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BATHHOUSE ON BROADWAY

ASHA URBAN BATHS NOW OPEN

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Monica Stark
Courtesy

Parkside Community Church guards itself from LGBT hate group

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

After a hate group picketed First Christian Church in East Sacramento on Sunday, Oct. 23, Rev. Ted Firch reached out to other LGBT-welcoming churches in town, including Parkside Community Church in South Land Park, warning them they could be the next target. Using hostile, provocative, homophobic rhetoric much in the style of Westboro Baptist Church, the hate group carried signs stating "God hates fags," "You're going to hell" and yelled at the church people, attempting confrontation. Meanwhile, another member of the group reportedly stood at a distance recording the situation, which church people fear could possibly be used against them later.

When she got the call from Firch, Parkside Pastor Elizabeth Griswold relayed her sympathy and gratitude for the heads-up. Then, she began to wonder how to guard her church from a potential hate group picket. In the process of appointing and asking for volunteers from her congregation to be peace-makers, she's looking for those who have been trained in nonviolence – those who won't respond to the hate group, but who will stand their ground. "You don't want to get somebody else yelling back. (The hate group) – they're looking for confrontation."

Firch said his wife who is also ordained acted as a buffer with one of the church elders and she would go back and forth in the parking lot, monitoring the situation. At the end of the service, Firch suggested the church members go out a different door than what they usually use. "I said they're probably still going to be there and be sure to treat them with kindness, consideration and forgiveness. And our people let out a cheer and said 'alright.'"

Firch said when asked where they came from, the protesters refused to say. "They



were for awhile on the church property and this was distressing to our board chair." So the police were notified and upon arrival, Firch said the protesters were asked to step back to the alley for the rest of the protest. "There are no suspects and it doesn't matter to me. I did go online and check to see if it was from Westboro Baptist, but they had nothing about that date."

Griswold not only wants to expose their hateful rhetoric for what it is, she says the hate group is targeting churches that are safe places – a notion that can be turned on its head. "I have the optimism that the general public would condemn them and act a different way. In my mind these churches might be a safe place people would want to be a part of. There are churches that are standing up for love. We have communities that are diverse by sexual orientation, race, socioeconomic

See Church, page 4

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Bathhouse on Broadway: Asha Urban Baths now open

By PAT LYNCH

Sacramento may have finally made it with Cori Martinez's new first-of-its-kind-here business: Asha Urban Baths at 2415 27th Street. First, what truly puts a city on the urban-hip map? It's not the colossal downtown arena. Look at blighted Detroit: four arenas, each supposed to revive and restart the core. None worked. We trust that ours will do better, but the mammoth Golden One doesn't define urbanity the way the Asha bathhouse does. Neither does extensive Mac Mansion housing development. A city is marked by the variety, not the size, of its offerings.

Asha Urban baths, inspired in part the Russian Banya (where some participants would enter tubs of increasing warmth, then, heated to the core, exit to roll in the snow) caters to needs all people seem to have. These baths provide more than mere physical cleansing. They help the participant indulge himself or herself in an

almost ritualistic submerging of the physical body with a corresponding freeing of the mind. "I don't know if it soothes me or liberates me," stated Sheila Redd, a regular user. "I only know that it works." She noted that in the distant past Roman bathers believed so ardently in the healing properties of the waters that they would drink it, a custom that soon ceased as people became ill. "They finally figured out that what cleans your exterior is dangerous for your interior," Redd said. Otherwise, she noted, the baths "help people thrive."

Is Asha thriving in Sacramento? "We're doing wonderful business," stated April McGrath, manager of Ashra Yoga and part-time manager of the bathhouse. "We're a co-ed facility, swimming suits required. Some people bring their own towels, others use ours. But everyone comes out glowing." Do clients make specific comments when they leave? "Yes. They say they feel so refreshed."

Bathhouses of yore were often associated with mystical beliefs, adding a dollop of reverence to the experience. It originated with the Greeks who built bathhouses around springs and tidal pools that they believed were blessed by the gods. Romans baths were built on natural hot springs and many dedicated to Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. In England under Roman occupation, the baths started as hot spring shrines, dedicated to the goddess, Sulis. The Celtic polytheism of Britain believed in her as both a nurturing mother-goddess and an avenging deity who would right wrongs done to her worshippers. Recently in Bath, England, anthropologists unearthed famed "curse tablets" where irate bathers scratched messages to Sulis in Latin.

Sacramento's Asha bathhouse provides no curse tablets; instead it gives flip-flops and towels for those who don't bring their own, and promotes positive emotions: wellness,

well-being. "Grab your suit and join the revolution to slow down, live well, enjoy life," its website urges. There is no question that the bathing experience relieves tension, soothes achy muscles, and invites modern bathers to reflect peacefully upon issues that are probably not much different from the problems that perplexed the ancients. The Sacramento Asha claims to provide "a modern, cultural fusion of the old-world bathhouse—a center for healing and rejuvenation, a gathering place to restore wellbeing with heat and water."

The word, Asha, comes from a Zoroastrian concept meaning, in broad English translation, True Force, truth, righteousness, lawfulness, and moral order. This is something to contemplate perhaps as warm, soothing water slowly quiets your restless mind. McGrath observed that Asha patrons return, so it's safe to say that the waters have been tested, and found to be excellent.



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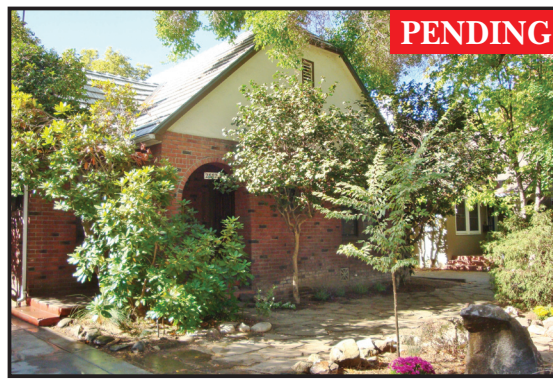
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Church:

Continued from page 2

standards and that's what the wider community is about."

Other local churches Firsch thought to call included Methodist churches and the three local United Church of Christ churches: Pioneer Congregational United Church of Christ, Sierra-Arden UCC and Parkside Community Church.

"There would be a handful of churches that are potentially welcoming and also Ted wondered if the hate groups used a website that talks about LGBT-welcoming churches. He wondered if they used that to find places to picket," Griswold said.

The following notion reads on the homepage for Pioneer, "Pioneer Congregational UCC is Open and Affirming, which means that we celebrate the diversity of our world, not discriminating based on gender, ethnicity, orientation, or abilities" and that the church "proclaims the love of Jesus Christ, the compassion that his love serves, and the humanity his love seeks to embrace."

As UCC churches, Griswold explained that to be able to proclaim being "open and affirming," individual church councils had to vote that they are in fact an "open space."

In terms of promoting their "open and affirming" atmosphere, Firsch said First Christian Church has information on their website and also on a gay church resource website. And perhaps most importantly, he said, "We say outright in worship that we welcome all to the Lord's table and all means all and we get pretty specific about who the all includes. There's still

a lot of misconception out that almost all churches are along the lines of what you see particularly in the Midwest (some in Sac) that there is judgmental hostile attitude with the interpretation of scripture. A lot of people outside the church are not willing to step inside, but that's just not the case anymore."

The congregation at Parkside has begun a youth-led youth group, for which Griswold intends it to be a welcoming place. "I think more than anything, moving into adolescence, I want them to know that this church is a safe place and they will be loved unconditionally, especially when they ask who they are, what their social orientation is. God is love. Everybody is welcome; we all stand for justice and church can be fun where they can eat tacos, eat pizza, watch movies. It's good clean fun and that sounds wonderful. And this is not top down. This is them telling our minister that this is what they want. There's money from the council put behind it."

