

# Developer Ordered Neighbor's Water Shut Off

*DWP refuses to restore service to desperate woman*

By Katharine Russ

Shadow Hills, Ca. Residents in Shadow Hills have deluged Councilman Paul Krekorian's (CD2) office with letters pleading with him to intervene on behalf of Maria Mejia, whose water service was terminated at the behest of Patrick Wizmann, principal of California Home Development LLC (CHD). The first shut-off was in December 2007, when Wizmann cited alleged water leaks upon his property from Mejia's pipes. Ironically, Mejia's water service was terminated the same



Wizmann standing near his truck and equipment parked at the spot on his property, where he alleges that Mejia's broken water pipe caused damage to his open space. Mejia's home is located beyond the top left hand corner of this picture.

day she was successful in a Court of Appeals action brought against her by CHD regarding ingress and egress easements to her property.

A recent lawsuit filed on January 26, 2010 by Mejia against the City of Los Angeles, Department of Water and Power (DWP), Wizmann and CHD alleges that on three different occasions her water service was shut off without her knowledge, consent and without due process. Her lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles and the DWP also contains allegations of inverse condemnation, wrongful discontinuance of service, violations of the California Health and Safety Codes and the Constitution, among other things.

Without running water for more than a year, Mejia's property has lost substantial value and is not saleable. To make things worse, her property is also in a high fire area. CA Health and Safety Code Section 17920.3 states in pertinent part, "Any dwelling unit in which there exists any of the following listed conditions to an extent that endangers the life, limb, health, property, safety, or welfare of the occupants thereof: (5) Lack of hot and cold running water to plumbing fixtures in a dwelling unit."

Mejia's water service has remained off since December 1, 2008 to her primary residence as well as her guesthouse since April 2009. Mejia's tenant was forced to leave the guesthouse because she had no running water. In April 2009, the County cited Mejia because there was no running water to her property. Wizmann has refused for nearly two years to allow anyone onto his property to repair the water lines that cross his property.

The lawsuit alleges that Wizmann told neighbors his intent was to "run Mejia out of her land and force her to sell it to him for a dollar." Shortly before, and since, Mejia filed her lawsuit against the City and DWP, several Shadow Hills neighbors have pleaded with CD2 Councilman Paul Krekorian, via written letters, emails and phone calls, to assist in restoring Mejia's water service.

A March 3 meeting was set up between Mejia and Jeremy Oberstein, Krekorian's Communications Director, but was abruptly cancelled because of pending litigation, according to another staffer, Damian Carroll.

*Continued on page 3*

# Truck Driving Academy Faces More Hurdles

By Katharine Russ

How does it happen that safety agencies in place to monitor the activities of the closing of the Lopez Canyon Land Fill (LCLF) have no documentation regarding that closure?

In a March 16, 2010 letter from CalRecycle, Michael Wochnick, Supervisor, wrote, in part, "After reviewing our records regarding closure and post closure maintenance compliance of LCLF, CalRecycle staff was not able to locate any information relevant to this alleged landfill postclosure land use. Although the landfill operator applied for and received several final closure construction completion date extensions, the incomplete closure construction project extends well beyond any reasonable time frame (almost 14 years currently)."

Amy Norris, spokesperson for CalRecycle, remarked, "The City is responsible for land uses. We do not have jurisdiction with what they want to do with the land in that area. The only thing the operator is required to do is to let the Enforcement Agency, the State Water Control Board and CalRecycle know before any work is started on a new project."

Upon closure of the Lopez Canyon Landfill in 1996 the zoning was designated as Open Space. According to Council File# 07-1660 (6/15/07), "The City of Los Angeles has an opportunity to make good on its commitment to the Northeast San Fernando Valley community to mitigate the impact of the landfill and other environmentally hazardous land uses by using Lopez Canyon as a location that can serve the recreational and open space needs of residents."

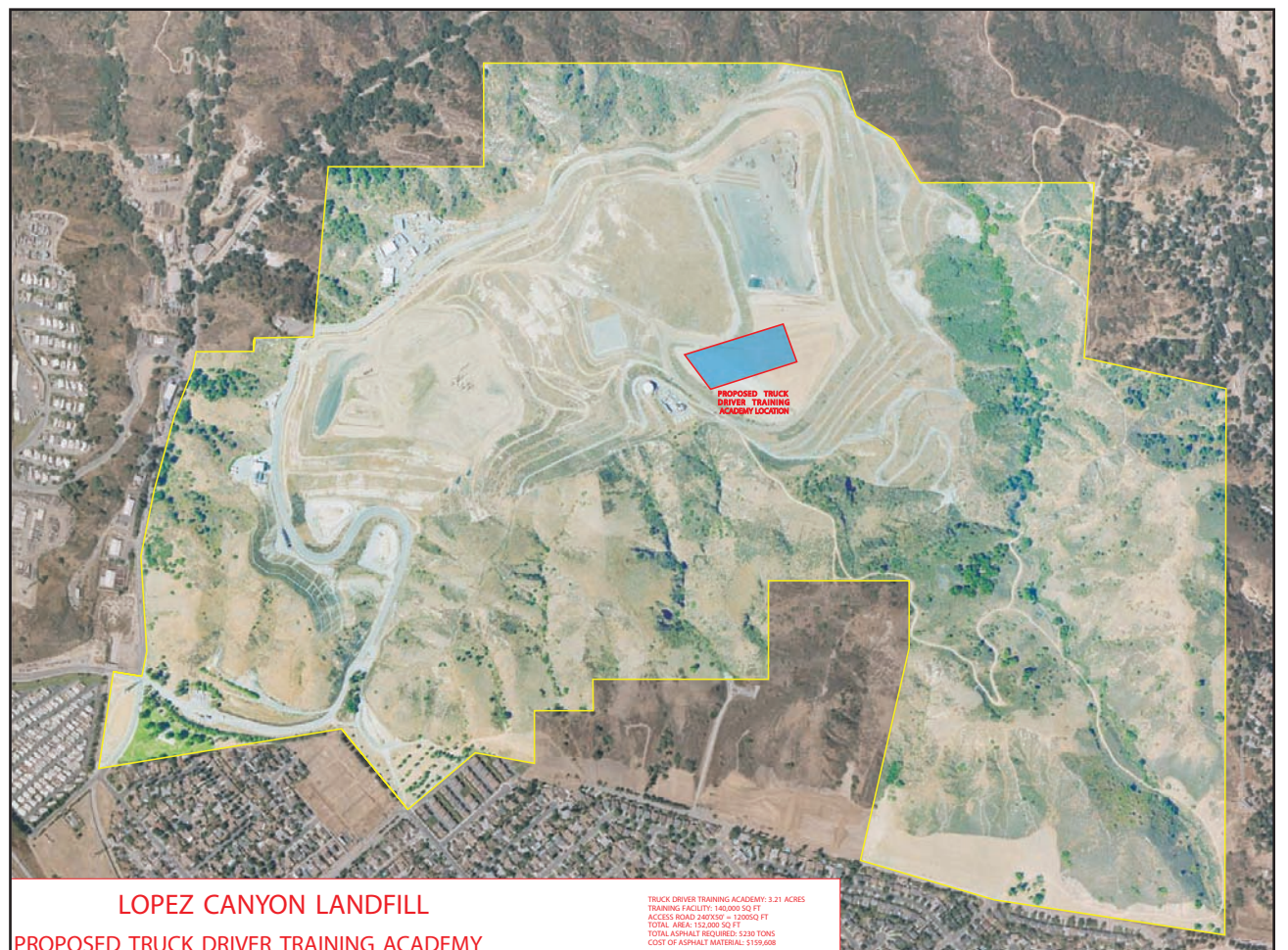
The appeal, filed on behalf of the Community Alliance for Open Space on February 5, 2010, con-

cluded, "The MND is legally insufficient for the City Planning Department to use as the environmental clearance document for the approval of the variance. And even if a variance granted by one City Department to another were proper, there is no substantial

evidence in the record establishing that the proposed diesel semi truck driving school can meet any of the variance test requirements of the City Charter."

The City Charter, Section 562, forbids the use of a variance for "special privilege". Sec. 562 states in

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Community Activists Gathered for Meetings



L.A. Neighborhood Council Coalition

By Nina Royal

Over 100 community activists citywide attended an all day series of public meetings held at the Hollywood Community Center on Saturday, April 3, beginning at 8:45 am.

The Department of Water & Power (DWP) Advocacy Committee addressed strategy for proposed future rate increases, green energy programs, the need for DWP transparency and accountability, and to encourage the City Council to support a community selected Rate Payer Advocate to the DWP.

