

City Council agrees, "IT'S A PROJECT"

LA City Council turns "thumbs down" to Home Depot remodeling permit

By Katharine Russ

Los Angeles – August 15, Amidst a sea of lawyers and lobbyists, the Los Angeles City Council agreed, with the PLUM Committee's recommendation, made during their hearing on August 7, that the Los Angeles City Council declare the Home Depot a "project." By doing so, the Company would be required to go through a new permit process. Dozens of Sunland-Tujunga residents packed the Council Chambers cheering for the 12-1 vote delivered by the Council. Councilmembers Reyes was excused from the 15 member Council and Councilmember Alarcon was excused before the voting process began to attend another function. Councilmember Cardenas who intently grilled the departments of Building and Safety, City Planning, the Associate Zoning Administrator and the City Attorney as to who knew what and when, cast the lone "No" vote.

"Today we made it clear that every business in Los Angeles, no matter how large or how small, must play by the same rules," said Councilwoman Wendy Greuel, who represents the Sunland-Tujunga community where the proposed Home Depot site is located. "I was confident that once my Council colleagues reviewed the facts of this case, they would join me and the community members, in demanding environmental and traffic reviews to mitigate the level of construction proposed by

Home Depot at this site." During her allotted ten-minute speech, Greuel spoke of her community's "Foothill Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan," which is unique to only the Sunland-Tujunga community, whose rules and regulations must be followed by Home Depot. Their failure to do so is what triggered opposition to the warehouse by their community.

Joe Barrett, No2Home Depot chairman, said, "We are happy that the City Council concurred with the findings of the PLUM committee, the Director of City Planning, the Zoning Administrator, the Department of Building & Safety, and also ruled that Home Depot's proposed store is indeed a "Project". The community of Sunland-Tujunga deserves to have public input into the effects this store would have on our area, and Home Depot should be held accountable for their actions. If Home Depot is able to mitigate their negative impacts, and those impacts are dramatic, then and only then, can they proceed with this Project."

For three years residents of Sunland-Tujunga have been fighting the proposed building of a Home Depot store. Residences on three sides border the 11-acre area of land. Approximately 450 feet behind the site is Apperson Elementary School. The Haines Canyon Flood Control Channel is 10-15 feet from one side and a Sen-



Community members gather with Wendy Greuel in front of the old K-Mart site prior to the City Council meeting on Aug. 15.

ior Mobile Home Park abuts another side. Controversy is no stranger to the hardware giant as a growing number of communities are saying NO to Home Depot.

The heated debates over the potential hazards to school children, the negative impacts on many businesses and increased traffic in the area have had residents showing up to Community meetings by the hundreds in opposition to Home Depot.

Home Depot's attorney, Lucinda Starrett, debunked these concerns, saying the store has gone to great

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Approximately 100 signs were put out the night before their community protest rally and someone pulled them up. They were discovered in the dumpster in the morning of July 26 by Kohl protesters.

Kohls Presenting its Case to Historical Old Granada

Is Big Always Better?

Hills

By Katharine Russ

By all accounts, Kohl's is a thriving business, with stores in nearly every state of the union. The chain's website reveals that Kohl's had opened 28 stores in California in 2003, "marking a coast-to-coast presence for the company for the first time in its history." Plans to soon add a new store in the historical area of Old Granada Hills has most of the residents fuming. The approximate boundaries of Old Granada Hills are from San Jose St. north to Rinaldi St., and from Louise Ave. west to Zelzah Ave.

The Granada Hills-Knollwood Community Plan indicates that "The Community's commercial districts, including the central business district on Chatsworth Street, shall remain

small in scale and be developed in a manner to meet the needs of a local service area". LAMC Section 12.21.1.A.5 states "All nonresidential buildings constructed on the property shall have a total gross floor area of not greater than 240,000 sq. ft."

The present Granada Village Shopping Center is approximately 231,000 sq.ft. and developers want to increase the size to 276,000 sq. ft. to accommodate Kohl's 95,000 sq. ft. store. Assembly Bill 178 (1999), provides that this Kohl's would fit the definition of a "big box retailer" whose store would be greater in size than 75,000 sq. ft., but some City Officials disputed that definition. (According to AB178(1) "big box retailer" means a store greater than 75,000 sq. ft. of gross buildable area that will generate sales for use tax pursuant to Part 1.5 [commencing with Section 7200] of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code. Approved by the Governor, September 22, 1999). Frank Quon, Hearing Officer for the South Valley, cited LAMC Section 12.24.U.14 that provides under Major Development Projects for "100,000 square feet or more of floor area in other nonresidential or non-warehouse uses". The definition was amended by Ordinance 176.166 which says, "An ordinance establishing regulations of

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Wealtha Pit Continues to be "The Pits"

Shadow Hills - Overshadowed by the afternoon Home Depot hearing, another developer-gone-wrong appeared on the morning of August 7, before the Department of Building and Safety Commissioners. The project that has become known as the "Wealtha Pit" was being considered for a new set of haul routes.

The property owner, Moshe Tomich did not appear before the commission. Rami Vardi of Forum Engineering applied on behalf of Form Engineering- a variant of the former company name that had operated an aggregate mining, crushing and sale operation from the residential building site.

The Commission staff report authorized removal of an additional seventeen thousand plus cubic yards away from the site and permission to haul in over fifty thousand yards of material to fill the excavation holes. The report also authorized a haul route for the large boulders to a location in Santa Clarita. Operating hours will be limited from 9 am to 6 pm with no weekend work. Forum Engineering will have 120 days to complete the haul work.

During the hearing Mr. Vardi requested that he be able to vary the route at his discretion, which was denied by the commission.

"The applicant enriched himself with the proceeds from an aggregate mining operation for over two years at the expense of the health and safety of the neighbors," Mary Benson reminded the commission. "There must be a single entity designated to be responsible for renewed operations. The health and safety of the neighborhood must not again be put at risk."

Other community members, Debbie Stevens and Katie Parkin also spoke. Debbie Stevens specifically asked for continuous monitoring by Department Inspectors. "We need accountability," said Parkin, a homeowner who suffered loss of family and property during the last excavation.

Responding to community requests regarding their concerns, Commission president, Andrew Adelman, added that the new hauling permits be accompanied by a full time Building and Safety Inspector at the owner's expense. "That will insure the project will be held to what the Commission has permitted and no more," remarked Adelman. Benson agreed that the monitoring was absolutely necessary.

PLAYING FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE RULES

The "Wealtha Pit" like the Home Depot project is just another example of a long and growing list of projects where the permits issued by Building and Safety don't begin to describe the activities undertaken by those who apply for the permits. There are a number of reasons developers get away with playing fast and loose with the City's Department of Building and Safety and the ordinances and codes passed by Councilmembers.

- Developer facilitation is the primary function of the City's Department today. Permit and inspection fees are used to fund the Department.
- Code Enforcement fines go back to the City General fund.
- The same inspectors do double duty for permit inspections and condition enforcement
- There are no rules or guidelines for inspectors when there are "special" environmental conditions for habitat mitigation or trails or wetland protection.
- The maximum fine for violating a condition is \$1,000 per violation (not per day)

Developers are taking advantage of the Building and Safety Department and it's outdated fine structure which has not been updated for decades. San Diego County has fines up to \$5,000 that are assessed "Per Day" until the violation is corrected.

That means a single citation from an inspector - in the case of the "Wealtha Pit"- could have amounted to \$150,000 in a month's time. Fines this large would not be seen by a developer as a cost of doing business. It would get their attention because it is an amount large enough not to be just another "builder's cost" factored into the project.

Condition enforcement and modernization of the department were reasons the community asked City Controller Laura Chick to audit the Department of

Building and Safety. Updating the fine structure and using fines to fund enforcement actions should be included in those recommendations.

