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Florist Al Balshor leaves grand legacy in community

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Over the Fence

with Greg Brown

By GREG BROWN
greg@valcomnews.com

Irish Eyes Were Smilin' At Brownie's Lounge

They really know how to throw a St. Patrick's Day party at Brownie's Lounge. Bagpipers playing traditional Irish tunes, patrons decked out in green were tipping back pints, and over 800 pounds of corned beef were cooked and ready to be served to the hungry St. Patrick's Day revelers.

Clair Brownie, the colorful longtime owner of Brownie's Lounge, was all decked out in a St. Patrick's Day outfit...kilt and all. I asked Brownie, "Are you Irish?" He said, "well, hell yeah I am."

Tim Taormina came to Brownie's with his wife because Marie Callender's on Freepoint sold out of corned beef. "That's why we're here," he said. He just had to have corned beef on St. Patrick's Day! There was some question whether Tim would actually get to fulfill his mission of corned beef on St. Patrick's Day. At first Brownie's told



him they were sold out. Tim said, "I'm Italian/Sicilian, I forcefully demanded I get the last two dinners." It worked because they relented and Mr. Taormina got his corned beef and cabbage dinner.

Tony Soprano would have been proud. The city of Sacramento pipe band, led by music director Liz Tubbs, was playing "Garyowen" while weaving through the packed house with the other bagpipers at Brownie's Lounge.

"Garyowen" is known to have been used by Irish regiments as a drinking song, which is really what most folks were doing: "Instead of spa we drink brown ale

And pay the reckoning on the nail
For debt no man should go to jail

From Garyowen to glory"
Liz and her husband Bill were wearing "his and her" kilts while Brown-

See Over the Fence, page 3

Over the Fence:

Continued from page 2

ie's grand-daughter, Jessica Bach, was following behind with the big tip jar full of cash.

Jessica told me, "I grew up here at Brownie's Lounge. I actually see more of my family on St. Patrick's Day than I do at Christmas."

Just then the bagpipers started another traditional Irish tune, "Wearin' Of The Green," and Jessica was on her way to get more tips from the crowd inside the bar.

The bagpipes weren't the only music at Brownie's Lounge on St. Patrick's Day.

As soon as the bagpipers left, Doug Meredith and his one-man band started up on the tiny Brownie's Lounge stage. Doug strummed the guitar and played a wide variety of music from country, R&B, rock, and of course some good ol' traditional Irish tunes. The bar was definitely heating up with a packed house and the corned beef cooking. Doug Meredith was feeling the heat as he sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" with a trickle of sweat pouring down from his brow. The backdrop was a giant cardboard cut-out of

Clair Brownie in a kilt surrounded by flashing green lights. The evening had a surreal feel to it. The crowd loved it: Corned beef, cabbage, kilts and a little bit of kitsch at Brownie's Lounge.

Who you gonna call? David Fisher's Cart Retrieval Service, of course. I actually stumbled upon David while he was returning abandoned shopping carts to Vic's IGA from parts unknown. It all started back in the 90s when David worked for a grocery store in north Sacramento. He picked up the carts for the store. One day he was running some errands out in North Highlands and he saw a recycling center that had numerous abandoned shopping carts. He stopped by to see if any of them belonged to the store he worked at. There were quite a few that belonged to the 98 Cent

Shopping Cart Retrieval Service

Sometimes I drive down the road and notice an abandoned shopping cart. What happens to it once somebody removes it from the store?

Who you gonna call? David Fisher's Cart Retrieval Service, of course.

I actually stumbled upon David while he was returning abandoned shopping carts to Vic's IGA from parts unknown.

There were quite a few that belonged to the 98 Cent

See Shopping Carts, page 4

Correction

In the March 12 issue of the Land Park News, due to an editing error it was reported that there have been some preliminary discussions to house a Safe Ground type facility at the current Camellia Waldorf location. Actually, the site is being talked about for the nearby 4.6-acre Sacramento City nursery.

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GRANGERS DAIRY
This stately 4 bed, 3 bath home features living room w/ fireplace and spiral staircase to library loft. Formal dining room, updated kitchen w/ stainless appliances & eating area. Family room w/ fireplace, bonus patio room w/ vaulted ceiling and wall of windows. Built-in pool, covered patio, outdoor cooking area, and large side yard. 6423 Faustino Way \$769,000

NEAR PARK TERRACE
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CUTE COTTAGE
Three bedrooms, two baths, living room with fireplace, formal dining room, updated kitchen w/ granite counter tops, new doors, refinished hardwood floors, enclosed patio and cute backyard. 4920 Flora Vista Lane \$439,000

Shopping Carts:

Continued from page 3

Store. Then a light went off in his head.

David decided to talk to Gary Cino, the owner of the 98 Cent Clearance Centers, and asked if he was interested in having him pick them up and return them to the stores.

Cino agreed and offered a dollar a cart.

April 1 of 1998 David got his business license and made it legal. He's been returning shopping carts to their original owners ever since.

David, who is a South Land Park resident, usually gets between 50 to 100 carts a day. He also covers the Woodland and Davis area, too.

"I just put 'em in there and strap 'em down," he said.

He's also helping out the community. He gets calls and texts about shopping carts abandoned on the side of the road, down an embankment, or abandoned in an apartment complex. Several neighborhood associations have put his contact information in their newsletters.

