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Where Your Community News Comes First

Mountain Views News

Sierra Madre — Arcadia — Pasadena — Altadena — Monrovia

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 13, 2010

VOLUME 4 NO. 6

It Definitely Rains In Southern California

Cities Recover From The Wet Weather and Mudslides - Dry Week Ahead

Sierra Madreans Are Finally 'Alert Free'

Governor and Congressman Dreier Visit Area



Photo by Chris Bertrand

After almost two weeks under either green, yellow or red alerts, it appears that residents in Sierra Madre and the entire San Gabriel Valley will be able to take a break from the rain. From heavy, unpredictable downpours and intermittent showers, Mother Nature had city staff working round the clock trying protect residents and their property.

Evacuation orders were issued when the risk of a mudslide was too great to ignore. And, despite the frustration that some felt with the on again, off

again warnings, the city survived. There were many, however, who did not adhere to the Police and Fire officials who remained in their homes. And others ignored warnings to stay out of Bailey Canyon. As one resident put it, "Between the squalls yesterday, I saw four people on the Bailey Canyon trail below my house. Idiots, all, but the cost to the city to tease them out (especially those helicopter calls like last Saturday afternoon), and possible danger to our PD and city personnel is unconscionable."

Sierra Madre's Resident Weather Watcher

Way back in the early 1970's, Sierra Madre resident Dave Felt was working at Meterology Research, Inc., a weather research firm in Altadena, CA. MRI had a line of electronic weather stations used all over the world, and Dave thought how nice it would be to be able to monitor the weather at his home. The early 70's were well before the internet came into use, and for a long time after the internet came into being, weather stations weren't online for many years.



By the late 2000's, internet connected weather stations were coming online, and it became financially feasible for Dave to both install a weather station and to connect it to his

station system prices have dropped to the several hundred dollar level in the last year or so, and keeping the various components updated isn't too expensive.



Rain is an easy weather component to measure, but Dave found that his initial rain gauge usually measured much less rain than that did his older glass tube rain gauge, which is mounted a few feet from the electronic rain gauge, (below) and which should be measuring about the same amount of rain. A replacement rain gauge,

internet connection. His Honeywell Instruments based weather station (above) reports to the University of Minnesota's Wunderground.com web site, and by searching on ZIP codes, one may interrogate internet-based weather stations anywhere in the country using any web browser.

installed just in time for Sierra Madre's recent 7-plus inches of rain, finally agreed with the glass tube gauges, so he's happy that his weather station is now reporting accurate information for his location near Baldwin Avenue. Readers may look at Sierra Madre weather on Wunderground's website, and by searching for KCASIERR3 or ZIP code 91024 for Dave's weather station.



Dave's installation used his experience with professional weather stations in the 70's, as well as his computer and internet networking skills (he also operates a local computer repair service) to install his weather station's components over a year ago. Most of the components, a rain gauge, temperature and humidity meters, and wind speed and direction sensors, have been replaced at least once, and with a wireless connections to the master weather console, the remote sensor batteries don't last as long as one might like, and need changing every few months. Weather



Congressman David Dreier visited La Cañada Flintridge today with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to see the mud and debris damage after the flash flooding, and received a briefing on the status of recovery efforts.

"First, my thoughts are with those whose homes were damaged or are no longer inhabitable," Dreier said. "In visiting with some of them, I'm grateful nobody was injured and that so many volunteers have come forward to help their friends and neighbors with mud removal."

Congressman Dreier is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the LA County Public Works Department to expedite the process for clearing and removing the debris and mud from the Mullally Debris Basin off of Ocean View Boulevard and the Pickens Canyon debris basin near Ocean View and Foothill Boulevards. There was a boulder weighing 6-10 tons clogging the drainage pipe in the Mullaly basin which caused much of the overflow mud and debris. Over 80 homes have been directly impacted or

damaged. "Emergency crews have been working non-stop to get the debris basins cleared. It is imperative that they not face any unnecessary bureaucratic nonsense in doing their jobs," Dreier continued, "I am committed to ensuring that the necessary resources and equipment are available and that no red tape stands in the way of getting the job done."

The state of emergency declared on January 21 in LA County due to the severe storms still remains in effect. Dreier echoed the calls of law enforcement and the fire department urging residents, especially those who are near the mud slides, to use caution in returning to the area and to heed instructions given by local authorities.

"It is absolutely critical for anyone who is in the immediate damaged areas to follow the instructions of law enforcement," Dreier said.

For the latest information for residents on damage mitigation please visit: <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/CARE/>

The 40th Annual Wine and Cuisine Tasting Event

Yes, the evening of evenings is almost upon us: The 2010 Fantastic February Festival and Feast otherwise known as the Friends of the Sierra Madre Library 40th Annual Wine and Cuisine Tasting Event.

Chefs from over 20 of our favorite local restaurants are stoking the fires in their kitchens as they prepare to delight us with totally tantalizing treats. Coming to the table, so to speak, include Café 322, Casa Del Rey, Fresco's, Charcuterie, Matt Denny's, Ugo's, Nikki C's, Sweet Pastries, Wildflour, Whole Foods, The Only Place in Town, Trader Joe's, and Village Pizzeria. Pasadena's Noir Food and Wine Bar is sending their master chef and oenologist, Claud Beltran to perform his epicurean magic on both the early premier and the main event.

Dozens of the finest wines will be served. Among the many vintners include: Van Ruiten, Bodegas, Madalena, Jordan, Serenity, Mendoza-Argentina, Frank Family, Keenan, Domaine Laurier, Lucero, Hahn, and One Hope.

In addition to the extraordinary wine and cuisine, musicians, magicians, good friends and neighbors, and beautiful floral arrangements from local florists will adorn this elegant affair. And let's not forget our famous Silent Auction. Extraordinary gifts include more than 20 pieces of artwork, meals from gourmet restaurants, theater tickets, Disneyland, wine tours and tastings. Jewelry, golf, race track, museum tickets, and a late entry: an autographed case of wine from Tommy Smothers.

Join us Friday night affair, February 19th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the majestic Alverno Villa in Sierra Madre. The Villa is located at 200 No. Michillinda Avenue. Two blocks north of Sierra Madre Blvd and approximately one to one and a half miles north of the 210 freeway.

Purchase your tickets at: Sierra Madre Public Library, The Bottle Shop, Arnold's Frontier Hardware, Iris Intrigue, Charcuterie, Savor the Flavor and Sierra Madre Books. They are also available on line at [www](http://www.sierramadrelibraryfriends.org).

SierraMadreLibraryFriends.org. Tickets are \$60 each and are limited so purchase your tickets as soon as possible.

In addition to enjoying a wonderful evening you help enable the library to add new acquisitions and additions to collections, support library services and programs, and make improvements to the building and grounds.

The Friends of the Sierra Madre Library
invite you to the 40th
Wine and Cuisine Tasting
February 19, 2010 Alverno Villa

Early Bird Premier Event
6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Limited to 100 guests
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• Premium Wines
• Special Food
• Door Prizes
• Live Music
• Disictive Badge
• Early Access to Main Event

Main Event
7:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Limited to 400 guests
• Domestic and International Wines
• Fine Local Restaurants
• Magic Castle Magicians
• Live Music
• Silent Auction
• Fine Art
• Door Prizes

\$60—Main Event • • • \$80—Premier and Main Event
• • •
For Information or Tickets: www.SierraMadreLibraryFriends.org
In Sierra Madre at:
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Iris Intrigue Charcuterie Savor the Flavor Sierra Madre Books
All Proceeds Support the Library

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Weather Wise



5-Day Forecast

Sierra Madre, Ca.

Mon:	Sunny	Hi 70s	Lows 50s
Tues:	Sunny	H 70s	Lows 50s
Wed:	Sunny	Hi 70s	Lows 50s
Thur:	Sunny	Hi 70s	Lows 50s
Fri:	Sunny	Hi 70s	Lows 50s

Forecasts courtesy of the National Weather Service

BARGAIN BOOK SALE AT SIERRA MADRE LIBRARY

The Sierra Madre Public Library is the place for the thrifty reader to go for fab February finds! The Friends of the Library will hold a table sale inside the Library Monday, February 22 through Saturday, February 27, during the Library's open hours. This month's featured topics will include Fiction, Hobbies, Gardening, Cookbooks, Politics, Children's, and Specialty Books. All books are in good condition and will be sold at the bargain price of \$1.00 each. These every-other-month book sales provide funding for Library resources and programs.

The Sierra Madre Public Library, located at 440 West Sierra Madre Boulevard in Sierra Madre, is open Monday through Wednesday from Noon to 9 p.m., Thursday and Friday from Noon to 6 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed on all major holidays. For information on all our Library activities and services, please call (626) 355-7186, or visit our website at www.sierramadre.lib.ca.us.

“Zorro: Myth and History”

A “One Book One City” Author Talk at Sierra Madre Library February 26

Author and Zorro expert Sandra R. Curtis will speak at the Sierra Madre Public Library on Friday, February 26, at 7:00 p.m. The program, part of Sierra Madre's “One Book One City 2010” celebration of Isabel Allende's novel Zorro, is free and open to the public.

Ms. Curtis is head of creative development for Zorro Productions, Inc., in Berkeley CA. Conversations with Ms. Curtis about her book, Zorro Unmasked, the Official History, piqued Ms. Allende's interest and inspired her to write her own historical novel on Diego de la Vega's early life and his evolution into Zorro, the beloved 19th century folk hero and champion of the oppressed. Amazon.com hailed the book as “A must-read for Zorro aficionados,” noting that “Sandra Curtis's thorough compendium offers a rich historical cross section of one of pop culture's most influential icons. Beginning with his debut in 1919 in a pulp magazine to Antonio Banderas's high-profile impersonation in The Mask of Zorro, every factoid and trivial tidbit about the masked muchacho is included.” Ms. Curtis has also written a series of young reader Zorro novels and worked with Jan Adkins in developing his Young Zorro series.

One Book One City hopes to inspire members of our community to share in reading the same good book at the same time and to participate in events honoring the book. The final program will be a docent-guided tour of the San Gabriel Mission, a prominent location in Zorro, on Saturday, February 27, at 2:00 p.m. Limited free transportation will be available (first call, first reserved) leaving the Library at 1:00 p.m.; reservations will need to be made by February 22. Contact the Library at 626-255-7186. Cost for the tour is \$5 per person.

Thank-you to the Sierra Madre Civic Club, the Friends of the Sierra Madre Library, the Rotary Club of Sierra Madre, Santa Anita Race Track, and Tom Southwell for contributions to this years’ “One Book One City.”

Copies of Zorro in English and Spanish and on CD, as well as Allende's other works, are available for checkout at the Library and for purchase at Sierra Madre Books in Sierra Madre. The Sierra Madre Public Library is located at 440 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre 91024. For more information, please call Catriona Shafer at 626-355-7186 or visit the Library's web site at www.cityofsierramadre.com.



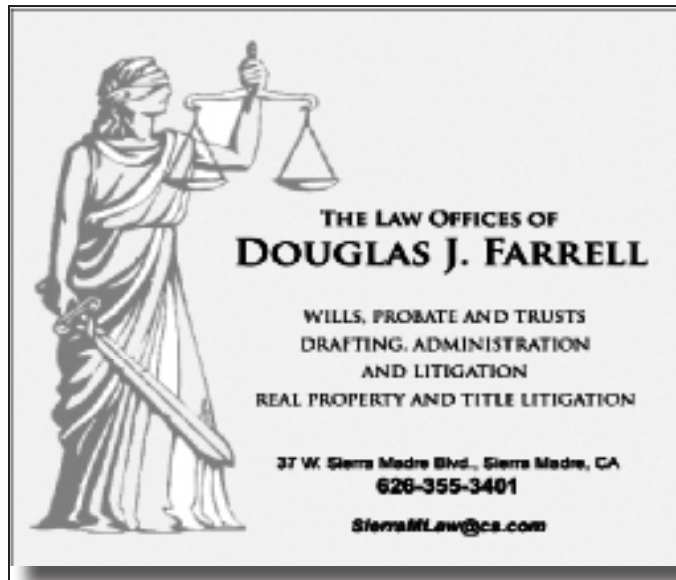
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FEBRUARY AT THE ARBORETEUM

February 18 Aussies You Should Know with Jan Smithen – Part 1

Inspired by their vigor in Los Angeles-area landscapes, Jan's illustrated lecture proclaims the unusual and durable beauty of Australian plants from Adenanthos to Westringia (and sneaks in South African members of the Proteaceae). After the talk there will be a plant for sale donated by Jo O'Connell and her Australian Native Plants Nursery (australianplants.com). Jan is the author of Sun Drenched Gardens: The Mediterranean Style. For over two decades, she taught the popular Fanatic Gardeners classes (that had a two year waiting list!) at The Arboretum, and is now very excited to tell everyone about this whole new pallet of plants! Part 2 of Jan's talk will be in the spring.

