Wildlife organization educates the public about our furry and feathered friends

By Brandy Miceli, Managing Editor

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic severely limiting in-person learning, the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley (WCSV) has continued its free educational programs through virtual visits to classrooms and other online meetings.

"Teachers are looking for ways to keep their students engaged during distance learning," Michael Chen, Outreach Coordinator at WCSV said in a press release. "We are able to bring captivating video presentations to their classrooms that offer a change of pace during these difficult times."

Earlier this year, WCSV gave a presentation to students of Fusion School in Los Gatos.

"We presented an overview of what we do here at the hospital and the rehabilitation process, and the do's and don'ts with wildlife," Chen told The Outlook. "We explained what the students can do at home in their own neighborhoods to help do their part to keep wildlife wild and safe, and also safe for humans." A Virginia opossum in care at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley in San Jose, Calif., on Friday, Jan. 17, 2020. Photo by Michael Chen/Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley

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Students ride the wild roller coaster of ‘meme’ stock runs

By Jonathan Li & Nilay Mishra, Saratoga High School, originally published in the Falcon

On Jan. 13, the financial markets saw retail investors present the single largest, unified front of stock market history as redditors banded together on the subreddit /r/wallstreetbets (WSB) to "short-squeeze" a number of stocks. These individual investors banded together to buy hundreds of millions of dollars worth of stocks from companies like GameStop (GME), BlackBerry (BB), AMC Theatres (AMC), Nokia (NOK), driving them all to all-time highs.

Among these redditors were a few Saratoga High students.

"I think that this is definitely a historic moment," junior Peter Li said. "For centuries Wall Street has been dominating and manipulating the market."

While Li invested in GME long after the start of its historic run, he managed to make some profit from the stock's fluctuations.

"I've been a WSB member since 2019," Li said. "I thought it would be interesting to join in on this historic event where retail investors beat hedge funds for the first time. I also wanted to grab some quick cash since the stock price was so volatile."

Li's trade on GME made him $2,000 in one day, and changed his perspective on trading and investing in stocks. He took a small position relative to his total portfolio value, which is valued at over $100,000.

"Yes, Wall Street may prevail in this war, but this frenzy shows that this war between retail investors and institutions has just started," Li said. "I'm very interested to see what the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission will do about this."

For years, Li said that Wall Street and institutions have displayed corruption that have led to drastically decreased well-being for regular people. And everywhere, Wall Street has won, with little to no consequences. To Li, this is a turning point in this war.

In the years leading up to 2009, the government, banks, rating agencies, real estate agents and a number of institutions on Wall Street were involved.

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Los Gatos

Los Gatos welcomes new Youth Commissioners

The Town of Los Gatos welcomed 12 new members to its Youth Commission. Emmanuelle Arbitay, Maia Bernholz, Taj Chunawala, Kaelen Doughan, Colette Dougher, Anjali Kalia, Luke Lennox, Najma Mahboub, Megan McCurrie, Brady Mogensen, Ishani Sood and Olivia Vinckier were all appointed to serve either one or two-year terms on the commission.

Esha Bagora, Sasha Balasingham, Kamron Emami, Arsha Mathur, Jacob (Jack) Noymer, Lucas Raspe, Quincy Scott and Owen Thompson were each reappointed to one or two-year terms on the commission.

According to a Town of Los Gatos staff report, the Town Council Selection Committee, composed of Los Gatos Vice Mayor Rennie, Los Gatos Police Chief Peter Decena and Los Gatos Youth Commission Chair Sasha Ryu, interviewed 26 applicants for 20 available positions. The Town Council voted unanimously to approve the committee's appointments at its June 1 meeting.

'The Growth Coach' workshop in Los Gatos

Join the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce for a launch/ribbon-cutting ceremony for The Growth Coach San Jose South on June 17. Coach Ramon Ware will hold a workshop at 4 p.m. at the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce office, with the ribbon cutting and reception at 5 p.m.

