

# EAST SACRAMENTO NEWS

September 5, 2013

Community News in Your Hands

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## BIRD TALK

### at Parrot Planet on J

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Vegetables aplenty at this year's Edible Garden Tour

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Faces and Places:

# Sweatin' for McKinley

Photos by MONICA STARK  
editor@valcomnews.com

It was a good ol' fashioned Sweat-a-thon where children of all ages worked out for a great cause – the up. Win raffle prizes, pick up some great gear, and support a great cause – for the upkeep of the Clunie Community Center! There was free blood pressure testing, Yoga by Yoga Across America near the Rose Garden, workshops featuring The Skinny on "Gluten Free", Emotion Eating, Blood Pressure Basics, Changing Habits for Good. And there was a special visit from the Sac City Rollers, Gymnastics and Fancy Feet Academy Dance Performance. There was a fashion show, raffle and silent auction. Plus there was Yoga, Zumba, Boxing, Boot Camp, Pilates, Pre Natal Yoga by Asha Yoga, a Kids Camp, Kids Yoga and an Advanced Boot Camp.



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# Behind the counter at Your Family Grocery

By BILL LAWS

*Editor's note: This is the first in a series about the Tallac Shopping Center in Tahoe Park, which is currently up for sale. To our readers: What would you like to see at the shopping center? Email editor@valcomnews.com*

Shan Minhas smiles broadly and raises both of his arms in the air. "Hi! Where have you been?" calls the owner of the local market, Your Family Grocery, to the customer who has just come through the door.

Melodious and softly tuned Indian string music wafts over the store. Behind the front counter where Shan stands, a personal computer is running an Indian news show.

It has been a slow Saturday morning. Customers dribble in one by one.

Each patron, however, is greeted fervently.

Many of the shoppers are aware that Shan has recently remodeled his full-service store to bring in more business. An elevated terminal streams news and information about lottery games. Fewer cash registers, more snack food racks and new displays of liquor and cigarettes are only a few of the other changes.

"Since April things have been going great," says Shan. "We remodeled to make it more convenient for the people."

Since he purchased the store in 2002 there have been other, less drastic changes. Things have been slowly contracting for over a year. The butcher shop, which once thrived when the store was a Compton's supermarket, is now closed. Very few new food brands make it to the shelves.

Shan no longer sponsors a Thanksgiving turkey giveaway to lucky customers. The Polaroid pictures, though, of the smiling winners holding their turkeys are still glued to the large, windowed ice cabinet.

"We stopped doing that promotion a long time ago," explains Shan. The long, central frozen foods aisle has been replaced by a few tubs of popsicles and ice cream bars.

"I'm following the people," explains Shan. "They want things more convenient."

In a recent butch haircut and thick rimmed glasses, Shan impresses me as an optimist and a realist. He explains that for over a decade the neighborhood wanted a full-service grocery store. But now, he says without a trace of regret, the people want a convenience store which is quick and stocked with what they need. He shows me the \$3 bottles of wine that are in crates near the registers.

"I still have \$50 bottles of wine but I can't give them much space,"



Photo by Bill Laws (above) Shan Minhas owner of Your Family Grocery.

he explains. "They don't sell like the other stuff."

All in all, I am appreciative of Shan's positive outlook. Despite the new shelves of candy, nuts and pastries that dominate the displays, there is still a selection of fruits and vegetables. Soy sauce, catsup and other condiments can still be purchased for less than \$3. Along one shelf are gift packages of Scotch and other liquors. "That can be handy if you forget a birthday or anniversary," I think to myself.

Shan introduces me to Dave Snyder, a long-time customer who is purchasing beer and a loaf of sourdough bread. "Everything is laid out better," explains Dave. "It takes less time to find things."

Almost as if an afterthought Shan tells me that "I'm thinking of making an offer for the shopping center." He explains that he has some "ideas" about improving the situation of the various tenants of Tallac Village Shopping center which is currently up for sale. These tenants include a donut shop, manicurist, bar and a small pizza parlor.

Shan stresses that his ideas are just preliminary. He is not completely ready to make a bid for the shopping center, but he says he is headed in that direction.

Indeed, it seems that things have changed for Shan and his wife Minhas. In the last year their twin boys have graduated from U.C. Berkeley. "They both want to go to graduate school," says Shan proud-



Photo by Monica Stark Tallac Village is for sale.

ly. R.D., the "twin who wants to be a doctor," often helped out in the summer when the store had three or four cash registers. Now, with only one register open, his help is not as needed. In addition, Shan's niece has graduated from nursing school and is now looking for a local job.

Last year a revered family patriarch, Uncle Gurdial Singh, visited from India. Competing in the Senior Olympics held at Sac State, Gurdial's visit was a huge event for the entire family.

No doubt Shan is thinking more and more about the old country. At 58 he is not far from a standard retirement age. When he is not busy with customers (and that has often been the case during the recent recession) he will talk for an hour about making Chutney or about other Indian food.

Suddenly the bell rings announcing another customer. "Hi!" says Shan enthusiastically, smiling and waving as if seeing a close friend. "Where have you been?"

I feel that with his energy and commitment things will certainly improve for this likable neighborhood grocer. Although the store has a narrower focus, Shan's outlook still seems entirely positive. While his business model for the grocery store has contracted, he confirms that he is thinking of owning the entire shopping center. Despite having shopped at Your Family Grocery for over a decade, I am not quite sure if Shan is "downsizing" or growing more ambitious.