With Thanksgiving coming up, Griswold said the church will embark on volunteer projects, including working with the South Sacramento Interfaith Partnership Food Closet, taking collections for WEAVE and Loaves and Fishes. Additionally, those interested in other opportunities can join weekly meetings.

Parkside Community Church is located at 5700 South Land Park Drive. For more information, call 421-0492 or email church.parkside@gmail.com. Services are Sundays at 10:30 a.m. and office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 to 5 p.m.; Fridays, 2 to 4 p.m. and Sundays 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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'Above the Fray':

Handwoven silks and textiles from Laos and Vietnam will be displayed at the Shepard Garden and Art Center

By **MONICA STARK**
 editor@valcomnews.com

Traveling to the remote hilltribe villages in Laos and Vietnam, Maren Beck and Josh Hirschstein of Eugene, Oregon-based Above the Fray personally select handwoven, naturally-dyed silks and other finely-woven textiles and other traditional craftwork directly from independent village artisans. Holding auditorium-sized public events where they showcase stunning handwoven silks, Maren and Josh will stop next at the Shepard Garden and Art Center (3300 McKinley Blvd.) on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 18, 19 and 20 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday for a show they've titled "Fine Silks and Tribal Art."

The event also includes models of silk and hemp looms, natural dye materials, and plenty of information about the ethnic groups, textile creation, and the role textiles and arts have played for centuries in these traditional cultures. An on-going slideshow featuring their own photos details the diverse people, including Tai Daeng, Hmong, Dzao, Lao Loum, Akha, Katu, Khamu and other ethnic groups. "We are eager to share the meaning of the art, the stories behind the artifacts, and details of our family's years of travel and relationship-building in the region," they stated in a press release.

Representing some of the finest, most intricate artistry in the world, the art includes handwoven, naturally-dyed silk shawls and scarves (from \$25 to \$1,000), handspun cotton and hand-embroidered hemp textiles, basketry, jewelry, vintage masks and ritual objects, used tools and more.

Their third annual event in Sacramento, Above the Fray chose the capital city to hold this event for a few reasons, Josh said. "One, it's a day's

drive from our home in Eugene (hence our other shows in Portland and the Seattle area). Two, Sacramento has an interesting and interested arts community, without all the hoopla and chaos of San Francisco. Three, it has the fortune of having a great (and affordable) venue for our event, The Shepard Garden and Art Center."

They have many hundreds of unique textiles (most are one-of-a-kind), as well as traditional jewelry (new and used), basketry, tools and ritual art (such as the shamanic "Mun" masks of the Dzao ethnic group of Vietnam). "We'll fill the 2,000 square feet of the Shepard Garden and Art Center with more in bins under the table," Josh added.

"All the silks and other items we sell have already been purchased, almost always directly from the artists, at fair-market cost in a strong effort by us and the local artists to strengthen and maintain their cultural identity in a dynamic world. We are passionate about supporting the artists, and their traditional methods, materials and processes for creating some of the world's finest art," he said.

While Maren grew up in a house full of looms and natural-dye materials and has a good working knowledge of the weaving arts, (She used to sew all of her own clothing and quilt too!), "in truth, when you see the precision of these silks and other textiles it is a little daunting to 'jump in' as a hobbyist. In Laos, most weavers begin to learn the art at about 6-7 years old... Our kids are now 23 and 20 years old (one a college grad, and the other currently at Bard College) and the years of immersion travel definitely shaped their characters and perspectives," Josh said.

Josh and Maren's love affair with Laos and its world class textiles began about 12 years ago while taking a "rug-



Dzao baby.

Photo courtesy

ged backpack vacation-adventure" with their teen sons during an extended winter break, Josh explained. "Despite the remoteness of the hilltribe villages, especially in Laos' Houaphon Province and Vietnam's Lao Cai Province, we discovered some incredible, highly-refined silk art traditions and skills – arts that have been in continuous production and of cultural significance for the people for

centuries (the silk art of the hilltribe ancestors goes back three to four thousand years). Further, fate played out that we meet local artists who have become very dear friends. The fact that we have befriended local translators has facilitated our depth of relationship and our knowledge of the tradition and art," Josh said.

In Vietnam, their primary fascination is with the traditional textiles of the Hmong

and Dzao (also called Yao or Mien) people of Lao Cai Province. Despite the availability of commercial materials from China, Josh explains that many of the Hmong and Dzao people are still raising their own hemp and cotton to weave their clothing fabrics, and then painstakingly hand embroidering and appliquéing their culturally identifying

See Fray, page 8



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Panama Pottery history began more than a century ago

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
Lance@valcomnews.com

Editor's Note: This is part three in a series about the longtime-operating Sacramento business, Panama Pottery.

Sacramento's historic business, Panama Pottery, at 4421 24th St. has a rich history dating back to its establishment in 1913.

But despite its grand past, many Sacramentans are unaware that the capital city is home to a pottery, let alone one with such a long history and even deeper roots, which date back to the 19th century.

But the business, which has survived major fires and the threat of closure, continues to add to a legacy that is famous among some people and unknown to others.

After progressing through its first 15 years, the business's original owner, Victor Axelson, returned to his native country of Sweden, and Andrew Anderson replaced him as the company's president.

Anderson had already established a history with the company at that time.

For instance, in 1922 he joined Axelson and Gustaf Johnson in filing for the business's articles of incorporation.

The area was certainly much less developed at that time. William Land Park was not yet built and Hughes Stadium was not even planned for the then-6-year-old campus of Sacramento Junior College – today's Sacramento City College.

A dark day in the business's history occurred on March 18, 1937 when Panama Pottery was destroyed by fire.

In its following day report, The Sacramento Bee noted that the fire burned for several hours and only a tall chimney and two large, brick kilns were left standing.

Another tragedy occurred on Jan. 18, 1945, when a fire of undetermined origin destroyed the rebuilt Panama Pottery.

The again rebuilt plant was on fire once more during the morning of Oct. 26, 1954.

The fire, which was caused by an overheated kiln, spread to the roof. But despite the damage, business was not interrupted.

Many people have contributed to the success of Panama Pottery, including the Indiana-born Noble Leonard, who bought the business in about the late 1940s.

Noble and his wife, Ouweta, operated Panama Pottery until 1954,

when they leased the business to a separate party who closed the plant after entering bankruptcy proceedings two years later.

The Leonards, who resided at 2381 20th Ave., came out of retirement to reopen the business in September 1956.

Noble died at the age of 64 on April 2, 1964, and his widow, Ouweta, maintained the operation of the business until her own death at the age of 74 on June 25, 1970.

Another notable name associated with Panama Pottery was Ramon Santos, who worked for the company for a short time in the late 1940s. He was rehired as a laborer for the company in 1958 and worked continuously for the business until becoming its owner in 1972.

Santos purchased Panama Pottery from Wells Fargo Bank, the executor of the estate, for \$100,000.

Under Santos' ownership, the business continued to fire handcrafted pottery made with red, American clay in its two beehive kilns.

An article in the March 31, 1998 edition of The Bee notes that at that time, the plant was producing about 30,000 pottery pieces a month "ranging from heavy, 24-inch bell pots to 1 1/2-inch standard clay pots." The pots

were stamped with the wording, "Panama Pottery, Made in U.S.A."

A resolution of the Sacramento City Council, issued on May 7, 1998, recognizes Panama Pottery and the then-69-year-old Santos.

The resolution notes: "Panama Pottery is one of five major pottery makers left in the United States, having turned out hundred (sic) of thousands of pieces of red clay pottery for more than eight decades.

"Panama Pottery operates out of a striking Titanic-shaped plant marked by a large vent stack towering above the buildings sitting on nearly two acres of land, which is wedged between 24th Street and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, south of Hughes Stadium."