Tony Wilkinson of Panorama City NC chairs this committee. For more information contact: lawilkinson@acm.org,

That meeting was followed by the L.A.Neighborhood Council Coalition, (LANCC). Their Agenda included DWP MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) Committee report, status of Neighborhood Councils and the future of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), the city budget crisis, NCs bylaws task force report, and the salaries of elected officials under "shared sacrifice" and a future actions agenda. Len Shaffer from Tarzana NC chairs this committee. For more information visit: <http://www.lancissues.org/>

The NC Budget Advocates Committee followed that meeting with their report on recent meetings with Larry Frank from the Mayors office. That group was selected by Neighborhood Councils to advocate before the Mayor, the City Council and the Budget & Finance Committee, collecting and processing information for community members. Jay Handel of West Los Angeles chairs this committee. For more info contact him at sgrest@aol.com

During a break before the next meeting, Caroline Aguirre of Eagle Rock donated lunch to all consisting of deli sandwiches, chips and cookies.

The Saving LA Project (SLAP) meeting was the last meeting of the day. Their discussion took on strategies for identifying candidates for the city council's even numbered districts that will be coming up in the next election. 25 members volunteered to form a Political Action Committee (PAC) within SLAP, whose first meeting will be April 17. Also to determine whether "clean money" or other campaign finance reforms should be sought. They also discussed whether Neighborhood Councils should have the authority to appoint at least one member to each city commission so as to achieve a measure of accountability and how to bring transparency, honesty and competence to the DWP. This group was founded and is chaired by Ron Kaye former Editor of the Daily News. For more information contact: ron@ronkayela.com or visit: [www.ourla.org](http://www.ourla.org).

These meetings are usually held back-to-back on the first Saturday of each month. Votes were taken and Motions were passed on the above issues. You can find out more through the contact information provided above. They are open to the public and everyone is encouraged to participate and become involved. Stay for them all or if you don't have much time, chose one that interests you the most.

## SR 710 Freeway North

By Dr. Tom Williams

The 710 Committee has finished all six communities' presentations of the Draft Report and the Final Committees' presentation of the final Report

March comments for the SR 710 North Extension basically focused on the Draft Report being: incomplete, inadequate, bias, "not sound research", and lacked fulfilling Federal/METRO-funded scopes of work for the Technical Study.

Mike Miles, Caltrans' new district manager, may set a new style for the SR 710, the Caltrans property corridor, and environmental justice for SR 710, I 710, and maybe the toll lanes of I-10/I-110. Public Records Act requests are being sent to Caltrans and METRO during April to assure 710 employment and 710 turmoil in Caltrans and METRO after the Final Study Report is available.

Some believed that "SR710 North Extension Tunnel" has followed Doug Failing to Metro. At least METRO provides some monthly public participation after they have approved the short-listing of SR 710 and inclusion of the Public Private Partnerships (PPP). Huizar opposed the SR 710 PPP inclusion by METRO, while Villaraigosa abstained because he knew that Rita Robinson and Richard Fatz would vote for it.

The Final Report to the Project Committees reviewed the same as in the Communities' presentations and showed some comments for and a lot against the Project. A new issue was promoted by a slide in the presentation showing the South Portal totally south of Valley Blvd. in Alhambra.

The Final Report is now under Caltrans control. Sierra Group's SR 710 Project webpage is no longer updated and is now on the Caltrans District 7 webpage, <http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/710study/>. Caltrans next step should be to put the Final Report on the webpage and the METRO Board agenda

Mike Eng's new 2316 bill is being monitored. It requires sale of Caltrans properties without specifying buyers, schedule for sale, how much, and if the money goes to current Measure R local projects = SR-710. This is not the resurrection of Portantino's bill but rather the worst parts of Cedillo's bill for promoting Caltrans' transfer of property to Metro, where Doug Failing can work on them.

METRO has two "710" projects: I-710 South Expansion, and SR-710 North Extension. And now we have to look forward to our efforts here for all communities south-to-north.

Meetings, presentations and workshops have been held or being planned for the following communities: Alhambra, City of Los Angeles, Glendale, La Canada-Flintridge, La Crescenta, Pasadena, Pasadena and South Pasadena

In El Sereno, meetings at the Eastside Café are focusing on Caltrans properties (saving Maycrest Bungalows), sales (Eng's Bill), and better maintenance of remaining houses. They will have additional meetings and fundraiser concerts April through May to help tenants of Caltrans properties.

South Pasadena and Pasadena have not realized that the Zone 3 North Portal may extend from SR-110 to north of the SR-134/I-210 interchange. Pasadena has not fully realized that the SR-710 would dump 2,000-3000 vehicles (1000 trucks) and commuters onto the I-210 during commute hours.

Glendale City Council wants to do even more against SR-710. LaCanada-Flintridge and Glendale are also in opposition to the 710 North extension. Sunland-Tujunga and their Neighborhood Council have been actively involved in major land use conflicts, and they voted in opposition to SR-710.

The focus is to show the complete BIASED geotechnical study and to oppose Zone 3 or any tunnel, viaduct, freeway, etc.

An effort is being made toward Virtual Townhall and Virtual committees in order to keep the public informed.

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Granada Hills

Elections for Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council (GHNNC) were held on Tuesday, March 2 however, final results are still pending due to a grievance filed by Candidate Eric Rosenberg.

GHNNC elections included 29 residents and “stakeholders” who vied for the volunteer, non-partisan 2-year Board seats.). Candidates represented a good cross-section of the community. Backgrounds of the new Board include small business owners, public relations professionals, business executives, environmentalists, military personnel, law enforcement professionals, political figures, members of the educational community, as well as participants in sports and youth groups.

The GHNNC continues to work on several projects, which often include other organizations. Their Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) committee is considering a proposal for two, 45 foot high 4-story dormitories to house 250 male students (plus

staff) for a trade and boarding school on the site of the old Jewish Community Center on Rinaldi St. near Hayvenhurst Ave. They are suggesting lower buildings and more parking to minimize the impact on neighbors. Anyone interested in participating in the meetings in the near future regarding this project can contact the Chair of PLUM at [www.ghnnc.org](http://www.ghnnc.org).

GHNNC volunteers help with cleanup and plantings to keep O’Melveny Park and Aliso Canyon mostly wild, and available for hiking and equestrian uses. They are working in tandem with the Ad Hoc Save Our Fields Committee, seeking an alternate site for the soon-to-be-lost playing fields at the MWD (Metropolitan Water District) Jensen Filtration Plant.

GHNNC continues to monitor Sunshine Canyon Landfill and its response to numerous complaints regarding very fowl odors wafting over residential areas. Members attended several meeting at AQMD in order to mitigate the negative impact on residents.

Other committees are working on adding traffic lights to high-priority areas; reviewing the speed limits on major streets; participating in the DWP’s Recycled Water Advisory Group; referring people to graffiti removal groups, and monitoring the proposed rate hikes by the DWP.

Monthly meetings disseminate useful information from the city -- law enforcement, fire department, City Council, the Mayor’s office, and various City political figures. Members speak at many City hearings on various issues involving budget, zoning, development, landfills, public safety, and other topics, and work together to magnify the voice of Granada Hills at City Hall.

The GHNNC General Board meets the fourth Monday of each month and the public is encouraged to attend. For further information visit: [www.ghnnc.org](http://www.ghnnc.org).

*Editor’s note: Information provided by Agnes Lewis, Secretary GHNNC.*

## Mission Hills

By Betty Ley

The LAPD Mission Station Community Police Advisory Board meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at Mission Station, 11121 Sepulveda Blvd., Mission Hills, in the Timothy M. Falco Community Room. Social begins at 6:15 pm, and the meeting at 6:30 pm. The public is cordially invited. For further information call the Mission Community Relations Office at 818-838-9860, or Betty Ley 818-837-3664.

Mission Hills Basic Car19A43 Neighborhood Watch meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month, also at Mission station, and also in the Timothy M. Falco Community Room at 7:00 pm. Community members are encouraged to attend. Contact Senior Lead Officer Mike Braun, at 818-838-9843, Betty Ley at 818-837-3664, or Rachel Barth at 818-304-4148 for more information.

Mission Hills Neighborhood Council elected their Board Members for the years 2010-2012.on Saturday, March 27. The Board Members and their installation information are listed in a separate article in this issue.

Continued from Page 1—Developer

In his letter to Krekorian, Thomas Despres, a Shadow Hills resident, pointed out, “Exercising ones right to the judicial system does not preclude a citizen of the right to local representation.”

Krekorian touted during his campaign; “We need to cut out bureaucracy and demand accountability from every city department and commission, and especially from the Council itself. The City should solve problems for residents, neighborhoods and small businesses - not create them.”

When asked about probable Planning and Zoning improprieties in the subdivisions of the original single tract of land, in years past, or the possibility of existing easements that may have averted this problem, Oberstein said, “I can’t speak for planning decisions that were made 56 years ago.” He did say Krekorian’s office would look into it.

In an email to Robert Renna, Shadow Hills resident, Oberstein, wrote, “I assure you that we are not standing idly by but are addressing this issue from multiple angles to see if we can find an equitable solution. I assure you Councilmember Krekorian takes the plight of Ms. Mejia seriously and is working diligently to find an answer.”