NVR Writer Katherine Russ



North Valley Reporter welcomes to its staff, Katharine Russ, a freelance journalist with extensive experience in addressing important issues common to small American communities. She has written for a number of community news organizations across the country and her articles have been read distinguished newspapers in several states.

She has been a guest speaker on Fox News Network, interviewed on ABC Radio Network News and has provided insights in roundtable discussions for NPR radio. Ms. Russ is also authoring an upcoming book titled "Eminent Distain" she is currently writing under her maiden because of the controversy her book will generate. Email:katharine.russ@charter.net.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Councilmember Greuel Champions Hillside Protection



Councilmember
Wendy Greuel

Continuing her efforts to defend the integrity of Los Angeles neighborhoods, Councilwoman Wendy Greuel led the City Council to unanimously approve a new ordinance that will close loopholes on density regulations and

limit the number of homes that can be built in the City's hillside communities.

"Too often in our City, we see planning disputes escalate because developers and community members are interpreting the slope-density ordinance differently," said Councilwoman Greuel. "The new ordinance will clarify density entitlements and more thoroughly protect the safety and integrity of our hillside neighborhoods."

Councilwoman Greuel introduced the new measure and pushed it through the City Council after a lengthy battle against a developer who wanted to build homes across 887 acres of untouched landscape in Canyon Hills. The development is off La Tuna Canyon Blvd in Sunland-Tujunga and is within the Scenic Corridor Specific Plan area. The original proposals for the development clearly showed it would have been highly visible and permanently blemish the spectacular scenic view of the hills currently enjoyed by everyone who drives the 210 Freeway between Sunland Blvd. and Lowell Ave. It would also have had a bigger negative impact on wildlife that inhabits that area, which is part of the "Rim of the Valley" proposal for wildlife preservation.

According to the developer's calculations, 169 lots were permitted across the steep mountainside. Community members produced several other slope-density calculations which showed the number of buildable lots ranging from 45 to 109.

After extensive negotiations, Councilwoman Greuel was able to preserve 85% of the land in question as permanent open space. But much of the anxiety and concern among community members could have been prevented if the City had employed clearer slope-den-

sity regulations. The new measure will prevent many of these battles across the city.

"Councilwoman Greuel's ordinance will preserve more of the natural hillside, allow for a more streamlined and efficient process as the City Planning Department evaluates potential development projects in hillside communities", said Principal Urban Designer Simon Pastucha. "This will provide us with a clear set of standards to use and reduce confusion and bureaucracy in the planning process."

The City's slope-density regulations were established to reduce the density of housing in hillside areas. Generally, that means the steeper the slope, the fewer the number of permitted lots.

The new ordinance amends the Los Angeles Municipal Code to clarify the way slope-density can be calculated in order to provide a definitive density number for each project and to minimize grading, drainage and natural land alterations. In order to improve accuracy, the ordinance will now require that a civil engineer or land surveyor licensed by the State of California prepare all maps used in for slope-density calculations. The ordinance also requires that all maps and calculation be made available to the public and subject to verification.

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"Bigger"—*continued from page 1*

"Superstore" in Economic Assistance Areas in the City of Los Angeles." Most would agree that Granada Hills is anything but an economic assistance area.

In addition, several variances would have to be granted in order to accommodate a building of this magnitude. Not only would the size of the project increase by approximately 40,000 sq. ft., the parking area would decrease by 10 percent. On a busy shopping day, where would that leave Kohl's patrons to park? Los Angeles Administrative Code Section 562(c) states, among its other articles that all the following findings shall be made before a variance may be granted: "Article (4) --that the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located; and "Article (5) -- that the granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan. A variance shall not be used to grant a special privilege or to permit a use substantially inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the same zone and vicinity."

In nearly all large cities, opponents criticize "big boxes" for being visually overbearing, wasteful of open space, and deleterious to community and small businesses. Proponents point to consumer benefits of greater convenience and lower cost of goods, and the ability of such stores to draw in tax-generating consumers from a wide area. But opponents contend that big box stores, such as Kohl's, often don't share a commitment to community betterment. They say this has been demonstrated in community after community where big box stores shut down when the bottom line got too small.

They sight examples of communities where "big box" retailers build stores, how traffic concerns increase substantially, and they feel Granada Hills is certainly no exception. Most of the streets within this community are two-lane residential streets that would not support the influx of daily shoppers that a Kohl's Department Store would bring. There are seven schools in the immediate vicinity and they believe their children would be impacted by the significant increase of traffic in the area. Potentially, the added cost to widen streets to accommodate this development would be an additional hefty burden to tax payers, and would be even more detrimental to the safety of residents as well as harmful to property values and the community, as a whole.

Jim Summers, President of the Granada Hills

South Neighborhood Council, first learned about plans to build the Kohl's store late last year. He said, "The proposed Kohl's is really a thin disguise for an overbuilding project designed to increase profit margins for the corporate property owner, Regency Centers, by requesting from L.A. City officials an unusually large amount of entitlements in order to skirt the laws that were enacted to preserve the quality and character of our neighborhood. It is a Big Box regional store that just does not belong in our neighborhood."

Nancy Norris, Attorney and Stakeholder, said, "The Department of Transportation's traffic assessment was missing some key information, the dates and times that traffic counts were taken. The Traffic Impact Analysis done by the applicant's retained expert was not part of the public file at the time of the April 30, 2007 public hearing. The public was denied a chance to respond or be heard on what we view as inaccurate, incomplete and selective data used to prepare the Traffic Impact Analysis by the applicant. For example, Parking demand and accumulation were studied in Fall 2005. The population and traffic in our area has increased dramatically since 2005, due to building of new developments north of Rinaldi. Traffic counts were also done in Fall 2005, and the data is not accurate due to the same reasons. If accurate and complete information and data were used, the traffic impact would be significantly greater." Ms. Norris had tried, unsuccessfully, since May 2007 to get this information from Regency Center's principal representatives and Frank Quon, the hearing officer. The Department of Transportation (DOT) furnished a copy of the report just recently.

The California Public Records Act provides that access for records is immediate and allowed at all times during business hours. However, stakeholders say they have had a difficult time in obtaining Traffic Impact Analysis and the Initial Environmental Survey and Checklist completed by the applicant, Regency Centers, and approved by L.A. City in October, 2006. It was not made known to residents until it appeared on the first Public Hearing Notice which was posted only a week before that April 30, 2007 meeting.

Councilman Greig Smith (District 12) supports the project. He said, "I've lived in the neighborhood for 35 years, when this shopping center used to have a police station, a movie theater and a bowling alley, so I know that the Kohl's at this location would have far less impact on traffic than the original tenants, for whom the center was designed. The shopping center was built in the 1960s and it is due for a facelift. As part of a general overhaul of this aging shopping center, the developer will be making improvements to the

parking lot that will benefit the existing tenants. Kohl's did a lot of community outreach, and many people in the community were supportive of the project and said they'd look forward to shopping there. The new Kohl's will be a very nice store that will be only slightly larger than the existing Ralph's."

Councilman Smith maintains, "Contrary to the claims of some critics, this will not be a big-box store. It will be far below the City's legal definition of a big-box store, which is 150,000 square feet. The nearby Target store is more than 140,000 square feet, and residents did not object and it did not require a special EIR. A traffic analysis was made to measure traffic impact at a half dozen intersections nearby, in the morning and evening, and only one intersection had an impact in the evening. The concerns about a heavy impact on traffic in the area have not turned out to be factual. There are a number of variances for the project, but no decisions have been made on them because they still must go before the Planning Commission where they will all be thoroughly vetted."

Maria Fisk, Old Granada Hills Resident Group Board Member, said, "More than 600 petition signatures and 340 letters of opposition have been collected and forwarded to Councilman Greig Smith, and Los Angeles Dept. of City Planning."

