



VALLEY VOICE

Serving Northridge, Porter Ranch, Granada Hills and Chatsworth

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YOUR Award-Winning Free Local Newspaper

JUNE, 2008



A teen is taken into custody by LAPD following an assault on a Chatsworth High School girl in Mason Park. He was later released.

Valley Voice Photo

Two Arrested In Park Assault

Two teenage boys suspected of sexually assaulting a Chatsworth High School girl in Mason Park are facing sexual assault and battery charges, authorities said.

A 16-year-old boy and a 15-year-old Canoga Park boy were arrested after police questioned several Chatsworth High School students who were in the park during the May 15 morning assault, said Los Angeles police Detective Mike Fesperman.

The older boy was booked on suspicion of sexual battery, while the younger was booked on suspicion of sexual assault on a victim, 15, incapable of defending herself, Fesperman said.

One teen initially detained was released after questioning, police said.

The teenagers were away from the campus because of staggered start times due to state testing and might have been drinking alcohol, said Los Angeles police Capt. Steven Ruiz.

At least one of the girls was believed to have been sexually assaulted.

"According to eyewitnesses, the group was there together and appeared to all know each other," Ruiz said. "They were all associated whether it be through the school or however, but they all appeared to have known each other - including the three girls who were found to later be unconscious."

Detectives were sent to the park at Mason Avenue and Devonshire Street on a report that "three females were possibly drugged and attacked," said Officer Kate Lopez of LAPD Media Relations Section.

Two girls were found unconscious in the picnic area, and the third was found topless in a men's restroom, Ruiz said.

It was unknown what caused the girls to pass out. Police found a bag of candy at the scene, and several empty soda containers, Ruiz said. The girls were having trouble remembering what happened to them.

3 Wounded

Granada Hills Church Shooting

A man accused of wounding his ex-girlfriend and two others at a church carnival in Granada Hills was on parole for a felony and should not have had a firearm, a county supervisor said.

Fernando Diaz Jr., 33, of North Hollywood, is accused of using a semiautomatic .22-caliber rifle to shoot the people, May 17 at St. John Baptist de la Salle Catholic Church, 16545 Chatsworth St., as the carnival was supposed to start.

"I will ask for a thorough investigation into how a convicted felon on parole was able to acquire or own a firearm," Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich said in a statement.

He noted that after white supremacist Buford O. Furrow Jr., a parolee from Washington, opened fire at a Jewish daycare center in Granada Hills on Aug. 10, 1999, and killed a mail carrier, Antonovich initiated a program to ensure that convicted felons on parole are monitored to ensure they do not acquire weapons.

The ex-girlfriend, who is 30 years old, was shot in an arm. A 45-year-old man was shot in the chest and a 47-year-old man was grazed in a leg.

An off-duty police officer and two other carnival-goers subdued Diaz as he was reloading.

Diaz was on parole for assault with a deadly weapon, the newspaper reported.

Diaz was charged May 20 with three counts of attempted murder, and is being held on \$7.2 million bail.

At CSUN

Performing Arts Center

will be Valley's Largest

By Christina Toroyan, Valley Voice Contributor

California State University, Northridge has begun construction on its new \$125 million Valley Performing Arts Center. It is located at the southern end of the campus, on Nordhoff Street near Etiwanda Avenue. The new development will include a 1700-seat performance hall, plus a 178-seat theatre that students in the theatre and music departments can use. The CSUN radio station, KCSN, will have a full production studio. A 150-seat lecture hall will also be added into the building.

One of the major concerns regarding the student body is the payment of the center.

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IMPACT ON NEW SCHOOL? New Housing Project Sought at Brown's Canyon

A proposed 188-new-home development west of Brown's Canyon, was the subject of the May Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council meeting.

Two Hidden Creeks Estate representatives, Michael Sanders and John Pope gave a status report on the project, to be situated northwest of the Renaissance community in Porter Ranch.

The project as proposed, will have 25 Equestrian lots. The average lot size is 18,500 square feet. The development site is approximately 285 acres, of which 118 acres will remain as natural open space.

Planned are an 18 acre recreational park with ball fields, restrooms, tot lot, basketball courts, and a community meeting building, all available to the Porter Ranch Community.

At the meeting, stakeholders expressed concern about wildlife corridors, traffic on Mason and construction traffic on Brown's Canyon.

When asked about where the Hidden Creeks children would go to school, Sanders replied that LAUSD said there was plenty of capacity and that would not be an issue. However, one stakeholder commented "that the community had gone to a lot of trouble for the new school with hopes that it would serve all of Porter Ranch for the middle school students. Also, the community would be frustrated if 25% of the school's capacity was taken up by Hidden Creeks students at the expense of Porter Ranch students."

The developer hopes to secure annexation by the City of Los Angeles, and approval by the City's Planning and Land Use Management Committee by the end of 2008.

You may review the Draft Environmental Impact Report at the Porter Ranch and Chatsworth Libraries or online at cityplanning.lacity.org, on the menu select "Environmental", then "Draft Environmental Impact Reports". You may submit your comments about the project in writing by: June 30, 2008 to Nicholas Hendricks, Environmental Review Coordinator, Department of City Planning, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd, Room 351, Van Nuys, CA 91401, (818) 374-5046, nick.hendricks@lacity.org

Providence Holy Cross Northwest Valley Cheers Hospital's Expansion

Recognizing that "Care Can't Wait" in the fast-growing San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys, Providence Holy Cross Medical Center broke ground May 12 on a four-story, 136-bed addition that will be the first LEED-certified environmentally friendly hospital building in the state.

With the growth at the hospital, and a new health center under construction in Porter Ranch, Northwest Valley residents are applauding Providence's projects.

A formal ceremony was held at 10 a.m. in front of the medical center, 15031 Rinaldi St., Mission Hills.

"This expansion will set new standards for hospital design, both for quality health care and for environmentally efficient features," Providence Holy Cross Chief Executive Kerry Carmody said. "We have worked with the community to come up with the best possible plan to meet a growing need for hospital beds while being sensitive to environmental concerns."

Among those who spoke at the ceremony were Bishop Gerald E. Wilkerson of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Los Angeles Councilman Tony Cardenas.

But more touching comments came from supporters of Holy Cross with personal stories about the need for more facilities, the planned 12-bed neonatal intensive-care unit in particular.

Sal Suarez told of his son's premature birth and how the tiny infant had to be rushed from Holy Cross to a NICU 35 miles away

(Continued on Page 10))

Councilman
Greig Smith's
Movies Under the Stars



Free!

"Shrek 3"

Saturday, June 14, 8:00 pm

Holleigh Bernson Park

20500 Sesnon Blvd., Porter Ranch

FREE POPCORN!



Credit Cards Facing Government Scrutiny Reiter-Wrong? *By Mel Reiter, Valley Voice*

The wrath of credit card holders over unfair and deceptive billing practices have finally reached Congress – along with the Federal Reserve, the U.S. Office of Thrift Supervision, and the National Credit Union Administration.

Proposals are already emerging criticizing the card companies for charging too many hidden fees and unfairly increasing the interest charges on borrowers. The OTS has already approved a plan that would prohibit raising the annual percentage rate on outstanding balances, and prohibiting double-cycle billing in the Savings and Loan industry.

The Fed's proposals, which could kick in before the end of the year, would prohibit unfair time constraints on payments to all card companies, and from unfairly allocating balances with different interest rates.

As for Congress, many members have criticized credit card policies, saying they blindsided unsuspecting cardholders who become trapped by a mountain of exorbitant charges. They want lenders to give more notice to the borrowers before raising rates, and are concerned with rates that have reached over 32%.

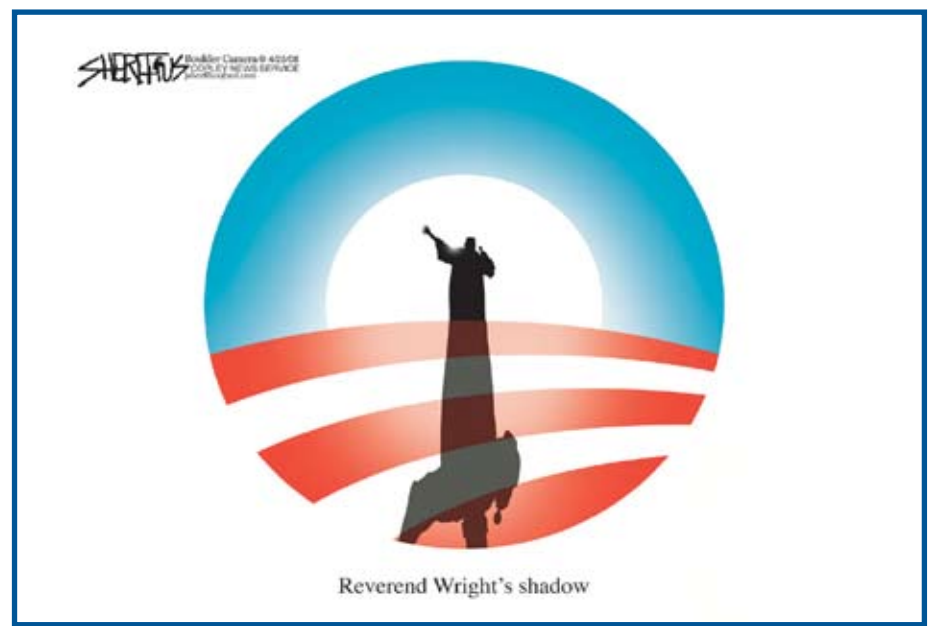
Have no fear for the banks and other issuers to find ways to compensate for any changes - they always have. One example would be to charge excessive annual fees to all cardholders.

