

A Wild Ride for the City's Neighborhood Councils...and its not over yet



Councilman Paul Krekorian and Councilman Dennis Zine hold the City's Education & Neighborhoods Committee meeting in City Hall Chambers on Feb. 17, 2010.

By Katharine Russ

During the week of February 22, three incidences arose that had Neighborhood Councils concerned about the financial status and future of Neighborhood Councils in the City of Los Angeles. Mayor Villaraigosa's press release signaled the merge of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) with the Community Development Department (CDD). The Mayor said the consolidation effort would potentially eliminate 27 positions and save an estimated \$2 million dollars annually. By

July, there would be 16 funded positions for DONE when approved.

Councilmember Greig Smith's motion to immediately remove the City Clerk from the election process and put election funds into the general fund sent shockwaves throughout Neighborhood Councils whose elections would fall within the month of March 2010. Smith said, "'This was a question of simple money. If doing this would help keep Neighborhood Councils funded and put some money back in the general fund, then it would be a winner."

Subsequently, Councilman Paul Krekorian, Chair of the City's Education and Neighborhoods Committee, recommended the City Council oppose the Smith/Rosendahl motion until more discussion could take place. Smith agreed. The next day, the City Council vote on the motion was unanimous as Smith graciously voted with others to reject it.

Questions about the legalities of such a consolidation of the two departments also emerged, causing more anxiety within the neighborhood councils. In his press release, Mayor Villaraigosa said, “The consolidation effort will not only create cost savings, but will



Neighborhood Council leaders from across the city packed the meeting of the Education and Neighborhoods Committee Meeting on Thursday, February 25. They pleaded their case to Committee Chair Paul Krekorian and Councilmember Dennis Zine regarding Councilmember Greig Smith's proposal to discontinue Neighborhood Council elections by the City Clerk for this year. They received a hearty applause at the conclusion of the meeting when the committee voted to deny the recommendation.

serve to take the bureaucracy out of community empowerment”. But City Charter Sec. 913 prohibits Transfer of Powers of DONE to any other department during the first five years pursuant to Section 905.

Continued on Page 2

California's Traffic Ticket Fines Increased

By Nina Royal

Beware! If you are a driver who has a “lead foot,” who is a notorious speeder, who talks on your cell phone that is not “hands free”, who texts while driving, who runs stop signs and red lights, or violates other California Motor Vehicle Codes, you are in for “Ticket Shock” after being “written up” by a diligent Traffic Officer. Effective January 6, 2010, motor vehicle fines increased by approximately 30 percent. Non-moving infractions that used to be dismissed, like after showing proof of a valid driver’s license or insurance coverage, for instance, now have a “reduced” cost (see chart below).

There was a time when violators were allowed to attend traffic school. Traffic school is a program that allows certain moving violators to receive instruction in driving and traffic safety. At one time, the court could refer you to a Traffic Violators Program, or you could

have requested it. Upon completion of the course, you didn't have to pay the fine, you received your certificate, which would erase the infraction, and your insurance insurance carrier was never notified.

However, times have changed. The Court can still recommend that you attend Traffic School, (or, again, you may request it), If you decline, your insurance carrier will be notified, which will, of course, have a negative impact on your insurance rates, and there will be points against your driving record. Either way, there will be a hefty fine. However, once you pay the fine and successfully complete traffic school, your citation will be erased from your record and your insurance company will be none-the-wiser. According to California Vehicle Code Section 1808.7, only one citation in an eighteen (18) month period can be masked from your driving record through driving school participation. The eighteen (18) month period is calculated from the citation/vi-

olation date, not class attendance date.

To attend traffic school, both the citation bail amount and a non-refundable administrative fee must be paid before you can enroll. The traffic school will charge you an additional fee to attend their program.

Based on statistics, drivers have become more impatient, inconsiderate, and reckless about following “the rules”. Whether the increase in traffic violation fees will have a positive affect on the public’s driving habits remains to be seen. However, payment of their tickets will certainly help to decrease the State’s budget woes.

Editor's Note: I too suffered from "Ticket Shock". The week before Christmas, when I received my first ticket in 20 years from the Burbank PD, I knew I was dead wrong for talking on my cell phone "hands-on" as I approached a signal. But, it was a shock and an expensive lesson learned as I painfully paid \$140 for that infraction.

Violation	Fine & Punishment	Violation	Fine & Punishment	Violation	Fine & Punishment	Violation	Fine & Punishment
VC 12814.6 Failure to obey license provisions.	\$214	VC 22450 Failure to stop at a stop sign.	\$214	VC 22507.8 Violation of disabled parking provisions second of- fense.	\$1876	VC 27803 (A through C) Violation of motorcycle safety helmet require- ments.	\$178
VC 14600(A) Failure to notify DMV of address change within 10 days Note: The fine may be only reduced with valid proof of correction.	\$214	VC 22454(A) Passing a school bus with flashing red signals.	\$616	VC 26708(A) Unlawful material on vehicle windows.	\$178	VC 34506.3 Commercial Driver - Log book violation	\$616
VC 16028(A) Failure to provide evidence of financial responsi- bility (insurance) Note: This fine may be only reduced with proof of insurance on or after the violation date.	\$796	VC 23123(A) Drive using “hands ON” phone, not hands free, first offense	\$148	VC 27150 (A and B) Inadequate muffler.	\$178	VC 4000(A) No evidence of current registration. Note: The fine may be only reduced with valid proof of correction.	\$256
VC 21453(A) Failure to stop at a red signal.	\$436	VC 23123.5(A) Drive using “hands ON” device to send, read, or write text.	\$148	VC 27315 (D and E) Violation of mandatory seat belt law.	\$148	VC 4159 Notify DMV of change of address within 10 days. Note: The fine may be only reduced with valid proof of correction.	\$178
VC 22350 VC 22349 Unsafe Speed, 1 to 15 miles over the limit.	\$214	VC 23124(B) Minor drive using “hands ON” phone.	\$148	VC 27360 (A and B) Violation of mandatory use of child passenger re- straints. Note: This fine may be only reduced, by complet- ing a court authorized child seat diversion program.	\$436	VC 5200 No display of license plates. Note: The fine may be only reduced with valid proof of correction.	\$178
VC 22350 VC 22349 Unsafe Speed, 16 to 25 miles over the limit.	\$328	VC 22500(I) Parking in a bus loading area.	\$976	VC 27400 Having Headsets/Earplugs over both ears.	\$178	VC 9400 (A through C) Violation of vehicle weight requirements	\$178
		VC 22507.8 (A through C) Violation of disabled parking provi- sions. first offense.	\$976				

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL ELECTIONS SPECIAL EDITION

NC Elections - Region B

Neighborhood Council Elections - Region B - Saturday, March 27

Arleta - Branford Rec Center 13310 Branford, 10 am - 4 pm

Candidates	Representing
Lamar Shelby	At –Large
Guy M. Dionne	Business Owners
Al Piantanida	Community Based Organizations
Robert A. Rouge	Home/Condo Owners
Saul Perez	“
Louisa A. Chajon	Renters
James R. Kallas	Seniors
Henry NG	“

Foothills Trails District - Shadow Hills Presby. Church, 10158 Johanna 1 - 7 pm

Candidates	Representing
Kevin J. Davis	Area 1
Linda J. Hornick	“
Dariush Bakhtar	Area 2
Alfonso Edeza	“
Richard Townsell	Area 3
Erwing Davis	“
John “Blue” Herget	“
Michael N. Carpenter	Area 4
Jill A. Knesek	“
Robert D. Gibson	“
Terry M. Kaiser	Area 5
Mary Ann Geyer	“
Ken S. Kebble	Area 6
Nancy W. Woodruff	“
Jeffery Woodruff	At-Large
Fritz Bonner	“
Royann Herman	“
Kjell E. Myhre	“
Robert D. Arnold	Community Interest