Regency Center's, Enrique Legaspi, said in a written statement that, "We are proud to have over 400 supporters who are Granada Hills' residents, including many who live adjacent to the property, who have expressed their support for the project. We are, and have always been, committed to transparent and ongoing communications with community members and local business owners. We are confident that this is a good project and one that Granada Hills will be proud of."

But Steve Bidermann contends, "At the Kohls presentation to the community, a GHSNC sponsored special meeting where over 160 members of the public were present, only 3 approved of the project.

At the first public hearing of the Planning Department, April 30, 2007, over 60 members of the public were present, 30 spoke against the project – there were no public speakers in favor of the project.

The proposed Kohl's store has become a "bone of contention" with the majority of stakeholders but, ironically, no one seems to be contesting the actual building of a Kohl's. Their arguments lie with the size and design of the store which many call "overbuilding" and the traffic issues it will bring to an already congested area. In the end, the courts may be separating fact from fiction regarding Kohl's fate in Old Granada Hills.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Panorama City Neighborhood Council

By Tony Wilkinson
Interim President

HUGE CLEANUP ORGANIZED

The newly certified Panorama City Neighborhood Council's Interim Board organized the largest street cleanup project in recent Panorama City history on Saturday, August 11. Aided by city crews, over 100 volunteers spread out across streets in Panorama City's center-west section to pick up trash and remove graffiti.

The cleanup focused on the residential streets west of Van Nuys Boulevard. Richard Alarcon of City Council District Seven sponsored the PCNC cleanup project.

Both the Neighborhood Council and the City Councilman are concerned about the pace of the North Hills "Safer Cities Initiative" (which also covers center-west Panorama City). At a press conference at the August 11 cleanup Day, Alarcon and Deputy City Attorney Mark Salz announced an expanded cleanup program. City crews will clean different areas of the Safer Cities Initiative one nearly every week through September.

An article in the Daily News last month contrasted the significant impact that a Safer Cities Initiative had in improving conditions in downtown Los Angeles with a lesser impact from the North-Hills/Panorama City program. The article noted that the program brought 50 additional police officers to the downtown SCI area. What it failed to note was that the North Valley's program added only eight.

LAPD's Metro comes to Mission Hills: With urging from Councilmember Alarcon, 50 officers from LAPD's elite Metropolitan Division will be assigned to the Mission Area police station in late August. One patrol officer told us there aren't enough lockers at Mission Station to handle belongings for that many new officers. The force won't be a permanent addition. Nevertheless, elected officials, city workers and neighborhood council volunteers who are struggling to improve the quality of life in North Hills and west Panorama City welcome this police support.

First Election Underway: The Panorama City Neighborhood Council will hold its first election for all 21 seats on September 8. Nineteen candidates filed in time to make the ballot. Write-in candidates can file up to September 5. Terms in this first election are staggered, with 10 seats getting "one-year" terms and 11 seats getting "two year" terms.

If the elected council must fill two vacant seats by appointment, they can't be home owners. There are already 10 resident-owners running. Council bylaws say resident-owners, resident-renters or business/worker stakeholders can't form a majority on the Board of Directors. Organizers claim this helps to assure that the council represents all major stakeholder groups.

Polling will be open from 10 am to 7 pm on Saturday, September 8, at Panorama Presbyterian Church, 14201 Roscoe Boulevard, Panorama City, CA 91402. Parking is off the alley that runs behind the church buildings. Stephen M. Box is the Independent Election Administrator. Jan Brown (818-785-5624) heads the election committee. Volunteers to help with the election are needed and welcome.

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Sun Valley Chamber to Host Cruise

Save the dates of February 29 thru March 3, 2008. The Sun Valley Area Chamber of Commerce has made arrangements for a fund raising Cruise to Ensenada and is inviting other Chambers in the region to participate according to Jesse Dizon, Executive Director of the SVANC. Each Chamber will keep the funds from their own members. In addition to the built in contribution, the Chamber will receive \$5.00 per day (a total of \$15.00) per person from Carnival. For further information Call Jesse Dizon at 818-768-2014, or email: executivedirector@chambersunvalleyca.org, or visit their website: www.chambersunvalleyca.org

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Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council

by Royan Herman
Vice President, Communicatins

Although much is going on within the boundaries of Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council, nothing comes close to what STNC achieved this past week. At least in the short term, their victory for community preservation against the giant and, frankly unethical, Home Depot is incredible. To realize that our local volunteers who comprise STNC actually forced the City to make the community and its people a priority over the wishes of tax base development is virtually unprecedented and we at Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council congratulate you.

What we, down the road in Foothill Trails, still fail to understand is why Home Depot would even want to open a warehouse facility in a residential neighborhood. We can all presently drive to a Home Depot within 10 or 15 minutes for anything we need in the way of building materials.

The lead OP ED editorial in the August 19 Sunday LA Times revolved around the success of right minded volunteers in the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council. The writer even holds out hope that just maybe NC Board members are not addle brained, one issue, NIMBY's he expected to see in every board room. Such an opinion is disingenuous, but widely held by the vast majority of decision makers with the City bureaucracy.

It is the sincere hope of this NC that all who read that editorial and this column come to realize that apathy of the citizenry is the ultimate weapon of those who would willfully damage our communities for profit. Have you ever wondered how many of those profiteers, when they return to their own communities, are activists to protect the congenial environs of their areas after damaging those of another? Here is a prediction. Even if Home Depot FINALLY recognizes that they have thoroughly alienated locals who have long been their customers, they may have the last word. How? They can still hurt Sunland-Tujunga by paying the monthly cost of their 20 year lease and preventing anything from going onto the land. This writer has come to believe they are prepared to be at least that ugly without blinking an eye because, to them, we are only as good as the size of our wallets and our quality of life is just not their concern. Hmmm!! Isn't it building materials to improve lives that they sell?

One of the most important jobs of the Neighborhood Council is to bring the people who would change our communities before its people. In many circumstances those proposing change can be convinced to include blending alterations. Those who cannot, take a page from STNC. We certainly have.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council



Cindy Cleghorn,
STNC Chairwoman

I am excited to see that our efforts as a neighborhood council led to the City Council's vote to declare the proposed Home Depot in Sunland a "project". The STNC has served as a conduit to our stakeholders in achieving a common goal for our community regarding this critical quality of life issue in Sunland-Tujunga. As our Councilmember Wendy Greuel stated "...all businesses must follow the rules whether big or small". Our Foothill Blvd. Corridor Specific Plan guides the future development and improvements in and around our commercial corridor. Reaching the "project" determination would not be possible without the work of the No2Home Depot Campaign, our neighbors and many neighborhood councils throughout the City.

A big thank you to the Lions Club for their hard work with organizing and hosting the Annual Watermelon Festival. It was great fun with lots of watermelon! We hope you had a chance to stop by the STNC table and meet Dan McManus, STNC Outreach Chair

and Lloyd Hitt, DAC member. Here are just a few of the things the Lions Club does: Sunland-Tujunga Lions Club helps to provide support to many Sunland-Tujunga youth and community activities, help with disaster relief, and to support many health and vision conservation programs in California, across the nation and throughout the world. Also support to McGroarty Arts Center, Fourth of July Rotary Club Parade, Fireworks Festival at VHHS, Health Fair at the Harvest Festival at Tierra del Sol, S-T Chamber of Commerce, Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council, Christmas and Thanksgiving Baskets, Sunland-Tujunga Temporary Aid Center. S-T Lions, congratulations on another great event for our community!