FACING A SHORTAGE of almost \$500 million in state funds for education here, why has the LAUSD, with an abundance of administrators, contracted out about \$175 million in various projects to outside firms?

For 60 years, most of us have hoped for a peace in the Middle East. Despite what you hear, and read, the odds diminish with almost every passing year. Can Israel really deal with the Palestinians, who have no control over Hamas? No Hamas leader has ever asked for a peace agreement. For that terrorist organization, its leader Khaled Meshaal boasts, "Never to even recognizing Israel."

Democratic Israel has faced the ravages of too many wars, and battles, and terrorism, with many other enemies still sworn to destroy it - especially with more modern rockets, and Palestinian suicide bombers, and their dreams of "Pushing Israel into the sea."

Add Iran, Syria, and all the other hostile terrorist groups, and nations, who is Israel to negotiate with? Yes, I like most others, wish for a peaceful two-state solution. Israel knows with the high Arab birthrate, it will be eventually be out-numbered. How



much time is left to share the land? Probably not another 60 years!

THE VALLEY VOICE was among the many invited recently to the groundbreaking of a 136-bed wing at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Mission Hills. However, the much needed expansion, scheduled to open in 2010, faces roadblocks.

On July 14 a judge must rule on a suit filed by a group, claiming that a full environmental impact report was not done. The Board of Supervisors supported the expansion, citing an extreme need for more hospital beds in this area, noting the recent closings of Granada Hills Hospital, as well as Northridge Hospital-Sherman Way.

With such a need for the new 186,000 square foot building, which will primarily serve our readership area, it would be a tragedy for any adverse ruling ending the already-started construction.

Councilman Greig Smith has been a major supporter for the unit.

AIRLINES are facing many problems, heightened by the major increases in fuel. We've all been here before. Not surprising, they get little support from the flying public. This is the industry that ended free meals, left passengers stranded on tarmacs for hours at a time, rather than get them to the terminals, and did not provide water and snacks to stranded travelers. Besides, a greater percentage of flights are delayed, or cancelled, and more and more are over-booked on full planes.

Fares are now being raised almost every week, and now passengers must pay a charge for checking in baggage. If and when fuel prices are rolled back dramatically, will the airlines cut back these fees? Don't count on it.

GRAND AVE. PROJECT REVISITED. It was about a year ago when the Valley Voice ran articles and editorials with our concerns – would the Valley be paying too high a tab for another downtown development?

We now learn, that due to the real estate and construction loan problems, delays are imminent. Without much fanfare, the developer has secured a \$100 million infusion of equity by Istithmar, a fund controlled by Dubai's royal family. Also, they are getting \$60 million in tax waivers from all the families in Los Angeles – yours and mine!

(Continued on page 11)

SIERRA CANYON SCHOOL

Now in its 30th year, Sierra Canyon recently opened a new state-of-the-art 7th – 12th Grade campus.

Visit www.sierracanyonschool.org to see a slide show of our new academic village:

- Library and Technology Center
- Dedicated Science Wing
- Multiple visual arts classrooms for painting, sculpture, photography, etc
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Cameras Catch Illegal Turns

Most red light camera tickets issued in Los Angeles do not involve drivers running red lights at intersections but, rather, turning right against a red light without first making a full stop.

One of the most powerful selling points for photo enforcement systems, which now monitor 175 intersections in Los Angeles County and hundreds more across the United States, has been the promise of reducing collisions caused by drivers running red lights.

But it is the right-turn infraction that drives tickets and revenue in the nation's second-biggest city and at least half a dozen others across the county, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Officials in Los Angeles estimate that 80 percent of red light camera tickets go not to those running through intersections but to drivers making rolling right turns, a Times review has found.

Los Angeles and other cities that cite large percentages of right-turn violators say the infractions increase hazards, particularly for pedestrians, The Times reported.



Northridge Pool Grand Opening

Mark your calendar for a community pool party to celebrate the grand opening of the new Northridge Pool, Sunday, June 8, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. at Northridge Park, 10058 Reseda Blvd..

Join Councilman Greig Smith and your neighbors to celebrate the completion of the new Northridge Pool, with free entry for all, swimming, and free refreshments and snacks provided by Northridge East Neighborhood Council. Bring your bathing suit and be among the first people to swim in the new pool.

The pool will open for the regular swimming season June 21.

Councilman Smith's office has worked for several years to secure funding to bring a new pool to Northridge, fulfilling a pledge to replace the old Northridge Pool, which was damaged and had been closed for years. Re-opening the pool is part of their ongoing commitment to the community of the San Fernando Valley.

Councilman Smith secured approximately \$6 million needed to build the Northridge pool from a combination of funding from Proposition 40, Proposition K, Seismic Bonds, Sites and Facilities money, a General Fund contribution and private contributions including the Kaiser Foundation.

The new pool features a large lap pool, a shallow wading pool equipped for young children's activities and access for people with disabilities, a splash pad, and all new lifeguard offices, first aid station, showers and changing rooms and an amazing two-story high waterslide.

The new pool will fill an important need for a summertime sport, exercise and recreation facility for the community.

Canoga Kerfluffle

Controversy is still swirling over a city agency's street beautification project that snarled things in Canoga Park for three weeks, when a major street was ripped out before replacement materials had been delivered.

The city of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency has yet to provide answers on the foul-up to the city council member, Dennis Zine, who represents the area.

The Daily News reported that \$303,650 was spent to rip out Sherman Way, leave it torn apart for three weeks, and then slap down temporary pavement. The beautification project is left mostly-undone, the money spent, and the councilman fuming.

"I want some answers," Zine told the Daily News. "As a representative of that community, I'm very upset."

CRA officials have been tight-lipped on the matter, and have not explained why a private contractor was allowed to rip out streets and sidewalks in Canoga Park before replacement decorative cement and special concrete forms had arrived at the site.

Local business operators want the job finished, and compensation for weeks of lost business.

At Holleigh Bernson PRNC, Greig Smith Provide Park Cover

The Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council is sponsoring a Playground Celebration and Disaster Preparedness Fair in honor of the new playground shade coverings at Holleigh Bernson Park, Saturday, June 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The PRNC partnered with Councilman Greig Smith to contribute \$17,000 towards the \$34,000 playground shade coverings. The Councilman's office covered the balance. The result is two coverings providing shade directly over the play equipment, in time for summer.

Lunch will be provided at the celebration, prepared by the Red Cross as part of their continuing emergency training. Also on hand will be Carol Parks of the LA Office of Emergency Preparedness, Brownies, Cub Scouts, Girl and Boy Scouts, Boy Scout Venturing, Fire Explorers, Red Cross Youth Volunteers and the YMCA. All will offer emergency related information, volunteer and



participation opportunities and freebies.

Sponsors include Councilman Smith, American Red Cross Disaster & Preparation, Castlebay Lane Elementary School. Holleigh Bernson Park is located at the corner of Porter Ranch Dr. and Sesnon.

PRNC Elections are scheduled for Saturday, June 28, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Shepherd of the Hills Church. Candidates are needed. Information available at PRNC.org. Please come to the Candidate Forum, where you can meet the candidates and ask questions. This is scheduled for June 3, at 7 p.m. after the regular 6 p.m. business meeting at Shepherd of the Hills Church. Cast your vote on June 28 or you may vote by mail.



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West Coast Rush Cheerleading and Dance All-Stars performed in Chatsworth as part of the West Valley Day of Service. Valley Voice Photo

"Day of Service" Ends in Chatsworth

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Councilmember Greig Smith and Big Sunday Founder David Levinson led community service projects in the neighborhoods of Chatsworth, Winnetka, Canoga Park, West Hills and Woodland Hills for the Mayor's West Valley Day of Service, as a part of this year's weekend-long Big Sunday volunteer event on Saturday, May 3.

