

RIVER PARK REVIEW

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River Park Shifted to District 4 in City Council Redistricting

by Tony Mader

The City Council districts were redrawn due to population changes captured by the federal census. The Council adopted a new map at the end of 2021, which shifted River Park and East Sacramento into District 4 from District 3. This means RP is now represented by Councilmember Katie Valenzuela instead of Councilmember (and RP resident) Jeff Harris.

As background, this is the first time the City Council districts were redrawn by an independent commission, as required by a State law approved by voters that aimed to mitigate “gerrymandering” at all levels of government in the state (i.e., reducing the ability of elected officials to draw their own districts, with sometimes odd outcomes). RP had been part of District 3 since

1971 and represented recently by Jeff Harris.

The RPNA Board discussed this topic at various points during 2021 and took a position to support a district map that (1) retained RP in District 3 so that we have continuity of representation (a criterion the commission was required to consider), and (2) kept the entirety of East Sacramento, including RP, as part of the same district. The RPNA Board sent a letter to the Commission on November 10 stating this position, and the East Sac Neighborhood Association sent a similar letter.

The Commission debated the new maps over several meetings in 2021. Much of the debate during the last few meetings focused on whether the new district

con't on page 3

Upcoming Events...

RPNA Board meetings have moved to Zoom.

Please check <https://www.riverparksacramento.org> **for updates**

Articles for the Review...

To contribute, contact: Richard Vincent at 916-228-4714 or email: rcvincent01@gmail.com

Please put “letter to the editor” in the subject line of your email

Park Pets

Send a quality close-up digital photo of your River Park pet with a description to: janet@ideasbydesign-graphics.com



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River Park Review is published 6 times per year and is available to all River Park residents at no charge.

Councilmember Harris' Message

The Sacramento Independent Redistricting Commission has adopted a final map; and I am sad to say that, effective December 16th, I no longer represent East Sacramento, River Park, the Railyards, Sacramento State or the River District.

I have lived in the same house in River Park for 32 years, and since I have no intention of moving, this means that I have no campaign to run in 2022. At this time and until 2024, CM Valenzuela will represent these areas (now called district 4). I have been asked by many if I will seek a D4 seat in 2024, so that I may continue my efforts in the neighborhood that I reside in and love. I will certainly keep that option open.

Until my term is over, I will continue to represent Natomas, Gardenland, and Northgate. My office has dedicated investments in these areas that are unprecedented and will continue to do so.

Throughout our country, the polarization of ideologies has reached extremes, and that is reflected on our City Council. I see myself as a Centrist--I am interested in practical solutions to City issues, and a moderate approach to policy. In my next year on council, I will carry that philosophy forward. We face substantial challenges: in finance, housing development, and of course addressing homelessness. I will continue in the vein of pragmatism to get to the best outcomes. The council is divided on all of these issues, and I will be writing about them as they arise.

The new district map means that there will be significant changes to the Council makeup. Please pay close attention to these council seats, as the outcomes of these races will affect the City for years to come. In contest this year are Districts 1,3,5, and 7-- and all have radically changed boundaries.

While this will be my last River Park Review column as your Councilmember, I still live in and care about our neighborhood. Let me know how you think the City is doing on issues that are important to you.

It has been the experience of a lifetime to represent my neighborhood on the City Council and I am forever grateful to all of you for allowing me this honor.

Flood Protection

Having served on SAFCA for seven years, and as chair of your flood control agency for three years, I cannot overstate the importance of the bank protection project that the Army Corps has commenced to prevent levee erosion from H Street to Glenn Hall Park. There will be some inconvenience associated with the construction (as there was with the slurry wall levee improvements in 2000) but it's a small price to pay for the level of flood protection achieved. I will be at the February RPNA meeting to join in the discussion about the project.

encompassing downtown, midtown, East Sacramento, and River Park should be District 3 (represented by Jeff Harris) or District 4 (represented by Katie Valenzuela). Either way, a proportion of people in each district would get shifted to a different representative.

