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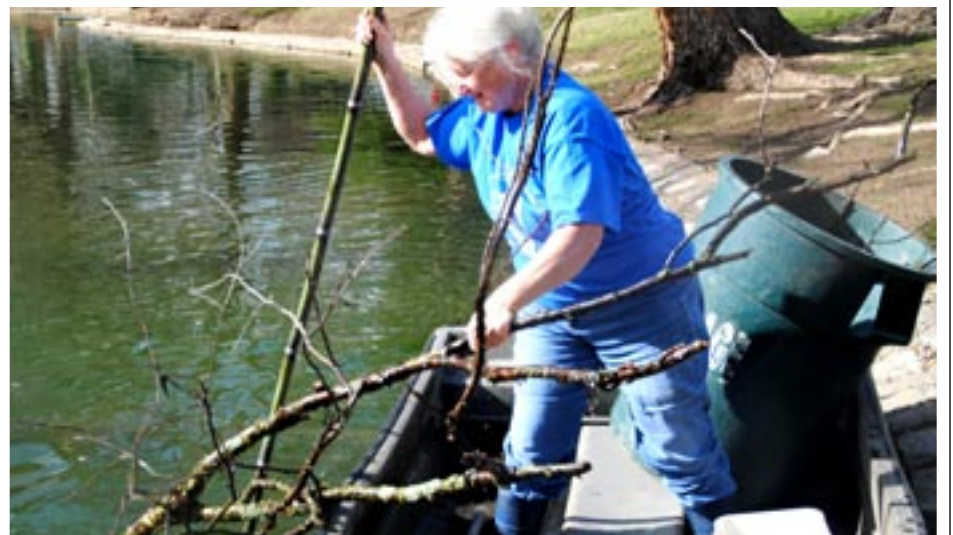
A look back

EAST SACRAMENTO NEWS SHARES
ITS BEST STORIES OF 2015

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Janey Way Memories:

A good ending to a not-so-good year



By **MARTY RELLES**
marty@valcomnews.com

The year 2015 proved a not-so-good year for me. Two of my beloved cousins passed away. But, I have to say the year ended on a good note with three memorable occasions.

On Dec. 12, we held the umpteenth annual Janey Way Christmas party at the Puccetti house in Elk Grove. Many of the old Janey Way gang showed up for that shindig including: my brothers Terry (in from San Diego) and John, friends Jim Ducray, Dan Rosenblatt, Dave Jurin, Larry Simpson and others.

As usual, we remembered many of the old stories from our neighborhood, including:

The time Dan caught the pit (the vacated sand and gravel plant behind my house on Janey Way) on fire;

Or, the night when Terry, Randy and I dressed up like police men to scare the O Street boys out of the Senior Little League dugout and confiscate their beer;

Or, the story of the great Janey Way Christmas tree war.

We have so many wonderful Janey Way memories.

The second event of note was the annual Relles-Petta family Christmas Eve party at Aunt Alice's house in West Sacramento. My cousin Bob and I made 15 pounds of Italian sausage for the party. My brother John cooked two home-made pizzas and Aunts Alice and Katie made cardoon. As usual, the event culminated with the arrival of Santa Claus with gifts for all the children.

Finally, my lovely daughter Vanessa Rose and her husband Ryan hosted our yearly Christmas dinner at their house on 53rd and L streets in East Sacramento—not so far from Janey Way.

I cooked the turkey for that party while Vanessa cooked the trimmings and Ryan provided a wonderful assortment of good wines. After dinner, we sat around the table conversing and watching the grandchildren play happily with their new toys.

It was a joyous way to end the holiday season, an unforgettable Janey Way memory.

The best of the East Sacramento News 2015

Dear readers,

The East Sacramento News has enjoyed bringing you stories about your neighbors and about the history that has made up the community you call home. What follows are summaries and excerpts from some of our favorite stories from the past year. Also, see some of the best photos of the year on page 15, all of which were taken by our star photographer, Stephen Crowley, who has had six photos nominated for awards by the California Newspaper Publishers Association. Additionally, on page 14, movie reviewer Matias Bombal shares with readers the top movies he has reviewed for Valley Community Newspapers since he started writing for us in 2014. Without further ado, here are the top stories and columns selected by staff this year.

Sincerely, *Monica Stark*

dent, Julianna Tanjuakio, class of 2016.

In reflecting on a quote of Pope Francis speaking of Father Junipero Serra, student Victoria Castillon, class of 2018, said, "He was filled with joy and the Holy Spirit in spreading the word of the Lord... I, too, will be filled with joy to share my experience with my peers through the stories I share at school, in clubs, a feature in the school yearbook and in our school newspaper."

In recognition of the SFHS school patron, St. Francis of Assisi being the Pope's chosen name, the all-girl Catholic high school received seats just behind the clergy gathered from across the United States. The student delegation was comprised of three seniors, one junior, and four sophomore students. The coveted seats put them within steps of the Pope. They also participated in a celebratory Mass at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land and spent the day with the Friars on a small group tour and discussion about Franciscan social justice works and teachings.

With the many St. Francis alumnae working or attending college in the Washington area, there was a reception at Clyde's Restaurant in Georgetown to meet and network.

Chaperone Margo Reid Brown, class of '81 and president of St. Francis Catholic High School, returned to Sacramento and shared the following statement about the trip: "It was indeed a magnificent experience for the young ladies who were chosen to attend the Mass of Canonization in Washington, D.C. While there we also had the great fortune to be invited to attend the Franciscan Monastery for their Mass of Celebration of Saint Junipero Serra on the following day."

Lady of the Lake speaks about traumatic experience at McKinley Pond and the need for a fence there by Monica Stark: For what began as a typical morning on McKinley Pond, Monday, Oct. 5, 2015, for the Lady of the Lake turned out to be anything but that. As news reports indicated, neighbor Judy McClaver was cleaning out the pond when from a distance she saw something black floating. At first she

thought it was a plastic bag, and then as she rowed closer to the floating object, she noticed black clothing. A bit worried at that point, she held her breath wondering if there was going to be fecal matter wrapped up inside, as that's been something she's come across in the past, but as police officials and news reports have stated she found a dead body.

As she comes rowing toward shore after I call out her name around 11:30 a.m., Judy asks, "Do you think this is enough to put up a fence?"

While she found the body around 9 a.m., Judy was found still on the island, cleaning the pond more than two hours later. "What am I going to do? Go home and cry? I've cried on enough shoulders today."

In the face of death, she didn't really want to look, but noticed the victim was wearing basketball clothing. "He was wearing pants, underwear, a top. I couldn't tell the skin color right away because of the murky green color of the pond." Pointing toward the southwest area of the pond, Judy noted, "It's the same place where that Range Rover drove into the pond (back in February 2014). You'd think that's the Bermuda Triangle over there. I told (the city parks and recreation department) this was going to happen weeks ago and here it happened. I just did not think I would be the one to find a body. I am thankful it was not a child! It's not pleasant. Kids fall in all the time."

She said she has witnessed numerous children fall into the pond either chasing toys or waterfowl or because parents were not close enough and they tripped on the uneven edge.