The West Valley Day of Service featured more than 50 projects in the West Valley, including tree plantings; school campus cleanups; an energy-efficient light bulb installment project in the Canoga Park Business Improvement District; animal adoptions; art workshops; and a project at the Topanga Park Assisted Living Center where cosmetology students will be giving makeovers to residents.

At the City's Day of the Horse in Chatsworth, Mayor Villaraigosa and Councilmember Smith toured the grounds with Mary Kaufman, organizer of Day of the Horse, and Brian McQueeney, Executive Director of Ride On.

At the community festival and closing ceremony at the Chatsworth Train Depot, Mayor Villaraigosa and Councilmember Smith thanked all the volunteers and sponsors that made the day a success. West Cast Rush featured cheerleading, tumbling, and dance for those in attendance.

In 2006 and 2007, the Mayor's Office partnered with Big Sunday – with Big Sunday now extending throughout Southern California, the City of Los Angeles is now a major sponsor and supporter, helping to continue the Big Sunday goal of being the largest all-volunteer day in America.

Ten years ago, David Levinson, a Los Angeles-based full-time writer, started Big Sunday with just 300 volunteers. Now, David and his team leads the largest region-wide community service volunteer weekend in America, with Big Sunday engaging over 50,000 volunteers in 2007.

Everything is free on Big Sunday, and volunteers of every stripe are asked only to share their time and talent. Big Sunday projects, including necessary supplies and services, are funded by private and corporate cash grants and in-kind donations.

"Fully Loaded" Cop Costs about \$9,000

Outfitting a Los Angeles Police Department recruit now costs about \$9,000, up 20 percent from last year.

"It's a lot of money for a recruit," LAPD Cmdr. James Cansler, the commanding officer of Personnel Group, which oversees recruitment, told the Daily News. "But the fact of the matter is, you've got to properly deploy the department because we're so understaffed."

The extra costs are hitting at a bad time as officials, saddled with the worst budget deficit in city history, try to make good on a pledge to boost the number of police officers to 10,000 by 2010.

Currently, the force is about 9,700 officers, but the department has experienced an exodus over the past few years as hundreds of seasoned officers retire.

Total recruiting costs have soared nearly 45 percent this year because of price hikes for items recruits use and an overall jump in the number of recruits -- to 780 from 650 last year, the Daily News reported.

While the city faces tough budget challenges, officials say they will not skimp on public safety, the Daily News reported. The LAPD's budget has grown to more than \$1.3 billion, while other departments have had to cut.

"It's no secret that the police buildup requires significant resources, but it would be the height of irresponsibility to recruit and train new officers on the cheap," Matt Szabo, a spokesman for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, told the Daily News.

A sampling of costs shows just how expensive equipping an L.A. officer can be. Uniforms alone - including body armor, boots, cap, helmet and flashlight - total \$1,620 per recruit, the Daily News reported.

Illegal Aliens' Welfare Costs

New statistics from the Department of Public Social Services reveal that illegal aliens and their families in Los Angeles County collected over \$36 million in welfare and food stamp allocations in March 2008, according to Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich.

Nearly twenty-five percent of all welfare and food stamp benefits is going directly to the children of illegal aliens. Illegals collected over \$19 million in welfare assistance for March 2008 and over \$16 million in monthly food stamp allocations, for a projected annual cost of \$432 million.

"Illegal immigration continues to have a devastating impact Los Angeles County taxpayers," said Antonovich. "With \$220 million for public safety, \$400 million for healthcare, and \$432 million in welfare allocations, the total cost for illegal immigrants to County taxpayers far exceeds \$1 billion a year – not including the millions of dollars for education."

City Budget At \$1 Billion

The Los Angeles City Council and mayor, signed off on a \$7.01 billion budget that includes higher fees for trash collection, parking fines and recreational activities, while setting aside funds to increase the size of the city's police and fire departments.

The vote caps more than 50 hours of public hearings on the spending plan, which was proposed by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa on April 21.

Los Angeles City Council President Eric Garcetti said that despite the city's financial constraints, residents will not see a change in the quality of services they receive.

"We're paving more miles of roads this year, we'll have more police officers, maintaining our fire and emergency services, maintaining our library hours and our staff there," Garcetti said.

The spending plan includes \$90.5 million in new revenue generated by upping fees for parking in city lots and structures, adopting a pet from a city shelter, playing a round of golf at a municipal course and releasing a car from the LAPD impound.

Beginning Sept. 1, single-family households will pay \$36.32 for garbage collection - a 30 percent increase over the current cost. Multi-family units will see the fee increase from \$17.16 to \$24.33.

The spending plan eliminates 767 civilian positions. Of those spots, about 350 are currently filled.

The city must still address a \$23 million shortfall through mandatory furloughs, buyouts or early retirement plans.

The unions representing city workers spoke out against the mayor's plan for civilian employees to take six unpaid vacation days as part of a mandatory furlough program. The "short-term" layoffs would impact 911 operators, traffic officers and other revenue-generating positions, according to the unions.

The Chief Legislative Analyst last month found an additional \$97 million in budget funds. Recommendations call for spending \$3.4 million to maintain 369 beds in homeless shelters; \$1.5 million for 75,000 library books and \$1.4 million to keep libraries open on Sundays; and \$3.2 million to maintain the city's parks.

The budget for 2008-09 is \$193.3 million more than the adopted budget for the current fiscal year. In the next year, 71 percent of the budget will be allocated for public safety.

By July, there will be 9,755 police officers in the city of Los Angeles. The mayor's office expects that number to increase to 10,032 officers in the next fiscal year, and to 10,316 officers by the summer of 2010.

City Salaries Half of Budget

More than 6,000 of the city's roughly 48,000 employees make more than \$100,000 per year, and the average salary is \$68,850 for civilians and \$93,800 for police and firefighters.

Department of Water and Power employees average \$76,949 a year, the Daily News reported based on records obtained via the California Public Records Act.

The total payroll comes to about \$3.2 billion, or nearly half the city's \$7 billion budget, the newspaper reported.

And even though city officials were warned of the current economic downturn, they approved labor contracts giving some 22,000 workers raises of 23 percent over five years in October.

Now, city leaders are working to close a \$406 million budget gap for the fiscal year starting in July, and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has proposed eliminating 800 position, some of which are vacant.

City Controller Laura Chick said the raises granted to various unions show "that local government knows how to spend, spend, spend and does not understand how to keep expenditures in line with revenue."

"The point is the packages - negotiated first with IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 18) and then with the rest of the unions - weren't negotiated in a reality-based climate looking at the facts of the city budget," she told the Daily News.

\$355 Million O.T.

Overtime Adds To City's Crisis

More than two-thirds of Los Angeles city workers earned overtime last year, totaling \$355 million, even as the mayor issued a directive to curtail such payouts.

More than 29,000 employees worked overtime in the 12 months through April, with nearly 1,500 earning more than \$50,000 each in overtime pay alone, according to the Daily News.

The soaring overtime has become a major contributor to a gross annual city payroll that now costs \$120 million more to compensate the same size work force as a year ago, according to a Daily News review of salary and overtime data obtained from the City Controller's Office under the California Public Records Act.

Despite Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's memo to department heads in January to suspend non-emergency overtime, extra pay has continued unabated, with April's tally accounting for about 10.6 percent of the payroll - slightly more than before the order, the Daily News reported.

While many city departments say they have made recent adjustments designed to reduce overtime, a Villaraigosa spokesman told the newspaper that the mayor intends to hold noncompliant departments accountable.

A review of city overtime data from April 2007 to April shows that nearly 75 percent of the extra pay went to police and fire personnel, the Daily News reported.

Fire Department employees received \$144 million in overtime, largely because of the city's policy to fully staff stations around-the-clock. More than 1,000 fire employees each made more than \$50,000 in overtime in the 12-month period the Daily News reviewed.

LAPD overtime totaled \$118 million through April, with about \$38 million reimbursed through grants and from Los Angeles World Airports. Nearly 250 officers made more than \$50,000 each in overtime, the Daily News reported.



Pastor Dudley - Shepherd of the Hills

What Kind Of Heart Do You Have?

By Pastor Dudley C. Rutherford

Did you know that one-third of the gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke are parables? Oftentimes Jesus used parables when He spoke, giving illustrations from everyday life to help them relate to the deep, spiritual concept He wanted them to hear and understand. He even had a parable about hearing and understanding! In the Parable of the Sower found in Luke 8, Jesus compared His words to sowing seeds. Just as a farmer casts seeds that land on one of four different types of soil, whenever the gospel of Jesus Christ is spoken, it falls on one of four kinds of hearts. The soil is symbolic of the heart of man. What kind of heart do you have?