The resolution also mentions that Santos and his wife, Arselia, were then seeking a buyer who would continue the operation of the business, which also gained notoriety for its more detailed artistic creations and pottery classes.

Santos ran Panama Pottery until September 2006, when it was sold to Dave DeCamilla.

In a well-documented story, with Panama Pottery on the verge of being closed prior to its 2013 centennial, Maria Vargas purchased the business in September 2012.

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Ripe for the picking:

Land Park resident rallies neighborhood association for participation with Harvest Sacramento

By **MONICA STARK**
editor@valcomnews.com

When life gives you lemons, shut up and eat your damn lemons - "The Physics of Being Dick" - 3rd Rock from the Sun

Or, give Harvest Sacramento a call. That's what Land Park resident Patricia Sturdevant did because there just wasn't any way she could eat all the citrus that fell from the three trees she had at the time: a tangerine, blood orange and Meyer lemon. Gleaning 180 pounds of fruit from her backyard, the Harvest Sacramento volunteers were "a happy crew," Patricia said. "They asked if I wanted any of the produce" before they took it away. "It's a win-win. I hated to see it go to waste and rodents are messy."

As the fruit attracts squirrels and rats that make unsightly messes in our yards

and patios and leave half eaten fruits on the trees, healthful produce could be put to good use feeding hungry people in our community. There are 245,000 food insecure residents in Sacramento County. That means 1 in 5 Sacramento adults and 1 in 4 children lack access to enough nutritionally adequate food for an active, healthy life.

Because of those reasons and her good experience with the Harvest Sacramento gleaners, Patricia, a member of the Land Park Community Association, has recommended the neighborhood group to form a committee, which she would be happy to co-chair, to oversee the project. "It would arrange for door hangers describing Harvest Sacramento, which Soil Born Farms will provide to us, to be widely distributed throughout Land Park in the fall by

students from McClatchy doing community service projects and by scout troops."

Patricia explained that McClatchy teacher Ellen Wong is excited to get students to volunteer for actual picking of fruit in January. "She'd like to have an actual 'McClatchy Day' where they can go to local backyards to Harvest Sacramento to pick and donate it."

Patricia said the LPCA has been "very enthusiastic and supportive. They see it as a win-win. It's helpful to residents who can't pick their own fruit. It's an attractive nuisance and (the gleaning) benefits the hungry."

How Donation Would Work: Everyone who wants to participate need only call Harvest Sacramento at (916) 572-6646 or go online, indicate how many trees are involved and what amount of produce they may contain,



Patricia Sturdevant.

and arrange a time for the volunteers to come and pick. Soil Born Farms provides training, ladders and other equipment needed for the picking, and also provides liability insurance for all of the volunteers. The link to Harvest Sacramento is <https://www.soilborn.org/index.php/food-access/harvest-sacramento/520-harvest-sacramento-tree-form.html>.

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Fray:

Continued from page 5

patterns on the cloth with silk to make their own clothing. "Many of our friends have an indigo dye pot constantly available in their homes, and teach their children how to raise fiber, weave, and dye the cloth to continue their traditional, culturally identifying clothing. We also buy traditional Hmong jewelry made by a Black Hmong friend," he said.

The silks of the Lao Loum and Tai Dae-ning people of NE Laos (Houaphon Province) have an intriguing tradition, as the cloths have been used as ethnic markers and as tools for healing for centuries. The complex motifs woven into the fabrics represent the stories and traditions of the people, and they can be used to "re-balance the spirits" of an individual (or even a rice field) to affect a spiritual healing. Although the region is modernizing quickly, there are still traditional shaman healers in this region who practice the art. The regional weaving artists have likewise organized themselves to continue the tradition and find new markets for their arts (such as Sacramento!).

Anyway, Maren and Josh love to explain the art processes, however, and have a model loom, video of weavers, and many of Above the Fray's photos, as well as several books discuss the people and their art to help audiences understand the complex process of making each type of textile. So be sure to catch them when they stop by the Shepard Art Garden Nov. 18-20.

They anticipate a book about their adventures to be released next August by Thrums Publication.

On the web: Dozens of stories about the people they've met on their travels accompanied with photos can be found on their blog at: <http://hilltribeart.com/wordpress/>.

If you go:

What: Above the Fray: Traditional Hilltribe Art presents "Fine Silks and Tribal Art"

When: Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 18, 19 and 20 from 10 am -5 pm Friday and Saturday, and 11 am - 4 pm on Sunday

Where: The Shepard Garden and Art Center in McKinley Park, (3300 McKinley Blvd).

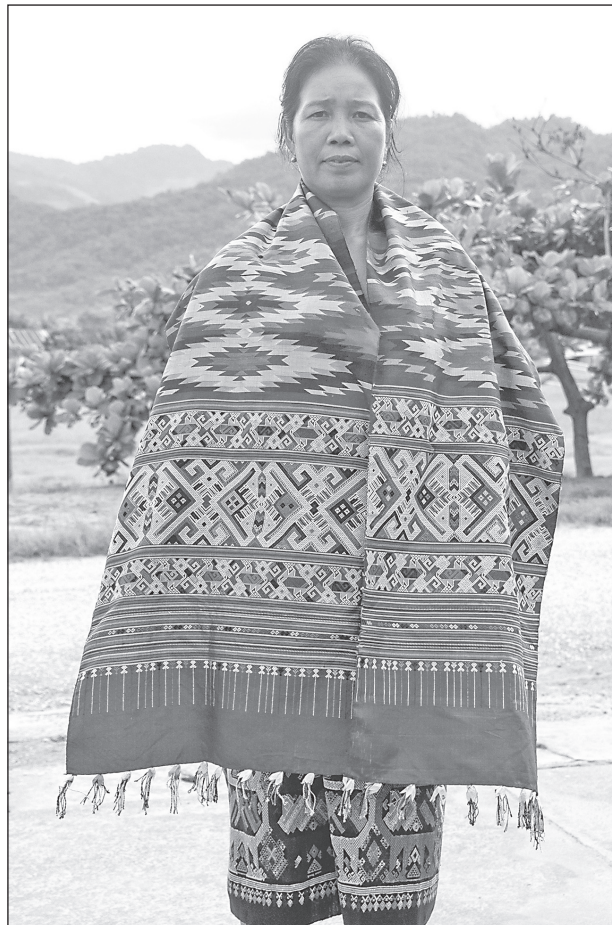


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Local Rotary Club's first blanket drive going on now

The Rotary Club of Pocket/Greenhaven is proud to announce the launch of its "1st Annual Blanket Drive" throughout the entire month of November 2016. The club thanks Pacific Workplaces (1104 Corporate Way), Cook Realty (4305 Freeport Blvd.), Public Safety Headquarters (5770 Freeport Blvd.) and the New City Hall (915 I St.) for providing public drop off locations for the donated blankets.

"As Sacramento's temperature drops to near freezing every winter season, we hope to provide a little warmth

and comfort to certain residents within our community," says club member Keiko Wong. The donated new or clean gently used blankets will benefit Moral Values Program & Homeless Outreach, My Sister's House (women & children shelter) as well as other organizations within our community. "The Rotary Club of Pocket/Greenhaven would like to thank our generous neighbors for your valuable support in this very worthy cause," states Wong. If you have any questions, call at Keiko Wong (916) 718-7400.



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Faces and Places:

Harvest Festival

Photos by **STEPHEN CROWLEY**
stephen@valcomnews.com

On Friday, Oct. 21 from 4 to 7 p.m. Matsuyama Elementary School held its annual harvest festival. A "cornucopia of fun" for the entire family, the festival featured arts and crafts, a pumpkin patch, a cake walk, dancing, and lots of delicious food. Funds raised by the Harvest Festival directly benefit Matsuyama teachers by providing much needed classroom supplies. Matsuyama is located at 7680 Windbridge Drive.