Join us at the next STNC Meeting on Wednesday, September 12, 2007 at Mt. Gleason Middle School, 10965 Mt. Gleason, Sunland -- starts at 7 p.m. Visit the STNC web site for details and agenda at www.stnc.org



Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council

By Tina C. Cameron
SVANC Corresponding Secretary

Poly High School experienced the desecration of 100 trees, all of which were planted within the last three years by the Rotary Club. This is the second time this has occurred, the last time about a year and a half ago. Fortunately, most of the trees can be saved. Alvin Kelly from Councilman Cardenas' office assured the council that any dead trees would be replaced. Tree People are making themselves available to assist and consult on the issue. One has to wonder what kind of an idiot would do something like this. Sun Valley Rotary Club, Neighborhood Council, Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations have been knocking themselves out to beautify Sun Valley. Tree People, in partnership with Parks & Rec's will be holding a FREE Community Greening Workshop Saturday September 15, in Sun Valley, to educate people about planting and maintaining trees for the long-term. In attendance will be a fruit tree coordinator, as the goal is to plant 3000+ fruit trees. Fruit trees will be given away at this event. The workshop hours are 8:45am – 3:00pm. For admission information, contact Linda Eremita at 818-623-4878 or email: trainings@treepeople.org.

An expansion is to take place at Poly High School, which will be the new home of Byrd Middle School. Once the middle school is completed at Poly and children begin attending, Byrd will be torn down and made into a High School. \$20,000,000 has been allotted to design the school. Mary Benson, Vice President of the SVANC and the 4H Club are actively involved in landscape projects at Poly.

The Land Use Committee of the SVANC has been actively working with developers in designing new parks over decades old landfills that are now ready for other usage. Some of the ideas being looked at are a motor cross park and a skate park as Sun Valley has a large number of skateboarding teenagers.

The Sun Valley Neighborhood Council meets the second Tuesday of every month at Villa Scalabrini Retirement Center, at 10631 Vinedale Street, Sun Valley CA 91352, 6:30pm-8:30pm.

"It's A Project"—continued from page 1

lengths to insure that Home Depot was an asset for the community. Richard Greene, head of their Real Estate Division said that Home Depot would bring jobs and benefits to the community. The battle turned ugly when a Home Depot attorney accused residents of Sunland-Tujunga of being racially biased against Home Depot because immigrant day workers gather at their sites. Community members charged that Home Depot played "dirty pool" by spending thousands of dollars to pay, feed and bus alleged supporters from outside the Sunland-Tujunga community, donned in "Thank You Home Depot" orange t-shirts to show support for the new store. (In August 2004, however, Home Depot agreed to pay \$5.5 million to settle discrimination claims brought by workers in Colorado based on gender, race and nationality.) Home Depot also charged that Do It Center, a minor competitor who owns a total of 13 stores, of unfair competition and claimed they were funding the No2Home Depot Campaign. It's a fact that most of the N2Home Depot funds come from community supporters.

Residents cried "foul" against racism as well and argued that nothing was further from the truth. Home Depot is simply not the kind of store the community needs. They have hardware, carpet, tiles, nurseries and other home improvement type stores that will be negatively affected by Home Depot. But, more importantly, there is no general merchandise store closer than 15 miles for residents to shop. Some residents have to take busses that take in excess of four hours in travel time to buy necessities for their families in neighboring cities.

To recap meetings relative to Home Depot's permit for the remodeling of the old K-Mart site: on July 19 the North Valley Area Planning Commission (NVAPC) granted Home Depot's appeal overturning the action, previously granted on March 9, 2007 to the community organization Sunland-Tujunga Alliance, by Assistant Zoning Administrator, Gary Booher. The July 19 NVAPC meeting lasted over 7 hours and was attended

by over 1000 people when the NVAPC voted 3-2 to grant the appeal.

On July 31, the City Council adopted the motion by Wendy Greuel asserting jurisdiction over the North Valley Area Planning Commission's action to grant the appeal filed by the Home Depot. The decision was unanimous (12-0) and referred to the Council Subcommittee on Planning and Land Use (PLUM). PLUM agreed with the Councilwoman and voted to designate the Home Depot as a "Project" subject to review and regulation of the Los Angeles City Council.

Pursuant to Section 245 of the Los Angeles City Charter, District 2 Councilwoman Wendy Greuel moved the Los Angeles City Council assert jurisdiction over the action taken by the NVAPC Greuel charged "that they erred and abused their discretion in granting the appeal." She further moved for a full and complete hearing before the City Council on August 7. Councilwoman Greuel said that the issue at hand was whether the Home Depot remodeling work constituted a "project" or "Tenant Improvement." Under the "project" designation the City could require Environmental Impact Report which includes traffic mitigation, regulation of deliveries, and hours of operation, etc. During her testimony, Councilmember Greuel recalled a comment made by community supporter Tomi Lynn Bowling to the commissioners at the PLUM hearing. "It talks like a duck and walks like a duck, it's a duck and Home Depot is a duck"

According to Paula Warner, Sunland Tujunga Alliance, No Home Depot Campaign, and Sunland-Tujunga resident since 1987, "The Sunland-Tujunga Alliance, No Home Depot Campaign has submitted over 4,000 Boycott Pledges in 2005. Also, a Petition to oppose Home Depot with over 2,000 signatures in 2006, and 214 personal letters opposing Home Depot were collected in 2007. Our grassroots campaign collected the Boycott Pledges in a little over two and a half months and the Petition signatures in about 2 weeks (most were gathered at the November 7, 2006 town hall meeting). Pledges and Petitions were placed in many local businesses who support our effort, and were brought to var-

ious neighborhood festivals, such as the Watermelon Festival and our Neighborhood Council meetings."

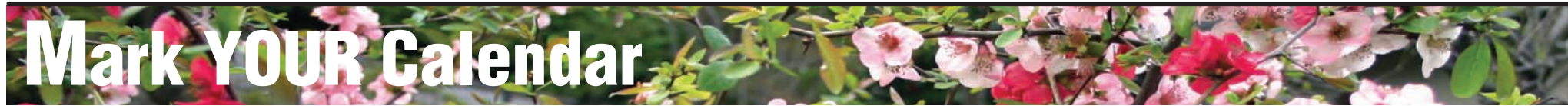
Kathryn Gallagher, spokesperson for Home Depot during the meeting maintains, "The Home Depot has been working with the City to remodel an existing building in the Sunland Tujunga area for the last 2.5 years. The remodel work was authorized by the City's Building Department, in concurrence with the Planning Department, with the issuance of a building permit. Two outside technical building experts agreed with this determination, which had also been affirmed by the North Valley Area Planning Commission. We have cooperated fully with the City, the building department and the planning department to get the necessary permit required to remodel this vacant store." The Department of Building and Safety admitted that they had been working with the company to help them avoid the "Project" designation in order to bypass the requirement for an environmental assessment.

The Foothills Blvd Corridor Specific Plan defines a project is as "the construction, erection, structural alteration of, or addition to, any building or structure, including architectural projections attached to exterior walls or roof structures, which requires the issuance of a building permit or a change of use permit."

The Sunland-Tujunga community will now be entitled to an environmental review on issues such as traffic; air quality and noise before building permits are issued. The Planning Department will dictate the parameters of these reviews.

"The Home Depot will continue to work to bring jobs, good benefits, and revitalization to this community" said Kathryn Gallagher, but many wonder if the jobs lost when other businesses are forced to close will create an impasse between the Home Depot ideology and what the reality would really be. For the time being, residents of Sunland-Tujunga can breathe a sigh of relief.

Katharine Russ (katharine.russ@charter.net) is an independent writer for community news organizations throughout the United States and author of the upcoming book, Eminent Disdain.



Mark YOUR Calendar

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Share your events with your neighbors through: calendar@northvalleyreporter.com FREE!