February 25 Three Tantalizing Taxa with Jim Henrich
Plant nuts: Board the tram with The Arboretum's curator of living collections! Learn about the Magnolia collection (55+ taxa) and the Quercus engelmannii grove (one of the largest remaining stands in Los Angeles County). In transit, he'll enlighten us about other Arboretum collections and history. The morning ends with a rare tour of the orchid collection, with details on its diversity and acquisition protocols. Jim has held various horticultural positions at the Conservatory of Flowers, San Francisco Botanical Garden, Denver Botanic Gardens and Missouri Botanical Garden.
Pre-registration required.

Celebrate Valentine's Day at Descanso Gardens Descanso Gardens is the backdrop as you romance your special person on Sunday, Feb. 14.

Patina Catering sets the mood for an evening to remember this Valentine's Day when you savor a three-course dinner held in the Boddy House complete with flourishes that will warm hearts and cause sighs of delight between bites.

Sample menu includes a choice of soup or salad, filet of beef, sea bass or short ribs and, of course, a Valentine-inspired desert. Available seatings are at 8 p.m. Price is \$73 per person (\$65 for Descanso members). For more information and reservations, call Patina at (818) 790-3663.

TAI CHI AT THE ARBORETUM

Master Mo Chi Sasian Yau, Instructor
Call 626.821.4623 to register OR register at the class!

Ayres Hall in The Arboretum, 301 North Baldwin Ave., Arcadia 8
Mondays, Jan. 4 - March 8 (no class Jan 18 & Feb 15)
8 Mondays, April 12 - June 7 (no class May 31)
8 Mondays, July 1 - Aug. 23

Beginning and Intermediate levels:
6:30-7:30pm
\$48 members/\$52 non-members for 8 sessions

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Could you use help in preparing written communications for your business? I have extensive experience in writing and editing business documents including brochures, proposals, newsletters, resumes, customer success stories, press releases, and articles for newspapers and magazines.

Current work includes writing the column, “Looking Up with Bob Eklund,” in Mountain Views News, and writing newsletters for the Mount Wilson Observatory. I recently published a book, First Star I See Tonight: an Exploration of Wonder, and am finishing a second book, Winds Aloft.

For writing samples and resume, see my web site: www.bobeklund.com.
Bob Eklund beklund@sprynet.com
(310) 216-5947

Attention Sierra Madre Canyon Residents: Please attend a Canyon Community Meeting on the planning process for the RESIDENTIAL CANYON ZONE

Two meetings:

February 22 and March 22, 2010 – 7p.m.
Recreation Center 611 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Sierra Madre Room

Regulations pertaining to the development of the Residential Canyon Zone have been discussed and studied over the past 27 years. Beginning with the 1972 General Plan Canyon sub-committee, this process continued with the 1996 General Plan Canyon sub-committee and again with another Canyon Committee, in 2005 – yet the Canyon Zone was never finished.

In April 2009 the current 5-member committee began reviewing the 4th draft of the zoning provisions goals and objectives that were previously developed for the Residential Canyon Zone designation.

The committee has been reviewing zoning guidelines as they apply to the unique nature of the canyon, such as building massing, height limitations, property line setbacks, building square footage and lot coverage, parking requirements, design, landscaping, fencing, protection for the 1972 Wildlife Sanctuary designation of the city, night-sky lighting and noise. The circumstances for allowable deviations or exceptions from standards, the permit process and Conditional Use Permits have been discussed.

Foremost in the discussions has been the goal of preservation of the unique residential setting and rustic and historic character of the Canyon. Your input is important to this process. These two community meetings are in addition to the regular open monthly meetings, held on the third Tuesdays of the month at 7p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

The final draft will go to the Planning Commission for further discussion and public input and then to the City Council for public hearings and adoption after further discussion and subsequent revisions.

Sincerely,

Canyon Residential Zone Committee Members:

John Herrmann, Chair; Caroline Brown, Vice-Chair; Michael Howard, Jim Monachino and Sherry Robison

Supporting documentation, including Draft Residential Canyon Code to-date, is available on City's website: http://www.cityofsierramadre.com/index.php?mod=planning_zoning

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sunday, february 14

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plays the grill

vahaghn turgutyan trio
plays the jazz club

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our valentine's brunch

10am-2pm

brandon bernstein duo



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and
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9:15 am Traditional Worship

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10:30 am Adult Spiritual Formation

11:15 am “The Gathering” worship service

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Sierra Madre

SIERRA MADRE GROCERY COMPANY OFFERS NEW GOURMET SALSA

Explore the aisles of any gourmet food store and you'll encounter scores of specialty salsas and bruschettas. But the unique and flavorful products of Sierra Madre Grocery Company are different. They are all-natural, healthy and low-fat, and they are the result of more than 26 years of experience by Karen Swisher, a highly trained food scientist who has created successful products for such leading brands as Carnation/Nestle, Lawry's Foods, Jenny Craig and Van de Kamp's. Sierra Madre Grocery Company offers a fine selection of gourmet products cooked in small batches with the best ingredients.

Local gourmet food shop, Savor the Flavor, prides itself in offering products not found in other local markets and concentrates on bringing their wide base of San Gabriel Valley customers new and delicious products from all over the world.

They love to showcase new local businesses and award winning specialty products. Last Saturday, Karen Swisher brought her salsa, bruschetta



and Sierra seasoning to the streets of downtown Sierra Madre, demonstrating several uses for the specialty products in appetizers and recipes inside and outside Savor the Flavor. The new products are currently available at Savor the Flavor, 11 Kersting Court in Sierra Madre, and soon online at www.SierraMadreGroceryCo.com.

Monrovia

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

The Santa Anita Family YMCA honored Carolyn Demcak of Monrovia (at right) for 50 years of volunteer service, including her 10 years as a member of the SAFYMCA board of directors. She is currently the SAFYMCA's liaison to the Y's Men, a club in partnership and support of the YMCA's mission. Joining in the salute, from left: Monrovia City Council Member, Becky Shevlin, Monrovia Council Member and SAFYMCA board member, Clarence Shaw, and SAFYMCA Chief Executive Officer, Damon Colaluca.



Pasadena

Crown City Symphony Free Concerts

Crown City Symphony, a community orchestra founded in 2003 under the sponsorship of the Pasadena Senior Center, will give two free concerts, February 27 & 28, at 2pm both days. The first concert is at the Altadena Senior Center, 560 E. Mariposa, Altadena, and the second concert is at the First Baptist Church of Pasadena, 75 N. Marengo. Marvin Neumann is the conductor, and the soloist is Mischa Lefkowitz, first violinist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Mr. Lefkowitz was born in Latvia and began studying the violin at the age of seven. At 17 he was admitted to the Moscow Conservatory where he studied with Leonid Kogan. He has won top prizes in several international competitions and the National Endowment of the Arts. He has appeared as soloist with symphonies in Europe, Canada and the United States. He has also played many recitals at music festivals in Aspen, Meadowbrook, and Carnegie Hall. He has been a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 1977.

Crown City Symphony, whose motto is Ability not Age, has received grants from The Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation and the City of Pasadena Cultural Affairs Division, and the Pasadena Showcase for the Arts.

The web site is crowncitysymphony.org. For more information email Roberta Wilcox, manager, at manager@crowncitysymphony.org, or call, (626) 797-1994.

Duarte

Concern Growing Over Vulcan Mining Expansion Plans

DUARTE, CA, Feb. 12, 2010 – Alarm is growing among residents over the risk to public health from potential increases in the emissions of crystalline silica dust if a mining company is allowed to expand operations to a mountain ridge in close proximity to schools, playgrounds and hundreds of family homes in Duarte and Azusa.

Vulcan Materials Company, which has a permit from the City of Azusa to mine 190 acres of its 270 acre property, is seeking approval to swap 80 acres currently approved for mining on the east side of its property for 80 acres on the west above Duarte. If Azusa agrees to approve the plan, Vulcan has pledged to immediately begin reclamation work, using a new micro-benching technique on already mined out areas. If the city rejects the plan, Vulcan said it will delay reclamation work until the end of its current agreement in 2038.

The Azusa Planning Commission is currently reviewing the plan and held its third and final public hearings on the project on Feb. 10. The commission will take up the issue again at its regular meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. when Azusa City staff will present an in-depth overview of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The presentation will include photo simulations with a special emphasis on how the mining project will affect Duarte's view of the ridgeline, disclosed in the DEIR as being an unavoidable impact.

More than 150 people attended the Feb. 10 public hearing to voice their concerns, among them parents and children from Valley View Elementary School which is located just 3000 feet from the proposed mining site. School Board member, Pam Kawasaki read a letter from Superintendent Dean Conklin asking the commission to vote down the plan.

Fred Ortega, aide to Congress member Judy Chu, whose district includes both Duarte and Azusa, read a letter to the commission from Chu in which she wrote: "While the project in question does reside within your commission's jurisdiction in the City of Azusa, the effects of the project, if approved, will not be limited to the residents of your city."

Chu had several recommendations for the commission pertaining to the DEIR, including:

- Mitigation measures be clearly delineated in precise language, with specific steps described and a requirement that such measures be implemented, as opposed to being addressed through the issuance of future reports.
 - Aesthetic impacts be properly considered, particularly viewing the project from the west side.
 - Additional, indirect impacts of the proposed mining be adequately studied, including effects on housing, additional traffic generated, noise and air pollution, and other issues.
- Several of the 51 people who spoke at the hearing agreed that the decision was too big and the impact of the project too far reaching for the City of Azusa to make alone, suggesting that perhaps Congresswoman Chu could conduct a town hall meeting for Valley residents in general to discuss the proposal.

By the next day, Duarte Deputy City Manager, Karen Herrera, said she had called Congresswoman Chu's office to request such a meeting for the public and is awaiting an answer.

Duarte has also sent a written request to the Air Quality Control District (AQMD) to conduct a town hall meeting to address residents' health concerns about the mining dust and



Shauna Pierce, whose children attend Valley View Elementary School in Duarte, tells the Azusa Planning Commission that she fears for the health of children at the school who would be exposed to dangerous crystalline silica dust if Vulcan Materials Company is permitted to expand its mining operations. The school is only 3,000 feet from the proposed mountain mining site.

discuss resuming air quality monitoring in the City of Duarte.

The nearly five hour Planning Commission hearing began with Vulcan spokesman, Todd Priest giving a brief power point presentation on the plan. At the Feb. 3 hearing, Priest had refused requests by commission chairman, Christopher Dodson and later Duarte Mayor Margaret Finlay to make such a presentation to the more than 200 people attending that meeting.

In addition to the health concerns, many Duarte homeowners talked about their fears that the visible destruction of the mountain in clear view of their homes would result in a loss of property values. There were also concerns raised over the damage to the plant life and wildlife habitat. Azusa staff and legal team has advised the planning commissioners that they do not need to wait for the final EIR to vote on plan. Therefore, a planning commission vote could come as early as Feb. 24. The final EIR will only be presented to the Azusa City Council for its deliberations and vote.

The public is encouraged to attend and speak at the Feb. 24 planning commission meeting and the Azusa City Council meetings held on the first and third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. In March, when the Azusa City Council is expected to begin its deliberations on the Vulcan plan, meetings will be held on Monday, March 1 and Monday, March 15.

Azusa will accept written comments on the DEIR through Feb. 20. Comments may be submitted to azusarockeircomments@ci.azusa.ca.us or by mail to: Conal McNamara, City of Azusa, Department of Economic & Community Development, 213 E. Foothill Blvd., Azusa, CA 91702.

The entire 1,000 page DEIR on the Vulcan Material Company's request for a Revised Conditional Use Permit and Reclamation Plan is available for review on the City of Azusa's official website, www.azusalw.com. The Save Our Canyon website, www.saveourcanyon.org offers detailed information and graphics about the project.

Videotaped coverage of the public hearings is available for viewing on Duarte Public Access (DCTV), Charter Cable Channel 3 in Duarte, and on-demand on DCTV on the Web, www.dctvduarte.com.

In 2008, the Duarte City Council established a \$700,000 fund entitled the "Fight Against Vulcan Expansion" fund (FAVE) in response to the anticipated expansion plans by Vulcan and its potential adverse impact on Duarte residents. For more information about the City of Duarte's Fight Against Vulcan Expansion activities, call Duarte Deputy City Manager, Karen Herrera at (626) 357-7931, ext. 221.

ONE WEEK LEFT FOR \$36,000 AWARD NOMINATIONS

Just a quick reminder that nominations for the Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards must be in by FEBRUARY 19th! We ask for your continued assistance in spreading the word about this amazing opportunity to recognize California teens for exceptional community service and potentially award them with \$36,000.

Any teacher, civic leader, or non family member may nominate a young California resident who is between 13 and 19 years old. Nomination forms are available online: <http://www.sjcf.org/diller/teenawards/>, by contacting (415) 512-6432, or by emailing: dillerteens@sjcf.org.