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Photos by MONICA STARK

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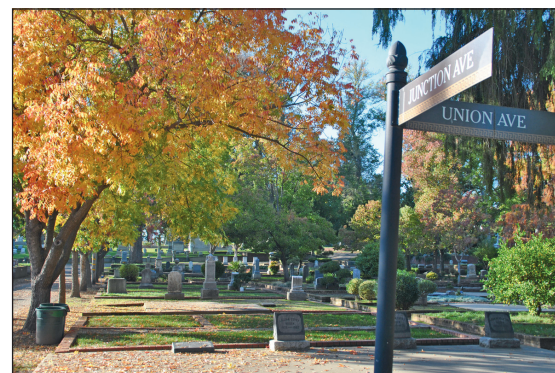
The cemetery is located at 1000 Broadway, Sacramento. There is ample free street parking on surrounding streets, with limited parking within the cemetery. For more information, call 448-0811.

If you go:

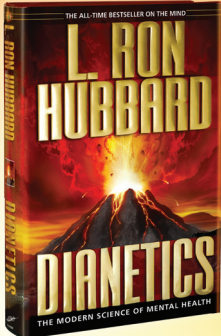
What: The Old City Cemetery Committee presents a seasonal tour of the cemetery's Historic Rose Garden and Hamilton Square Garden

When: Saturday, Nov. 19 – 10 a.m.

Where: Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, 1000 Broadway, Sacramento



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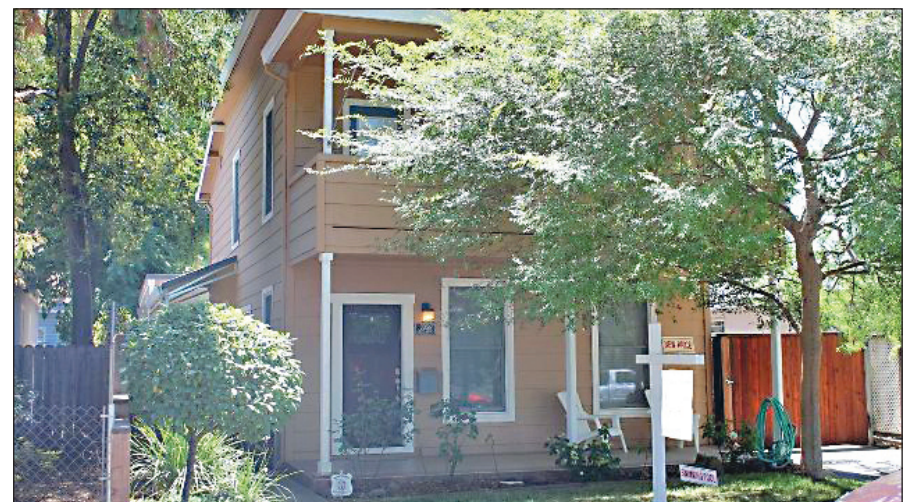
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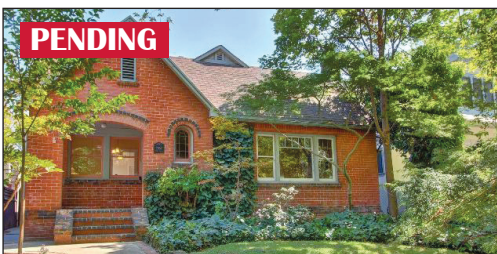


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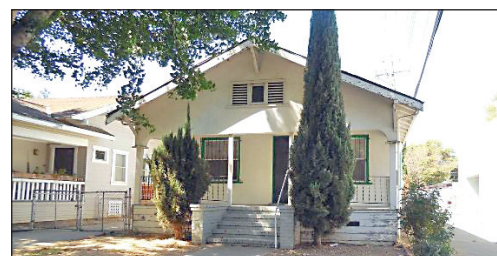
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Meet Bret Harte's new principal James Tucker

By MONICA STARK
editor@valcomnews.com

The new principal at Bret Harte Elementary School in Curtis Park, James Tucker, has big plans for the small K-6 neighborhood school.

An educator with the Sacramento City Unified School District for 14 years Tucker taught grades K-6 for most of his career and received his admin credential about seven years ago and held an interim position while his boss was on maternity leave. Three years ago, he was retrained as a Waldorf teacher and worked with the transition team to convert A.M. Winn Elementary into a Waldorf-inspired charter school.

A resident of Oak Park now for two years, Tucker got involved with the neighborhood association about one year ago and has been the community solutions event coordinator. Because of that position, he knew a lot of the Bret Harte parents from tabling at the Saturday Oak Park Farmers Market who told him of the

principal position that was going to become open this year.

"I moved to Oak Park because it was affordable and I ended up falling in love with the community once I got involved and I was just really drawn to work in the community. I was really drawn to Title 1 schools. I've had a lot of experience working with students with a diverse amount of needs."

The experience he had working to transform A.M. Winn into a Waldorf charter promises to be a useful skill as over time Bret Harte will transform into a Science Technology Engineering and Math school. The Waldorf model grows hands-on experience into abstract concepts -- a technique Tucker said will be useful as he grows the STEM curriculum at Bret Harte. Additionally, the socio-emotional component of Waldorf education will be incorporated with restorative justice practices as an example.

"There's buckets that I've bought with pickers, so in-

stead of kids sitting around when they are not following directions in class or if they've harmed the community, they're giving back to the community," he said, adding that there are beautification projects that neighbors are initiating. So as that starts unfolding, there will be community service projects tied to the restorative justice component, he explained.

In the very beginning phase of beautifying the corner of 9th Avenue and Franklin Boulevard, Tucker said currently they're taking out the grass next to the child development building. Meanwhile, neighbors are securing donation money for a drought tolerant area and the kids will weed it, water it and take care of it as part of restorative justice work. "That way we can give kids an opportunity to build their self esteem after they harm the community. I'm not drawn to a punitive model. All the consequences should be logical and if there's harm, there should be a way to make that up." This is a welcome change to Bret Harte.



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Sacramento City College held large centennial celebration, opened time capsule from 1991

By **MONICA STARK**
 editor@valcomnews.com

It was the moment the crowd had been waiting for. After a full day of events from live music in the performing arts center to free manicures and an art show, Sacramento City College students, faculty, alumni and visitors waited in anticipation on Saturday, Oct. 15 for college interim president Michael Poindexter to pry open a time capsule that had been buried beneath concrete for 25 years near the cafeteria.

But when Poindexter opened it up, the contents – a course catalog and class schedules – were water damaged and the audience let off sighs of disappointment. In a scurry, photographers with their big cameras rushed the scene to capture images of what used to be. There was no cassette tape of Nirvana's Nevermind, nor were there any mentions of popular films of the year like "Silence of the Lambs" or "The Addams Family". There wasn't even any mention of the new constitution for a multicultural society after years of Apartheid in South Africa. And yet, the audience was so disappointed by the water damaged SCC class schedules of 1991.

Because Poindexter mentioned that next spring the college will place a time capsule somewhere on campus, the Land Park News asked, "Well, what kind of stuff will be put inside?" He replied stating the same kinds of things -- a course catalog and the class schedules.



Photos by Monica Stark

(above left) Shown here is a copy of a book by Dr. Bill Doonan, professor of archaeology at SCC, called "A History of Sacramento City College in 100 Objects". The book showcases 100 objects that have been collected throughout the years and that reflect the rich history of the college. He published a book it as part of the college's centennial celebration. The book is available to purchase at the Kondos Gallery, the College Store and the SCC Foundation Office for \$25.

(above right) Shown here is the water-damaged contents of the time capsule that was opened at the centennial celebration on Saturday, Oct. 15 at SCC.

As a friend at a party said since then: For how many years has the college offered Spanish I?

What do you, dear reader, think should be put into the capsule? This article is being written on election day, so the results aren't in. But history could be in the making. If Hillary Clinton becomes president, should stories about her be in the capsule? She did, in fact, visit Sacramento City College during her campaign. Perhaps photos of her at the SCC rally?