Arl - Arleta, **G.H.** - Granada Hills, **K.C.** - Kagel Canyon, **LA** - Los Angeles, **LVT** - Lake View Terrace, **LTC** - La Tuna Canyon, **M.H.** - Mission Hills, **NR** - Northridge, **NVCH** - North Valley City Hall, **Pac** - Pacoima, **S-T** - Sunland-Tujunga, **S.V.** - Sun Valley, **Syl** - Sylmar, **V.N.** - Van Nuys

Thursday, August 23

Community Plan Review
Van Gogh Elem. School
17160 Van Gogh, GH
6 - 7:30 pm

Panorama City NC
Knob Hill Bank.Center
8229 Van Nuys, VN
5:30 pm 785-9355

Sylmar NC
Bible Baptist Church
13724 Fenton, Syl
6:30 pm 8737

Friday, Aug. 24

Steak Dinner
Elks Lodge 2098
11037 Commerce, S-T
\$10 6 pm 352-2098

Andres Pico Adobe
10940 Sepulveda, M.H.
Tours, 1 - 4 pm 365-7810

Saturday, Aug. 25

SHPOA BBQ
Tierra del Sol
9919 Sunland- SH
6-9 pm Resv.353-5534

First Aid & CPR Class
by LAFD Capt Stacy Gerlick
S-T Elks Lodge
11037 Commerce, S-T
\$20 8 am - 12 pm
Resv 352-5504

Beginning Meditation & Yoga
Sylmar Library
14561 Polk, Syl
3:30 pm 367-6102

NC Training Day
"The Brown Act"
Braude Center
6262 Van Nuys, VN
RSVP 374-9890
Diana

Sunday, Aug. 26

Concert in the Park
El Carriso Park
Foothill Blvd, Syl
818-901-3831

Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
Docent Tours
1-4 pm 352-3420

ETI Trails
Hansen Dam
353-4682

Monday, Aug 27

Andres Pico Adobe
10940 Sepulveda, M.H.
Tours, 1 - 4 pm 365-7810

Radio / ICS drill
Fire Station 89
7063 Laurel Canyon, No Ho.
7pm-9pm

Granada Hills North
Vam Gogh Elementary
17160 Van Gogh, GH
7 pm 831-0578

STNC/DAC Educ Mtg
Community Plan
NVCH 7747 Foothill
Tujunga - 7 pm

Tuesday, Aug. 28

Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
Docent Tours
1-4 pm 352-3420

CERT Training
Class #1
By LA City Fire Dept
S-T Elks Lodge
10137 Commerce, S-T
Free 7-9 pm 352-5504

Foothill Optimist
Fairways Restaurant
Hansen Dam Rec Center
10400 Glenoaks, Pac
6:30 pm

Grant Workshop for Beautification Grants
Pacoima Library
13605 Van Nuys, Pac
5:30 - 8:30 pm 899-5203

Wednesday, Aug. 29

Community Plan Review
Granada Hills Library
10640 Petit, GH
6 - 7:30 pm

Foothill Optimist
Fairways Restaurant
Hansen Dam Rec Center
10400 Glenoaks, Pac
6:30 pm

Rotary Club
Coco's Restaurant
10521 Sunland, S-T
7 pm 951-5299

Friday, Aug. 31

Steak Dinner
Elks Lodge 2098
11037 Commerce, S-T
\$10 6 pm 352-2098

Sunday, Sept. 2

Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
Docent Tours
1-4 pm 352-3420

Monday, Sept. 3

Labor Day
Great L.A. Ice Cream Party
L.A.'s. 226 Birthday
All you can eat ice cream
800 Homer St.
Heritage Sq. Museum
laicecreamparty@gmail.com
www.thegreatla.com

Tuesday, Sept. 4

Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
Docent Tours
1-4 pm 352-3420

Wednesday, Sept. 5

Foothill Optimist
Fairways Restaurant
Hansen Dam Rec Center
10400 Glenoaks, Pac
6:30 pm

Rotary Club
Coco's Restaurant
10521 Sunland, S-T
7 pm 951-5299

Thursday, Sept 6

Beautification
Grant Workshop
Mid-Valley Reg. Library,
16244 Nordhoff, N. Hills
6 pm

Networking Breakfast
Sylmar Chamber
Denny's Restaurant
Hubbard & Gladstone, Syl
7:30 am 367-1177

Kagel Canyon Civic Assoc
Dexter Park
7 pm

Elks Lodge #2098
11037 Commerce, S-T
6:30 pm 352-2098

Sylmar Women's Club
Odyssey Restaurant
15600 Odyssey Dr. M.H.
11:30 am 833-8033

Friday, Sept. 7

Steak Dinner
Elks Lodge 2098
11037 Commerce, S-T
\$10 6 pm 352-2098

Saturday, Sept. 8

Community Plan Review
Granada Hills Library
10640 Petit
1 pm - 2:30 pm

NC Elections
Panorama City NC
Panorama Presby. Church
14201 Roscoe, PC
10 am-7 pm

Open House
Devonshire Police Station
10250 Etiwanda Ave.Nthrg
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Little Landers Historical Society
"The Mardens of Aurora"
Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
1 pm 352-3420

Sunday, Sept. 9

Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
Docent Tours
1-4 pm 352-3420

Monday, Sept. 10

Community Plan Review
Granada Hills Charter School
10535 Zelzah, GH
6 pm - 7:60 pm

STNC/DAC land use mtg
Agenda at stnc.org
NV City Hall
7747 Foothill - Tuj
7 pm

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Mission Hills NC
General Meet. w/
Councilman Richard Alarcon
14928 Clymer St. MH
7 pm

Northridge West N/C
Beckford Elementary
7 pm

Bolton Hall Museum
10110 Commerce, S-T
Docent Tours
1-4 pm 352-3420

Sun Valley Area NC
Villa Scalabrini Center
10631 Vinedale,SV
6:330 pm 767-6766

Wednesday, Sept. 12

Foothill Optimist
Fairways Restaurant
Hansen Dam Rec Center
10400 Glenoaks, Pac
6:30 pm

Rotary Club
Coco's Restaurant
10521 Sunland, S-T
7 pm 951-5299

STNC Gen.Meeting
Mt. Gleason Middle School;
10965 Mt Gleason, S-T
7 pm 951-7411

Thursday, Sept. 13

Granada Hills South N/C
Granada Hills Rec Center
16730 Chatsworth St.
7- 8:30 pm

Friday, Sept. 14

Steak Dinner
Elks Lodge 2098
11037 Commerce, S-T
\$10 6 pm 352-2098

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Real Estate Websites:
GranadaHillsEstates.com
JimSummers.com
EscapeToBigBear.com
HorsePropertyUSA.com

Community Websites:
OGHRG.org, GHSNC.org,
GranadaHillsHistory.com



Homecoming Game
 Surprise Guest
 Verdugo Hills High School
 10625 Plainview – Tuj
 6 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 15

The Tree People
 Greening Workshop
 Sun Valley
 8:45 am-3 pm
 818-623-4878

San Fernando Pioneer
 Memorial Cemetary
 Foothill & Bledsoe, Syl
 9 – noon 365-5860

STNC Outreach Committee
 At Joselito's West – Tuj
 1 p.m. Info: 951-7411
 stnc.org

Sunday, Sept. 16

Bolton Hall Museum
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Omlette Bar
 S-T Elks Lodge
 10137 Commerce, S-T
 \$6. 9 am 352-2098

Monday, Sept. 17

4H Meeting
 Shadow Hills Pres. Church
 Sunland, SH
 7 pm 352-0864

San Fernando Pioneer
 Memorial Cemetary
 Foothill & Bledsoe, Syl
 9 am – 12 pm 365-5860

Arlita NC
 Beachy Elementary School
 9757 Beachy, Arl
 6:30 pm 897-9122

STNC/DAC land use mtg
 Agenda at stnc.org
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill – Tuj
 7 pm

Watershed Committee
 Foothill Trail NC
 .Lake View Terr Rec.
 11075 Foothill, LVT
 7 pm

