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A look back

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ITS BEST STORIES OF 2015

See page 2

Best movies of 2015
See page 17

Best photos of 2015
See page 18



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The best of Pocket News 2015

Dear readers,

The Pocket News has enjoyed bringing you stories about your neighbors and about the history that has made up the community you call home. What follows are summaries and excerpts from some of our favorite stories from the past year. Also, see some of the best photos of the year on page 18, many of which were taken by our star photographer, Stephen Crowley, who has had six photos nominated for awards by the California Newspaper Publishers Association. Additionally, movie reviewer Matias Bombal shares with readers the top five movies he has reviewed for Valley Community Newspapers since he started writing for us in 2014. Without further ado, here are the top stories and columns selected by staff this year.

Sincerely, Monica Stark



Photo by Lance Armstrong
Dolores Greenslate feeds ducks in the Pocket area. Greenslate, who was once known as the "Duck Lady," is shown in some of her original duck feeding attire, including boots that she wore while feeding ducks at Lake Greenhaven during the 1960s.

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'Duck Lady' saved ducks at Lake Greenhaven more than a half-century ago by Lance Armstrong: It has been five decades since the Greenhaven 70 development began to change the face of the Pocket area immediately south of The Trap, the historic bar at 6125 Riverside Blvd. And included in part of that development was the old clay pit that had become known as Lake Greenhaven.

Among the various old-time stories regarding Lake Greenhaven is that of the "Duck Lady." The "Duck Lady," who is better known as Dolores Greenslate, was among the original residents of Greenhaven 70.

Greenslate recalled that in about 1964, an effort was made to make the area around Lake Greenhaven more attractive by removing its surrounding brush.

"(The developers) weren't building anything around the lake at that time, but they wanted to make it look better for potential buyers in the area, so they eliminated everything that was growing around the lake," Greenslate said.

"They cleaned that area up all the way to the original soil. I was so mad at them when they did that, because these 12 to 14 (mallards) were coming up and down these streets looking for food, and digging in the early residents' lawns looking for worms. Since (the ducks) had previously lived at (William Land) Park, they weren't like the wild birds that just flew in and landed in the lake. They were domesticated. They were lost, and they came over here (to the early Greenhaven 70 homes). I just felt so sorry for them, so I started going to (the Safeway supermarket, which was located at 5930 South Land Park Drive) and getting day-old bread, and I would feed them that day-old bread."

Greenslate recalled how her efforts to assist the ducks attracted the attention of Dr. Merrill A. Burt, veterinarian at the South Sacramento Pet Hospital at 5651 Franklin Blvd.

"It was completely out of (those ducks') nature to go (live in) the wild when they had been fed all of their lives (at the park)," Greenslate said. "And so, I got rec-

ognition in the newspaper for (feeding them at Lake Greenhaven). Dr. Burt had put in for me being the most humane person of the year for animals.

"(Burt) had become aware of what I was doing (feeding the mallards). I had brought a little female duck to (Burt's) office in a towel that had been hit by a construction truck (in the area). The duck ended up dying on the table (at Burt's office). And (Burt) said, 'Do you want me to take care of (the dead duck). And I said, 'No, let me take her home. She's mine, and I'll bury her in my garden in my backyard. So, I took her home, and I cried all the way home. I buried her in the same towel in my backyard, so she wouldn't get dirt on her face. I still know the exact place where I buried her. But anyway, that's how Dr. Burt (became aware) of what I was doing, and nominated me."

Although Greenslate did not receive the award, many people became aware of her kindness to those ducks at that time.

In recalling her duck feeding routine, Greenslate said, "I made it a point of every day I would go get bread and I would break it up at night and the next morning I would go (to Lake Greenhaven) whether it was raining or whatever. I would go over there and they would see me coming and they would get really excited when they saw me. They would come running to me. I was known as the 'Duck Lady.' I would show up at the lake in a heavy coat and boots up to my knees and two big grocery bags. There was one duck with an injured leg, so I always favored him and fed him first."

Greenslate said that the aforementioned newspaper article led to her bread supply being cut off by Safeway's manager.

"I think the manager was supposed to return the old bread and not give it away, so he was probably afraid of getting found out (by his Safeway superiors) with the publicity of giving the bread to me," Greenslate said. "That was the end of my bread supply. (Hank) Spencer, (superintendent of the William Land Park Zoo/now Sacramento Zoo) also

found out about (the article), and he came over with sacks of grain for me, because he had read what I was trying to do."

Eventually, after several months of feeding the mallards, Greenslate went to Lake Greenhaven, caught the ducks, placed them one or two at a time in gunnysacks, and then transported them

See Greenslate, page 4

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Greenslate:

Continued from page 3

back to their previous home at William Land Park. Greenslate said that a short time after she had returned the ducks to the park, she was contacted by (Greenhaven 70 developer) Jack Parker.

"(Parker) said to me, 'Mrs. Greenslate, you can't do that.' And I said, 'Why can't I do that? Do you realize what you did when you brought (the ducks) over here? You just left them to fend for themselves, and they were domesticated and used to being fed at the park. You can't do that!' It really bothered me. I couldn't just let (the ducks)

starve and die over there (at Lake Greenhaven)."

More details revealed surrounding the mystery of the decapitated animals by Monica Stark: Tucked behind the soccer fields at Reichmuth Park belies a woodland area with an entry that is easy to miss, but if found, welcomes wanderers to a pristine and extensive nature area where some people in the past have hung swings from trees and have arranged fallen logs into rows of benches. During a typical winter, the area floods, hence all the bushes and trees.

It's a hidden, local treasure that has most recently been exploited as ground zero for five out of the 11 locations where authorities have reported finding decapitated animals. Front Street Animal Shelter Director Gina Knepp, a Hollywood Park resident, has been on the case since the first animals were found, beginning last year with a 120-pound cow's head at Reichmuth and another one last December at Garcia Bend Park.