Perhaps sensing my puzzlement, Shan shouts at me as I leave. "I'm following the people," he says, "They are my boss."

# CALENDAR

Send your event announcement for consideration to: editor@valcomnews.com at least two weeks prior to publication.

**Mental Health America of Northern California** is seeking volunteer peer counselors to work with older adults in the Sacramento County. Volunteer peer counselors will provide emotional support, friendship and needed resource linkage for isolated, home-bound older adults. For information please contact Jesse Williams or Jan Blanton at (916) 855-5444

**California Youth Basketball League** is currently registering for the Fall 2013 season. Games continue through Nov. 2. Boys and girls grades 5 thru 12. Individual and Team registration. For more info call 391-3900 or visit us on line @www.cybhoops.com

## SEPTEMBER

**Rotary Club of Pocket/Greenhaven**  
Sept. 5: Guest speakers address local, regional and international topics. Visitors welcome. 7:30 a.m., every Thursday. Aviators Restaurant, 6151 Freepoint Blvd. (916) 684-6854.

**Rotary Club of South Sacramento**  
Sept. 5: Guest speakers address local, regional and international topics. Visitors welcome. Every Thursday from noon to 1 p.m. at Iron Steaks Restaurant, 2422 13th St, Sacramento, CA 95818.

**Bi-Polar Anonymous**  
Sept. 6: Free 12-step program/support group, for people who have Bi-Polar and those who love them. Meets every Friday, 7:30-8:30 p.m. 4300 Auburn Blvd., Room 106. (916) 889-5786.

**Kiwanis Club of East Sacramento-Midtown**  
Sept. 6: Visitors Welcome, weekly breakfast meeting on first, second and third Fridays at 7:00 AM and Dinner meeting on fourth Thursday at 6:00 PM. Topical weekly speakers and first meal for visitors on us. Meet at The Kiwanis Family House, (at UCD Med Ctr/50th St & Broadway) 2875 50th Street Sacramento, CA 95817. www.eastsacmidtownkiwanis.com, Meeting/Membership info: 916-761-0984, volunteers always welcome!

**Fire Station 19 Open House**  
Sept. 7: The Sacramento Fire Department will be hosting Fire Station Open House from 2 to 4 p.m., located at 1700 Challenge Way. You are invited to bring your family and friends to visit with firefighters, take a tour of the fire station, and more! For more information, call 808-1011.

**Movie Night in Hollywood Park**  
Sept. 7: Bring a blanket and visit with neighbors at Hollywood Park for the showing of "Brave" at 8 p.m.

**Free golf lessons offered at Bing Maloney Golf Complex**  
Sept. 8: Are you interested in starting to play golf, but not sure where to begin? Bing Maloney is offering Free Family Clinics for 2013. These clinics are family oriented for any level of golfer. Each clinic will be held on Sundays from 1 to 2:15 p.m. at the Bing Maloney Golf Course: 6801 Freepoint Blvd. in Sacramento. Call 808-2283 for more information.

**Art and mind symposium**  
Sept. 9-10: The symposium will explain how to use art and creativity to connect the heart and mind of individuals living with dementia. Call 792-3281 or email Tiffany Paige at tiffany.paige@artisanmind.org. Monday, Sept 9th, 8:30am-4:30pm and Tuesday, Sept 10th, 8:30am-12:30pm; Sierra Health Foundation 1321 Garden Highway Sacramento, CA 95833

**'Honoring our Heroes' Golf Tournament**  
Sept. 10: The Women's Council of Realtors Sacramento Chapter will host its 11th Annual Golf Tournament "Honoring our Heroes" at 7 a.m. Teal Bend Golf Course, a portion of the proceeds will benefit "The Soldiers Project" a non profit free psychological service for service men and women and their families. Cost is \$99 & includes lunch and prizes. Register at www.wrcra-sac.org or donate a raffle prize. Contact Sue Kuhn, 202-9998.

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**The Mission Oaks Computer Club meeting**  
Sept. 12: Meeting will go from 1 to 3 p.m. at Mission Oaks Community Center, 4701 Gibbons Drive, Carmichael, CA. A problem-solving clinic, led by Adam Lacey of Applications, Etc, will follow the meeting. First-time visitors are welcome. For additional information call (916) 366-1687 or visit our website at www.missionoakscomputerclub.org.

**Genealogy Gold at the Archives**  
Sept. 12: Learn how county archives are a goldmine for locating ancestors at the Root Cellar Sacramento Genealogical Society meeting. Pre-meeting tips and tricks roundtable starts at 6:30pm. Free, visitors welcome. 7 to 8:30 p.m. - Christ Community Church, 5025 Manzanita Avenue, Carmichael

**X-Factor vocal finalist Jerry Lopes presents "Fly Me to the Moon" at Casa Garden**  
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**Rotary Clubs of Arden-Arcade, Carmichael**  
Sept. 10: Guest speakers address local, regional and international topics. Visitors welcome, every Tuesday. Arden-Arcade meets at noon, Jackson Catering and Events, 1120 Fulton Ave. (916) 925-2787. Carmichael meets at 6:30 p.m., Ancil Hoffman Golf Club. www.rotary.org

**Soroptimist International of Sacramento North meeting**  
Sept. 10: An organization for the betterment of women and children meets at the atria El Camino Gardens at 2426 Garfield, Carmichael. Call Sheila at 624-4643.