Mission Hills - Galpin Honda Showroom 11151 Laurel Cyn., 2- 8 pm

Candidates	Representing
David Guzman	At –Large
Yolanda Anguiano	“
David E. Hunt	“
Joyce A. Sipes	“
Patricia F. Aidem	Employee
Irma Chaidez	Residential Homeowners
Randy W. Kuluva	“
Fred H. Ginsburg	“
Jerrilyn Hayashi	“
John Roy Samuelson	“
Nicholas A. Marlas	Residential Renters
Tuesday Ca. Sipes	Youths

No Hollywood N.E. - L.A. Family Housing- 7817 Lankershim, 2 – 8 pm

Candidates	Representing
Ernie M. Moscoso	Business
Monica Austin-Jackson	Community Based Organizations
Benjamin D. Moore	Residents

Pacoima - Pacoima Family Source Ctr. 11243 Glenoaks 1 – 7 pm

Candidates	Representing
Griselda Ortiz	Community Based Organizations
Rosy Santana-Williams	Schools

Panorama City - Mission Comm. Hospital, 14850 Roscoe, 1 – 7 pm

Candidates	Representing
Lupton “Tony” Wilkinson	At-Large
Pamela D. Gibberman	“
Martin Geisler	Business
Anthony A. Robles	“
Jose J. Soto	Resident-Homeowner-East
Fred M. Whitebook	Resident-Homeowner-North
Angela Sichler	Resident-Homeowner-Southeast
S. Michelle Klein-Hass	Resident-Renter Center-East
Saul Mejia	Resident-Renter Center-West
Jose Sandoval	Resident-Renter-Southeast
Faarax Dahir Sheikh-Noor	Resident-Renter-Southwest

Sunland-Tujunga N.V. City Hall, 7747 Foothill Blvd, Tujunga, 1 – 7 pm

Candidates on Ballot	Representing
Dan R.McManus	President
Nina Royal (Antoinette)	“
Steven J. Vanover	“
Tomi Lyn Bowling	1st. V.P. -Community Improvement
David G. Cain	2nd V.P. – Outreach
Cynthia E. Cleghorn	Secretary
Mark Seigel	Treasurer
John P. Laue	Region 1
Janet L. Insalato	“
Barbara D. Johnson	Region 3
Belinda Woodruff	Region 4
Edmund Novy	“
Nancy Cailloet	Stakeholder Group
Olina F. R. Lowe	Stakeholder Group
Lydia Grant	Stakeholder Group
Cara DeCaro	Stakeholder Group
Richard V. Stewart	Stakeholder Group
Thomas J. Macauley	Stakeholder Group
Write-In Candidates	
Randall Abegglen	Region 1
Dana Miller Coburn	"
John Blue	Stakeholder Group
Jodie Brittain	Stakeholder Group

Continued on page 5

Neighborhood Council Elections: Why Voting is Important

By Dan McManus

I have had a front row seat for much of the good work accomplished by neighborhood councils across the City of Los Angeles. Things haven’t been the same since the City Charter was amended to create a citywide system of neighborhood councils to serve as advisory boards to the City Council. Their duty is to engage the public to participate in city government and serve as the eyes, ears, and mouth for citizens of their communities. Our communities are no longer held hostages by a small group of connected downtown insiders. The multitudes of neighborhoods across Los Angeles were finally invited to the party.

The years rolled by and now there are 90 certified neighborhood councils from one end of the city to the other, staffed with an army of approximately 1,600 citizen volunteers. This is grassroots democracy at its finest. People who participate have one goal in mind: improve and protect the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Neighborhood Councils in the North Valley have successfully weighed in and have made a difference on such issues as: the Las Lomas Project, Kohl’s Department Store, Sunshine Canyon, The Sesnon, Oak Ridge, Marek and Station Fires, Canyon Hills Project, Home Depot, the Verdugo Hills Golf Course, Measure “B”, Public Safety, the DWP, Education, Equestrian and transportation issues, and they are currently hard at work on the City of L.A.’s Budget, just to name just a few.

If you’re wondering how our friends and neighbors find their way onto Boards of neighborhood councils, simply stated, you elect them. Every two years, community stakeholders across the city file the appropriate papers and run for positions on the neighborhood councils in the areas that interest them. They apply for a variety of available po-

sitions: presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, treasurers, regional representatives, and group representatives according to each Neighborhood Council’s election rules. Then you go to the polls and elect those you believe are the best qualified. The winners serve on those Council Boards until the next election.

That brings me to my main point: Neighborhood council elections are taking place in regions across the city this year. In order for the system to function properly, we need you to get out there and vote. The act of voting is easy and simple, yet profound. By going to the polls and participating, you ensure that this amazing experiment in grassroots democracy continues, that it remains vibrant, and that it succeeds in your neighborhood.

During these challenging times of budgetary chaos in Los Angeles, the work of your local neighborhood councils is needed more than ever. There are fewer dollars to go around--dollars that provide the offices, personnel, and services that help the city function properly. Without a neighborhood council system that is completely alive and well, those dollars will again begin to be focused in the hands of the downtown insiders and the wealthy interests on the West Side. Basically, this matters greatly as regards to the day to day life of you and your family.

Elections for North Valley Neighborhood Councils in Region A will take place on March 2, and for Region B on March 27. Check the Neighborhood Council page in this issue of the NVR for your Neighborhood Council’s election location, date and time.

Editor’s note: Mr. McManus has served as Region 4 Representative and Outreach Chair, and presently serves as President of the Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council.

Wild Ride - Continued from Cover

Al Abrams, Vice President- Board of Neighborhood Commissioners, said, “The Mayor has not specifically made clear whether he intends to abide by Section 514 of the Charter as it relates to his decision to transfer one or more of the duties and functions of DONE to the CDD. Section 514 mandates that any transfer of the powers, duties, and functions of DONE (a Charter created department) first be presented to the City Council for approval, modification, or rejection by a two-thirds vote during a 45-day consideration period. The submittal must be very detailed and include copies of all proposed ordinance(s) needed to effectuate the proposed transfer of powers, duties, or responsibilities. The Council's failure to timely act on the Mayor's proposal is sufficient to allow its terms to go into effect.” Now is the time for neighborhood councils across the city to ask questions about the possible merger of DONE with the CDD. Will the new department be DONE/CDD or CDD/DONE ?

In a recent article, attorney Noel Weiss wrote, “If the Mayor continues to ignore his responsibilities under the Charter, and unlawfully attempts to consolidate power into his office, the chances of the City's bankruptcy are enhanced, not diminished. We cannot afford to have a constitutional crisis on top of a budget and economic crisis.”

The fate of the 90 NCs remains up in the air. Many have expressed concerns that more funding slashes would create hardship for NC operations which includes community improvement and outreach.

In her letter to the City Council, Barbara Monahan Burke, Studio City NC, said, “Neighborhood Council funding was already reduced by \$5,000 this year. A reduction of an additional 50% is a far greater reduction than many city departments are being requested to make. More and more expenses are required to be paid for by the Neighborhood Councils, i.e.; election outreach, which was expected to be paid for by the City Clerk’s Office. The value received from the Neighborhood Council system far exceeds the cost of its allotted budget.”