In The Sacramento Bee and during television news interviews, Knepp has mentioned that the mutilations have resembled religious practices. In speaking with this publication, she said the best example of this was along the Sacramento River around the 5800 block of Riverside Boulevard where there were several beheaded chickens, five \$1 bills splattered in blood, and a paper plate with strange oils on it. (There was) an offering of food, like a cornmeal cake. Google 'Santeria.' It is religion. (The mutilations) have the appearance of some type of religion, possibly from Afro-Caribbean practices like Santeria,

or Macumba, which has a similar practice in Brazil. You will see that activity in the Haitian community and Sacramento is one of the most diverse cities (in the country)."

Taking heed on that lead to "Google 'Santeria,'" a 2009 British Broadcast Company cultural report on Santeria, can be found online which discusses the Afro-Caribbean religion and animal sacrifices as one of its primary practices. "Animal sacrifice is central to Santeria. The animal is sacrificed as food, rather than for any obscure mystical purpose. Followers of an Orisha (a manifestation of a god or gods) will offer them food and sacrifice animals to them in order to build and maintain a personal relationship with the spirit. The process not only brings the worshipper closer to their Orisha, but makes them more aware of the presence of the Orisha within them.

"This is a mutual process; the food is essential for the Orishas, who will die without being fed, and in return the Orishas are able to help the worshippers. Orishas are also nourished by other forms of worship and praise. Sacrifices are performed for life events such as birth, marriage, and death. They are also used for healing. Without sacrifice the religion would die out, as sacrifice is essential for initiation into the faith community and the 'ordination' of priests. "The animals are killed by cutting the carotid arteries with a single knife stroke in a similar way to other religious methods of slaughter.

"Animals are cooked and eaten following all Santeria rituals (except healing and death rites, where the sickness is believed to pass into the dead animal). Eating the

sacrificed animal is considered a sharing with the Orisha, who only consumes the animal's blood, while the worshippers eat the meat.

"Sacrificial animals include chickens (the most common), pigeons, doves, ducks, guinea pigs, goats, sheep, and turtles.

"The USA Supreme Court has stated that it is constitutional for Santeria worshippers to kill animals for such a ritual sacrifice."

In the interview with this publication, Knepp reiterated that constitutional right, stating: "Animal sacrifice is not illegal," but, she added, "a profane act suffering during a sacrifice is illegal."

To determine the level of suffering, however, intensive necropsies would be required, but she hopes the perpetrator will be found. "We need someone to turn somebody in." Complicating the findings is when animals, like the rabbit which was found at 20th and X streets, have been dead for awhile, Knepp said.

As with the mutilations cases in Sacramento, officials aren't certain if the animals were beheaded before or after they were killed. The cuts appear to have been made with a saw and do not appear to be precise and, the fact some bodies of animals are found without the heads leads one to question the application of religious practice here, as the BBC report and other sources indicate eating the animals and leaving the blood for their supreme being is the traditional approach.

The question still remains, why were remains left in bags in public view?

On Feb. 27, 2015 at 19th and V streets, two baby

See *Animals*, page 5

Animals:

Continued from page 4

goats were found. "They were young enough to fit in a Raley's brown paper bag. They were both decapitated and the heads were left behind. It's clear that none of the killings are occurring at the locations where we find the animals," Knepp said.

Every once in a while, Knepp said discarded farm animals are found, but to her knowledge, officials have not seen this practice to this extent ever in Sacramento. "I've been checking with staff (who have been here longer) and they have never seen quite so many. In my travels, in working this case, I've learned about a high amount in Florida. In Miami, they have to pick up sacrifices every day. I'm so glad we are not there."

Anyone with information about the cases is asked to call the City of Sacramento Animal Care Services at 808-8333.

A HeavnLy accident: No passersby or customers injured in Pocket area crash: At about 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 4, 2015, a woman named drove straight into HeavnLy's Yogurt. According to store owner David Ly, the accident damaged the store's door frames. Fortunately, no one was injured but because a delay with insurance companies, the store was closed for four days, affecting the staff during that time. The Pocket News' ad sales representative Linda Pohl was having coffee in the shopping center there and happened to snap these photographs.

"It's been a loss of income; our employees can't work. I've had a lot of paperwork to do," David said. "I'm glad nobody got hurt. Thank God no one got hurt or anything like that. You figure that's a place where people walk around. We're very fortunate."

Local soccer icon wrangles columnist into a guest-announcer gig by Jeff Dominguez: My approach to writing the Pocket Watch is that I generally write for myself, as if no one else is going to read what I'm typing out. I think that makes me a little more fluid, a little more candid, a little more free to express myself. It also makes it a little

more surprising when I meet someone, and they recognize me from my writing and go on to tell me how much they enjoy reading my work.

Since my Thanksgiving column about the things in our neighborhood for which I'm most thankful was published, several folks have made an effort to tell me that they agreed with me when I mentioned how Greenhaven Soccer Club Coaching Coordinator, Wayne Novoa, is a local treasure, and they're glad to see him get a little recognition for all that he does in the community. It always seems like a "small world" coincidence when strangers discover a mutual friend between themselves, but Wayne knows so many people that I could probably play the Kevin Bacon game with anyone who lives in the Greenhaven/Pocket area and get to Wayne in two or three steps every time.

When we first met, Wayne and I realized quickly that we were, more or less, cut from the same cloth when it comes to civic involvement. We became fast friends, and we've been roping each other into assisting one another with the various activities within the community that we've independently undertaken ever since. I was explaining this to Judy Foote, a former local educator who happens to know Wayne through the local Rotary group, when she came to my house to pick up her order of tamales sold by the volleyball club that I run for area players from 10 to 14 years of age. Explaining my relationship with Wayne to Judy reminded me of my more recent adventures with him.

One of Wayne's passions is his work on behalf of our local semiprofessional soccer franchise, the Sacramento Gold, a team once owned by his late brother, Richard. He called me one Monday morning toward the end of last season to ask if I could fill in for their announcer, who had a conflict and couldn't make it to their game that weekend. I told him I would do it, but I had never been to one of their games. I had absolutely no idea what the job entailed, if I was just introducing the sides and making an occasional announcement or announcing subs and fouls and corner kicks and, you know, exhort-

ing the fans to give us a little home-field advantage... I had absolutely no idea.

Wayne said, "We'll have a script for you, and we'll put you in touch with the regular announcer, who's been doing the games for five years. He has it down to a science, and he'll make sure you're squared away." So I was fine with it. I'm not shy. It sounded fun, and thought I'd be fine. Anyway, there is no saying "No" to Wayne when he's sold on an idea.