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Community Plan Review
 Van Gogh Elem. School
 17160 Van Gogh, GH
 6 – 7:30 pm

Mission Hills NC
 Beautification &
 Cultural Affairs Comm.
 10161 Sepulveda, MH
 6:30

Bolton Hall Museum
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Wednesday, Sept. 19

Economic Development
 Encouraging Small Business
 El Sereno Senior Center
 4818 Klamath Place LA
 7 pm

Foothill Optimist
 Fairways Restaurant
 Hansen Dam Rec Center
 10400 Glenoaks, Pac
 6:30 pm

Rotary Club
 Coco's Restaurant
 10521 Sunland, S-T
 7 pm 951-5299

Pacoima N/C
 Pacoima Youth &
 Family Center
 11243 Glenoaks, Pac

Thursday, Sept. 20

STNC Safety Meeting
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill, S-T
 6 pm 951-7411

S-T SERVS
 NV City Hall
 77477 Foothill S-T
 7 pm 352-5504

Foothill Trail NC
 General Meet.
 Lake View Terr Rec.
 11075 Foothill, LVT
 7 pm

Sylmar NC
 Bible Baptist Church
 13724 Fenton, Syl
 6:30 pm 8737

Friday, Sept. 21

Steak Dinner
 Elks Lodge 2098
 11037 Commerce, S-T
 \$10 6 pm 352-2098

Saturday, Sept. 22

SHPOA Yard Sale
 Tierra del Sol
 9919 Sunland, SH

Mission Hills NC
 Outreach/Youth Outreach
 10161 Sepulveda, MH
 2 pm

Elks Lodge #2098
 11037 Commerce, S-T
 6:30 pm 352-2098

STNC Outreach Event
 Pancake Breakfast
 Location: TBA
 Info: 951-7411
 stnc.org

Community Safety Fair
 Our Lady of Lourdes
 Apperson/Tujunga Cyn
 12-4 pm
 see ad in NVR

Sunday, Sept. 23

Bolton Hall Museum
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Monday, Sept. 24

Mission Hills NC
 BBQ & Pot luck
 10161 Sepulveda, MH
 6:30 pm

Granada Hills North N/C
 Van Gough Elementary
 17160 Van Gogh, GH
 7 pm 360-4346

Tuesday, Sept. 25

Bolton Hall Museum
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Wednesday, Sept. 26

Community Plan Review
 Granada Hills Library
 10640 Petit, GH
 6 – 7:30 pm

Luncheon Sylmar
 Chamber
 Guest: Keith Richmond
 China Town Buffet
 13760 Foothill, Syl
 11:30 an 367-1177

San Fernando Pioneer
 Memorial Cemetary
 Foothill & Bledsoe, Syl
 9 am – 12 pm 365-5860



Sunland-Tujunga says farewell to City Planner, Anita Cerna, who has been transferred to Sylmar to move forward with the next steps in their Community Plan process. She is joined by Dale Thrush and Jim Dantona, Planning Deputies for Councilmember Wendy Greuel along with members of the STNC's Design Advisory/Land Use Committee.

Our Chambers of Commerce at Work



San Fernando Chamber of Commerce host, President Cesar Garcia, welcomes Sylmar Chamber members during their mixer on July 20, at El Trasco Restaurant on Polk and Glenoaks in Sylmar.



Congratulations to Sunland-Tujunga's new Honoary Mayors, Fran and Ray Loiselle from Century 21 Real Estate with Angela Motta, Field Deputy for Councilmember Wendy Greuel. Contact the S-T Chamber at (818) 352-4433.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Arleta Activist Harry Williams Honored

By
Al Piantanida

A very special Commendation was given in honor of Harry Williams, President of the Looky-Loos Neighborhood Watch group or Arleta because of the 18 years of continuous



Service during National Night out on August 7. The Looky-Loos are the oldest established Neighborhood Watch Group in the San Fernando Valley.

Harry is well loved and is known as Mister Community because he is very special says his fellow community members. He is well known because volunteered his time wherever needed and is still spending most of his time fighting crime and keeping his community graffiti free.

The dignitaries and communities members in attendance who presented awards and to honor Harry for his dedication and service to the community were: State Senator Alex Padilla's Office, Assembly Member Felipe Fuentes, Al Piantanida of Arleta/Pacoima Neighborhood Watch, representatives from community organizations, businesses, LAFD, LAPD and Councilmember Tony Cardenas.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Councilmember Cardenas announced that the current Community Service Plaque award, that is given to an individual for outstanding community service in either Pacoima or Arleta, will become a perpetual award called the Harry Williams Arleta/Pacoima Community Service Award. It will be presented for the first time at the 2008 National Night Out that will be held in Pacoima. Congratulations and best wishes to Harry and his family for receiving his well deserved award.

Beautification Grant Workshops

Los Angeles - The City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works Office of Community Beautification announced the opening of the 2007-08 Community Beautification Grant filing period. Competitive matching grants of up to \$10,000 will be made available to community groups such as Neighborhood Councils, Schools, Environmental Groups, or five or more individuals that reside, work or take an interest in beautifying an area in the city of Los Angeles.

Fifteen community beautification grant workshops are being held throughout the city with one session in each city council district. Community Beautification Grant workshops accessible to the North Valley will be held on:

- Wednesday, August 22, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in Van Nuys Marvin Braude Building, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Room 1B, Van Nuys, CA 91401
- Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in Pacoima Pacoima Library, 13605 Van Nuys Blvd., Pacoima, CA 91331
- Thursday, September 6, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in North Hills Mid-Valley Regional Library, 16244 Nordhoff St., North Hills, CA 91343

Community Beautification Grant applications will be available at City Hall, the 15 City Council offices and their field offices, as well as 72 selected libraries throughout the city. Applications may also be found online at www.laocb.org. For more information call (213) 978-0228.

Antonovich Moves to Prevent West Nile Virus

Los Angeles County – Due to the recent, possibly lethal, West Nile Virus discovery in Panorama City, Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich is requesting the Directors of Public Health, Public Works, and Vector Control clear all County waterways that may harbor mosquito breeding grounds.

“While the Departments of Public Health and Public Works have taken recent action to alleviate potential hazards, it is vital that countywide proactive measures are taken to eliminate mosquito breeding sites,” said Antonovich.

West Nile virus has killed 25 people in California in the last two years, and sickened nearly 1,200 others. Antonovich is requesting people to act responsibly to reduce the potential threat of West Nile Virus at home and is providing the following tips:

- Eliminate standing water – Empty containers and keep pools and spas chlorinated.
- Set sprinklers to allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle.
- Get mosquito-eating fish for fish ponds, decorative pools or large horse troughs.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use CDC recommended mosquito repellents.
- Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to keep mosquitoes out.
- Make sure horses are properly vaccinated.
- Report dead birds and stagnant pools to 1- 877-968-2473

Visit www.westnile.ca.gov for further information

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P.O. Box 674, Tujunga Ca 91043

Publisher/Editor
Nina Royal

Layout Design
Paccio Ad & Design

Contributing Writers
Mary Benson, Tina Cameron, Cindy Cleghorn,
Peter DiNova, Al Piantanida,
Royan Herman, Marlene Hitt, Katharine Russ,
Sgt. Adrian Torres, Tony Wilkinson, Rick Yerrington

Photographer
John Blue

North Valley Sales Representative
Cathryn McElryn, Gordon Lee

**Special Recognition to Elaine Brown,
Cindy Cleghorn, Tina Cameron, Peter DiNova,
Erna Royal, Bobby Royal, Mark Seigel**

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Personal Opinions expressed in "Sound Off" are those of the writers only.



LA ECO

Urgent... Calling all Equestrians

By Mary Benson

Concerned about where your horses will live in the future? Your support is needed immediately to extend the new tax incentive for conservation easements that help land conservation not only in your area but also across the country. Your support for legislation to permanently extend the tax incentive for donations of conservation easements can help make it happen.