However, Oberstein pointed out, "We wanted to reach out to her, despite the fact that this is a dispute between two neighbors and the city cannot legally do anything to solve the current problem."

Renna said, “During all this time Maria has attempted to get assistance from the Mayor's Office, former Council Member Greuel and her Deputy, Dale Thrush, the City Attorney's Office, Officials at DWP, numerous other city department heads, State Senators, State Congressmen; and even the President of the United States without success. Her phone calls, e-mails, messages, and letters have gone unanswered. She needs help, not hugs! Simply put, Maria is dying without water and no one gives a damn.”

Mejia tried for months to avoid expensive litigation. It was DWP’s CEO David Nahai who dropped the first bomb.

In his May 7, 2009 letter to Council member Wendy Greuel, Nahai called Mejia’s plight a “dispute between adjacent property owners” but did not to speak with Mejia.

This is not the first time Mejia has filed a lawsuit to get her water restored. In her application of July 22, 2009, she asked the Court for a preliminary injunction against Wismann/ CHD to stop interfering with the use, operation, maintenance and repair of her waterlines. On November 30, 2009, Judge David P. Yaffe ordered the preliminary injunction that compelled CHD to allow access to Mejia to replace her water lines.

In his Order, Yafee said, “CHD knew or should have known the existence of said easements because his property completely surrounds Mejia’s property.”

Wismann and CHD appealed Yaffe’s Order. A trial set for May 10, 2010, has been pushed into July 2010 and it could be several more months beyond that before Mejia’s service is restored. Douglas Leonard, a Shadow Hills resident, remembered, “I was present at the meeting where, then, Councilmember Greuel's assistant, Dale Thrush, announced that Ms. Mejia needed to avail herself of the courts before any aid could be given to her from the City.” To this day, the City has not stepped to resolve this issue.

For Mejia, a resolution cannot come soon enough. She said, “I am exhausted. I cannot shower, cook, clean, or properly flush the toilet. I am unable to drink water on a regular basis. My landscaping plants have died. I have health problems and either have to rely on buckets or bottles of water from neighbors or do without water.”

*Katharine.russ@charter.net*

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Neighborhood Council Elections Results

Elections were held in March for Neighborhood Councils (NC) for years 2010 to 2012 in Region A and B in the North Valley. Installation of all new board members will take place according to each council’s by laws. Visit their websites for board meeting dates and other community information. The election were handled by the L.A. City Clerks this year as an experiment. However, they will be turned back over to the individual NC’s—as per their request—in 2012 because the Clerks’ office was less efficient and more costly.

<u>Arleta</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Robert A. Rouge	Home/Condo Owners
Saul Perez	“
Louisa A. Chajon	Renters
Guy M. Dionne	Business Owners
Al Piantanida	Community Based Organizations
Cindy A. Riding	Schools
Lamar Shelby	At–Large
Kelly G. Magallanes	“
James R. Kallas	Seniors
<b>website: <a href="http://www.arletanc.org/">www.arletanc.org/</a></b>	

<u>Foothills Trails District</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Robert D. Arnold	Community Interests
Jeffery Woodruff	At-Large
Fritz Bonner	“
Kevin J. Davis	Area 1
Linda J. Hornick	“
Alfonso Edeza	Area 2
Billy RM Hayes	“
Richard Townsell	Area 3
Erwing Davis	“
Michael N. Carpenter	Area 4
Robert D. Gibson	“
Terry M. Kaiser	Area 5
Mary Ann Geyer	“
Ken S. Keeble	Area 6
Nancy W. Woodruff	“
<b>website: <a href="http://www.ftdnc.org/">/www.ftdnc.org/</a></b>	

<u>Granada Hills North</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Rafael M. Garcia	District 1
Rahim Kazi	District 2
Sue Devandry	District 3
Anne Ziliak	“
Edward D.Headington	“
Kim Thompson	“
Scott A. Manatt	“
Wayde A. Hunter	“
Agnes Lewis	“
William J. Hopkins, Jr.	“
Ray B. Pollok	“
William E. Lillenberg	“
Leon F. Marzillier	“
Carl Buettner	“
Sid Gold	“
Steven L. Steinberg	Education
Ralph E. Kroy	Faith Based Organizations
Jan H. Subar	Neighborhood Organizations
Mary Ellen Crosby	Parks
Neysa Frechette	Students
Gary L. Holmen	Youth Groups
Josh Jordahl	Environmental
<b>website: <a href="http://www.ghnnc.org/">/www.ghnnc.org/</a></b>	

<u>Granada Hills South</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Jerry D. Askew	Factual Business
Bonnie M. Bursk	Commercial Property Owners
David P.Beauvais	Community Organizations
Erick Mansker	Homeowners
Ross L. Turmell	“
Jeremy “Jette” Dunlap	Member At Large
Julie A. Carson	“
Brad Smith	“
Ernin N. Groman	“
Michael L. Philips	“

Branden L. Schindlheim	“
David Breneznick	“
Ernest H. Boctor	“
Joel M. Lyle	“
Tiwinkle Khurana	Students
Arthur A. Daush	Seniors
Sean Rivas	Parks & Cultural Arts
website: <a href="http://www.ghsnc.org/">www.ghsnc.org/</a>	

<u>Mission Hills</u>	<u>Representing</u>
David Guzman	At –Large
Yolanda Anguiano	“
Joyce A. Sipes	“
Patricia F. Aidem	Employee
Irma Chaidez	Residential Homeowners
Randy W. Kuluva	“
Fred H. Ginsburg	“
Jerrilyn Hayashi	“
Nicholas A. Marlas	Residential Renters
Young S. Lee	Business Owners
Tuesday C. Sipes	Youth
<b>website: <a href="http://www.mhnconline.org/">www.mhnconline.org/</a></b>	

<u>North Hills West</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Ellie M. Hill Reese	General Board
Yvonne Dipre	“
Erick M. Aguirre	“
Adam Halaby	“
Ernie R.Hiliger	“
Amanda S. Persinger	“
Dawn C. Ailetcher	“
Loyd C.Ray	Residential
David Hyman	“
Ronald D. Forbes	“
David L. Mc Clain	“
Maria E. Carrillo	“
<b>website: <a href="http://www.mhnconline.org/">www.mhnconline.org/</a></b>	

<u>North Hollywood N.E.</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Ernie M. Moscoso	Business
Monica Austin-Jackson	Community Based Organiza-tions
Benjamin D. Moore	Residents
website: N/A	

Northridge East	Representing
Nestor M. Fantini	At-Large
Alice N. McCain	“
Barry M. Greenberg	Business Owners/Employees
Yeprem P. Davoodian	“
Sudhir “Steve” Patel	Property Owners/Renters, Businesses
Lucille R. Meehan	“
Donld L. Dwiggins	Residents, Property Owners/Renters
Yehuda J. Draiman	“
Peter C. Mc Carty	“
Kelly M. Lord	Property/Business Owners/Employees
<b>website: <a href="http://www.mhnconline.org/">www.mhnconline.org/</a></b>	

<u>Northridge West</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Thomas Johnson	General Business
Pamela R. Bolin	At-Large
Juativa Spurlock	Homeowners
Glen A. Wilson	Community/Faith Based Organizations
<b>website: <a href="http://www.northridgewest.org/">/www.northridgewest.org/</a></b>	

<u>Pacoima</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Juana Gonzalez	At Large
Rosa Santana-Williams	Schools
Reginald Kinlaw	Faith Based Organizations
Bobbie Pringle	Home/Condo Owners
Griselda Ortiz	Community Based Organizations
<b>website: <a href="http://www.pacoimanc.org/">www.pacoimanc.org/</a></b>	

<u>Panorama City</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Lupton “Tony” Wilkinson	At-Large
Pamela D. Gibberman	“
Martin Geisler	Business
Anthony A. Robles	“
Jose J. Soto	Resident-Home owners-East
Fred M. Whitebook	Resident-Home owners-North
Angela Sichler	Resident-Home owners-Southeast
S. Michelle Klein-Hass	Resident-Renters Center-East
Saul Mejia	Resident-Renters Center-West
Jose Sandoval	Resident-Renters-Southeast
Faarax Dahir Sheikh-Noor	Resident-Renters-Southwest
<b>website: N/A</b>	

<u>Sunland-Tujunga</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Dan R. McManus	President
Tomi Lyn Bowling	Ist V.P Community Improvement
David G. Cain	2nd V.P. Outreach
Cindy Cleghorn	Secretary
Mark Seigel	Treasurer
John P. Laue	Region 1
Janet L. Linsalato	“
Barbara D. Johnson	Region 3
Belinda Woodruff	Region 4
Edmund Novy	“
Nancy Calliouet	Historical Societies
Olina F. R. Lowe	Seniors
Lydia Grant	Parents
Jodie Brittain	Education
Cara DeCaro	Students
Thomas J. Macauley	Youth
Richard V. Stewart	Service Clubs
John “Blue” Herget	Veterans
<b>website:: <a href="http://www.stnc.org">www.stnc.org</a></b>	