But, Thursday, Wayne calls and says, "Jeff, man, this is awkward. I just found out that our head coach, of all people, hired some DJ he knows who works at a radio station in Modesto, to announce the game we talked about. I don't know how it happened. I promise we'll have you do some games for Jose next year." I was absolutely fine with it. I tell him that's great, and, actually the pressure was off, and I could enjoy the game. I tell him I'm still coming, and I'll help him with whatever he needs.

So I arrive at the game, and there's Wayne, running around like a chicken without a head. His formal role with the club is Community Relations Director, but, on game-day, he becomes Chief Cook and Bottle Washer. There was this huge swim meet at high school where they play, and, with all the tents pitched outside, the parking lot looked like the Pasadena Flea Market. Wayne was having a hard time clearing people out and even just getting into the stadium to set up. We got there after 7:00 for a 7:30 game, and they weren't even taking tickets yet. So I spring into action and jump right in... I'm setting up tables and carrying stuff, water bottles... people are helping me who just showed up to watch the game.

Wayne comes up to me and says, "Can you set up the ball-boys and ball girls?" And I look over, and there's a couple dozen Sac United kids, all in their uniforms, on the field with one ball, going crazy. Some of them are little, little, like, 5 years old, and they're all wrestling and going nuts. I tell Wayne, "Sure, I'll go set them up now." He says, "Really? You know what to do...???" I'm, like, "Absolutely. Don't worry." So he stops me before I walk

over there, and he's giving me the most detailed instructions for the kids, what line to stand on, how they should hand the ball to the players rather than throw it to them, where to put the extra balls by the goal... Time is ticking, and Wayne was showing no sign of finishing his instructions anytime soon, so, finally, I just walk away, right in the middle of one of his sentences.

I go up to the kids, and they're still crazy, like, drunk from the freedom of running around in a big stadium with no supervision and just going wild. So I begin calming them down, and I'm trying to figure out, in my head, how far apart they should be spaced, based on the number of kids we have. I line them up in order of height,

and there's 23 of them, so I put them 15 yards apart, one in the back corner of the end zone, one on the five, the 20, the 35, the 50, then down... the 35... the 20... etc. When I finish one side, I count how many it took, so I can figure out how many I have for the end zones if I duplicate the pattern on the side. It sounds like a simple job, but it took a lot of figuring, and I didn't think math would be involved in this evening.

I'm alternating the kids by size, a big one, a tiny one, a big one, a tiny one, so the big ones can help the little ones. By now, the scoreboard is set up, and I look up and see the game clock is ticking down. Six minutes to the start of the

See Soccer, page 6

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Soccer:

Continued from page 5

game, and I'm not even halfway through!

A gentleman with a walkie-talkie approaches me and says, "Hey Jeff, I'm Ruben Mora." "Hi," I say, briefly turning my attention from the kids. We shake hands, and he says, "Uhh, Wayne asked me to come over and get you, because the announcer we hired didn't show up, so they need you up in the booth to announce. The players are lining up in five minutes."

"Okay," I say, "Wait. What...???" Not wanting to appear nonplussed, I tell him, "Sure. Uh... let me finish with these kids, and I'll be right there." His eyes narrow, and he says, "We really need you up there now." I say, "I'll hurry and be there in one minute."

So now, all the niceties are off with the kids. "You? There!... YOU, THERE!" We're all practically jogging around the track now, still in by-height formation. A big one, a little one. One from the front, then one from the back. I finish up, and they're asking questions, "Yes! No! Just use your judgment... Bye!" One of the kids is little Kathryn Maebori, my setter and team captain from the Dragons Volleyball Club team I coach. She's smart and responsible. "Kathryn is in charge!" I say, as I break into a jog away from them. As I pass the kids, like Burma-Shave signs around the field, they're looking at me not fully sure of their specific duties. I swear one says, "What a jerk" as I trot by.

On my way up to the booth, I literally have to cut through the line of players marching onto the field to be introduced—by me. When I reach the bottom of the bleachers, I almost knock over both Julia Marie Padilla, 7, AND her mom, who are patiently waiting at midfield to sing the national anthem. I dash up the stairs, and people are recognizing me, "Hey Jeff!" "Hey!" I say back, "How's it going?" and "Long time no see!"

I get into the booth. "Alright, where's my binder? Where's my script? Where are the rosters? Guys I've never seen

before in my life are pointing me through two doors, and into a chair. They're like an Indy 500 pit crew. I sit down, and in front of me is a long, narrow, stainless steel counter, one of those desk microphones with the rectangular talk button built into its base... and nothing else.

A guy says, "Hi, I'm Rico, You gotta announce the national anthem! Julia Marie Padilla! She's 7 years old!"

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The crowd politely applauds. As Julia is belting out the Star-Spangled Banner with impressive vibrato, I'm asking Rico, "Where's my script??!!!" Rico appears to have been plucked from the crowd like I was, and he shrugs his shoulders and yells back at me, "I don't know!" He pulls out a walkie talkie, and shouts into it, "Where's the announcer's script?!" I hear Wayne reply, "There IS no script. We emailed it to the other announcer! I'll be up there in a couple of minutes!"

"O'ER THE la-aand of the FREEEEEE...!"

A guy who looks a bit like Barney Fife in street clothes is sitting there with what appears to be the scoreboard controls and scorekeeping papers. He introduces himself as "Bruce". Then, in what seems like the slowest speech cadence I've ever experienced in another human being before in my life, he says, "Say... I... have... the... lineups... on... this... here... scoresheet. I... suppose... you... could... use... it... to... introduce... the... "Give me that thing, man!" I break in. "OF THE... brave!!!"

I thank Julia Marie and her mom and begin to introduce the lineups. The names are scratched out as though Bruce were writing a prescription. In between names, I'm asking for clarification, so there is a pregnant pause between players, as though I'm waiting for the nonexistent applause to die down. Bruce can barely read his

own writing. "Todd Bailey" and "Justin Middlemiss" are no problem. But I'm totally winging it through "Manolo Pina" and "Gabino Carranza, Jr." I glance up, and I can see the players looking into the booth at me, like, "This guy is a frickin' idiot."