Make sure your elected representatives know about the treasured and beautiful places in your community. Give them the opportunity to enjoy the view-sheds, nature trails, and historic farm and ranchland that you cherish. You can involve your local newspaper too! Invite congressional representatives to attend an equine event.

The current legislation, which is set to expire in December 2007, increases the federal tax deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%. It also allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income and extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

This legislation has been instrumental in increasing the amount of land that has been preserved. If you own or drive on land that needs to be preserved, now is the time to consider donating the development rights for that land. The process of donating the development rights, or establishing a conservation easement, is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows you to continue to own and use your land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. People execute a conservation easement because they love their land, and want to protect their land from inappropriate development while keeping their private ownership of the property. Perhaps most important, a conservation easement can be essential for passing land on to the next generation. By removing the and's development potential, the easement lowers its market value, which in turn lowers estate tax. Whether the easement is donated during life or by will, it can make a critical difference in the heirs' ability to keep the land intact.

In the five years between 2000 and 2005, the amount of land protected by local and state land trusts using easements doubled to 6.2 million acres. Landowners have found that conservation easements can be flexible tools, and yet provide a permanent guarantee that the land won't ever be developed. Conservation easements are used to protect all types of land, including farm and ranchland; historical or cultural landscapes; scenic views; trails; wildlife areas; and working forests.

The Equestrian Land Conservation Resource can help you tailor a conservation easement to your needs. Easements typically permit landowners to continue such traditional uses of the land as farming and ranching and ELCR can help you insure that horses can be a part of your land forever. Visit www.elcr.org or call the national office at 859-455-8383 for more information.

In Southern California, You can also contact your local ELCR affiliate, Mary Benson, at Los Angeles Trails Project Tel: (800)-660-0650.

THIS AND THAT

New Exhibit Debuting at Bolton Hall

Tujunga - Little Landers Historical Society has announced their new museum display featuring "Sports Appeal" showcasing sports and sports figures of Sunland-Tujunga, beginning with the first official baseball game in 1914. They are providing a sports registry for those athletes who have yet to be discovered.

You are invited to attend celebrate with them on Saturday, September 16, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Refreshments will be served to everyone at Bolton Hall Museum, 10110 Commerce Ave in Tujunga. For further information call Lloyd or Marlene at 818-951-1041

Watch Your Wallet

By Tina Cameron

Credit card issuers are good at inventing new ways to make money. One way is to shrink grace periods. They used to be a standard 30 days but now some are as low as 20. So watch your statements as a shorter grace period could trigger a late fee of \$29-39.

One particularly clever trick is for the card issuer to regularly check their customers credit reports for late payments on ANY of their bills. Any late payment can be an excuse to trigger an interest rate hike even if you never made a late payment to this particular card issuer. You will not be given any notice. One day you'll simply be paying a higher interest rate than the one you signed up for.

ID theft is growing each year and it's a lot easier than people think. For instance, in Sun Valley on trash day, it's not uncommon to find homeless persons scavenging through neighborhood trashcans. They're not always just looking for cans and bottles, they sometimes steal information such as discarded debit and credit cards. So be sure to always shred any document with confidential numbers and cut up your credit and debit cards before discarding them. There are merchants out there who will accept a card not belonging to the person standing right there in front of them.

(This column will appear as a regular feature. Tina Cameron, is a Financial Administrator for a major corporation in Los Angeles and serves as Corresponding Secretary of the Sun Valley Area NC)

Help Save Verdugo Hills Golf Course!

I am writing to encourage you to please help the citizens in the Foothill communities preserve the Verdugo Hills Golf Course as a public park. We are outraged to hear that the developer has filed an application with plans to destroy this beautiful landmark in our community, along indigenous wildlife and 97 mature oak trees. We ask you to please, please request that the City of Los Angeles require an Environmental Impact Report for this proposal in order to analyze the affects that this project will have on the surrounding areas. We believe the Report will prove that the developer's project should not be approved due to the negative affect on:

- Traffic in an already busy and very dangerous area. More traffic will also be generated from three future projects already approved in that area which must be included.
- Air quality adding 2300 autos per day and grading which would require 33,000 dump loads of dirt be moved
- Recreational resources, this is one of the last places for families and friends to spend time together golfing (and learning to play) without going to another community. Our son has wonderful memories
- A beautiful, open green space would be gone forever, too many such treasures are rapidly diminishing,

as hillsides, wildlife and native chaparral give way to new developments with no regard for the natural topography that initially made this area desirable to residents

We implore you - please do not let the developer build 229 homes without considering all of the concerns of our communities and how it will significantly and adversely change our beautiful area. We have an obligation to protect our wildlife, our shrinking natural preserve and outdoor recreation areas from development, in order to save them for future generations..

Thank you!

Julia and Tom Leeper, La Crescenta

What's with the clothes!

I was looking through a catalog today and it dawned on me. I receive probably two to three catalogs every day. Obviously it is important to me that I dress nicely and look professional. I take offense at these catalogs these days that look more like a Playboy magazine for men than a showing of wears for women. I don't know anyone that is that skinny. I take it back. I do know a few models and they are that skinny. According to them they have to be. I also know a few Diabetics that skinny.

My point is whatever happened to the concept of modeling clothes to show the consumer what the outfit might look like in real life, on themselves? The catalogs today are not a depiction of what outfits really look like. I have two "drop dead gorgeous" daughters in their early twenties and even they, beautiful as they are, are not Ethiopian starvation skinny. What do we have to do to get catalogs to be for "us" again, for the women, for the consumer and not something that ends up a pinup magazine for men?

Tomi Lyn "Opinionated" Bowling
Sunland-Tujunga

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Golf that Reduces Crime???



By Captain Joe Curreri
Commanding Officer
LAPD Foothill Area

On September 17th, Foothill Area Booster Association (FABA) will hold its 2nd Annual Golf Tournament at Knollwood Country Club. You're probably wondering why I'm talking about golf, instead of addressing the important crime issues facing our area.

Well, I'm telling you about the golf tournament because this tournament actually helps reduce crime. You heard me, golf that helps reduce crime.

FABA is a group of citizen volunteers, people like you who live and/or work in our area, who have come together to raise funds for equipment and training that

we cannot obtain through the Police Department budget. Included in those items are tactical lights for shotguns, computers, Global Positioning Systems, tuition for training seminars and a multitude of training equipment. This is, by no means, a comprehensive list of items purchased by FABA for Foothill Area, but I hope it sends the message that the funds are raised to provide things for police personnel to assist us in better serving the community, thereby reducing crime. The Golf Tournament is FABA's primary source of raising funds, so you see the golf tournament does assist us in reducing crime.

Playing spots are filling up fast for the tournament, however, there are still a few spots left. The price of \$150.00 per player, or \$600.00 for a foursome, includes a BBQ lunch, golf, an outstanding banquet at the conclusion of the tournament and the opportunity to win some great prizes. In short, it is a fun day to help raise funds for an outstanding cause at a reasonable price. If you don't golf and would like to make

a contribution toward the tournament, FABA will gratefully accept any donation. All donations should be made out FABA and sent to FABA at 12760 Foothill Boulevard, Pacoima CA 91331. Anyone requesting additional information can e-mail me (curreri@lapd.lacity.org) or call our Community Relations Office at (818) 756-8860.

Now a short word about Foothill Area's crime picture. Unfortunately, Foothill started this year off with a 40.5% increase in crime. Due to the hard work of our dedicated officers and detectives, as well as the efforts of our outstanding volunteers, like FABA and our Volunteer Surveillance Team, we have been steadily reducing crime. Foothill is currently up 8.8% in crime, a 31.7% decrease in crime so far this year. Our goal is to end the year by reducing crime by 5% compared to last year. I am confident, with the help of our partners throughout the Foothill community, that we will achieve that goal.

