

Park Owner Intended to Evict Fire Victims

Before The Marek Fire Claimed Their Homes



Sky Terrace homes destroyed by Marek Fire

By Katharine Russ

What mattered on October 13th to residents of Sky Terrace Mobile Home Park (the Park) became fraught with more issues as fire, fueled by the Santa Ana winds, engulfed the Park burning nearly all the mobile homes in a fire that is still under investigation. Only 16 homes remain undamaged. Its entire infrastructure must be rebuilt. No one knows when, or, if residents will be able to return home, receive any type of assistance, or who will be responsible for cleaning up the charred remains of their homes. No one knows what will happen if they don't continue to pay rent for the spaces their burnt homes occupy, or if they will even have a space when the damage assessment is complete.

The legality of events at Sky Terrace, which sits atop the old Russell Moe landfill, was in serious question before the fire. Residents were terrified that they would be evicted from their beloved homes, without enough money to live elsewhere. They learned that Dewey-Koar (aka SE Sky Terrace LLC) recently purchased the Park and have plans to change its use. Residents were not given proper legal notice and were told by counsel that the former owner's failure to disclose the fact that

the Park had been sold would constitute fraud. Also, the new owners, citing a "confidentiality clause" made no such disclosures and continued to sell homes in the Park throughout March and April 2008. The new owners told Park residents it would be two years before the process to close the Park would be finalized.

According to the Park's residents, Los Angeles County Supervisor Antonovich's office, under whose purview the Park falls, seemed to be enabling the new owner's effort to displace the residents. Residents apprised his office of the alleged, illegal events and thus far appear to have made no effort to remedy the problem.

County Counselor Lawrence Hafetz promised to help and protect residents, but issued this statement "The issue raised is really one between the residents of Sky Terrace and the prior owners. I'm not sure the County would get involved in any investigation for fraud, misrepresentation, etc. between the residents and the prior owners since it is a private, civil issue, not within the County's purview." Glenn Bell, President of Neighborhood Friends, an advocacy organization for residents of manufactured homes, adamantly disagreed, "Since when are fraud and misrepresentation private civil issues? I have argued this for years - it's nothing more than 'do-it-yourself' law enforcement."

Ian Golson purchased his \$120,000.00 home under the CalVet Program. Disabled Veterans can get a loan at anytime, providing the previous CalVet loan has been paid in full. Golson said, "We bought the home in March 2008 and heard rumors of the Park closure. The realtor told us the rumors were not true, so we decided to buy. Golson, who served his country honorably, has a wife and a three-year-old child. Golson fears insurance may not offer enough to repay this loan, which he is aware, must be paid off before he can purchase another home for his family.

Residents have additional concerns since the fire: Do the legal issues just "go away" because fire destroyed most of the homes. Has the fire extinguished homeowner's rights under the law? Who pays to clean up the remains of their homes? The new owner told some residents, the company will clean up the charred remains of the Park, but each homeowner must pay \$1,200.00 for the cleanup of their pads. Residents question whether the Park owner gets insurance money as a result of the fire.

Bell spoke with an attorney, who said, "Here is my best argument for relocation: Residents are entitled to replace their homes. Therefore, they should be entitled to relocation costs. The relocation costs may be limited because there is no home on the space to move. If the State condemns the Park, then the owner is not voluntarily closing the Park. The condemnation is not a final action. The Park owner would

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City's DRP Breaks Agreement with Community Leaders

By Elaine Brown

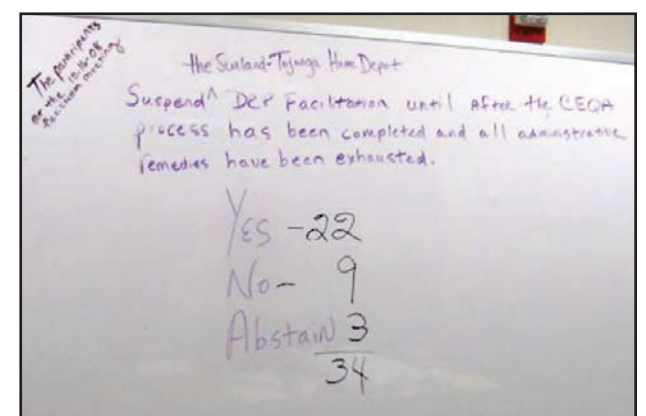
During the Dispute Resolution Program (DRP) meeting held in L.A. City Hall, Thursday, October 16, after two hours of deliberation, participants overwhelmingly voted to suspend any further discussion between the Sunland-Tujunga community and representatives of Home Depot. In a vote of 22 in favor, seven opposed and three abstentions, they agreed that any discussion is premature until all administrative processes have been exhausted. The Los Angeles City Planning Department has yet to make a determination regarding Home Depot's application for a categorical exemption from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) review. The community is asking for a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and is opposed to a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). Barbara Goldfarb, the facilitator, neglected to tell the group that the DRP would continue dialogue with Home Depot should they vote to suspend the process.

On Wednesday, October 22, Director Avis Ridley-Thomas, head of the DRP, sent an email to some of the community leaders who were present during the October 16 meeting. She said, "The Dispute Resolution Program has been contacted by a member [one person] of the Sunland-Tujunga community to facili-

tate and/or mediate further sessions to resolve the matter involving the Home Depot. As in every other matter where we are contacted by a member of the community, we are proceeding forthwith. The process will be voluntary and confidential unless and until the parties deem otherwise."

The Stipulation Order (SO), issued by the judge presiding over the lawsuit, said mediations are to take place between Home Depot and community "leaders". Random persons who are individually selected by DRP are not the community's leaders.

The Sunland-Tujunga community has been thrown into a "Catch 22" position. They are not a party to the lawsuit between Home Depot and the City of Los Angeles. However, they are being forced to negotiate with them. Also, the Los Angeles City Attorney's DRP, which is funded by the County, is supposed to be acting as an impartial mediator, but, they appear to be supporting Home Depot, according to community members. Goldfarb, while facilitating the DRP's October 16 meeting, made remarks that were clearly pro-Home Depot and refused to discuss a no Home Depot possibility. She told community members in attendance, they were not going to win, and may as well get something out of Home Depot. She also said she does not want her tax dollars going toward the lawsuit.



The Sunland-Tujunga community has outreached to their members for four years, through the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council, starting in 2004. The Sunland-Tujunga Alliance/No Home Depot Campaign began their outreach in 2005. Surveys were conducted and meetings were held. Outreach included homeowners' associations, service organizations, Bolton Hall Museum, McGroarty Arts Center, local festivals, fairs, citywide events, and utilized various forms of media, including websites, blog spots and national coverage. Their

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Jon Kirk Murkri Named Grand Marshal



Jon Kirk Murkri

General Manager for the City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation and Parks, Jon Kirk Murkri, has been named Grand Marshal to lead the Fifth Annual San Fernando Valley Veterans Day Parade to be held on Veterans Day, Tuesday, Nov. 11. This is a day we honor Veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces.

Jon Kirk Mukri was born in Hawthorne and raised in Pacoima. Although drafted into the U.S. Army in June, 1972, he was able to enlist in the U.S. Navy, where he had an extensive military career as follows: He served as Aviation Officer Candidate; He served onboard the submarine U.S.S. Nathan Hale (SSBN-623) Gold; He was designated qualified in Submarines, by Vice Admiral Kenneth M. Carr, and served almost nine years in various positions in the Submarine Community. He was then assigned to foreign military duty with the United States Joint Military Assistance and Advisory Group, Manila, Philippines. While working directly for the United States Department of State and Department of Defense, he helped to formulate policy and programs to support both the military mission and social infrastructure of the Philippine Government. After his tour in the Philippines, Mukri was reassigned to the then Long Beach Naval Station and was responsible for all the logistics support to 33 ships. Upon closure of Naval Station in Long Beach, Mukri was reassigned to the Commander, Marine Corps, Air Basis Western Area, Marine Corps Air Station, El Toro, Ca. He was responsible for all logistics and material support for the First Marine Air Group/Military operations, which included Project Restore Hope, Somalia and the first Gulf War.