Anyway, I get through that, and I'm just calling out corner kicks, throw-ins, and fouls. There's a couple of yellow cards to spice things up (one of which was for a dive, which I LOVE!). And I had fun with the goals. "EU-REKA!" I say, "Jason Jones strikes GOLD...!!!" That is my "Put-it-in-the-book-and-send-him-to-da-line!" signature tagline that Ruben and I developed at the dinner table earlier this week, you know, before I was told that there was no way that I was actually going to announce the game.

When Wayne finally comes up to the booth about 10 or 15 minutes into the first half, he says, "Hey! You're doing a great job, but I need some shout-outs to our sponsors!"

"Wayne!" I tell him, "I have no idea who our sponsors ARE!" He laughs like everything is great and reaches into his back pocket and hands me a folded up old program. "Read them off from here!" But then he notices that some of those sponsors aren't sponsors anymore, and he sits down to handwrite a list. "KOMBAT INK... UM, FOR ALL YOUR SILKSCREENING NEEDS!" I remark to the mic, sounding, I'm sure, not nearly as smooth as I think I do.

My son, Ruben, walks in midway through the first half, which also makes things a lot better. He was working a shift in the newsroom at Channel 40 that night, and I didn't plan on seeing him at the game at all, but he drove over during his dinner break. So he's kind of feeding me lines and making fun of me as I deliver them.

The game turns out to be a blast. We win, 2-0, to finish atop the league and advance to the playoffs! It was really a fun and exciting game, very chippy! They knocked probably our most dominant player out of the game in the first half with a tackle from behind on a "clear path" breakaway. But

we were just better on every possession. The other team had one player who looked like an MLS player compared to everyone else on his team. Every time he got the ball, it seemed like he would just cut through everyone and take it into the box and shoot. It literally took three guys to stop him every time. But, clearly, the most interesting storyline of the night was all about me.

Afterward, Wayne walks up and says, "Great job!" as though there hadn't been an earth-shattering crisis involving my sole function at the game. "Thanks. You too," I reply. It reminded me of the Looney Tunes cartoon with the sheepdog and the coyote, who, after killing each other all day, greet one another with a deadpan "Goodnight, Sam" and a "Goodnight, Ralph" at the end of their shift, punching out at the time clock as though all the craziness that had just occurred was just another day at the office.

And that, in a nutshell, is what it's like to be a friend of Wayne Novoa.

Elks Hawaiian Luau to feature special show, music on Aug. 21 by Lance Armstrong: The Elks Lodge No. 6 building was the site of a Hawaiian luau on Aug. 21, 2015. And a special feature of the evening included performances by singer and guitarist Doug Meredith and the Island Essence Hawaiian Dance Duo.

The event also included a no host bar, dinner, with k̄lua pork, teriyaki chicken, Chinese chicken salad, steamed rice, macaroni salad, rolls and dessert.

During an interview with this paper prior to the event, Doug, spoke about the entertainment portion of the luau.

"I will sing a handful of Hawaiian songs at 7 p.m., and then our Polynesian-style floor show will begin about 7:15 (p.m., and will continue until) about 8 o'clock," Doug said. "Then after that, I will be singing all different types of dance music from 8 o'clock to 11 o'clock. Waltzes, rock 'n' roll,

See Elks, page 7



Photo courtesy of Don Meredith

Singer and guitarist Don Meredith and his wife, a dancer named Evelyn Kahealani, performed as two-thirds of the entertainment at the Hawaiian luau at the Elks lodge on Aug. 21, 2015. The program included dancer Leilani Ahulau (not pictured).

Elks:

Continued from page 6

cha-cha, maybe a little bit of country music, as well. It's all basically stuff that people, age 60 through 90, grew up with. The reason I like to focus on that type of music is that the lyrics are nice, the melodies are nice and the sentiments are nice. A lot of more modern music is very aggressive."

After being asked to name a few familiar songs that he will be singing, Doug said, "Most of the ones during the floor show are Polynesian language songs. They wouldn't recognize those (songs), but as far as the listening music goes, I will sing 'Blue Hawaii,' also 'Beyond the Reef,' and I might even throw in 'Tiny Bubbles.'"

Doug said that he had not planned on performing at a luau at the local Elks lodge, since his Polynesian music and dance group had called it quits six years ago and he has since mostly focused on events featuring ballroom dancing music.

"(Polynesian music) isn't what I do as a rule now, because we disbanded our Polynesian group, (the South C's Island Revue)," Doug said. "We performed thousands of shows (from 1981 to 2009)."

However, the local Elks lodge persuaded Doug to do another luau with two of the dancers that he worked with who are still dancing.

In regard to his experience in music, Doug explained that he became involved in music at a very young age.

"I'm a lifelong, full-time musician and singer," Doug said. "I was born in Long Beach, California. On Christmas in 1962, when I was 5 years old,

my parents gave me a Hawaiian ukulele and a Tahitian drum called a fa'atete.

"I switched to guitar in 1965 at age 7 or age 8. My grandfather (Edward Simchick) gave me a Hawaiian steel guitar.

"I switched to electric guitar in 1966. I had what was called a (Teisco) Del Rey electric, solid body guitar. I practiced very hard and began forming my own group with older people, and performing locally in recreation houses and places like that.

I had my first paid performance on Valentine's Day in 1968. That group was called The Unknowns, and they are still unknown. We were playing Beatles and Beach Boys music. Our first performance was in Sacramento in a rented hall of some kind. It was an event put on by some ladies in the neighborhood. They hired my young group to play, and they charged admission and then they paid us part of the admission fee. I was only 10 years old."

After being asked when his family moved to Sacramento, Doug said, "My father (Pete Meredith) was part of RCA, the electrical company, and he would travel and install (airport) runway lighting systems. The first time we came here was when (runway work was being performed at) the Executive Airport, and he was in charge of putting in runway lights. And we left, and then we came back and finally stayed here permanently."

As Doug progressed as a musician during his teen years, he began performing in Polynesian-style floor shows

See Luau, page 8



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Luau:

Continued from page 7

at the Zombie Hut restaurant at 5635 Freeport Blvd. in 1973.