Jesus explains to His curious and captivated disciples in Luke 8:11 that the first type of soil upon which the seed falls is a hardened path. Seeds that fall on this soil are trampled on, and then eaten by birds. This soil represents an impervious heart. For people who refuse to hear anything related to Jesus and have rejected Him so many times, a wall is built in their hearts that prevents them from receiving the truth. They refuse to listen to or accept His offer of love and salvation, and His call for repentance and a changed life. Like the seeds eaten by the birds, God's Word is removed from the hearts of those who refuse to listen.

Furthermore, some of the seeds fall on rocky soil and eventually wither from lack of moisture. Germination takes place with these seeds, but because they lack deep roots, they do not survive. This soil represents those hearts that receive God's word with joy initially, but lack a firm foundation of faith and turn away from the truth as soon as the first trial or testing takes place.

The owners of this kind of heart may be offended, discouraged, pressured, disheartened, or otherwise disappointed, and subsequently give up on the Christian life Jesus called them to live. The reality is, Christians are called to give up everything—pride, selfishness, self sufficiency—and to put our complete trust in Christ alone. Without deep roots or a firm foundation of faith in God's word, the Bible, we are unable to endure this sacrifice.

“Like a boa constrictor, our schedule book, checkbook, and pocketbook crush any life that our faith would produce. Our cravings for wealth and other of life's pleasures choke out any ability to grow as a believer in Christ. We simply become too busy.”

Still other seeds fall among weeds and thorns, which choke the plants the seeds produce. This type of soil symbolizes the crowded heart. Jesus explains plainly that the possessors of this kind of heart hear the truth of the gospel, “but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature” (Luke 8:14). There are infinite demands made upon us from all facets of our life including friends, family, work, finances and other commitments. Like a boa constrictor, our schedule book, checkbook, and pocketbook crush any life that our faith would produce. Our cravings for wealth and other of life's pleasures choke out any ability to grow as a believer in Christ. We simply become too busy.

Lastly, there were some seeds that fell on good soil, “and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown” (Luke 8:9). This soil



represents the receptive heart. As Jesus explains, “the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15). This parable assumes trials and challenges. However, the seed in this soil requires perseverance in order to bear fruit. The proof of good soil is, when the pressure mounts—you are criticized, you lose your job, your car breaks down, you can't make a house payment, your loved one dies—the fruit of your Christian faith remains. Are you firmly rooted in the promise that in “all things, God works for the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28)? That's when you know when your heart is right with God.

It is my hope that you would not only hear but also receive what God has in store for you! Please join us as we continue to study the meaning of Jesus' parables in the coming weeks. Next month, we will begin a series on the “Passion of Jesus” and His interactions with a doubting man, an adulterous woman, two thieves, and more. Hope to see you in church!

Pastor Dudley C. Rutherford is the Senior Pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch.

Edited by Rhona Cue



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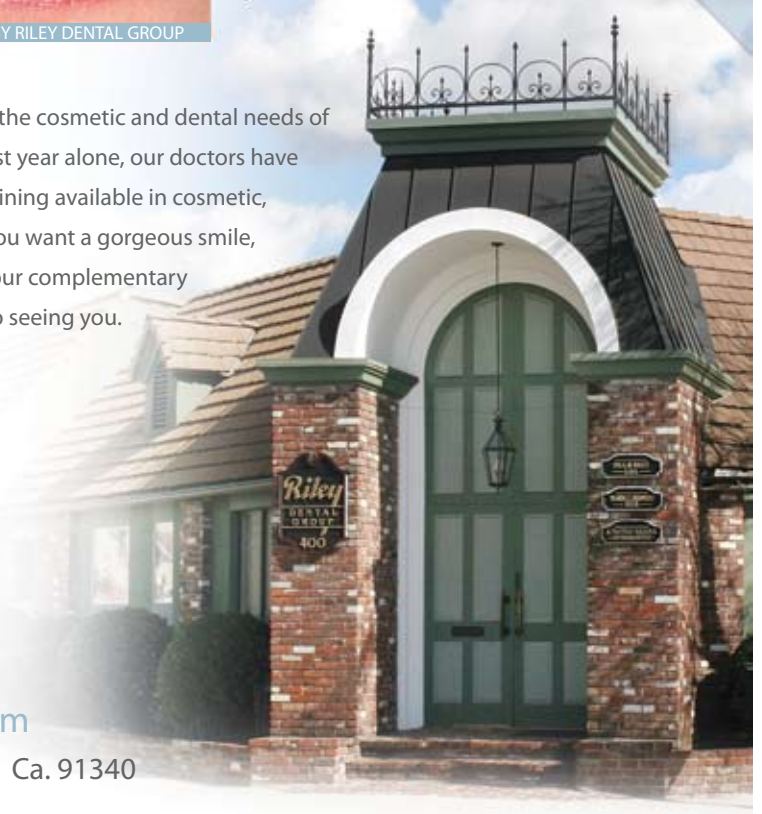
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Home Rescue Bill Boost to Valley

A bill approved by Congress would help protect San Fernando Valley homeowners facing foreclosure, according to a local lawmaker who voted for the measure.

The proposed American Housing Rescue and Foreclosure Act of 2008 would guarantee up to \$300 billion in new mortgages to refinance borrowers facing foreclosure, said Rep. Brad Sherman, D-Sherman Oaks.

The bill would also maintain the temporarily increased limits for loans from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and for insurance from the Federal Housing Administration, he said.

Loan limits increased to almost \$730,000 under the Economic Stimulus Act are scheduled to drop to almost half that when the limits expire next year, Sherman said.

“Allowing the temporary 2008 loan limits to expire would be a catastrophe for the Valley,” Sherman said. “It would significantly reduce the number of San Fernando Valley homeowners with access to lower-cost financing that comes from having their loans purchased by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.”

“It also would return the FHA to irrelevance for most prospective San Fernando Valley homebuyers and homeowners,” he added.

The House also passed The Neighborhood Stabilization Act of 2008, which would make \$15 billion available to states to buy vacant and foreclosed homes.

The measures must be approved by the president before becoming law.

Mansionization

The proliferation of oversized homes on small lots will come to an end in some parts of Los Angeles.

Under the so-called “Mansionization Ordinance” - which would not apply in the hills or coastal areas - the maximum square footage of a single-family house would be half the size of the lot.

Owners of houses meeting certain criteria, such as larger setbacks and properties that are certified as being environmentally friendly, would be allowed an additional 20 percent square footage allowance.

“Los Angeles is a city of great neighborhoods. In order for it to continue as a city of great neighborhoods, we must protect the neighborhoods from oversized buildings that destroy the character of a neighborhood,” said City Councilman Tom LaBonge, who proposed the ordinance two years ago.

“I don't think everybody is happy, but at least we're not going to see odd-looking buildings,” he added.



SoCal Home Sales Showing “Bounce”

In what could be a sign of hope in the midst of a long housing slump, Southern California home sales surged in April to their highest level since August, a real estate information service reported.

Home sales in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Diego, Ventura and San Bernardino counties rose 21.9 percent between March and April, according to La Jolla-based DataQuick Information Systems.

A total of 15,615 new and resale homes and condos sold in the region in April, up from 12,808 in March -- but down from 19,269 in April 2007, DataQuick reported.

Since 1988, the average increase in home sales between March and April has been 1.2 percent, according to DataQuick, which attributed this year's surge to buyers taking advantage of discount prices.


“Quite a few more buyers stepped off the sidelines in April to snap up homes at substantial discounts relative to the market's short-lived peak,” said Marshall Prentice, DataQuick president. “It's no surprise, given the magnitude of the price declines in inland areas and the fact sales have been so amazingly low for so long.”

“We continue to look for evidence of a sales bounce in the mid-priced and higher-end markets along the coast,” he said. “If the higher conforming loan limits are making a difference in those areas it's certainly not a large one, at least not as of the end of April.”

DataQuick officials noted that despite the month-over-month surge, last month's sales total was still the weakest for the month since 1995, when 15,303 homes sold. The sales total was 38 percent below the April average of 25,311.

In Los Angeles County, 5,016 homes were sold in April, down 30.6 percent from 7,225 in April 2007. The median price of a Los Angeles County home was \$435,000, down 19.4 percent from \$540,000 in April 2007.

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Valley Affected DWP Unveils New Water Plan

A plan to meet the long-term water needs of Los Angeles, which is expected to use 15 percent more water by 2030, has been unveiled by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the Department of Water and Power.

The initiative is an effort by the city to pursue more aggressive conservation efforts and an extensive water recycling program. The plan is expected to cost more than \$1 billion over the next 20 years.