Nominations must be received by the application deadline of February 19th:

- The \$36,000 award can be used however the recipient wishes—most have used the funds for furthering their educations, developing their projects, or starting new endeavors
- Teens must self-identify as Jewish, though their community service projects can benefit the general community
- Teens can nominate themselves, or be nominated by teachers, rabbis, community leaders, or anyone who knows the value of the their volunteer service and commitment—family members excluded
- Teens must be residents of California, age 13-19 years old at the time of nomination

Sierra Madre Little League Gets Underway February 27!

Join in on the Opening Day fun as Sierra Madre Little League starts its season on Saturday, February 27.



It starts at 8:00A with a parade through town, ending at Sierra Vista Park. There will be games, booths, obstacle courses, a climbing wall, music, and great food at the diner, in addition to a pancake breakfast. Opening Day ceremonies start at 9:00A on Heasley Field and Little League games begin at 10:30A.

For more information go to www.sml.org or call the SMLL President Pete Siberell at 626-355-6746.

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News From Your Community For Your Community

Police Release Response to Investigation

The Pasadena police department released Friday their response to an independent investigation following the Leroy Barnes, Jr officer involved shooting last year.

The statement said the following. On February 19, 2009, two Pasadena police officers conducted a traffic stop on Mentone Avenue in the City of Pasadena. This encounter resulted in an armed confrontation between Leroy Barnes, Jr. and police officers.

In an effort to inform the community of the facts surrounding this incident and to ensure a high level of transparency, the department requested an independent investigation by the Office of Independent Review (OIR). Once the report was made available to the Police Department, the department distributed it to the public.

The department has completed its written response to the OIR report. "It was essential for us to respond to the OIR report, as it allows the public to readily view the changes that have been completed. Publishing our response is consistent with our efforts to be transparent," says Interim Chief of Police Christopher O. Vicino.

The department altered or updated policies and procedures in order to accept 13 of the 14 recommendations. The department has also begun the process of institutionalizing a training regiment to patrol officers. This training will increase tactical expertise at the patrol level. "It is my belief these modifications will serve to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of our police department," says Interim Chief of Police Christopher O. Vicino.

The summary portion of this report also mentions patrol officers conducting "community days". The police department has devised a regular community outreach program for each Service Area that directly involves every patrol officer. This will enhance community relationships and supplement the connection to the neighborhoods each officer patrols. None of this will happen overnight, but the department aims to be consistent in approach and application.

The police department's review of the OIR and follow-up action steps have played a critical role in improving the quality of police work and increasing police accountability and commitment to the Pasadena community.

[Editorial note: The rejected policy recommended that the department modify its officer involved shooting protocols to ensure that training personnel are part of the rollout team.]

The report can be found online at <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/Police>.

City Budget Shortfall Larger Than Expected

By Dean Lee

The city council got the bad news Monday night that in October what looked to be a \$5.5 million shortfall in General Fund revenue is now more likely \$7.7 million leading to more cuts, all aimed at city employees, including more furloughs, reducing work hours and layoffs.

The city currently put furloughs in place for 290 employees.

Also suggested was increasing eight percent employee contribution towards retirement costs and reducing or eliminating anticipated salary increases. Although before taking any drastic steps city staff said they should look at freezing all 192 existing vacant positions.

"One of our strategies to deal with this additional shortfall [\$2.2 million] and some of the \$5.5 million shortfall, that we were not able to get so far through discussions with the labor unions, is to really look at and scrutinize the filling of the vacancies that are outstanding," said Director of Finance Andrew Green.

Freezing all vacancies, through the end of the year, would save \$9.9 million he explained estimated by an average salary of \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year.

"Realizing that has a direct impact on service levels in a lot



of instances," he said. "I don't think we are looking at freezing those flat out, the purpose of bring this up is there is money we could look at." Green later said this included looking at very specialized positions and seeing if those needed to be filled.

He also said all the numbers were through December not taking into account another 33 positions that became vacant in January. Only 62 of the 192 were paid from the General Fund he added.

Green also said they needed to look at reductions of internal service transfers from the General Fund. He said this was on track with a five year plan ending the city fiscal deficit in 2014. Most of this was consolidation he explained.

"We are looking at a \$1.4 million surplus in 2014 looking at the assumptions we're making," he said.

He explained that if they just let things go the deficit would grow to over \$20 million.

"The actual fund balance in 2014 is a deficit of over \$80," he warned.

City Manager Michael Beck

said any pay rises in the future did not seem possible.

He said the good news was they had a grip around the situation and any forced reduction in employees was not necessary based on negotiations with labor unions. He said the city had a strong future. Back thanked the council for looking at a five year plan and not the immediate future saying this will save money. He also said this is something most cities are not doing.

Councilmember Margaret McAustin said any cuts had to be made by June.

Councilmember Terry Tornek said he did not like the situation but now understood it.

"The takeaway for me tonight," Tornek said. "Is when you start talking about those vacancies, we have already achieved, through attrition and other affirmative action a substantial reduction in the workforce and each one of those jobs represents \$100,000... it starts to take its toll on city services and at some point you start to cut into the bone."

Beck said there are currently about 2,200 city employees.

Doo Dah Madness Goes East

Daring to go where no parade has gone before, this year's May 1st Pasadena Doo Dah Parade will venture eastward for the first time in its colorful history. While the alternative event has enjoyed much popular success in the Old Pasadena retail and entertainment district, organizers are excited to bring the eclectic parade to the town-like setting of East Pasadena. "Old Pasadena has been a terrific backdrop and host for the Doo Dah Parade," says organizer Tom Coston. "But with Doo Dah we see an opportunity to keep it fresh and interesting. We fondly leave Old Pasadena on the cusp of predictability. We look upon East Pasadena as an exciting frontier with its own local character and possibilities."

Local Ad Airs During Super Bowl



The French gothic style Westminster Presbyterian Church on Lake Ave was the backdrop for a contestant driven Doritos "Crash the Super Bowl" ad airing during last Sunday's Super Bowl game.

The ad, showing a football fan rising from the dead after a prank goes wrong, and his wish to be buried in casket full

of Doritos. The now famous ad was produced by Mosaic's lead Pasadena Pastor Erwin McManus and written by Gabe Trevino who also attends the same church.

The Ad made finalist winning \$25,000 and a trip to the Super Bowl in which The New Orleans Saints won over the Indianapolis Colts 31-17.

Valentine's Day Flowers Inspected for Pests

U.S. Customs and Border Protection agriculture specialists prepare for Valentine's Day by inspecting cut flower shipments. Historically, Valentines is the 2nd busiest time for cut flower importations. CBP agriculture specialists inspect flowers to ensure they are free from pests or diseases.

CBP agriculture specialists are the first line of defense against pests and diseases that could harm the U.S. agriculture industry. These pests can seriously damage

America's crops, livestock and the environment. If pests or diseases are intercepted, the shipments are treated, re-exported or destroyed.

Saint Valentines is the second busiest season for cut flower imports; Mother's day is the busiest. Last year during this season (Jan 1-Feb. 14); CBP agriculture specialists at Los Angeles International Airport processed over 7.5 million flower stems. During this period over 79 pests were intercepted. LAX ranked 2nd in the Nation among U.S. ports of entry for the number

of cut flower shipments during this season, Miami ranked first.

The top three types of flower shipments during the Valentine's season last year were Roses, mixed bouquets and rose bouquets.

On a typical day in 2009, CBP agriculture specialists seized more than 4,291 prohibited plants, meat and animal byproducts and intercepted 454 agricultural pests that could potentially harm America's agricultural resources.

Street Closures For The Pasadena Marathon, Feb. 2

Beginning at 5:15 a.m., vehicular traffic will be allowed on the official route in certain areas only, a full list of closers can be found at <http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us>.

Streets will re-open according to a 17-minute-per-mile time clock. The Pasadena Police Department reminds everyone to be patient and drive slowly with caution.

Roads in and around the Arroyo Seco will be closed from 5:15 to 11:30 a.m. Access to Brookside Golf Course, the Rose Bowl Stadium area, Kidspace Children's Museum and the Rose Bowl Aquatics Center will be allowed on an intermittent basis during this period only

when Pasadena police deem it to be safe. Employees and patrons of the golf course or the stadium should take Arroyo Boulevard to Rose Bowl Drive. Employees and patrons of the museum and aquatics center, as well as recreational users of the Rose Bowl Loop, should take Holly Street, then go south on Arroyo Drive, north on Arroyo Boulevard and park in Lot 1 at Brookside Park.

Parking will be prohibited along the route from 1 a.m. to 3 p.m. Overnight parking restrictions throughout Pasadena will not be enforced during these hours

For more information, also visit www.pasadenamarathon.org or call (626) 797-7238.

Upcoming Library Free Events

Economics For Success: Exploring Personal Finance

Hastings Branch Library will host a Personal Finance Seminar featuring Vladimir Milev, CFA Vice President, Financial Investment Analyst on Tuesday, February 23 at 6:30 p.m. Milev will speak on how to become financially savvy.

Learn how to balance a budget, what the advantages and disadvantages are of using credit and how to identify what situation is appropriate to use cash or credit. Call (626) 744-7262 for reservations.

Hastings Branch Library is located at 3325 E. Orange Grove Blvd. For more information about this program, call (626) 744-7262.

Girl Friday Book Talk

Author, Thelma Reyna will discuss her book, Heaven Weep for Us and Other Stories, on Friday, February 19 at 5 p.m. at La Pintoresca Branch Library, 1355 N. Raymond Ave.

For more information about this program call (626) 744-7268.

Rock On With Guitar Hero

Join us for a finger tingling, head spinning session of Guitar Hero as we rock the afternoon away at La Pintoresca Branch Library, 1355 N. Raymond Ave. on Tuesday, February 16 at 4 p.m.

College District Asks Community to Take Ed Master Plan Survey

The Pasadena Area Community College District invites the community to participate in developing the Educational Master Plan for Pasadena City College by taking the Educational Master Plan Survey. The survey is designed to help the college better understand the key issues and priorities of the communities it serves, which includes residents and business owners, as well as students, faculty, and staff.

The survey includes key issues facing the PACC as identified in town hall meetings, internal

forums and focus groups, and additional data research. The survey can be accessed here: www.surveymonkey.com/s/LCXJSW9.

The EMP is a critical element of the college's accreditation requirement, and will provide direction and focus to future decision-making. The purpose of the EMP is to help the college best support student learning and meet the changing needs of the community.

For more information, please visit www.pasadenavision2020.org.

Latino Advisory Committee Offers Student Scholarships

The Pasadena City College President's Latino Advisory Committee has established four \$1,000 scholarships for PCC students through the PCC Latino Scholarship Fund.

"We hope to encourage qualified students to continue their studies at PCC to achieve their degree or transfer to a university and ultimately obtain a well-paying career," said committee member Dr. Cynthia Olivo, associate dean of Counseling and Student Success Services. "The President's Latino Advisory Committee has worked hard to provide access to a higher education and to increase the number of Latino and Latina students completing their studies at PCC."

To be eligible for the scholarship, an individual must be a full-time PCC or CEC student, be enrolled in at least nine units at the time

of application, demonstrate financial need, show an understanding of Latino culture, and be involved in extracurricular activities. The GPA requirement will be based upon the applicant pool.

Applications should be submitted to the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid (L114) by Friday, March 12, 2010. Applications must be accompanied by official transcripts (if attended a school other than PCC), one letter of recommendation, and a personal statement. The application is available online on the PLAC website at www.pasadena.edu/about/president/plac.cfm.

Students selected to receive an award will be notified by Monday, May 3, and will be given at the scholarship awards breakfast on Thursday, May 13 at Brookside.

Pet of the Week



What a cutie! Pauly, an adorable three year old Chihuahua is very sweet and calm. He can be shy at first but will surely warm up when he settles into a loving home. Pauly gets along with the other little dogs in his kennel and would love to be adopted today!

The regular dog adoption fee is \$120, which includes medical care prior to adoption, spaying or neutering, vaccinations, and a follow-up visit with a participating vet.

Please call 626-792-7151 and ask for A264497 or come to the Pasadena Humane Society & SPCA, 361 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena CA, 91105. Our adoption hours are 11-3 Sunday, 9-4 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 9-3 Saturday. Directions and photos of all pets updated hourly may be found at www.pasadenahumane.org

An Activity For The Whole Family On
President’s Weekend
Great Backyard Bird Count

Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15.

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It’s free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. We’ll be adding updated GBBC materials for the next count as they become available.

Participants count birds anywhere for as little or as long as they wish during the four-day period. They tally the highest number of birds of each species seen together at any one time. To report their counts, they fill out an online checklist at the Great Backyard Bird Count website.

As the count progresses, anyone with Internet access can explore what is being reported from their own towns or anywhere in the United States and Canada. They can also see how this year’s numbers compare with those from previous years. Participants may also send in photographs of the birds they see. A selection of images is posted in the online photo gallery.

Why Count Birds?



Carolina Wren, Jim Lockyer, CA, 2009 GBBC

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time.

We need your help. Make sure the birds from your community are well represented in the count. It doesn’t matter whether you report the 5 species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day’s outing to a wildlife refuge. Your counts can help us answer many questions:

- How will this winter’s snow and cold

temperatures influence bird populations?