But Krekorian remains optimistic in his fight to preserve NC’s. “We all acknowledge the need for important cost cutting measures, but we cannot allow cutbacks to gut the very successful system of Neighborhood Councils,” said Krekorian,. “Neighborhood councils are a vital tool to empower communities across Los Angeles and I am unwilling to limit their voice. We must not balance our budget on the backs of neighborhood council members, most of whom serve an essential role in our communities’ growth.”

The committee asked that the city study the feasibility of neighborhood councils controlling their elections, instead of the City Clerk, for the 2012 NC election cycle. That report is due back at City Council in 120 days. For more information visit lacity.org and for the fastest up-to-date information visit BudgetLA.org.

Katharine.russ@charter.net

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL ELECTIONS SPECIAL EDITION

NC Elections - Continued from page 2

Sun Valley – JHF Polytechnic H.S. Audit, 12431 Roscoe, 1 – 7 pm

Candidates	Representing
Alex Garcia	At-Large
Nicholas Dalton-Pawle	“
Guy M. Dionne	“
Stephen E. Franklin	“
Julie Monroy	“
Elidia Vasques	Business/Property Owner
Gerrado E. Prietro	“
Mike L. O’Gara	“
Art A. Kalantarian	Residential
Robert V. Lim	“
Stella I. Arrington	“
Susan A. Bartlett	“
Angelica M. Duenas	“
James F. Helfenhaus	“
Victor Hernandez	“
Wesly M. Hernandez	“
Daniel H. Evans	“
Monica V. Vacas	“
Samuel D. Palomino	“
Imelda Padilla	“
Carmen Perez	“
Yvette E. Martinez	“
Felix J. Martinez	“
Luis O. Medina	“
Write In	
George R. Dhalquist	“

Sylmar – Sylmar Recreation Center, 13109 Bordon, 1 – 7 pm

Candidates	Representing
Hector F. Cabrera	At-Large
Nicholas J. Krall	“
Quyen T. Vo-Ramariz	“
Elizabeth H. Meher	“
Ricardo H. Benitz	Community Based Organizations
Cheri L. Blöse	Equestrian
Randall L. Kelly	Home /Condo Owners
Martin E. Laufer	“
Guillermo Reyes	“
George E. Ortega, Jr.	Recreation/Open Space
Artemia “Tammy” Flores	Renters
Esteban Tabarez	Retail
Jeanne Rowe	“
Hiral P. Bhakta	“
Write In	
Barry Sylvan	Retail

VOTE

LYDIA GRANT

Stakeholder Group Representative - Parent

Sunland-Tujunga

Neighborhood Council

March 27, 2010

VOTE

OLINA F.R. LOWE

Stakeholder Group Representative - Seniors

Sunland-Tujunga

Neighborhood Council

March 27, 2010

VOTE

DARIUSH BAKHTAR

Area 2

Foothill Trails

District Neighborhood Council

on March 27, 2010

www.ftdnc.org

VOTE

MICHAEL CARPENTER

Foothill Trails District

Neighborhood Council

Saturday March 27, 2010. 1-7pm

Shadow Hills Presbyterian Church

Call 818 470-5235

For More Information

ELECT

DAN McMANUS

President

Sunland-Tujunga

Neighborhood Council

Vote – March 27, 1:00pm – 7:00pm

North Valley City Hall

7747 Foothill Blvd, Tujunga

Volunteer Pollworkers Needed for 2010 Neighborhood Council Elections

Serve within your own community

Contact the L.A. City Clerk for more info and an application. Training will be provided in advance of election day.

Call: 213-978-0444 or email: clerk.election@lacity.org

(Deadline for Region B pollworker sign-ups is 3-10-10)

Long Awaited Costco to Open

The doors of Costco in Pacoima will finally open for the first time at 8 am on Thursday, March 4. A large crowd is expected to join their celebration at 13550 W. Paxton Ave. Costco and their neighbor Lowes, are part of the Community Re-development plan for that area of Pacoima.



Bettercise Your Health



By Ben Fury

Sugar is Not So Sweet - The United States screwed up in 1977. No, I don't mean Gerald Ford pardoning Tokyo Rose or Carter pardoning the draft dodgers. No, this screw up was far worse. We gave sugar the green light. The official Dietary Goals from the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs came out and said eat less fat and eat more carbohydrates. Sure, it said eat less sugar way down the chart... but nobody heard that. All America heard was, "More carbs, less fat."

Well, how's that plan been working for us so far? Pretty disastrously. People took this bad advice and reduced their fat and increased their carbohydrates like they were told and obesity soared from 14% up to 34%. Diabetes more than doubled. The Senators didn't know much about nutrition. Apparently nobody told them carbohydrates are just another name for sugar. Sugar is carbohydrates is starch is sugar. Sugar is sugar is sugar. Whoops. Who knew?

Your Grandma knew that when you were getting pudgy you should lay off the sweets and the starch. But nobody from the Senate invited Grandma to the hearings and instead we got the eat more carbs and less fat advice from the government. From now on, listen to Grandma and ignore the government when it comes to advice. Ok?

So how do we fix your sweets intake? Cut it out. NOW!

The single biggest thing you can do for your health AND your waist is to turn off the sweet spigot. There's no nutrition in it. Only calories. No vitamins, no minerals... just empty calories.

Sweet in it? Don't eat it! Not even one bite.

Recent research found that sweets are more addictive than cocaine (1). Real or artificial doesn't matter. Let's face it. We're a society of sweet addicts. And the, "Oh, a little bit in moderation..." excuse is crazy. If your recovered alcoholic friend said, "Oh, a little drinking in moderation is alright." What would you do, join them in hoisting a few in celebration? No, you'd tell them they're crazy and to cut it out this instant. "You're an addict you idiot! You can't EVER drink again!" Well, it's the same with you. You're a sweet addict. Don't kid yourself. If you want to be healthy, you need to turn off the sweet spigot now and forever. Don't kid yourself and replace the full calorie with the zero calorie. That doesn't work. You're still feeding the sweet beast. Nope, just turn off the sweet spigot, remove the handle and throw it away. Make Grandma proud. Oh, and lay off the starch too.

Sources: Lenoir M, Serre F, Cantin L, Ahmed SH (2007), Intense Sweetness Surpasses Cocaine Reward. PLoS ONE 2(8): e698, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.000006

If you have questions you want answered in this column, send them to ben@bettercise.com

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Panorama City



California State Senator Alex Padilla (left) at Health and Safety Fair

The 3rd Annual Health and Safety Fair was held on Saturday, February 20, in Plaza Del Valley. The event was hosted by the Panorama City Neighborhood Council (PCNC) and sponsored by Agora Realty and Mission Community Hospital. They provided free screening for Vision, Blood Pressure, Diabetes and Dental. The also gave out information on health, senior and youth services, car seat and bike safety.

Elections for the PCNC- will take place on Saturday, March 27 at Mission Community. Hospital, 14850 Roscoe Blvd., Panorama City, 1:00 pm – 7:00 pm. For more information, call 818-714-2133 or email: info@pcnc.us.

Electronics vs Time Capsule



Sitting Ivan Cole; Standing, Lloyd Hitt; Camera, Joe Barrett; Sitting, Marlene Hitt

Little Landers Historical Society in Sunland-Tujunga is using modern electronics to preserve history. President Lloyd Hitt and Director Marlene Hitt conducted interviews while Joe Barrett, President of the Sunland-Tujunga Alliance served as cameraman, to preserve history of people and events of their community for future generations. 90 year old area resident Ivan Cole, among the first to be interviewed, was busy relating his fascinating experiences upon arriving in the community many years ago as an immigrant from Europe.