**Sacramento Geranium Club meeting**  
Sept. 10: Debbie Arrington, writer for the Sacramento Bee Home & Garden section will share her experiences interviewing gardeners and visiting their gardens over the years. Also the club is celebrating its 65th anniversary. The event goes from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and its free of charge. For more information, call 808-8800. Shepard Garden and Arts Center is located at 3330 McKinley Blvd.

**East Sac Rotary**  
Sept. 11: Meets at noon, Evan's Kitchen, 855 57th St. Sacramento. www.eastsacrotary.com.

**Rotary Club of South Sacramento meeting**  
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**Training for Reading Tutors Literacy Little League**  
Sept. 12: This is the 17th year of a successful tutoring program that lets you get to know a third grade student in need of help with reading comprehension. Tutors work together in the Resource Room with a credentialed teacher present and all materials provided, for about an hour, one day per week. Substitutes are also needed. Tutoring will be at Edison School, now the Edison Language Institute, at 2950 Hurley Way near Morse and Arden and will start in late September. Come for coffee and cake, meet our veteran volunteers and take home your training packet. Training starts at 2:30 p.m. and will be held at St. Marks United Methodist Church, 2391 St. Marks Way, upstairs in the Fireside Room. Contact Dorothy Marshall, retired psychologist, San Juan Unified School District, at 488-2578. Email dorothy@csus.edu

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person, one check. Reservations a must - call (916) 452-2809. Proceeds benefit the Sacramento Children's Home.

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Elk Grove, 95758. Handmade only boutique style craft show. Unique gifts and holiday decorations. SALE ROOM. Ladies of the Church will have Greek food & pastries for sale. Free admission. Centralized check-out for our customers convenience. More info. www.craftytreasures.com.

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Sept. 10: An organization for the betterment of women and children meets at the atria El Camino Gardens at 2426 Garfield, Carmichael. Call Sheila at 624-4643.

**Sacramento Geranium Club meeting**  
Sept. 10: Debbie Arrington, writer for the Sacramento Bee Home & Garden section will share her experiences interviewing gardeners and visiting their gardens over the years. Also the club is celebrating its 65th anniversary. The event goes from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and its free of charge. For more information, call 808-8800. Shepard Garden and Arts Center is located at 3330 McKinley Blvd.

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## Starlite bar, eatery, entertainment venue opens in old Town House Lounge building

By LANCE ARMSTRONG  
Lance@valcomnews.com

Note: This is part one of a two-part series regarding the new, local business, Starlite, and its historic building.

Sacramento's newest business, Starlite, held its grand opening last Friday night, Aug. 30, with food, drinks and live music by the dance rock band, Mondo Deco, and recorded music with DJ Roger Carpio.

This new bar, eatery and entertainment venue was well received by the event's attendees, who investigated and partook in the business's many offerings.

Many people are familiar with the Starlite's two-story building at 1517 21st St., between O and P streets.

Prior to Starlite's opening, its structure was the site of the Townhouse Lounge.

The owners of the Starlite are two notable Sacramentans, Charlie Coyne and Shannon Cannon.

Charlie, a 63-year-old San Rafael native, came to Sacramento in 1991 to become the general manager of the old, permanently moored riverboat, Delta King, in Old Sacramento, and he held that position until Dec. 31, 2012.

Shannon, who graduated from Foothill High School in 1995, is a veteran in her field, as she formerly worked as the bar manager at the Delta King, Benny's (now Q Street Bar and Grill), The Park Ultra Lounge, Mix Downtown and Firestone Public House.

In discussing the roots of his new business, Charlie said, "I became aware that there was some real estate that was coming available and that it was tied up in some contentious litigation, so five of us (Charlie, Shannon, Paul Kress, Doug Bayless and Jon Dresser) kind of joined together to buy the real estate, and the (former) Town House (property) was one of the three parcels. Shannon and I decided that we would be interested in operating (a bar, eatery and entertainment venue) at this location and so we agreed to partner up and to lease the (former) Town House. There are two LLCs. One of them is Irish Five, LLC, and Irish Five, LLC owns all three parcels. Shannon and I are members of Irish

See Starlite, page 7

## Starlite

Continued from page 6

Five. Then we formed a separate LLC called Irish Two, and Irish Two leases this property from Irish Five."

Charlie noted that Shannon presented the concept for what would become the Starlite and that he was "all for it." "My arrangement with Shannon is it's her concept and her bar and restaurant to run and I'm in the back seat and supportive," Charlie said.

Shannon added, "I'm talking to a lot of the little 'dive bars' around and they're looking to work with us. They think what we have here is a good thing for the neighborhood. We're certainly not going to be a high-end nightclub, but we're going to have live music and deejays and dancing and that sort of thing, which I think is needed in this area. I think the closest places that do live music are smaller venues. We have a great opportunity here to do bigger acts, national acts."

Starlite's music and dancing area, as well as a small bar, is located on the building's second floor, since Shannon wanted to maintain the feeling of a local, neighborhood bar on the first floor.

The structure's ground floor level includes 30 barstools, five tables and about a 25-foot-long bar with a unique top with a transparent surface, which covers a wide variety of small items, mainly vintage bar-related items such as matchbook covers, beer labels, bottle caps and swizzle sticks

from Shannon's personal collection.

Shannon's husband, Phillip Cannon, who Shannon described as a "great metal worker," who "builds cars and motorcycles for a living," created many of the bar's most dominant visuals. These attractions include a 7-foot-tall, metal robot figure whose image became the business's logo, decorative light fixtures, an artistic clock and a rocket-shaped lighting unit above the pool table.