His personal decorations include: National Defense Service Medal with a Bronze Star, Battle "E" Ribbon with 2E Device, SSBN Patrol Insignia, Outstanding Achievement (NMD Republic of the Philippines), Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

As is customary, the parade will begin precisely at the eleventh minute of the eleventh hour of the eleventh month of November. The many participants will include military representatives, veterans groups, equestrian teams and marching bands. It will start at the corner of Laurel Canyon Blvd and San Fernando Mission Blvd. and proceed down Laurel Canyon Blvd and end at Richie Valens Recreation Center and Park, 10736 Laurel Canyon Blvd., in Pacoima where there will be a carnival and refreshments available. The Department of Veterans Affairs and other Veteran service organizations will staff booths offering services to all veterans.

Arleta



Arleta High School's new scoreboard

By Al Piantanida

Arleta High School – A new football scoreboard was dedicated during a ceremony held prior to their opening season football game on Friday, September 12. The School's staff and students were present at the ribbon cutting as Principal Dr. Calvo thanked the Arleta Neighborhood Council (ANC) for their donation, which made the purchase possible. Jim Kallos, Pres-

ident of the ANC, and Al Piantanida, Past President, cut the ribbon to the drum roll of the Arleta High School Band and the applause of the crowd.

Arleta is "green and clean" – Community volunteers, Arleta Community Watchdogs, and staff from the Sun Valley office of Council District Six joined together at Liberty Temple Church for a community cleanup on Saturday, October 4. They picked up trash from residential streets, alleys, and vacant lots. They pulled weeds, swept sidewalks, driveways, gutters and cleared debris from the grates on storm drains. Pacoima Graffiti Busters removed graffiti, Parking Enforcement removed seven illegal vehicles and 30 vehicles were cited for various infractions. Animal Control authorities picked up stray dogs and the Dept. of Sanitation picked up over 3,000 pounds of bulky items. Public service information and refreshments were provided to all participants by the Council Office and give-a-ways were provided by community volunteers.

Remodeled Shopping Center – The Arleta High School Band played at the grand opening of the remodeled Center at Woodman and Nordhoff on Thursday, September 25. City and State officials made special presentations to owner, Rod Noorafashan, and Reliable Properties, the center's management team, and manager Alex Martinez, as well. Also acknowledged for their service to their community were Al Piantanida and the Arleta Community Watchdogs, the organizers of the event. Additionally, representatives from the LAFD, LAPD, and Arleta NC were likewise in attendance. Some of the festivities included food, give-a-ways and coupons.

Mission Hills

By Jim Abrams

The Mission Hills Little League (MHLL), located on the Veterans Administrative (VA) Property in North Hills was donated to the Little League, as a cooperative land deal with the VA, to develop the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork, and physical well being for youths in the local community.

MHLL baseball and softball programs offer children ages 4-17 years old the opportunity to make new friends, cooperate with others in a safe and friendly environment and receive caring supervision from managers and coaches. This allows children to learn the necessary skills to play baseball or softball, and throughout the season they learn to play as a team as well as become more confident in their own abilities. It is very rewarding experience for the children and their parents.

MHLL Special Needs Program is the only league in the San Fernando Valley to offer a program specifically designed for children with special needs. Our "Field of Dreams" for the Challenger Division addresses the special needs and abilities of handicapped children by teaching them to play baseball within their

own capabilities. With very compassionate volunteers who manage and coach these teams, the children can participate in an organized sport and have fun.

The Spring season will be upon us soon and registration starts the first weekend of November. These are the following dates to remember: Early Bird sign ups: Monday, November 8, 10:00 am-4:00 pm, and Tuesday, November 9, 12:00 pm-4:00 pm, Saturday, November 22, 10:00 am-4:00 pm, Saturday, November 23, 12:00 pm-4:00 pm, Saturday, December 13, 10:00 am-4:00 pm, and Sunday, December 14, 12:00 pm - 4:00 pm. For more information visit www.mhllbaseball.com, or call 818-893-0505

Mission Hills Little League Golf Course one of the best-kept secrets in the Valley, is located on the VA grounds off of Plummer Street. This nine-hole golf course is open to the public seven days a week and is a great course designed for the amateur who wants to improve his or her short game. The course opens at dawn and closes at dusk. For information about getting a tee time, call 818-892-3019.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Continued from cover — City's DRP

community opposes Home Depot with many demonstrations on their lone thoroughfare – Foothill Boulevard, during peak hours, calling attention to their plight with bullhorns and honking car horns. As a result of their extensive outreach, to date, only a handful of residents have come forth to support the Home Depot warehouse, even though Home Depot hired Consensus Planning, their lobbying firm. Therefore, the community is well informed about the Home Depot issue and plans to continue their battle to obtain the kind of neighborhood friendly retail land use on the previous K-Mart property, as specified in the Foothill Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan, which is a city ordinance.

The DRP is ignoring the protests made by community members who voted to suspend talks regarding Home Depot until the planning process is completed per their mutual agreement at the last meeting. It is apparent from the Ridley-Thomas email that she is going to continue to allow Home Depot supporters, who are not community leaders, to negotiate directly with Home Depot behind closed doors, for what one community leader called "cookies". During the last meeting, Goldfarb stated that the decisions discussed during those meetings could be legally binding if both parties agree. Community members looked to Dale Thrush, Planning Deputy for Councilmember Wendy Greuel, who was also in attendance, for confirmation. Thrush responded that no deliberations between the community and Home Depot would be binding because the community is not a party to the lawsuit.

The community was quick to react to the email and fired back with emails of their own protesting what they deem to be a waste of taxpayer time and money. They believe their agreement to put all talks on abatement until a decision is reached by the Planning Department should be upheld. Joe Barrett and Abby Diamond, Officers of the Sunland-Tujunga Alliance, both told Goldfarb, "Home Depot is a land use issue and cannot be negotiated through the DRP." There is now talk that the community may also be considering a lawsuit.

Editors Note: Elaine Brown is a community activist specializing in land use issues, and writes for the NVR.

NVR salutes our Veterans November 11, 2008



Angel of the Fire

By Katharine Russ

Out of the ashes and smoke of the fire that devastated hundreds of families came a sixteen year-old girl, whose family lost their home and all their belongings in the Marek fire. Instead of focusing on her own problems and worrying about all that her family had lost, Laura Mata focused her attention on others who were taken to the evacuation center at San Fernando High School. Mata said, "I did not cry since the first day. I helped people because everyone was scared, and worried about their homes. They didn't know what to do there."

Mata, a mere teenager, took it upon herself to comfort those who cried, bring food to those who were hungry, listen to their fears and worries and hug them in reassurance that all will be better. She went from person to person helping to bridge the language gap by translating so that everyone could understand. Her penchant for kindness prompted her to assist those in finding towels for showers, blankets, and the area where pets were kept. She helped with the children while parents, frantically, tried to make phone calls.

Jean Bell, an evacuee, said, "She ran all over the place helping people. She was a godsend to all the people who were at the center. I was extremely grateful for all the assistance she gave us."

Some 500 people registered at the shelter and many went to hotels and family or friends homes. Approximately 120 people called the evacuation center home for a few days. According to Glenn Bell, Jean's husband, Laura Mata is an inspiration to all of us and reminds us to be kind and helpful towards others whether tragedy strikes or not. David Hernandez, a member of the Board of Trustees for Mission College in Sylmar, worked diligently to make sure college will be possible for Laura, by securing two scholarships that will enable her to attend Mission College when she graduates from high school.