Digression aside, there were many fun happenings at the open house and 100-year celebration, including free manicures.

Cosmetology department chair Marcia Bonawitz spoke with the LPN about the free offerings provided by her students. Bonawitz also discussed the changes in the department over the 16 years she's taught at SCC. "We've added so many things to keep up to date in the industry. We go on field trips, to shows, salons." Sharing a success story, Bonawitz said she recalls one manicuring student who came to class right out of high school. "Her par-

ents came in, her dad pulled me aside and said she's very flutery, very all over the place. She doesn't have focus. Hopefully, you can get her on the right path." When the student finished Bonawitz's program, she took the state board exam to get her license and was working in a salon as a manicurist before starting the cosmetology program. Within the first year, she had enough money to buy herself a car and her own cosmetic supplies. By the time

she finished the second semester, she had enough money to get herself an apartment just by doing manicures on the weekends and after school. By her third semester, she got the job of her dreams and became a success story. "I see her every once in awhile; her name is Michelle. She'll come back to visit. She loves the industry."

Perhaps success stories like Michelle's could be put into a time capsule. What do you think?

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Alone Together Again: Dave Mason at The Crest Theatre

By MARK HANZLIK
Special to
Valley Community Newspapers

I've been working on a musical bucket list of sorts the past few years, dropping in on more shows in clubs, mid-size theaters and larger venues in the area, longing to fulfill the dreams of a young man's sideline as a rock/pop music critic. I'm hoping to catch a favorite band or musician that I've wanted to see for many years but never seem to make the effort required. This is not to say that I don't follow current styles, and enjoy discovering new music, but there's something about reliving a bit of your musical past that brings with it a sense of satisfaction or at the very least accomplishment.

The downside of chasing aging musical heroes is their physical viability as live performers. Familiar voices weaken and crack, and as nimble fingers become more measured and deliberate, some of the energy of what was once fresh is no longer present. It takes a fair amount of courage or financial need for a musician to mount a tour after decades of performing. I assume most musicians at this stage are not taking to the

road on a lark, and often fans are there to see if they can still deliver the goods. I'll admit I'm usually one of the doubtful followers.

Some musicians I've already checked off my list over the past few years, who performed in varying degrees of success: Bruce Hornsby, Paul McCartney, Richard Thompson, Hot Tuna, Rita Coolidge, Nick Lowe, Irma Thomas, Dr. John, and Geoff Muldaur

Add to that list, Dave Mason who appears at the Crest Theatre December 4. I'll be there to take another trip back in time, to see if he's still got some chops. The last time I listened to his music was in 1974 concert at Memorial Auditorium, but little of that memory remains other than the newspaper review I wrote.

Today my curiosity in seeing Mason, founding member of Traffic in the 60's and five decade solo artist after all these years was sparked simply by his tour title *Alone Together Again*. From his classic first solo album *Alone Together*, Mason brought to life all eight songs for this limited engagement tour along with other hits in his canon. Some of those hits include "Feelin' Alright" from Traf-

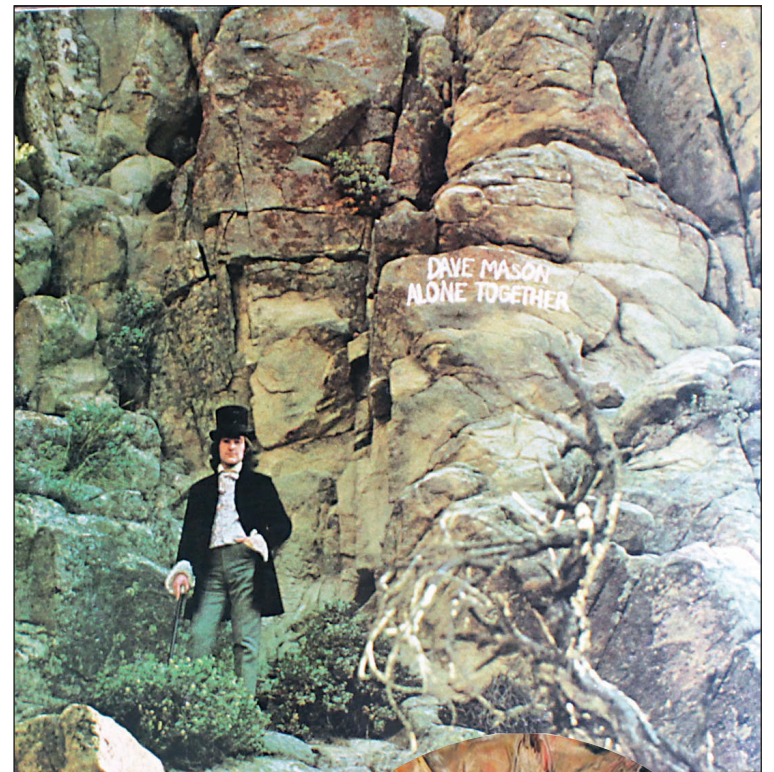
fic, "We Just Disagree", "Only You Know and I Know" and an iconic cover of Dylan's "All Along the Watchtower".

Even though I've only nominally followed Mason's career for the past 40 years, the throwback to this 1970 record brings back vivid memories that prefaced years I spent "hounding rock stars for that break with *Rolling Stone* that would never happen."

In the summer of 1970, my brother added *Alone Together* to his record collection (a collection I sampled often) and it wasn't long before the album became a favorite of mine. We had one of the original marble vinyl records that provided a bit of amusement spinning on the turntable, and a unique cover that was a tri-fold with a die-cut image of Mason in a top hat perched on rocky backdrop.

The music between those marble grooves was mostly love songs, all pleasantly crafted with enough of an edge provided by Mason's masterful electric guitar. It was an introduction of sorts for many listeners to a sound and song craft that would serve Mason well for years though to this listener his guitar licks despite their familiarity, proved to be the one gift that kept giving (much more than his forced songwriting.)

Alone Together contained some of Mason best material, "Only You Know and I Know" also a hit for Delaney & Bonnie, "Look at You Look at Me," "Just a Song" and "Shouldn't Have Taken More Than You Gave,"



a wah-wah guitar-dominated piece that highlighted Mason's vocal and instrumental talents.

The all-star personnel contributing to the album helped boost its cred with music critics and broaden its appeal. Leon Russell, and Delaney & Bonnie band members formed the nucleus of the group in addition to a number of session players. Even the drum kit position attracted some of the rock's top drummers with three Jim's (Keltner, Capaldi and Gordon). Backing vocalists Bonnie Bramlett, Claudia Lennear (*20 feet from Stardom*), and Rita Coolidge (guilty pleasure bucket list) provided the harmonies needed to balance Mason's reedy vocals.

The results on *Alone Together* were much greater than the parts; an agreeable collection of tunes; solid studio performances; and creative packaging.

I recently listened to the album from start-to-finish for the first time in years. It immediately transported me back to that summer with my brother and I sharing a room and record collection briefly before he moved out and our lives began to change in many ways.

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KZAP memories remain strong for station's former listeners

By LANCE ARMSTRONG
Lance@valcomnews.com

Editor's Note: This is part eight in a series about the history of radio station KZAP 98.5 FM.

Nearly a quarter century has passed since listeners of 98.5 FM learned that this legendary Sacramento radio station was replaced with a country music station. But many of KZAP's former listeners continue to reminisce about the station.

Bud Gordon

Bud Gordon fondly recalled the early years of KZAP when it operated as a free-form FM radio station.

"Of course, KZAP was groundbreaking," he said. "(Free-form) was just a real good format, and a nice departure from the AM (stations) that we were listening to in the 1960s.