The Commission ultimately adopted the City Staff recommendation to make this new district numbered 4 instead of 3. The City Staff argued fewer residents would shift districts using this numbering, as compared to the reverse, according to its analysis.

Councilmember Harris remains on the City Council but now represents South Natomas despite living in RP. South Natomas was also part of his District 3 prior to the re-drawing of the districts.

Councilmember Valenzuela has already been in discussions with the RPNA Board and joined our Board meeting on January 20 to introduce herself. ■

Army Corps Prepared to Begin Erosion Mitigation Project

by Tony Mader

An update on previous articles -- Despite some delays and high water levels, the U.S Army Corps of Engineers is prepared to begin its riverbank protection project. This project will mitigate the chances of a flood event but will also significantly alter the existing landscape between the H Street bridge and "Paradise Bend" (where the river turns westward at the location some call "rocky beach"). The Army Corps will be removing nearly all trees and vegetation along this stretch and replanting new vegetation and smaller trees at its conclusion. The Army Corp project overview (which contains old timelines) is available here: <https://riverparksacramento.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AarmyCorpFaQ.pdf>

The timeline currently calls for starting "site preparation" activities in January 2022, which includes vegetation removal. They expect construction to begin over the summer and complete in the fall. Construction will include placing erosion-protection material (typically rock) on the slope and toe of the levee. The Army Corps then expects to plant new vegetation in the spring of 2023.

Membership Dues are \$15.00 annually.

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2021 first place winner

For this holiday season, we had 19 residences who entered the competition. Thank you to everyone who lit up the neighborhood! We also want to thank the over 200 people (more than last year!) who braved the cold and voted for their favorites. The rankings were based on a point system where every first-place vote is worth 5 points, second-place votes are worth 4 points, third-place votes 3 points, etc.

The following are the winners:

- First place: #16 - 3823 Moddison (the Morks)
- Second place: #5 - 5713 Shepard (Behr family)
- Third place: #1 - 5715 Moddison (Katie & Jeff Ebner)
- Fourth place: #18 - 3791 Erlewine (Alex Sherry)



2021 second place winner



2021 fourth place winner



2021 third place winner



2021 fifth place winner

- Fifth place: #2 - 5301 Monalee (Jami and Kelly Richmond-Moore)

The winners were awarded \$200 cash for first place, \$150 cash for second place, \$100 cash for third place, and for fourth and fifth place each received a \$50 gift certificate for one of the neighborhood restaurants of their choice.

This year we continued a modification we made last year to allow for viewing on two nights instead of the traditional one night. Neighbors seemed to like having the option of two nights, and we will likely continue to have the formal competition take place on two nights.



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2021

Buffalo Stampede 10 and 4 Mile Run/Walk Although we were unable to hold the 4th of July 5 Mile Run and the Susan B Anthony Women’s 5K in 2021, the Buffalo Chips Running Club (aka the Chips) were able to hold the Buffalo Stampede on September 12, 2021. We were SO happy to work with the River Park Neighborhood Association and the members of the community again.

Yes, we had to make a few adjustments, but we followed County guidelines and had a successful event. As usual, our participants mentioned the enthusiastic community involvement--your cheers and calls of encouragement along the course are a welcomed part of every run.

Tuesday Night Workouts Around May 2021, a dozen or so Chips members started informally to meet at Glenn Hall Park. For the past 20 years, the club had been meeting at the Golden Empire Boy Scout building and running through Commerce Circle; but by 2021 we needed a safer location, and River Park seemed perfect. We set up our tent Tuesday evenings at 5:30 pm, and before long the group numbered more than 40. As



spring turned into summer and then fall/winter, Chips continued to show up.

After brief announcements and some dynamic stretching drills, running or walking begins at 6:00 pm. Participants are required to wear reflective gear and headlamps for safety. Our workout coordinators are concerned about safety for both the runners and the

community. Runners are to keep to the left of local traffic and be respectful to River Park residents and the neighborhood at large.