And in recalling that time of his life, Doug said, "When I was 15, I already knew how to play the Hawaiian and Tahitian music. My parents would drive me (to the Zombie Hut). I was too young to drive and they would drive me to (that restaurant) and I would join a musician there named Uncle Willie. He was running the floor shows there, and I would accompany him on guitar, and then at 2 a.m., my parents would come and pick me up and take me home. They were very supportive, and then I was making some money, so they were in favor of that."

Eventually, Doug would perform various times at the Zombie Hut throughout the years, until 1986.

Doug, who graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in 1975, also recalled performing in Hawaii.

"I traveled over to Hawaii at age 17 and began playing with the floor shows at the hotels," Doug said. "And at various schools and colleges, we would put on cultural floor shows with Hawaiian dancing and Tahitian dancing, and Hawaiian, Tahitian and New Zealand Maori (music). I went back a few times. I did it primarily in about half of 1975 and part of 1984."

In speaking about his aforementioned ballroom dancing music performances, Doug said, "What I do nowadays is I travel from city to city within a 100-mile radius of Sacramento, and I perform for dance organizations that hold their own dances, and I play ballroom dancing music. I perform as a solo artist under my own name, Doug Meredith. I usually do one-night performances at many different cities."

Doug, who has never worked in any other field but music, spoke about his career as having been sort of a financial rollercoaster.

"It's up and down, up and down, along with the economy," Doug said. "When the economy goes bad, people don't have money, and they hire me fewer times. And when the economy is booming, I get lots and lots of jobs. I save all my money for times when it's low."

And in discussing his future in music, Doug said that he plans to retire when he is 75.

But he added that he intends to take a different direction with his career when he turns 60.

"At age 60, I want to finally focus on staying home and writing my own music and recording," Doug said. "That's what I'm going to focus on two years from now. And it's because to make a living as a fee-for-service musician, I have to travel and perform all the time. And I don't really have the chance to focus on bringing music out of my heart and putting it in a listenable form. I always have to travel or perform music that people are familiar with, instead of original music."

In being that he plans to become a recording musician in two years, Doug, who has performed at many other luaus at the Elks building, was asked if this could possibly be the last time he performs Polynesian music at this venue.

"It could be the last Polynesian show at the Elks," Doug said. "This is the smallest (show). We only have two dancers (Leilani Ahulau and his wife, Evelyn Kahealani). We used to perform with eight dancers or more. I know for sure that I will not be doing any more Polynesian shows once I turn age 60. I might still play ballroom music, just because I have to earn a living. But I'm going to focus on writing and recording at that point."

But for at least one more night, on Aug. 21, 2015, Doug and his Polynesian dancers joined together at the Elks lodge to entertain guests at a luau.

Elks members share chili cooking secrets and love of the lodge by Monica Stark:

With a slight breeze in the air on the evening of Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015, the smell of barbecue ribs spread through the Elks Lodge No. 6 parking lot as chefs Erica Jones and husband Bryson Wilson prepared 144 servings of ribs for about 100 Elks members and their guests who got their appetites wet before dinner with more than 20 tastings of homemade chili at the Elks' annual chili cook-off.

A benefit for the Elks Lodge No. 6 and its many scholarships it gives to local students, the chili cook off and the rib dinner brought together some of the best in Southern cooking the Pocket neighborhood gets to experience – and it happens every year with cooks vying for bragging rights.

At the cook off, a close call runoff vote was had between judges over Karen del Real's Peruvian bean chili and Anita Neves' Tex Mex inspired specialty. With one vote to break the tie,

See Chili, page 9

Chili:

Continued from page 8

Karen's chili took the lead. In an interview with the Pocket News about her big win, Karen said she's been making chili for a "long, long time" and that the winning chili is her Uncle George's favorite. "I won first place last year and he absolutely loved it. It really is a special treat. So I am going to call him right away and tell him. He lives in Woodland. I've been making chili dogs since I was a teenager and he has always loved my chili. So it's really special for me. This is really great, all the friends here. It's really wonderful."

Also speaking about family traditions and how they've influenced her chili, having entered her dish for the third year, Anita said she "finally got it right. It was a run off between me and Karen for first place. It was really great for me. We do this to help our lodge.

Winning is always fun. We're big on Tex Mex and chili back in Oklahoma. My mom (Veda) used to make it all the time."

The third place winner was Pocket resident Conrad De Castro whose chili, like both the first and second place winners, is the end result of a lot of tinkering over the years. "I finally got it to where I like it, where I know what the outcome is going to be. It may not suit other people's tastes, but I like it and my friends like it. So, I don't change it anymore. So it's perfect the way it is as far as I'm concerned."

With spirits high and tummies full of tasty chili beans, the camaraderie between the Elks members and their friends at this event was perhaps the biggest highlight for even the first place winner.

"(The chili cook off is) so much fun. I've met a lot of great cooks here. Oh my gosh," Karen said. "It's just awesome and it's more because we're just

friends. I would have been equally happy if they would have won as well. It's just a great cause, obviously. (We're) fundraising for the lodge. It always goes to charities we do."

Speaking fondly about the Elks Lodge No. 6, of which he is on the board of directors, Conrad said the nonprofit "has a definite set of traditions and values that are consistent with being an American to begin with and that's galvanizing a lot of the community here, especially in Pocket. You have a galvanizing effect over both conservative as well as liberals and independents in this neighborhood. We have a very homogenous membership here in the Elks. We have a credo that follows the principles and values of Elks. We are very community oriented, so we watch out for each other. We watch out for our members. So, yeah, we're all good people, hopefully. We don't allow not good people into our lodge."

After everyone in attendance got their plates of ribs and chili, it was announced that there were leftover ribs and that "bags of bones" were being sold for \$5, which turned out to be a popular take home treat.

Asked to discuss the secret for the rub she puts on the ribs, Erica (who is the lodge's kitchen manager), said it's really basic: just salt and pepper. "It's funny. People always ask me the same thing. (It's good) as long as you have a good marinade and you make sure your meat is really thick. The thing is you have to take all the muscle off the meat. That's really the key to make it tender. It's before you even do anything. The marinade and the rub is for the flavoring. For the tenderness, I clean my meat really, really well. After that, the seasoning takes over. We put on our barbecue sauce during the last 10 minutes of cooking to

See Cookoff, page 10

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Cookoff:

Continued from page 9

give it a little extra flavor because a lot of it burns off, so you don't want to put it when you start cooking; you want to put it on during the last 10 minutes. Also, you have to make sure you poke holes in your meat so that your juices sweep through the meat."