"I have seen people swim in the pond. Dogs go in chasing a ball. People use the pond water for water balloons and to wash their hands off. I have a picture of a couple drunk young maybe 20-somethings with their surf boards. One mother with her child reported to me seeing a teen kill a duck, throwing sticks at it. The number of people inebriated around the pond is unbelievable. Some are there drinking at family gatherings but the majority are there to sleep.

"People sleep on the benches, on edges of pond, and in the park and bushes. This at times



St. Francis delegation to Washington D.C. for Pope Francis visit.

is combined with other mental issues, too. Then, there are those using drugs and breathing in gas from spray cans at night. Add those who think using the pond for a toilet in broad daylight in front of others is a badge of honor, or use it

because they are too inebriated to know where they are. They get up from lying down and can easily fall into the pond. Then there are those pouring bottles of soda and alcohol into the

See *Lady of the Lake*, page 4

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Help The Rose Garden—Join The Prune-A-Thon

On Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon in the McKinley Rose Garden. (H and 33rd streets), will be the Friends of East Sacramento annual prune-a-thon of the rose garden. No experience is required as expert rosarians will be there to teach volunteers how to prune. Help will also be needed in removing the rose bush trimmings, raking where needed in the garden, and pruning the bushes around the garden. At 8:45 a.m., courtesy of East Sacramento Hardware, Stanley Spencer of Stanley's Perfect Edge, a profes-

sional knife sharpener will be at the garden to sharpen clippers volunteers bring. This will be done on a first-come first-served basis. Coffee will be provided in the morning and as a special treat, after the prune-a-thon, we will have a hot soup lunch for the volunteers from the restaurant Evan's Kitchen. This year's lunch will be sponsored by East Sac Give Back. If you have garden clippers or rakes that you could bring with you that would be a big help. Also, please bring your garden gloves, dress

warmly and be sure to wear closed toed shoes. RSVPs are requested, though drop-in help will also be appreciated. The check-in will be at the benches in the garden, which is at the corner of H and 33rd streets. Come and help for as long as you can. Because the majority of the roses are newer cultivars with patent protection, we are sorry that rose cuttings will not be available this year. Rose petal collection is allowed after the prune-a-thon to participating volunteers.
Source: Friends of East Sacramento



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Lady of the Lake:

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pond. I am not making any of this up as I don't have that kind of an imagination."

Judy pushed the city to test the pond water considering the number of waterfowl and turtles, people using it as a toilet, dog feces tossed in, trash, strollers, bikes, tires, and drug paraphernalia found in the pond. This testing was done in May 2013 and the pond was deemed a "Human Health Hazard" for fecal bacteria, including Salmonella, a test backed up by testing at Sacramento State University. "The city agreed to put up signs, but the signs are small and easily missed. They also say the water in the pond is non potable. Lots of people tell me they do not know what non potable means," she said.

For more than three years, Judy's been on a mission to get the city to help her clean out the pond and put a fence along the whole walkway, but her goal hasn't been a popular one at least with those on the citizen advisory committee, which was formed to assist city staff to address water quality and aesthetics of the McKinley Pond and the three William Land Park ponds. "The idea of constructing a fence around the entire McKinley Park pond was proposed by two members out of a concern to primarily prevent people from feeding the wildlife and tossing trash into the pond. The fence around a decorative pond was

overwhelmingly rejected by the committee," Maria C. "Marycon" Razo, media and communications specialist for the Office of the City Manager, told the East Sacramento News.

Razo said the city hired a consultant to develop long term pond improvements and maintenance procedures that will "ensure water quality enhancement for the wildlife and pond aesthetics. The committee reviewed the consultant's recommendations and voted unanimously on a set of solutions to forward to city council." She said, for McKinley Park, the improvements related to safety included the construction of a decorative fence between the McKinley Park playground entrance and the pond. The committee is made up of two citizens from Council District 3 (McKinley Pond), two citizens from Council District 4 (Land Park Ponds), and three city parks staff.

Judy currently sits on the Pond Advisory Committee for the pond's renovation and is one of the members Razo speaks of in regard to those who have been pushing for a fence around the pond.

"Do we need a fence around the pond for public protection? I say 'yes.' This is supported by many visitors to the pond that have seen many of the same things I have. The playground that attracts many is right next to the pond. Kids come to the pond from all directions. This pond is a public safety issue. Pond renovation will not make the water clean for very



Judy McClaver

long. The waterfowl and people will continue to do what they already do. Renovation does not change behaviors. It will take the muck (about 2 feet of it) out of the pond. A fence can be done so that it is aesthetically appealing.

"There are lots of pictures of this pond over the decades back to 1913 showing fences around this pond serving a safety purpose without appearing as barriers. Planting tall plants between the fence and pond would decrease trash and leaves from blowing in and add filtration of the run-off water from the park and the street. This would help keep the water in the pond cleaner. The plants

could also add color (flowers) that attract hummingbirds and photographers. Low water use plants exist. There is aeration proposed that would come from the bottom of the pond as opposed to the fountains. This is a good idea as it adds oxygenation to the bottom of the pond to help the bacteria with breaking up the debris (leaves etc). It also helps with the ecosystem of a body of water that has no flowing water and provides oxygen to fish."

Judy said she has received more than 270 thank yous and "only one or two is

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Bobaloo:

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against the fence." East Sacramento Preservation, which she is a member of, is working on a Go Fund Me account to raise money for the fence.

Janey Way Memories: Bobaloo by Martin Relles: When I grew up on Janey Way in the 1950s and '60s, 40 children called it home. They came in all sizes: short, tall, big and small. One boy in particular stands out in my memory. His name was John.

John had a nearly 100 percent hearing loss, but he managed to forge a place for himself in our gang. He taught himself to read lips early on, so he could speak words that he couldn't even hear. But, the kids teased him a little though, because of the way he mispronounced some words.

He didn't let it get him down. Instead, he developed a sense of humor. Remember the old saying, "Make them laugh with you, not at you." John embraced that idea. He told jokes; he mimicked the other boys. And, sure enough, they began to laugh with him. They even gave him a nickname: Bobaloo. I don't know where that came from. I think Desi Arnaz used to sing a Cuban song of that name. No matter, John became the Bobaloo of Janey Way.

John did well in grammar school in the David Lubin special needs class. His speech improved, and he demonstrated a real talent for the arts. However, in junior high school and high school he floundered, but he graduated on time.

After high school, the kids of Janey Way went in all different directions; some joined the military, and others went to college or got jobs.

John tried several different occupations. He worked first for our neighbor Rick, in a liquor supply distribution warehouse. After that, he worked with his cousin Ron doing landscaping. Eventually, he took a job with Relles Florist, first delivering flowers, and then doing floral design. He taught himself to make arrangements, funeral sprays and even wedding flowers. He had found his niche.

John has worked at Relles Florist for more than 30 years. He has become my designated floral designer. When I order flowers for my wife, I always ask that he do the work. That way, the arrangement is sure to be beautiful.

I think you can tell that John is more than just my friend. In fact, he is my younger brother. These days, John lives in our family home on Janey Way. He takes good care of our family home, and I help take care of him. They don't call him John Bobaloo any more; he is just Johnny. Now, Bobaloo is just another inspirational Janey Way memory.