I asked David if he feels bad about taking a shopping cart from a homeless person. He said, "I used to, but you have to remember they're in possession of stolen property."

And the shopping carts aren't cheap. According to David, the smaller ones that Rite-Aid or Walgreens have are about \$80 each. The carts Winco, Food Co and Raley's use can run as high as \$200-\$250 a piece.

That's why stores want to hire somebody like David to go pick them up. Dollars and cents. "If a store loses 20 carts a month, that could be \$5,000 a month they've lost in revenue," David said.

At the Wal-Mart in Woodland, David told me he "picks up at least 40 carts a week. These carts run about \$150, so if I didn't bring these back and Wal-Mart had to replace them they're looking at \$6,000 a week to replace shopping carts."

David told me Wal-Mart has the most shopping cart theft of any other store in Sacramento.

So if you see a lonely shopping cart on the side of the road give David Fisher a call or text. He'll be glad to pick it up and return it to its rightful store owner. Call 812-3885 for David's Cart Retrieval Service.

The spots the abandoned shopping carts end up are recycling centers, apartment complexes, and certain neighborhoods. "You learn the hot spots."

He also gets calls from the City of Sacramento, Sac PD, "They all have my phone number."

He's the go-to-guy for abandoned shopping carts.

I find carts for Raley's Bel-air, Winco, all those stores.

He rarely gets into confrontations with the people who are stealing the shopping carts. Although, one time a guy was throwing stuff at David because he didn't want to give up the cart. The guy tried to sick his dog on him. "I played it smart, I had some of my lunch left so I took part of my hamburger and gave it to his dog. The dog and I became friends."

Matías Bombal's Hollywood

The Divergent Series: Insurgent

The MPAA has rated this PG-13

From Lionsgate comes the second in the Divergent series, "Insurgent" in 3-D and IMAX and standard presentations in other theatres. In the first movie, set in the ruins of Chicago, the action thriller of an oppressive future divided the population into four districts based on the resident's virtues. We pick up where the last one left off as Tris Prior, who is played by Shailene Woodley, is the one "Divergent", a person in possession of all virtues not merely one. Thus, she must be captured by the power hungry Jeanine played by Kate Winslet, who wishes to control all factions. This movie is louder, bigger and faster than the first, and the chase for Tris is on! Theo James is Four, her love interest. Kate Winslet as Jeanine is always fun to watch, and Ashley Judd returns in the role of Tris' mother. Also returning are Miles Teller, Ansel Elgort, and a lady that seem not to be able to give anything less than a good performance no matter what the script: Octavia Spencer. As impressive as this was, I was not consumed by it personally. I thought that the first movie was much better. This movie seemed more action packed, and violent for that matter, than the first. If you are going to see it at all, see it at the Esquire IMAX, where the sheer size and 3-D of the experience will be a thrill you can't find with home viewing.

Until next time, this is your pal, Matías Bombal, bidding you a fond farewell.

For more in-depth, complete reviews of these same movies and many more in theatres now, with scenes shown from the movie reviewed, you may see and hear "Matías Bombal's Hollywood" at: www.mabhollywood.com. Find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter: @MABHollywood

Florist Al Balshor leaves grand legacy in community

"Mr. Southside" was connected to his childhood neighborhood for 90 years

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
Lance@valcomnews.com

Sacramento native Antonio Alberto "Al" Balshor, who operated one of the city's oldest floral shops, the family-owned Balshor Florist, died last Thursday, March 19. He was 90.

Born on Nov. 22, 1924, Al grew up in a large family in a home at 315 U St., near Southside Park. And he remained connected to the Southside area for the remainder of his life, thus earning himself the nickname of "Mr. Southside."

In speaking about that title, his wife, Marie, 87, said, "(Al) was a Southerner through and through until his dying day. He always felt so proud to own the home that he was born in. That was 90 years ago. And he was so involved with the Southside Improvement Club."

Additionally, Al was a charter member of Southside American Legion Post 662 and a member of the Sacramento Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Portuguese Club and the Portuguese Historical and Cultural Society.

Al's family, which also includes his surviving children, Judie, Al, Jr. and Jerry, was a cherished part of his life.

And, of course, there was his Portuguese-born mother, Grace (Secco) Balshor, who was one of Al's greatest loves. A large photograph of Grace hangs on a wall at Balshor Florist at 2661 Riverside Blvd., just south of Broadway.

Al's bond with his mother increased following the death of his Portuguese-born father, Arthur, on Dec. 15, 1929.

Marie, who met Al in 1934 and was married to him on New Year's Day in 1948, added that with Arthur's death, Al "became an instant man."

And with added responsibilities as the "man" of the family, Al began working during his youth.

His jobs included selling programs for boxing matches at the old L Street Arena at 223 L St., pitching watermelons at the Sacramento Farmers Market at 2630 5th St., just south of Broadway, washing bottles at Jones Howell pick-

le works at 315 T St., and working as a motorcycle courier for Willis & Martin Co. at 1001-1003 K St.

Additionally, while attending the old Lincoln Junior High School at 4th and Q streets in the late 1930s, Al delivered newspapers on three routes for The Sacramento Bee.

In an interview with the Land Park News last May, Al spoke about one of those routes, saying, "I used to go out and get the first papers off of The Sacramento Bee's press, and that was at 7th and I (streets). I would take the first papers. There would be 25. They would come up the chute and I would run down the hallway, get on the bike and I had 10 minutes to get over to the (Southern Pacific) depot and catch the train going to San Francisco. The papers would come out at 12:15 (p.m.) and the train left at 12:25 (p.m.). Many times, I caught (the train) on the go."