The first part of the plan calls for tighter controls on Angelenos' water usage. The city's Emergency Water Conservation Plan Ordinance already limits the watering of lawns between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. from April 1 to Sept. 30. The law also prohibits restaurants from serving water to customers unless requested.

The mayor's office plans to pursue new restrictions that could limit outdoor water use on particular days.

The Department of Water and Power will begin a \$2.3 million conservation education campaign. The utility will also offer instant rebates for water-efficient washing machines, water-saving faucets and shower heads and waterless urinals.

The second part of the city's plan calls for a six-fold increase in the DWP's recycled water use. Officials plan to increase the city's system of using recycled water for irrigation and industrial uses.

To do so, the DWP will need to upgrade the Tillman Waterwaste Treatment Plant in Van Nuys and upgrade the Hansen, Tujunga and Pacoima "spreading grounds," where treated water is able to blend with existing groundwater.

A third part of the program calls for the collection of rainfall in the Big Tujunga Dam. By 2010, the DWP plans to have completed seismic retrofitting, clean up and water expansion of the dam to quadruple its capacity.

The mayor's office estimates it will cost \$1 billion for the water recycling program and infrastructure improvements and another \$500 million to implement the rest of the plan.

That funding will come from existing state and federal grants and the DWP's budget. Water and power rates will not be increased to pay for the improvements, according to the mayor's office.

It will cost an additional \$500 million to \$1 billion to clean up the San Fernando Groundwater Basin, but that project could be funded through litigation against "polluters." The mayor's office declined to identify who or what companies pollute the basin, but said it will likely be up to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to go after them.

DWP Approves Tiered Water Rates For Valley Imminent

A plan to charge Angelenos different rates for energy use depending on where they live was unanimously approved by the Board of Water and Power Commissioners.

The panel's approval of the tiered electric rate plan comes two months after the Los Angeles City Council agreed to increase water and electricity rates proposed by the Department of Water and Power.

"We're not doing this in order to increase revenue, not at all. We're doing this in order to decrease energy. We're doing this in order to intensify conservation," said DWP General Manager David Nahai.

Under the proposal, which must be approved by the Los Angeles City Council, the city would be divided into two zones. Residents in warmer parts of the city, such as the San Fernando Valley, South Los Angeles and east of downtown, could use more energy before they have to pay more for their power use.

Cooler areas, like the Westside, Hollywood and San Pedro, would have a lower threshold.

Each zone also has three tiers. The system would only apply during the summer months, June through September.

In the warmer zone, residents would have to pay a higher rate for the energy they use that exceeds 500 kilowatt hours per month. A third rate would apply to energy use greater than 1,500 kilowatts a month.

Residents in the cooler zone could use up to 350 kilowatts a month before they reach the second zone. Use that exceeds 1,050 kilowatts a month would end up in the third tier.

"This rate restructuring plan demonstrates LADWP's environmental leadership by rewarding energy conservation and discouraging energy wasting," said Nick Patsouras, president of the commission.

"By designing fair and equitable rates with strong economic price signals, LADWP is encouraging customers to shift to off-peak, lower cost periods and reduce their use during peak periods when demand and cost is highest."

If the proposal is approved by the council and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the tiered pricing would go into effect July 1.

The DWP's base power rates will increase by 9 percent and water rates by 6.2 percent by July 1, 2009.

"Water, Water Everywhere?..."

Record dry weather, a shrinking snowpack and below-normal reservoir levels leave the Southland and the rest of the state confronting a "worrisome water picture," the head of the Department of Water and Power said.

The comment echoed remarks by state officials who said in California's final Sierra snowpack report of the snow season, that California communities face a strong possibility of water shortages and even mandatory rationing this summer because current conditions.

The bleak news means a second consecutive year of water anxieties in a state heavily dependent on water from the melting snow in the Sierra Nevada, the Los Angeles Times reported.

After a record-dry 2006-07 snow year, water managers had hoped this year would bring ample snow and rainfall to fill reservoirs and ease worries about water shortages, The Times reported. Those concerns have been exacerbated by a long drought in the Colorado River Basin and a federal court ruling curbing water deliveries from Northern California.

Los Angeles traditionally has gotten 30 percent to 60 percent of its water from the Eastern Sierra via the Los Angeles Aqueduct, but it still buys water imported from the north and east.

"I think we're all facing a worrisome water picture," H. David Nahai, general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, told The Times.

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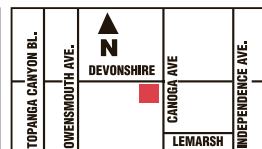
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LOCAL Events



Salute to Recreation

The 26th Annual Salute to Recreation will be held on May 30, 31 and June 1 at Northridge Park, 10058 Reseda Boulevard, Northridge.

Salute to Recreation, presented by the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, features plenty of activities for the whole family, including a children's area, a petting zoo, carnival rides, games, food booths, an International Village, a Hawaiian Village, an arts and crafts boutique, Teen Night, and entertainment on four stages.

Admission is free. For more information, please call (818) 756-8060 (Prior to the Event) or (818) 349-0535 (Day of Event).

2008 Depot Art Show

Chatsworth's Annual 2008 Depot Art Show, presented by the Chatsworth Fine Arts Council, will be on *June 1*, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Chatsworth Metrolink Depot,

10040 Old Depot Plaza Road - between Devonshire & Lassen, West of Canoga.

The event features an interesting variety of original art works by Valley artists, exhibited outdoors on the patio and walkways surrounding the charming Chatsworth Depot. In addition, there will be an equestrian themed bonus exhibit and art competition, a silent auction fundraiser, a free children's art project booth, and a People's Choice favorite artist award.

Free admission and free parking. For more information, please call (818) 772-1639.

Wet Paint

The Art Museum Council of LACMA Presents "Wet Paint" on Sunday, June 1, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Roxbury Park, Beverly Hills (grassy area near the Recreation Center).

Meet some of southern California's best artists as they create works of art in acrylic, oil, ink, pastel, and water color. Local Valley resident artists participating are Gisela Colon, Danny Heller, John Kilduff, Trice Tolle and Daniel Stein.

Admission is free. Bring a picnic.

For more information, please call 310-487-6288.

Clean-up Day

The Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for their 25th Annual Clean-Up Day and Go Green!

Community Festival on Saturday, *June 7*, beginning at 8:00 (Clean up from 8:30 to 12:30). Each year, the Chamber along with 300 members of Valley community groups, local businesses, and residents to help clean and beautify the San Fernando Valley.

There will also be an E-Waste (electronic waste) & Household Hazardous Waste collection from 9am to 4pm that Saturday. Bring all monitors, televisions, VCRs, radios, printers, computers, motor oil, batteries, and other toxic materials that can not be disposed of in the regular trash.

Come join the Chamber on June 7th, and make the Valley a more beautiful place to live, eat, shop and play. Call the Chamber at (818) 989-0300 or visit www.sanfernandovalleychamber.com for more details.

Free Concert

The public is invited to a free "Opera Concert," featuring members of the Los Angeles Opera Company, Tuesday, *June 10*, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The concert will be at the Porter Ranch Library, 11371 Tampa Avenue.

Reservations are suggested.

Movies Under the Stars

Councilman Smith's series of free movie screenings in Northwest Valley parks begins Saturday, *June 14*, with Shrek 3 at Holleigh Bernson Park in Porter Ranch. Come for a night of family fun under the stars, with free popcorn.

Movies Under the Stars features a different family-friendly film screened at a different park in the Northwest Valley once a month during June, July, August and September.

Bring picnics, blankets and chairs. Because this is a family event, alcohol, BBQs and pets are not allowed.

Shrek 3
Saturday, June 14
8:00 pm
Holleigh Bernson park

March of the Penguins
Saturday, August 9
8:00 pm
Balboa Sports Center

Back to the Future
Saturday, July 12
8:00 pm
Northridge Park

Grease
Saturday, Sept. 6
7:15 pm
Northridge Park

For more information, please call Councilman Smith's office at (818) 756-8501 or email MeganCottier@lacity.org.

Free CPR Class

The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council is sponsoring an adult, child, and infant CPR class on Saturday, *June 14*, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rockpointe Club House, 22300 Devonshire St., Chatsworth. This CPR class is free to any Chatsworth Neighborhood Council Stakeholder. You are a stakeholder if you live, work, own property, or board a horse in Chatsworth. All others are welcome for a \$25 fee.

Space is limited. To register call Clara Woll at (818) 464-3511 and leave your name and either a phone number or an e-mail address.

Optimist Dads' Day Dash

De-"FEET"-ing childhood cancer one foot at a time is what the Optimist Dads' Day Dash is all about.

