

CLIMATE CORNER

Steve Schiller: Piedmont's energized EV owner



Steve Schiller with his electric Chevrolet Bolt.

By Ronna Kelly

As a clean energy expert working on climate change for 25 years, Steve Schiller knows he has to “walk the walk.” Even he didn’t think he could get by with only one car that was all electric.

When the lease was up on the family SUV, he and his wife Kristine decided they would try getting by with just their Chevy Bolt for a month rather than looking for another car — one of their least favorite activities.

That month-long experiment has now extended into a second year.

“We’re getting by fine with one car,” said Schiller, an empty nester who acknowledges his situation may be fairly unique. “My fun fact is that the best way to reduce your energy consumption is to have your kid move away,” he joked.

Steve and Kristine chose the

Bolt because it’s a great commuter car and perfect for any outing in the greater Bay Area. The Bolt also has a long enough range — about 250 miles on one charge — for an occasional work trip to Sacramento. Plus, access to HOV lanes on the freeway can be a real treat during commute hours.

“It’s actually really fun to drive. It’s quite quick and peppy. It handles well and is comfortable. And there’s essentially no maintenance,” he said. “You get to reduce your environmental footprint and have some fun, carefree driving.”

Schiller charges the Bolt with clean energy from solar panels he installed on his roof nearly 10 years ago. He estimates he spends only \$200 a year on electricity from the grid, and that’s largely because of charging the car (and a hot tub).

He admits his Bolt isn’t as

sleek as a Tesla but doesn’t see that as a disadvantage.

“I take night classes at Laney in ceramics and don’t have to worry about parking a fancy car,” he says. “It’s a very practical car.”

Seeing more electric cars in Piedmont

Schiller served on the Piedmont Climate Action Plan Task Force and is an expert on clean energy policy and implementation. Electrifying the transportation sector is key to addressing climate change, he stated, noting that about 40% of greenhouse gas emissions in California and about 42% of Piedmont’s emissions are associated with transportation, mostly passenger cars.

“Passenger vehicles are a big deal,” he says. “Eventually we have to get rid of gasoline as the primary transportation fuel source for personal vehicles and trucks.”

He acknowledged that in addition to people buying electric vehicles, there is a need for more infrastructure — namely charging stations — to support widespread adoption of electric vehicles. And that’s why he supports a proposed pilot project to install seven EV fast-charging stations in three different locations in Piedmont at no cost to the city.

“The bottom line is you have to build the infrastructure,” he said.

He believes the fast-charging stations may be most valuable for people like teachers and city staff who drive to Piedmont regularly for work.

“You need to try projects and experiment to see what technologies and strategies will be adopted as cost-effective and convenient common practices,” he explained. “Piedmont is a good community for innovation.”

To watch a video of interviews with Steve Schiller and other electric vehicle owners in Piedmont, visit <https://youtu.be/OE3a9yTBeTA>.

Climate Corner is a collaboration between the city of Piedmont and Piedmont Connect, a local environmental nonprofit, to raise awareness about climate actions in our community. If you have suggestions for a Climate Corner article, please email Ronna Kelly at ronna.abramson@gmail.com.



Chabot Space and Science Center will celebrate its 20th anniversary on Skyline Blvd. with online events today through Friday, August 19-21.

Chabot Space & Science Center celebrating 20th anniversary this week

By Jay Russell

This week Chabot Space & Science Center is celebrating its 20th anniversary on Skyline Boulevard in Oakland, and 137 years in Oakland.

The festivities begin tonight, Wednesday, August 19 at 8 p.m., with a virtual program marking its long history in Oakland. View rare photos and learn about Chabot’s exciting history.

The major event for its 20th anniversary will be Chabot’s Star Party Spectacular on Friday, August 21 at 8 p.m. Join astronomer Ben Burrell for engaging STEM activities, a virtual dance party, and appearances from leading scientists, Fritz the resident robot, and Executive Director Adam Tobin.

An online silent auction to benefit STEM education at the Center Chabot’s special silent auction will continue until September 1. Items to bid on include private telescope viewings, prints from the Luminous Moon exhibition, a party with a scientist and an exclusive Hike and Sip event.

Throughout August Chabot Space & Science Center encour-

ages the community to share their favorite memories from the past 20 years on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter with #ChabotSpaceMemories.

Chabot Observatory opened in 1883 at Lafayette Square in Oakland as the official timekeeper of the city. In 1918, Chabot moved outside the city center to Mountain Boulevard for clearer skies and astronomical visibility. It expanded with a 90-seat planetarium, science labs and classrooms.

In collaboration with NASA, Chabot Space & Science Center moved to its current location on Skyline Boulevard in August 2000. Since then, the Center has grown with interactive unique exhibits, otherworldly NASA artifacts and cutting edge technology to drive scientific curiosity.

For details on the events call 510-336-7300. Chabot Space & Science Center is located at 10000 Skyline Blvd. in the Oakland hills. For more information on events see: <https://chabotspace.org/events/events-listing/>. To sign up for and bid on items in the silent auction, see: www.paybee.io/quickpay.html?handle=chabotspace

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