After graduating from Sacramento High School in June 1942, Al obtained a job as a flower wholesale worker for Lino Piazza at 1328 7th St., before



Longtime local florist Al Balshor, who lived and worked in the Land Park area, is shown in this photograph taken last November.

accepting a position delivering ice for the Consumers Ice & Cold Storage Co. at 831 D St.

Like many young men in the 1940s, Al served

his country during World War II.

In speaking about that time in Al's life, Marie

See Balshor, page 9

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Locals share April Fools' Day memories

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
Lance@valcomnews.com



Local residents Roman Hull, left, and his brother, Michael Hull, both enjoy April Fools' Day pranks.



Edwin Hintz, right, could not recall any April Fools' Day pranks that he was involved in during his life. However, he mentioned that his son, Sir Edwin Hintz, also pictured, was born on April Fools' Day, April 1, 2013.

With April Fools' Day approaching, the time is right for sharing a few of the community's favorite memories from that long-time popular day dedicated to playing practical jokes on others.

The Encyclopedia Britannica mentions that the true origins of the day, which annually occurs on April 1 in the United States, are unknown.

Among the possible origins presented in that encyclopedia entry is that April Fools' Day dates back to the 16th century.

That portion of the entry reads: "Some have proposed that the modern custom originated in France, officially with the Edict of Roussillon (promulgated in August 1564), in which Charles IX decreed that the new year would no longer begin on Easter, as had been common throughout Christendom, but rather January 1. Because Easter was a lunar and therefore moveable date, those who clung to the old ways were 'April Fools.'"

Furthermore, the same entry notes: "(April Fools' Day) received its name from the custom of playing practical jokes on this day - for example, telling friends that their shoelaces are untied or sending them on so-called fools' errands."

Last week, the Land Park News made its way around its coverage area to speak with people in that area, collect their April Fools' Day memories and then share them with readers of this publication.

In a twist of coincidental fortune, among those interviewed for this article were a homeless woman who identified herself simply as April, and a man named Edwin Hintz, who mentioned that his son, whose birth name is Sir Edwin Hintz, was born on April 1, 2013.

Some of the comments of those sharing April Fools' Day memories for this article are presented, as follows:

Rhonda Shield

"When I was a (business) manager, me and a bunch of the staff people I worked with hid when we went to work, and then we called our boss and we all left different messages about not being able to come to work that day," said Rhonda Shield, who is a resident of Land Park. "One of them said they couldn't find their car in the parking lot. We just gave ridiculous excuses. So, then we waited like 15 minutes and we listened to him on the phone, with all of us calling in sick (or with other reasons). And then we said, 'Surprise,' to him."

Shoab Siddique

Another Land Park resident, Shoab Siddique, grew up in Virginia and Illinois, and moved to Sacramento in 2000. After being asked if he had any April Fools' Day memories to share with Land Park News readers, Siddique said, "Not really anything serious. Just things like (telling his children), 'You forgot to do this, you're in big trouble now and you're going to be grounded.' I get them worried. They're 7 and 11 years old. But they turned the age where they kind of recognize it now."

"My parents didn't (play April Fools' Day pranks). They were immigrants, so they didn't really know about April Fools' (Day)."

Glenn Vanderplaats

"There was a time (one April Fools' Day that) my

(John) told me my tractor was stolen," said Davis resident Glenn Vanderplaats, a former Sacramento resident who was visiting the Land Park area. "And I'll tell you one that my son pulled on me. We had a horseradish plant growing in the backyard. My wife and the kids dug up the plant while I was at work, and I got home that night, and my son said, 'You know, it's horseradish all right, but the thing is, it's not hot at all.' I believed him on it, so I put a big old spoonful on my prime rib and it was the hottest horseradish that I ever tasted in my life. And he said, 'April Fools.'"

Lis Maloney

"People usually get me on stupid ones, because I'm very oblivious to things sometimes," Lis Maloney said. "I wear shoes without laces, so they'll be like, 'Your shoelace is untied.' And I look down, but I'm not wearing shoelaces."

A different sort of humor

Certainly, not all April Fools' Day jokes are built alike, as is evident by the

following memories of various locals:

Stephanie Walker

"She got me back from a prank I did on her," said Stephanie Walker, regarding her sister. "She put my name in for all these magazines, and so I had like every magazine and newspaper coming to my house, and then the bills started coming (due). I had already previously done something to her, so that was her getting me back."

And in describing her own April Fools' Day prank, which lasted well more than one day, Walker, who graduated from Sacramento High School in 2002, said, "I added a (cell) phone to her account, and I put it in her purse and I kept calling the number and she kept wondering why her phone bill went up. The phone kept ringing and she said, 'What is ringing? My phone is off. What's going on?' And she found it like a month later inside her purse pocket, because she never used that pocket. And she finally heard it buzzing. I would (occasionally) take it out of her purse and charge it."