This year's Dash will run on Saturday, *June 14* in Woodland Hills. It begins at Warner Center Park, 21820 Califa Ave. (5800 Topanga Canyon Blvd.). It benefits the UCLA Mattel's Children's Hospital Cancer Program and the Kids Cancer Connection.

The race features 5k, 10k and 1k Kiddie runs, computer chip timing, a measured course which meets USTAF standards, goodie bags, raffles, celebrities, and more. Also, each participant receives a commemorative t-shirt with an American flag over the heart.

Registration can be made at www.w2promo.com.

For more information, contact Ed Young, Optimist Project Chair at (818) 704-1501 or by email at ed19357@yahoo.com.

"Rigoletto" June 21-22

Center Stage Opera proudly presents Verdi's beloved opera, Rigoletto, Saturday, June 21, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, June 22, at 3 p.m., at the Madrid Theatre, 21622 Sherman Way in Canoga Park.

Based on a play by Victor Hugo, Rigoletto is one of Verdi's best known operas. The plot revolves around the libertine Duke of Mantua's jaded jester, Rigoletto, known for sparing no one his biting and often vicious sarcasm. But when courtiers abduct Rigoletto's beloved daughter, Gilda, a curse and misdirected revenge bring tragedy and are Rigoletto's undoing.

Tickets are \$35, \$30 and \$23, with a \$5 discount on all ticket categories for seniors 65 and older and students with student ID. Tickets are available online at www.madridtheatre.org, by phone at 818-347-9938, and at the door.

For more information, visit the Center Stage Opera website at www.centerstageopera.org, or call (818) 517-4102.

Taize Service

A Taize Service will be held at Northridge United Methodist Church on Sunday, June 22 at 6.30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Childcare is provided.

NUMC is located at 9650 Reseda Blvd. at Superior in Northridge.

For more information, call: 818-886-1555

NUMC Summer Camp

This summer, Northridge United Methodist Church will take on another Imagination Vacation where children will explore and appreciate the peoples and cultures of the world through the stories and legends they tell.

Conveniently located between the Simi and San Fernando valleys, "The Villa" is nestled in the rustic chaparral of the Santa Susana Mountains and offers students a unique experience in learning.



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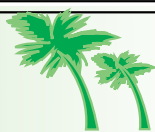


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LOCAL *Events*



NUMC Imagination Vacation meets Tuesday through Thursday, *July 1-31*, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$30.00 per day, \$15.00 for siblings. Ages Kindergarten through 6th grade. Bring a sack lunch.

For more information, phone Denise Woerner (818) 881-9322.

Summer Study Abroad Programs

AFS-USA is currently wrapping up their sending season, where they offer American high school students the opportunity to apply for programs to study abroad.

If you're in high school or about to graduate, there's still time to apply for a summer study abroad program or 'gap year' experience. Financial aid is still available.

Please call 1-800-AFS-INFO or visit www.afs.org/usa to learn more.

4th of July Spectacular

On Friday, July 4, Shepherd of the Hills Church will host its annual "4th of July Spectacular."

More than 60,000 people will enjoy festivities including: a spectacular fireworks show, entertainment for the kids, indoor musical show, favorite local food vendors, popular carnival treats.

This event is free to the community (excluding food purchases). Gates open at 4 p.m. (Subject to change). No alcohol, smoking, personal fireworks or animals allowed at this event.

The church is located at 19700 Rinaldi Street, Porter Ranch. For more information, please call 818-831-9333.

PALS Golf Invitational

For the twenty-ninth consecutive year, the LAPD and PALS will hold a Golf Invitational to raise funds for a local youth center to serve at-risk kids in the Devonshire/Northridge area of the San Fernando Valley. The Invitational will be held at the Porter Valley Country Club on Monday, *July 14*, 2008 at 10 a.m.

The full day of festivities will feature a putting contest, 36 foursomes in a scratch golf competition, lunch, dinner and raffle with prizes ranging from high-end electronics to entry passes (valued at \$250 each) to the much anticipated 3rd annual Monte Carlo Poker Tournament benefiting PALS, and hosted by Nancy Cartwright, the voice of Bart Simpson and the honorary Mayor of Northridge, as well as poker pro Jamie Gold.

For further information, visit www.devonshire-pals.org, call 818.349.1706 or email Sally Barnes at sallyab@sbcglobal.net.

Chamber Plans Fall China Trip

The Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber will hold another tour of China from *October 21-29, 2008*. This experience is available to ALL Chamber Members, their friends and family for the special price of \$1,599.00 per person.

The 9-Day trip includes bus transportation from Van Nuys to LAX, round trip international airfare, 4 or 5 star hotel stays, three meals each day, deluxe bus tours, English speaking tour guides, admission to all major tourist spots.

For questions regarding Destination: China please call the Greater San Fernando Valley Chamber at (818) 989-0300.

New Laws on Use of Cell Phones While Driving Starting July 1

Please mark your calendar - starting July 1, two new traffic safety laws go into effect in California regulating the use of cell phones while driving, according to Councilman Greig Smith.

The first law prohibits the use of handheld cell phones while driving. Drivers under 18 years old may not use ANY cell phone behind the wheel. Emergency calls are exempt. The laws do not apply to passengers, only those driving the car.

For more information, visit our website at www.CD12.org

Granada Hills Gets New High School

The LAUSD Board voted unanimously to proceed with a development agreement for the construction of a new Granada Hills high school which will create 1,215 seats in 45 new classrooms on a 9.5 acres, according to Board Member Tamar Galatzan.

This is the first board action for the building of a new school in Board District 3 since Tamar was elected last July.

The campus, located at 10445 Balboa Blvd., will consist of three small learning centers, and facilities for performing arts classrooms, a multi-purpose room, gymnasium, and playgrounds. The project will provide relief for overcrowding at Granada Hills, Kennedy, Monroe, and Northridge Academy High Schools.

The school is expected to open for classes in Fall 2011.

Teen Births

The teen birth rate in the Los Angeles area was among the highest in the state, costing the county more than \$29 million per year, according to a study released by the nonprofit Public Health Institute.

After 15 years in decline, teen birth rates in California are rising, costing taxpayers about \$1.7 billion per year, the study found.

At 37.8 births per 1,000 teens, California's birth rate is lower than the nation's as a whole, but four times higher than the median of 9.2 births per 1,000 in 16 other Western democracies, according to the study, entitled "No Time for Complacency: Teen Births in California."

Every two years, the nonprofit PHI counts teen birth rates in the state's 40 Senate districts.

Blankets of Love Keep Pets Warm

During our seasons of unpredictable weather, LA Animal Care Centers are always in need of comfy blankets to help keep animals warm. Thanks to LA Animal Services' volunteer Eileen Smulson, The 2008 Operation Blankets of Love Drive is now a reality. The group has collected over 7,500 items to

date.

LA residents are encouraged to drop off their old (or new) blankets and towels to comfort our community's best, but homeless, friends. For locations to drop off blankets, give Eileen a call at 818-402-6586, or e-mail her at eicreate@aol.com.

Guard-A-Kid

Hoping to draw awareness to and promote child safety, local mother Nicole Whiteside has opened a San Fernando Valley franchise of Guard-A-Kid Child ID Systems. Guard-A-Kid is the nation's most highly recognized Child Identification and Child Safety Program which offers a complete child identification program.

For more information about the Guard-A-Kid Child Safety program and products, visit the web at: www.guardakid.com/nwhiteside.html. To hold a Child Safety Event at your School, Day Care or business, please email: nwhiteside@guardakid.com or call 818-644-7643.

Valley Hearing Aid

Hearing Aid Specialists, Inc. celebrated 46 years of Service in the SFV and Better Hearing and Speech Month. Joel Lipin and his brother Gene Lipin operate Hearing Aid Specialists, Inc., a family owned and operated business in Northridge and Burbank started by their father Martin Lipin in 1962.

Hearing Aid Specialists, Inc., Northridge: 818.701.5484, Burbank 818.848.5484

Local Writer "Spills The Beans"

David M. Matthews, longtime Porter Ranch resident, has written a frank, eye-opening, warts-and-all exposé about himself and all his male brethren. Entitled "Every Man Sees You Naked: An Insider's Guide to How Men Think," Matthews' book takes the reader on an amusing yet highly informative journey through the seamy underbelly of the male mind.

Copies of "Every Man Sees You Naked" are available at local bookstores and online booksellers. For more information, visit www.everymanseesyounaked.com.

Sigma Chi Tops Records

Sigma Chi Fraternity of California State University Northridge (CSUN), announced they have exceeded all goals in raising funds for Children's Miracle Network (CMN), during Derby Days, their biggest philanthropic event, which occurs every 18 months. The week long event netted more than \$13,000, to be given to Los Angeles Children's Hospital for distribution to Children's Miracle Network.