Proposed Bill to Protect Teens Who Abuse Alcohol

State Assemblymember, Anthony Portantino, introduced AB 1999 in order to encourage teenagers to seek emergency response when a fellow teen is in need of medical attention. The bill would offer limited immunity for the teen reporting the incident, and as a result may cause more incident reports. However, net results might lead to saving lives.

The Bill would protect an underage drinker, or one or two peers who seek emergency medical attention due to alcohol poisoning, by granting them immunity from criminal prosecution. The immunity could only be granted to the victim and the one or two underage peers acting in concert if they are the original callers and stay at the scene until the authorities arrive. His Bill is modeled after similar legislation from other states whose experiences show that this approach does not encourage or condone underage drinking. Instead, it creates a situation where a child in need gets the medical help he or she warrants. According to Assemblymember Portantino, “What it does is decrease barriers for young people who need emergency medical care, but are scared to call because they made a mistake.”

Students Tip Their Hats ...and Pockets to Haiti



On the heels of the devastating earthquake and widespread suffering in Haiti, Hillcrest Christian School students felt a strong desire and obligation to make a difference in the region. Two student-initiated fundraisers, “Hats for Haiti” and “Change for Haiti”, spurred a one-week-long drive to collect money for the cause. For a donation of \$2.00 or more, students were allowed to wear a hat of their choice for the day. On “Hats for Haiti” day, the campus was covered with hats, caps, and beanies from every genre. The excitement was so contagious that Hillcrest’s mail carrier made a donation. At the same time, high school students donated their lunch money, their humble savings, and sacrificed many other personal perks in an effort to raise “Change for Haiti.” During the week, 265 pounds of change and cash were collected from the classrooms. The combined result of both fundraising efforts was a substantial donation of \$6,626.97 to the Children’s Hunger Fund, which focuses all donations towards those suffering in Haiti.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

I’m Hard at Work on the Budget



*Paul Krekorian
Councilmember, District 2
Los Angeles City Council*

As you all know, Los Angeles is facing a tremendous budgetary challenge right now, with multiple city services endangered and thousands of city employees worried about their future. The City Council continues to consider a range of options to begin to bridge our deficit and get L.A. back on the long road to fiscal sustainability.

Personally, I have called for greater efficiencies in, and increased enforcement of debt collection. We need to recover what is owed to the city, and I will press city officials until we recoup those funds. Deadbeats, scofflaws and tax cheats shouldn’t get away with refusing to pay up as our crisis worsens.

Additionally, I have directed my staff in City Hall to look into other alternative measures to solve the city’s budget mess by reducing our costs. At the same

time, my district staff continues to address your needs in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

I also asked our city’s financial office to analyze the impacts of raising the city’s transit occupancy tax, which out-of-town visitors pay at hotels. A modest increase in the hotel tax would not affect local residents, would have no impact on tourism and would help us bridge our ballooning deficit. It would also save city services by bringing in tens of millions of dollars from outside Los Angeles.

Los Angeles faces a projected \$212 million budget shortfall this fiscal year, and a \$484 million projected shortfall for Fiscal Year 2010-11. A relatively high unemployment rate in the city (about 15% - well above the national average of 9.3%), declining home values and plummeting tax revenues have created the perfect storm of fiscal collapse.

The last time L.A. experienced a recessionary period was in the early 1990s. That economic lag lasted a relatively brief eight months (from July 1990 to May

1991), but the city’s general fund tax revenues did not return to pre-recessionary levels until 1997. Because of the extraordinary depth and length of the current recession, the city’s revenue base could take much longer to recover this time around.

Economists and analysts say that the worst of the recession is over, but in the real world the pain for many of us has yet to fully subside. No one knows how long it will take us to recover from our current recession, though we should assume that it will take a number of years and the city should prepare accordingly.

In the coming days and weeks, I will try to provide as much transparency and straight talk as I can about this process. I will do my best to keep you fully informed, to dispel false rumors, and to reach out to the residents of our district for input and engagement.

In that regard, as always, I welcome your suggestions and comments. Please email me at councilmember.krekorian@lacity.org or check out our blog, www.cd2policy.wordpress.com, for updates.

You Should Know...

By Nina Royal

A special Campaign Finance Reform Forum - hosted by Councilmember, Jose Huizer is being held on **March 4**, 9:00 am to 11:00 am in L.A. City Hall Council Chambers. 200 N. Spring St., L.A. They will be discussing possible policy solutions regarding the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling which will change the way election campaigns are financed.

2010 Spring Adult Classic Fishing Derby - sponsored by L.A. County Dept. of Parks and Recreation takes place on **March 6**, in Apollo Park, 4555 West Avenue, Lancaster, from 7:00 am to 11:00 am. It’s an opportunity for novice and experienced fisherman to compete in trout fishing. There will be contests and cash prizes will be awarded to winners. Participants must be 16 years of age, have a valid fishing license and own fishing gear, including strings and bait. Admission: \$15 presale or \$20 at the door. Presale Tickets in the North Valley can be purchased at El Cariso Park, 13100 Hubbard St., Sylmar up to March 5, at 2:00 p.m. sharp. For additional information call 661-775-8865 .

122nd Veterans Appreciation Day - Anniversary Celebration is Sunday, **March 7**, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm, on the Veterans Grand Lawn, northeast Corner of Wilshire Blvd. & San Vicente Blvd. in Brentwood.

It will be hosted by the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 13, San Fernando Valley. Parking is available in lots 10 & 17. The celebration is in grateful patriotic tribute to John P. Jones and Arcadia de Baker who granted the land "To locate, establish, conduct, and permanently maintain a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers" in March 1888.

Towne Hall Meeting – the State Budget Crises is the subject State Senator Alex Padilla will address with students at L.A. Mission College, Thursday, **March 11** at 5:00 pm. He is providing an opportunity for students and faculty members to ask questions regarding the future of the community colleges in California. The event is sponsored by “Students Having Awareness Rising to Progress”, (S.H.A.R.P) and will take place in the Mission Campus Center, located at 133356 Eldridge Ave., Sylmar. For further information call 818-554-7260.

Initiating Change in Our Neighborhoods - the annual Policy con Pan Dulce forum, where community members meet and exchange ideas with local, state and federal representatives, including Mayor Antonio Villaraigsa, will take place on **March 13**, 9:30 am, at Palacio Torres Banquet Hall, 12341 San Fernando Rd., Sylmar. A complimentary breakfast Buffet will also be available. To RSVP, call 818-899-3636, or email rsvp@icon-cdc.org.

“To Mount Lowe With Love” - will be presented by the Little Landers Historical Society, Bolton Hall

Museum, Tujunga, Saturday, **March 13**, at 1:00 pm. Guest speaker, Wally Schidler, a Southern California historian, offers fascinating, grand views of the Pacific Electric Railway. “To Mount Lowe with Love” is a film that chronicles the history of the scenic mountain railway that began its journey in Altadena and terminated at the base of Mount Lowe. Additional information is available from Lynn Lowry or Marlene Hitt at the Little Landers Historical Society, (818) 352-3420, or littlelanders@verizon.net.

Free Income Tax Service - is available for individuals and working families at over 100 free tax preparation sites by EITC. The EITC Campaign Partnership is a broad-based coalition of government agencies, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and financial institutions who have come together to improve the economic status of L.A.’s working families by providing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites. Visit: <http://www.eitc-la.com>. For more information, call 2-1-1, or visit the EITC Partnership’s web site at www.eitc-la.com.

Free Income Tax Service for seniors is also offered by AARP volunteers at the Montrose Library, 2465 Honolulu Ave., Montrose, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm through April 15. Call 818-548-2048 for further information.