The billiards room is also enhanced with a 1937 Harley-Davidson Flathead custom motorcycle, a functioning photo booth and a giant gumball machine, which presents patrons with opportunities to win tickets for free drinks and other prizes.

Shannon, who described her business's interior as having a mid-century modern appearance, explained that the process of preparing the building for Starlite's grand opening was a very time-consuming, labor-intensive project.

"My husband, myself, we worked endlessly," Shannon said. "It was kind of a family thing. His cousin (Al Westerdale, owner of All West Painting) helped us out a lot. My family helped out. It was just night and day. It was tiring, but exciting at the same time. I was happy to do it and be here 15 hours a day."

Charlie described Phillip as an "excellent tradesman," who dedicated much of his time to performing plumbing, electrical and carpentry work inside the building.

Both Shannon and Charlie stressed that Starlite's food



Photo by Lance Armstrong  
Charlie Coyne and Shannon Cannon of Starlite stand alongside a 7-foot robot figure inside their new business. The new bar, eatery and entertainment venue is open daily from 5 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

offerings should not be confused with the food served by some bars that concentrate on fulfilling the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's minimum food service requirement for bars.

"We hired a really good team to work with us to create an awesome menu that's farm fresh, really hearty, American comfort food," Shannon said. "There's nothing frozen. It's straight from the farm to the table pretty much. We have a team of four. It's (the business) Papa Dale's (Modernish Cuisine). There are two couples - Keith Breedlove, his wife, Amy, and then Janine Bills and her husband, Mark - who run a really successful food truck. They have really good, awesome food, a ton of experience and a huge following with their truck."

Shannon, whose interest in history extends beyond collecting vintage bar related items, said that she was pleased to recently learn about a portion of the history of the Starlite building. "We were digging out the old tile walls in the bathrooms - it's kind of like the Winchester Mystery House inside here (with) doors that lead to nowhere - and my plumber found the original paperwork from the health department, written in pencil," Shannon said.

Although the paperwork discovered in the building is dated June 24, 1938, the history of today's Starlite building began much earlier.

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**Marty takes up acting**



By **MARTY RELES**  
Marty@valcomnews.com

I graduated from St. Mary's School in 1960 and headed off to ninth grade at Christian Brothers School. That year our eighth grade class presented a play for the entire student body: Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado. The Mikado is a musical comedy with lots of fun and lively songs. I had no lines in the show, only singing in the chorus, but I caught the bug.

That same year, my sister Pat attended Sacramento State College and she also caught the bug. Pat had big roles in the two plays presented that year: "Hamlet" and "Our Town." That summer, a group of actors from Sac-

ramento State did a summer stock play in Sutter Creek, California. The play, a musical comedy called Chu Chin Chou is based on the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves. My big sister earned a roll in that play too and took me along for the ride.

Herman George, a veteran actor, produced the play. He did all the things good producers do. He found sponsors, rented a theater and assembled the cast. When Pat took me to the first rehearsal, Herman offered me a small part in the production, and my acting career took off.

That summer the cast sort of took over the small Amador County town of Sutter Creek. First, we had to fix up the old and unoccupied Sutter Creek Theater. We painted it, fixed the theater lights and cleaned off the old wooden

seats. In doing so, we befriended many of the residents and generated a lot of enthusiasm for our production.

When the play premiered after the fourth of July, it turned into an unqualified success. The Sacramento Bee theater critic attended the show and gave it a good review. That led to good attendance throughout the summer. We had a wonderful cast: Herman (the producer) had a role in the play, as well as my sister, me and other actors from Sacramento State. Barbara Bell, a soprano from the Sac State Music Department played the lead female role. She had a wonderful voice and she received loud ovations after each of the songs she sang. I remember too the male lead, a fellow named Tom. He made a great impression on me by how he delivered his perfectly timed lines. I recall that once when one of the actresses failed to appear on queue, Tom proceeded to deliver an impromptu 2-minute monologue without skipping a beat. I was amazed.

After every performance, the cast adjourned to a local pub to celebrate. Pat always took me along to the party. Of course, my beverage of choice was root beer, not bourbon. It was great fun, and made me feel like a grownup.

After the last performance, we had a cast party at saloon in Amador City. We celebrated late into the night. Herman made a speech thanking the cast and sponsors. He also promised to produce another play in the next summer. That never happened. In fact, I never acted again. To this day I regret that.

But, on the other hand, I got a lot out of that summer of performing. I grew from an adolescent to young adult. I gained confidence I didn't previously possess. I also met a group of talented people who influenced me in ways I cannot put a value on, thanks to my big sister Pat.

Now my days of acting in summer stock are another unforgettable Janey Way memory.

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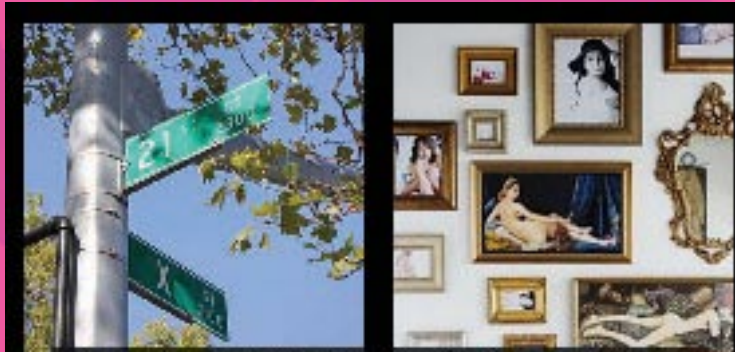
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# Chicano history to come to life at the Colonial Theatre