Katharine.russ@charter.net

Continued from cover — Park Owner

have the choice of repairing and refilling the Park. The State can condemn the entire Park or sections of the Park. If the owner elects to not rebuild, then he would be voluntarily closing the Park. The matter should go before the Federal and State Fair Housing Boards for initial resolution."

A majority of the homeowners who rented space for their homes in the Park are elderly and/or disabled; living on fixed incomes and have lost everything. They are worried about how they will replace necessary staples.

Herb Coleman, a vaudeville performer, lost his entire life in the fire. He has nothing but the borrowed shirt on his back. "I lost 60 years of my show tapes, music, pictures, costumes and performance dates. I have nothing left of my life, my work - no deed to the house, no important papers or documentation- not even a nail clipper.

What is yet to be determined is what the County and State will do for them. Would the Park owner be required by law to pay relocation fees if the Park is permanently closed? Affordable housing is scarce. Unless elderly, disabled and low income families have friends or family to house them indefinitely, they could be forced to live on the street. They are fearful that the fire is the "golden ticket" Dewey-Koar, the new owner, needs in order for the County to condemn the Park, which will enable the company to continue on with their plan to build 116 residential homes with panoramic views, in place of their Park.

Katharine.russ@charter.net

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Publisher/Editor
 Nina Royal

Layout Design
 Paccio Ad & Design

Contributing Writers
 Jim Abrams, Robert J. Barbera, Mary Benson, Tomi Lyn Bowling, Cindy Cleghorn, Marlene Hitt, Ron Kaye, Jack Linblad, Nick Krall, Capt. Ivan Minsal, Wendy Moore, Mike O'Gara, Al Piantanida

Investigative Reporter
 Katharine Russ

Proofreaders
 Paula Warner and Elaine Brown

Photographers
 Cindy, Cleghorn, Mark Seigel

North Valley Sales Representative
 Bill Manning, Gordon Lee

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

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Sunland-Tujunga

By Cindy Cleghorn

The first annual Top of the Rock Awards Banquet honoring Mary Lou Pozzo and Dr. Lloyd Hitt was held on Monday, Oct. 13, 2008. Sonny Sardo was the master of ceremonies and Councilwoman Wendy Greuel presented awards to the honorees. RDC Dance Studio students shared several of their

dance routines at the direction of owner/director, Julie Kay Scallcup. The event was held at Caesar's Banquet Hall in Tujunga and coordinated by the Commerce Avenue Cultural Festival Assn, S-T Chamber and the S-T Rotary Club. The event wouldn't be possible without the coordination efforts of a great committee of volunteers.



Councilwoman Wendy Greuel with Dr. Lloyd Hitt



Councilwoman Wendy Greuel with Richard Pozzo



Master of Ceremonies Sonny Sardo with his wife Deannie

Sun Valley

By Mike O'Gara

The License Plate Reader (LPR) is back in action. Patrol Captain Ivan Minsal of the LAPD Foothill Div., informed the Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council during their October 14 Board Meeting, the LPR Camera Car will be patrolling the streets of Foothill Division again. The Camera is mounted on the roof of a Police Cruiser and reads the license plates of automobiles approaching the vehicle on the left as well as the plates on cars parked in the right hand lane. A computer is mounted in front of the vehicle and all license plates are compared to a database of stolen vehicles. If there is a match, the computer sounds an alarm and the software shows a GPS location, date, time, description of the car, description of the driver/felony, etc. This apparatus has recovered quite a few stolen vehicles in 2007 before it had an unfortunate mishap. While executing a pit Maneuver on a vehicle being pursued, the Cruiser and LPR

reader suffered an accident and was disabled. There was a problem with the warranty because the camera was already outdated however; the department has since negotiated a new camera. The camera was purchased for the Foothill Division, through the combined efforts of the Pacoima, Arleta, Foothill Trails District, Sunland-Tujunga and Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Councils in late 2006. The Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council voted to purchase an extended two-year warranty for the camera during their October meeting.

Waste Management's Bradley Landfill Recycling Center, in Sun Valley has a Public Hearing regarding expansion scheduled in Van Nuys City Hall, 14410 Sylvan St., in the Council Chambers on the second floor, Monday, November 3, at 9:00 am. Public testimony will be taken regarding this project. Written comments can be submitted to Los Angeles City Planning Department. Reference Case Number CPC-2007-3888-CU-ZV-SPR, and ENV-2001-3267-EIR on the Envelope and the letter.

Athens Sun Valley Material Recovery Facility has a public hearing regarding the EIR from [Athens Waste (Formerly American Waste)] at 7:00 pm, Monday, November 12, at Stonehurst Recreation Center, 9901 Dronfield St., Sun Valley. Visit http://www.environmentLA.org/enforcement/enf_leapermits.htm for a copy of the EIR

Name the new Sun Valley High School – The former Byrd Middle school on Telfair Ave. and Sheldon St. is being converted to a High School and will open in September 2009. A name has yet to be selected for the new school. You have an opportunity to help name it. You can send your suggestions for the name to Gary Gray, Principal of the new school, at gary.gray@LAUSD.net. Contact Sandra Morriago regarding construction concerns, or LAUSD Community outreaches, at 213-893-6838.

Editors Note: Mr. O'Gara is President of the SVANC, and writes for the NVR.

Sylmar

By Nick Krall

Sylmar Neighborhood Council – meets the 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at Hubbard Street Elementary School. Visit www.sylmarnc.org for other committee meetings and agendas.

Sylmar Community Plan – is being updated by Anita Cerna. See the draft of the new community plan at: <http://sylmarncp.googlepages.com>

Local horse owners – will be meeting for further review of planned horse-zoning in the plan on Tuesday, November 18, 6:00 pm, in the Sylmar Public Library Community Room, at the corner of Polk St and Glenoaks Blvd.

The Sylmar Gang Injunction – During the September 25th Sylmar Neighborhood Council meeting, Senior Lead Officers Charles Chacon and John Loneragan provided an update on crime since the beginning of the San Fer Gang Injunction last summer. Five people have been arrested as a result of the injunction. There has been a noticeable decrease in crime. On average, there have been 13 arrests monthly attributed to gangs. Since the injunction, that number has dropped to five arrests a month.

The Sylmar Chamber of Commerce – is sharing its new office with Barry Sylvan Realty, who also recently moved. Their new office is next to Caruso's Italian restaurant, 13731 Foothill Blvd. For information on chamber membership, contact Nick Krall, at 818-521 7252, or nkrall@primerica.com. We've been a little loosey-goosey during the summer-without-an-office, but that will turn around now that we're back in off the streets. Also, look for our Chamber breakfast the 1st Thursday of each month at Denny's restaurant on Hubbard St., just Northeast of the 210 freeway.

Relay for Life of Sylmar – The 2009 event is tentatively scheduled for April 18-19, 9:00 am-9:00 am (a 24-hour event!), at Olive Vista Middle School, at Polk St. and Borden Ave., in Sylmar. Committee leaders and volunteers are meeting monthly to make it a great event that raises awareness of free American Cancer Society services, teaches about cancer prevention life choices, and raises money for research and services. To learn more or to get involved, call or email, Event Co-Chair Esteban Tabares, at 818-915-0406/shspartan@verizon.net, or Sonia Lopez of the American Cancer Society, at sonia.lopez@cancer.org.