Isaac Cota

"Last year, I got fooled on April Fools' Day," said Isaac Cota, who is a native of West Sacramento. "My birthday is in late March. A friend

See April Fool's, page 8

PUZZLE PLUS

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The Crossword by Margie E. Burke

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| <p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Old-style road covering</p> <p>8 Rile up</p> <p>15 Reach, as a goal</p> <p>16 1 is one</p> <p>17 Flipped (through)</p> <p>18 Snack bar?</p> <p>19 Pants feature</p> <p>20 Platinumlike metal</p> <p>22 Rehab candidate</p> <p>23 Secure</p> <p>24 Chromosome component</p> <p>25 Messy one</p> <p>28 Hypnotic state</p> <p>31 Klutz's cry</p> <p>32 Buck's partner</p> <p>33 Pincered bug</p> <p>37 Climbing plant</p> <p>39 Throne, so to speak</p> <p>40 Shepherd sitter?</p> <p>41 Action movie prop</p> <p>42 Geometric measure</p> <p>43 Workout target</p> <p>45 Within reach</p> <p>46 Social outing</p> <p>49 Unabridged</p> <p>52 "Days of ___ Lives"</p> <p>53 Pull a _____ (cheat)</p> <p>55 Used to be</p> <p>58 News article</p> <p>60 Word before "shop" or "gun"</p> <p>62 Fill beyond full</p> | <p>DOWN</p> <p>1 School subj.</p> <p>2 Tylenol target</p> <p>3 Pal</p> <p>4 Ultimate goal</p> <p>5 Ledger entry</p> <p>6 Sidestep</p> <p>7 Go-between</p> <p>8 Chest pain</p> <p>9 Wise advisor</p> <p>10 Mosque leader</p> <p>11 Decimal base</p> | <p>12 Came up</p> <p>13 Prey grabber</p> <p>14 Make merry</p> <p>21 Very serious</p> <p>23 Failure to appear</p> <p>24 Apropos</p> <p>25 Puppet material</p> <p>26 Folk wisdom</p> <p>27 Ready for business</p> <p>29 Night sight</p> <p>30 Smartphone</p> <p>34 Became frayed</p> <p>35 Notion</p> <p>36 Toothed wheel</p> <p>38 Fairytale legume</p> | <p>39 Purchasing person</p> <p>41 Lady's man</p> <p>44 Evening prayer</p> <p>46 Divine for water</p> <p>47 Hearing-related</p> <p>48 Overused</p> <p>50 Pointless</p> <p>51 Verso's opposite</p> <p>53 Accomplishment</p> <p>54 Sedan or coupe</p> <p>55 Flag waver?</p> <p>56 Pot starter</p> <p>57 Soothsayer</p> <p>59 Facial twitch</p> <p>61 That girl</p> <p>See Solution, page 20</p> |
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April Fool's:

Continued from page 7

of mine happened to be out of town and he came back in town around April Fools' (Day). He gave me a birthday card with (California Lottery) Scratchers inside of it. I continued to scratch away. On the first ticket, I think I won a ticket or a couple dollars. He probably got me like 10 tickets and I got down to about the eighth one and I scratched it and it said that I won 10 grand. But it was a total joke ticket, and I had a houseful of people that day that happened to be watching

basketball and I ran around giving everybody high fives thinking I won 10 grand.

"I need to get him back this year (for April Fools' Day). I think it's definitely better to wait a year to see if they maybe forget about it."

Nadia Joy

"I'm sure I told a few people in elementary school that they were expelled," said Nadia Joy, a transplant from Los Angeles who was walking her young schipperke dog. "But one that I did use was that I told my brother that he was adopted. I like to really mess with people's psyches."

Jonathan Becima

"I glued my friend to the couch once," Jonathan Becima said. "I took like 36 of those little, tiny, dollar store superglues and I glued him to a couch. It ended up ripping off a lot of his arm skin. We did that kind of stuff all the time. I fell asleep once and he had like 10 people come over and draw stuff all over me. He took pictures of it and showed it around school. It really (irritated him), so I got him back on April Fools' Day, and I glued him to the couch."

After being asked if he was also an initial instigator of April Fools' Day pranks, Becima said, "I wouldn't say so, but if an opportunity presents itself. If it was going to be a great joke that everybody is going to love, maybe not now, but later, I would probably take action and do it."

Roman Hull

Roman Hull, a 2013 graduate of Sacramento New Technology High School, recalled a moment in which his friends tampered with an office chair, where he would eventually sit.

"I went to sit down and my friends kept laughing," said Roman Hull, who is presently studying to become a computer hardware engineer. "And I said, 'What's so funny?' And they're like, 'Oh, nothing, nothing.' What they did was they loosened the wheels (on the chair). As soon as I sat down, I fell out



Photo by Lance Armstrong
Isaac Cota enjoys a moment at a local park with his daughter, Jaelyn, who was less enthused with the moment. Cota said that he was once the recipient of an April Fools' Day prank, in which he was led to believe that he had won \$10,000 through the California Lottery.

of my chair. I was mad at first, but then I thought about it and I just laughed it off. It was funny. But I'm easy going."

Safe and sane April Fools' Day

As shown in this article, there are different types and levels of

April Fools' Day pranks, some of which are not condoned by this publication. But pranks of a good-hearted, non-cruel nature are part of a long, cherished tradition that has made April Fools' Day a time that can be enjoyed by all involved.

Balshor:

Continued from page 5

said, "He was so proud of being in the service for 23 months, and he was under Gen. George Patton's army. He served in the European campaign.

"He wasn't exactly in the Normandy invasion, but he came in to clear the path, they built the beaches and they were able to drive their ambulance right off of the boat.

"And he was definitely in the Battle of the Bulge. (Many) Americans got killed, and he picked up dead bodies."