“Pay as You Go” - ACA 32, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2010, was introduced in Sacramento by Assemblymember Anthony Portantino on February 16. This measure is similar to a policy adopted by the Federal Government in the 1990’s that led to record budget surpluses If passed, the Bill will require the California State Legislature to adopt a process providing that all legislation, initiatives measures and bonds issued in the state be revenue neutral for ten years. It also requires all new legislation and initiatives that require money, to include specified savings or revenue sources that identify how expenditures are to be made in order to become law. For further information regarding this Bill and other California Legislative Bills, visit: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/index.html>.

If you know a “True Angel”- it can be you, or someone you know, who volunteers untold hours each day building their communities. They are contributing to the common good whether painting a mural, planting a tree, or serving food to seniors. They, including yourself, can be nominated to be recognized as one of the Mayor’s “True Angels.” Three Angeles will be chosen each month and featured on the Mayor’s True Angels website at <http://mayor.lacity.org/OurCity/Volunteer/TrueAngels/index.htm>.

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<p>Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser Dexter Park Community, Center 11053 N. Trail, Kegel Cyn 9:00 am-12:00 pm Donations</p> <p>Book Sale S-T Library 7771 Foothill Blvd., S-T 10:00 am – 4:00 pm 818-352-4481</p> <p>Sunday, Mar 14</p> <p>Pancake Breakfast “Comm. Alliance for Open Space” Fundraiser Dexter Park, Kegel Cyn \$5 Donation</p> <p>Monday, Mar 15</p> <p>MHNC Beautification Committtee LAPD Mission Station 11121 Sepulveda Blvd., MH 7:00 pm</p> <p>STNC/Land Use Committee North Valley City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 7:00 pm 951-7411 Info: stnc.org</p> <p>Tuesday, Mar 16</p> <p>GHNNC Outreach & Publicity Meeting 11139 Woodley Ave., GH 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Wednesday, Mar 17 HAPPY ST. PATRICKS DAY</p> <p>Community Police Advisory Board (CPAB) 11121 Sepulveda Blvd., MH 8:30 pm</p> <p>Rotary Club Coco’s Restaurant 10521 Sunland Blvd., S-T 7:00 pm 818-951-5299</p> <p>Pacoima NC 4:00 pm -Senior Advocate 5:00 pm -Comm. Outreach 6:30 -Gen. Meeting Pacoima Comm. Center 11243 Glenoaks Blvd., Pac</p> <p>North Hills West NC New Horizons, 15725 Parthenia St. NH. 7:00 pm 818 893-8613</p> <p>MHNC Quarter. Outreach LAPD Mission Station 11121 Sepulveda Blvd., MH 7:30 pm</p> <p>Northridge East NC Northridge Academ HS 9601 Zelzah Ave., Nrth 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Bingo Night S-T Elks Lodge 10137 Ave., S-T 6:30 pm 352-2098</p> <p>Thursday, Mar 18</p> <p>STNC Safety Comm NV City Hall 7747 Foothill B lvd., S-T 6:00 pm –6:45 pm</p> <p>S-T SERVS NV City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 6:45 pm-7:30 pm</p> <p>STNC Outreach Comm NV City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 7:30 pm</p> <p>FTDNC Gen. Meeting www.ftdnc.org for location 7:00 pm</p> <p>SNC Gen. Meet. Hubbard St. Elementary 13325 Hubbard St., Syl 6:30 pm– 9:30 pm</p> <p>Saturday, Mar 20</p> <p>Bolton Hall Museum Presents “Rainy Day Games” 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00-4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p>	<p>Sunday, Mar 21</p> <p>Elks Famous Omelete Bar S-T Elks Lodge #2098 10137 Ave., S-T \$7.00 9:00 am-12:00 pm 818-352-2098</p> <p>Open House & Tour/ Beautification Day Pioneer Memorial Cemetary Foothill & Bledsoe, Syl 9:00 am–12:00 pm</p> <p>Tuesday, Mar 22</p> <p>Bolton Hall Museum Presents “Rainy Day Games” 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm-4:00 pm 818-352-3420</p> <p>PCNC Rules & Finance PCNC Office (4th Floor) 14500 Roscoe Blvd., PC 5:30 pm & 6:45 pm 818-714-2133</p> <p>Neighborhood Watch NV City Hall 7747 Foothill, S-T 7:00 pm 818-756-7766</p> <p>GHNNC Gen. Meeting Van Gogh Elem. School; 17160 Van Gogh St., GH 6:30 pm</p>	<p>PCNC Public Safety PCNC Office (4th Floor) 14500 Roscoe Blvd., PC 6:30 pm 818-984-2133</p> <p>Valley Vote Meeting Galpin Ford 15555 Roscoe Blvd., N. Hills 6:30 pm</p> <p>Thursday, Mar 25</p> <p>Northridge South NC Northridge Middle School 17960 Chase St., Nrth. 7:00 pm</p> <p>SNC Gen. Meeting Sylmar Rec. Center 13109 Borden St., Syl. 6:30 pm</p> <p>STNC Budget Committee North Valley City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 6:30 pm</p> <p>SNC Gen. Meeting Sylmar Rec. Center 13109 Borden St., Syl. 6:30 pm</p> <p>STNC Budget Committee North Valley City Hall 7747 Foothill Blvd., S-T 6:30 pm</p> <p>GHNNC Outreach & Publicity Meet. 11139 Woodley Ave., GH 7:00 pm</p>	<p>Saturday, Mar 27 Region “A” NC Elections See NC Schedule</p> <p>Sunday, Mar 28</p> <p>Bolton Hall Museum Presents “Rainy Day Games” 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p>Tuesday, Mar 30</p> <p>Bolton Hall Museum Presents “Rainy Day Games” 10110 Commerce Ave., S-T Docent Tours 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm 818-52-3420</p> <p>Thrusday, April 3</p> <p>CNC Land Use Mission Community Hospital 14860 Roscoe Blvd., PC 6:30 pm 818-894-7841</p> <p>S. V. Rotary Mandarin Terrace 8815 Sunland Blvd., SV 12:00 pm-1:30 pm 818-768-9888</p> <p>PCNC-Commerce Com Wells Fargo Bank 8548 Van Nuys Blvd., PC 2: 00 pm</p> <p>Sylmar Woman’s Club Odyssey Restaurant 15600 Odyssey, GH 11:30 am</p>
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COMMENTARY

The Never-ending Budget Story



By Ron Kaye

City officials for years have ignored the fact that spending more money than they take in sooner or later leads to bankruptcy. They did it in good times and in bad, and they are still doing it in this time of the worst economic decline since the Great Depression.

Fifteen months ago, the city’s financial advisers laid out the case that drastic measures needed to be taken at once. Their advice was ignored and every quarter since then, city revenues have fallen by double-digit percentages. Yet, the mayor and the City Council kept on spending like there never would be a day of reckoning.

Finally, in June, without any financial analysis, they cut a deal with most city unions to pay 2,400 workers handsome bonuses to retire early. When that deal blew up and was shown to make the city’s financial situation even worse, they went back to the bargaining table and cut a second deal that involved workers paying a little more toward their pension, and giving up pay raises for two years with the promise of being made whole within five years.

Now that deal has blow up as financially unsound, too, so we are watching the mayor and Council doing a budget contortionist act to try to get the unions back to the bargaining table a third time.

They gave the unions all the leverage back in October when they signed the last deal so we have seen in a matter of days of the threat of 1,000 layoffs jump to 2,000, and then 3,000, and finally, now 4,000 --- the exact number that was in their financial advisers’ report 15 months ago.