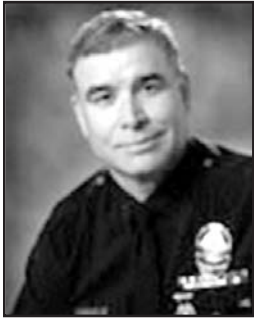
Sylmar Hang Gliders Association (SHGA) – With the support of the community and the Sylmar Neighborhood Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Councilmember Richard Alarcon's office, the group is proceeding with preliminary plans to replace their aging gazebo with an American Disabilities Act-compliant viewing deck, expecting to make the long-standing Sylmar group feel even more welcome in the community. Nick Krall, of Sylmar, and Robert Fedor, of Woodland Hills, have been advising the club on the land-use processes. The SHGA club recently held the Dahlsten Cup hang gliding competition, an annual Sylmar event that challenges pilots to fly a course to and from different peaks or other landmarks along the foothills. Present at the competition was Mary Dahlsten, whose husband the competition was named for. She was bright and perky, and looking much younger than her years. Also, the annual Dockweiler Training Area Party was held in September at the famous beach south of LAX airport. Free training flights were just part of the fun, which included "bungee-powered flights", for more seasoned pilots. If you've always wondered what it's like to fly, check out www.SHGA.org, or www.windsports.com.

Nick Krall is a member of the Sylmar Chamber of Commerce and writes for the NVR.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

News From Foothill Station



*Captain Ivan Minsal
Commanding Officer
Foothill Patrol Division*

November is the beginning of our holiday season. This festive season can be more enjoyable by following a few holiday security tips: Remember to lock your home, even the second floor,

when you are away. Even if you leave that window open a crack, it may invite someone in unexpected. As you drive around shopping for that perfect holiday gift, lock your car and leave nothing for prying eyes to see, such as gifts in the back seat, loose change in the console or cup holder. A car trunk is preferable, but not all cars are equipped with one. So, if you must leave something in your car, place it on the floor and cover it. Leave a cup holder or ashtray empty and keep your GPS or I-pod in a concealed area of your vehicle.

November is Earthquake Preparedness Month. Take a few minutes to review your personal and/or businesses earthquake plan. If you do not have one or need an "info-tune-up", or need to re-acquaint yourself with some important information, please contact www.CERT-LA.Com, your local public li-

brary, or book store. They have all you need to know about earthquake survival, including survival kits for home and business.

California is earthquake country and quakes can strike at anytime. We need to have a plan for our families, homes, and business. Critical supplies you must be able to have immediately on hand are: water, food, medications, clothing, and some type of portable shelter. Include enough cash for a least a week because ATM's will most likely be down for some time. Remember to formulate a family communications plan. Cell phones, hard line (home phone), and other forms of data lines may be out of service as well. So, consider options when developing your plan.

Remember, also, to plan for your pets, Fido, Tabby, fish, birds and horses. They, too, will need water, food, and medications. Remember that information is available for survival kits that work for you and your pets.

A week's worth of supplies is needed because after, or during a major disaster, fire, emergency services, or personnel, may not be available in your neighborhood for an indeterminate period of time. You will need to fend for yourself until help arrives. A sound survival plan and adequate supplies will make the wait a safer and less stressful experience.

Many ask what the Police Department's responsibility is during or after major disasters, such as earthquakes. We assist the Fire Department in evacuations, provide assessments on damage, control, the ingress/egress of emergency vehicles and personnel, and maintain a perimeter around the incident. We continue to maintain the peace and ensure public safety. Our Department works with all public safety agencies to ensure the safety of all persons and protect property when at all possible. Unlike in a criminal incident, where our Department is the lead agency, in these situations, we work in a unified command with other agencies, known as the Incident Command System, as we did in the Marek and Sesnon fires last month, to manage the incident and direct resources.

For other concerns or questions you can call our Community Relations Office, or leave a message for your Senior Lead Officer, at (818) 756-8866, and as always, you can contact Captain Joseph Curreri, Foothill Area Commanding Officer, or myself, at (818) 756-8860.

Have a happy and safe holiday season and please continue to be alert at home and at work. Report any suspicious activity to your Police Department by calling 911, or, for non-emergency calls, Foothill Area desk, at (818) 756-8861.

Meet Tammy Flores, One of Many Heroes



By Wendy Moore

A hero is defined as someone of distinguished courage or ability, admired for brave deeds and noble qualities, according to Dictionary.com. Sylmar's own Tammy Flores demonstrated courage and ability as she worked for 24 hours non-stop to assist victims of the Chatsworth train accident and their families.

Tammy, who is the current Vice President and served as the first President of the Sylmar Neighborhood Council from 2004-2008, prepared herself for such a time as this, by joining the Mayor's volunteer Crisis Response Team (CRT). She completed in depth training learning to provide immediate on-scene crisis intervention as well as emotional support and referrals to victims and their families involved in traumatic incidents. The CRT's liaison role allows Fire and Police department responders to focus on the their primary tasks in a crisis. Heroism is no accident; it takes preparation.

Tammy was first sent directly to the crash site and was there to witness the removal of LAPD Officer Spree DeSha. "I noticed one fireman in particular among the many lined up in respect for Officer DeSha. He was a big man, with tears streaming down his face. He turned and gave another fireman a hug. The scene was unimaginable, like something from a Universal Pictures movie," Tammy remembers.

She served the remainder of the evening and next day at Chatsworth High School providing physical and emotional support to families awaiting news of their loved ones. "What kept me going was not knowing where their loved ones were. I wanted to be there for them," remarked Tammy. She stayed until the last family, that of 18 year old Maria Villalobos was notified of her death. She helped gather the family for their notification with the coroner. Each notification was tragic, emotionally grueling, and exhausting.

"I was blessed to have the opportunity to serve. I am grateful that in a time of crisis, everyone left their egos behind and worked well together. I am proud to live in a country like that and humbled by the compassion I saw around me. I pray for those families. It gave me a sense of perspective: Don't leave home without saying I love you," she shares.

After 24 hours of volunteer service on Saturday, September 13, she cried all the way home. It was her son's birthday.

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Monday, Oct. 27

GHNNC General Meet.
 Van Gogh Elem. School
 Van Gogh, GH
 6:30 pm

Tuesday, Oct. 28

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

SNC Gen. Meet.
 Hubbard St. Elementary
 13325 Hubbard, Syl
 6:30 - 9:30pm

STNC Budget Commit
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill, S-T

Friday, October 31
HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Saturday, Nov. 1

United Methodist
 Women of Tujunga
 Holiday Boutique
 9901 Tujunga Cyn, S-T
 9 am-3 pm 353-3669

Saving LA Project (SLAP) Charo
 4301n E. Valley Blvd, LA
 1-4 pm

Friends of GH Library
 10640 Petit, GH
 10:30 am 368-5689

Sunday, Nov. 2

STANDARD TIME BEGINS
 Turn Clocks Back

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Monday, Nov. 3

SNC Public Serv. Commit
 13515 1/2 Hubbard, Syl
 6:30 pm

Public Hearing
 Bradley Landfill Expansion
 Van Nuys City Hall,
 14110 Sylvan, VN
 9 am

STNC/DAC (Land Use)
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill, S-T
 7 pm 951-7411

Tuesday, Nov. 4
Election Day
 Don't forget to VOTE

Wednesday, Nov 5

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

N. Hills West NC Gen. Meet.
 Sepulveda VA
 16111 Plummer Bg22 N.H.ills
 7 pm 893-8613

Thursday, Nov. 6

PCNC Land Use
 Mission Community Hospital
 14860 Roscoe Blvd., PC
 6:30 pm 785-9355

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

Kagel Canyon Civic Assoc
 Dexter Park
 7 pm

S-T Art Assoc. Meet
 Guest Artist
 Sunland Senior Center
 8640 Fenwick, S-T
 call 352-24

Friday, Nov. 7

Stargazing at Veterans
 Park, w/JPL Speaker
 13000 Sayre, Syl
 7-9 pm 833-7550

S-T Chamber Installation
 at Elks 6:30pm

Saturday, Nov. 8
Registration Deadline to Run for Public Office

Saving LA Project Charo
 4301 E. Valley Blvd, LA
 1 - 4 pm
 Raymond J. Castellani
 Author-Guest speaker
 Little Landers Hist. Soc.
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 1 pm 951-1041

Sunday, Nov. 9

Fire Victims Bar-B-Q
 Debra Lee Entertains
 Dextor Park, KC
 Donation- 1 pm

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Monday, Nov. 10

Sylmar NC Land Use Com
 13515 _ Hubbard, syl
 6:30 - 7:30pm

PCNC-Outreach Comm
 Plaza del Valle
 8614 Van Nuys #B PC
 6:00 p.m.