Although Al was given official clearance to return home after his brother, Joe, died in the war on Jan. 13, 1944, he opted to remain in the Army.

Al spent six months in Wales before D-Day and was on the border of Poland when the war ended.

After returning to his hometown, Al went to work at Relles Florist at 2220 J St. by way of the GI Bill.

And on Nov. 4, 1950, Al opened the original location of Balshor Florist at 730 O St.

Twenty-two years later, a plan to redevelop the site forced Al to relocate his business to its present location at 2661 Riverside Blvd.

Until recently, Al continuously went to work every day, six days a week.

While sitting in his office at his floral shop a few months ago, Al commented about his continuous run of working that dated back to his childhood.

"A little hard work never hurt anyone," Al said, with a gentle smile that was part of his endearing demeanor.

It was his kind-hearted, soft spoken nature and knack for listening that drew people to seek his advice and friendship.



Photo courtesy of the Balshor family
Al Balshor is shown around the time he was delivering copies of The Sacramento Bee during the late 1930s.

And as a longtime icon in the community, Al attracted many friends throughout his life, as was evident by the constant flow of visitors who stopped by his shop four months ago to wish him a happy 90th birthday.

Al's many friends are invited to attend his funeral service at St. Elizabeth Portuguese National Church at 1817 12th St. on Monday, March 30 at 10 a.m.

A viewing will be held at Klumpp's funeral home at 2691 Riverside Blvd. on Sunday at noon, and a rosary will be held at the same site on Sunday at 6 p.m.

The burial will occur at St. Mary's Cemetery at 6700 21st Ave. on Monday, following the funeral services.



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Photo courtesy
Shown here is an aerial photo of three Sacramento communities at Mutual Housing.

Sacramento communities re-opening after major green rehab

Celebrate the green re-opening of three Sacramento communities on Thursday, April 9 from 10 a.m. to noon at Mutual Housing at the Greenway, 6311 Sampson Blvd.

The \$6.3 million rehabilitation also included Glen Ellen and Sky Park Mutual Housing Communities.

Purchased nearly 20 years ago, solar panels, rain gardens and drought-tolerant landscaping were added to the developments to make them not only greener and healthier for the residents, but to make the buildings more energy and water-efficient.

Piped from storm drains—and landscaped areas—rain gardens filter storm water to cleanse it before it goes into storm-drains.

To save water, the nonprofit developer Mutual Housing California also installed automatic shower head cut-offs and high-efficiency water heaters to supply hot water quickly to nearly 170 apartments in the communities.

Mutual Housing expects to receive a Build It Green certification from the Oakland nonprofit in a month.

Taking more than a year to complete, the rehabilitation was partially funded by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, the Sacramento City Council, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, NeighborWorks America, U.S. Bank and the Union Bank Foundation.

Founded in 1988, Mutual Housing California develops, operates and advocates for sustainable rental housing for the region's diverse households.

A member of NeighborWorks America—a congressionally chartered nonprofit that supports community development nationwide—Mutual Housing has more than 3,000 residents, nearly half of whom are children.

Through its focus on leadership, the nonprofit provides training and mentoring as well as educational programs, community-building activities and services for residents and neighbors.

For more information, go to www.mutualhousing.com.

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Land Park area Easter church services announced

The following are select Easter church services from the Land Park/Pocket area:

Parkside Community Church will hold a Palm Sunday service on March 29 at 10:30 a.m., a Maundy Thursday at 6:30 p.m. and an Easter service at 10:30 a.m., followed by an egg hunt. Additionally, there will be a Holy Humor Sunday on April 12 at 10:30 a.m. Parkside Community Church is located at 5700 South Land Park Dr.

Riverside Wesleyan is located at 6449 Riverside Blvd. For more information, visit rwcsac.org.

Saint Anthony Parish will hold Easter Sunday Masses at 8, 9:30, and 11:15 a.m. There also will be an Easter Vigil Mass at 8 p.m. Saint Anthony's is located at 660 Florin Road. For more information, call 428-5678.

Faith Presbyterian Church will hold a Maundy Thurs-

day Service on April 2 at 7 p.m., followed by a Good Friday Prayer Vigil on April 3. There will be a self-guided worship available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and a service of Healing and Wholeness at 7 p.m. Easter Sunday is April 5 and a Sunrise Service will be provided at 7 a.m., followed by traditional services at 9 and 11 a.m. Faith Presbyterian Church is located at 625 Florin Road. For more information, call 428-3439 or visit www.faithpresby.org

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SATURDAY, APRIL 4
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11:00 am — 1:00 pm

SUNDAY, APRIL 5
Easter Celebration Service
10:00 am

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Celebrate The Risen Lord

Faith Presbyterian Church

Maundy Thursday Service: April 2: 7pm

Good Friday Prayer Vigil: April 3:
Self Guided Worship 7am-7pm,
Service of Healing & Wholeness 7pm

Easter Sunday: April 5th: Sunrise service at 7am
Traditional services at 9am and 11am
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1pm - Reflection on the Seven Last Words of Jesus
2pm - Stations of the Cross
7pm - Liturgy of the Passion & Death of the Lord
- Holy Saturday, April 4: 8:30pm - Easter Vigil Service
- Easter Sunday, April 5: 8am, 9:30am & 11am Services

Join Us!

Palm Sunday - Palm Passion Worship - Sunday, March 29th, 11 a.m.