2022

Tuesday Night Workouts We are committed to being good partners and hope to have our weekly workouts in the neighborhood on into the future. COME JOIN US! We welcome anyone interested in running with the herd (or walking)! Just sign our online waiver at buffalochips.com (scroll down to Meetup).

Chips Runs We are excited to be offering our regular schedule of runs in River Park in 2022. Look for additional information about these events in future River Park Reviews.

- July 4, 2022–4th of July Free 5-Miler
- August 13, 2022–Susan B Anthony Women’s 5K
- September 11, 2022–Buffalo Stampede 10 and 4-Mile Run/Walk



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It is such a tremendous privilege to welcome the River Park community into District 4. My team and I could not be more eager to dive in, familiarize ourselves with your concerns and priorities as a community, and get to work serving you to the best of our ability.

For a little background on myself, I am an alumna of UC Davis (go Ags!) where I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees in community development. I am a community organizer, environmental justice advocate, and rescue dog mom to two great pups named Buster and Chevy.

Prior to running for office, I was deeply engaged in starting the Sacramento Urban Agriculture Coalition and the Sacramento Community Land Trust and spent a great deal of my spare time helping neighborhoods engage in local and state policy discussions that would impact their communities – work I still continue on a part-time basis for environmental justice groups seeking to influence state policy. I won my seat on the City Council in March 2020 – two weeks before COVID-19 caused massive shutdowns across Sacramento. Needless to say, our first year in office has been very eventful!

We've made a lot of progress that I'm very excited to take forward into 2022. Last year, District 4 made unprecedented moves in addressing Sacramento's homelessness crisis. We convened the D4 Homelessness Task Force, and opened the City's very first safe camping and parking sites to provide immediate relief to people experiencing homelessness who were facing displacement due to the WX Freeway construction. While there were certainly challenges that arose and lessons that were learned, we were able to provide services to hundreds of people suffering from chronic homelessness, and to date have moved more than 200 folks from those sites into long-term shelter or permanent housing.

Homelessness wasn't the only area we focused on in 2021. Our office pushed for big changes in public safety and police oversight, advanced policy to phase out fossil fuels in Sacramento, built stronger relationships between the City and our local Indigenous community, championed the right

to healthcare by establishing Sacramento as a defender of reproductive freedom and supporter of Medicare for All, secured federal funding to invest in local arts and businesses, and a lot more.

We're also hitting the ground running in 2022 with several exciting projects. We are actively working on a new safe camping and parking sites, the phase down of the WX site (and the return of the downtown farmer's market), a partnership with the YMCA to secure several new housing units, a strategic plan to address community concerns at Marina Vista and Alder Grove, and so much more that we will be announcing as we go.

My team and I are so excited to be representing River Park! I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you and look forward to working with everyone to ensure that the needs of this community are understood and addressed. We pride ourselves on being responsive, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can ever be helpful – or to just say hi! My personal email is kvalenzuela@cityofsacramento.org, but also feel free to call my team at 916-808-7004 if they can be of assistance.

Thank you for having me – I look forward to meeting you soon!

All the best,

Councilmember Katie Valenzuela



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It's Time to Act: Prune Your Young Shade Trees Now

In last February's River Park Review article, we lamented that COVID norms prevented us from holding the Fifth Annual Young Tree Pruning Workshop in River Park. We ended the article with the sincere hopes of seeing our neighbors again in January, 2022, when (presumably) safer and healthier times would allow a return to hands-on, in-person pruning tutorials.