Interjecting, Bryson, a New Orleans native, said he's been making ribs all his life but that since he's been married to Erica for the past 13 years, he learned "she has better skills than me."

"I taught him how to barbecue," Erica added. It was just that kind of friendly competitiveness that made for the best southern cooking under one neighborhood roof.

Water policy protest hits Little Pocket: Dozens demonstrate "2nd California Water Summit" outside the Westin Hotel by Monica Stark: Demonstrators from as far north as Lake Shasta and from as far south as the Los Angeles area converged on the sidewalk on River-

side Boulevard in front of the Westin Hotel on two mornings last June. Their cause: Water is a human right and it should not be controlled by those with money and power. Meanwhile, inside the hotel was the "2nd California Water Summit" in which government officials and private investors converged to talk about water policy. But the cost to get in was \$1,495 for the four-day summit and many of the demonstrators, who were from various Native American tribes, have been feeling left out of discussions such as these for too long.

"Fight, fight for your rights. Fight, fight for water rights," they chanted in the Little Pocket neighborhood, as inside the hotel investors and governmental officials discussed how \$7.5 billion can be distributed through the state due to the passage of the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Act of 2014. The Act, which signals "investments in water" and the "long-term sustainable supply and delivery of that water are critical to California's future," was a benchmark of success deemed by the Ed-



Photos by Monica Stark

Shown here is a protestor outside the Westin Hotel joined by others who were protesting the "2nd California Water Summit," a water policy meeting that cost about \$1,500 to attend for the entire program, which was held June, 2015. Demonstrators felt left out of important water policy discussions.

mund Gerald "Jerry" Brown Jr. administration.

The supporting organization for the conference, West Coast Infrastructure Exchange, "was created by Governors and Treasurers of the West Coast states (California, Oregon, and Washington) and the Premier of British Columbia to promote the type of new thinking necessary to solve out infrastructure crisis. Its board consists of senior representatives of the Governors and Treasurers of the member states and the Executive Director of Partnerships British Columbia."

According to the event website, funding from the \$7.5 billion statewide water bond will "create a multitude of new project opportunities and redefine the way California state and local governments use and invest in solutions to address the water crisis; and fund these new water infrastructure projects ... Only stakeholders intimately aware of the latest insights, lessons learned, and how to maximize project fundability from successfully (public and privately) funded water projects will succeed in this climate."

Those very words of exclusivity and ownership surrounding every living things basic need - water - was the very thrust of the protestors' spirit.

Spokesperson Caleen Sisk, chief and spiritual leader of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, resides near Lake Shasta and discussed the purpose of the protest as follows:

"We feel that it's unfair to hold the water meetings and exclude most of the interested parties that invest in people. Especially the tribes, they have not talked about California tribal water rights. They are talking about senior water rights and rights before 1914 and they have excluded the talks about the native California people's water rights and to hold it here, at the Westin, is out of the way, excluded. It costs \$1,500 to get in there to

attend the meetings and they had a limited number of people in there who could register, so it's not an open registration even if you had \$1,500. There was a cutoff date you had to know about and they're going to be discussing the \$7.5 billion water programs for Prop. 1, which includes Shasta Dam raise, the tunnels. Most people want to restore the Delta, the fisheries, Golden Gate salmon, and the tribes should have a place on that agenda. Tribes or environmentalists should be heard about digging up the Delta."

At the protest, members from the Winnemem Wintu, Pomo, Wailaki tribes were present as well as Hawaiians who stood in solidarity with those concerned about the delivery of water. Living near Lake Shasta, a source of water for the Sacramento River, Caleen said she's particularly concerned about how water is distributed because of the salmon. "The salmon have to live in the Delta and if they are planning on diverting all the water from the Delta, which the tunnels can do, then the salmon can die.

Lake Shasta is very low and hasn't recovered and it is still being drained. It was at 33 percent (of its capacity) earlier and it will probably be a lot less. The river is full, the Sacramento River. That wa-

See Water Summit, page 12



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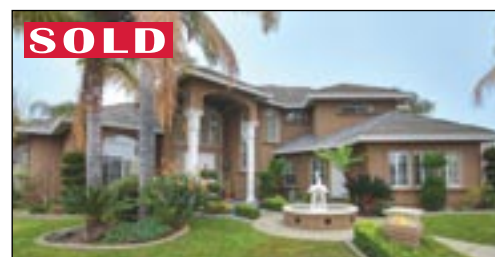


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Water supply:

Continued from page 10

ter comes from the north to fill that river and that water is going down south through the aqueducts to agribusiness farms.

"Our biggest message is that the California people, the good-hearted people, have to start paying attention to what's going on. They have to start relying on information that is outside the government and so far we've been trained to believe the government will take care of us and deliver

the water the way they need to. I think people need to wake up and see this is not a fight between salmon and water. This is not a fight between L.A. and Northern California because the projection of the water that's going to be there is for five new communities in the desert, for two new fracking mines and the rest of it will be brokered.

"I think that (the general public) could wake up and they need to wake up, but I don't know if they will. We're just a little minion tribe. We're not considered scien-

tists, but generations of our people have been here and we know what the weather is. We live the weather. We don't live in an artificial community. We know when the grass turns brown. We know when the flowers come up. We know that the flower is supposed to be there and what the flower means in relation to the salmon that is coming up river. Most people don't know what water tastes like anymore."

Another one of the protestors, Dan Bacher, has been writing about water issues for many years for such websites as Daily Kos, Alternet, the California Progress Report, and for such print publications such as the Sacramento News and Review. He is also the editor of the Fish Sniffer magazine. He's currently working on a critical book about Governor Brown and his environmental policies, which is expected to be released within the next year. "It's going to be about his environmental policies. It will show a picture of the oil spill, and right under it there will be a bunch of dead fish and a dried up lake."