Door to Door with Pat Lynch: There's a lot of talk locally about Airbnb (Air Bed and Breakfast), the website for renting temporary lodging. A friend got recently and weirdly involved in this. Joan's a school teacher, divorced, the kids have fluttered from the nest, and she pays the mortgage on a three-bedroom, two bath house. So she went to Airbnb and listed a room and bath. "People stay a few days, get a reasonable rate, and I get the income bump," she said. "This is win-win." I should mention that Joan is an optimist, open to adventure, and very hospitable. She'd be a great landlady. And there's always that mortgage.

Her first renter was a man. Her sister asked Joan if she'd feel comfortable with an unknown man in the house. Joan said, sure, added that he'd sounded nice on the phone. "You're welcome to use the kitchen," she had told him. She was too hurried in the mornings to make breakfast for this total stranger, but imagined him quietly brewing coffee and munching on a muffin. The man picked up his key, then, strangely, disappeared. Two days later Joan came home from work to find boxes and bins piled all over her living room. He had returned with most of his possessions. He was moving to a not-yet-vacant new apartment, he said. She told him he could not leave his lifetime of stuff in her living room. She made him move it all to the garage.

That night she was awakened at 1:30 a.m. by noisy banging from his room. "What could he have been doing?" she said. "Building something? Hammering? At 1:30 a.m.?" But she let it go.

My own sister, Joan's sister and I got together with Joan two mornings later. Relieved that she hadn't been serial-killed in the night, we asked about her new tenant.

"He set off the smoke alarm," she said. "When I went in there was this strange, sweet smell. I wonder if he'd been vaping." So she told him—no smoking, no vaping, no setting off the alarm. She forced a grin as she talked. "People have their ways," she said. Her refrigerator was now filled to bursting with his foodstuffs, most notably chicken nuggets, which he sizzled and consumed repeatedly, and with apparent relish. Joan, a vegetarian, did not complain to him about the chronic chicken nugget smell because, after all, she had granted kitchen privileges.

She returned to us the next day. She tried to smile but her eyes weren't in it. "He's okay, I guess," she said. Then she broke. "He takes an hour at least in the shower. A really long time. And when he leaves, the bathroom smells like bleach. After-

ward the whole hall reeks of it. It literally reeks. Bleach."

I asked Joan if her tenant entered the bathroom with a large plastic jug of laundry bleach, or if he went in with purchased tubes. She didn't know. She only knew that the potent chemical sting filled the hall. My assessment was: if he went in with a big jug he was a murderer bleaching the DNA blood evidence from his instruments, probably knives. If there was no jug, he was using a bleach cream as part of his hygiene routine. (Don't ask).

Joan is capable of appreciating the odd encounters life serves up, even while she struggles with them. She laughed gamely when we pointed out that her tenant had brought her a unique new blend of olfactory experiences at once: vape, chicken nuggets and bleach. He was an innocent, a nomad, lumbering in with all his worldly encumbrances and habits, making

See Door to Door, page 5

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Door to Door:

Continued from page 5

camp in her spare room, carrying on as was his custom.

He finally left, not on time, of course, but never mind. Joan scoured her kitchen, aired out the rental room and bath.

This got us all thinking: to whom might we like to rent? My perfect tenant would be a high-minded, timid female who keeps to her room, constantly wears Ipod earphones that deliver thundering classical music so she won't hear the shrieking and cackling that so often rattles these walls. She edits poems about existential anguish for an obscure literary publication and takes sedatives. Yes, she may have kitchen privileges to brew her little cups of tea. When she leaves I'll say, How lovely to have met you, and she will murmur the same, and will make a future booking. The perfect tenant. Win-win.

"Good luck with that," Joan said.

Airbnb started in San Francisco in the 2008 election year

when roommates Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbis couldn't afford their flat rent. They got three air mattresses, placed them on the living-room floor, and advertised. They also served partisan, election year cereal breakfasts — Obama O's or Captain Mc Cain's, and thus launched their now world-wide business.

You don't have to make special cereals if you do Airbnb these days. The coffee and muffin is enough, and you don't even have to do that.

Meanwhile the City is studying Airbnb's tax and regulatory potential. It needs the dough to help the struggling NBA build an arena.

Joan came over. "You won't believe what he did."

"I thought your new tenant was a woman."

"No. The old one. Him." He had arranged to have her mail held up. He was expecting a check and wanted it delivered to her address, even though he would no longer be there. So he put a hold on her mail until the check arrived. When the check came to the Post Office, it, and all of Joan's detained mail, was delivered to Joan at once. He explained what he had done when she called to tell him his check had arrived at her house.

Who would do such a thing? And how?

Joan's tenant is who. And how is a mystery. How does one stop someone else's mail? Her innocent, nerd nomad was a tad craftier than we had thought.

Joan's okay now. She's rented again and gotten good tenants. But the experience with him got her off to a daunting start. Really, don't you think she should get a plaque or something for getting back in the biz?

Sausage City: Sacramento's history includes successful sausage factories by Lance Armstrong: During its history, Sacramento has been referred to as many things, including the "City of Trees" and the "Carmellia Capital of the World," and it has also been known historically for its operation of many breweries and canneries, and as the western terminus of the first Transcontinental Railroad and the Pony Express. But many people today are unaware of Sacramento's history as a "sausage city."

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, "The first authenticated reference (to sausage) appears in the 'Odyssey' written by Homer, 9th century, B.C., who wrote: 'As when

a man near a great glowing fire turns to and fro a sausage, full of fat and blood, anxious to have it quickly roast; so to and fro Odysseus tossed, and pondered how to lay hands upon the shameless suitors.'"

Through research for this article, it was discovered that sausage was sold in Sacramento as early as 1850, and East Sacramento became home to one of the city's most notable sausage factories — Pureta Sausage Co. — in the 1920s.

Among the food items offered in the auction were five half barrels of bologna sausage.

On Jan. 8, 1855, The Sacramento Union ran an advertisement, which reads: "Sausage manufactory. The subscribers would respectfully state that they have commenced to manufacture sausages, head cheese, (etc.), and that they intend to use only the best qualities of fresh meats for the purpose, and trust that they may, by giving satisfaction, establish a good connection with families, hotel and restaurant keepers. Fresh pork, liver, blood and all kinds of fresh meat sausages and head cheese, of a superior quality. We trust by making low charges and giving every attention to business to merit a liberal share of patronage. Marquet & Frichon, Front Street, between P and Q (streets)."

Clauss & Kraus One of the city's all-time most notable sausage manufacturers was Clauss & Kraus at 1700 I St.

Also known by its shortened name of C&K, the business began its operations at that site on Sept. 3, 1888, under its original proprietorship of John Clauss and Frank L. Kraus.

An early C&K advertisement in the Jan. 5, 1890 edition of The Union reads: "Clauss & Kraus. Dealers in all kinds of fresh meats, bacon, hams, lard, pressed corn beef and all kinds of sausages; proprietors I Street Market, cor. Seventeenth and I sts. Free delivery to all parts of the city."

According to an article in the Sept. 2, 1948 edition of The Union, those deliveries were made by bicycles.

Warmerdam, 78, said that he was present at C&K when it began using sausage making machinery.

"We made a lot of (sausage) and we made it every day," Warmerdam said. "We used pork and beef and that was the main ingredients, and the meats

came from different parts of the animal, and there were the spices. The sausage making, (C&K) used to do it by hand, and then later on in about 1969, it was done by machine. At first they would do it on two machines at the same time, but it became more efficient with just one machine. It was really a step forward (to use a sausage making machine), with the competition (from sausage factories, including Sacramento's Pureta and Made-Rite factories)."