- Where are winter finches and other “irruptive” species that appear in large numbers during some years but not others?
- How will the timing of birds’ migrations compare with past years?
- How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?
- What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?
- Are any birds undergoing worrisome declines that point to the need for conservation attention?



American Goldfinch - Gail DuBois, NY, 2009 GBBC

It’s as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day.
2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. You may find it helpful to print out your regional bird checklist to get an idea of the kinds of birds you’re likely to see in your area in February. You could take note of the highest number of each species you see on this checklist.
3. When you’re finished, enter your results through our web page. You’ll see a button marked “Enter Your Checklists!” on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1st.

For more information go to: <http://gbbc.birdsource.org>

Arcadia Police Blotter

For the period of Sunday, January 31, through Saturday, February 6, the Police Department responded to 904 calls for service of which 140 required formal investigations. The following is a summary report of the major incidents handled by the Department during this period.

Sunday, January 31:

1. Shortly after 2:00 a.m., a traffic stop was initiated at Santa Anita and St. Joseph for a vehicle code violation. Four male African-American occupants were contacted and record checks were conducted. A 25-year-old was arrested for providing false identification to officers and a \$26,000 outstanding warrant, and 20-year-old was taken into custody for 2 outstanding warrants and possession of marijuana.
 2. A solo traffic collision occurred in the 1000 block of Alta Vista around 9:30 p.m. An intoxicated 30-year-old male Caucasian drove onto a lawn and struck a tree. The man was arrested at the scene for DUI.
- Monday, February 1:**
3. Around 9:30 p.m., a victim came to the station to file a fraud report. She was checking her bank statement due to an overdrawn account and discovered several unauthorized transactions totaling approximately \$3,350.
 4. Two auto burglaries were reported at the Westfield Mall parking lot. Unknown suspect(s) entered an Acura and removed about \$1,110 in property between 4:30 p.m. and 10:45 p.m.; a Range Rover was broken into between 7:30 p.m. and 11:50 p.m. and \$5,700 in property was stolen.

Tuesday, February 2:

5. Between 1:08 p.m. and 1:18 p.m., a residential burglary occurred in the 500 block of West LeRoy. Unknown suspects, possibly using a newer model white Chevrolet van, pried open a front door to gain entrance into the house. The suspects then removed the audible alarm speaker and ransacked rooms. The homeowner is currently out of the country and it is unknown at this time what property was taken.
6. Nordstrom loss prevention personnel detained a woman around 6:00 p.m. for using a fake identification to open an account. She admitted to opening several fraudulent accounts by using phony ID’s acquired from another individual. The 44-year-old Hispanic was arrested and multiple fake identification cards were found in her possession.

Wednesday, February 3:

7. A representative from Abercrombie & Fitch came to the station around 11:42 p.m. to report two thefts. Thirty bottles of men’s cologne worth about \$1,500 were stolen from the store between 10:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on January 27, and 30 shirts were stolen on January 28 around 1:53 p.m. by a male Hispanic and a female Hispanic for a loss of \$1,800.
8. Around 1:27 p.m., a victim came to the station to file a fraud report. He received a call from a credit union advising that an individual had his account number and was attempting to cash a \$274,000 check in New Mexico. The transaction was denied and no loss was incurred.

Thursday, February 4:

9. Shortly before 11:00 p.m., units stopped a speeding vehicle at Centennial and Huntington. A 20-year-old male Hispanic was contacted and a consensual search revealed a baggie of marijuana and hashish. He was arrested for possession of concentrated cannabis and possession of marijuana.
10. A residential burglary occurred in the 100 block of West La Sierra between 11:30 a.m. and 2:50 p.m. Unknown suspects entered the home by prying open a sliding glass door. The suspects ransacked rooms and stole two revolvers and a large amount of jewelry and cash.

Friday, February 5:

11. Around 1:19 a.m., units stopped a car at West Camino Real and South Baldwin for excessive speed and failure to stop at a stop sign. Upon contact, officers detected the odor of alcohol on the driver’s breath and person. A field sobriety test was conducted and it was determined that the 26-year-old male Asian driver was under the influence and was taken into custody.
12. A vehicle was stopped at Huntington and Centennial around 8:54 p.m. because there was a warrant attached to the license plate. A 23-year-old male Hispanic driver was contacted and a record check revealed that he had 3 outstanding warrants totaling almost \$28,000.

Saturday, February 6:

13. Around 2:03 p.m., units responded to the 700 block of West Naomi in reference to a fight in progress. Investigation revealed that an argument occurred between a male suspect and an off-duty Sheriff’s deputy. During the altercation, the suspect assaulted the deputy and removed the deputy’s pistol and threw it several feet away. An independent witness indicated that the suspect was the aggressor in the dispute. A 26-year-old Caucasian was arrested for battery on a peace officer, remove peace officer’s firearm, and vandalism.
14. Between 8:00 p.m. on January 1 and 6:00 p.m. on February 6, a grand theft occurred in the 2000 block of Highland Oaks. Unknown suspect(s) stole a large amount of coins, jewelry, and cash from a locked safe, and there was no sign of a forced entry.



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Not Even Heavy Rain Could Stop These Scouts

Photojournalist Lina Johnson Shares Her Observations

It was not easy getting out of bed on the morning of Saturday, February 6, 2010 to attend Girl Scout International Day, which officially started at 9:30 am. Although the weather forecast was "light rain" it seemed like "heavy rain" to me. It felt like a nice day to sleep in but I got myself out of bed and prepared my photographic equipment for rainy weather. I arrived at Saint Rita Church, O'Malley Hall at 8:45 in the morning and found the parking lot already completely full. There was a myriad of umbrellas surrounding the entrance to the hall. Once inside, I discovered a frenzy of young girls and their troop leaders, mothers and

presenting information they had learned, in various ways on stage. They also created exhibits to be displayed around O'Malley Hall with samplings of food from their chosen country, which could be purchased with tickets. Dressed in costumes, each troop performed a dance, a game or a song and recited facts or a combination of these. The presentations were entertaining and brought a smile to my face. Especially, Brownie Troop 5361, which represented Holland and wore authentic wooden clogs. This troop was considerate enough



Brownie Troop 5361 Holland Folk Dance

for the Crown Poppy Service Unit. The silver award is the second highest award a Girl Scout can receive and can only be earned by Cadette Scouts in the 6th through 9th grade and ages 11-14. It has taken these girls two years to get to this point and this particular service project required a 40-hour commitment. The girls exhibited poise and professionalism as they held the role of leaders during this exuberant event. It was evident that the process of earning the silver award had developed the girls as strong leaders.

The countries represented were India, Armenia, France, China, Australia, Japan, England,

Holland, Mexico, The Philippines, Peru, Italy, Guatemala and South Korea. The event opened with a flag ceremony and a prayer led by Saint Rita's Pastor, Father Richard Krekelberg. The troops were also given the opportunity to earn badges after the International Day presentations. Brownies could earn the "Try It" badge, called "Around the World", juniors "Celebrating the People" and cadettes "A World of Understanding".

All of the girls received a well-earned "International Day Patch".



Brownie Troop 13871 - China



Cadette Troop 5261 representing The Philippines

other family members in a state of complete excitement and unaffected by the downpour that was taking place outside. Taking it all in, I was glad that I slipped out of my pajamas to attend the event and to see with my own eyes the diligence of being a girl scout.

Fourteen troops participated in the International Day Event with the majority of the scouts residing in Pasadena and surrounding areas. Each of the troops had picked a country to represent and took a turn

to remove their clogs when walking around so not to cause unnecessary disturbance to others and their performances.

A distinctive feature of this International day was that it was being hosted by Troop 2581 which consists of five girls who acted as Master of Ceremonies.

These girls, Kate Jones, Fiona Eustace, Monica Perez, Olivia Pope and Andrea Hurtado were in the process of earning their silver award by coordinating this 2010 International Day

Alverno Clinches League Championship in Third Sport This Year



The Alverno High School Jaguars clinched the Horizon League basketball championship with a 37-34 win over Holy Family. Only days earlier, Jaguar soccer finished League play as champions for the tenth consecutive year. Add that to a Horizon League championship win in volleyball this fall, and you have a school with championship teams in three out of four sports so far this year.

Jaguar basketball ended the season 7-1-0, winning its first title since 2007. Alverno's Head of School Ann Gillick called the team "perhaps the most exciting basketball team we've had in ten years." Brent Fabbri coaches, and members of the Varsity team are: Alyssa Avila, Chelsea Bejjani, Mimi Capra, Kristina Cortez, Isabella Jusay, Meghan Malooly, Jasmine Ross, Marissa Seanez, and sisters Erica and Koko Tavera. Expect spirited and exciting games at playoffs!

Jaguar soccer, the 2009 CIF Soccer Champions, ended the season undefeated with 60 consecutive League wins. On this year's team are co-captains Jessica Capra and Maha Abdallah, Briana Alvarado, Regina Cabrera, Courtney Conte, Stephanie Hardin, Becca Iraheta, Liz Kinney, Sammi Lorey, Celina Minissian, Karineh Minissian, Devny Osuna, Chellee Parker, Sarah Purnell, Cassie Saavedra, Lauren Sanchez, Gabby Vasquez, and Mackenzie Winslow. "The team looks great," says Coach Ken Berry. "We're ready for CIF playoffs."

This fall, the Alverno volleyball team was also finished the season undefeated in Horizon League play.

Alverno High School is the independent, Catholic college-prep high school for girls in Sierra Madre. Its college-prep curriculum and emphasis on leadership attracts students from public and private schools throughout the San Gabriel Valley. The school will celebrate the 50th anniversary of preparing young women for the future with a series of events during the 2010-2011 school year.

Sierra Madre Little League Gets Underway February 27!



Join in on the Opening Day fun as Sierra Madre Little League starts its season on Saturday, February 27.

It starts at 8:00A with a parade through town, ending at Sierra Vista Park. There will be games, booths, obstacle courses, a climbing wall, music, and great food at the diner, in addition to a pancake breakfast. Opening Day ceremonies start at 9:00A on Heasley Field and Little League games begin at 10:30A.

For more information go to www.sml.org or call the SMLL President Pete Siberell at 626-355-6746.

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Current work includes writing the column, "Looking Up with Bob Eklund," in Mountain Views News, and writing newsletters for the Mount Wilson Observatory. I recently published a book, *First Star I See Tonight: an Exploration of Wonder*, and am finishing a second book, *Winds Aloft*.

For writing samples and resume, see my web site: www.bobeklund.com. Bob Eklund beklund@sprynet.com (310) 216-5947



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JOB OPENING: Senior Recreation Leader

The City of Sierra Madre is now accepting applications for the Senior Recreation Leader position. The Senior Recreation Leader is a front line position that implements recreation programs and leisure services for middle and high school students at the Youth Activity Center.

For more information contact Rosemary Garcia at 626-355-5278 or via email at: r.garcia@cityofsierramadre.com.

You may also get additional information by going to the city's website at: www.cityofsierramadre.com.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY

Alverno High School

200 N. Michillinda Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
(626) 355-3463 Head of School: Ann M. Gillick
E-mail address: agillick@alverno-hs.org

Arcadia High School

180 Campus Drive Arcadia, CA 91007
Phone: (626) 821-8370, Principal: David L. Vannasdall

Arroyo Pacific Academy

41 W. Santa Clara St. Arcadia, Ca,
(626) 294-0661 Principal: Phil Clarke
E-mail address: pclarke@arroyopacific.org

Barnhart School

240 W. Colorado Blvd. Arcadia, Ca. 91007
(626) 446-5588 Head of School: Joanne Testa Cross
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website: www.barnhartschool.com

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93 N. Baldwin Ave. Sierra Madre, Ca. 91024
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E-mail address: jml@bcslions.org

Carden of the Foothills School

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The Gooden School

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(626) 355-2410 Head of School: Patty Patano
website: www.goodenschool.org

High Point Academy

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Contact person: Garrett Newsom, Asst. Principal
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TABLE FOR TWO

By Peter Dills

Pasadena Sandwich Co.

Sometimes I wonder if I am getting to the best, most affordable and noteworthy restaurants in our metropolis.

Maybe, I could rush in, get a quick meal and move unto the next restaurant and never stop. But even that approach would not allow me to sufficiently embrace all of the dinning opportunities that are offered in Southern California. I stumble upon more than a few restaurants that are worth having us at their tables; unique places, family run establishments and food artists. Many of my readers also double as detectives and email me these secret spots from time to time. I'm even on Facebook, for those of you who are the computer sort and enjoy connecting with people, and sharing restaurants. I have seen a number of things over the years and I recently heard some news that made me reflect on a landscape of excellence. When I think of the best Pizza around, my mind drifts to Domenico's on Washington Blvd. For the best margarita, it has to be Jamie's and Roger's Rancho Mexican Restaurant on Foothill. For a Heavenly Cheeseburger, I go to Tops on Allen and Walnut, and for succulent Ribs, it is Robin's on Rosemead!!!