This Growth Workshop is designed to show you how a Growth Coach works with you to help you achieve your goals. While

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Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley offers informative presentations

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to keep themselves and their families from coming into conflict with wild animals.” WCSV has presented virtually over 45 times, reaching over 1,300 students in Santa Clara County through individual classroom visits, and a district-wide after-school presentation open to all students and their families.

Presentations educate students on how to coexist peacefully with local wildlife, what to do if they find sick, injured, or orphaned wild animals, and what the rehabilitation and release process is at WCSV. Teachers have the option of requesting information tailored to a specific unit topic or area of interest.

Established in 1993, Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley (WCSV) is a wildlife rehabilitation hospital dedicated to providing sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife with exceptional free care, rehabilitation, and the opportunity for release. WCSV also aims to educate the public about coexisting peacefully with local wildlife. Each year, WCSV takes in over 6,000 native animals with the goal of rehabilitating and releasing them back into the wild.

The organization also gives presentations to adult groups, and has partnered with the Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council to host one for its members on June 30 at 3 p.m.

“People attending the presentation will learn about local wild animals, and the roles they play in our ecosystem,” Chen said. “We will discuss common issues related to wildlife that people may encounter and some of the myths about suburban wildlife, separating fact from fiction, and about peaceful coexistence with our wild neighbors. We will also go over the rehabilitation process at the hospital, and what to do if attendees encounter an injured, sick, or orphaned wild animal.”

The presentations that WCSV offers schools differ from those offered to older adults in that for our school presentations, WCSV tailors the information to the state curriculum requirements for each particular grade.

“For example, for third grade classes we talk about some of the interesting adaptations that certain animals have to help them thrive in the wild,” Chen said. “Recently, I did a presentation to a kindergarten class where I worked with the teacher to include an activity for the students to draw an animal, and we talked about the animals in each of the drawings.”

Presentations for adult groups go into more detail about possible human and wildlife interactions, and how to address any issues that may arise from these interactions to prevent conflict and allow everyone to coexist peacefully,” Chen said. “We cover common issues including birds hitting windows, animals orphaned by tree-trimming and how to deter unwanted wildlife from taking up residence in your yard.”

Chen provided some valuable insight into common animals that inhabit the Saratoga and Los Gatos area, and what to do if you encounter them.

“One of the most common animals in this area is the Virginia Opossum. They are actually very beneficial to our neighborhoods, eating many insects, snails, and slugs, serving as natural pest control—opossums eat all the ticks in the area and essentially eliminate the risk of contracting Lyme disease in the suburbs. They also cannot carry rabies, nor can they dig, laying on holes dug by other animals. The best thing to do when encountering them is to simply leave them alone. Opossums are nomadic and will move on.

Right now, many mallards are in the area, often with ducklings. Residents with pools and tall vegetation in their yards may find that a female mallard with her ducklings has moved in. The best way to keep them away from neighborhood cats and other possible suburban hazards is to cover the pools so that the mother will take the ducklings elsewhere in search of another water source. If one is unable to cover their pool, placing inflatable pool floats and beach balls into the water will also deter the ducks from staying. Sometimes the ducklings end up trapped in pools a makeshift ramp made from a plank of wood will allow the mother to lead her ducklings out of the water.

At this time of year, there are also many American crows lacking after their young fledglings. Fledgling crows are about the same size as the adults, but are only several weeks old and cannot yet fly; the flock will be nearby and will protect and care for the crow that is on the ground. As long as the young crow has no visible injuries, and is in the care of the flock, please leave the crow there! It will be able to fly away in a week or two.

If members ever have any questions about whether an animal may be sick, injured, or orphaned, please call us for advice at (408) 929-9453.” - Michael Chen

WCSV presents at no cost to all grades K-12, extracurricular groups, and adult groups. Interested parties can register online at www.wcsv.org/ outreach, or email Michael Chen: mchen@wcsv.org. For more information on WCSV, go to www.wcsv.org.

June 30 presentation info will be available at www.sascc.org