MHNC Zoning & Land Use
 10161 Sepulveda., MH.
 6:30 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 11
VETERANS DAY

SFV Veterans Day Parade
 Laurel Cyn & Brand, MH
 11 am

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

SNC Outreach Com.
 13515 Hubbard, Syl
 6:30 - 7:30pm

Public Hearing-American
 Waste Mega Expansion
 Stonehurst Park
 Check FTDNC for time

SHPOA Gen. Meet.
 Elections
 Tierra del Sol
 9919 Sunland, SH
 7 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 12

Public Hearing Re EIR
 Athens Matl Recovery Fac.
 Stonehurst Rec. Center
 9901 Dronfield, SV
 7 pm

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

STNC Gen. Meeting.
 Mount Gleason Mdl. Sch.
 Mt. Gleason, S-T
 7 pm 951-7411

PCNC-Commerce Com
 Wells Fargo Bank
 8548 Van Nuys, PC
 2: pm

SVANC Gen. Meet.
 Villa Scalabrini Retire. Ctr
 10631 Vinedale, SV

Sylmar Woman's Club
 Odyssey Restaurant
 15600 Odyssey GH
 11:30 am

Thursday, Nov. 13

Foothill Div. Community Police
 Advisory Board (CPAB)
 Villa Scallabrini, SV
 6 pm 756-8866

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Foothill Div. Community Police
 Advisory Board (CPAB)
 Villa Scallabrini, SV
 6 pm 756-8866
 Thursday, Oct. 9

GHSNC General Meet.
 1st Baptist Church of GH
 11011 Havenhurst, GH
 7:00 pm.

Sylmar Womens Club
 "Getting to Know You"
 Oddessey Restaurant, GH
 11:30 am Reserv 783-2989

Friday, Nov. 14

Intro to Computer Word
 Process
 Granada Hills Library
 10640 Petit, GH
 1-2 pm 368-5689

Sunday, Nov. 16

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Elks Famous Omelete Bar
 S-T Elks Lodge #2098
 10137 Commerce, S-T
 7\$ 9 am-12 pm 352-2098

NV Disaster Preparedness
 & Award to LAFD
 Fire Station No. 87
 10124 Balboa, GH
 2-5 pm

Monday, Nov. 17

PCNC Safety Committee
 Plaza del Valle
 8614 Van Nuys #BPC
 5:30 pm

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 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill, S-T
 7 pm 951-7411

Tuesday, Nov. 18

Nat'l Memory Screening Day
 Free, Confidential Screening
 Shadow Hills Presb. Church
 10158 Johanna, Sunland
 353-2500

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

PCNC Finance Committee
 PC Public Library
 14345 Roscoe Boulevard
 6:30 pm

MHNC Beauti. & Cultural Com
 10161 Sepulveda Blvd. MH.
 6:30 pm

Tip-A-Cop
 Acapulco Restaurant
 8431 Sunland, SV
 11am-9 pm 767-4240
 11:00 am to 9:00 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 19

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

PCNC Rules Committee
 Mission Comm. Hospital
 Office Building, 2nd Floor
 14860 Roscoe, PC
 6:30 pm

MHNC Senior Commit
 10161 Sepulveda. MH.
 6:30 pm

Pacoima NC Gen. Meet.
 Pacoima Comm. Center
 11243 Glenoaks, Pac
 6:30 pm
No. Hills West NC
 Sepulveda Va
 16111 Plummer, N. Hills
 7 pm 893-8613

Mission CPAB
 Mission Police Station
 11121 Sepulveda, MH
 6:30 pm

Thursday, Nov. 20

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

S-T SERVS
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill S-T
 6:45 563-1962

STNC Outreach Com
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill, S-T
 7:30 pm 951-7411

Block Captains Meeting
 Sylmar Library
 14561 Polk, Syl
 6:30 pm

SNC Board Meet.
 Hubbard St. School
 13325 Hubbard
 6:30 pm

Friday, Nov. 21

Fish Fry & Karoke
 VFW Post 10040
 8548 Lankershim, SV
 \$8 Donation

Sunday, Nov. 23

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

Monday, Nov. 24

GHNCC General Meet.
 Van Gogh Elem. School
 Van Gogh, GH
 6:30 pm

Tuesday, Nov. 25

Bolton Hall Museum
 Presents "Horsin' Around"
 10110 Commerce, S-T
 Docent Tours
 1-4 pm 352-3420

SNC Gen. Meet.
 Hubbard St. Elementary
 13325 Hubbard, Syl
 6:30 - 9:30pm

STNC Budget Commit
 NV City Hall
 7747 Foothill, S-T

Wednesday, Nov. 26

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

MHNC Senior Outreach
 10161 Sepulveda, MH.
 11 am

MHNC Outreach/Youth Commit.
 10161 Sepulveda, MH.
 7 pm

Thursday, Nov. 27

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Happy Halloween From The North Valley Reporter

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COMMENTARY

Lady Liberty's Light in Jeopardy

By Robert J. Barbera

Statue of Liberty is, for me, a driving force and image of the greatness of America and what our country represents at its most basic – liberty. Lady Liberty's light is a beacon that shines to the rest of the world with the message: "If you are seeking liberty, you will find it upon these golden shores."

Our forefathers left countries which had been darkened by tyranny, persecution, serfdom and repression. In the glow of Lady Liberty's light, our country grew from a disjointed collection of feuding colonies into the richest, freest and most powerful country in history. I'm concerned, however, that the growth of government power and intrusion into our citizens' and our businesses' daily affairs is drastically dimming that light.

Rules and regulations of bureaucrats stifle the independence and basic freedoms of all of us every day. Our free enterprise system runs into impregnable walls,

supported by faceless, yet all-powerful government agents. Individuals may have no stake in an issue, but if they can hire a slick-enough trial attorney, they can dictate how you run your daily life, what you can do with your property, and how you run your business.

If you read the Declaration of Independence, focusing on the list of complaints about King George III and his "tyrannical" actions, it is hard not to conclude that old George was a piker compared to many in government today.

On the more personal side, too many of our citizens have forgotten that the preservation of liberty requires responsible citizens who are willing to exercise self-control. Just because we can do something doesn't mean we should. Liberty, without this sense of personal responsibility, will soon become anarchy. John Adams was right when he said, "democracy can only be preserved by a moral people."

That includes respect for opinions different than ours, and a broad respect for the rights of others. As

Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, all men are indeed endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights – and that includes folks we disagree with.

That said, history teaches one stark lesson about freedom, and that is that as governments – even democratic ones – grow in power they pose larger and larger threats to the basic freedoms of their citizens. Every generation must renew the Founders' commitment to keeping Lady Liberty's light shining brightly. We can do this in our daily lives, and with our participation in the democratic process. As the old saying goes, freedom isn't free. It requires care and feeding by those who enjoy its blessings. Don't let the hub-bub of daily living distract you from this task, lest we wake up one morning to find the Lady's light totally extinguished.

Editor's Note: Mr. Barbera is Chairman of the Americanism Educational League, which works to "instill patriotism and citizenship in America's youth."