"All my friends and myself, we were all listening to the popular music of the day and it was all AM. We were used to the commercials and the loud noise and all that chatter and then all of a sudden FM came on with KZAP and it was just really quiet, calm and great music. It was a life changer."

Gordon also said that the station's DJs were very memorable.

"And, of course, you can remember the DJs," he said. "They were very good and I think some of them are still working today for other stations.

"There was a female DJ, one of the first female DJs that I had heard," he said. "Helen Meline was her name. This was the early 1970s and I remember that was really refreshing to hear a woman DJ, and she was quite good."

Although Meline left KZAP in the 1970s, she returned to work at the station in the early 1980s.

Donna (Wetterer) Pane

Among the people who attended KZAP's first birthday party in Cal Expo's Building A on Friday night, Nov. 21, 1969 was Donna (Wetterer) Pane.

Performing at the event was the headlining San Francisco band, the Grateful Dead, as well as A.B. Skhy, Command-

er Cody, Country Weather and Wildwood. And a light show accompanying the music was presented by Rainbow Jam.

Individual tickets for the show were available for \$3.50 in advance at Tower Records, Tower Books, directly from KZAP in the Elks Building and other locations, or at the door for \$4.

Pane, who was one of KZAP's earliest listeners and visitors of the station, said that a unique part of the event was the presence of a giant birthday cake, which was shared with the audience members.

"They passed out birthday cake there, I know it," she said. "I ended up with a box and I was passing it out."

Pane added that Bonnie Gillespie, one of her former Foothill High School Class of 1969 classmates, also attended the event.

Mick Martin

The well-known, local musician and disc jockey Mick Martin recalled an unusual moment in KZAP's history when he was listening to the continuous crackling noise of a record that had finished being played 20 minutes earlier.

"This (crackling noise) goes on for 20 minutes, so I hopped into my car and I drove down to the station and everybody in the studio was on the floor and they were playing Captain Beefheart's (album), 'Trout Mask Replica,' which was one of those four albums if you had to use the men's room, for example, you would put that on.

(A DJ said), 'Mick, can you turn the record back? Just put the needle at the beginning.' So, I sat down and played some different songs. But it was like if somebody didn't do it, nobody was going to do it, because everybody there had smoked too much fun."

Martin said that incident occurred during the early years of KZAP when "all the disc jockeys were really celebrities."

Those disc jockeys, he added, included Jeff Hughson, Fred Gaines, Cary Nosler and Charlie Weiss.

Pat Melarkey

Pat Melarkey, who served as a Sacramento County su-

pervisor from 1972 to 1978, recalled being a guest on KZAP.

"I was on there two or three times," he said. "I would talk about county planning and (more). They were very active in local stuff like that. All the other political people, they were on, too. I would say I was on (KZAP) in 1974 or 1975. (KZAP) was very popular."

Bob Gorham

Bob Gorham remembered growing up listening to KZAP.

"I remember all the disc jockeys, all the music," he said. "It was just a great station. It was one of the first stations where you could actually hear the whole album. There was the Grateful Dead, a lot of the music that was coming out of San Francisco.

"I remember it was the first time you could hear the Grateful Dead music live and discussions about it. I enjoyed the Dead, Quicksilver (Messenger Service), Jefferson Airplane, all the great stuff.

"I remember people would call in (to the station) and ask the disc jockeys, 'Can you play this?' And they would say, 'No,' and hang up on them. It was rude, but it was just sort of great."

Gorham also shared his memories of KZAP's Chan Laughlan (1937-2012), who worked for the station from 1968 to 1978 and was known on the air as Travus T. Hipp.

"I enjoyed all the music, but Sunday nights, Travis T. Hipp was on for three hours at least," he said. "He would do interviews with people. I remember when he had Bob Matsui on and Vic Fazio on. This was at the time when Bob Matsui was going to run for City Council. They were very good interviews. He would get them going and everything."

An article by Ted Bell in the Jan. 5, 1998 edition of The Sacramento Bee notes: "(Hipp) was, and is, a newsman and commentator cut from the same radical mold of the 1960s with people such as Hunter S. Thompson. He was one of the Roman candles of the 'underground' broadcasting movement that barely exists anymore, but was alive and exploding in Sacramento on KZAP back then."

Tim Hunter

While growing up in Folsom in the 1970s and 1980s, Tim Hunter listened to KZAP.

Among his favorite KZAP DJs were Bob "The Godfather" Galli, Kevin "Boom Boom" Anderson, and Bob Keller, who hosted his noon-time show, the Café Rock on the station. That show continues today on KSEG 96.9 FM, "the Eagle."

Hunter described the old KZAP bumper stickers with their iconic cat image as a sort of currency of his childhood.

"It was like social status to collect KZAP stickers and if you had more than 20 of them, you were like God; you ruled the playground," he said. "They were like trading stock. You could trade them for steelies, you could trade them for marbles, you could trade them for knockers – those big, kind of urethane plastic things that we used to play marbles with.

"I had like 100 (KZAP stickers). There was a pizza place in Folsom and they handed them out every time you bought a pizza and I coerced my parents into going into this pizza place over and over and over. At first you could grab a stack of KZAP stickers before they cracked down on you. And oddly enough, they had great pizza, too. So, it was just a win, win."

K-ZAP 93.3 FM

Gorham, who also recalled listening to KZAP's May Brussels and Cary Nossler, said that he enjoys listening to the 1-year-old, low-powered radio station, K-ZAP 93.3 FM, which includes DJs who worked at KZAP 98.5 FM.

"I enjoy (K-ZAP)," he said. "I get it here in the Pocket in one room and I can't get it anywhere else in the house. It brings back a lot of memories just listening to the music and the stories."

Today's K-ZAP can also be heard through the internet at k-zap.org.



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THURSDAY, NOV. 10

TODDLER STORYTIME AT BELLE COOLEEDGE LIBRARY: From 9:30 to 10:30 a.m., toddlers and their caregivers will enjoy fun songs, stories, and fingerplays. After the storytime, there will have a stay and play group or a simple craft. To ensure that storytime is a positive experience for all, attendance is limited to 40 children (they can bring as many adults as they want!).

PRESCHOOL STORYTIME AT BELLE COOLEEDGE LIBRARY: From 11 a.m. to noon, join the library for fun songs, stories, fingerplays and a craft or play activity, all designed to build early literacy skills.

TEEN SPACE AT BELLE COOLEEDGE LIBRARY: From 3 to 5 p.m., join other area teens in the community room for after school Teen Space! Hang out, geek out and mess around with friends and snacks! Seriously, what could be better? Ages 12 to 18.

JOB COACH AT BELLE COOLEEDGE LIBRARY: From 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., the library's job coach will help you look for jobs, get an email address, create and upload a resume, and prepare for an interview. No appointment required., 5600 South Land Park Drive.

YOGA: GO WITH THE FLOW AT TWO RIVERS CIDER: Yoga Class and a Full Glass at 7 pm! 45 minutes of Vinyasa Flow paired with a glass of cider. \$15. Thursday at 7 to 8 p.m. Two Rivers Cider Company, 4311 Attawa Ave, Ste 103, Sacramento, California 95822.

SATURDAY, NOV. 12

PURPLESTRIDE SACRAMENTO 5K RUN AND 1-MILE FAMILY FRIENDLY WALK. Enjoy a day filled with children's activities, music, refreshments,

ShopPurple store, and more. The event raises awareness for pancreatic cancer. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.; opening ceremony at 10 a.m.; event begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a closing ceremony at noon. William Land Park: Corner of Freeport Boulevard and Sutterville Road

SING ALONG WITH MISTER COOPER AT BELLE COOLEEDGE LIBRARY: From 11 to 11:30 a.m., join neighborhood favorite Mister Cooper for 30 minutes of music time and freeze dancing for ages 3 to 7 years at the library, 5600 South Land Park Drive.