Original member of El Teatro Campesino, retired professor Dr. Pickett, directs

By MONICA STARK  
editor@valcomnews.com

Set in the barrios of post World War II Los Angeles, when a group of Chicano youths were charged with a murder that they did not commit, what ensued later — Zoot Suit Riots — became the inspiration for playwright Luis Valdez's masterpiece, 1979 *Zoot Suit*, which will be scene at the Colonial Theatre later this month as local actors will don themselves in the Chicano subculture pachuco and pachuca flamboyantly extravagant outfits. Premiering Friday, Sept. 13 and running through the Sept. 29, with shows Friday-Sunday opening weekend and Thursday through Sunday the remaining two weekends, all shows are at 8 p.m. with the excep-

tion of the Sunday shows, which are at 2 p.m. Opening night will also host a car show featuring cars from the 30s and 40s. A car show and live band is also expected every Sunday, starting at 12:30 p.m.

Directed by Dr. Manuel Jose Pickett, a retired professor of theater and dance and head of the Latino Theater program at Sac State, *Zoot Suit* was the first Chicano play on Broadway and Pickett was an original member of El Teatro Campesino, which was founded in 1965 on the Delano Grape Strike picket lines of Cesar Chavez's United Farmworkers Union.

Actress Melinda Ochoa plays Elena, the wife of the best friend of the leader of the gang. (Smiley's her husband and Henry is the leader, who was set

to go serve in the Navy, but was accused of the murder of a rival gangster after a party.)

For Ochoa, Chicano history is not often explored in school subjects and even in high school. "Chicanos are often left out of history books, their struggles and successes in this country left unnoted. Any part I can play in exposing this history is a personal goal for me. This play is based on a true story and also depicts the Zoot Suit Riots and the ill treatment Mexican Americans received from U.S. sailors and law enforcement in the 1940s. Although a common issue, this is a topic not frequently touched upon in history books," Ochoa said.

She did her part to change her high school experience by independently

researching the Chicanos' involvement in the Vietnam War and with the aid of the school History Department Director, she was permitted to instruct a lesson at her school's U.S. History courses during her junior year of high school. "This was such a success, the school obtained permission to get this lesson included in their U.S. History courses," she said.

Her favorite scene so far is the Saturday night dance scene, mostly because she enjoys the music and the energy in the scene. "The cast has had a lot of fun with this scene, which also makes it one of the more memorable scenes in the play for me. I have learned a lot of new dances, which has been the ultimate bonus of working in this play -free swing dance lessons!"

# Arts & Activities

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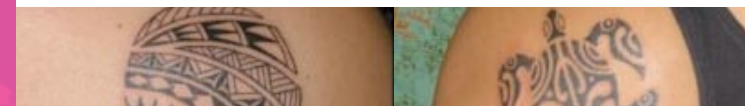


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(L) Monique McKisson, Walt Thompson, Julie Bock, Rodger Hoopman. Photo by Warren Harrison

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## 24th annual Polish Festival

Sept. 14: Don't miss the 24th Annual Polish Festival on Saturday, September 14, 2013. The festival will be held from noon to 6 p.m. at the Polish American Club grounds, located at 327 Main Street in Roseville. Fill up on home-made Polish foods – over 5,000 pierogies (potato-cheese filled dumplings); 1,000 golabki (cabbage rolls); 700 lbs. of Polish Kielbasa (sausage), and hundreds of servings of potato pancakes, bigos and Polish pastries (paczki and kruschiki, to name a few). Enjoy the music of the Dave Chelini Trio and Cher Chwalik on the accordion; watch the beautiful Lowiczanie Dancers perform; dance the Polka; shop at our Polish marketplace. Admission is free. Food prices vary. For more

information and directions, go to [www.polish-club.org](http://www.polish-club.org) or call (916) 782-7171 or e-mail us at [publicity@polish-club.org](mailto:publicity@polish-club.org).

## The Recycling & Solid Waste Division host Free Composting Seminar

Sept. 14: Backyard composting allows you to recycle your yard clippings and fruit and vegetable scraps into a valuable soil amendment right in your own yard. Attendees are eligible for a drawing for a free compost bin. At the seminar you will learn how composting works, what materials you should and should not compost, getting the right balance of food, air and moisture, maintaining your compost pile, Vermicomposting (composting with worms), and more. Seminar goes from 8 to 10 a.m. and

will be held at Sparrow Community Garden, 3219 Sparrow Dr. (North Natomas)

## Blood drive at Northminster

Sept. 15: From 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., there will be a blood drive with Blood Source at Northminster Presbyterian Church, 3235 Pope Ave. This annual event is sponsored by the Northminster Board of Deacons, and for any questions on eligibility please visit [bloodsource.org](http://bloodsource.org) or call (866) 822-5663. For more information call (916) 487-5192 or visit [northminsteronline.org](http://northminsteronline.org).

## All Saints Episcopal Church Concert

Sept. 16: First concert of their 2012-2013 season, "Good Vibes: A Musical Mystery Tour" featuring YOU, the audience, in an interactive recital. Come see how the instruments work, ask questions, take photos. Sunday, 4 p.m., 2076 Surterville Rd. Childcare provided, \$10 donation suggested. Overflow parking available across Surterville Rd. at City College. Reception to follow.