Life as We Know it Will Become Extinct

(Part 3 of 3)

By Jack Lindblad

What would you do if you knew societal and ecological collapse was going to end life as we know it in 20-40 years? And how do you think a lot of other people will do? To do nothing is not on the table.

This installment explains that, by removing developers and politicians from the built-form development decision-making process, of how much and what to build, payola politics will cease to block and counter the public interest permitting our Tujunga-Pacoima Watershed to answer a sizable portion of the City of Los Angeles' water needs, as a localized solution to our water crisis.

Surely, once payola politics, borne of a tryst between politician and developer, is extinguished, aesthetic, life-safety, and other community impacts will continue to enjoy the public forum for dialog, community, and negotiation between all players will con-

tinue. However, the nature of bio-regional determinacy will leave the decision-making about restricting sensitive, ecologically vital land areas from urbanization, up to a map generating process of overlaying various map overlays of hydrologic, ground water recharge, riparian, chaparral, flora, fauna, woodland, forest, geologic, landslide-prone, seismic off-limits-to-urbanization preserves to be maintained for the overall carrying-capacity of the watershed.

Without human intervention, an emergent composite will reveal those least ecologically sensitive areas remaining as suitable for green-collar, 100% renewable energy source economic and built-form development.

So, respecting the watershed's carrying capacity, presents all the more reason for neighborhood empowerment to reject payola politics: the greed and corporate-personhood of the developer greasing the skids by writing the legislation, then profiteering from that legislation, after paying the politician, with both the developer and the compromised politician threatening, extorting and coercing the constituency with

bureaucratic layers of immunity provided by the one-party town politic.

Once crass developer payola-inspired politics are removed from the State Legislature, California can proceed to mitigate and cope with global warming and act to pull the human species back from the precipice of extinction. Payola politics does not allow adequate funding to restore our watershed and provide for relocation of our unsustainable, failed global economy based on the local production of food, energy, and goods and the local development of currency, governance and culture.

Reuse, reduce, recycle, restore – have to replace the one-party town payola mantra of denial, distraction, disruption, distortion, and diversion. Healthy watershed means healthy neighborhood means no payola politics.

Editors Note: Mr. Lindblad is a Local Architect and long time Community Activist in the San Fernando Valley who is dedicated to protecting the environment.

A Horse isn't Just a Horse

By Mary Benson

The horse industry isn't a few four legged animals standing in a few scattered pens around the Valley. Research from the American Horse Council shows that the Horse Industry in Los Angeles generates about \$900 million dollars a year in direct and indirect local revenue. It's about Stuntmen, leather workers, retail stores, fencing, architects, waste haulers, laundry services, video services, realtors, back yard boarding and truck sales.

There are an estimated 20,000 horses in Los Angeles, but each horse touches dozens, if not hundreds of

lives. A horse in a program for the developmentally disabled can bring joy and health to thousands in its lifetime. Horses compete for hundred thousands prizes at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center, and at dozens of other local venues. They race for millions of dollars at Santa Anita and are seen by millions of people every New Year's Day on TV. They brought home medals from the China Olympics. Horses are cast in supporting roles for movie stars from Kevin Costner to Clint Eastwood to Arnold Schwarzenegger.

There's an opportunity to expand equestrian oriented tours in the place where western movies were born.

Nearly all of those animals live and work in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Horse Council has launched a campaign to raise awareness about the horse industry and educate lawmakers about the concerns of the normally silent and diverse group. "Most people have no idea of the financial impact of horses", mused Dale Gibson, Vice President, of the newly organized council. "Around Hansen Dam, the horse industry supplies from 15% to 100% of household income."

Editors Note: Mary Benson is Exec. Director of the LA Trails Project.

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This information was printed in the letters section of Western Horseman Magazine April 2008

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COMMENTARY

The Fear Factor: No more Mr. Nice Guy



By Ron Kaye

For too long, the politically conscious people of Los Angeles have projected their own good hearts and good intentions onto their City Council members, and come hat in hand hoping for favors like a speed bump on their street, then leave with nothing but a smile and flattering word.

If we're going to change the political culture of City Hall and save the city from over-development, over-population and over-taxation, we're going to have to stop being so naive and get tough with our elected officials.

The problem in a nutshell is they treat us like their servants and order us around and make decisions for us that aren't in our or the city's best interests. The elected officials have to be put in their place. They're the servants, the public servants and their handsomely rewarded for it. They live like millionaires -- and somehow most of them become millionaires while on the public dole -- with the highest salaries of municipal officials in America and lucrative perks.

I've listened to a lot of City Council meetings in the last six months and I've attended a lot of commission and city hearings and I'm shocked -- critical as I've long been about the arrogance of City Hall -- by the way the public is treated.

During a recent Department of Water and Power Commission meeting, where the Saving L.A. Project brought out about 50 activists to support board President Nick Pat-saouras' proposal for a Ratepayer Advocate, the utility's bureaucracy brought in 10 armed guards to cordon off the halls and make sure the rabble of ordinary law-abiding citizens didn't storm the bastille.

When I tried to record the meeting on video -- my absolute legal right -- guards twice came up to me and threatened to throw me out. I finally had to interrupt the meeting and protest loudly to get the board's legal adviser to tell the guards to back off.

At a zoning hearing, that exposed the city's lack of a policy on where and how cell phone towers can be installed close to where people live and work, the hearing officer lectured the 40 community activists about decorum, like a strict school teacher laying down the law to unruly six-year-olds. And then he treated a councilman's aide like royalty.

We can't afford to take this kind of treatment anymore. I've talked to a lot of smart people, who live off the corrupt culture of City Hall that makes special interests rich at the expense of the people, and all of them say pretty much the same thing about the effort to organize community groups of all types from all over the city into a single force. "Your biggest challenge," they tell me, "is that 'the public' screams with a lot of voices, is far from unified, not particularly democratic and often unreasonable, making whatever it is on any given day on any subject easy to ignore."

I've learned how true that is in recent months in meeting with hundreds of people from every part of Los Angeles. Rich or poor or in-between, they all experience the same thing from: City officials give them the runaround, stymie them with rules designed to protect special interests and if they're lucky and kowtow enough, they might just get a crumb from the table of power.

That's not good enough. The problems are mounting. The city is teetering on the brink. Ordinary citizens and business people need to decide the days of playing nice are over. No more begging for our basic rights.

The only thing City Hall will respond to is fear, the fear of losing their rank and privilege. And the only way I know of to make them afraid is to look beyond our local concerns to the pattern of abuses and unite in common cause to restore L.A. to greatness as a city.

Editors Note: Mr. Kaye is the former Editor of the Daily News, Founder, Chairman of Saving LA Project and columnist for the NVR.

Harvest Time

All the People

By Marlene Hitt

"Come ye thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home; all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin."

These words are from a popular hymn sung in many churches at this time of year. The sentiment is one felt by all people everywhere, past and present.

Our Thanksgiving is but one moment in the traditional times of the world. On the Internet I found lists and lists of harvest festivals from everywhere, some of which I'll describe here.

Mabon is the old, old festival of the Welsh, named for the mythological character Mabon, called also Harvest Home, Feast of the Ingathering, or as Alban Elfed by neo-druidec traditions. This festival is a celebration of thanksgiving for the fruits of earth and a recognition of the need to share them. September is considered a holy month and Mabon is the time when the oak king, who has ruled for half as year must give up his throne to the holly king who will rule the rest of the year.

The Thai Pongal is a harvest festival equivalent to a thanksgiving event celebrated by Tamils all over the world. Pongal in Tamal means "boiling over spill over", as in the act of the boiling over of milk in a clay pot denotes future prosperity for the family. Traditionally celebrated at harvest time, it is a celebration of the prosperity of the harvest, thanking the rain, sun and farm animals that have helped in the harvest. New clothes are worn. The first of the four days of the festival, symbolizing new opportunities, is celebrated by throwing away and destroying old clothes and materials, by setting them on fire, marking the end of the old Thai and the emergence of the new.