What about the staple of the "blue collar" man, the reliable sandwich? The Pasadena Sandwich Company on Sierra Madre Villa is the Gold Medal winner. I would go there everyday if I could, but the sandwiches are so big I would need a consistent companion to share just one. There is a common thread with all of my favorites. They are all owned and operated by families and they all carry the pride of American excellence in their work.

Stephen created beauty in the world; he was an artist in spirit and in operation. There is something very endearing in a man that loves his work, especially when it's what many of us would describe as common work. Sometimes you meet someone special and they remind you again that loving something, even something simple, is what gives the world its lasting beauty. The world is different because of Stephen; it is a better place because he forced it to be better and he nurtured it.

When you'd walk into his shop, Stephen would see you from the corner of his eye. He was working away, of course, but he could sense you were there. He worked standing up, and he understood that he operated an assembly line just as well, if not better, than Henry Ford. Stephen's was a Sandwich assembly line. Steve would yell out, "Pickle with that today, Peter?" "Sure, Steve, that sounds good."

For those who weren't sure what to order, even if he sounded impatient he would still - and gladly - give you his reassuring look and add, "Trust the cook." You were never disappointed.

We might be amazed by the number of people that a simple sandwich man touched, but he was much, much more than that, Stephen was an artist.

Stephen is survived by four children and, at this writing, my understanding is that they will carry his bright torch forward. My heart and our prayers are with the family.

The PCS was opened in 1995; Steve had worked for his parents for twenty years prior to that.

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Wed 10	THE L.A. SONG SIRENS
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HOWARD Hays As I See It

First off, I'd like to go back to the chart Greg used in his column last week. It shows an FY 2009 federal budget deficit of \$1.4 trillion, more than triple the 2008 deficit of \$455 billion - which Greg refers to as "the last budget of President Bush". Actually, the 2009 budget is the last prepared under the Bush administration. Remember the TARP bailout? That was a parting gift, \$700 billion courtesy of U.S. taxpayers, to the Wall Street oligarchy ("those members of society who are most productive") from the outgoing Bush team - leaving the incoming Obama administration to deal with the consequences.

Then there's the budgetary trick during the Bush years of keeping the costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, estimated from \$8 billion to \$12 billion a month, off-budget (and unpaid for) - through "emergency supplemental" legislation. President Obama ended that practice and the costs are now included in the budget. It may result in higher deficit figures, but at least it's honest.

Going through newspapers, there's something to be learned in exploring connections between articles seemingly unrelated. Last week in the L.A. Times, there was the swearing-in of Scott Brown, the new Republican senator from Massachusetts (he's been in office two weeks, so is now working on his memoirs). Elsewhere was an article on California families receiving notice their health insurance premiums will increase by more than a third.

Senator Brown has been heralded as the "41st vote" needed to kill healthcare legislation, elected by Massachusetts residents already protected under their state's plan - one similar to what's being considered in Washington, and which Brown himself supported. That vote number has meaning only if one considers the likes of Sens. Joe Lieberman (I-Ct) and Ben Nelson (D-Neb) to be supporters of healthcare reform. It refers to filibuster and cloture rules (appearing nowhere in the Constitution) which can be used as an excuse by those professing concern (add Sens. Mary Landrieu D-La and Max Baucus D-Mt to the list) to avoid taking actions that might displease corporate donors.

Despite the arrival of Senator Brown, presuming the death of healthcare reform is premature, at best. Nonetheless, the prospect made carriers so giddy they dispensed with all pretense of responsibility (and morality) and jacked up premiums while asserting their "right" to do so as often as they please. According to the Times, the 2.5 million Californians holding individual policies are becoming the first victims. A Bay Area couple said their 39% increase to \$1,658 a month, plus a \$130 increase for their 26-year-old daughter, means that as of March 1 their monthly premium will exceed the mortgage payment on their home in pricey San Rafael. Anthem Blue Cross assures they "share our members' concerns", and attributes the increase to "rising costs". A few days earlier, they reported an eight-fold increase in profits for the last quarter of 2009.

Unlike automobile and homeowners' insurance, health insurance rates can be raised without state approval. The only catch is that 70% of premiums must be spent on medical care - and Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner vowed to make sure that's still the case. (Anthem says they hired their own actuary who's already determined everything's okay.) HHS Secretary Kathleen Sibelius wrote to Anthem Blue Cross president Leslie Margolin, stating, "These extraordinary increases are up to 15 times faster than inflation and threaten to make health care unaffordable for hundreds of thousands of Californians, many of whom are already struggling to make ends meet in a difficult economy." She notes that Anthem's parent company, WellPoint, earned \$2.7 billion in profits in the last quarter of 2009, and wonders whether "premium increases would be invested in better medical care or insurance company overhead costs like salaries (WellPoint's CEO received \$9.8 million total compensation for 2008), profits, and advertising."

Secretary Sibelius might also have mentioned money going to buy off Congress and prep talking points for Fox News; WellPoint spent \$2.4 million on lobbying in 2009. There's also legal costs, such as the \$10 million settlement Anthem paid to the California Department of Managed Health Care in 2008 when it had to reinstate 1,770 policy holders kicked off the rolls to improve their balance sheet.

For the benefit of insurance CEOs turning to my column for advice, I would suggest such rate increases are ill-timed from a public relations standpoint as we enter a new phase of public debate. Going into it, there are a number of misconceptions to be straightened out. A recent Pew Research survey made three things clear: First, people don't like the healthcare bill; second, people like the things that are in the healthcare bill; and third, people don't know what's in the healthcare bill. A number of Massachusetts voters stated they didn't like the healthcare bill - but would if it included a "public option".

When President Obama meets with Republicans later this month to hear their ideas in front of TV cameras, familiar talking points will be repeated. We'll hear about "tort reform" as a means of reducing costs, though where it's been tried, it hasn't. There's being able to sell policies "across state lines", but that's already in the bill - it's called the "exchange". Nobody wants a bureaucracy coming between ourselves and our doctor, but for most of us anything would be preferable to a for-profit insurance company. According to a report from the California Nurses Association, between 2002 and mid-2009 insurance companies forcibly came between patients and their doctors 48 million times in California in rejecting 22% of submitted claims. And yes, people died as a result.

Back in 1992, President Bill Clinton predicted that forty years from now we'll find it inconceivable there was a time we allowed families to face financial ruin because a child got sick. As I see it, the more insurance companies feel emboldened, the more people will find it inconceivable we're allowing it to happen today.

GREG Welborn

Islam Needs A Civil War

"The test of every religious or political system is the man that it forms - Amial"

February 11th marked the anniversary of the birth of the Islamic revolution in Iran, and somewhat ironically, the Iranian Mullahs promised a great wrath would be visited upon the west on this day. Sadly, the only wrath visited on anyone on this day was directed by the Mullahs on their own people who sought to demonstrate for democracy. The conflict in Iran between the Mullahs and Iran's citizens is symbolic of the battle between good and evil which must be waged within Islam. It is not a conflict between America and the Middle East or between Christianity and Islam. As painful as it is to realize, a civil war between good and evil must be waged within Islam itself, just as Christianity underwent its own civil war, and we may be seeing its genesis in the streets of Tehran right now.

Today, there are two predominant strains of Islam. We hear on the news that Islam is a peace-loving religion, but we have also seen vast crowds of Muslims calling for the destruction of America. Trying to reconcile this contradiction is impossible unless you realize there are truly two Islams. There is the peace-loving strain of Islam with a long history of tolerance, and then there is the repressive strain of Islam, which has been visited on us only recently by historical standards.

First, there was classical Islam that spawned a great culture and established a body of law, which to this day condemns terrorism and does not permit suicide. Even jihad was restricted to retaking your own property and contains strict prohibitions against wholesale slaughter of non-combatants. The Islam of old was quite tolerant of other religions in its midst. Classical Islam still exists today, and we should pray that it survives.

On the other side, is the Islam we should do everything in our power to vanquish. This Islam, dominant since the early 1970s, dismisses the teachings of classical Islam along with the Islamic and Judeo-Christian concept of an absolute moral code. It dismisses women and non-believers as unworthy of basic human rights. This Islam produces Muslim clerics and intellectuals, like those who rule Iran and those in Al Qaeda who seek to rule the world, who justify terrorist attacks and highjackings.

Pretending that the repressive side is small and confined to a few isolated patches of real estate would be self-deluding. Most self-proclaimed Islamic states are repressive towards their own populations. Countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Taliban-controlled parts of Afghanistan not only strike out at the western world, but they also suppress their own women, ethnic minorities, and the average Muslim-in-the-street who dares to challenge the beliefs of the ruling order. Even the supposedly more moderate Islamic states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or Indonesia repress various sectors of their population. In these countries, state policy is intolerant of other religions, and political dissent is quickly and severely punished. In several Islamic countries, slavery is widely practiced and condoned.

Even with these examples, some may still resist the notion that the darker strain of Islam is dominant today. But how else are we to explain that not a single Egyptian mosque observed even a minute of silence for the victims of the terrorist attack? Why did the vast majority of the people in Pakistan and Indonesia indicate that they supported the 9-11 terrorists? Why don't the vast majority of Muslim clerics condemn terrorism outright? The only plausible answer to these questions is that the hateful, repressive strain of Islam dominates Islamic schools, governments and seminaries today.

Any honest assessment forces us to conclude that the darker side of Islam is dominant and seeking greater ascendancy. But, and herein lies the hope for Islam, in this honest assessment we would also find a corollary to Christianity's struggle with good and evil.

Many centuries ago Christianity was intolerant, repressive and in most places thoroughly corrupted. In essence, it took a long and protracted civil war to restore Christianity's original vision. The birth of Protestantism started this battle, leading to the 30 years war. The American Revolution continued it, establishing freedom of religion. The battle was ultimately successfully concluded through the abolitionist movement and our American civil war, which finally eliminated slavery as an acceptable Christian practice. Thankfully, because brave believers were willing to fight the good fight, intolerance and repression in the name of God are no longer accepted by most faithful Christians.

Islam must also fight its own civil war if it is to again resume its role as a moral religion. Today, the dominant strain of Islam at every institutional level is at best repressive and at worst inhumane. Muslims in most parts of the world are fed a daily diet of hatred toward the west. Without an effective counter message, they believe it. This is why Islam needs its own civil war just as Christianity had to undergo that conflict.

We can hope and pray that only a few lives will be lost. But if we truly love our Muslim brothers, we must refrain from that very human tendency to simply pray for peace. When any culture is conquered, it can be said that there is peace. But peace, at the price of subjugation, is not the answer. The conflict between good and evil within Islam must be waged. Islam must be purged of the hate which seeks to consume it. It may be starting in Iran, but this battle will have to be waged across the globe by Muslims of all nationalities. Only then will Muslims escape spiritual emptiness and attain a measure of the grandeur that it once commanded. Only then will there truly be peace.

About the author: Gregory J. Welborn is a freelance writer and has spoken to several civic and religious organizations on cultural and moral issues. He lives in the Los Angeles area with his wife and 3 children and is active in the community. He can be reached at gregwelborn@earthlink.net.

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8:30 A.M.	CHECK-IN	9:15 A.M.	PANEL PRESENTATIONS—QUESTION & ANSWERS
9:00 A.M.	WELCOME	10:25 A.M.	FACILITATED BREAKOUT SESSIONS
9:05 A.M.	OPENING REMARKS	11:25 A.M.	REPORT BACK TO THE CITIZENS
		11:45 A.M.	WRAP-UP AND CALL TO ACTION

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Mission Statement
The traditions of the community newspaper and the concerns of our readers are this newspaper's top priorities. We support a prosperous community of well-informed citizens. We hold in high regard the values of the exceptional quality of life in our community, including the magnificence of our natural resources. Integrity will be our guide.

HAIL Hamilton



While I was cruising Australia and New Zealand over the holidays I met many Aussies and Kiwis. Eventually the conversation would turn to the topic of health care –or lack of it—in the United States. I was asked, “Why doesn’t the United States have universal health care?” Visitors to the US, I was told, buy travel insurance to avoid paying the high cost of health care if they get sick while vacationing.

I also learned Australia and New Zealand have private health insurance. A British couple who retired in Australia told me they have private health insurance because they hadn’t paid into government system. I was floored when they told me their annual premium for Australian private health insurance was less than my monthly premium for Kaiser-Permanente.

As I have written in earlier editorials, universal health care is necessary for the US to expand health coverage

Health Care - US Compared to Australia and New Zealand

to everyone and stop skyrocketing health care costs. In Australia and New Zealand government health care is aimed at extending access to health care as widely as possible and setting minimum standards. Both countries have implemented universal health care through a combination of legislation, regulation and taxation. Apparently the governments of Australia and New Zealand work for their people—not corporate special interests like they do in Washington.