<u>Sun Valley</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Art A. Kalantarian	Residential
Angelica M. Duenas	“
Imelda Padilla	“
Robert V. Lim	“
Susan A. Bartlett	“
Victor Hernandez	“
Monica V. Vacas	“
Elidia Vasques	Business/Property Owners
Mike L. O’Gara	“
Gerrado E. Prietro	“
Karina Valles	“
George M. Dalquiat	“
Alex Garcia	At-Large
Stephen E. Franklin	“
Julie Monroy	“
Nicholas Dalton-Pawle	“
Guy M. Dionne	“
Fern L. Romans	“
<b>website: <a href="http://www.svanc.org">www.svanc.org</a></b>	

<u>Sylmar</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Hector F. Cabrera	At-Large
Nicholas J. Krall	“
Quyen T. Vo-Ramariz	“
Donald L. Neal	Educational Institutions
Ricardo H. Benitez	Community Based Organizations
Artemia “Tammy” Flores	Renters
Guillermo Reyes	“
Randall L. Kelly	Home/Condo Owners
Martin E. Laufer	“
Esteban Tabarez	Retail
Jeanne Rowe	“
Hiral P. Bhakta	“
Cheri L. Blose	Equestrian
George E. Ortega, Jr.	Recreation/Open Space
<b>website: <a href="http://www.sylmarneighborhoodcouncil.org/">www.sylmarneighborhoodcouncil.org/</a></b>	

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## I’m on Your Side



Paul Krekorian  
Councilmember, District 2  
Los Angeles City Council

Last week, I led the charge against the Department of Water and Power’s (DWP) proposal to raise your electricity rates. In my view, the proposed increase was not adequately justified, and the process by which it was proposed was not sufficiently transparent. I argued against any increase at this time, and ultimately that was the position adopted by the full City Council.

The residents and businesses of Los Angeles are suffering today to a degree that we have not seen since the Great Depression. At a time when people are losing their jobs and their homes, and businesses are shutting down, a rate increase would have been a tremendous added burden.

Worse, the residents of our district would have been unfairly and disproportionately impacted. Nearly half of all people who live in Council District Two are ratepayers in tiers two and three -- the strata that would be most affected by the rate hike. Now was certainly not the time to ask San Fernando Valley residents and businesses to pay even more when we have not received even the most basic of details to explain and justify the DWP’s plan.

To justify any increase in rates, the DWP should have been making the case to residents, to business groups, to neighborhood councils; they should have been speaking to you and to me about exactly why this rate hike was essential at that time. Instead, the Department developed the proposed increase with minimal public input and no clear explanation about the long-term consequences or purposes of asking rate-payers for more money.

I voted against the DWP’s proposal because I wanted to make clear that any rate hikes proposed by the Department must be vetted in the most responsible and transparent fashion. Because this proposed increase failed, there can now be no increase at all prior to July 1. I anticipate that the DWP will continue to press for an increase in the coming months, and I will keep you informed of all such proposals.

In the meantime, for more information about the DWP’s proposals and the Council’s actions -- and to see video of my arguments, during the Council’s consideration of the increase -- please check our website, [cd2.lacity.org](http://cd2.lacity.org), or check out our blog, [www.cd2pol-icy.wordpress.com](http://www.cd2pol-icy.wordpress.com)

As always, I welcome your thoughts. Please feel free to contact my office and share your views.

## You Should Know...

By Nina Royal

**California State AB 1999, which protects teens seeking help for intoxicated friends** was overwhelmingly approved on a bi-partisan vote of 61 to 1. The bill, sponsored by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino, encourages teens to seek emergency help for underage drinkers by offering limited immunity from prosecution. However, it does not condone underage drinking, cautioned Assemblymember Portantino. “What it does is make it easier for young people to call for help when they suspect alcohol poisoning.”

AB 1999 offers of limited immunity for one or two young people who call 911 and stay with the underage drinker until help arrives. The bill is modeled after similar legislation in Colorado, New Jersey and Texas. The Peace Officers Research Association of California, La Cañada High School PTSA, the California Public Defenders Association and the Emergency Medical Services Administrators’ Association of California also supported the Bill.

**Lopez Canyon Appeal-ZA-200—3619-ZV-1A April 15** at North Valley Planning Commission at Marvin Braude Constituent Center, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys at 4:30 pm. The Appeal was initiated by Marlene on behalf of Community Alliance for Open Space, which is asking to rescind the variance granted to a Truck Driving School by the Zoning Administrator.

**‘Save the Verdugo Hills Golf Course’ Fundraiser (VHGC)**, sponsored by the Sunland-Tujunga Alliance, will be held on Saturday, April 24, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, at Gobble Green Gourmet Vegan Restaurant, 10045 Commerce Ave., Tujunga. A Gourmet Vegan Brunch will be served for a donation of only \$13.00 per person. This event is to help the “Save the VHGC” multi-community organization’s effort to save the Landmark. The course is utilized by many schools throughout the area who have golf teams in their athletic programs and are also fighting to keep it open. For more information visit: [www.savethegolfcourse.org](http://www.savethegolfcourse.org). Reservations for brunch are recommended. Email: [mira@gobblegreen.com](mailto:mira@gobblegreen.com)

**LAPD Foothill Division Jeopardy Boxing Program** is holding a fundraiser on Monday, April 26, at Red Vest Pizza, 12639 Glenoaks Blvd., Sylmar, beginning at 1:00 pm. Twenty per cent of the proceeds will benefit their Boxing Team and send two out-

standing Boxers to the Junior Golden Gloves event in Nevada. There will also be several raffles held. One prize is a gift basket with a Wii Bundle. There will also be two Wii games and an IPOD, for which winners need not be present. Winners must be present for other additional raffles.

**AB 1777 -Creative Industries and Community Economic Revitalization Act**, authored by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino, was approved on Tuesday, April 6, by the State Assembly Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism and Internet Media Committee, which proposes increasing funding into the arts economy.

AB 1777 establishes the Creative Industries and Community Economic Revitalization Fund and requires 20% of sales tax revenue from specified arts-related businesses to be earmarked for arts programs through the California Arts Council. The Council’s funding was gutted in 2003 and spent just 3-cents per person on arts programs.

**A Community Fund Raiser for Haiti** is being held on Saturday, May 1, at Sunland Neighborhood Church, 10632 Oro Vista, Sunland. The church will be holding a rummage sale, bake sale, car wash, music, food, and a recycling area for plastics and aluminum will be manned as well. All funds collected will be sent as a cash donation to help a relief organization in Haiti.

They are also inviting all members and non-members to celebrate the National Day of Prayer with them on Thursday evening, May 6. See Calendar Section for more information.

**The Clean Team** (Community Leaders Educating and Assisting Neighborhoods) Program sponsored by Paul Krekorian and Bureau of Street Services Investigation and Enforcement Division, is being held Saturday, May 8, at North Valley City Hall, 7747 Foothill Blvd., 10:00 am to 11:30 am; also at Valley Plaza Library, 12311 Van Owen St., No. Hollywood, 10:00 am to 11:30 am.

The purpose of the program is to teach community members how to identify, report, and resolve quality of life issues such as: how to reduce illegal signs, vending, yard sales, potholes, graffiti, blight, and other city code violations. RSVP your meeting date selection to [anita.avakian@lacity.org](mailto:anita.avakian@lacity.org). Call 818-755-1616, or 818-352-3287 for further information.

## Office of Civil Rights Investigating LAUSD

The Los Angeles Unified School District is one of 35 School Districts involved in a nationwide investigation for civil rights violations, in all areas, by the U.S. Department of Education. Tax Payers and students are rallying for more public hearings and are asking for them to be held on Saturdays with a least a week’s public notice so they can participate.

Supporting documents must be submitted with claims. Contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights-Region IX, 50 Beale St., Suite 7200, San Francisco, Ca., 94105, or Tel: 415-486-5555, Fax: 415-486-5570, Email: [ocr.sanfrancisco@ed.gov](mailto:ocr.sanfrancisco@ed.gov).

For more information visit: [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr).