Declining sales led to the closure of C&K in November 1981, as the business fell seven years shy of reaching its 100th anniversary.

In the kitchen and on stage with neighbor Gabriel "Gabe" Levan Aiello by Monica Stark: In the face of a world filled with corn syrup, sugary sodas and preservatives, neighbor Gabriel "Gabe" Levan Aiello goes old school, back to a time when pharmacy soda fountains had drinks to help with people's ailments.

Gabe pops into Valley Community Newspapers for the interview a little sweaty, as he had just biked from his employer, Preservation & Co. He opens up his bag, puts a plastic cup on the table (he managed to find space on it despite the clutter) and stirs ice, seltzer and a ginger-based liquid concoction together, making a most deliciously healthy soda he calls ginger beer. Opaque in color, the drink has only three ingredients as its base: ginger, lime and brown sugar. As he talks about old timey cures for ailments, he speaks on how the combination of ingredients he uses rehydrates the system. "It'll boost you. Molasses, honey and maple syrups. They have a no-crash phenomenon," he says. And Gabe stays true, keeping the ingredients simple and healthy.

According to WebMd, ginger is commonly used to treat various types of "stomach problems," including motion sickness, morning sickness, colic, upset stomach, gas, diarrhea, nausea caused by cancer treatment, nausea and vomiting after surgery, as well as loss of appetite.

Rewind to a year ago; Gabe was on the hunt for healthy, preservative-free sodas, but he couldn't find any, so he decided to make his own and found

Meatless Mondays:

Continued from page 5

he was quite good at it. From ginger-molasses switchel to a sesame-mandarin soda, his list of drinks continues to grow as does his passion and his following.

Currently, he's been producing the beverages out of his own home near Sacramento to High School and out of his work, Preservation & Co., but he ran an IndieGoGo campaign for his line of drinks, which he calls Burly Beverages, to facilitate the purchase of logo and branding materials, equipment, ingredients, and the first round of bottles.

As he explained on burly-beverages.com, "This campaign will assist Burly Beverages in obtaining all of the necessary licensing and permitting required to operate this sort of business."

A humbling experience is watching to see who has contributed to his campaign, noting that some of those people have included some he hasn't heard from in years, like old classmates from junior high and his parents' church friends leaving messages, saying they were proud of him. "I didn't expect those feelings, then you see who it is and you're like, 'whoa, this is so cool. It's so personal.'"

With a thick red beard and a well-built stature, Gabe's appearance is an obvious inspira-

tion for the name of the line of drinks. But the term burly, he said, is one he wants to redefine. "Beard plus curly equals burly, but I want to stay away from the masculine. (Burly) is how I am viewed. I like the name (Burly Beverages). It's catchy and it fits my look. A lot of people want me to put my face on the labels." Continuing, he jokes, "What if there's a rainbow behind it?"

Having worked previously at Sun & Soil Juice Company, 1912 P St., he beefed up his knowledge on health foods, kombucha, cold press juice, all of which piqued his curiosity further. Why wasn't there a market for healthy drinks (that weren't juices)? At Preservation & Co., naturally he's learned about preserved foods and shrubs, you know the soft drinks that were popular during America's colonial era, made by mixing vinegared syrup with spirits, water, or carbonated water.

Sharing some tidbits of advice on how to mix his beverages with alcohol, if that's your fancy, he recommends the following pairings: Black grape with gin. "The booze dilutes vinegar, but vinegar washes out the alcohol flavor. As a soda, it's real grape flavor with molasses." Then there's the lemon jalapeno or alone. Some use vodka or gin."

As he's been creating new drinks from his home kitchen and at Preservation & Co., these types of concoctions have been taking off locally at Hock Farm (the Paragary restaurant, located at 1415 L St., that was named after John Sutter's farm), Shady Lady Saloon, 1409 R St.; and The Mill coffee shop, 1827 I St.

Meatless Mondays

Gabe's popular beverages are hitting street fairs, friends' cupboards, and pop-up Meatless Monday dinners at Old Ironsides, where he serves about 150 people one night a month a creative dish for \$5 and where diners can purchase his sodas, which if they are so inclined, can mix with alcoholic beverages from the bar.

The day prior to Meatless Monday dinners, which are held every second Monday of the month, Gabe gets all the food prepped, so that all he needs to do is warm it in the ovens at Preservation & Co. and then head over to the bar.

As his beverage inventions grow over time, so do his Meatless Monday meal offerings. "I've always been interested in flavor combinations, and cooking. Even stuff I do at Meatless Mondays is unique."

In what grew in attendance from about four friends in his apartment to about 130 people packing Old Ironsides, Gabe's

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Dalton children:

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most recent Meatless Monday featured lasagna fagioli, grilled Romaine heart salad (on top of a vegan cheesy puree) and a signature cocktail menu with pear-ginger shrub (which could be mixed with whiskey, bourbon or vodka), and a watermelon-lime shrub (which could be mixed with tequila, rum or vodka).

Talking about the early incarnations of the dinner event, Gabe said friends started bringing friends, and shortly Meatless Mondays got “too crazy with 30 people in my apartment. So different friends would host. We’d go to my friend Ben’s; my friend Lauren’s... I would prepare the food, and ask for donations. The group then grew to 50 people, then 60 people. Some people wouldn’t bring money and I wasn’t breaking even. I’ve always been committed to it, but I wanted to make back at least what I was spending. I started yelling on Facebook that I need an accurate headcount.”

As the popularity for Gabe’s Meatless Mondays grew, the need for a larger venue became necessary and because he knew of Old Ironsides Monday dinners, he asked the owner for one Monday a month. “I told him I could guarantee at least 75 people would be there. He said, sure let’s try it out. The first time we had 65 people, then 85 people, last time 115 people.”

Because in the past he has ended up cooking about a third more meals than he’s sold, he said he brings the leftovers back to Preservation and sells them the next day. Even then, he’s had to throw some food away. “It’s stuff I can’t bring to Loaves and Fishes, so I’m just trying to undercut slightly.”

A regular to the Meatless Monday dinners, since its near inception, diner James Wade said he really enjoys Gabe’s vegan cooking even though he eats meat regularly. “Gabe makes delicious food; it doesn’t matter if it has meat in it. Especially since we are in a drought, for once a month you can stand not to eat meat.”

Completely genuine about his love for animals and about the health of those he feeds, Gabe encourages – by example – learning about the food people eat. “I try to help people understand where food comes from, not just for personal health but for the health of the planet. If all Sacramentans stopped eating meat on one Monday a month, it could have a huge impact on the cattle industry.” Especially during a drought, Gabe talks about the amount of water that a cow drinks each day to survive – not to mention the amount of water needed to grow the food the animal eats.

Backed by facts, his thoughtfulness and passion toward animals is contagious. He’s not a vegetarian (anymore – he was for a bit), but the Meatless Mondays event has truly grown, perhaps because of his love for animals, but most definitely for his meticulous cooking techniques. Earlier this summer, he

made handmade veggie sausage, baked beans and fresh cucumber salad, again for \$5 a plate.