In Australia, Medibank — as it was then known — was introduced, by the Whitlam Labor government on 1 July 1975, through the 1973 Health Insurance Act. The exact structure of Medibank/Medicare, in terms of the size of the rebate to doctors and hospitals and the way it has administered, has varied over the years. The original Medibank program proposed a 1.35% levy (with low income exemptions) but these bills were rejected by the Senate, and so Medibank was funded from general taxation. In 1976, the Fraser Government introduced a 2.5% levy and split Medibank in two: a universal scheme called Medibank Public and a government-owned private health

insurance company, Medibank Private. During the 1980s, Medibank Public was renamed Medicare by the Hawke Labor government, which also changed the funding model, to an income tax surcharge, known as the Medicare Levy, which was set at 1.5%, with exemptions for low income earners. The Howard Coalition government introduced an additional levy of 1.0%, known as the Medicare Levy Surcharge, for those on high annual incomes (\$70,000) and do not have adequate levels of private hospital coverage. This was part of an effort by the Coalition to encourage take-up of private health insurance. According to WHO, government funding covered 67.5% of Australia’s health care expenditures in 2009; private sources covered the remaining 32.5% of expenditures.

The healthcare system of New Zealand has undergone significant changes throughout the past several decades. Currently, New Zealand has a mixed public-private system for delivering healthcare. In New Zealand hospitals are public and treat citizens or permanent residents free of charge and are managed by District Health Boards. Under the Labour coalition

governments, 1999 - 2008, there were plans to make primary health care available free of charge. At present government subsidies its existing health care system by taxes.

The New Zealand government agency PHARMAC subsidizes certain pharmaceuticals depending upon their category. Co-payments exist however these are ignored if the user has a community health services card or high user health card. In 2005, New Zealand spent 8.9% of GDP on health care. 77% was government expenditure. So how does our health care system compare with the Australian and New Zealand systems—not very well? The US sends 17.5% of its GNP on health care including Medicare, Medicaid and Veterans hospitals. Yet still not everyone is covered. Presently forty-seven million Americans have no health insurance at all. This is totally unacceptable. Our lack of universal health care is morally wrong and economically unsustainable. The US should be leading the world in health care. Instead, we are falling further behind. We can learn a lot from our mates down under.



STUART Tolchin On...LIFE WE HAVE TO TALK TO ONE ANOTHER

My son had an eye operation yesterday and today we had an early morning appointment to see the doctor who would tell us what the rest of our lives would be like. I’m doing my best to try and make some sense out of this difficult time in our lives and I’m trying to answer my son’s question of why difficult stuff is happening to him. Without thinking much about it I brought along a copy of the Book of Genesis Illustrated with me and was describing some of the stories to my son. The Book of Genesis Illustrated is compiled by R. Crumb, the former infamous Underground Comics creator, who carefully explains in the introduction that he “does not believe that the Bible is the word of God or inspired by God” and that it is solely the words of men. I agree completely with the author and also agree that “nonetheless, it (The Bible) “is a powerful text with

layers of meaning that reach deep into our collective consciousness” and that “its power derives from its having been a collective endeavor that evolved and condensed over many generations.” I guess I thought that by going over the book it might help my son and I to accept the arbitrariness and seeming unfairness of life. We need some help.

As I was going over the book and doing my best to explain to my son my view that the people described in the Bible were not real historical people I felt disapproval being expressed by the face of the woman seated next to my son. Yes, she was a religious person, and a Social Worker to boot, who let me know non-verbally, at least at first, that she strongly disapproved of what I was saying. I was a bit restrained by the fact that we were in a public waiting room and by the fact that my son and his bandage-covered eye were present and really was unwilling to say much to her. Still, inside I was steaming! It bothers me that, despite

my certainty of the non-existence of any super-natural creator, religious people still make me feel like a rebellious smart-ass teenager too full of himself to even engage in a conversation.

The same thing happens when I meet people who have children who have enlisted in the military. I have been anti-war for all of my life and I think that families that encourage their kids to enlist are really child-abusers who deserve to be punished. Yet, it’s impossible for me to say this to a person with a child in the military risking his or her life fighting for no apparent purpose in some distant place. I wish I had the courage to be inappropriate. Maybe we wouldn’t have wars if nobody was willing to go and fight. Similarly what would happen if all of us who disapprove of the behavior of banks and corporations would stop utilizing these institutions? That is the message of Thoreau. Live and act in accord with your own principles and don’t worry about convincing other people. If you have enough courage change will come.

Strange, isn’t it, that the lady within the waiting room was acting in accord with her own principles and I was the one

who really wasn’t willing to talk about the disagreement. My asserted certainty that the Love, Memory, Dreams, and Gods of Mankind are simply the products of random accidents that have influenced the evolution of the human brain is simply not very sexy. It’s almost a century and a half since Darwin, and most Americans still don’t want to forsake the belief in some overseeing Creator who cares about us and presents us with a path to salvation, immortality and eternal tranquility. Even I wouldn’t kick that out of bed.

To finish the metaphor do we risk sleeping alone if we take a risk and talk to people with whom we disagree? What would happen if we expressed our disapproval of wasteful government and stopped paying taxes and even mentioned this to other people and were willing to talk about it? Personally, I’m not even ready to take the first step. It’s so much easier to feel superior to other people rather than to confront my own fears and try and live consistently. Anyhow, complaining about others is about the only thing most people feel free to talk about as long as the “others” aren’t there to respond. God or no God I just don’t think this is the right road to anywhere.



RICH Johnson

How about a dollar and cents excursion down memory lane? If you’re brave enough lets take a peek at the prices us old timers paid for stuff over the last 50+ years.

Gasoline, for starters, sold for about 25 - 30 cents a gallon through the 1950-60s. Then again cars in that era typically got around 15 miles per gallon (if you were lucky.) A hospital room stay in 1958 would set you back about \$28.00 per day. Today I think that buys you a Q-tip.

In the early 1960s a McDonald’s hamburger set you back about 15 cents. The hamburger went to 18 cents in 1968, 30 cents in 1974, 50 cents in

1984. And it is holding at 89 cents today (which would buy you about six back in 1965.) In 1970 a six-pack of Coke cost you 73 cents. A half-gallon of milk was 57 cents and a loaf of bread was 24 cents.

First class stamps hovered around the 4 - 8 cents in the mid-sixties. It jumped to 10 cents in 1973 and 13 cents in 1975. In 1981 it went from 18 cents to 20 cents. Today it’s at 44 cents (Of course we have cell phones, email, fax machines, Facebook and texting to take the place of snail mail.)

In 1977 you could have your choice of a Corvette or a Porsche at a price right around \$9,000. A pair of Levi Jeans set you back about \$16.00 in 1978. The average cost of a new house in 1979 was \$54,000. In 1981 a movie ticket averaged right about \$2.90.

Where Have All The Prices Gone?

I would tell you what a cell phone, personal computer, and IPOD cost back in the 1970s but, oh yeah, they didn’t exist. I bought my first computer in 1979. It was a Commodore 64, which meant it had 64k (that’s 64,000 bytes of memory.) It hooked up to a television set. Hey, it was a start. My first Macintosh, purchased in 1987, had 1 Megabyte (1 million bytes of memory.) It came with a 20 Megabyte hard drive. These days you can buy a 1 Terabyte hard drive which is a gigabyte is 1000 megabytes. And a Terabyte is 1000 gigabytes. So a gigabyte is equal to 50 of my 20-megabyte hard drive. So wrap your head around this: A terabyte is equal to 50,000 20-megabyte hard drives. All this really important information I got from online and out of books. How

is that for a segue into promoting the Friends of the Sierra Madre Library 40th Annual Wine and Cuisine Tasting Event this Friday night (the 19th) at the Alverno Villa On Michillinda north of Sierra Madre Blvd. It’s from 7:00 pm to 9:30.

If you have never been, it’s a wonderful evening. Lots of familiar faces, great food and wine. Magicians, musicians, and a silent auction help round out a terrific time. And it helps support the wonderful task of keeping our library vibrant, alive and cutting edge. Tickets are \$60 and can be purchased at: Sierra Madre Public Library, The Bottle Shop, Arnold’s Frontier Hardware, Iris Intrigue, Charcuterie, Savor the Flavor and Sierra Madre Books. Please come join me.

Letters To The Editor

Canyon Zone Committee One Sided?

Dear Editor:

The current Canyon Residential Zone Committee appears to be one-sided and noticeably absent of differing views which gives the appearance that equal representation is not important. It is purported this current committee group was selected with the express view not to allow ‘builders’ and ‘architects’ to serve. One would think that divergent views and expert advice would be a good thing from people who deal with zoning as a matter of profession on a daily basis, thus providing pertinent perspective to the Committee’s agenda. Otherwise it would seem unfair and unwise to the total Canyon population.

Citizens have a strong sense of fairness and this Canyon Zone Committee appears lopsided in its make-up which could be interpreted as not representing a true sampling of the views and opinions of fellow Canyon residents. Why else would builders or architects be purposefully shunned? If the current committee is attempting make the canyon zone solely with their own ideas, and lock out other views, it is fundamentally unfair in its representation of all citizens of the Canyon. Obviously, it is assumed any group endeavoring to create a new canyon zoning would be interested in achieving well-rounded representation of the entire community. Group think should be avoided in developing a new zoning ordinance.

The establishment of this Committee to preserve the Canyon’s “unique residential setting and (its) rustic and historic character” seems honorable, but how did the Canyon become this unique setting, this rustic sylvan paradise we have all enjoyed all these years WITHOUT such a committee? Why is what we have had for countless years no longer sufficient? Micro-managing the properties of Canyon citizens could become more of a problem than a solution. We do not need more local intrusive government intervention. We can be trusted to manage our own properties under current ordinances without a select group telling us we need more regulation. Where is the outcry for such changes, other than from a micro group of unsolicited advocates?

Why not first put to vote whether the Canyon residents want a zoning revision and more local government supervision? Why do we need this Canyon Residential Zone Committee? Why is this advocacy group necessary for maintaining the Canyon in its present state? If it can be proven we are losing our uniqueness, that the Canyon is disappearing as we know it, then maybe we could organize a representative group

of concerned citizens to tackle the issues; otherwise it appears to be an oligarchy dictating more regulation just because they think they know better than the rest of us.

It is understood there will be public meetings (Feb. 22 and March 22) where we can challenge and question the proposals of this Committee, but who will write the final draft? If the current group writes the draft, will other opinions and input be represented? The appearance of a biased canyon zoning panel does not bode well for fair representation of all. Whoever gave their blessing to this group could have been more sensitive in creating a more balanced cross segment of our community which is a basic right. It is hoped that we could do a better job at administering a local government for ALL Canyon residents.

Greg and Mary Prout, Sierra Madre



Help Our Neighbors In Haiti: Send your donations to:

<http://www.unicef.ca/kiwanis> or
<http://www.redcross.org>

Hey! What About Our Restaurants?

Dear Editor:

I have been a faithful reader of your paper since its beginning. One thing that has bothered me for some time is the lack of coverage of local Sierra Madre restaurants by your restaurant critic, Mr. Dills. I actually went through all your archived issues just to make sure I wasn’t misspeaking. I found out of approximately 140 columns, there were nine or ten mentions of Sierra Madre restaurants. Six or seven of those mentioned were in name only being lumped together in columns listing several other restaurants. There were only two columns devoted solely to Sierra Madre restaurants. And one column promoting both Lozano’s and Zelo Pizza in Arcadia. I wondered why I saw several restaurants mentioned multiple times over the years including at least two columns on the Balboa Bay Club all the way down in Newport Beach. One particularly frustrating column doing a critique of the best pizza around mysteriously ignored Village Pizzeria whose pizza, in the opinion of many, is the best.

It’s a shame your paper doesn’t devote more attention to the restaurants in our own back yard. They sure could use the support. I have made a few suggestions to Mr. Dills over the years but they fall on deaf ears. I have never seen one of my suggestions ever acted upon. Maybe you could find a critic with a little more interest in the local places.

Sierra Madre Resident

Looking Up with Bob Eklund

Imaging Pluto's White, Dark-Orange and Charcoal-Black Terrain



NASA has released the most detailed and dramatic images ever taken of the distant dwarf planet Pluto. The images from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope show an icy, mottled, dark molasses-colored world undergoing seasonal surface color and brightness changes.

