes for Future Masterpieces. Moderated by Xico Gonzalez, a Sacramento-based artist, educator, and social justice advocate.

Tween Comic Book Club (October 8 at 4 p.m.)
Tweens ages 9 to 12 are invited to join librarians live for a Comic Book Club. During this special Tween Comic Book Club, special guests Elisa Amado and Abraham Urias will discuss their graphic novel Manuelito and modern-day refugees and asylum-seeking.

Virtual Traditional Doll Making Workshop with Ramona Garcia (October 9 at 2 p.m.)
Join Sacramento-based artist Ramona Garcia for an art workshop celebrating Mexican papier-mâché dolls, tradition, and storytelling. In this workshop, create your own doll using molded forms, strings, embellishments, and paint. Participants will also learn about the history of the paper-mâché doll as a traditional and indigenous form of art from Mexico as well as its use with practices of art therapy.

Jonny Garza Villa - Virtual YA / Teen Author Visit (October 16 at 2 p.m.)
Sacramento Public Library is honored to welcome YA author Jonny Garza Villa for a teen author visit. They are an author of contemporary young adult literature inspired by their own Tejane and Chicane and queer identities, including the multi-starred reviewed Fifteen Hundred Miles from the Sun and upcoming sophomore YA, Ander and Santi Were Here. Whether they're writing about coming out in a Mexican American household, immigration, mariachi, or being in a brand new place for the first time, Jonny ultimately hopes Latine young people feel seen and at home in their writing.

www.saclibrary.org/LatinoHeritage

Garcia:

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coaching services. So pivoted back to coaching. It's a gift to companion someone who seeks to understand themselves and to gain the skills to be more authentic. Sometimes that means growing in openness, trusting a divine call, or making a radical life change. Sometimes it means learning how to set boundaries to keep a bully away.

Tell us about the current state of the Belize Writers' Conference. Have you been able to travel there (or do virtual workshops with writers there)?

I was thrilled to launch the Belize Writers Conference (BWC) in 2018—the first professional event for creative writers in the history of Belize. I also established the first-ever fellowship for a Belizean writer. The conference was held in person during 2018 and 2019; we had a very successful three-day virtual conference in 2020. This year, about half of our registered participants opted to meet in Belize for our five-day in-person event. Due to pandemic restrictions, our European participants could not join us, but American and Belizean writers enjoyed themselves immensely. At most writers' conferences, participants don't spend much time with literary agents. At BWC, writers spend five days learning from, and hanging out with, literary agents. This experience invites writers to begin thinking about their literary project from two essential perspectives: as a creative endeavor and as a business enterprise. Producing an international writers conference is an incredible experience but with the uncertainty around overseas travel, it's doubtful that the Belize Writers Conference will continue in-person in the future.

What have been your biggest takeaways from the relationships of last year that you've either written about or just heard about?

As a culture, we're ill-prepared for solitude. We—parents and other caring adults—have failed to prepare teens and young adults for solitude and silence. Instead, they're inundated with messages that spending time alone means something is wrong with them. It's essential to understand how to be alone and to enjoy one's own company. A person who is unable to find pleasure in solitude can't mature fully into adulthood or even as a fully-human being. And when I say solitude, I mean time alone without other people or pets. And when I say silence—I mean no electronics, nothing streaming—no music, podcast or televised story to distract you from yourself or from hearing your own thoughts. Once we learn how to listen to our thoughts, we can learn how to interact with them. Not every thought is true and some thoughts we believe are about others are our own projected pain and reveal where we (not they) need to heal and grow. The pandemic offered an ideal time for teens and young adults to learn and value solitude and silence, but the adults in their lives couldn't model it because many never learned these skills themselves. It's not too late, though. We can take walks without listening to a podcast and without talking with a friend on a phone. We can get intimate with ourselves and the world around us.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Writing a book is on most people's bucket list. Publisher's Weekly states that 600,000 to one million books are published every year so lots of people are checking off that goal. Very few of those authors understand that a book is a product. Once it's written, it needs to be publicized and marketed to get into the hands of readers. Too many authors have a 20th-century mindset. In the last century, writing a book was unusual. It isn't anymore. I tell authors that they are not the star, their book is the star. Writing a book without first building a platform or developing an audience is like having a baby and then deciding someone else should raise the child and take care of it. The smartest authors develop a platform and following while writing their book, not after the book is written or published. My previous careers as a public relations executive, TV producer, radio show host, educator and event manager give me a unique perspective that can help writers become successful authors. It's incredibly fun and fulfilling to help authors establish literary careers and get their books into the hands of readers.

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