Arleta and Pacoima Unite for National Night Out

By Al Piantanida

The Arleta and Pacoima communities joined forces on August 7 at Branford Park in Arleta to celebrate National Night Out. Over 400 people plus members of the LAPD and LAFD, city and state officials were in attendance.

Arleta and Pacoima Neighborhood Councils served a superb buffet dinner with desserts. Council District 6 furnished flashlights and batteries to the families and Council District 7 furnished glow rings to everyone for a community walk around Branford Park to show support for neighborhood crime fighting effect at the end of the event.

Target, also a sponsor of the event, gave away \$350.00 in store gift cards. Tables were set up with public safety information and gift items were handed out to participants. Other organizations or officials who also participated were Assembly Member Felipe Fuentes, LAFD Battalion Chief Bowman. LAPD Deputy Chief Michel Moore, LAPD Captain Curreri and area Senior Lead Officers.

Safer Cities Initiative Program at Work

By Sgt Adrian Torres

On Saturday, August 11, 2007, the Panorama City Neighborhood Council hosted a community clean up day event in the Panorama City community. Working in conjunction with city resources such as Street Maintenance, Department of Sanitation and Lot Cleaning Division, the event was spearheaded by the Los Angeles City Attorney's office. The combined resources completed three hours of massive cleanups, which included bulky item pick-up, replacement of road signs, repainting of curblines and other quality of life issues.

The area targeted was Nordhoff St. to the north, Parthenia Street to the South, Kester Avenue to the East and Van Nuys Blvd. to the West. This section encompasses the "Safer City Initiative" area, one of the five critical locations in Los Angeles. The Safer Cities Initiative is a program endorsed by the Mayors office that uses a variety of City resources in partnership with LAPD to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in that particular community.

Several community volunteer groups, constituents, members of the neighborhood council, Councilman Alarcon's office as well as members of Los Angeles Police Department participated in this event. Guests included Councilman Alarcon, City Attorney Delgado, Senior Lead Officer Mike Braun and Mission Area Commanding Officer Captain Jorge Villegas.

A special thanks goes out to all the volunteers whose hard work and effort was rewarded with a fine meal that was graciously provided by the Panorama Mall Management staff.

Sgt Torres can be reached at 11121 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Mission Hills, Ca 91345 Tel:818-838-985 email at: 31467@LAPD.LACITY.ORG



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Your Public Safety Tax \$ at Work

By Nina Royal

Recent earthquakes in Chatsworth and Peru are rude reminders that if you aren't prepared for an emergency or disaster, you should be.

S-T SERVS, the STNC Safety Committee and the Sunland-Tujunga Elks Lodge are sponsoring upcoming First Aid, CPR and CERT classes. All classes will be held at the Elks lodge at 10137 Commerce Ave., in Tujunga. Everyone is encouraged to take this training.

The First Aid and CPR class will be held on Saturday, August 25, 2007, 8:00 am – 12:00 noon. The Instructor is Captain Stacy Gerlick of the Los Angeles City Disaster Preparedness Section. What a deal! \$20.00 covers the entire cost and you will receive your certificates in the mail. The same classes through the Red Cross would cost over \$160. Take them while you have the opportunity. These next classes will not likely be held by the sponsors again, until this time next year. Bring a self-addressed stamped envelope, along with \$20, and you will receive your Red Cross certificate cards in the mail in a few weeks. High School students are also welcome to attend.

FREE seven week CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Classes for disaster and emergency response training will be taught by the L.A. City Fire Dept. starting Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. and continue for the following six Tuesdays thereafter. You will receive your certificate, green hard hat and vest at the end of the last class. High School students can also attend; however, they will not receive their equipment because you must be 18 years old in order to participate in a Fire Department "official call out". The main goal is for you to know the basics and to be able to aid yourself and possibly your neighbor should an emergency occur.

Take advantage of the training. These are your public safety tax dollars at work. You may recall that this program was almost cut out of this year's budget. Our phone calls letters and e-mails to City Hall helped to save it. There are no guarantees that it will be around in future years. Now is the time to take the class. For further information email secretary@stnc.org or Nina Royal at 818-563-1962.

A CERT refresher will be held on Sunday, October 21, at Fire Station 88 in Sherman Oaks. They invite all graduates to attend the practice and refresh their skills. For more information and to sign up, visit www.cert-la/refresher.htm.

Circle you calendar for a Safety Fair hosted by Our Lady of Lourdes School and co-Sponsored by Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, S-T SERVS and the STNC Safety Committee to be held on Saturday, September 22, on the school premises at Apperson St. and Tujunga Canyon Blvd. in Tujunga, from 12:00 noon – to 4:00 pm. Plan to bring your children. It should be a lot of fun as well as being very informative. Many organizations have already signed up to participate and best of all...it's free!

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Bernhard Settlers

By Marlene Hitt

On the far eastern edge of Shadow Hills, or just past it, was the acreage of one early settler, William Bernhard, a German immigrant, who fled from his native land about 1865 to escape being drafted into Bismark's Russian army. From Napa, he traveled to Sunland ten years later. Phil Begue, another pioneer who had a farm near Tujunga Canyon and Foothill, used to say that William moved into Sunland when the Indians moved out.

With bees and honey William made a living until in 1884 he purchased 80 acres west of Newhome Street for \$1000, that was \$100 down and the balance on contract. Here he planted grapes and peaches. As early as 1890 the news reports tell us that Bernhard's crop, grown on 10 acres, produced 25 tons of fruit - peaches, grapes, berries, apricots and prunes. That year's crop sold for \$750. The cost of production was \$70, the net profit, \$680. Added to that was the information: "soil, heavy loam, not irrigated, vines 5 years old".

The only reason Ted Bernhard, William's nephew, came to Sunland the first time was to give his Uncle William help in the vineyards and peach orchards during the harvest season. Uncle William's home was on Oro Vista and Wyngate streets. Only 6 families lived in Sunland at that time (1899). Ted, already a successful young businessman in northern California, and one of the wealthiest men in the state, first set foot on his uncle's ranch in that year.

After that visit, Ted traveled the Southern Pacific many times to Los Angeles, then rode a horse and

buggy to Sunland. On his way home to Napa after the visit to Sunland, he would drive down Sunland Boulevard to the Roscoe station at San Fernando Road and flag the train.

As the years went by, Ted came south more and more often until, in 1934, Uncle William died (at the age of 90). By then Uncle William owned 200 acres of choice land in Sunland and, being a bachelor, his estate was divided between Ted and his brothers and sisters.

Ted Bernhard was already established in a series of enterprises; grocery, the baking and meat businesses, meat slaughtering and shipping, cattle raising and brokerage, land purchasing, and was a shrewd investor in stocks, bonds as well as an oil company. In 1902, at the age of 22, he became a director of the Crescent Petroleum Company located at Maricopa, California. About his wealth, Theodore once said that "Being in the 80-90 percent income tax bracket is as high as I want to go".

By 1956, Ted Bernhard was an active man of 76 who owned nearly 80 acres of land in Sunland and who lived in a large, handsome hilltop home at 10400 Sunland Boulevard, which he had built in 1940. At



that time he lived a quiet life primarily involved with his position in the Sunland-Tujunga Telephone Company for which he was the largest stockholder. He described himself as an active man - "too active worrying about the country's ills. The country's drunk with too much prosperity," he declared, "Taxes are getting out of hand and prices are too high."

The Mr. Bernhard's family property now holds on it the homes of many as they live in apartments and condos, looking at the same mountains and the same Sunland Park as Uncle William and Theodore did those many years ago.

(Marlene is a former Sunland-Tujunga Poet Laureate)

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