If layoffs are ever carried out, it will mean the overall city work force will have been reduced by nearly 7,000, or close to 15 percent of the total. But all the cuts proposed come from a pool of less than 13,000 workers – the people who run the parks and libraries, community planning and building code enforcement, and many other services used by all of us

The truth is, they do not have a plan to fix what is broken--what they broke. Their only plan is to get through this year, and maybe next, by selling off golf courses, parking structures, the convention center and other revenue producing assets, to defer costs into future years and to borrow heavily – all steps that perpetuate today’s problems for years, even decades to come.

It is a never-ending story.

The moves they are making will blow up, just as surely as the ones they already have taken.

Dramatically worse services hurt the quality of everyone’s life, the value of everyone’s property and business. Dramatically higher DWP rates coming as soon as April 1, and higher fees for just about everything in the city hurt everyone, drain money from the economy, and make life harder at a time when incomes are declining and jobs are in jeopardy.

All that their strategy achieves is to get through this year and maybe next. They have no plan beyond when the deficit is expected to reach \$775 million, or nearly 20 percent of the current budget, or the year after when it goes past the \$1 billion mark. This is a catastrophe in the making. Every action they are taking is certain to blow up into controversy and conflict without actually solving the problem.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. There is only one

way out that preserves city jobs and services, and cleans up the city’s financial problems once and for all. Instead of using gimmicks and deceits as the city’s leadership is doing, they need to admit they have failed. They need to bring the civic, business, labor and community leaders to the table and talk about how we all pull together to save our city. Clearly, city workers at all levels including agencies such as the DWP are paid more than we can afford and their pensions and health benefits are too extravagant. The unions need to take a step back financially to scale payroll costs to revenue. They won’t do that unless there is real job security and a commitment from the public to pay a share of the cost of fixing the city’s financial mess.

A short-term tax of some sort on sales or property combined with reduced payroll costs could right the ship of the city and preserve the quality of our lives and our hopes for the future. Power sharing itself would change the city’s political dynamics and actually give us the chance to do a better job of managing our affairs for success as partners instead of as victims of a political machine that has lost the confidence of all sectors of the city. There is no other way.

Editor’s Note: Ron Kaye writes 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 communitypartners.org (click donate), or by sending a check to Community Partners, 1000 N. Alameda St., Los Angeles CA 90012

DONE : An Appendix for the Community Development Department?



By Michael Cohen

Deputy Mayor Larry Frank presented on Feb. 23rd at a Board of Neighborhood Commissioners (BONC) meeting, the organizational structure for the Mayor’s plan to merge the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment into the Community Development Department (CDD). Merging eliminates DONE as a separate and distinct department and replaces it with an Office of Neighborhood Council Support making it merely a minor appendage to the much larger CDD.

It’s not just that the new, tiny 16 employee office is small, compared to CDD at 300 employees, it’s troublesome because it will not be an independent voice for neighborhood councils, but will answer to the Assistant General Manager of CDD. That’s right the new Director of Neighborhood Council Support (née DONE) and BONC as well will be UNDER the AGM at the CDD. [NOTE: Larry Frank, no doubt under pressure, moved BONC out from under the AGM to under the General Manager directly]

To add insult to injury the CDD General Manager publicly at last week’s (Feb. 16th) City Council Education & Neighborhoods meeting expressed no desire to have DONE part of his department, something that Larry



Frank and the Mayor would have know before the plan was made public.

So we have a reluctant shotgun marriage forced by the Mayor.

What makes the plan DOA (dead on arrival) for me (and probably the City Council) is that the CDD General Manager will actually select the DONE Director.

No longer will DONE be headed by a candidate selected by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

With every council district having several NCs, I would think that every Council Member would be against that part of the plan at least.

Since structure is everything in an organization, will DONE have to be satisfied with whatever resources and hand me downs it can get from the CDD?

Although I can see some synergy between DONE and CDD on outreach for some important community programs, more likely though DONE will get marching orders to assist CDD in areas and directions that neighborhood councils do not want to go. Money and resources that should be used to improve L.A.’s neighborhoods could be largely consumed by CDD’s mission.

Some say it is possible for DONE to continue to exist as an independent department the way the voters decided and still cut as many positions and dollars as the mayor’s consolidation plan anticipates. Even if it turns out to be legal, having a commission and a department that were

created by the City Charter reporting directly to an assistant general manager in a department that is created by ordinance is simply a bad idea.

Neighborhood Councils were set up to be an independent community voice, not carry water for the City Council or Mayor and not certainly for the Community Development Department.

This revelation is much more serious and far reaching than losing rollover funds or having delayed NC elections, far more serious than reduced NC funding. The Mayor’s plan in contrast, stabs a stake into the very heart of the NC system. If this subservient role is enshrined in the City Charter and by ordinance neighborhood councils may not have access to resources they need and could be subject to unfriendly directives and maneuvered in directions not of their choosing – by both the CDD and the City Council. The sentiment of some in the City to minimize the pesky NCs will have been realized.

The Board of Neighborhood Commissioners made no recommendation to the City Council, wanting to study the proposal in more detail.

The Education and Neighborhoods Committee will take up the issue at their next meeting on March 9th.

This meeting is crucial to our survival.

Important Links: Video of Org Chart Presentation: <http://vimeo.com/9719377>

Board of Neighborhood Commissioners recommendation: ens.lacity.org/done/newsflash_a/donenewsflash_a93865118_02242010.pdf

CDD’s function: cdd.lacity.org/index_two.html

Editors Note: Michael N. Cohen is a long time activist living in the Valley and is a member of the Reseda Neighborhood Council Liaison Committee and BudgetLA

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PUBLIC SAFETY

How State Budget Cuts Affect LA County Safety



Los Angeles County Sheriff,
Leroy Baca,

In a letter recently released by Los Angeles County Sheriff, Leroy Baca, he noted the serious negative impact proposed cuts will have on public safety. State, County and local governments are looking at another year of reduced budgets and additional costs.

According to Baca, Legislators wrote and passed Senate Bill 18 (SBX3 18) which took effect January 25, 2010. The measure was written as a way for the California Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to decrease its budget by decreasing the time sentenced inmates serve in prison, and increasing sentencing credits for jail and prison inmates. Also, certain prisoners who would normally be released to a parole agent on a “supervised parole” with a detailed program of re-entry, would be placed on “summary parole”, which is another way of saying “unsupervised parole”.

CDCR is currently reviewing over 7,000 Los Angeles County parolees. When releases occur, the offenders will be unsupervised, released without a plan

or program for proper, safe re-entry into our communities and without accountability. The Sheriff’s Department is working together with the Board of Supervisors, various county public health and human services departments, and other local law enforcement agencies attempting to reach out to the parolees. It doesn’t replace supervised parole, but at least that lets them know about available services that can help and support their needs, said Baca.

Unfortunately, the state’s 2010-11 budget and Federal Court Panel’s mandate will now shift the responsibility of some “felony” inmates to the county jail system, which would have an immediate affect on local community safety. Under the budget proposal, there are at least 11 current crimes for which a person could be convicted of a felony and sent to state prison. They include crimes such as grand theft, receiving stolen property, possession of methamphetatamine and auto theft, which would be changed to an “administrative felony”. That person would still be convicted of a felony, but he or she would be sentenced to 366 days and placed in the county jail

While this creates savings for the state, according to Sheriff Baca, “it is irresponsible to shift the costs to counties. The Los Angeles County jail system is already a severely overcrowded system that has population controls placed on it by the federal court. If the Governor’s proposal were, in fact, to become law as

of today, this would mean the Los Angeles County Jail would have to house approximately 1,900 additional inmates who would currently be sentenced to state prison. Since we are already at capacity, this would force me to comply with the federal court order to reduce the amount of time some inmates spend in jail to a fraction of what they were sentenced to. Again, the state’s proposal clearly shifts the state problem onto counties and local communities.”