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# Bird talk:

A conversation with Parrot Planet's new co-owner/bird rescuer Dana Strome

By MONICA STARK  
 Editor@valcomnews.com

A bird loving man had trouble saying goodbye to his Umbrella Cockatoo when he came to surrender it at Parrot Planet, but luck had it a customer came into the new J Street store at that same time and fell in love. "She is absolutely ecstatic," co-owner Dana Strome said of the woman who "just had the urge to come here – she didn't know why, but she does now."

Strome said she does not charge any money for rescue birds. "I just try to find a good home for them." Strome said with a rescue bird like that, she does home visits because as someone else's previous pet, she wants to "make sure (the new owner) is equipped to deal with a parrot that might have issues."

Co-owned by husband Peter Schniedermeier and longtime responsible bird breeder Steven Hildreth, Parrot Planet is located in the space where Knott's Pharmacy used to be.

It's a 3,500-square-foot parrot store, rescue and breeding center that has the birds out in the open, outside of cages as children of all ages are welcome to play and talk with them for as long as they like.

Strome said she doesn't mind when people come in for hours on end to her store even if they don't buy anything. In fact, she loves when they do, as she stresses the importance of socializing them. "The only time they're in cages is to sleep, so people can come and play with them. Parrots are very social animals," Strome said.

She encourages children to learn about parrots at her store because the birds' habitats are being wiped out in the rest of the world. "And it's not just parrots – elephants, rhinos -- it's all very sad. I don't have any answers," Strome said.

But they have saved many birds and have made many of them happy with new owners. "We're all bird-aholics here," Strome said. "They make great pets ... How many pets tell you I love you?"

In 1989, Strome got her first pet parrot. "I fell in love and one thing led to another. I started a rescue – a 501c3 ... I accrued so many birds." She is the founder of the Wing Foundation, a parrot rescue group. She had a house

in San Francisco that she used as a sanctuary for parrots whose owners couldn't take care of them any longer. As a rescuer, Strome has found homes for the rescued birds or has been sending them to a parrot sanctuary in Miami.

With Parrot Planet, her dream came true and with long-time friend Hildreth, the store is also helping keep endangered species alive. "Without breeders these would become extinct completely," she said, noting that she hasn't always thought that way but after meeting Hildreth, she's rethought her position on breeding parrots.

"Steven and I have seen many sad cases of backyard breeders. As there are puppy mills, and kitty mills, there's also parrot mills," she said.

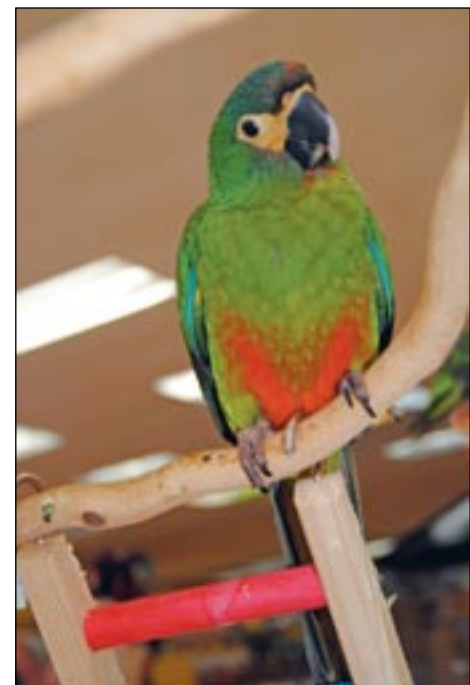
Some of these she said were breeders who'd show up at the fairgrounds with birds in cages. "A lot of these people are no longer in business. It's just people who indiscriminately breed birds and bring along fatal diseases. And they don't care."

Strome said with the use of a closed aviary, Hildreth has tight control as a breeder. "People can't come visit for potential disease," she said. The birds are hand fed from the moment they've hatched. She said they will be breeding ones that are friendly. "Umbrella Cockatoos -- We are not breeding them," she said. "It's like (breeding) a dog. Do you want a cute fluffy dog or a Great Dane? We will do it responsibly ... Most of the time they are sweet. Sometimes they're pretty bratty," she laughed.

"We have sold parrots to wonderful people. I'm feeling good about things," she said.

Strome's connection with the birds runs deep and she tells customers the birds do bond to their owners. She's like a matchmaking service between the bird and customer. "I talk to people and ask them questions like: do you live in an apartment? Or do you live in a house? Is your partner on board? I try to advise them what would be the best bird for their environment," she said.

While the price of the parrots at the store range in price, the average is about \$1,000. "I'm not going to lie, parrots are not cheap ... But Steven and I went across the country (looking at) pricing. Ours is prob-



Parrots at Parrot Planet.

Photos by Monica Stark

Parrot Planet is located at 4819 J St. Sacramento 95819. Hours are Monday to Friday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 594-9290 or visit [parrotplanet.com](http://parrotplanet.com)

**On the cover:**  
 Emma, 11, and Bridget, 8, Fitzpatrick played with the birds at Parrot Planet on Aug. 28.

# Vegetables aplenty at this year's East Sacramento edible garden tour

By MONICA STARK  
editor@valcomnews.com

Quite often, it's a sunny day at the Sunshine Garden. A sunny East Sacramento yard, located at 39th and G streets, is sprinkled with suns, some brightly painted form Mexico and others rustically made from metal while the sun shines onto her vegetable garden.

Garden four of six at this year's Edible Gardens Tour (which will be held Saturday, Sept. 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), homeowners Susan and John Ortiz have corn, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, beans, onions, carrots, and strawberries growing in a large open space out back, while a grape arbor supports tables grapes and provides some shade in the center of the yard.