### North Valley Reporter

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<p><b>Saturday May 1</b></p> <p><b>Taste of Sunland-Tujunga</b> S-T Coordinating Council Angeles Nat'l Golf Course 9401 Foothill, S-T 11:320 am-3:30 pm \$5 818-446-0399</p> <p><b>Friends of GH Library</b> 10640 Petit Ave., GH 10:30 am 818-368-568</p> <p><b>Sunday, May 2</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>Monday, May 3</b></p> <p><b>STNC Land Use Comm.</b> North Valley City Hall 7747 Foothill, S-T Info: stnc.org</p> <p><b>Tuesday, May 4</b></p> <p><b>GHNNC Elections</b> 11139 Woodley Ave., GH 2:00 pm-8:00 pm</p> <p><b>GHSNC Election</b> 16730 Chatsworth St., GH 2:00 pm – 8:00 pm</p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>MHNC Budget &amp; Finance</b> LAPD Mission Station 16161 Sepulveda Blvd., MH 7:00 pm 818-892-2414</p> <p><b>FTDNC Land Use</b> 9747 Wheatland Ave., SH 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Wednesday, May 5</b></p> <p><b>Rotary Club</b> Coco's Restaurant 10521 Sunland Blvd., S-T 7:00 pm 818-951-5299</p> <p><b>NHWNC Gen. Meeting</b> Holy Martyrs Armenian School 1667 Parthenia St., NH 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Bingo</b> S-T Elks Lodge 11037 Commerce Ave., S-T 6:30 pm 818-352-5504</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 6</b></p> <p><b>PCNC Land Use</b> Mission Comm. Hospital 14860 Roscoe Blvd., PC 6:30 pm 818-894-7841</p> <p><b>S. V. Rotary</b> Mandarin Terrace 8815 Sunland Blvd, SV 12:00 pm-1:30 pm 818-768-9888</p>	<p><b>PCNC-Commerce Com</b> Wells Fargo Bank 8548 Van Nuys Blvd., PC 2:00 pm</p> <p><b>Sylmar Woman's Club</b> Odyssey Restaurant 15600 Odyssey, GH 11:30 am</p> <p><b>Sunshine Cyn Advis. Comm</b> Knollwood Country Club, GH 3:00 pm-5:00 pm</p> <p><b>S-T League of Women Voters</b> North Valley City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 1:30 pm 818-782-4236</p> <p><b>Kagel Cyn Civic Assoc.</b> Dexter Park, KC 7:30 pm</p> <p><b>Saturday, May 8</b></p> <p><b>Plan Check NC</b> Hist. Downtown O.R. Center 114 W. Fifth St., L.A. 10:00 am-1:00 pm</p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "To Mount Lowe With Love" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T 1:00 pm 818-352-3420</p> <p><b>Book Sale</b> S-T Library 7771 Foothill Blvd., S-T 10:00 am – 4:00 pm 818-352-4481</p> <p><b>Sunday, May 9</b></p> <p><b>Mothers Day</b></p> <p><b>Mothers eat free</b> Elks Famous Omelete Bar S-T Elks Lodge #2098 10137 Ave., S-T \$7.00 9:00 -12:00 pm 818-352-2098</p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>Monday, May 10</b></p> <p><b>PCNC Outreach</b> PCNC Office (4th Floor) 14500 Roscoe Blvd., PC 6:30 pm 818-714-2133</p> <p><b>SNC Land Use Com</b> Sylmar Park 13109 Borden Ave., Syl 6:30 pm</p> <p><b>GHNNC, Rules &amp; Policy Comm.</b> 11139 Woodley Ave, GH 4:00 pm</p> <p><b>Tuesday, May 11</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p>	<p><b>PCNC Commerce</b> Wells Fargo Bank 8548 Van Nuys Blvd., PC 2:30 pm 818-714-2133</p> <p><b>SVANC Gen Meet</b> 10631 Vinedale Ave., SV 6:30 pm</p> <p><b>SNC Outreach Com.</b> Sylmar Park 13109 Bordon Ave., Syl 6:30 pm</p> <p><b>PNC – House/Econom. &amp; Land Use Comm.</b> 11243 Glenoaks Blvd., Pac 5:30 pm 818 890-1563</p> <p><b>S.H.P.O.A. Gen. Meeting</b> Tierra del Sol 9919 Sunland Blvd., SH 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Northridge West NC</b> Beckford Elem. School 19130 Tulsa St., Nrth 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>FTDNC LUC Comm.</b> TBD www.ftdnc.org 7 pm</p> <p><b>Wednesday, May 12</b></p> <p><b>FTDNC Exec Board</b> 9747 Wheatland Ave., SH 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>STNC Gen Meeting</b> N.V. City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 7:00 pm 818-951-7411</p> <p><b>Sun Valley Beautiful</b> 9081 Tujunga Ave., SV 11:30 am</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 13</b></p> <p><b>FTDNC Equestrian Meet.</b> 9747 Wheatland, SH 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 14</b></p> <p><b>FTDNC Equest Comm.</b> 9747 Wheatland, SH 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Granada Pavilion</b> 16916 S.F. Mission Blvd., GH 7:30 pm 818-668-5969</p> <p><b>Sat. May 15 &amp; Sun. May 16</b></p> <p><b>Relay for Life</b> Clark Magnet High School 4747 New York Ave., LC www.foothillsRelayForLife.com</p> <p><b>Sunday, May 16</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>Monday, May 17</b></p> <p><b>Valley Vote</b> Ron Kaye, Speaker Galpin Ford 15555 Roscoe , NH 6:30 pm</p>	<p><b>SNC Land Use Comm</b> SNC Office, Sylmar Park 13109 Bordon, Syl 6:30 – 7:30 pn</p> <p><b>Tuesday, May 18</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB)</b> 11121 Sepulveda Blvd., MH 8:30 pm</p> <p><b>Rotary Club</b> Coco's Restaurant 10521 Sunland Blvd., S-T 7:00 pm 818-951-5299</p> <p><b>Pacoima NC</b> 4:00 pm -Senior Advocate 5:00 pm -Comm. Outreach 6:30 -Gen. Meeting Pacoima Comm. Center 11243 Glenoaks Blvd., Pac</p> <p><b>North Hills West NC</b> New Horizons, 15725 Parthenia St. NH. 7:00 pm 818 893-8613</p> <p><b>MHNC Quarter. Outreach</b> LAPD Mission Station 11121 Sepulveda Blvd., MH 7:30 pm</p> <p><b>Northridge East NC</b> Northridge Academ HS 9601 Zelzah Ave., Nrth 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Bingo Night</b> S-T Elks Lodge 10137 Ave., S-T 6:30 pm 352-2098</p>	<p><b>S-T SERVS</b> NV City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 6:45 pm-7:30 pm</p> <p><b>STNC Safety Comm</b> NV City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 7:30 pm</p> <p><b>GHNNC Outreach &amp; PR</b> 11139 Woodley, HG 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 20</b></p> <p><b>STNC Safety Comm</b> NV City Hall 7747 Foothill B lvd., S-T 6:00 pm –6:45 pm</p> <p><b>S-T SERVS</b> NV City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 6:45 pm-7:30 pm</p> <p><b>STNC Outreach Comm</b> NV City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 7:30 pm</p> <p><b>FTDNC Gen. Meeting</b> www.ftdnc.org for location 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>SNC Gen. Meet.</b> Hubbard St. Elementary 13325 Hubbard St., Syl 6:30 pm– 9:30 pm</p> <p><b>Northridge East NC</b> Northridge Academy 9601 Zelza, Nrthrdg 7:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Sunday, May 23</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>Monday, May 24</b></p> <p><b>GHNNC Gen. Meeting</b> Van Gogh Elem. School, 17160 Van Gogh, GH 6:30 pm</p> <p><b>May 29 – 31</b></p> <p><b>Annual Greek Festival</b> St. Nicolas Greek Church Plumber &amp; Balboa, Nrthrdg 1:00 – 9:00 pm</p> <p><b>Tuesday, May 25</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p><b>Thursday, May 27</b></p> <p><b>Northridge South NC</b> Northridge Middle School 17960 Chase St., Nrth. 7:00 pm</p> <p><b>Sunday, May 30</b></p> <p><b>Bolton Hall Museum</b> Presents "Water" 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00-4:00 pm 818-52-3420 Monday, May 31 Memorial Day</p>
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# COMMENTARY

## We Are Being Ripped Off



By Ron Kaye

Few places in the world are more perfect for solar energy installation than Los Angeles with 300 days of sunshine every year and a populace that is sensitive to protecting the environment.

The city even has its own municipal utility--the nation's largest--so it's not beholden to uncaring corporate executives and greedy shareholders in faraway places. Yet, after a dozen years of trying, LA still has the largest portfolio of dirty coal-burning power plants in the nation and least amount of solar energy of virtually any utility in the state, far behind its nearest largest competitor, Southern California Edison.

The reasons for this is so go right to the heart of the city's political culture that is built out of insiders and special interests that have, for far too long, served themselves much better than the public that pays the bills. Even as public discontent has expressed itself in riots and secession movements and demands for power sharing reforms, the City Hall political machine has perpetuated itself and its stranglehold on power.

It's only now that the city can't pay its bills, can't find a way out of the financial quicksand that is pulling it down into bankruptcy, that we are seeing the machine begin to come apart piece by piece even as manipulators of power frantically try to hold it together. The engine that drives the machine has driven the machine for a century, and is a monopoly on the most basic of all public services -- water and power--the two elements that every business, every resident must have.