Giving much credit to his innate talent pairing and mixing flavors, he said, “Mom was an early child educator; she minored in nutrition and was always cooking well-balanced meals. Sometimes, she blended nutrition (into our food). She was sneaky.” She grew up Mormon, meanwhile his dad, Sicilian Catholic. Marrying the two, they became Methodist. Despite their differences growing up, they came from culinary backgrounds with a good working knowledge of food. “I couldn’t say who the better cook is.”

Longtime friend of Gabe’s, Tom Lake, has had the good fortune of being able to enjoy their home cooking and subsequently Gabe’s. Like James, Tom has experienced the low-key Meatless Mondays at Gabe’s house as well as the busy Old I monthly events. “I had a little nostalgia of how it used to be. But I am so happy for (Gabe) that it has gotten this big. It’s really important to him. He wanted it to get bigger and it has. He nurtured it to where it is today.” Speaking about the vibe of Meatless Mondays, Tom continued, “it’s young at heart and hip with the times. It fits with the atmosphere downtown. It’s definitely a grassroots thing.”

Even though he didn’t learn to cook until after he left the nest, Gabe continues to eat ramen and burritos if he’s cooking just for himself. But when there’s an audience involved, be it big or small, he creates meals that are well-balanced nutritiously and look appetizing.

As was mentioned prior about Preservation & Co.’s willingness to let their employee use space to make beverages, owner Jason Poole (who people in the biz refer to as the “brine boss”) has encouraged Gabe and other small businesses to follow their dreams. “It’s interesting what’s happening,” Gabe says. “He is nurturing small businesses and getting them off the ground. He doesn’t see it as competition. He embraces it and helps others move forward.”

From jarring jams, jellies and “pickles” (think outside the box here: cayenne carrot sticks, hefeweizen bread & butter chips, and hickory Brussels sprouts are just a few examples) to bottling citrus rosemary salt and “Hellfire Sriracha,” the most sought after items at the store time and again, Gabe said, are the various Bloody Mary mixes, which within a week, they make anywhere between 3- to 20-gallon batches. “I never worked at a place like this, a factory. It’s small time but it’s really cool. Now we’re making 500 jars of balsamic beets. We’re trying to get ahead, trying to have backstop.” Gabe said customers like Whole Foods, The Natural Foods Co-op, Nugget Markets, bars and hotels are amongst the regulars to purchase in bulk.

While food culture continues to embrace craft this and craft that, people in the music scene sometimes complain

there is no music scene (TBD is an obvious exception); but for Gabe who is involved with both – he’s the lead guitarist for local band Drop Dead Red – complainers shouldn’t complain if they’re sitting idly. “We can’t complain if we are not helping it move forward.”

As you can imagine by now Gabe is a doer, a mover and a shaker and so goes his involvement as lead guitarist with Drop Dead Red, which he has been a part of for 2 and a half years. Joining songstress Carly DuHain, Tony Ledesma, Joseph Castro, and Brittany Vanessa, Gabe said the band is rising to new heights since last summer’s performance at the Friday night Concerts in the Park downtown where on opening night the band was the opening act, playing in front of about 6,000 people. “We played our best show. We were getting so much energy; we were pushing energy back. It was a circular motion of energy. Ever since then, we’ve been having to turn down shows, because if you play more than one show a month, people stop coming.”

The band opened for country singer Deana Carter, who will play at the Theatre De Ville in Vacaville on Friday, Oct. 23, 2015. Asked to downsize to a trio, Drop Dead Red instilled a fear of being upstaged at that show, Gabe said.

The band recently won the Battle of the Bands at midtown bar, Pour House. Sponsored by Jack Daniels, the winners of the battle get sponsorship by the Tennessee whiskey company, a website, a photo shoot and a video shoot. “We’re now getting to know our Jack Daniels’ rep. They are excited to have us. Our sound will fit their brand. Carly is so powerful and commanding; she deserves the recognition. It seems like, why did it take so long? But now that it is happening, it’s going, going, going.”

And that pretty much sums it all up. Gabe is going, going, going too: food-wise, beverage-wise, and music-wise. Luckily, for Sacramento, he’s rooted here and our community can enjoy the passion one neighbor puts into everything he does.

Janey Way Memories: The Dalton children revisited by Martin Relles: While perusing my Facebook messages, I discovered an eye-opening note. It came from a man named Ray Dalton. Those of you who have followed my column since its inception may remember a story titled: “The Dalton Children.”

That column tells the story of five children, Carolyn, Wayne, Donna, Bonnie and Wiley Dalton, abandoned by their parents and raised by their grandmother.

Unfortunately, their grandmother died suddenly in the early 1960s. When that happened, the Sacramento Department of Social Services looked for foster care for the children and placed the five oldest Dalton kids with their Aunt Mary Kinzel on Janey Way. The two youngest children, Ray and Pat-

rick, went to live with a foster family in Southern California.

Ray is the one who sent me the Facebook message. He said that the story touched him and that he has been trying to reconnect with his siblings. His message made me feel good because I, too, would like to reconnect with the Dalton children.

When I wrote the story about how the kid’s aunt Mary took them into her house on Janey Way and raised them to adulthood, one of my Janey Way friends said that he felt that the Dalton children had a tough time of it in the Kinzel home.

You know, that does not surprise me. It had to be hard in that household. Mary had two children of her own: Richard and Nancy. Then, having five new children thrust into her world could not have been easy.

However, you would never have known it. The children were always neatly dressed and well behaved. They never complained, even though they had to do chores, some of us never had to do.

I think living on Janey Way really made their difficult transition a lot easier.

We accepted them into our gang without question. They became a part of the fabric of our neighborhood.

The one sad thing is, that they each, in turn left the Kinzel house when they turned eighteen years of age. This did not surprise them. Mary had told them well in advance, that it would happen.

However, once they left Janey Way, we lost track of them. The oldest girl, Carolyn, found work and moved on to who knows where. Her brother Wayne went on to study at U.C. Davis, married, and took a job outside of Sacramento. Unfortunately, he died of cancer in his early thirties.

The other kids went their separate ways. I heard that they moved to Oregon to re-unite with their parents.

I would love to see them again someday. They were nice kids.

However, now their story is just another mysterious Janey Way Memory.

Ann Menebroker, East Sac Poet by Corky Oakes

Tucked away in East Sacramento, a poet quietly works her craft. Ann Menebroker, long-time resident of East Sacramento, says she began writing poetry “probably” in her teens. Her contributions to the Sacramento poetry world and beyond indicate she never looked back.

In the late 1950s, with a two-year course in poetry composition under her belt, Menebroker joined the California Federation of Chaparral Poets. With Joyce Odam, another established Sacramento writer, she helped start a local chapter, The El Camino Poets. This was followed by joining The Sacramento Po-

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Menebroker:

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etry Center, originally known as The Poet Tree. Menebroker recalls, "We were always struggling for money to keep going, through grants, membership dues, and such. Poetry is the low guy on the totem pole of the arts. We were grateful for whatever we received."

Menebroker's style has been described as "no apologies asked" and the "anti-love" poet. "Mostly I'm talking about experience in living." The overriding quality in her poetry is one of presence to the slightest detail, regardless of seeming insignificance. With a droll sense of humor and slight impishness, that presence brings the reader directly into her experience.