Good Friday Services - Friday, April 3rd, 6 p.m. A time of observing the Crucifixion of our Lord through Scripture

Easter Service - Sunday, April 5th, 11 a.m. Celebrating the Resurrection of Our Savior, Jesus Christ

Faith United Methodist Church, 3600 J Street (In East Sacramento)

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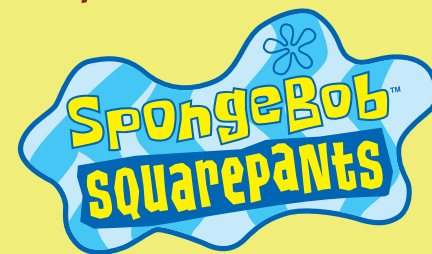
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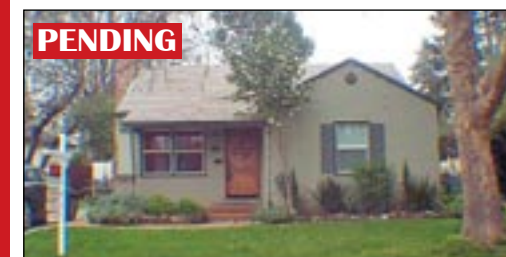
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Preaching "kindfulness" in Land Park to Sacramento Buddhists

By ALICIA DIENST

Sacramento Buddhist Meditation Group hosted a crowd of about 300 people to welcome unconventional Buddhist monk Ajahn Brahm on Thursday, Feb. 19, an event which was co-sponsored by the American Buddhist Seminary, Sacramento Insight Meditation. Brahm sat in a gold robe, flanked by eight monks on either side, all women. SBMG Board Member Helen Hobart greeted attendees and Brahm presented Hobart with his book, "Kindfulness" as a gift. Besides supporting gender equity in Buddhism, Brahm also stands out in his down-to-earth style. "There ya go," he said as he handed the book to Hobart.

Ajahn (a Thai language term meaning "teacher") Brahm defied a long standing prohibition of the ordination of women as Buddhist monks (known as bhikkunis) by arranging one for four women at a ceremony in Australia in 2009, the first such ceremony in the Thai Forest Tradition. As a result, he was expelled from his monastery in Thailand.

In a report he was to present to the United Nations, he argued for the inclusion of women in Buddhist monasteries saying that it was part of the Buddha's plan to do so and challenged Buddhists to lead their cultures in establishing women's rights. Brahm was invited by Vietnam to present this paper in May, 2013. However, at the last minute, an International Committee for the United Nations Day of Vesak stopped his presentation of the pre-approved paper.

Brahm lead the group in a 40-minute "noble silence," or meditation and then asked "What do you want me to talk about?"

When senior sangha member Terry Wenner said "Women," Brahm joked sarcastically, "I know all about women having been a monk for 40 years." He then talked about his follies going into the wrong bathrooms at airports.

When Brahm gave a more serious answer, he said that the Buddha taught that there should be four groups of followers of his teachings: monastic men (monks), monastic women (bhikkunis), lay men and lay women. He also explained that in Thailand monks are their own gender and that being a monk gives one the chance to stand outside of genders and get more understanding about relationships.

In his comments, Brahm explained "Mindfulness is not enough. Add kindness. It becomes kindness. He told a story of a wealthy woman who goes to a meditation and talk and tells a guard to be mindful because she feared the many burglars in the neighborhood would try to steal from her. She came home to find her home had been burgled and the guard said he mindfully saw the burglar going into the house and taking her things away. And so, Brahm, said, had the guard been kind, too, he would have stopped the thief from stealing the woman's things.

Brahm said that as a young man he went to Central America's Yucatan Peninsula in Guatemala and sought out the pyramid ruins alone. He walked a path through tunnels not seeing sunlight for days and then when he climbed the pyramid, he found a room in which he "could see infinity in all directions."



Ajahn Brahm

Photo courtesy

He said that to him, this journey gave him a spiritual version of "the Google map view, so you can see where you are so you can see how everything comes together." We need to find detachment, he said. "Take time out to figure out what the big world is all about. Trying to make sense out of it when you're right in the middle of it is really hard to do."

Brahm injected a great deal of kidding into his talk. He said there are too many different types of Buddhism. "So to get it all together," he said, "I've taken the H from Hinayana, and Aha from Mahayana, and the Yana from Vajrayana and

See Brahm, page 22

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DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE®



Parkside Community Church expands while promoting diversity within its mission statement

By MONICA STARK
 editor@valcomnews.com

The East African region has overcome incredible challenges to be where it is today. Now 24 children are traveling the world telling this story. The Asante Children's choir is made up of 24 very talented children ages 9-12. Most of the children in the choir are orphans. Some come from homes devastated by HIV/AIDS. The choir presentations are a great source of healing and encouragement for the children. The children perform in churches, schools, and other public places raising awareness about

the issues that Africa faces today and giving thanks for the great steps that have been made. — Asante

Traditional African worship music and folk songs with drumming and vibrant dance filled Land Park's Parkside Community Church on Saturday, Feb. 7 as the Asante Children's Choir from East Africa executed a joyous and moving performance.