Nearly a dozen years ago, the Department of Water and Power (DWP) embarked with great fanfare on the largest solar energy program in the United States. Despite squandering tens of millions of dollars on promotion and planning, the city still only has a miniscule amount of solar energy, barely enough to light a suburban block

Instead, nearly half the city's power comes from coal and a third more from natural gas. Only 15 percent comes from nuclear and wind, with a small amount of solar that is privately owned on residential rooftops or bought at a premium in the open market.

The reason is quite simple: The DWP is virtually run by its union, the IBEW, and union boss Brian D'Arcy -- the most powerful single figure in City Hall, who has ruthlessly used the threat of strikes to get one lucrative contract after another, and the threat of unlimited campaign cash to destroy any politician who gets in his way.

D'Arcy has thwarted all efforts to go green for the simple reason there are very few jobs in clean power, when compared to coal or gas, for his members.

When the pressure of state law and public opinion grew too strong, D'Arcy came up with "Measure B" 18 months ago: A costly half-baked proposal that required all large solar installations on government and commercial buildings be owned by the DWP and installed and maintained by IBEW members. The bills for Measure B were intended to fall heavily on homeowners, which is why it failed. So D'Arcy went to work on a new plan that would protect his union's interests -- that plan launched by the mayor in early March as his own.

The proposal for a "carbon surcharge" that would only add "\$2.50 to the average bill" to replace coal with green energy blew up in the mayor's face as soon as he announced it. What he didn't say was that it would add \$2.50 to the bills of half the city's residents who live in apartments. Every other resident and business would face up to 30 percent increases within 12 months and similar increases year after year all in the name of green energy. Yet, the DWP has no green energy plan and no plan to eliminate coal plants because D'Arcy doesn't want them.

You could almost hear D'Arcy laughing all the way to the bank as the mayor floundered, revising his

plan nearly every day, dragging out Al Gore and the environmentalists and their greenwasher leaders who believe we must purge ourselves of fossil fuel power immediately no matter what it costs.

Even as the raging controversy over green power has exposed the DWP, Commissioners are nothing but stooges for the mayor and that the tensions stirred by the debate has produced a rift within the City Council. It is clear that electricity rates will go up over time and LA will have to reduce its reliance on coal in favor of renewable energy sources.

But nothing good -- good for the public as a whole -- will come of this debate until the IBEW and its boss are reined in, independent people put on the DWP Commission, and an independent Rate Payer Advocate put in place to serve as a watchdog and provide honesty and transparency.

It is going to be a long and challenging fight but the alternative is to see City Hall's war against the middle class and its financial and managerial incompetence turn LA into a dying city of rich and poor.

We are fighting for our jobs, our neighborhoods, and the quality of our lives and the city we love despite everything. It is worth the effort to join the struggle to save LA.

*Editor's Note: Ron Kaye writes for the NVR, the RonkayeLA.com blog, and is editor of the community news and networking site, OurLA.org., which brings together reports and commentaries from citizen and professional journalists. Tax deductible contributions to help OurLA.org hire a full-time investigative reporter to cover the Department of Water and Power and other vital City Hall issues can be made on behalf of OURLA to community partners.org (click donate), or by sending a check to Community Partners, 1000 N. Alameda St., Los Angeles, Ca 90012*

## Leaders? L.A.? You've Got to be Kidding!



By Doug Epperhart

How does one describe what it's like to be a close observer of--and sometime participant in--the city's budgetary storm? Is it Kafkaesque or Dickensian? Or both at the same time?

After eight years as a neighborhood council board member, treasurer, and president, I'm now as deep into the municipal budget process as I've ever been. Serving as co-chair, along with Dan Wiseman of the West Hills Neighborhood Council, I'm one of the 14 budget advocates representing communities throughout Los Angeles.

I'm also one of the leaders of BudgetLA, the group set up by the Los Angeles Neighborhood Council Coalition to educate and organize NC volunteers to influence the decision-makers downtown on all things involving the city's finances.

The reasons we're in this mess are myriad. Mostly, it boils down to spending money as fast as it came in the door and never saving any for a rainy day--or in this case--a downpour of biblical proportions.

If that isn't bad enough, L.A.'s putative leaders are constrained by the city charter, administrative code, ordinances, union contracts, and, of course, all the special interests clamoring for their piece of the ever-shrinking pie.

You would think that at a time like this, the city's elected officials--all 18 of them--would come together, put their differences aside, and unite to steer our ship through the storm, or at least keep it from sinking.

Instead, the mayor is blaming the council; the council is blaming the mayor; the unions are blaming the mayor and the council; the city attorney is doing his own thing; and the controller is firmly in the "it's not my fault" corner, calmly watching the fiscal food fight taking place at city hall.

Think about what's happened in the last year. Anticipating the need to cut, the unions worked out a deal to remove 2,400 civilian workers from the payroll via early retirement. Except that delays and the inability to quickly process paperwork means most of the positive impact will be lost when it's needed the most.

So, to close this year's \$200 million-plus deficit, the mayor ordered layoffs of 1,000 employees. After

resisting this move, the council suddenly decided 4,000 have to be laid off. Again, the rules for determining seniority are so arcane; it will take months to actually figure out who goes. And, of course, the salary of the first person to get a pink slip is reimbursed by a proprietary department, so her layoff was revoked because it would have no effect on the General Fund shortfall.

On a recent Friday afternoon, the neighborhood council budget advocates were warned by the mayor not to use the "B" word (bankruptcy). Three days later, one of Villaraigosa's chief deputies was telling the city council that not raising electric rates could result in bankrupting the city. Apparently, he didn't get the memo.

And, just when you think it can't get any more weird, the city administrative officer is arrested for drunk driving and he checks himself into rehab. I can't wait to see what happens next.

Forget about the financial mess, the real deficit in Los Angeles is one of leadership.

*Editor's Note: Doug Epperhart serves on the Board of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council as well as various other organizations.*

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# PUBLIC SAFETY

## Tips to Prevent Property Crime



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Joseph M. Hiltner  
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Department*

Although the California Supreme Court has temporarily placed a hold on the early release of 40,000 low-grade prisoners in California, the numbers of property crimes continue to soar within Foothill Area. Those responsible for committing those crimes are finding it very easy to break into the homes and cars of the good people of the Sunland, Tujunga, Lake View Terrace, Shadow Hills, Pacoima and Sun Valley communities. There are innumerable ways to prevent property crimes and I ask that all of you follow these easy rules so that you and your family members do not become the next victim of a property crime:

**For your car:**

- Never leave your car running or keys in the ignition.
- Always roll up your windows.

- DO NOT leave valuables in plain sight (I-Pods, cell phones, GPS, wallets, money, etc.)
- Park in lighted areas and use anti-theft devices such as alarms and clubs.
- Use special screws available free from Foothill Auto Detectives to prevent the theft of

**Your license plates:**

- If your vehicle is stolen, report it immediately to the police.

**For your home:**

- Keep doors and windows locked while at home and every time you go out.
- Lock doors and windows to prevent entry while you are asleep or outside of the room.
- Lock windows at night.
- Close doggy doors whenever possible.
- Trim bushes and trees so that your house and front door are visible from the street.
- Leave lights on at night. Buy timers for your lights and set them in a random pattern.
- Keep a radio or TV on during the day.
- Put up motion lights around your property.
- Don't leave valuables, including jewelry and cash, on the dresser.

- Vary your times of arrival and departure. Don't be a creature of habit. Others will notice.

The Foothill Division said good bye to Captain Ivan Minsal who has been transferred to Topanga Division. Captain Minsal proudly served our community for the past two and a half years. He will be missed. Replacing Captain Minsal has been replace Captain Jerry Rodriguez, who comes to us from the Office of Operations. Additional information regarding the Captain will follow next month.

Remember to phone for police service by calling "9-1-1" when you see a crime in progress. When only suspicious or possible criminal behavior is observed, be a good witness and generate a non-emergency radio call for police service by calling (877) ASK-LAPD.

Neighborhood and Business Watches are great ways to get to know your neighbors and look out for each other. If you want to start a watch on your block, please phone our Community Relations Unit at (818) 756-8866.

Be safe out there.

## Chief Jim McDonnell



*Monia Harmon and Chief McDonnell*

Newly appointed Long Beach Police Chief, Jim McDonnell, was congratulated by Los Angeles Community Activist, Monica Harmon, who was one of a group of L.A. community members in attendance at his ceremony. McDonnell recently retired as Assistant Chief of the LAPD after 28 years of service. Former Governor, George Deukmejian, swore him in as Chief of the Long Beach PD at the Long Beach Convention Center on March 13. Many rank and file officers from LAPD, along with many other departments, also were on hand to show their respect and support.

*Continued from cover*—**Truck Driving**

pertinent part, "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."