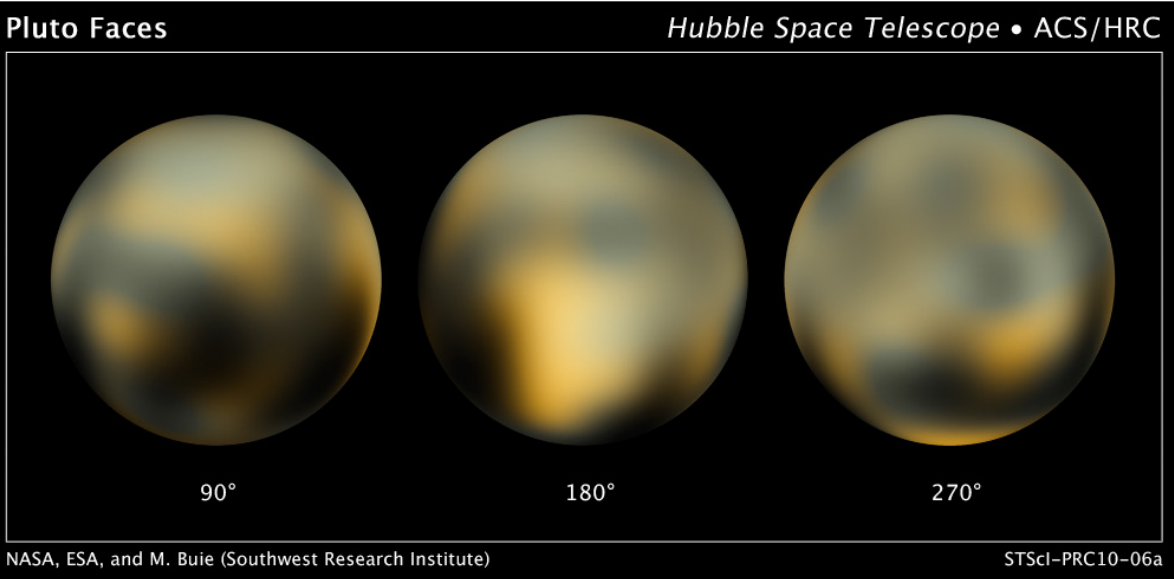
Pluto has become significantly redder, while its illuminated northern hemisphere is getting brighter. These changes are most likely consequences of surface ice melting on the sunlit pole and then refreezing on the other pole, as Pluto heads into the next phase of its 248-year-long seasonal cycle. Analysis shows the dramatic change in color took place from 2000 to 2002.

The Hubble pictures confirm that Pluto is a dynamic world undergoing dramatic atmospheric changes, not simply a ball of ice and rock. These seasonal changes are as much propelled by the planet's 248-year elliptical orbit as by its axial tilt. Pluto is unlike Earth, where the planet's tilt alone drives seasons. Pluto's seasons are asymmetric because of its elliptical orbit. Spring transitions to polar summer quickly in the northern hemisphere, because Pluto is moving faster along its orbit when it is closer to the Sun.

The images will help planetary astronomers interpret more than three decades of Pluto observations from other telescopes.

"The Hubble observations are the key to tying together these other diverse constraints on Pluto—and showing how it all makes sense—by providing a context based on weather and

seasonal changes, which opens other new lines of investigation," says principal investigator Marc Buie of the Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colo.



These Hubble images, taken by the Advanced Camera for Surveys, will remain the sharpest-ever view of Pluto until NASA's New Horizons probe is within six months of its flyby during 2015. The Hubble images will be invaluable for picking the planet's most interesting hemisphere for imaging by the New Horizons probe.

The New Horizons spacecraft will pass by Pluto so quickly that only one hemisphere will be photographed in detail. Particularly noticeable in the Hubble images is a bright spot that has

each Pluto snapshot, which is important for taking the most detailed pictures possible," Buie said. With no chance for re-exposures, accurate models for the surface of Pluto are essential for properly exposed images.

Hubble's camera can only resolve surface variations a few hundred miles across—too coarse for understanding surface geology. But in terms of surface color and brightness, these images reveal a complex-looking world with white, dark-orange, and charcoal-black terrain. The overall color is believed to be a result of ultraviolet radiation from the distant Sun breaking up methane present on Pluto's surface, leaving behind a dark and red carbon-rich residue.

The Hubble images are a few pixels wide. Through a technique called dithering, multiple, slightly offset pictures are combined through computer-image processing to synthesize a higher-resolution view than can be seen in a single exposure. "This has taken four years and 20 computers operating continuously and simultaneously to accomplish," Buie said.

Hubble information and images:

- * <http://hubblesite.org/news/2010/06>
- * <http://www.nasa.gov/hubble>
- * <http://www.boulder.swri.edu/~buie/pluto>

You can contact Bob Eklund at: beklund@MtnViewsNews.com



The Internet's largest ongoing private enterprise (officially known as Google) has shown itself to be entirely comfortable with the huge computing enterprises it routinely undertakes as well as the huge splashes these efforts create when these projects are made public. Starting with its inception and its stated goal to organize the seemingly infinite amount of information on the web, to its latest serious foray into the social networking arena (Buzz), Google has proven itself as big as big gets and just as ambitious. Its war chest of cash reserves is as large as the entire national budget of some countries and its sphere of influence in the computing world can only be described as universal. Not content with conquering the world of private and business computing, the internet behemoth has begun offering its cloud computing array of SaaS (Software as a Service) products to municipalities as an alternative enterprise computing model rather than the traditional self-managed infrastructure model that business, educational and private enterprise has used for years. The Google cloud computing model promises better service, security and availability but since the service provider (Google in this case) is a private business concern whose basic business model is the sale of advertising to the highest bidder, the case can easily be made that the public service sector might not be the best arena

for Google to participate in as private profit is its main concern. Despite the possible conflict-of-interest issues that have been raised, several high-profile municipalities have opted-in for Google's offerings. We have yet to see exactly how this will turn out for all parties involved.

Google's latest big-box project is Gigabit Fiber to the Home. Earlier this week Google announced its plans to test ultra fast fibre-optic broadband home connections to a small number of test users (50,000 to 500,000 as of this writing). This project has the potential to deliver speeds of up to 1 Gb/s to the home user desktop. Speed of this magnitude has the potential to give the home user the ability to download a full-length feature film in 2 seconds. The increased data transfer capacity would effectively re-write what is now possible in terms of data handling in fields as diverse as Film Production to Medical Imaging processing. The mere existence of the technology would ensure that applicable uses for it (some legit and some not so legit) would proliferate beyond the geeky imaginations of many. As of this writing no one is really sure if Google has designs on rewiring the entire nation and large swaths of the digital world but one thing is for certain: a player this big, pursuing a project this big, has the very real potential to re-write broadband policy for the telecommunications industry on a very large scale.

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Could you use help in preparing written communications for your business? I have extensive experience in writing and editing business documents including brochures, proposals, newsletters, resumes, customer success stories, press releases, and articles for newspapers and magazines.

Current work includes writing the column, "Looking Up with Bob Eklund," in Mountain Views News, and writing newsletters for the Mount Wilson Observatory. I recently published a book, First Star I See Tonight: an Exploration of Wonder, and am finishing a second book, Winds Aloft.

For writing samples and resume, see my web site: www.bobeklund.com. Bob Eklund beklund@sprynet.com (310) 216-5947

THE ROOTS OF SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

By Christopher Nyerges



Valentine's Day. Hearts. Chocolates. Flowers. Pretty cards to your sweetheart. The newspaper advertisements tell us what Valentine's Day is all about: jewelry for your loved one, chocolates, and sexy underwear for your wife or girlfriend. So this is nothing more than a day to flirt and arouse passions in your loved ones, right?

Hold on! At least one of the newspaper advertisements says "Saint" Valentine's Day. What's that all about?

That's right. February 14 is the day set aside to commemorate a real historical person named Valentinus. With just a little bit of research, we learn that this Valentinus person was stoned, clubbed, and beheaded in about the year 270 A.D. He was violently killed by an unruly mob. That's the meaning buried there in that word "martyr." But why? And how have we come to associate Valentinus with chocolates and hearts and lovers?

It turns out that there were at least two people called Valentinus – possibly more – who lived in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries. One – who the Catholic Church now called Saint Valentine – was beheaded in 270 A.D.

Another Valentinus lived about a century earlier and founded one of the most important sects of Gnosticism. He was born in Egypt and educated in Alexandria. He settled in Rome during the reign of Pope Hyginus and taught there for more than 20 years. He attracted a large following to his beliefs, due in part to his intelligence, his eloquence of speech, and his forceful arguments.

But the teachings of this Valentinus differed in some ways from the Christian church of that time, and thus he was not selected for the office of Bishop. So Valentinus broke off from the Christian church, left Rome, and continued to develop his doctrines.

There are no original surviving documents from the teachings of Valentinus. So, if you want to discover what he actually believed and taught, you have to study fragmentary quotations found in the writings of his orthodox Christian opponents. Through research, we learn that Valentinus was influenced by Plato (the main source of the teachings of Socrates), Zoroastrianism, and Christianity. Valentinus also spoke of a spiritual realm which he called Pleroma, which consisted of a succession of aeons, or "emanations," evolving from an original divine being. These aeons have been described as the layers of an onion, with each layer being a wholly complete reality.

The term Gnosticism came from the word "gnosis," defined as spiritual knowledge. Those

who followed this line of study were called the Gnostics, and many were referred to as Christian Gnostics. But by the third century, the more orthodox Christian church (and the political power of the day), decided to oppose and persecute the Gnostics. By the end of the third century, Gnosticism as a distinct movement had largely disappeared.

Now, here's the quiz: Where in all this did you hear anything about chocolates, hearts, greeting cards, bunnies, jewelry, roses, or lace underwear? Plus, there doesn't appear to be any historical connection with any of the individuals named Valentinus with the date of February 14.

It turns out that in the pre-Christian days, there was a celebration in honor of Lupercus, a pastoral god, sometimes identified with Faunus or Pan. Faunus is depicted as having the body of a man but the horns, pointed ears, tail, and hind legs of a goat. That is, Faunus is more or less identical with the satyr, who was said to be lecherous, lustful, and always ready to party.

The pre-Christian observance of this day was called Lupercalia, which fell on February 15. Most of what people do today in the name of "celebrating St. Valentine's Day" has its roots in the ancient feast of Lupercalia. On Lupercalia, cards were given (often with subtle or overt sexual overtones), and men reportedly chased women through the streets (sounds somewhat like Mardi Gras).

It is difficult to ascertain why the commemoration of Valentinus was used to supplant, uplift, and supercede the already-existing commemoration of Lupercus, but that's what happened. Yet, very little of the trappings of modern St. Valentine's Day have anything to do with the historical Valentinus.

And that's really a shame, since Valentinus was as important as perhaps Socrates or Pythagoras, and yet most of us only associate him with the silly commercialism of Lupercalia's remnants.

Certainly it's possible that the Church engineered this substitution so that people would elevate their practices on this day, though there is no evidence that that has happened.

So rather than waste money and time on chocolates and red cards, why not take the time to study something meaningful about the great teacher Valentinus. Do this with your loved ones, and your family. You may discover that much of what he taught is very much relevant today.

[Nyerges is the editor of Wilderness Way magazine, and author of several books. He can be reached at Box 41834, Eagle Rock, CA 90041, or www.ChristopherNyerges.com, where one can view his various blogs.]



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The Senior Spot

By Bruce Lamarche

FEEL LESS ISOLATED

Seniors who are isolated from family by divorce, death of a spouse, or distance, can have a full life. Those who have been "homebodies" all their lives may need time to transition to more social environments. Becoming reconnected is imperative for both mental and physical health.

One of the most difficult challenges facing seniors is maintaining relationships with people who share their interests, hobbies and experiences. Research indicates peer-to-peer interaction is essential for healthy and rewarding aging. *Consider these ideas:*

Participate in senior groups. Contact your local fitness center or city hall for ideas about community groups. Senior centers have planned activities such as exercise, meals, games and trips.

Learn new skills. Find a new passion. Acquire new abilities and exercise your mind. Sign up for a class at your local junior college. For a few dollars, you will have an entire semester of fun and learning. This can be a craft class, history, art, or any of a multitude of subjects. At home keep stimulated with brain teasers, cards, or puzzles, for example.

Volunteer or find a part-time job. Volunteer to work with an organization whose cause you believe in. It will help give your life purpose and meaning. A fun part-time job will get you out and keep you going!

Establish or maintain friendships. Make new friends and keep the old! Having friends reduces stress! Get together often and stay in touch regularly with friends.

Get involved. Contact your public library, community center, or volunteer at your local

police department. Most local police stations have senior volunteers who help in many ways. These can be important contributions.

Go and visit your family! It is interesting to note how many seniors are separated from their children by distance and yet make little effort to go and visit them, usually asking, "When are you coming to visit me?" Children of seniors with children of their own are most likely at the stage of life where earning a living and children's activities keep them very busy. While many children desire to spend time with senior parents, they are usually too involved to pack up, leave jobs, deal with grandkids, and travel. Seniors rationalize that they don't want to intrude on these busy lives. In many cases, this is not valid. Grown children often hunger for interaction with their parents. I know I do! We can become that incredible grandpa or grandma to our grandchildren who could benefit so much by this historical role. This opportunity would be missed with the "once-a-year" visit to Grandma and Grandpa's house. Spend some time on their turf.

Positive aging happens with the next step. It is the best yet. Step out of your comfort zone and make a decision . . . to get out and do something enjoyable; something important. It's your life, live it!