Menebroker has written over 20 collections, numerous broadsides and has been published in small magazine publications of poetry. She has participated in many projects including anthologies, marathon poetry readings and collaborations. The first collaborative effort was published in 1985, titled Landing Signals. It accepted "poets who were born here or had lived in Sacramento to some point and contributed to the poetry scene." Menebroker is quick to share credit with many other members and supporters of the Sacramento poetry scene, including former

Mayor Anne Rudin who designated Oct. 26 as Sacramento Poetry Day.

In a one-time venture, Watching From The Sky was published in 1988 by Menebroker and fellow-editor Martha Ann Blackman under their own publishing name Pinyon Pine Press. Menebroker explained that the small anthology "contained work directed against war, and caring for environmental issues. We dedicated the anthology to Grandmothers for Peace, an organization begun in Sacramento by Barbara Wiedner, in 1983."

"One of the most exciting anthologies I appeared in was The Outlaw Bible of American Poetry because one of my grandkids was impressed with my poetry." Also featured was Tupac Shakur, her grandchild's favorite musician. "I was lucky to be part of it, for as I understand it, it was about ready to go to print when someone presented my name and I squeezed in with one poem. I had no idea who would be included in it. It was incredible!"

Menebroker tells of participating in The Tough Old Broads reading in June, in 2014, that made her "soar." The reading was held at the Verge Center for the Arts in downtown Sacramento. "Usually I'm an anxious reader, but on that occasion, all of that was swept away due to the audi-

ence, which I felt was suddenly part of my family; remarkable, satisfying in every way. I read with Viola Weinberg, one of the two poets laureate, the first, for Sacramento; Kathryn Hohlwein, a retired professor from CSUS; and Victoria Dalkey, well known as the art correspondent for the Sacramento Bee."

Although she doesn't have any projects pending, a 16-poem portfolio was recently published by Sore Dove Press, Soheyl Dahi, the publisher, out of San Francisco. A minimal amount of the portfolio was printed. The title is "The Fish Who Swallowed the Stars."

What is a poet's greatest challenge? "Personally, I think the most significant challenge for a poet is to remain true to his or her own style and need in writing...to be aware of what goes on around you. To be open to other points of view, and to be okay with getting a little crazy around the edges. My greatest joy is in the friendships I've had over all of these years with the poets, not just here, but across the country and outside of it. These people became an important part of my life, a direction and goal, a harmony that kept me from a lot of sour notes. I love them."

Know your neighbor: River Park resident discusses his storied as a former Israeli soldier and growing up in small town Ukiah by Monica Stark (Editor's Note: Since the article came out last year, John-Michael Kibrick has moved back to Tel-Aviv Israel where works for Haaretz, an online news source.)

When a youthful and handsome 24-year-old River Park resident John-Michael Kibrick enters the room, a feeling of familiarity and comfort fills the air as he smiles widely and in-

troduces himself. On the surface, it's as if nothing terrible could have ever been experienced by such a gentle soul.

The short story is that John-Michael was born in Jerusalem, grew up in Ukiah (Mendocino County), moved back to Jerusalem fought for the Israeli military and just last October ended up living with his sister in River Park. He also recently took a position as a copyeditor at the Citrus Heights Messenger and North County Messenger, and an intern job at Fox40.

Prior to John-Michael's birth, parents Sondra and John fell in love with Jerusalem. While they met in a Mendocino County church on the coast, John (a Los Angeles native) took Sondra (a Humboldt County native) to Israel several times and during one of their longer trips, they had John-Michael on April 11, 1990. A year later, they decided to return to California, settling on beautiful Ukiah, a town that sits in a deep valley surrounded by redwoods and that is full of vineyards and pear orchards and that includes a lively population of creative, community-oriented old time hippies.

However, that picturesque image cannot illustrate what it was like growing up in a small town as well as John-Michael can describe: "I think there's a lot of good people in Ukiah, but particularly among the youth, growing up in such a small place, the young people there don't set their sights really high. I think that's a shame. And most of my life was around the young people. I think I had a poor outlook on my future and America, in general, really. And, that was based on really small town living."

So setting his sights high, he did what many ambitious youths do when they want to get out of town – he graduat-

ed early in 2008. That's not to say he didn't take advantage of what Ukiah High School had to offer him. He joined the student newspaper, the Ukiahlite and became its editor his senior year under the advice of UHS' beloved journalism teacher, Tonya Sparkes (Dec. 8, 1963-Nov. 11, 2011).

"Journalism was big for me. Tonya Sparkes helped shaped (my passion). She was really encouraging and really helpful. She taught me a lot. She was one of the few teachers I had that was your friend even more than your educator. I think that earns your respect rather than demands it. I really appreciated it. I learned from her in a friendly way. She was very approachable." John-Michael recalls one project that took a "good month" to complete. Beating out the local daily newspaper, the Ukiah Daily Journal, the young reporter wrote about all the financial details regarding the construction occurring at the high school. He also takes pride in a story he wrote about a local man who served in Iraq. "It won a third place prize in all of California high schools for best news/feature story," he said.

Despite his academic success, during sophomore year, he thought a lot about college, but came to the realization he didn't have money to go to school, and secondly he didn't know what he wanted to go to school for. He didn't want to throw away money and follow the path that everyone else around him was taking. "I wanted to experience more than that small town mentality in Ukiah that I had a diversion to. And I didn't want to be stuck in Ukiah. I know a lot of people who get stuck like that."

But the cliché, life happens, happened for him in a short period of time. Where John-

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Soldier:

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Michael's life began is where his mother's ended – in Israel. "She told us in the summer of 2007, (she had cancer). She waited quite some time to get proper medical attention. (Diagnosed) in about 2005, she was in pain for a while. My family was breaking up at that point. It got rough at the end with my mother being ill."

Having graduated from high school and ready for a change, John-Michael went with his mother and one of his sisters, Jessica Frykman, to Israel where they could afford healthcare.

Born Feb. 4, 1952, Sondra died in Israel in Aug. 21 2009, despite having excellent doctors. "Medical in Israel is pretty good. They have the best doctors in the world. The bureaucratic side of it is a little problematic. I had the best healthcare in the country and I paid \$20 a month for it."

Living all over the Tel Aviv area and having moved 15 times over the course of seven years, John-Michael said he has no regrets over that period of his life. "I am not sorry I did it. I would do it again if I was in the same situation. When we went, we had basically nothing. My mother had a little bit of cash, but not too much."

So, to make ends meet, John-Michael took a variety of odd jobs, including bartending without tips at an event hall, to delivering telephone books for five months before joining the army for two and a half years. Joining the military is mandatory in Israel, but John-Michael actually signed up before they called him, and three months into his service, his mother passed away; so one of his initial reasons for coming to Israel – healthcare for his mom – was no longer needed, and yet despite a complete lack of pay, he still wanted to remain in Israel and finish his term.

"I think being in the army is what made me Israeli. It integrated me into the culture, as well as helping my mother. My goal was to become Israeli. They don't pay you to join the army, but I wanted to stay. I was disillusioned when I left America. In a lot of ways I did find what I was looking for. Something was in me and it wasn't something necessarily outside of myself. I found social acceptance there I never experienced in high school. The (Israeli) culture is very warm in that way. I had a hard time connecting with most kids I went to school with. In Israel, a complete stranger would act like your best friend in the whole world. There is a sense of community there that is lacking in a lot of ways in America and I think that disillusionment is based in reality. That was a very real emotion, but it was wrongly based on my experience in Ukiah."