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Letters to the Editor

Please keep them brief and include your name, address and daytime phone. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Guest Articles & Opinions

These should run between 300 and 500 words on topics of interest to our northwest Valley readers.

The Valley Voice is published every last Wednesday of the month.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month.

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For 2008-09

Student Fees Rising 8-10%

As expected, the California State University Board of Trustees approved a 10 percent hike in student fees, with officials saying the increase is necessary in the face of state budget cuts.

The decision means student fees will increase by \$276 for the 2008-09 academic year, bringing total tuition to \$3,048 per year. Students also pay an average of \$749 in campus fees.

“Although the state has not yet adopted next year's budget, the CSU is increasing fees now in order to provide students enrolled for the fall a reasonable amount of time to plan their finances,” said CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed.

“In addition, it is critical for the university to set fees in order to put together student financial aid packages, and to meet federal and state financial aid deadlines.”

Fees for teacher-credential students will increase by \$324 and graduate student fees will increase by \$342.

The tuition hike came in response to an anticipated \$386 million cut in state funding as a result of the state's budget crisis. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger released a revised mid-year budget May 14 that lowered that cut to \$288 million, but CSU officials said the university system is still hurting financially.

The student fee hike is expected to generate \$110 million.

According to CSU officials, one-third of the revenue will be used to cover the fee increase for low-income students.

A University of California Board of Regents committee also meeting May 14 approved a 7.4 percent fee hike, which would raise UC tuition by \$490. With the increase, tuition would be \$7,126 a year. UC students also pay campus fees that average \$881.

Student Abuse

Schools Superintendent David L. Brewer's is coming under criticism from prosecutors for sending two high school administrators back to work after they were criminally charged with failing to report a student's sexual abuse claims.

David Demerjian, head of the Los Angeles district attorney's Public Integrity Division, told the Los Angeles Times that it's “very unusual” for public officials accused of a crime to be allowed to return to their jobs - particularly when they deal with children.

“We prosecute a lot of public employees, and they are usually placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the trial,” he said.

Jesus Angulo, principal of South East High School in South Gate, and Maria Sotomayor, an assistant principal, were charged May 1 with failing to report child abuse allegations by a girl who said substitute teacher Jesus Salvador Saenz had sex with her.

As district employees, they are mandated by state law and district policy to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse.

Brewer defended the decision to return Angulo and Sotomayor to work. He told The Times they were needed back on campus to avoid disruptions - particularly with state academic testing this week and graduation scheduled in the next few weeks.

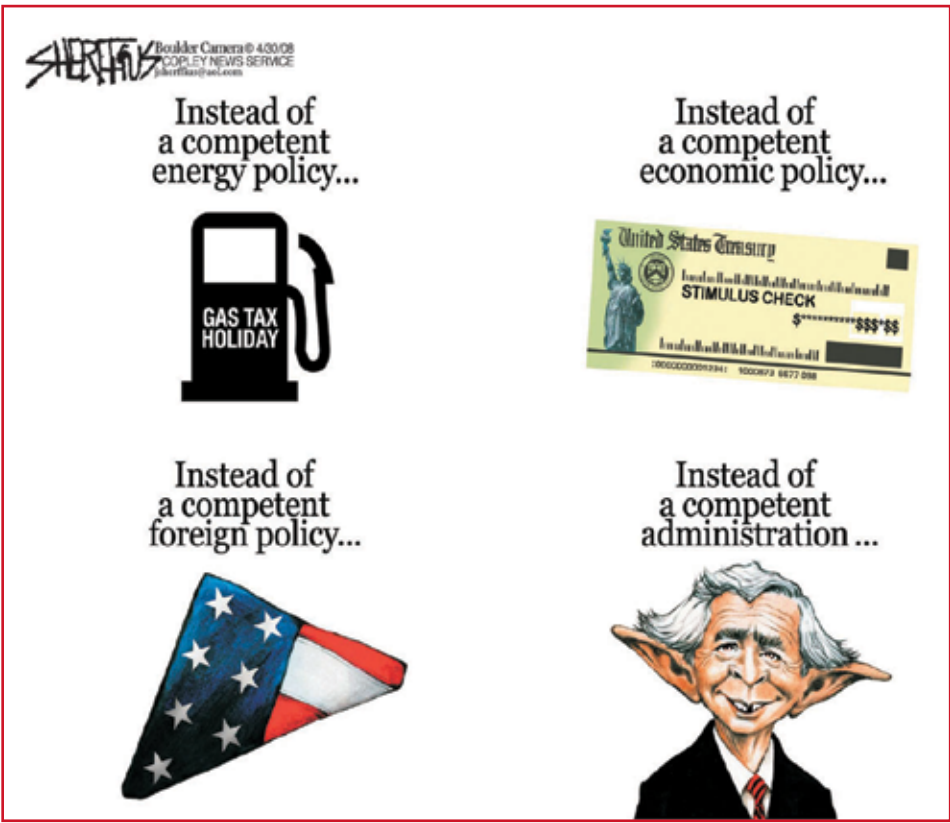
Brewer also told The Times he suspended the officials for three days without pay - and that they would be subject to additional discipline if convicted.

Coalition Reacts To School Cuts

On May 14, the L.A. Budget Coalition, a coalition of unions, community organizations, and advocacy groups stood together at Wadsworth Elementary School, in response to Governor Schwarzenegger's announcement of the state's May budget revise.

The L.A. Budget Coalition is encouraging workers and community members to say “NO” to draconian state budget cuts to education and other social services. The group is instead proposing solutions that invest in the lives of all children and working families. Solutions the coalition is recommending include modernizing property tax laws for commercial property, an oil production / severance tax, and closing tax loopholes like the one the allows yacht and aircraft owners to avoid paying taxes.

“Children and their families should not pay the price for the state's financial troubles,” said Nancy Berlin, a spokesperson for the coalition. “We shall see if the Governor is finally getting that message.”



84% at or Above

UCLA Freshmen – 4.0 Average

UCLA's incoming freshman class is more diverse with a higher percentage of 4.0 grade point averages than in the past, and many are the first in their family to go to college.

A record 4,889 students have notified UCLA of their plans to enroll this fall, according to a university assessment.

“UCLA's 2008 freshman class exhibits the highest academic standards and leadership qualities while also displaying a wide range of diversity,” Chancellor Gene D. Block said. “All the students who plan to be with us next fall are in the fine tradition of the campus in terms of intellectual potential and service to their communities and the world.”

The percentage of students from under-represented groups applying to UCLA declined dramatically in the years after the 1996 passage of Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action programs at state universities.

But the statistics released show the percentage of African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos who said they plan to attend UCLA this fall rose to 21.7 percent, up from 19.5 percent in 2007.

In addition, 84 percent of planned freshmen have grade point averages of 4.0 or above. Traditionally, the percentage of students admitted to UCLA with 4.0 or above averages has ranged from 72 to 79 percent, officials said.

UCLA has about 37,000 graduate and undergraduate students and is the largest university in California.

(Continued from page 1)

Performing Arts Center

Administrators are trying to keep the weight of the payments off of the students.

CSUN received \$63.1 million for the project, funded by state capital for building construction and equipment. Other government agencies have given \$7.7 million to the development. The City and County of Los Angeles has given \$2.5 million for developmental purposes. CSUN hopes to get the rest of the cost donated through private donations.

"It is opening the doors for us to people who really had not known anything about CSUN, who can be substantial supporters of this university across the board for all of our programs," said Gailya Brown, director of the Valley Performing Arts Center fundraising campaign.

CSUN celebrated the beginning of construction on April 30 with a ground breaking ceremony, where about 500 guests were present. Director/actor Garry Marshall served as master of ceremonies for the evening.

"The first curtain will rise in just two years and provide to the community a new level of entertainment and cultural programming that previously was difficult for students and residents to enjoy locally," said Jolene Koester, president of CSUN. "Best of all, our outstanding students and faculty will benefit from the stages...that will be located in what will be the largest venue of its kind in the Valley."

The Performing Arts Center's proposed completion date is spring 2010.

(Continued from page 1)

Providence Holy Cross

where he stayed several weeks until he was well enough to go home. The 70-mile round trip took a toll on the family who Suarez said was relieved other families wouldn't suffer the same stress once construction at Providence Holy Cross is complete in 2010.

Mitch Englander, chief of staff for Councilman Greig Smith and a member of the board of the Providence Holy Cross Foundation spoke of how hospital overcrowding at another facility cost his sister her life. An asthma sufferer, the woman went to a Northern California hospital that locked its doors because it was beyond capacity. Untreated, she collapsed and later died.