When the Bureau of Sanitation (BoS) prepared the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), it was not a sufficient Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this type of facility. BoS had to try to get the zone variance because a truck driving academy is not permitted in an area zoned 'open space'. BoS applied for the zone variance which was approved in January 2010. County Supervisor Michael Antonovich voiced his concern that the trucking school was initiated without proper clearance under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Paul Novak, spokesperson for Supervisor Antonovich gave findings detrimental to the project. He said, "Decision makers should look at this and realize that it is an inappropriate location. The Supervisor does not have an issue with the proposed use, he has an issue with the proposed use IN that location.

Taking unemployed people in this economy and training them to be truck drivers to make a good living is a good thing. No one would contest that.

We met with the Mayors office, the Bureau of Engineering, and Alarcon's office and they insisted that the only place they could find a one acre site in the entire San Fernando Valley was on top of the Lopez Canyon Landfill. That's absurd!"

The Van Nuys Airport, Police Training Facility and the Sylmar Water Reclamation Plant were among several suggestions offered by Supervisor Antonovich' office for the truck driver training school.

Novak, further stated, "If Councilman Alarcon wants to put a commercial facility there, the General Plan and the Zoning should be changed. There's two precedents here that are very dangerous: One - You are using a use variance which most cities wouldn't approve instead of the General Plan amendment and zone change to allow a development project.

That is entirely contrary to every concept of good zoning. Secondly, we called into question whether or not the City is at all serious when it designates something as open space. You don't call something open space, then wake up five years later and say 'gee, we're going to put a commercial use there.' The people of Los Angeles should be very, very concerned about the precedent it is setting here." Councilman Richard Alarcon's office did not respond before press time.

Every Community Organization, Neighborhood Council, and several Property Owners Associations stand in opposition to the proposed truck driver training academy.

The appeal will be heard by the North Valley Area Planning Commission on April 15, 2010, time 4:30pm at the Marvin Braude 1st floor meeting room, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys 91401 (corner of Van Nuys Blvd. & Sylvan).

## CHP Offering Free Classes to Teen Drivers

California Highway Patrol's (CHP) Mission of Safety, Service, and Security, the responsibilities of newly licensed drivers, the responsibilities of parents/guardians, and collision avoidance techniques. The purpose of holding "Start Smart" classes is to provide teens and their parents/guardians with an interactive safe driving awareness class which will illustrate how poor choices behind the wheel of a car can affect the lives of numerous people. The classes will also encompass the following.

The CHP's goal is to save lives on the streets and highways. According to Captain Bill Dance of the Altadena Area, the program specifically targets the teen driver to aid in the reduction of teen fatalities as a result of traffic collisions.

Due to some of the graphic pictures and videos which will be shown, each teenager must be accompanied by a parent or guardian and sign a waiver form prior to the beginning of each class.

Classes will be held Friday, May 7, 2010 at 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, May 22, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at

Altadena Community Center, 730 E. Altadena Drive, Altadena. Seating is limited. Call or e-mail to reserve a seat for each teenager and parent/guardian. Contact Officer Hsu, at 626-296-8100, or by email: mhsu@chp.ca.gov

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# THIS N THAT

## Watch Your Wallet—Get Educated

By Tina Cameron

For the last year, much attention has been paid to the unemployment “continuing claims” figure; people who have been unable to get back into the labor market. This primarily affects those with low skill sets because small business are simply not hiring now. The US Dept. of Labor states, “the higher a person’s educational attainment, the more likely they will be a labor force participant and the less likely to be unemployed.” Over the last decade, US employers have complained about the difficulty in locating the skilled and educated workers they need to compete. Clearly, there is a huge disconnect here.

The least likely to be hired are high school graduates, some of which has to do with the inability to speak properly, spell, or do basic math. It’s appalling what the public school system and disinterested parents have released. Human resource studies reveal that employers are also finding a lack of good work ethics, i.e. showing up on time, staying with a company for more than a year, doing good work. Kids have not been prepared with a decent high school education nor lessons from home in personal conduct and responsibility to others.

For experienced workers who have been laid off or fear losing their jobs, it’s important to fully understand what industry you work in and where it’s headed. Is it growing, like Technology, or struggling, like Construction? Some seem to weather all storms, such as medicine and law. If you are working in a struggling field, it may only be a matter of time. Take it upon yourself to better understand your skill set and how it compares to others. What additional skills might you need in order to keep your job? What degree is most sought after by potential employers? What industry has a shortage of skilled workers? Get aware of your employability.

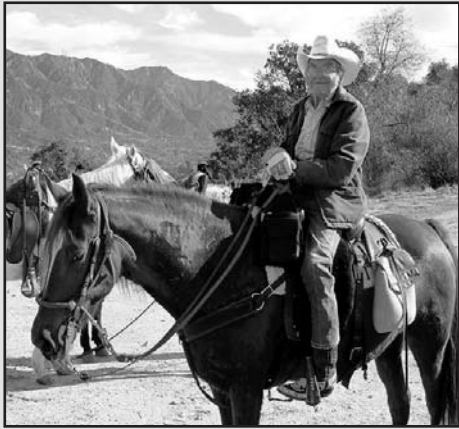
There is no better time to go back to school than now. The best and easiest way to start is at a community college. Community colleges offer day, evening, week-end, and online classes to work around your schedule. It doesn’t matter that fees have risen over time, it is still a great value that pays dividends through future wages and job security. Financial Aid and Scholarships are extensively available. Besides Math, English, Law, Business, Art, Accounting, Science, Computer Science, there are trades such as, drafting, photography, culinary, plumbing, electrical and more. Community colleges also help you obtain your GED. A good source for finding the right community college for you is [www.CaliforniaColleges.edu](http://www.CaliforniaColleges.edu). The closest one in our area is Mission College in Sylmar and can be accessed at [www.lamission.edu](http://www.lamission.edu). Admissions can be reached at 818-833-3322.

There’s more... a credential or license can easily set someone apart in the workplace. Whatever your particular set of skills, look into getting a related credential or license. It truly makes a difference.

Lastly, anyone who doesn’t have a resume is a step behind and should go to a professional resume writer or service to have one drawn up. It’s an investment that may help you stand out among the hundreds of others vying for attention. Best of luck!

*Editor’s Note: Tina Cameron is a community college and university graduate, a former business owner, and a holder of numerous financial credentials/licenses over a 30-year career.*

## Congratulations!



100 Years young and still he is going strong. Bert Bonnett, a resident of Shadow Hills, celebrated his centennial birthday doing what he loves most, riding the trails with his family and friends from ETI Corral 20. The ride was followed by a bash at the home of Pam and Hei Mitchell in Lake View Terrace. His wife, Bari, and his horses, are the loves of his life. He and Bari ride their horses together yearly in the Tournament of Roses Parade. Bert still rises at the crack of dawn to tend to his horses and perform daily chores around his ranch.

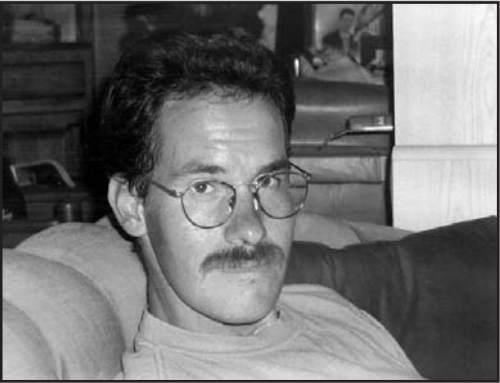
Bert Bonnett

## NVR “Ticket Shock” Article

The North Valley Reporter received a faxed letter on March 23 regarding the above titled article published in our March issue. There was no contact information and I cannot read the signature. You wrote a very poignant letter about the death of your blind brother after reading an article in the NVR regarding a ticket for cell phone use. I believe your letter is very important and I would like to share it with our readers, but I won’t do so without your approval. I would like to hear from you. Please contact me with your name and address. In accordance with NVR’s policy, your address will not be published. As with all such publications, we use it for identity and authenticity purposes only.

Publisher/Editor  
North Valley Reporter  
818-563-1962

## In Memory of Those We have Lost



**Aaron Robert Ashton**  
**March 4, 1969 - Feb. 10, 2010**

Aaron was born and lived in San Jose, Ca. before moving to Sunland, Ca. in 1971.

His passion was hiking and walking and he was a familiar figure in the community as he made his rounds around Sunland-Tujunga averaging 26 miles a day.

He loved volunteering during the six years he spent at the Sun-

land Senior Center. He was also especially proud of his prized possession, his trophy that he received while a member of the McCloud Salvage Softball Club.

Aaron passed away after a year long battle with cancer. His family wishes to thank his medical providers, who he adored and who gave him excellent care. He is survived by his mother, Teresa Ashton, Sunland, brother Amon Ashton, Los Angeles, father Robert Ashton, Gold Hill, Oregon, uncles, aunts, cousins in the U.S, Canada, England, his church and Bible study family and his beloved cat Psycho.

A memorial service was held at Mountain View Baptist Church in Lake View Terrace, Ca. He is now at piece with the Lord.