He went on to say, “ I am increasingly concerned about proposals related to parole, county jails and increased local responsibility at a time when we are struggling to fund and manage our current responsibilities and inmate populations. We urge careful scrutiny of these proposals and that the Governor and legislature weigh fiscal benefit against public safety impact before making further changes this year.”

This Bill is constantly being re-addressed by the Senate and CDCR. For further information visit: <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/and>, and http://www.votesmart.org/issue_keyvote_detail.php

Editors note: LAPD’s Foothill Division and other Divisions are in the process of updating their Neighborhood and Business Watches. It is important to locate or start one in your neighborhood. Call the Community Relations Office in your Division for information.

LAPD Officers Were Out in Force



LAPD Officers from six Valley Divisions where out in force during the Storms the weekend of February 6, in anticipation of debris flow problems as a result of the Station Fire. They set up their Incident Command Post in the parking lot of the former Kmart site on Foothill Blvd. in Sunland-Tujunga. Fortunately, there were no major problems. Future storms will continue to be a danger to the foothills for some time to come and their Department plans to continue to be proactive, to assure the safety of the foothill communities.

New storms are predicted through the first week of March in the foothills that are extremely saturated already. Both the Police and Fire Departments are giving early warning evacuation notices and are asking residents to please evacuate when asked to do so in order not to hamper the duties of the First Responders.

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Opportunities for Employment and Education

By Nina Royal

A Job Fair - is being hosted by the Los Angeles Dodgers at Dodger Stadium, 1000 Elysian Park Avenue, Los Angeles, Saturday, March 6, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. It’s advisable to dress for on-site interviews. Transition services will be available.

Unemployed workers and job-seekers - can call 311, or visit www.wib.lacity.org regarding training program providers who will train 2,000 workers in high growth and high wage industry sectors including: construction, transportation, utilities, financial services, healthcare, green jobs and green technology. The nearly \$600 million in recovery act funds being administered by the Community Development Department (CDD), and the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for training is part of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s plan to put people back to work in high growth areas.

High School Internships - are being offered to students by the L.A. City Board of Public Works. Students will be exposed to career options in the water, wastewater architectural and environmental engineering industries. Partnering firms are offering six-week paid internships that integrate classroom learning with work-based experience. For more information visit their website: www.bpw.lcity.org/pwhip, or contact Public Works Commissioner Andrea Alarcon at 213-978-0254.

Census 2010 is hiring - hundreds of people for various Census positions that will be available over the upcoming months. They are approaching the end of their testing period to qualify for Census jobs. Call the following number to be routed to the appropriate Local Census Office based on you place of residence: 866-861-2010. For further questions contact at miguel.perla@census.gov, or call 213-923-2527.



**VOTE
NINA ROYAL
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Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood
Council
March 27, 2010

- 25 year activist on behalf of Sunland-Tujunga
- Chair Public Safety Committee & Member Community Police Advisory Board

THIS N THAT

Everyone is Irish in March

By Marlene Hitt

On a scale of one to ten, which is most fun? A cup of black tea or a pint of green beer? A sage leaf or a shamrock? A lemur or a leprechaun? Now, what would dear Saint Patrick say to that on the day that memorializes him and his legendary life?

Ah! The Irish! Back a time long ago the Irish settled on their island, accepting incomers and warring tribes and all the changes that came with them.

The people were collecting facts, refining their collective imagination, and mixing them all together. While the wee folk spun their yarns, great writers put pen to paper, thatched homes huddled in the wind, grand castles were built to last forever, nature provided turf to warm the bodies, stone to build with, and plenty of water. The Irish experienced sad weather,

famine, hardship, and grandeur. It was a good world and a bad one, just like all the others.

On a trip to that country a traveler will hear the lighthearted tale of the storyteller, the songs of the singers, the clear sweet sound of the harp, pipes, flute, tin whistle, accordion, bodhran, fiddle, and the like. They will drift into the slow life of the country man and woman, then across to the more than modern great cities where poets, writers, artists, and scholars study and create. Students learn Irish history and their native Gaelic Language.

What a beautiful and magical place it is. In early summer, as Aer Lingus begins its landing, the earth below looks like an emerald quilt, breathtaking. The narrow lanes you travel on go through countryside, past glens, beside the sea, to the most beautiful places there might be anywhere. Strains of “Danny Boy” and the like flit through your head. But then the

singers burst out with rapid war songs and sillies like Mrs. Fogarty’s Christmas Cake that they say will kill a man twice after eatin’ a slice.

The Irish land, through all its struggles and celebrations, has given to the world a greatness unequalled. So, on this Saint Patrick’s Day, when everyone is Irish, you are wished well. “May you live to be a hundred years with one extra year to repent!” And also, “Health and long life to you, the woman of your choice to you, a child every year to you, land without rent and may you die in Ireland”. May you have warm words on a cold evening, a full moon on a dark night, and the road downhill all the way to your door.

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


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In Memory of Those We have Lost



Shirley Lorenz Kellstrom

September 4, 1927 - Feb. 21, 2010


Shirley passed away peacefully last week and will be greatly missed. Shirley, was an activist, who believed in community involvement, and Women's Rights. She was an earnest believer in early literacy, and self-empowerment through education. She was extremely active and belonged to over thirty organizations including Business and Professional Women's Association, International Training in Communication, California State Association of Parliamentarians, National Organization for Women and the League of Women's Voters. She volunteered often and was also on the Board of Directors of the Little Landers Historical Society/Bolton Hall Museum, Sunland-Tujunga and the Hillview Mental Health Center in Pacoima. The Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council appointed her Parliamentarian immediately after their certification in 2004, and she remained totally committed, while participating in other organizations.

She enriched the lives of students, staff and parents at Hubbard Street Elementary School where she taught for 37 years. Always involved, she became a School Improvement Coordinator, a BTSA support provider for new teachers, Faculty President and an Assistant Principal. She also organized school pageants often providing piano accompaniment and a lovely alto in Barbershop harmonies.

Shirley is survived by her daughters Judith, Susan, Nanci, and son David, her five grandchildren, Elizabeth, Curtis, Bret, Marie and Andre, her three great-grandchildren, Abby Rose, Anthony Vincent, and Alec Xander, her sister, Judy Jame and her family, and two devoted sons-in-law, John Wittenbel and Dean Hooker.

Shirley touched the lives of everyone with optimism and love because she believed in the potential of every human being to make the world a better place. She was a guiding light and is still an inspiration to all that knew her.

A celebration of her life will take place on Saturday, March 13, at Forest Lawn, Hollywood Hills in the North Church at 2:30 pm, with a reception following at the McGroarty Arts Center in Sunland-Tujunga. In lieu of flowers, donations are requested to be sent to The Hillview Mental Health Center 12450 Van Nuys Blvd., Ste. 200 Pacoima, CA 91331.




Mario A. Polance

August 30, 1953 – September 2, 2009

Mario Polance and his wife, actress Jody Lee Olhava were producers. Together, they produced the award winning Children’s Film “Mamochka, A Russian Folktale Retold”. They also produced “Gone with the Film Festival” at the historic Towne Theatre in Fillmore, in 2008, and again, at the Barnsdall Gallery Theatre, Co-Sponsored by the city of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Mary Pickford Foundation, in 2009. Councilmember Richard Alarcon awarded them a plaque for their contribution to culture in the City of Los Angeles.