As an environmentalist, a writer and a lover of fishing, Dan visits many lakes, which he says are currently full. "Rancho Seco lake is full. Lake Valley reservoir; Fuller Lake was brim full last Friday (June 26). I went to Union Reservoir on the Stanislaus River. It was the highest I've ever seen it. Rollins Lake on the Bear River is full. Water agencies that planned ahead - that practiced conservation - they were able to bump release the minimum stream flows to keep the fish going during the drought. The ones that squandered their water, sent it south in 2013, 2014, and again this year. I did an investigation and found they were filling Southern California reservoirs with the water they stole from Folsom even though they knew we were in the worst-ever drought.

"The media talks like these are separate projects. The tunnels are not a separate project. The tunnels project is designed in conjunction with the Shasta Dam bridge. One facilitates the other." They're trying to build twin tunnels and send

(water) to the agricultural folks in Southern California. They need storage, so they are going to raise the Shasta dam. Our argument is that it doesn't make a lot of sense because if you don't have any water, you don't have any water to store. You can build the tunnels, but it isn't going to create the water. But Brown is committed to this anyway. I think he's betting on having wetter winters ahead and also hoping the people are stupid and don't wake up and don't realize you can't create something out of nothing."

Elks building in the Pocket dates back to the 1970s by Lance Armstrong: The Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 building at 6446 Riverside Blvd. is one of the grand landmarks of the Pocket area.

Many longtime Sacramentans recall that the local Elks previously maintained their headquarters in an even grander landmark - the 226-foot-tall, brick and steel building at the northeast corner of 11th and J streets. That structure was dedicat-

Elks building, page 13

Elks building:

Continued from page 12

ed as the new home of Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 on June 22, 1926.

The era of the Elks' existence at 11th and J streets ended in the 1970s, and plans were made for a new home for the local organization.

Having sold the 11th and J streets building, Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 began that new chapter in its history at its present Riverside Boulevard building.

Although that structure does not have the grandiose aesthetics of the old 11th and J streets temple, the structure, which encompasses about an acre of property, is nonetheless a high quality building with various amenities.

The main feature of the building is its combined rooms, which include the Riverside Room, the Florin Room and the Lodge Room. These rooms can also be opened up for use as one large room.

Available for rentals, the combined rooms also include a 50-foot by 50-foot hardwood dance floor and a 46-foot by 16-foot stage.

Additionally, all members have access to a fitness center, which includes an indoor pool, Jacuzzi, steam room, racquetball and handball courts and a weight room.

Other amenities include a library and meeting room, a lounge with a full bar and small dance floor, a patio and barbecue area, a kitchen and a game room.

As for telling the story of the establishment of an Elks lodge in the Pocket, information was gathered for this article, the most important of which was a chronological summary of the building project written

by Garry T. Vivaldi, then-Elks state trustee and exalted ruler of the lodge in 1956 and 1957.

The road to the Elks departure from its downtown skyscraper began on Jan. 17, 1967 when Otto Steinbrenner, Jr., city chief building inspector, via a letter, informed the Elks Lodge No. 6 Hall Association that its temple would need to be improved to meet the then-present building codes.

In recalling that time in the local Elks history, Vivaldi wrote, "For approximately three years, we procrastinated on what course to pursue in this matter. Would we attempt to raise

money to make necessary improvements to meet the building code standards or should we continue in our efforts to purchase new land in a desirable location and build a new home?"

On Aug. 25, 1970, the pros and cons of selling the longtime home of the Elks were discussed during a regular meeting.

During the following year, the local Elks' building com-

mittee met various times with the McKeon Construction Co. regarding a possible build-to-suit and lease back arrangement in the Stonelake area, near the site of a then-future portion of Interstate 5.

The lodge made major moves regarding its downtown temple in 1972, with the first of those moves com-

See Ed Mauricio, page 15

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Ed Mauricio:

Continued from page 13

ing on April 4, when membership approved a resolution to sell the building and its land.

Then on Nov. 1, 1972, a sale occurred, when A&A Key and Builders Supply and B and B Enterprises purchased the building and property for a net sum of \$250,000.

But in being that the lodge would have become homeless without its old building, an arrangement was made to lease back three floors of the structure for five years.

That arrangement called for the lease to begin on Dec. 1, 1972 and terminate on Dec. 1, 1977.

Considerations were given for various potential sites for a location of a new lodge building, among which were 10 acres in the Natomas area along Interstate 5 and property in the Campus Commons area near California State University, Sacramento.

On June 11, 1974, local Elks members voted, 112-8, to purchase about a 15-acre site at the lodge's present location.

An application was filed with the city Planning Commission on Aug. 14, 1974 for the purpose of acquiring a special permit to have a "private club" constructed in an agricultural zone at the northwest corner of Riverside Boulevard and Florin Road.

A kickoff rally for the new building fund was held in the lodge's Mirror Room on Feb. 13, 1975.

Highlights of that event included steaks that were grilled on a barbecue on the fire escape and the presentation of a wheelbarrow with 300 sil-

ver dollars that was wheeled into the room by Francis W. Silva, past exalted ruler, as a donation to the new building fund.

In reflecting on that time in the efforts to have a new Elks lodge constructed, Vivaldi wrote: "The year 1975 was a critical one of the building committee. Much had to be done by way of designing the building, inside and out, location of building on property, type of building, interior considerations of location of offices, athletic department, bar, banquet hall, lodge room, library, pool room, conference areas, kitchen and numerous other items, and most important of all - the financing of the building program."

Members of the lodge approved a contractual agreement for building design services on Oct. 23, 1975, followed by the grand lodge's approval to proceed with the construction of a new building on Jan. 8, 1976.

On Dec. 14, 1976, membership approved the borrowing of \$600,000 for the financing of the new building.

Ten days later, a formal application to the grand lodge designated plans to expend \$1,055,000 for the new Elks structure and the execution of a \$600,000 mortgage at a 9 1/4 percent interest to be repaid in 25 years.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the building was held on Jan. 15, 1977. At the gathering, Exalted Ruler Richard Sanderson turned over the first shovel full of dirt with the same embossed, jewel encrusted shovel that was used for the groundbreaking of the 11th and J streets temple.