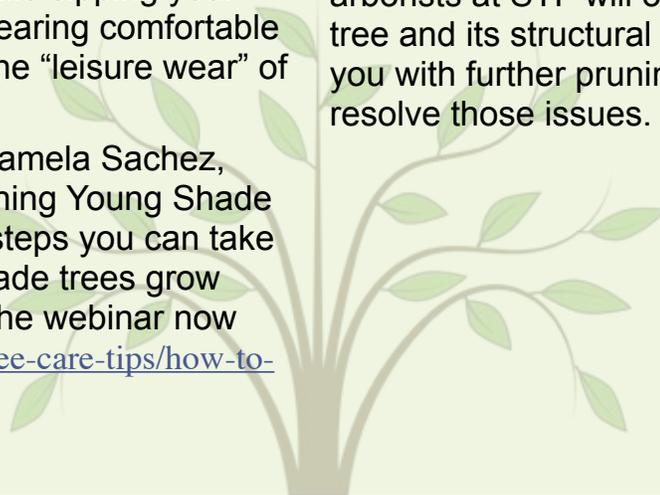
Unfortunately, given current health circumstances, such a workshop will not be held in 2022. The next best thing, however, is available from the Sacramento Tree Foundation (STF), in the form of a free pruning webinar. You can now get pruning advice for your young shade tree from the comfort of your home computer, while sipping your favorite warm beverage, wearing comfortable pajamas, sweat pants, or the "leisure wear" of your choice!

Presented by STF's own Pamela Sachez, ISA Certified Arborist, "Pruning Young Shade Trees" gives quick simple steps you can take now to help your young shade trees grow healthy and strong. View the webinar now at: <https://www.sactree.org/tree-care-tips/how-to-prune-young-trees>

Here are some reminders about the importance of pruning young shade trees:

Why Prune Young Trees? Why Prune Now?: Correct pruning now, during dormant winter months, promotes a strong and attractive tree structure. The results will be a safe and healthy tree, saving you time, money and potential heartache ten to twenty years down the road.

How Do I Get Personal Pruning Advice for My "Problem" Tree? Have you viewed the webinar, but still face unique pruning challenges with a particular young tree? Take advantage of the professional expertise offered by the staff at the Sacramento Tree Foundation. Simply email a brief message, along with a photo of your tree to treetips@sactree.com. The knowledgeable arborists at STF will offer an analysis of your tree and its structural challenges and provide you with further pruning suggestions to help resolve those issues.



SHOW US YOUR TREE!

Send us a picture of your River Park tree. Let us know why you love it. Is it big, is it historic, does it have flowers in the Spring or colors in the Fall? Do children play in or under it? Did the community plant your tree in one of our six Community Tree Plantings? Please email a good quality picture (it can be a phone camera pic, if it's in focus) with your name and address. Feel free to include yourself, your family, your neighbors, and/or your pets in the picture (but that's not required.) We won't include your house number, but will include the street, unless you ask us not to. Let's share our beautiful tree canopy – and how the community has worked together to re-build it! Send your picture and information to kbriley@surewest.net

Park Pets



Minnie, our quirky rescue cat, has always done things her own way – such as shunning her new cat bed and claiming the kitchen towel basket on our fridge as her own. Delighting in surprise attacks on my wife's ankles, sleeping in front of my keyboard and ruling over the other cats in the house, our irascible but beloved companion of seventeen years passed away this month.

Tim Reynaga, Moddison Ave.



River Park Garden Club Update

by Ron McCormack

The next meeting is on Thursday, February 17th, at 6:30 PM. We will be welcoming Greg Gayton from Green Acres Nursery, who will be presenting "What's New in 2022 at the Nursery." The event will be held at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park. We are not sure whether it will be a potluck or a bring-your-own dinner. Contact me a week before the event for more information. 916-826-2984

The Garden Club will have a booth at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center spring sale March 5 and 6. The sale is a major fundraiser for the garden club. We are seeking donations of garden-related items. Please call me and I will pick up any donations, or they can be dropped off at the house, 5319 Shepard Ave., behind the school.

Keep in mind to come out and visit the spring sale. It's a great opportunity to purchase plants and garden items at discount.