The \$180 million Patient Care Wing, scheduled to open in 2010, will expand Holy Cross to 355 beds – with a capacity to add 35 more – making it one of the largest hospitals in the San Fernando Valley. The 186,000-square-foot building will include a 12-bed neonatal intensive-care unit for premature and high-risk babies, as well as a new Women's Pavilion with state-of-the-art labor and delivery suites.

“While other hospitals in our area have closed, Providence Holy Cross Medical Center continues to expand to meet the skyrocketing health care demands in the growing San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys,” Carmody said.

The new addition will create 250 full-time hospital jobs and 171 construction jobs.

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"Too many people miss the silver lining because they are expecting gold." — Maurice Setter



Dear Teacher

A Listening Ear; A Listening Heart

By Sandy Ojeda, Valley Voice Education Editor

Editor's Note:

"Dear Teacher" is finally a way for students, parents, and teachers to express their concerns, ask questions, and seek problem resolution regarding issues facing us in the educational arena.

E-mail or snail mail "Dear Teacher" and all correspondence will be answered. Some will actually be published in this newspaper.



"Dear Teacher is looking forward to hearing from you.

dearteacher@verizon.net or

Dear Teacher - P.O. Box 7011 - Mission Hills, CA 91346-7011

Dear Teacher,

What is a GATE program? TMO, mother of a 1st Grader

Dear TMO,

Great question! With all the acronyms and terms floating around, you're not the only one confused. GATE literally means Gifted and Talented Education. Students are identified as gifted and/or talented and are then placed in a GATE program designed to challenge them and provide them with unique educational opportunities. Check with your school if you are interested in this for your child.

Dear Teacher,

I'm an 8th grader, and I wanted to go to a certain High School out of my living area. I applied, but when they had their drawing, my name wasn't drawn. It's unfair. RMC, 8th Grade

Dear RMC,

It might seem unfair, but the system is set up to allow students to attend their neighborhood school. If you wish to attend a school outside of your area, the 'open enrollment' policy allows those schools to accept applications. Many years ago, that didn't exist, so this is actually a good thing. Anyway, those schools feel that the only fair way is to draw names like a raffle. Just remember, no matter where you go to school, the experience is what you make of it.

Worthwhile Web - www.familyeducation.com

1% Sales Tax Hike?

Arnold Revises Budget, Schools Still Shortened

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's revised budget is a step forward for schools, state and local education officials said, but they insisted it will still mean billions of dollars in lost funding and possible layoffs.

Education, which was facing \$4.8 billion in cuts in Schwarzenegger's January budget proposal, got somewhat of a reprieve in the revised budget proposal released, with \$1.8 billion in state general funds diverted to meet the minimum state funding under Proposition 98.

"I am very happy to say that the budget I am releasing fully funds Proposition 98, at \$56.8 billion, which allows us to raise per-pupil spending for the fifth year in a row," Schwarzenegger said.

But that's still not good enough, according to state Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell and Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent David Brewer, who said the revised budget would still negatively impact schools.

"The state revised budget is clearly better than the budget in January that the governor initially put forward, but let's be clear: Many of these programs are still facing a 10 percent cut," O'Connell said.

Schwarzenegger's budget proposal includes cuts on health care and programs for the disabled and welfare recipients, and it diverts funds from gas taxes. The governor also proposed borrowing money against future state lottery revenues to help plug a \$17.2 billion budget shortfall. That proposal requires voter approval, and under his plan, if voters reject the idea, a 1-cent sales tax hike would go into effect.

Instead, O'Connell recommended raising taxes as a method of making up the shortfall, something Schwarzenegger has shied away from.

Brewer said the budget proposal "does not fully fund education. It does not even bring us back to ground zero."

LAUSD officials had originally predicted \$460 million in lost revenues after the January proposal was released.

(Continued from page 2)

Reiter-Wrong?

This "give-away," is the courtesy of City Hall.

In revisiting the Rev. Jeremiah Wright story, we have been impressed that more than half of black preachers, like Barack Obama, have stepped away from the minister, and his anti-American outbursts.

Now that Sen. John McCain has also disassociated himself from a popular minister, most of us will agree on two points: What we think of the candidates should be taken from their own words – not of ministers or others.

However, whether a candidate is "carrying" a president, or a minister, on their backs, it could prove too heavy a load in the political "field of battle."

On my first trip to Israel, my tour guide and a former military officer, explained to me (jokingly) how that little nation bested so many larger armies. "I put all the lawyers in front of the troops, and yelled "Charge."

To me more serious however, I have recently learned that attorneys in California are NOT required to carry malpractice insurance. We are required to have auto insurance, and for most, fire insurance. Most carry life and health insurance, protection on valuables (jewelry), earthquake and flood insurance, and even more.

I was shocked when learning this from the State Bar and also the Los Angeles County Bar Association. While most large firms almost always carry the insurance, many smaller or single-member lawyers do not. The groups would not reveal the percentage of those California members that do.

How then would an innocent client be protected from any negligence of his legal representative? Little chance, I learned, as most lawyers have their own assets tied up in very legal family trusts –places where you, and me, the clients, cannot reach.

In securing the services of an attorney, ask the five magic words: "Do you carry malpractice insurance?"

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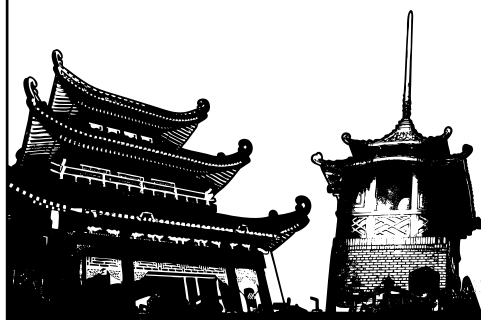
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"Sierra Canyon School's Production of Twelfth Night"

Beneath a full moon suspended above the Upper Campus of Sierra Canyon School's new 7th – 12th grade Science and Humanities Classroom Building, audience members delighted in a memorable production of William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Prior to a 7:30 p.m. curtain, guests dined *al fresco* on the grassy knolls of the School's outdoor amphitheatre. Truly an evening that celebrated the Shakespearian tradition of theater in the round, Sierra Canyon's production of *Twelfth Night* featured a Victorian boardwalk amidst a lively carnival atmosphere.

Under the direction of Christopher Tulysewski, Performing Arts and English Instructor at Sierra Canyon, *Twelfth Night* included 19 outstanding Upper School student actors, several gifted musicians, a talented crew of student costume and set-designers, and well-versed sound and light technicians. Students and audience members alike reveled in two sold-out evening performances of "madness, mistaken identities, and mayhem."

"The performing arts have long been celebrated as an integral aspect of learning at Sierra Canyon School," stated Jim Skrumbis, Sierra Canyon's Head of School. Now in its 30th year, Sierra Canyon is an independent, academically excellent, college preparatory school committed to an empowering environment in which students realize their greatest intellectual, creative, ethical, and athletic promise. The School is defined by an energized, attentive, and diverse student-teacher culture. Hallmarks of a Sierra Canyon education include small class size, individualized attention, integrated curriculum, and experienced teachers.

In the fall of 2005, Sierra Canyon School expanded its Early Kindergarten through 8th grade program to include an Upper School. Plans for a 7th through 12th grade Upper Campus were implemented, and last month Upper School students moved into their new, permanent home, located to the west of the School's renowned Lower Campus. The 16-acre Lower School campus is the thriving educational home to 700 students in Early Kindergarten through 6th grades. The educational experience in the Lower Campus program places strong emphasis on the development of basic skills within small instructional groups, recognizing each child as an individual. Within this atmosphere, students mature and develop to their highest level of personal growth and academic achievement.

The principles of Sierra Canyon's 7th through 12th grade academic program are evident throughout the new Upper Campus, a place where students are able to pursue in-depth knowledge, artistic and creative expression, and athletic skill. With panoramic views of the Valley, the architecturally dynamic Science and Humanities Classroom Building comprises 24 spacious classrooms, state-of-the-art science facilities with prep rooms and "wet lab" resources; a Library and Technology Center; a black-box theater and dance studio; a Media Center for the study of film and media, digital filmmaking, editing and animation; and a Student Center that serves as a central hub for congregating, studying and socializing.

Sierra Canyon School is a place where intellectual discourse, athletic prowess and artistic expression come together in an environment that instills hard work and promotes caring values. Sierra Canyon is an independent, non-sectarian, co-educational school. Please visit www.sierracanyonschool.org to learn more about us, or contact Steve Burnett, Director of Institutional Advancement, at (818) 882-8121, ext. 311.



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