The construction of the building initially progressed rapidly, but progress would be temporarily de-

layed in August 1977, as it was determined that the parapet walls surrounding the mechanical units on the roof were insufficient for their purposes and thus needed to be revised.

During the final meeting at the 11th and J streets temple on Nov. 8, 1977, a resolution was approved for the borrowing of an additional \$135,000 for the building project.

Furniture and fixtures that would not be used at the new building were sold at an auction held at the downtown temple on Nov. 12, 1977.

Two weeks later, many Elks members dedicated a day to moving the remaining Elks property from their former home to their new home on Riverside Boulevard.

The first lodge meeting in the new building was held in the conference room on Dec. 13, 1977, as the lodge room had not yet been completed.

Following its eventual completion, the present home of Sacramento Elks Lodge No. 6 was dedicated on April 21, 1979. And the mortgage for the present building was burned in 1991 after the sale of the lodge's additional property created funds to pay the balance of that mortgage.

Ed Mauricio recalls life in Riverside-Pocket area in the 1920s, beyond by Lance Armstrong: At 92 years old, Riverside-Pocket area native Ed Mauricio is a rarity, as he is one of the few people who can tell firsthand stories about life in that area during the 1920s and 1930s.

It was because of that point that he was asked to share some of his memories of his life with readers of the Pocket News.

During his interview with this publication, Ed said that there is a possibility that he was born at a roadhouse that was located a short distance north of the old bar, which is known today as The Trap.

"I could have been born at home (at the roadhouse on the old Riverside Road)," Ed said. "I don't know. I know the doctor used to make home calls."

Ed was the youngest of the children of Manuel Mauricio and Carrie (Nevis) Mauricio.

His siblings, in order of their births, were Beatrice "Bea" Isabel, Manuel and Herman.

Ed, who is the last survivor of these featured Mauricio family members, experienced hardship in the early part of his life, as his father died when he was 5 years old and his mother died five years later.

After being asked to speak about his parents, Ed said, "I don't remember that much about my parents. It was pretty hard on my mother taking care of us. I figure we were on welfare. And I think the (St. Maria) Church - the old church down there on (today's) Pocket Road - helped us out.

"We lived (in the roadhouse) until my dad passed, then we moved to the home there across the street (at 5890 Riverside Blvd. on the west side of the road near the levee), where Wesley Silva lives. We moved to that house when I was about 5 or 6."

Ed said that his father operated a 33-acre ranch that was located on the east side of the roadhouse, and

See Pocket in the '20s, page 19

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BEST PHOTOS OF THE YEAR



Photo by Monica Stark
Members of the John F. Kennedy High School band provided wonderful entertainment during the annual Spirit of the Pocket 4th of July parade.



Photo by Stephen Crowley
Faith Presbyterian Church held its Second Annual Walk4Water on Sunday, March 22, 2015. The walk began at Faith Church, 625 Florin Road, for a 2-mile roundtrip walk to the Cabana Club South private swimming pool, 6615 Gloria Drive. Walkers experienced what it is like for most people in developing nations around the globe to fetch water every day. They carried an empty water container one mile and filled it up at the pool and returned to the church and emptied their load into the courtyard fountain.

Pocket in the '20s:

Continued from page 15

that his father's ranch was one-third of a once larger property.

"It was (formerly one property) and they split it three ways," Ed said. "I don't remember who (originally owned the property). There was a man we used to call Black John. He was one of (the ranch owners). Then there was my father. I don't know who the other person was (who owned the third ranch). And I don't know who bought the acreage, but they split it three ways. (The ranches) were all about the same size. They were all Portuguese who owned the properties."

The Mauricio ranch had wheat, grapes, alfalfa, and some orchards, which included peach trees.

Following his father's death, Ed moved with his aunt and uncle, Tony and Lena Silva, and their children, Wayne, Arlene and Harlan, into the house where Wesley Silva now resides.

During his grammar school years, Ed was a student at the old Sutter School, which is now home to Cabrillo Civic Club #5 at 4605 Karbet Way. Ed said that he lived in that house until he was about 11 years old, at which time he moved to (the Merced County city of) Gustine, where he worked on a dairy farm milking cows.

"I went to a dairy and that was a bad time in my life," Ed said. "I felt like maybe (his aunt and uncle) didn't want me anymore. I went to work



Photo by Lance Armstrong
Ed Mauricio grew up in the Riverside-Pocket area in the 1920s and 1930s.

for the Souzas in Gustine. I don't remember their first names. I was milking cows. I would get up in the morning and go to school and then when I was 13, I got sick and I was still milking cows. I got to where I was milking 13 cows a day. I got down to one cow, and my uncle who happened to come by, he brought me to Sacramento and took me to the doctor and they put me on medication.

"What I remember was I thought the doctor said I had Asian flu. I know I was sicker than a dog. I lost a lot of weight. It took me about six months for me to get my weight back. When my uncle brought me back, I went to my grandma's house in the Pocket and I stayed with my grandma (Mary Nevis) for a while. My oldest sister, Bea, got married (to King Silva) and then I moved in with her in the old house there where

Wesley lives. I was still about 13 then. I stayed there until I went and joined the Navy (in August 1942)."

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Chad Sweitzer left John F. Kennedy High School as principal last year for an area superintendent position at the district level.



Photo by Stephen Crowley



Alice Birney Waldorf School celebrated an evening of wonder on Friday, Oct. 30, 2015 with a candlelit path and magical stories and skits. There were also delicious food, Waldorf-inspired art, a petting zoo and a pumpkin patch.

Photo by Stephen Crowley



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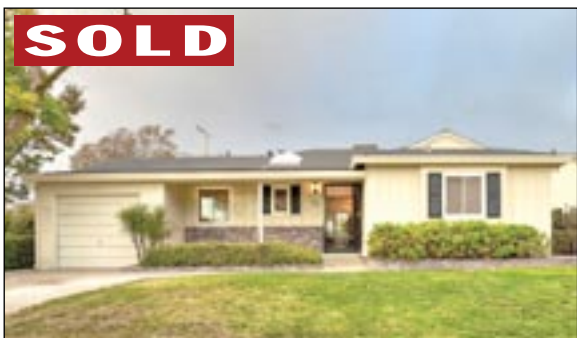
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