Organized by volunteers from the Soroptimist International of Sacramento, ticket sale proceeds of the garden tour will benefit the Tubman House, which provides homeless parents and children with housing and support for 18 months. They learn the life skills that they need growing up. Goal for them is to exit the program ready to contribute to society.

Event goers can chat with master gardeners and hear music from the Sacramento Symphonic Winds throughout the tour.

Children under the age of 12 are free as an incentive to pique an interest of vegetable gardening to the future generation. Garden tour chair Susann Hadler said children in previous years have enjoyed being outside and picking some of the vegetables from their neighbors' gardens. A vegetable gardener

herself, Hadler likes to go out first thing in the morning or when it cools off in the evening. "I just sort of putter around. (When gardening) you're relaxing, but relaxing with purpose. It feels like you are accomplishing something."

Now in its third year, the tour continues to garner interested neighborhood vegetable gardeners wishing their homes to be chosen for the tour. Hadler said she's found that gardeners are so enthusiastic about showing off the fruits of their labor. Susan Ortiz was no exception. She was so excited to share what she's currently got growing and how her yard has transformed over the last 15 years.

Tending to the garden is a labor of love, but Ortiz says she enjoys doing it. "I just see little areas to fill in ... I have lots and lots of flowers. I love flowers." Some of her heirloom tomatoes came up voluntarily from last year. "My husband went to pull it. I said: 'No don't do that,'" Ortiz said. As Hadler noted, the plant comes from a nonprocessed hybridized seed.

Ortiz bought a little arbor at a yard sale down the street for a couple of bucks and while on her way home from work downtown, in an alley, she found an old smoking or telephone table. She's not sure which it is exactly, but she's given it purpose in her yard as a plant stand.

That's the kind of trend going on in her yard – giving everything a purpose.

She painted an old wicker chair blue. Instead of pulling out a cement slab, she painted over it with a sponge, making it look like a brick patio. A fountain that got knocked over, she made into an herb garden planter.

One of the benches in the back has sentimental value. Her childhood friend's parents had it on their front porch and when they died, it was given to her.

Behind her orange tree is a metal sculpture she calls "Iron Man." It came



from the old iron foundry on Franklin Boulevard where the Coffee Garden now is. She said the owner there, Michael Madsen contacted her years after he'd given it to her, saying: "You know that iron man we own -- the artist is becoming famous." Her response: "We don't own it. I own it and I am not going to sell it."

It really is an eclectic yard. Ortiz made an old metal shed look like a small red barn. "My father put wood over it," she recalled. Then they painted it.

She's salvaged broken tiles from tile companies for mosaic tabletops. "A lot of teachers do that for art projects," she notes.

Last year she went on the tour, she put her name down on the email signup sheet. Some of the other gardens were found by word of mouth. "My friend walks dogs a lot and saw a garden and said they should be on the tour, so it's been a pretty good response. Garden owners are so enthusiastic," she said.

Some gardeners who requested to be on the tour were too far off the grid, so maybe in future years, the tour might be in another neighborhood other than East Sacramento if there are enough gardens in a small radius.

Last year's garden tour raised \$24,000 and proceeds then were chosen by the Soroptimists to benefit Guardian Scholars, a program at Sacramento State that uses college students who came from foster programs to mentor high school aged foster youth. Proceeds also go toward a scholarship fund. "As a group we are able to touch so many people in more good ways than what we would be able to do individually," Hadler said.

Here's a brief look at some of the other gardens that will be on the tour.

## Garden One: Rooms Full of Art

37th Street and Folsom  
Owners: Eric Geiger and Phil Klamm

Enter an outdoor museum and view strategically placed art that tells about each garden room. Imagine dining in a covered area with a circulating fan or relaxing in chairs, which are pieces of art. Enjoy the sound of water cascading down a Zen fountain and note the rubber ducky placed on top of the fountain as an element of whimsy. Left of this room are the edibles – a variety of tomatoes, zucchini, melons, artichokes, bell peppers, corn – planted in redwood boxes and adorned with art pieces including garden guardians, a giant spoon and fork, a sundial, and a small cairn.

## Garden Two: Neighborhood Community Garden

38th Street and Folsom Blvd.  
Owners: Ty and Janine Yancey

This garden is unique in many ways. Ten neighbors raise their vegetables here in their own little park-like community garden. The property owners, Ty and Janine Yancey live on the adjoining property. The empty front lot has been put to edible use by selected neighbors, each managing their own garden plot. Watering schedules are noted on the "white board" mounted on the fence. Everyone can leave notes for each other.

## Garden Three: Peter Rabbit's Garden

41st between J and M Streets  
Owners: Mike and Juliana Horrell

Enter this garden through the wrought iron archway at the front pathway. See the whimsical status and various herbs, flowers, and vegetables planted alongside the pathways throughout the front yard. The landscaping has been lovingly accomplished through the hard work of the owners and their



Susan Ortiz in her yard.

Photos by Monica Stark

friends and family members. This garden is full of herbs and medicinal plants that the family's bunny rabbits like to enjoy.

Walk up the driveway and look for the potting bench that is used almost every day. This area also serves as a cozy spot to rest between gardening chores.

The backyard includes an outdoor bunny pen (when the weather isn't too hot) and lots of tomatoes, squash, beans, artichokes, melons, cucumbers, and pumpkins. Don't forget the nasturtiums for the bunnies. Other herbs and medicinal plants – aloe, borage, sage, chives, plantain leaf and chamomile—are also in abundance.