After the army, John-Michael was trying to think about what he wanted to do career-wise and he knew writing had to be part of the job description. So, af-

ter searching online he found a demand for English writers. "I found a job pretty much right away at a high-tech place writing. They sold diamonds, jewelry and Jewish products. I stayed in that job for six months." During that time, he moved into a managerial role, but he found with the added responsibilities, the position lacked a better title and pay raise. So on the hunt again, he took another job, a quality insurance position, until he landed a job at YNETNews, the English-language edition of Ynet, Israel's largest news source.

Speaking about how he covered news for YNETNews, John-Michael said: "On one hand, the news site wanted to provide news objectively to foreigners. On the other hand, they are providing Jewish news to the Jewish community abroad, so everything had to do with Jewish news or something happening in Israel. But I strove for objectivity. It was really challenging and therefore it was one of the most important things for me – to be as objective as possible."

"Automatically you have a conflict of interest. I worked there during the last war in Gaza. You have friends in the army in the Gaza Strip. You are very much involved in the middle of this war zone. No matter what you do, the readership is part of the Jewish community. (We would get) push-back from readers to write more pro-Israel pieces. When we put stories in about Gaza, it was naturally difficult. Just because where we were located, we didn't have personal access to what was happening in Gaza. We were able to write every biography (of each dead Israeli soldier), but about 2,000 Palestinians died and we didn't know any of their names. On one hand, it's too bad that was the situation. I wish I could have published all the names of the Palestinians, but when you cover news from one location, you could only cover news from that side."

"We didn't have reporters ourselves. If we had any information, it was from Hebrew reporters. We would take pieces of what they wrote, took parts from AP (the Associated Press). Sometimes we would call people (to localize the stories) and put our names on it. Sometimes we did opinion pieces. There was a lot of translation, but mostly it was a compilation from a lot of sources. Usually we'd come in, check the wires (AP and Reuters) and get a general update of what is going on."

An international news desk, John-Michael said YNETNews included one Israeli, one person from England, and people from other countries. "But you had to know fluent Hebrew. The army made me very fluent in speaking, but I still struggled with reading and writing. I communicate in text, but YNET improved my writing. I used a lot of 'Google Translator' but there were things I couldn't figure out, but I got by. The pay was enough to get by on and it wasn't about the money. I got up and didn't feel like I was getting up

and going to work. It was something that was stimulating. It challenged me. Everyday I would come into work and there was something that challenged me emotionally. A single article could make you question everything you believe in, including things you could take for granted."

In the summer of 2007-2008 before he even graduated from high school, John-Michael was the assistant sports editor at the Ukiah Daily Journal, covering local games as well as general community features like the Mendocino County Fair. "Back then I don't think I appreciated it as I should have. I don't know if it's your age, but at that period of time, I wanted to do national news. But even in the smallest little communities, there are great people to know. You can learn from any experience great or small. I have enjoyed getting to write."

After six months working for YNETNews, John-Michael moved back to the United States, landing in Sacramento, specifically in River Park with his sister Erika Frykman. Writing again for community news, John-Michael is excited to have accepted a copyeditor and writing position for the Citrus Heights Messenger and the North County Messenger.

Additionally, he has enjoyed running local events like the Sacramento Food Bank's Run to Feed the Hungry and blogging about local politics on the Wordpress site, "Politics from the Sac."

Classy Hippie Cafe is born out of the experiences of a world traveler who has settled in Elmhurst by Monica Stark: A former biomedical engineer, a post 9/11 soldier, an athlete, and a world traveler, Leo Hickman has created the Classy Hippie Cafe – what he calls a traditional tea room with an urban, artsy twist – out of experience. Now located in Elmhurst inside The Grange Performing Arts Center near Stockton Boulevard at 3823 V St., the Classy Hippie Cafe is a bit hidden from the bustle of traffic, but Leo is making his presence known with outdoor seating and an ongoing gathering called tai chi and tea. With a few tables set out on the corner of the T Street Parkway corridor, Leo invites tea drinkers to enjoy the good weather while they sip a cuppa or if they stop by around 9 a.m., Wednesday through Sunday, they can participate in a drop-in tai chi lesson with "Hidden House Sacramento" his wellness venue dedicated to tai chi, qi gong and meditation.

And because of its location inside the theater building, he offers its patrons the opportunity to purchase tea from the tea room and has invited friends to "VIP Nights" at the theater on Saturdays. Showing now is the sold out Green Valley Theatre Company production of "In the Heights", a 2008 Tony Award winning musical which chronicles the lives of the residents of New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood.

In a Jan. 28 interview with the East Sacramento News, Leo said the cafe is representative of himself and his eclectic love of the world's cultures. "Before the classy hippie came about, I would brand myself as the cultured bandit because I love taking the best out of every culture. I'm huge into ayurvedic medicine, which comes from India. I lived in China. A lot of the teas are from China. We also have some macha which comes from Japan. A little bit of everywhere. Also to get back to my roots, there's also rooibos, (a member of the legume family of plants growing in South Africa) and yerba mate, which is native to South America. The tea will take you all over the world."

Quite the world traveler himself, Leo, originally from New Jersey, left his hometown which he describes as having a lot of "culture, a lot of b-bop, a lot of music" at the early age of 19 and hasn't looked back. "I've been traveling ever since."

Hitting 27 countries in 2 and a half years, Leo financed his trip around the world in an unconventional way. "A lot of people get jobs at hotels and things like that so they can speak English, but I taught salsa dancing. And that was my way around."

With the philosophy of making "your job fun," Leo is making his job fun today after years of finding himself and eventually landing in Sacramento.

Sacramento was not part of his plan, he said. He came to the West Coast racing motorcycles. You see, he fell a few times, injuring himself without insurance, so he went back to school and became a medical engineer. "I got hired on in Vegas. Well, 2008 hit and a lot of people got laid off. I was pretty good at what I did. So, they said, 'We don't want to fire you, but we don't have a position for you anymore. Do you want to go to California or Colorado?' I had no idea what Sacramento was. I cannot lie. When (General Electric) said California, I thought palm trees, beach. Aww. I guess they do most of the filming in L.A. and San Diego. When they said, 'The City of Parks and Trees' I thought, what part of California is that?"

After residing working in Sacramento for some time and living with his wife at the time, Leo was still a little restless and "too young for settling" down, so he decided to quit his stable job for more excitement. He thought his wife was on board, but after losing about \$8,000 on a month long poetry competition held at the Elks Tower, she left him. Speaking highly of the event, however, Leo said, "It was really cool. It had everything I wanted. People got to speak and open themselves up, but I lost a lot on that event and I lost my wife. She left three weeks later and it was a very difficult time when it happened."

But what came out of that ill-fated time period was the birth of three companies: the Classy Hippie Cafe,

See Classy Hippie, page 13

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Classy Hippie:

Continued from page 11

Hidden House, and Leo Sensations, his event planning company.

Established within the borders of midtown in January 2014; the three businesses held their first incarnation within the rustic brick of an early 1900s firehouse building on 20th Street, before moving to the Midtown Collective, which currently houses Firefly, Moonrise Boutique, and Trash Boutique.