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*Third Wednesdays at 7 pm Board Meeting*  
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THIS N THAT

HERE'S MY CARD



*Carrick's Journey*  
—Part Twenty-Six  
By Tomi Lyn Bowling

Maddie had veered off and was making her way back to the cabin. It was dark and there were very few lights on the path through the woods. On her way, she had become quite spooked by something. She had an eerie feeling that eyes were following her every move.

She stopped and looked all around, through the tall trees as far as she could see... up in the sky, down on the ground, her eyes searching everywhere. She turned a complete circle carefully looking again and again. In a sudden chill, she shivered and rubbed her arms. Still unable to see what may have been watching her, she continued on with her steps, now much more cautious than before.

She had only advanced a few more steps when she tripped over a stone on the path. As she fell, she could hear movement around her, brush crackling as though steps were being taken towards her. She landed on her hands and knees, her head bouncing down towards the dirt. Her heart raced as she felt lost in this strange place. She looked up but saw no one.

As she picked herself up, dusting off the dirt on her knees she heard it again. She looked around again but saw nothing. "Is anyone there?" she called out. There was silence. Continuing to walk, she noticed there were no more lights on the path at all and she realized she was no longer on the path to the cabin.

She had only been there twice on her own and must've taken a wrong turn. She stopped and looked around trying to orient herself and change her direction, but it was no use; she was completely lost. The forest had grown much colder and a light fog was forming at the tree tops. Though not given to scaring easily, she was not very fond of the notion that she was lost.

She decided to make her way back to where she had started. Knowing that the paths had some lights on them, she turned back looking for the nearest light and hoping to follow it back. It was pitch black and she had a sinking feeling in her stomach. She continued to walk, very cautiously now, but started to feel as though she was being watched again. She picked up her pace as she tried to increase her stride. Suddenly, she felt something touch her face. She let out a scream and ran as fast as she could

*...to be continued.*

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# The Armenian Genocide: Incomplete Mourning

By *Nayri Vartanian*

## Part 1 of 2 Parts

Every year on April 24, Armenians from all over the world put on their black clothing and commemorate the Armenian Genocide. This commemoration is nothing like the Jewish commemoration of the Holocaust. While there is a moment of silence to remember the annihilation of one and half million Armenians perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks at the end of the First World War, this silence is anything but quiet. It explodes with cries and screams of dead ancestors whose voices current generations of Armenians feel that the governments of Turkey and the United States refuse to listen to. Armenians today, who do have voices, ensure that they are heard, and demand that the United States and Turkey recognize the Armenian Genocide once and for all.

Though the Armenian people have been advocating for the recognition of the Genocide for 95 years, it has evolved into a political matter that has worked its way into the United States Congress and Senate. The Turkish government refuses to acknowledge that they carried out the mass killings of one and half million Armenians from April 1915 to 1923, despite the fact that many historians conclude otherwise. The Turkish government will only acknowledge that there were deportations of Armenians, but will not admit that they participated in genocide. The word genocide, which was first coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-



Jewish lawyer in 1944, is defined as “the systematic killing or extermination, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group”. Armenian history is very long and complex, and it is important to be aware of some important events in that history to better understand the Armenian-Turkish Conflict.

According to Wikipedia, during the 14th century, after Mehmed II defeated the Byzantines at Constantinople, he invited the Armenian Archbishop to establish an Armenian patriarchy, which, through a religious system, was a way to control the population. During this time period the Armenian population not only grew, but also became respected members of Ottoman society. Though the Armenians had to pay taxes in

order to gain religious sovereignty, they were easily able to do so because they became quite prosperous through the Sultan’s support. Unfortunately, when Abdul Hamid II, who is also known as the “Bloody Sultan”, rose to power, the Armenians, as again illustrated by Wikipedia, “lost the reforms to free the historic Armenian homeland of eastern Anatolia and Transcaucasus from Russia, and Ottoman domination and re-establish the independent Armenian state”.

While the First World War was raging on, the Ottoman Empire was collapsing. The Ottoman Turks were attempting to establish an empire that was fully committed to expelling all other nationalities from their country, while furthermore converting the population of their country into a pure Turkish state. This was much like what Adolph Hitler had managed to accomplish when he became Chancellor of Germany and established the Nazi party in the 1930s. In fact, eight days prior to invading Poland in 1939, Hitler himself proclaimed: “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

Some may wonder what exactly did happen to the Armenians during the Genocide years of 1915-1923? Or why do Armenians commemorate the Genocide specifically on April 24? And what is the current status of efforts in getting the United States Government to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide? The never ending battle, and so too, the sadness, continues in part 2 of *Incomplete Mourning*.

# Black History Celebrated

By *Leroy Geter*

Pacoima Center celebrated Black History Month in February. Booker T. Washington once said, “The world cares very little about what a man or woman knows, it is what the man or woman is able to do that counts.”

Fostering the theme “Using the Best of the Past to Build Bridges for Future Generations,” the Pacoima Community Youth Culture Center, Inc. (PCYCC), along with its affiliate advocacy group, the Leader-to-Leader African American Community Empowerment Think Tank (LLAACETT), in collaboration with the Pacoima Neighborhood Council (PNC), worked together to bring to the community a series of weekly events during February in recognition and celebration of the achievements and accomplishments and traditions of the African American experience.

During the month, sponsors presented the Black past, through selected examples of the diverse gifts of

Black people: prose, verse, letters, science, art, dance, music and various forms of media entertainment. Each program, seminar, and activity for the celebration focused on the social, educational, economic, political, and spiritual cultures and awareness of the African American tradition – past and present. The goal this year was to celebrate and interpret the African American cultural equation;

The closing activities for the month long celebration honored African American elders who have been ‘trailblazers’ of the African American culture in Pacoima dating back to the 1930s to the present. A special recognition reception was held on Wednesday, February 24th to honor seniors who were designated by their church congregations to receive the honor of being a 2010 Black History Month Trailblazer.

The celebration concluded with the presentation of the premier, 1st Annual “Chioke” Award to four legendary individuals and visionaries of the African

American experience in Pacoima. Chioke is of the African origin (Nigerian); it is a name given to children which means “God’s” gift.

The individuals chosen to receive the first award were Mrs. Annie Pledger-Smith, Legendary African-American Pioneer, Mr. Joel Rucker, Long term Educator who taught for years at San Fernando High School, Mrs. Marie Harris, 1st “Honorary May” of Pacoima (presented posthumously) and Mr. Joe Dickerson. Their legacies and contributions are indeed “God’s gifts” to Pacoima.

This historic celebration was an excellent salute to one of American’s richest cultural legacy and contribution to society. The month long celebration presented the sagacity and legacy of the Black American experience Pacoima-style!

*Editor’s Note: Leroy Geter is Senior Associate of the LLAACETT Group and Board Member of the Pacoima Neighborhood Council*

# Tiptoe Through the Tulips



By *Marlene Hitt*

Remember Tiny Tim and that song? April and tulips seem to go just right together. My friend told me recently about her memory of going to the Tulip Festival in Albany, N.Y. Then I knew there was a party I hadn’t been to and never had known about. So I googled the subject and was fortified with knowledge.

Several festivals are held in North America where Dutch people once settled. The Canadian Tulip Festival, for one. The largest in the U.S. is in

Holland Michigan. There is one in Fulton, Illinois, Lynden Washington, and in several other cities. The Albany festival, set in Albany’s historic Washington Park, is a splendor of flowers of various bright colors blooming for the thousands of visitors who join in the joy of springtime.

During World War II, the Dutch Royal family took refuge in Canada. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands was born at Ottawa hospital in 1943, and the Canadian government declared the land to be extraterritorial. This was done to ensure the princess would have Dutch citizenship. Every year afterward, Queen Juliana or the royal family has sent bulbs for the festival.

The old country, Holland, a kingdom on the North Sea, was a country rescued from the ocean. The scenes consist of flat green fields, canals, and windmills. The windmills serve to drain the water back into the sea. When tulips are in bloom the view must be marvelous.

The faithful tulip came to center front in 1637 when a Dutch farmer wanted to purchase one special bulb. When found, the farmer paid two loads

of wheat and two of rye, four fat oxen, eight pigs, a dozen sheep, two oxheads of wine, four tons of butter, a thousand pounds of cheese, a bed, some clothing, and a silver beaker. Now, that is hard to believe and I hope that bulb grew into something special. They say that price was not unusual during the height of the Dutch tulip-mania. Though that popular in Holland, the bulb itself came from Turkey into Europe in 1556.

What a beautiful sight it must be to see thousands of tulips in full multicolor bloom in cities all over the world where festivals have provided with arts, crafts, special foods and even the crowning of the mother of the year.

“Tulips in the garden, tulips in the park. The tulips that I love best are the tulips in the dark”, said my uncle Dolph.

*Editor’s Note: Marlene Hitt is Director of Bolton Hall Museum, a former Sunland-Tujunga Poet Laureate, and writes for the NVR.*