COMMUNITY DAY AT THE SACRAMENTO ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND: From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Fairytale Town presents an all ages day of play at the Sacramento Adventure Playground! Children get to create their own play structures and spaces by re-purposing everyday items such as cardboard boxes, plus household wares, natural elements and unexpected items. The Playground is a fun and safe environment where children can use their imagination and creativity to direct their own play! Community Days also feature special activities and craft projects. Families are requested to wear closed-toe shoes and clothes that can get messy. The event will take place rain or shine. Featured activities include: Box forts, mud play and slide, sand play, bike riding (bring your bike and helmet!), craft projects, bubbles, painting. For more information about the Sacramento Adventure Playground, visit <https://sacadventureplay.org/>. While the Sacramento Adventure Playground's regular operating hours are designed for ages 7-15, the Playground opens up for children of all ages to come and play on Community Days. Advance registration is not required. Community Days are held on the second Saturday of the month (except December and January) from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sacramento Adventure Playground, 3301 37th Ave.

RECLAMARE GROUP ART SHOW: Reclamare Gallery & Custom Tattoo will hold a Second Saturday art show free and open to the public that will feature fine art and prints from some of the best tattoo artists in the greater Sacramento area. Small bites and drinks provided by Localis, Kru, and Burly Beverages. 6 to 10 p.m. Reclamare Gallery & Custom Tattoo, 2737 Riverside Blvd.

THURSDAY, NOV. 17

TWEEN BOOK CLUB AT BELLE COOLEEDGE LIBRARY: Club meets from 4 to 5 p.m. Are you a reader between around 9 - 12 years old, enjoy snacking, crafting and talking about a book with readers your age? Then the Belle Cooleedge Tween Book Club is THE place for you. Snacks will be provided. This program is designed for readers between the ages of around 9 - 12.

TUESDAY, NOV. 22

CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO DISCUSS FREEPORT BLVD. RALEY'S: Mark your calendars for Tuesday, November 22 at 6:00pm (City Council Chambers, 915 I St.). The City Council will be voting whether or not to approve the Raley's Development Project aka "The Park" at the former Capital Nursery site. Public comment is welcome and must be 2 min. or fewer. LPCA has yet to take an official position on the SHRA project, but is planning to hold a community forum, hopefully in January. You are welcome to contact the LPCA Land Use Committee Chair, Steve Walker, at landuse@landpark.org for more info.

ONGOING

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OFF THE GRID FOOD TRUCK AND MUSIC EVERY THURSDAY: Off the Grid is partnering with the Sacramento Zoo for a weekly food truck and music event every Thursday from 5-9 p.m. Mark your calendars for this fun, family-friendly event on 15th Avenue near Land Park Drive! <https://offthegrid.com/>

SAC ZOO HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE: Daily November and December from 10 am to 4 pm. During the holiday season bring a non-perishable food item when you visit the Zoo and receive \$1 off your Zoo admission! The Zoo will raise donations for River City Food Bank with your support. The Zoo is proud to partner with an organization that makes such an impact on our community. River City Food Bank is the oldest, continuously serving food bank in Sacramento and the only Sacramento-area food bank open every week day to anyone experiencing hunger from anywhere in Sacramento County.

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See Events, page 21

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Events:

Continued from page 20

cal and well-known compositions that include Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" (from the Messiah), Amazing Grace, and Sousa's Stars and Stripes. This is a grand event for instrumentalists, vocalists, or spectators alike, as the Symphony of 2000 makes Sacramento history again. Tickets: \$25 participation fee for instrumentalists and vocalists. Participants register online at www.sacramentoyouthsymphony.org/symphony-of-2000. General Admission \$20, Tickets available at Community Center Theater Box Office or at <http://www.sacramentocommunitycentertheater.com/Events>. More details are as follows: Sunday, Nov. 20 at 4 p.m. at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium, 1515 J St. Contact: Sacramento Youth Symphony, Vicki Schaevitz, vicki@sacramentoyouthsymphony.org or at 731-5777.

LIBRARY WAREHOUSE BOOKSALE: Looking for a hard-to-find book as a Christmas present for someone? You just might find it among the more than 100,000 "gently used" books at the Saturday December 3 book warehouse sale of the Friends of the Sacramento Public Library. A few videos and audio books are also available. Prices range from fifty cents to \$2. Sale hours on Saturday will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a preview on Friday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for Friends members only (You can join at the door for \$15). The warehouse is at the rear of the Friends' "Book Den" store at Suite E, 8250 Belvedere Avenue, just south of 14th Ave. between Power Inn Rd. and Florin-Perkins Rd. Plenty of parking is available, but visitors should be careful not to park between the "No Parking" signs on the south side of Belvedere. Income from the sale helps pay for programs, equipment, and materials local libraries need but can't afford. With more books constantly needed for their ever-changing inventory, the Friends will be glad to have your spare books, too. See a staff member on how to donate and perhaps earn a small tax write-off as well. The book store will also be open during the sale as well as weekly on Thursdays 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Items there are priced from \$1 up. Gift coupons — great presents for those "who have everything" — are available at the Book Den. For more information, call (916) 731-8493 or go to book-den@saclibfriends.org.

BEST BETS



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Mister Cooper's new track makes the big leagues: Pandora!

By MONICA STARK

South Land Park's very own children's musician Ken Cooper, aka Mister Cooper, had to make up something, he said. So, he did it himself. It's a DIY 10-track album called "The Colors of Us." True to name the title track speaks on multiculturalism and the importance of unity while maintaining one's unique identity. And, like many of the musician's songs, this one has a humorous twist at the end.

The album, unlike many of his others, is just Mister Cooper on guitar and vocals. There's no back-up band - no extra singers or banjo. But apparently, Pandora picked up track 2: "Look at that Cat." On his website now, mistercooper.com, folks interested in the music can take a listen. It's about

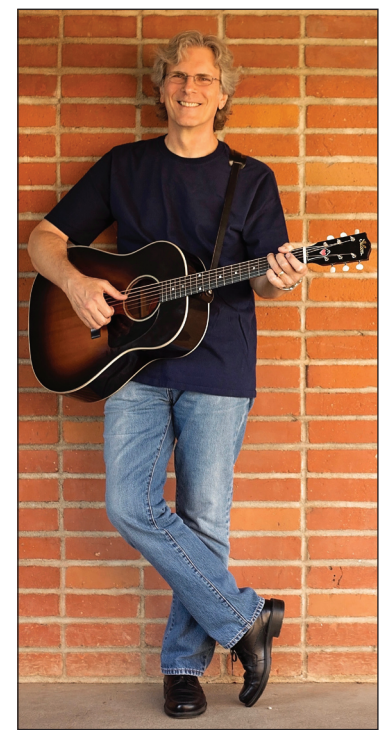
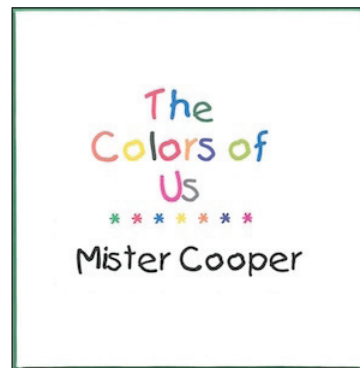
his furry and fat cat Macy Gracy who drives him nuts. "I figured if I wrote a song about her, I'd get a laugh out of all the frustration. It's working... so far," he says.