When Leo and his ex wife lived inside the old firehouse, they resided on the second floor and beneath them was a recording studio, Sound Cap Audio. "They would bring recording artists up and I would send talent down. Because I was open late, I would make food and different things for the artists. So we played off of each other. So that's where I was when the wife left and I wondered what am I going to do. I went in, I started painting and remodeled the place and turned it into a wellness center where we did tai chi and Asian yoga."

That transition in his life, Leo said is rooted deep within the way his parents raised him. "The thought of letting them down and knowing my own self worth. I mean I finished engineering school. I raced motorcycles. I went to war. And to die from doing too many drugs, really? You're not Jimi Hendrix, you will die and no one will remember you.

So, it really hit home that there's so much more to do with your life."

"Everything I'm doing now, we did growing up. It was mainly my mom. My dad was the quiet guy. Our home — they called us the Huxtables in our neighborhood. We were one of the only Black families with a huge house, but it wasn't like we were rich. My parents both worked. My grandfather lived with us. We had family chip-in. We just had a home that anyone and everyone came to.

"There were kids that didn't have a place to go, a coat for the winter. (His parents would tell them): You have a coat now. You have food. You stay with us.' So all that flowed over to the business. My father, on the other hand, was the guy who didn't say a lot, but he had that wisdom about him. And when he spoke, you did listen. So, I picked up a lot from him. My mother is an assembly line worker for General Motors and my father is the manager for the night shift."

Unfortunately for Leo, he lost living in the house and had to rewrite the business plan for his future. Hopefully for Leo, the current location — the Grange Performing Arts Center on V Street off Stockton Boulevard — is able to fulfill the needs for this creative venture.

The Classy Hippie Cafe is located at 3823 V St. Current hours of operations are Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 235-3243 or visit http://classyhippiecafe.com/.

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Matias Bombal's Hollywood

The Big Short

The MPAA has rated this R

Paramount Pictures offers "The Big Short", the true story of four separate Wall Street wizards that predicted the financial crisis in the middle of the year 2007 that led to the collapse of many big banks. Armed with this knowledge, they embark on the concept of a credit default swap to pitch against the CDO market. This had never been done before. It brought them ridicule from the experts in the CDO market who were clearly not prepared for this slingshot hit from David to Goliath.

An all-star cast is assembled in key roles bringing this story to life under the clever direction of Adam McKay, the man behind the "Anchorman" movies. McKay also has co-written the screenplay for this with Charles Randolph based on the book by "Moneyball" author Michael Lewis, "The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine". The cast that weaves in and out of this cleverly mounted production includes Christian Bale, Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling, Brad Pitt, Marisa Tomei, Hamish Linklater, and Finn Wittrock.

With all of these fine actors, this movie is never dull for a moment. Its quick cutting adds to the sense of impending financial doom for the banking business. In wonderfully quirky little asides, the actors often break the fourth wall, look directly at you in the audience, and give you

a note of explanation which helps advance the story or give you some needed background about individuals that you are about to meet on the screen.

Occasionally, the narrative stops completely and you are given an explanation of certain Wall Street terms, such as when we are transported to a high rise apartment where we see lovely actress Margot Robbie as herself in a bubble bath toasting you with champagne, explaining directly to the audience exactly what a CDO is. Later, Anthony Bourdain, as himself in a kitchen, uses day-old fish as a metaphor to explain an aspect of the financial market. Perhaps my favorite moment of oddness arrives when Selena Gomez is seen at a gambling table with a tenured Wall Street expert explaining the process of big banking side bets. The juxtaposition is memorable and just the right kind of odd.

With all of these elements you have a highly entertaining movie, but this really is Steven Carell's movie for his performance is wonderful. The world of high finance has never been an interest of mine but this excellently made movie kept my interest from start to finish, never waning. It is a freshly mounted humor-infused look at a real horror story.

Matias Bombal's top 10 movies of 2015

As often happens near the end of the year we start to examine what



transpired in this now elapsed year that remain present in the mind. Might some of these moments have offered something of merit that would make them memorable still? In a society so geared to "what's next?" I offer some movie titles that made an impression that may stand the test of time, at least for me.

The first movie I reviewed in 2015 was a sci-fi musical called "The Ghostly Love of Johnny X", the last, "The Hateful Eight". A remarkable connection between the two: in this now all digital age, both films were actually released on motion picture film prints for theatrical distribution. A photographic process, not an electronic one. In between those two cinematic bookends of 2015 here's what I liked the most. There were other excellent films with fine acting, to be sure, but these are the ones that I remember with fondness; beginning with special categories first, before giving away the top ten over all.

Honorable mentions for films that did not make the top 10, but were considered: "The 100 Year Old Man that Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared" and "Black Sea".

Best foreign language movie: "Labyrinth of Lies"; best documentary: "Meru"; best use of 3-D: "The Walk". In numeric order from the very best on down, here are the top ten.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The Best Picture of 2015:

1. Youth
2. Ex Machina
3. Danny Collins
4. Pawn Sacrifice
5. Love and Mercy
6. Mr. Holmes
7. The Water Diviner
8. Inherent Vice
9. Kingsman: The Secret Service
10. The Intern

Best photos of the year

All photos by STEPHEN CROWLEY
stephen@valcomnews.com



Colors caught on camera: About a dozen folks came to McKinley Park on Saturday, Feb. 21, 2015 for a community flow jam as the sun set. With glowing hula hoops and other glow-in-the-dark toys, the folks have a great time each month as they watch colors spiral from their fingertips out into the air. Details on the group can be found at www.SacramentoHoopDance.com/community.



The Chinese New Year Celebration Association and the Sacramento Chinese Culture Foundation at Hiram Johnson High School celebrated 2015, the Year of the Goat, with stage entertainment, food, arts, children's games, martial arts, and community exhibits on Feb. 7, 2015 at Hiram Johnson High School, 6879 14th Ave.



A rockin' evening for heart kids and their immediate family members with dinner, dancing and entertainment was put on by non-profit Angels for Hearts on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2015 at the Sutter Cancer Center.



BANDALOOP, a pioneering vertical dance group that has performed on the sides of buildings, cliffs, and monuments, performed a special perspective-bending dance presentation on the sides – yes, the sides – of the Sacramento State University Library on Friday, April 10, 2015. The group's performance was part of the University's annual Festival of the Arts.



Pictured here are two girls photographed at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church expansion on Sunday, June 14, 2015.



On Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015, the Sacramento Ballet put on a special preview of the Nutcracker for the community at the Clunie Center.



The Tahoe Park Neighborhood Association put on one fun party at the park on Friday, Aug. 28, 2015. Neighbors enjoyed music, food and fun at the 20th annual concert in the park, which featured music by Soul Shakers.

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2016 annual Japanese American Citizens League (JAACL), Sacramento Chapter, Crab and Spaghetti Feed; January 30, 2016, 6 p.m., Sacramento Buddhist Church, 2401 Riverside Boulevard, Sacramento, 95818. Doors open at 5 p.m. \$50, general ticket; \$10, ages 6 to 10; free, 5 and under. Please join us for all-you-can-eat food and fun with raffle prizes, games, and a performance by UC Davis's Bakuhatu Taiko Dan group. Contact Janice Luszcak (916) 903-6645 or janice.luszcak@gmail.com for tickets or information.

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