Speaking about the group in an interview for the Land Park News, Parkside Community Church Pas-

See Parkside diversity, page 17



Photos by Monica Stark

Photo courtesy Elizabeth, Lilah and Seth make up a multi-faith family. Elizabeth Griswold is the pastor at Parkside Community Church in Land Park. Seth Castleman is a rabbi at B'nai Harim in Grass Valley. Their daughter Lilah is being raised Jewish. They live in a co-housing development in Davis.

(above left) Shown here are performers from the Asante children's choir, which performed at Parkside Community Church on Saturday, Feb. 7. (above right) Shown here are chaperones of the Asante children's choir.

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Parkside diversity:

Continued from page 16

tor Elizabeth Griswold said it would be wonderful if Asante returns next year. "They had so much energy and they were emissaries. Each one was representing other kids. They showed their talents, despite the struggles they go through back home, and they were really talented too. They were really good dancers and singers."

In the foyer of Parkside Community Church, Asante's chaperones displayed photos of children in need of financial assistance. Parkside parishioners Jenn Kunkle and Tracey LaPierre were at the Asante show and sponsored Ugandan child, Pavine Muwanguzi. Speaking about how they chose Pavine from the group of children to sponsor, Jenn said, "I chose him because I am a math teacher (at Sacramento Charter High School) and he said his favorite subject was math. Also, he lives in Uganda and I have a few friends from college who were from Uganda, so it's kind of a connection, I guess. And, who could resist that face? I'm so excited." Through out the year, Asante will send updated pictures and Jenn expects to receive letters from Pavine. "He can send letters, and I am looking forward to doing that as well."

Elizabeth showed appreciation for the sponsorships made by members of her congregation, stating: "Why make it a one day experience, but to have it ongoing and a lasting relationships with some of the children."

Elizabeth Griswold, who became the pastor in July 2013, previously was an associate pastor at Irvine United Congregational Church, UCC. Community involvement, youth programs and alternative worship were her top priorities in Irvine, where she launched a children's garden and composting program. Reflecting her social justice commitment, she helped her church toward becoming a Global Mission Church, and organized service trips to Guatemala and Mexico.

As an associate Pastor, Elizabeth was seeking to lead a congregation and her dream came true in Land Park. According to a statement provided by Elizabeth, "Parkside is a church where there is diversity in beliefs and backgrounds, yet unity in striving to love neighbors and God with our whole hearts, souls and minds."

Elizabeth said that perhaps her connection to youth is due to having a daughter of her own. During the Asante concert, Elizabeth kept looking at her little girl, Lilah, who hadn't turned 2 years old yet and noticed her daughter wanted to mimic the dancers. "She would do their movements and sing along. I was feeling this love for her and then I'd look back up to the front at the sanctuary and see these other kids dancing and feeling like how proud their own mothers and fathers and family members must be of them and what a sacrifice they are making. Some of these kids are orphans, too. But for the families back home and for the kids here to be away from their families for a month at a time, they are really serving their communities by being on this tour. And, so seeing them and their joy and what they are offering to all of us, was such a blessing. It's not just my own desire in terms of reaching out to children in need. The congregation actually went through a listening campaign and we found that in the Sacramento area, there's a need to have stronger programs with youth."

Parkside Community Church has also renewed its focus on youth ministries, providing social and emotional learning for socially disadvantaged kids in the public schools as well as offering volunteer opportunities with the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership food closet, which serves about 8,000 families in need of emergency food assistance.

Elizabeth, the former pastor at large for SSIP, said members of Parkside's congregation currently serve on the SSIP board and many volunteers run the food closet. "So, we're very active and engaged with the volunteering and donating of food, donating money

as well as serving educational outreach for healthy babies," Elizabeth said.

Elizabeth's devotion to diversity of beliefs is centered within her most personal daily life. Her husband, Seth Castleman is a rabbi at Congregation B'nai Harim in Grass Valley and works in the education department at Congregation Bet Haverim in Davis. The family of three resides in a co-housing development in Davis.

Speaking about the reaction she receives when people learn her husband is a rabbi, Elizabeth said, "The United Church of Christ is a very progressive, liberal denomination. I like to tease my more conservative friends that not only is my pastor a woman, she's married to a rabbi. (She says that) just to see people's reactions. Within the Church itself, they've been incredibly welcoming and accepting of me to preach, teach Sunday school and to teach lessons on Judaism. We see (Seth) as a real asset. In the Jewish world, it's been a little bit more difficult, which is understandable. Christianity is a much more dominant religious force in this community and this society, so it forces other religions to have to be a little bit more exclusive to maintain survival. So, it's pretty unheard of for a rabbi to be married to somebody not Jewish, and especially a Christian minister. We actually don't think there are any other couples like us. It can present some challenges, but not necessarily. We are choosing to raise our daughter Jewish and that was a decision we made very early on in our relationship. I personally have a real heart for Judaism and have loved it since a young age, way before I even met Seth. We both wanted (Lilah) to have one identity and one community she belonged to. Obviously, the Church loves her too, but it was more important to (Seth) that it be Judaism."

Within Parkside's denomination, United Church of Christ, there are more women than men pastors, so when asked what it's like being a female pastor, Elizabeth said, "I don't even think twice about it. I do notice that when I do introduce myself to some-

one, I think twice maybe because I am a woman or also because I'm 36 (years old); I'm not that young anymore, but people think that's very young and they're surprised that I'm the pastor."