Lyrics of "Look at that Cat" are, as follows:

Look at that cat, look at that cat
 She's lying like a rug, flat on her back
 Look at that cat, look at that cat
 She's always under my feet
 Begging for more to eat
 She's furry and she's fat
 Look at that cat, look at that cat
 My cat's a tortie tiger
 I'll tell you what that means
 She has got more catitude
 Than you've ever seen
 She sleeps all day, up all night
 Bouncing off the walls
 I'm lucky I get any sleep at all
 There's shredded toilet paper

On the bathroom floor
 But I don't know how I could ever love her more
 Look at that cat, look at that cat
 Once I caught her curled up
 In the kitchen sink
 She likes to lick the faucet
 When she wants a drink
 She makes the weirdest noises
 When she's lost control
 She thinks my leg is her scratching pole

Born on May 6, 2007, 9-year-old Macy can be described as "a scaredy cat who doesn't like too much light or too much noise and doesn't like to be held, doesn't like to be petted. She sleeps all day and is up all night." But Mister Cooper loves her. Poor Macy has had a little medical difficulty lately but she's feeling better now and Mister Cooper sings the song at local libraries. While supplies last, his current CD is a "\$5 no holler". I guess he figures he can't charge too



much since it's just him and a hand-held digital recorder, an album he produced in just about two days.

You can catch Mister Cooper at live library shows, where you can purchase this affordable gift idea for those kiddos in your life. Oh, and an added bonus with this Mister Cooper album, you get his autograph!

Upcoming Events

Colonial Heights Sing-Along Club on November 10 at 10:00 am - 10:30 am
 Belle Coledge Sing-Along Club on November 12 at 11:00 am - 11:30 pm
 Colonial Heights Sing-Along Club on November 17 at 10:00 am - 10:30 am
 Belle Coledge Sing-Along Club on November 19 at 11:00 am - 11:30 am
 Belle Coledge Sing-Along Club on November 26 at 11:00 am - 11:30 am

For more information, visit mistercooper.com.

If you can't make it to a library show, or your youngster doesn't sing with Mister Cooper at school, you can now order online by visiting <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/mistercooper7>. You can also listen to samples of all the songs. Please beware of shipping and handling charges. Digital downloads are also available from iTunes, Amazon, and everywhere.

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Matias Bombal's Hollywood

HACKSAW RIDGE

The MPAA has rated this R

Summit Pictures brings us "Hacksaw Ridge," Mel Gibson's latest directorial effort, about one of the great heroes of the United States during the second world war, Desmond T. Doss, who, when serving his country on the treacherous battlefield of Okinawa, never fired a single shot. The combat medic was a conscientious objector, which put him at odds with the men he was training with to fight.

Andrew Garfield sheds his Spiderman suit and into a meaty role as Doss. His fellow soldiers find it hard to believe that he will not even as so much touch a gun in his training and they seriously doubt his effectiveness in combat, but he remains steadfast in his profound belief that he, himself, must not kill. The story begins much earlier, with young Doss and his brother scrapping about the humble family home, where his alcoholic father, who had severed in the great war, is played by the talented actor Hugo Weaving. Weaving masters a very good Midwestern accent in his excellent performance.

There are many Australians in the picture, which was in fact, photographed entirely down under. Every now and then an actor's accent slips into the dialogue. A state-side actor in the cast is Vince Vaughn as Sergeant Howell and in the bloodiest of Okinawa battle zones, the titular Hacksaw Ridge, we see Doss's bravery again and again as he drags men to safety, including his sergeant.

There are many intense scenes of battle in the picture, quite graphic, yet the battles are only approximately twenty-five percent of the screen time, for much of the story plays before the arrival to Okinawa, allowing plenty of time for excellent character development. This is, of course, yet another film on Hollywood's mad craze of true story telling, with this script adapted from the pages of the history of Doss's real life. The real Doss is actually seen and heard just before the credits roll in archival footage and in interview. Although the battle scenes are harsh, this movie and excellent cast are well worth your time at the movies. Also in the cast: Rachel Griffiths as Doss's mother, Bertha, Teresa Palmer, Sam Worthington and Milo Gib-



Benedict Cumberbatch is Doctor Strange. Photo: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures/ Marvel Studios

son. Braced for battle scenes, this is one you should see.

DOCTOR STRANGE (2016)

The MPAA has rated this PG-13

Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures and Marvel Studios bring us "Doctor Strange," presented as an IMAX presentation in IMAX Theatres in 3-D and in regular engagements, but this is just the kind of movie for which IMAX and 3-D are experienced at maximum effect and really is the way you should see this attraction. From the pages of the Marvel comic book comes the screen visualization of the adventures of Doctor Stephen Strange, penned into a screenplay by Jon Spaihts, Scott Derrickson and C. Robert Cargill.

The self-absorbed and somewhat unlikable Dr. Strange, played by Benedict Cumberbatch, is oh-so-sure of himself as the medical and surgical genius of the age. This, whilst his work mates such as Dr. Nicodemus West played by Michael Stuhlbarg and Dr. Christine Palmer, an on again-off again love interest played by Rachel McAdams, recoil at his ego-driven smarminess. The turning point comes when the Doctor defies death in a spectacular texting whilst driving accident. His hand reconstruction takes away the ability to work effectively as a surgeon, even with multiple surgeries by the best specialist on the globe. His funds exhausted and his drive increased to heal, he finds a case of a complete nerve recovery Jonathan Pangborn, played by Benjamin Bratt. On meeting Pangborn he's led to seek a master to assist with different kind of recovery, not that of the world of medicine, but that of mystic arts.

Tilda Swinton delivers one of her delightfully quirky perfor-

mances as "The Ancient One" a master sorceress who finds abilities in the strange doctor that make him worthy of tutelage. From this moment on, the story delves in to the magical world of sorcery and effects, fantastically rendered and delightful to watch as bad and evil forces that engage with Doctor Strange need not worry about good writing or further character development. This is primarily because anything can... and does happen. Just as the doctor gets into a jam, presto! You can have some new magic whisk him out of it!

Actor Mads Mikkelsen plays Kacilius, the big antagonist out to destroy the good doctor and all sorcery other than his own across myriad dimensions. His voice sounds so much like that of classic Hollywood actor George Macready that I could not stop thinking about it the similarity of it.

The movie itself is all eye candy. Yet that is perfectly OK, because I had great fun watching it. Somehow, it is so much easier to suspend disbelief if the world depicted is so far from reality that the normal earth-bound rules of this dimension do not apply. I am very fond of both Rachel McAdams and Michael Stuhlbarg and found them greatly underused in the movie, almost wasted, which with their talents, seems criminal.

Thus, this is not a great movie, or even a memorable one, but I did have fun watching it and that is a value that should not be underestimated when choosing a movie to enjoy in the magnificence of an IMAX presentation. I think you'll have as much fun as I did. For you Marvel fans out there are two scenes during the final credit crawl, so you want to stay in the theatre till the lights come up or the curtain closes across the screen.



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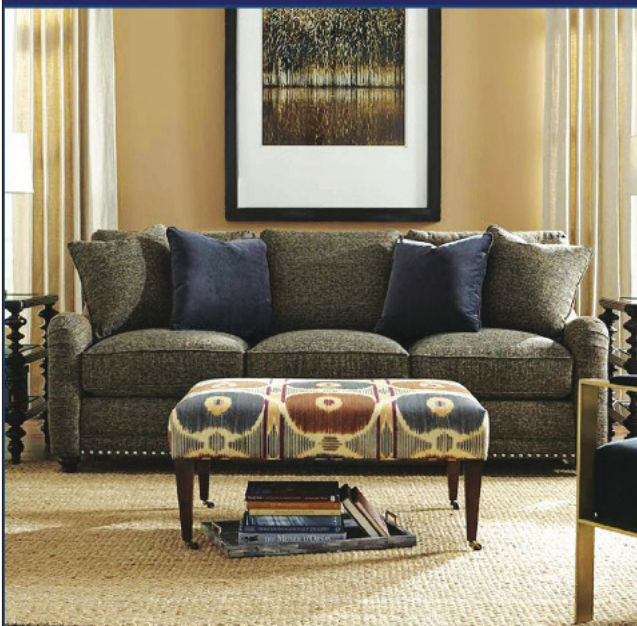
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