You can reach Bruce by phone-(626) 335-3412 or e-mail: blamarche@verizon.net

This article is provided by Bruce Lamarche, a member of Society of Certified Senior Advisors®, www.csa.us. Bruce's company, R & B Reverse Mortgage Services, helps seniors make an informed decision about obtaining a reverse mortgage. www.LASeniorMortgage.com

SENIOR HAPPENINGS

FYI:

LA County Offering
FREE H1N1 Vaccine
Tuesday, March 2, 2010
1:00 pm to 3:30 pm
Sierra Madre Community Center /
Sierra Madre Room
611 E. Sierra Madre Blvd.
Vaccines are available to anyone 6 months or older - no reservations necessary. For more information, please contact the Senior Desk at (626) 355-7394

Older "Sierra Madre" American of the Year

The Senior Community Commission is now accepting nominations for the Older "Sierra Madre" American of the Year. If you know someone living in Sierra Madre who has demonstrated outstanding community service and is 60 years of age or older, please contact the Senior Services Desk at (626) 355-7394 for a nomination form.

Nominations are due to the Community & Personnel Services Department, 611 E. Sierra Madre Blvd., by Monday, March 1, 2010. The Senior Community Commission will discuss nominees at its Study Session on March 4, 2010 and announce the honoree at their regular scheduled meeting also on March 4 at 3 pm in the City Council Chambers. The honoree will also be recognized at a reception held in their honor at the Sierra Madre Hart Park House in May.

AARP Safe Driving Class

Next class: February 23 & 24 - 9 am to 1 pm both days
\$12 for AARP Members & \$14 for Non-members
Please call the Senior Desk at (626) 355-7394 to register in advance or for more information.

FEBRUARY EXCURSION

February 26th - L.A. Subway Art Tour - join our escort on an adventure that will take you on the Gold Line to Union Station where you will meet your docent who will take you on a 2 hour art tour of Metro's artwork via the Red Line. After the tour you will have lunch on your own and return to Sierra Madre via the Gold Line & Gateway Shuttle.

No money will be collected but you will need 25 cents for the Metro ride & extra cash for lunch. If you are interested, please call the Senior Desk at 355-7394 for more information and/or to have your name added to the list.

Some walking & limited restrooms are part of this trip

Recipe of the Week:

Short Ribs In Beer

Ingredients

2-1/4 lbs. beef short ribs
2 large onions/cooked, sliced
1 package dry onion soup mix
1-1/2 cups beer

Directions :

Turn on broiler. Broil ribs 10-15 minutes until brown. Transfer ribs to a baking pan. Preheat oven to temperature 325°F. Spread onion slices over browned ribs. Sprinkle with onion soup mix. Pour beer over all. Cover and bake 1-1/2 hours until meat is tender. (Serves 6)

February Birthdays



Lorraine Bush, Susan Henderson, Hilda Pittman, Ursula El-Tawansy, Sylvia Lorhan, Ann Luke, Janet O'Day, Ana Ptasinski, Jannene Reed, Winifred Swanson

Activities:

Unless listed differently, all activities are at the Hart Memorial Park (Senior Center) 222 W. Sierra Madre Blvd., Sierra Madre

Lunch Program:
Monday- Friday at the Intervale Café -12:00 Noon-Call (626) 355-0256 to make your daily reservation. Suggested donation \$2.00 for seniors (60+) and \$3.75 for visitors.

Monday:
1:00 pm to 1:45 pm: Strength training with Lisa Brandley. FREE class of stretching with light hand weights while you sit.

Tuesday:
2nd Tuesday of each month FREE blood pressure checks by Methodist Hospital; 11 am to 12 noon

3rd Tuesday of each month FREE financial consulting; 10 -12 noon call 355-7394 for an appointment

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm: BINGO; cards are only 25 cents each so stop by & play

5:30 pm to 7 pm: Yoga; \$7.00 - 50 & over. Please call 355-5278 for more information

Wednesday:
11 -11:45 am: Balance Class with Teryl. FREE class designed to improve

balance & refresh the joints

2nd Wednesday of the month: FREE Legal Consultations: 10-11:30 am. Appointments call 355-7394

Wii Wednesday - 1:00 pm or call the senior desk at 355-7394 to arrange another time & day to learn how to play. No previous experience or skills required and it is great exercise.

Thursday:
1:00 to 3:30 pm: Game Day. Join us for UNO and Poker with Bridge on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays; so please call for more information.

5:00 pm to 6:30 pm: Yoga; \$7.00 - 50 & over. Please call 355-5278 for more information

Friday:
1:00 pm: Ping Pong
Saturday: 11:30 am: Senior Club brown bag lunch and BINGO at 12:30 pm

Free Lawn Bowling Lessons: The Santa Anita Bowling Green Club will have beginning lawn bowling lessons each Saturday morning starting at 10:00 AM.

Located just north of the golf course at 405 S. Santa Anita Ave.<free parking> For information call Gene at 626.351-5327.



Meals-On-Wheels

Meals are delivered to home-bound seniors by volunteer drivers through the YWCA Intervale Lunch Program M-F (with frozen meals for the weekend.) Call the YWCA at (626) 214-9460 or Darlene Traxler at (626) 355-0256 for more information.

MEALS-ON-WHEELS NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO DELIVER MEALS TO OUR HOMEBOUND NEIGHBORS **ONCE A MONTH OR WEEKLY**

Please contact Darlene Traxler at 626.355.6220 or (626) 355-0256.

City of Sierra Madre's Community Services Commission is looking for two motivated, enthusiastic, creative, and friendly volunteers to serve on the City's Ad Hoc Transit Committee and SMTV3 Committee. The City welcomes any interested residents to apply. Submit applications to the Community & Personnel Services Department at the Community Recreation Center, 611 E. Sierra Madre Boulevard. For an application, please visit www.cityofsierramadre.com look for commission/committee applications. For more information please call (626) 355-5278.

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Balance and Mobility

One of the most powerful ways to stay active and independent is by preventing slips and falls. According to the CDC, falls have become the leading cause of injury deaths in the elderly. Complications from falls can create loss of mobility, complications from surgeries, increased risk of infections and death. Dr. Licata DC will have a special health presentation teaching you; how the brain and body controls balance, ways balance and mobility declines with age and ways to maintain and improve coordination to stay active and independent.

The lecture will take place Tuesday, February 16 at the Arcadia Community Center, 365 Campus Drive, Arcadia. If interested in attending please call or register at the Arcadia Senior Services Department, 626.574.5130 before February 10, 2010.

For additional information please contact Arcadia Senior Services at 626.574.5130. This medical presentation is for individuals age 50 and over.



Chris Bertrand

One Of A Kind:

Featuring unique homes & gardens and the people who create them

Story and Photos By Chris Bertrand

Altadena Architect's Own Craftsman: A thirty year journey of restoration, updating and enjoyment

Restoration architect, Raymond Fortunato Spanó, his wife and their brood of nine children set up residence some

thirty years ago in a neglected, Craftsman home on Rubio Drive in a gracious area of Northern Altadena. Actually, the Spanós had only eight children when they moved in. The last child made an appearance some time later.

Designed by George J. Webster and built in 1909 by Pasadena's Gunnison and May at a cost of \$5400, the home is believed to be the first constructed on Rubio Street. Beautiful wrought iron gates provided privacy from the street, three fireplaces promised elegance and charm. Most importantly, the home had those "great bones" architects and interior designers talk so much about.

"The property was so overgrown to the brim with wisteria and ivy," Spanó recalls, "We didn't discover the second floor terrace until our third visit to the house as I was working hard to convince my wife that it was the house we would one day love."

Slowly, the Spanós set about peeling back the years and layers of paint, wall coverings and the like. They literally spent thirteen years removing as many as nine of paint from the woodwork that Craftsman homes are known for. Spano laughs that the job was so huge that they enlisted paint removal assistance from many friends, children, relatives and college students during that period. They uncovered an entry detailed in beautiful Douglas fir and an oak balustrade on the stairs.

The delivery of baby number nine motivated a remodel project of its own, but not of a bedroom as one might imagine. The couple who watched over their offspring during labor and delivery didn't quite make the tight turn in the porte cochere originally attached to the house, gashing their brand new VW camper on a corner of the

steps. Unfortunately, they weren't the first. The formerly square brick column had been rounded off from many vehicles challenging the turn and losing over the years.

As a result, architect Spano redesigned the porte cochere as an enchanting, bougainvillea and grapevine covered walkway with shaded seating area, and then moved the long driveway to the east edge of the property. Just a few years ago, Spano expanded and redesigned the small garage at the back of the property into a magnificent Craftsman outbuilding. It now showcases the exquisite work of "cabinet-door-furniture-and anything else Ray Spanó thinks of"-maker, Ramon Ramirez, "Altadena's premier master craftsman," according to Spanó.

The breathtaking mahogany doors fold back instead of rolling up, and are detailed with ebony plugs, just like best of vintage Craftsman millwork. Ramirez not only created these incredible garage doors, but was commissioned to build several furniture pieces for the home, like the dining room's buffet under the front window, including wings that extend the meal display for larger events.

In the living room, the slow restoration work uncovered Douglas fir paneling which had to be laboriously and meticulously stripped. Further investigation revealed that fixtures had been removed from the walls and ceilings. Spano remembers, "When we stripped the paint off of the wood beams and wood moldings around the fireplace in the living room, and grass cloth off the plaster wall sections we discovered eight hidden fixture connections in the living room, two in the entry and two in the dining room. Wall sconces and hanging pendants from beams and the ceiling were all live and intact in the wall."

Spanó commissioned a firm named Art Manufacturer's of Santa Ana to recreate many fixtures on the property. The company's specialty is duplicating any fixtures style desired. Replications now grace all the intended lighting locations in the grand yet comfortable room, many with custom, Craftsman-style wood support framework or ornamentation, made by Ramirez, as was the table and sofa frame.

Altadena Architect's Own Craftsman:

A 30 Year Journey of Restoration, Updating and Enjoyment



The incredibly overgrown landscape on the ¾ acre parcel required the removal of over thirty trees, though today, you'd never know it. Spano chuckled that he's never needed to purchase any firewood for the home's fireplaces, and probably never will.

Nearly every year brought a new project. He built-in the roof gutters into a roof system similar to the Greene and Greene Brothers' Gamble House probably the way it had been originally constructed.

The kitchen was reconfigured from several rooms, including a laundry porch, into a warm friendly space more conducive to a current day lifestyle yet in keeping with the architectural style of the home.

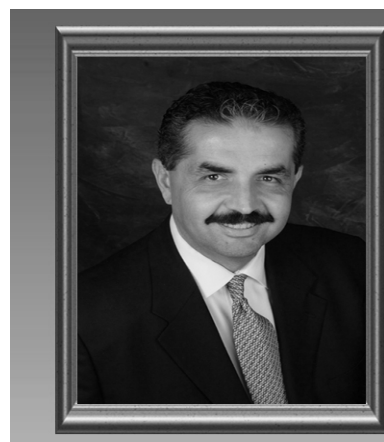
He brought in a bulldozer to make the yard more functional, terracing an upper area for a hidden seating area. All the retaining walls were built with stones gathered on the property. A deck and trellis outside the kitchen was constructed in joyful anticipation of a daughter's wedding.

Many years ago, one son began building what he described as a tool shed. As bedroom space was always at a premium with a large household, the lovingly built outbuilding grew into his own quiet respite space.

Spanó moved his forty five year architectural practice of private corporate institutional and public buildings to his home three years ago, anticipating a gradual wind down of his career. But, he muses, it hasn't happened yet, and his firm, SpanóArchitects is amid four restoration and addition and new design projects currently.

His office space reflects his love of Craftsman design, filled with more of Ramirez's remarkable creations, doors, cabinets, and a private, mini patio opening to the gentle Altadena breezes to freshen thoughts and ideas.

Have an idea for a feature about an interesting home, garden or person who creates them? Email C.Bertrand@MtnViewsNews.com with the information!



Tips of the Trade: Real Estate Revealed

by Luther Tsinoglou

When Push Comes to Shove

If you're under pressure to sell your home quickly in a challenging market, you may have to swallow a large dose of reality and take some radical steps to increase your home's visibility. While making concessions can seem difficult, please consider the following proven suggestions to produce a quick sale.

Remember that there are myriad possibilities for exposure in today's internet-driven society. In addition to your agent's traditional print and online marketing tools, use social networking sites like facebook and Twitter to promote your listing to younger first-time buyers.

When setting your price, place it ten to fifteen percent below your competition. All other things being equal, your home will readily appear as the best value.

Also consider the price "range" your home will fall into, and make sure you're on the lower end

of that range. For example, a \$199,000 home falls into the upper end of the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range, but that same home priced at \$201,000 is in the lower end of the \$200,000 to \$250,000 range. Buyers tend to look in ranges of prices, so again, make yours look like the best value.

Finally, talk with your agent about incentives you can offer, like paying buyer closing costs or a decorating allowance. If you have a strong need to sell quickly, any or all of these suggestions should produce results.

Luther Tsinoglou has just been named the top producing sales agent in Dickson Podley Realtor's Sierra Madre office for 2009, making the top 10% at the company overall. Luther has been licensed and practicing real estate since 1992. He specializes in residential and income property in Southern California. Luther can be reached at his direct line (626) 695-8650 or at luther@tsinoglou.com.

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