"I do talk to friends of mine in seminary how different it is just in my generation. My mother is a registered nurse, but her career wasn't as much of a focus. And there's the privileges that I've had in terms of education, empowerment as a woman, in terms of my own relationship with my husband and how we pretty much do everything 50/50. He's also ordained as a clergy member. He's a rabbi, so we're an interfaith clergy family and also very dedicated raising our daughter together and sharing all of that work. I've never felt such incredible support."

Since Elizabeth became the pastor, the congregation has steadily grown to about 100 people who attend the weekly 10:30 a.m. Sunday service. Speaking about her time as the pastor at Parkside, she said, "It's been wonderful. We have a lot of things going on, meeting the needs of our church community and also the community, community. Some of the things that we've adopted since I've been here is the new tag-line and that's: 'Parkside Community Church: A caring community, pursuing justice, practicing diversity, and promoting spiritual journeys.' So, in everything we do, we try to live that out."

Of course hosting the Asante children fit in with the new "tag-line," as members of the church were excited not only to welcome the children, but also to pursue justice and support what they're doing in Uganda. "We were blessed with the richness of what the children brought us and to learn about spiritual journeys too — that people are on different paths. And the way that they are expressing their faith is a gift to our church too, to be able to learn from one another."

With the congregation's commitment to serve the community at large and by welcoming diversity, Parkside Community Church will undoubtedly continue its steady growth.

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Brahm:

Continued from page 15

now this becomes my tradition. It's my vehicle and it is the 'Hahayana.' Cause why not put a little bit of fun into Buddhism?"

Brahm said he deliberately makes playfulness part of what he teaches. "Take off the restraints and just explore. For goodness sake, don't follow your teachers. Find your own dharma. Don't imitate others."

Brahm really struck a chord with attendees who said they

appreciated his progressive take on Buddhism.

Shannon Martin, a new comer to SBMG said she found Brahm's lightheartedness refreshing. "I like his idea of play."

Jith Maganathan, an SBMG regular, said he enjoyed that Brahm's humor "was inextricably linked with teaching."

Rich Howard, a member of another group, said women's presence in Buddhism "is in the teachings so he's got a deep understanding, a historical perspective on Buddhism." He added that he thought Brahm "taught as the Buddha does," and that he "answered metaphysical questions without compromising science."

Brahm, who was educated as a physicist at Cambridge, said it's important to him to keep a "seamless" connection to science in his talks.

Nixa Schell, a senior SBMG member and member of the SBMG Board, said "He spoke to a wide variety of people."

She remembered a story he told about a teenager who told him there were zombies at his monastery. Schell said she realizes folks must look strange when they are doing walking meditation. "We probably seem like we're in a cult, just walking around blindly, but it's really about concentrating and being aware while you're walking."

Schell also appreciated his humility "He diverted attention away from what he's done."

"I was really touched and I could see the profiles of the nuns (from his monastery) and they were all very serene and 'reverential,' but he didn't require that. "I got the sense that he was uncomfortable with the attention on what he'd done," Schell said.

She added, "People were very generous (with donations) and he donated every bit of it to the cause."

She found "a discrepancy in his own lineage (regarding the unequal treatment of women)" and the Buddha's teaching that monastic women should be included in the tradition and he decided to "do the right thing."

Schell said Brahm noted that Buddhism was an oral tradition for some time and that the misogyny was written into the texts when teachings were put into writing.

Brahm said that other religions need to contribute to the work in order to continue to integrate women in to their traditions. He knew of a brave Catholic cardinal who ordained a woman at sea having found no mention of that act being illegal in cannon law. He said religious leaders should be activists. He said "It's their job to be a bit radical."



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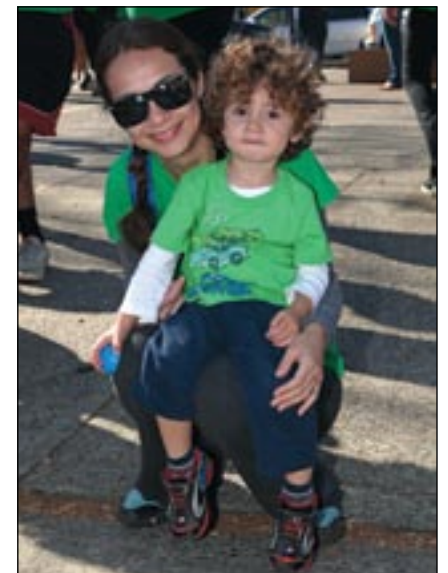
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Faces and Places: Donut Dash

Photos by STEPHEN CROWLEY
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The Seventh Annual Donut Dash, in support of Child Life Program at Sutter Children's Center, was held on Saturday, March 7. The four-mile race started and ended in William Land Park with Marie's Donuts as a turnaround spot, where runners got a bag of four doughnuts.





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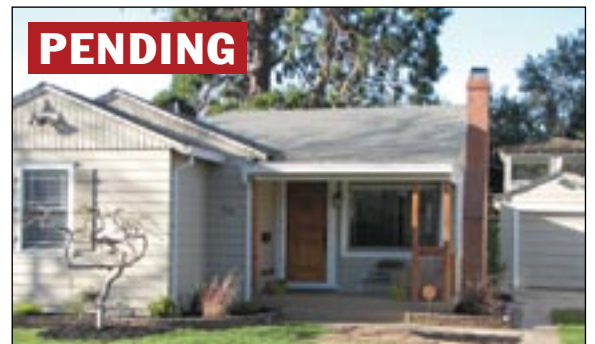
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