Tending the Plants at Yermol Fountain

by Richard Vincent

For the past eight years, I have tended the garden around the fountain (as distinct from the plants around the CSU parking lot, where Lee Ruth works so hard). I intend to continue with the light and routine chores, such as weeding and dead-heading the roses; but age is urging me to drop the heavier work.

If anyone is willing to take over the demanding parts of gardening around the fountain, such as digging and pruning the tall shrubs and roses, please contact me at rcvincent01@gmail.com

Thanks to Dick Dotters for helping with this year's rose pruning.

River Park Mothers' Club

by Stephanie Ogren

The River Park Mothers' Club has been a River Park tradition and institution since 1954. The club has taken a lot of forms over the last 68 years and continues to evolve, not unlike the mothers in our neighborhood. With the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Mother's Club, clearly a mom-run but also a working mom-run, social organization, has had to find ways to survive amidst social distancing, quarantines, school closures, working-from-the dining table, and toilet paper shortages. We are proud to say we are still here, still prioritizing supporting one another, laughing with one another, and lending one another an extra coveted roll of toilet paper or rapid test. With all sincerity, we hope you join us. Whether you just moved to River Park or

have been here forever and not sure what we are or how to join, we hope you check us out on Facebook, send us an email, and drop into an event or ten over the next year.

We plan to have our annual install party, in one form or another, in February or March. Keep your eyes peeled! We are also welcoming new board members this year. If you are interested in helping us keep this River Park staple alive and thriving, please reach out.

For more information on membership, please visit us at <https://riverparkmothersclub.com/> or email us at riverparkmothersclub@gmail.com. You can also add us on Facebook by searching River Park Mothers' Club.



Author Mary Mackey has lived in River Park for 35 years, but much of her inspiration comes from her time living and traveling in the jungles of Central and South America. “The jungle,” she says, “is a significant inspiration for my novels and poetry.”

Mackey’s reference to “the jungle” includes her time living in remote regions of Costa Rica in the late 1960s and early 70s. While studying English Literature at Harvard, she got to know the “father of modern Ethnobotany”, Professor Richard Evans Schultes. “I was fascinated with plants,” she notes, “and became his student assistant. I might have pursued that field had I been better at math.”

These interests led her to a volunteer position as a biological research assistant, living in remote areas of Costa Rica. She describes her first time there as a “turning point” in her personal trajectory. “It was very remote. There was no contact, and I was literally living in the clouds.”

Mackey witnessed the ecological destruction taking place in Costa Rica and believed there would need to be a movement to save the planet. “I feel like I have been doing ‘climate change activism through art’ since 1966 when I saw the cloud forest being turned into charcoal. Mother Earth was being rapidly ravaged. In my writing, I try to invoke the beauty of the earth to preserve the gift of the planet.”

Her passions for the environment, feminism, and writing/literature yielded her first novel *Immersion*, published in 1972, which is considered the first “ecological feminist” novel. The book follows a young woman isolated at

a field station in a rain forest that is being gradually destroyed.

Mackey has been happy to see environmentalism become more mainstream over the last 50 years but hopes it is not too late. “Writing a doctoral dissertation about Charles Darwin, I realized that if we humans rapidly changed our environment, then we will no longer be adapted to it.”

As a woman at Harvard in the 1960s, Mackey also began a career as a trailblazer in the areas of gender equality and women’s studies. “At that time, Harvard was one of only two Ivy League schools that would accept female students. It seems crazy now because it wasn’t that long ago.”

After earning a PhD in Comparative Literature at University of Michigan, Mackey moved to the Bay Area. While interviewing for teaching positions, she was freelancing in film and became the only female sound recordist in the Bay Area at the time.

Then while teaching at Sonoma State University, Mackey applied for a position in the CSUS English Department. At the time, a professor in the English department was looking to create one of the first Women’s Studies programs. While Mackey was not originally applying for that role, after the first hire backed out, she got a call two weeks before the beginning of the semester with a job offer. “It was fortunate I got that phone call because otherwise I was headed back east for another teaching job, and I wanted to be in Northern California.”