Mario was a resident of San Fernando Mission and Pine Mountain club before succumbing to Diabetes at USC Medical Center. He was well known for his wacky sense of humor and slant on living. He is missed dearly by his devoted wife Jody, mother Estella, daughters Rayann Garcia, Salena Villa, brother Ricardo, their spouses, and many nieces, nephews and grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his father Albert and his son Richard.

He is interned at Rose Hills Park in Whittier. Donations may be made in his name to the American Heart Association.



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(Holy Martyrs Elementary, 16617 Parthenia St, NH)
Third Wednesdays at 7 pm Board Meeting
(New Horizons, 15725 Parthenia St, NH)

THIS N THAT

HERE'S MY CARD



Carrick's Journey

—Part Twenty-Five
By Tomi Lyn Bowling

Piece by piece, hour by hour, the efforts to help those that survived-and remove those that did not-went on long into the night. Sebastian, Fanella, Drake, and Maddie had all left the rubble and headed back to the village. The long trek back to the room where his introduction had begun just hours earlier was well underway. Maddie excused herself along the way, as she had been too long away from the rest of her children. The elders met Sebastian along the way and joined in the trek. Soldiers reporting in from different districts would run up and give their information to the elder for their respective area.

As the group arrived and took their places at the table the noise of the room, now filled with many group leaders, quieted down as they all looked on eager to hear where the plans now stood.

Sebastian explained to everyone that the plans remain the same. Gasps in the room could be heard here and there as the words echoed through the large chambers. “We’ll have to assess the losses but we must move ahead. It’s more important now than ever. They know we’re here now. We’ve succeeded in remaining a hidden force for a very long time. We’ve vowed as a community to never again fall victim to the kind of slavery and poverty that had fallen over this great place. We have to hastily move ahead.”

Hands were waving in the room and clearly many questions were to be addressed. “My friends, we have little time, if we are to succeed in getting our plan underway we must move quickly. Unless you have a most pressing question I ask you to hold your thoughts and let’s work together to bring this plan into action immediately.” The arms dropped just as quickly as they had risen. Not a whisper was heard but everyone in the chamber knew what they had to do as if they had rehearsed it over and over.

Drake looked shocked as he looked around at the sudden scurry. Fanella followed Drake as he walked to the chamber door and then paced back to the elder’s table. In his eloquence he looked at the elders and spoke out: “What now? Where are they all going? Don’t they need to know what just happened?” Sebastian signaled to Fanella and she grabbed Drake by the arm and began walking out with him. “I will tell you everything. Just come along and we’ll walk while we talk.” The story she told could be seen in Drake’s eyes as they grew wide and the dilation shifted from small to large and then back again. “What? What do you mean they’ll leave here...on what? They can’t leave the planet on horseback? Maybe you plan to use that noisy heap of a metal thing you captured me with?” he said with a snarl. As they walked down the path Fanella veered off to the right where there was no path entering the dark forest. “Wait...where are you going? I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to be rude...Fanella, come back!”. After a few seconds, “Hurry up Drake, come on!” Fanella had to urge Drake to take the steps and enter the darkness. He tried to be brave and jumped in and quickly walked smack dab into a tree hitting his noggin, bouncing him to the floor, and leaving quite a souvenir on his forehead. A giggle could be heard a few feet away. As he stood up his eyes started to adjust and he could see a snickering Fanella. “Come on Drake, there’s no time to play.”

Quite flustered that Fanella had thought he was playing Drake reluctantly walked ahead following her lead...to be continued.

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Candidates Mixer - **Wed. March 24 at 7 p.m.**
Election Day is **March 27, 2010 1-7 p.m.**
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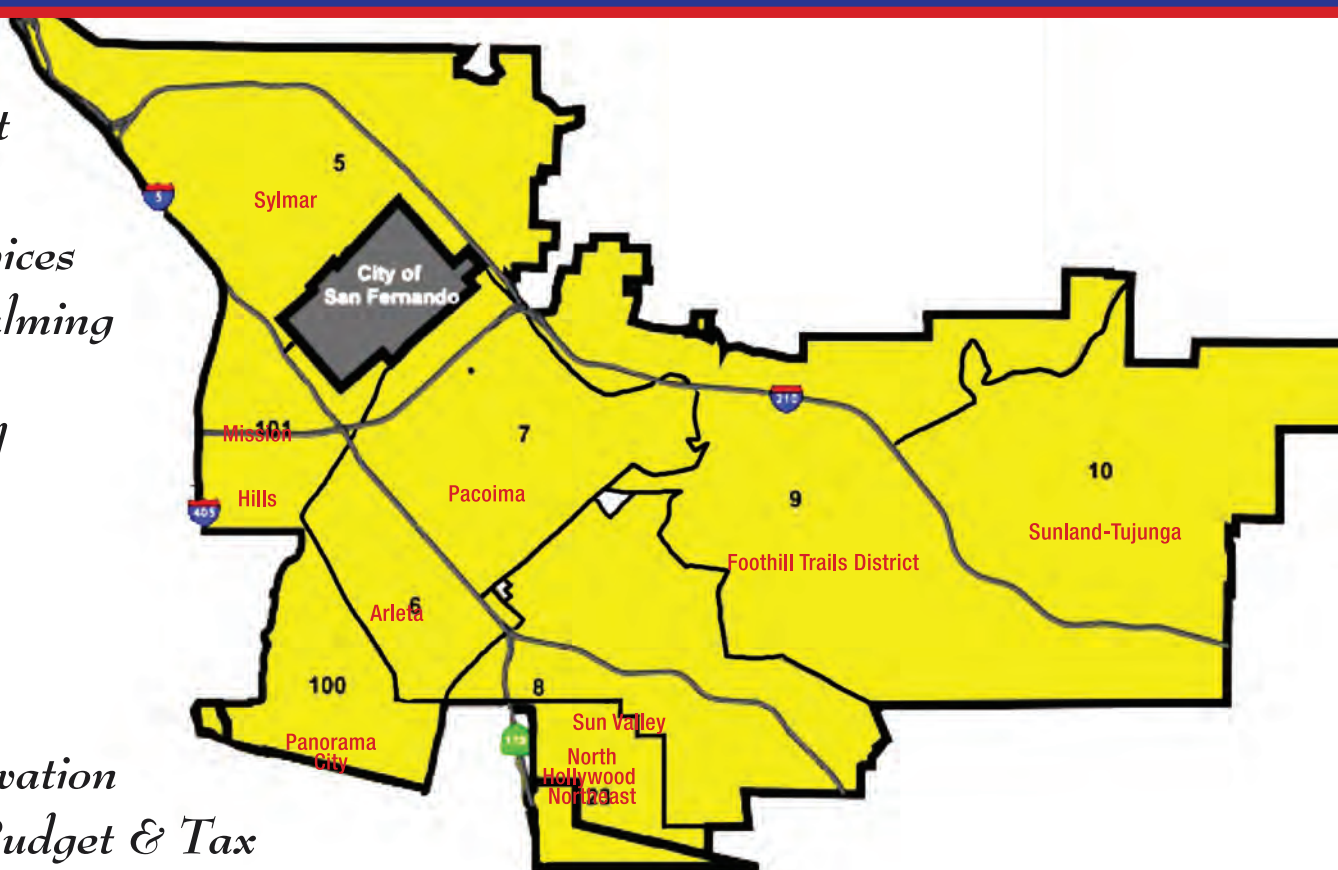


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Polling Location & Times

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www.arletanc.org
818-897-4908
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Branford Recreation Center -
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www.sylmarnc.org
818-833-8737
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www.ftdnc.org
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www.nhnenc.org
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