This festival is celebrated in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, South Africa, USA, Canada and Singapore.

The second day is celebrated by boiling rice with fresh milk and jaggery in new pots which is later topped with brown sugar, cashew nuts and raisins. On the third day, to thank cattle, the beasts are decorated with paint, flowers and bells, are allowed to roam free and are fed sweet rice and sugar cane. On the final day, people visit their friends and relatives.

The Indian Sakathri site on the Internet has wonderful recipes for the Indian harvest festival; rice, chana dhal, cardamom, ghee, sugar, coconut, raisins and cashews.

China's Moon Festival, or Lantern Festival, or Mooncake Festival celebrates the harvest by eating moon cakes outside under the moon, putting pomelo rinds on the head, carrying brightly lit lanterns, burning incense to deities, planting mid-autumn trees, collecting dandelion leaves and dancing Fire Dragon Dances.

All in all, people appreciate a good harvest and enjoy the promise of food for the rest of the year and are not afraid to show their appreciation. It is difficult for us in our current culture to fully appreciate the results of their planting, care and harvest of food crops, but lets appreciate our bounty anyways. Think of the alternative!

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SOUND OFF

Open Letter to the 7th District Councilman

Dear Mr. Alarcon,

As a twenty five-year resident of the 7th Council District I think I have been in the community long enough to make some observations.

I will start by stating that I never failed to cast a ballot in every election. I have stepped out of my comfort zone and became actively involved in civil issues of the community. I wanted to participate in the efforts to improve my community. The list of organizations I have worked with is endless. After twenty-five years I find myself fighting the same quality of life issues I fought in the eighties.

Streets littered with abandoned vehicles, illegal construction, backyards turned into trailer parks, front yards acting as parking lots and junk yards, the same as in the eighties and nineties.

Not a single community organization in the Northeast Valley has put a dent in the steady decline of CD7 in the past twenty years. The reason for their failure can be placed at the door of Los Angeles Code Enforcement Agencies (every single one of them).

Community organizations, volunteers, non-profits and no one else can prevent the once great city of Los Angeles from steadily crumbling into a state of decay and Third World status.

Until, and unless, the (paid) employees of the City of Los Angeles start to perform their jobs (pro-actively), this city will become known as a Third World City in a First World Nation. Los Angeles will become known as the "...arm pit of America..." I understand the part that residents play in the destruction of a community. I am also aware that if the city authorities do not enforce existing laws, chaos and lawlessness will prevail.

Hundreds of violations of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) are in plain sight, in public view, yet no city agency takes any action against the violators. Drive down any street in CD 7; Code violations are in every block, on both sides of the street.

Am I all wet with my expectations of city Code Enforcement Agencies, utilizing their staff of city employees to enforce the laws of the city, county and state? City authorities must demand that residents conform to the standards that have been defined and mandated for this city. Without standards, we are facing community decay.

The neglect of the Northeast Valley could be occurring purposely. Maybe the powers that be, have decided to let this community die, and then they can declare it a substandard housing area,

bulldoze the area and create a new tract of up-scale residences.

Maybe the powers that be have decided to declare this area as a place where new immigrants can get a toehold and a lift up. So, why enforce any laws? Let the new arrivals do what they want, regardless of the standards as defined by the LAMC.

Mr. Alarcon, as the representative of CD7, I, and many others, ask on a daily basis, "Why haven't our elective representatives to city government, leveled a demand on City Departments to enforce existing laws and the set of standards as defined within the LAMC?"

If the existing laws are not strong enough, strengthen them. If the fines are not heavy enough, increase them. If the laws are no longer valid, remove them from the books. Demand that the City Attorney's Office prosecute LAMC violators.

Not a single one of us is asking for a miracle. We only want the services that we are being charged for. Regardless of what has been decided in the smoky backrooms, we pay taxes, we want services.

*Morris Pichon
Pacoima*

Judge Rules Against Providence Holy Cross

Providence Holy Cross (PHC) should not be building their planned expansion according to the Judge's ruling on an Appeal filed by multiple community groups. He said the City Council's passive denial of the CEQA appeal against building the massive expansion with only a Mitigated Negative Declaration report (MND) instead of requiring an extensive Environmental Impact Review (EIR) violates the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Although PHC has been ordered to cease all construction activities, they insist that, in order for the site to not be a hazard to the surrounding community, they need to finish pouring all their foundations, structural slabs, and complete all bolts and permanent welds for the steel frame that is already up, but only temporarily pinned together.

Community groups who brought forward the lawsuit demanding the E.I.R. say that fact further emphasizes the dangers that were not properly explained to the community and to the city in PHC's MND. Further meetings with the City Council will be required for a legal and proper vote, based on a simple majority per CEQA on the appeal, which was filed over a year ago.

Stay tuned. In their boldness and arrogance, even after the Judge's preliminary opinion that the lawsuit had a strong basis in CEQA law, the PHC development team started building as fast as possible, with the blessing of the city of Los Angeles, according to Maria Townsend of the Providence Holy Cross Medical Center Public Relations department.

Proponents of the E.I.R. say the expansion is needed, but that there are also critical safety and community-care issues that have not been properly addressed. They include unsafe, too narrow, Indian Hills Road, which is the only access to the communities behind the hospital; traffic congestion; overflow of doctor and employee parking into surrounding neighborhoods; air quality affecting the youth sports fields next to the hospital; the urban design in a rural neighborhood; the expansion of high-dollar service aimed at the neighboring Santa Clarita valley communities while ignoring the local health care needs identified in the last three triennial Health Needs Assessments.

*Nick Krall
Sylmar*

Cut our Dependency on Foreign Oil

Dear Friends:

We should no longer stand by and watch as America's national security and economy become more dependent on the unstable foreign nations that we rely on for nearly 70% of the oil that we use each day.

We spend nearly \$700 billion every year buying foreign oil, which represents the greatest transfer of wealth in the history of mankind. The new President and the 111th Congress need to enact an energy plan that reduces our foreign oil dependence by at least 30% within ten years.

This plan must include proven American technology and resources; the development of new energy sources; and the expansion and modernization of the national electrical grid to transport renewable energy to homes and businesses.

Delaying any further means tacit support for continuing America's addiction to foreign oil. I urge you to join with T. Boone Pickens and his army of supporters in calling for an Energy Independence Plan to be enacted within the first 100 days of the new administration. Lend your support at <http://www.pickensplan.com>. Even if just to get the work to your senator/congress person, and to family and friends.

*Nancy M. Norris
Granada Hills,*

The Fate of Prop R

No other issue in the history of Los Angeles, at least in my life time, demonstrates the complete failure of "checks and balances" than the Proposition R scandal. Special Interest Groups used their influence with so called non-partisan groups and their extra special relationship with elected officials to force their agenda on the public.

Those entrusted with protecting our rights, have not only failed to act, but in the end aided the abuse of the public trust. With unlimited resources and using the tax dollars of the people, the special interest manipulated the system to the very end. Having limited funds and resources, the end of this fight must come to an end.

Who is "Serving the Public?"

Joe Pinoy Lozano
Semper Fidelis
USMC 1954-1957

It is with great regret that I have to write these letters of discontent about our elected officials. I am sure that at one point they were nice, normal people. But then they became politicians who are self-serving and have no regard for people trying to clean up their community. I report things on a

Although Prop R demonstrates a clear abuse of power, there are many more abuses which are just as shameful. With so many unjust issues in need of reform, the interest of the people must be the priority of the individual at the helm of the city. Clearly, those entrusted with that responsibility have too many of their own individual interests, to act on behalf of the people.