Mackey continued to write after starting at CSUS in 1972. In addition to her 14 novels and seven volumes of poetry she has written screenplays, and she also writes humor under the pen name Kate Clemens.

Mackey’s work hit the New York Times Bestsellers’ list with the 1986 novel *A Grand Passion*, a generational story of three great ballerinas spanning from pre-revolutionary Russia to New York in the 1980s. The structure—following three generations—has a parallel to a course she taught at CSUS called “Grandmother, Mother and Me”, where students would write biographies of their mothers and grandmothers, and also their autobiographies. “It was my favorite course”, she says.

Mary Mackey (con't)

Mackey is also well known for her prehistoric fiction, particularly The Earthsong Series. The first volume of the series, *The Year the Horses Came*, is set at a time when male-god-worshipping nomads invaded goddess-worshipping Europe, and a love develops between two of the rivals. "The series," Mackey explains, "sees the Earth as a living being that brings forth life."

This series was recently "optioned" by a film studio that is considering turning it into a feature film trilogy.

For readers interested in Mackey's poetry, she recommends starting with *The Jaguars that Prowl Our Dreams*, an award-winning collection of her best poetry spanning 1974-2018.

For readers interested in Mackey's humor (under pen name Kate Clemens), she recommends *Sweet Revenge*, a romantic comedy about a woman dumped on her wedding day who creates a revenge consulting business. "Over the years, I have written comedy to cheer myself up," she says. "That book was written shortly after 9/11".

Not only is Mackey a writer, but she is also very active in the field of literature. In 1978, Mackey founded the Feminist Writers Guild with poets Adrienne Rich and Susan Griffin and novelist Valerie Miner. She has been recognized for her collective contributions to feminism and is considered one of the "Feminists who Made America."

Mackey retired from CSUS 2008. In addition to Women's Studies, she taught English, Creative Writing, and Film. She is one of the founders of the English Department Graduate Creative Writing Program. Her former students include CSUS's own Ryan Coogler, writer and director of *Black Panther*.

Mackey has lived River Park with her husband since 1987. "I love the easy access to the American River and the fact that when I was teaching, I could walk to my office at CSUS in 20 minutes."

For her next book, expected to be published later this year, Mackey shifted to a nonfiction memoir exploration of where creativity comes from, entitled *Creativity: Where Poems Begin*. In Mackey's case, she attributes some of her extraordinary creativity to extremely high fevers which, half a dozen times in her life, almost reached 107 degrees. "On rare occasions, since I was six months old, I have had high fevers that I believe have made me see the world differently. I occasionally see different kinds of light and golden leaves on winter trees. In one case, during one of these rare fevers, I talked in rhymed couplets for four hours."

Despite her broad array of work from novels to poetry to screenplays to humor, she believes all creative impulses comes from the same place. "Ideas come to me all the time," she says. "I write what I feel like writing and take on the subjects I feel like exploring".

Her advice for aspiring writers includes stopping while you are hot. "Give yourself something to go back to the next day." Also, for new writers, she says that it is important to acknowledge that your work will get better over time. "Don't get discouraged. Anything can be fixed and rewritten."

Mackey continues to return to the jungles that have inspired her work and recently traveled 1000 miles up the Amazon River. Her website that includes summaries of her works is <https://marymackey.com>. You can find electronic, audible, and hard copies of her book on Amazon.com and in bookstores. You can also follow her on Twitter at @MMackeyAuthor.

This article is part of a series that profiles artists and authors in River Park. I have received several leads for upcoming profiles, but please continue to send any leads to TonyMader@Gmail.com

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We chose Elise as our agent because of her specialty in the East Sacramento area and her years of experience. We found the entire selling process transparent, informative, and educational. We received her knowledge and valuable counsels at every critical step of the process, and we very much appreciated the prompt and frequent progress updates all throughout the month. – David and Cecilia S.



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