(Garden four is owned by the Ortiz's at 39th and G.)

## Garden five: Circle of Life

40th and G Streets  
Owners Donna and Josh Pane

A deep lot lies behind the main house – you are first greeted by the fragrant lavender plants that have replaced the front lawn, and then you see the purple agapanthus. Go through the garden gate and follow a path to the cottage, built in 2009. Notice the Buddha Hand lemon tree and private dining area on the right, enclosed by red curtains. Next is the large garden surrounding the Circle

of Life, a gravel meditation area known formally as the Yoga Shala Peace Garden. Grape plants define the circle in this full-sun yard with an Eastern exposure. Heirloom tomatoes thrive in full sun. Zucchini and yellow squash produce abundantly along with Zucchini da Fiore – a variety that has been bred to produce flowers, but very little fruit. The flowers are used for traditional Italian summertime dishes. Several varieties of cucumber and squash grow alongside basil and sage. To the rear of the garden, artichokes and cardoon thrive. Notice the fruit trees – nectarine, peach, olive, a mission fig, and wild blackberries. The Panes own the property and Josh tends the garden. Their daughter Ashley lives here with her roommate, Nichole.

## Garden Six: An English Garden

52nd between J and H streets  
Owners: Trish and Tom Uhrhammer

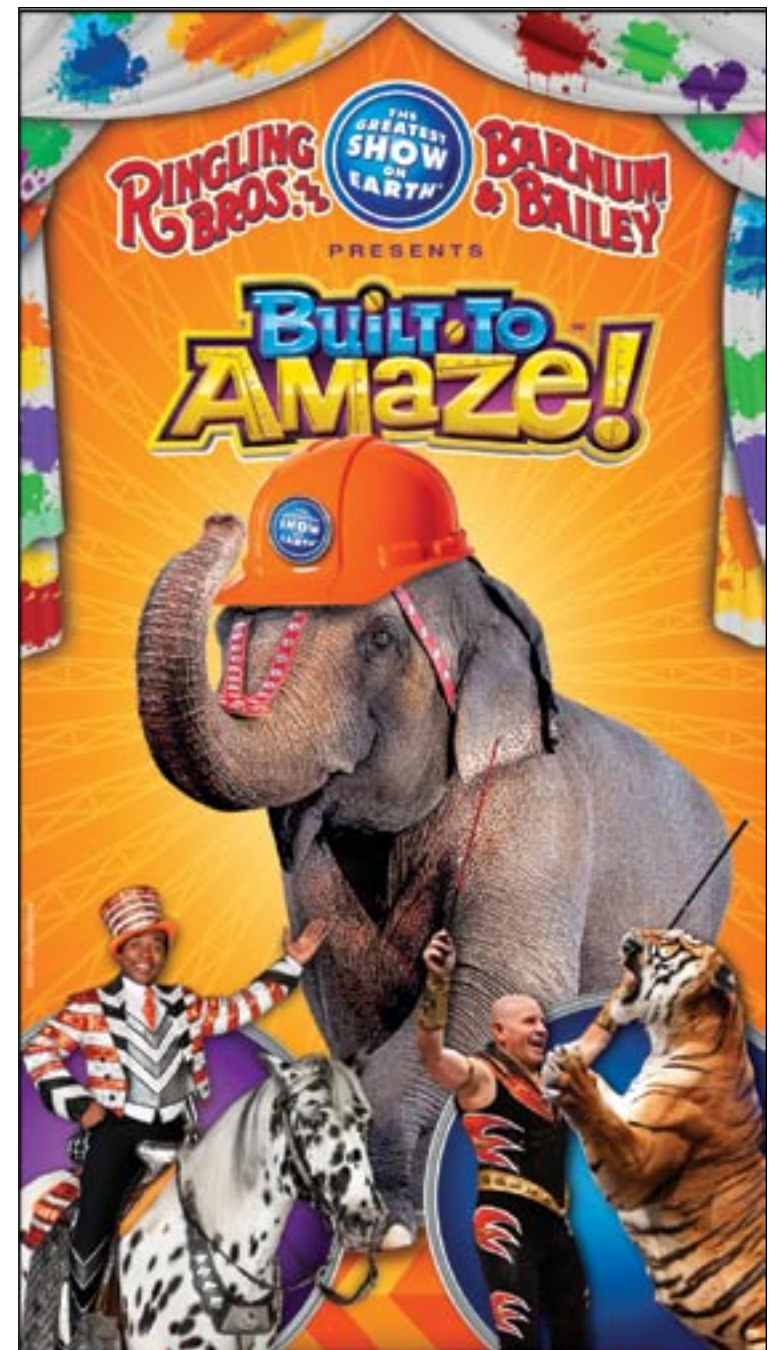
Two houses are situated on this large property that the owners transformed from a yard covered with only Bermuda grass to a lovely English garden. A brick pathway is the floor for an outdoor sitting room sporting a variety of trees – Japanese maples and other large trees provide shade from the direct sunlight.

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3 bedroom, 2 bath home located just steps from McKinley Park. Features include a spacious floor plan, hardwood maple floors, granite kitchen counters, stainless steel appliances, beautiful kitchen cabinets, completely updated bathrooms, and a private low maintenance backyard patio. \$375,000

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Plenty of space and charm in this 4 bedroom 2 bath home with wood shake shingle facade, cute shutters, multi-lite windows and oak hardwood floors! Both upstairs bedrooms are spacious and there is a lounge area. Downstairs has a bedroom and an office off the formal living room. \$599,000

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