*David Hernandez
North Hollywood*

daily basis and get no response. But be it as it may, me sounding like a broken record, I have to continue reporting things. My conscience is clear. I was promised a signal at Brand and Arleta in June; then it changed to November. November is approaching and I see no signs of a signal. I guess what I am trying to say here is that all the education in the world does not make you a nice person. God Bless America! It is still the greatest country in the world!

THIS & THAT



Carrick's Journey -Part Twelve

By Tomi Lyn Bowling

The sounds of children laughing and playing would otherwise paint a picture of serenity in this warm cabin. Drake's pounding headache overrode that joyous laughter. He moaned and yelled out, "My head!" as he grabbed both sides of his face and tried to describe this pounding pain to Maddie, his mother.

His shouting drew the attention of the siblings and others as they ran to the little cabin in wonder. Fanella came from nowhere and jumped through the door stating, "Here, drink this." as she pushed her way through the on-looking crowd. She had anticipated the pain and brought a concoction of some awful tasting juice, home brewed. Drake sat down drinking the mixture and looking up at Fanella in wonder. As the pain dissipated he realized that this woman was the captor and the reason for the massive headache. He immediately sprang up from the rickety old chair and started to shout at her for drugging him. Just then the pounding pain returned severely, and he plopped right back down, nearly missing the chair, stopping his loud tirade. The chair wobbled and just missed falling over. Fanella could not help herself. She started to giggle and turned away so as not to be seen. It was too late. She burst into complete laughter, nearly falling over. Everyone else in the room saw her and all were soon laughing as well. As the tears streamed down Maddie's hysterically laughing face Drake's face turned red and he stared at the room full of laughing hyenas. He was not happy and was desperately trying to hold his firm position and be mad. He watched as the roars of laughter soon had his siblings on the floor. He found his resistance weakening as he gave way to a little giggle. His giggle grew to a full belly laugh. The laughter billowing out of the cabin soon spread to the guards outside. What a sight this was.

As the laughter died down, and bodies began to rise from the floor Fanella, in an apologetic manner, reached out to shake hands with Drake and introduce herself. Drake stood up, slowly this time, and thanked her for reuniting their family. Drake started to feel much better by the time he downed the concoction from Fanella. The laughter stopped short when Fanella finally confessed what the ingredients were. It was the mention of three crushed cockroaches that silenced all of the laughter and nearly brought Drake to his knees coughing and gagging...to be continued.

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AFTERMATH OF FIRES, OCTOBER 13, 2008

By Katharine Russ

More than 800 city, county and state firefighters battled the two blazes Monday, October 13, which shut down major portions of the 210 and 118 freeways, forced closure of Metrolink commuter trains through the Santa Susana Pass and filled the air with a thick blanket of black smoke. The winds, at times gusting more than 70 miles an hour, snapped limbs from trees and scattered debris and trash

throughout the area. Police evacuated over 1,200 residents as fires threatened more than 450 homes.

Authorities confirmed two deaths linked to the fires; one was a homeless man and his dog who were killed as fire swept under an overpass.

Also 14,125 acres burned in the Sesnon fire and 4,824 acres burned in the Marek fire. Evacuation centers were set up in several locations across the North Valley. It cost approximately \$12 million to fight the fires that destroyed over 80 buildings ac-

ording to the U.S. Forest Service.

Governor Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in Los Angeles and Ventura counties due to wildfires, and Oct. 12, he declared a state of emergency in San Bernardino County. His Executive Order, signed October 20, waives fees and will assist in recovery efforts for fire victims in Los Angeles, Ventura and San Bernardino counties.



Burning tires causing contamination near Sky Terrace

Sky Terrace resident Herb Coleman said, "The fireman who fought the battle at my house said the he was sorry he couldn't save the house, but there was no water to fight the fires." Residents also reported a tanker explosion that rained fire and destroyed rows 7, 8, and 9 in the Park almost instantly. The area directly behind the Park was filled with thousands of tires, whose steel belts remains, are pictured here to the left, along with old derelict cars and trucks. Some had engines that contained oil and other toxic contaminants. All were completely burned. The fumes emitted are full of many toxic chemicals that tires contain, including organic compounds such as benzene, lead, benzo (a) pyrene, and synthetic rubber components like butadiene and styrene. The chlorine content in tires contributes to the foundation for dioxins and furans, which are dangerous toxic chemicals when burned. They are extremely harmful to the health of humans and wildlife. There are homes remaining in the midst of potentially contaminated soil and toxic air particulates. Homeowners cannot return to live safely in that environment and have no idea if they can ever return.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD), issued a warning that the site of the fire in the Angeles National Forest is spreading unhealthy concentrations of fine particulate dust throughout the San Fernando Valley and portions of the San Gabriel Mountains. Affected residents should also keep windows and doors closed. The SCAQMD also warned, "With strong Santa Ana winds, the dust could reach as far as the San Bernardino Valley, southwest Riverside County, Orange County, the South Bay-Long Beach area and the Santa Monica-Malibu area."



Commercial Buildings destroyed in Merek-Lopez Canyon fire

Merek Fire, Lopez Canyon – An earlier report by the Los Angeles Fire Department says approximately 40 homes in Sky Terrace Mobile Home Park were destroyed and six others damaged. In Dexter Canyon, two residences were damaged and two destroyed. In Lower Lopez Canyon, one residence damaged, one commercial building damaged and two commercial buildings destroyed. U.S. Forest Service said the cause of the fire was "vehicle related" but declined to comment further.



Photo Audra Gott

Sesnon Fire – Brian Gott, a Porter Ranch resident, said, "On Sunday morning my family went for a walk down the Limekiln Canyon trails on Tampa (at Sesnon). We commented on how beautiful an area we lived in was and also spoke about how dry everything was, in particular, the pine needles that blanketed the trail. There were tons of them and our kids loved stepping in and kicking through piles of them. Three hours later I boarded a flight to Abu Dhabi. When I landed, (22 hours after I left LA) I had a dozen messages from friends and my wife, saying our area had been evacuated due to fires. No one could return for any belongings. She remained evacuated for two days, staying with friends on White Oak. I landed at 1:00 am and saw the newscasts on the damage done to the Porter Ridge Park area across the street from my home. It was surreal to be 12 thousand miles from home, watching my neighborhood in chaos. I rebooked a flight and came back, all on the same day. Our home sustained very little damage, shy of a collapsed gazebo that fell under the weight of a water drop. Luckily, all our windows were closed so there was no interior damage." Some of Gott's neighbors were not as fortunate. Some homes on his street were completely destroyed while others sustained some damage.



Blue Star Mobile Home Park Emergency Gate

Photo Glen Bell

Merek Fire – Glen Bell, President of Neighborhood Friends, gives his account of the fire that singed the corner of his home in Blue Star Mobile Home Park. "My neighbor and I watched as the truck diesel tanks exploded. As they exploded, the winds, blowing roughly 65 miles an hour, would blow this still burning fuel down the hill towards our community. With every explosion I shuttered, fearing for our lives. My third grade math tells me that there were at least 415 vehicles that had only five minutes to escape from one exit. The operators of this mobile home park refused to open the emergency exit, so needless to say we were "log jammed" getting out of the park. People were amazingly patient, considering that fire was raining down on them as they were stuck waiting to get out of the park. It took over two hours to evacuate and if we hadn't forcibly opened the back gate, everyone would have perished."



Fire Retardant Drop

Photo Randall Neudeck

The Sesnon 5,000-acre fire in the Granada Hills/Porter Ranch area started in a drainage area south of Palo Sola Truck Road, west of Limekiln Canyon Road. Flames crept into Ventura County along Highway 118, just northeast of Simi Valley. According to fire officials, the cause appears to be a downed electrical distribution line that fell onto dry brush. Investigations are still being conducted by LA County Fire, LA County Sheriff and CAL FIRE.