Riding the Metro Just Isn't Safe

See Page 4

Nighttrek Report:
Meteor Shower is Highlight of August Sky

See page 12

They're Everywhere! When to Worry About a Mosquito Bite

See Page 9

North Valley News

Volume 3, Number 10 August 1, 2024

Serving Porter Ranch, Northridge, Granada Hills & Chatsworth

News in Brief

Following Newsom's Order, Homeless Won't be "Criminalized" in L.A.

Following Governor Newsom's executive order to be more aggressive in dismantling homeless encampments, the county Board of Supervisors this week reaffirmed its commitment against "criminalizing" homelessness. This motion adheres to a "Care First, Jails Last" approach stressing that individuals displaced by anti-camping ordinances will not be arrested and put in county jails. "Arresting people for sitting, sleeping, or lying on the sidewalk or in public spaces does not end their homelessness, and will only make their homelessness harder to resolve with a criminal record and fines they can't afford to pay," the motion states. "Moving people from one community to another does not resolve their homelessness." The County Board of Supervisors further called for a report back to the board on measures that will be taken to prioritize a humane approach, increase community outreach programs such as Inside Safe and stress partnerships with local municipalities.

National Night Out Celebrated in Northridge Park

Councilmember John Lee and the LAPD Devonshire division will celebrate National Night Out on Tuesday, August 6. The free community event will feature a police vehicle display, over 50 community resource booths, face painting, bouncy house and more. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live and work. The movie *Sing 2* will screen at 6 pm with free popcorn. The event will be held at Northridge Park, 18300 Lemarsh Street.

Meet Your Elected Officials at Annual State of the Community Event

The Chatsworth Porter Ranch Chamber of Commerce is hosting their annual "State of the Community" luncheon on Friday, August 30, from 11:30 am to 2 pm. Councilmember John Lee will serve as MC, and the keynote speaker will be U.S. Senator Alex Padilla. Invited (not all confirmed) guests include Mayor Karen Bass, Senator Henry Stern, Congressman Brad Sherman, Congressmember Mike Garcia, Assemblymember Pilar Shiavo, L.A. County Sheriff Robert Luna, LAPD Devonshire Captain Kathleen Burns, LAPD Deputy Chief Jaime Moore and several candidates for public office. RSVP to chatsworthchamber.com.

Residents Taking Crime Fighting Into Their Own Hands

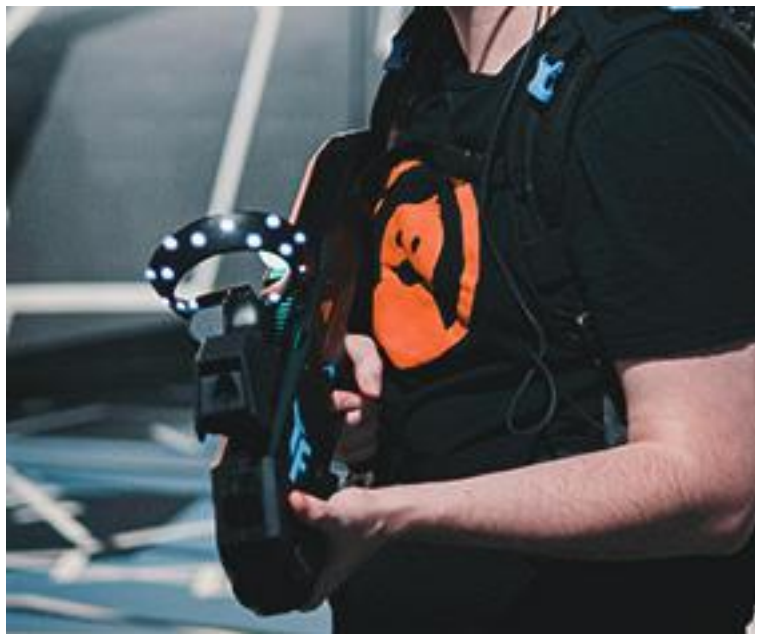
The rash of burglaries we've reported in the last two weeks continues, as thieves attempted another hit Tuesday night in Tarzana.

Police are still unsure if the same gang is responsible for the string of burglaries south of Ventura Blvd. from Woodland Hills to Tarzana, but on Tuesday night four men wearing masks jumped a wall onto a property in the 5400 block of Aura Avenue. The residents were reportedly in the home at the time.

Julian Harper-Smith, a neighbor with a sophisticated security system that includes three cameras, saw them on his monitor and flashed bright lights at them.

As they were running to their car Harper-Smith fired at them with a paintball gun.

"I put my flashlight down and just gave them a couple paintball shots to the back of the car just to tell them to 'stay away,'" he said.



With this increase in actual and attempted burglaries, LAPD has said they have increased patrols, including mounted officers who have been seen riding through the various neighborhoods.

Smith told ABC News, "The thievery that goes on around here, it happens all the time. If you keep your windows locked, your doors locked, they're most likely not gonna go in." Of course, paintball hits are also a deterrent, as they pack a punch, and in this case, were enough to scare off the masked intruders.

"Runaway" to Warner Park for Bon Jovi Tribute

This Sunday, August 4, Valley Cultural Foundation presents Wanted, a Bon Jovi tribute band. Wanted takes the stage at 6:30 pm, with emerging artist Saticoy preceding them at 5:30 pm.

Wanted is the nation's number one tribute band performing the music of Bon Jovi. Based out of Los Angeles, Wanted captures the atmosphere, excitement, and fun of the arena rock anthems that can only be described as Bon Jovi. Rock out to such songs as "Livin' on a Prayer," "Wanted Dead or Alive," "Runaway," "You Give Love a Bad Name" and more.

The concert takes place in the park at 5800 Topanga Canyon Blvd. in Woodland Hills. There are food trucks and local vendors in the park, and parking is available in the adjacent structure. Concerts run through August 25. For more information and a concert schedule visit valleycultural.org.

COMMUNITY

Community Calendar

GRANADA HILLS: The Granada Hills Woman's Club will host a Summertime Bake-Off Bunco Party on Sunday, August 11, at 1 pm.. There will be a special drawing for those dressed in the craziest summer outfits. Enjoy Bunco, pastries, snacks and punch. $25 per person with per-paid reservations. RSVP by sending a check to Granada Hills Woman's Club, 10666 White Oak Ave., Granada Hills CA 91344. The event will be held at their clubhouse, 10666 white Oak.

NORTHRIDGE: The community is invited to the annual International Cultural Festival on Saturday, August 3, from 12 to 1 pm at Jerks Wings Café in Northridge (8300 Tampa Ave). There will a cultural dance, a costume contest, activities for kids, face painting, food and more!

CHATSWORTH: The second annual backpack giveaway will be taking place on Sunday, August 4, from 11 am to 2 pm at the Child Care Resource Center (20001 Prairie St.) in Chatsworth. This family-friendly event will include a free shaved ice truck and activities for all ages. They will also be giving out free backpacks and school supplies, while supplies last, to help students get prepared for the year ahead. While attendance is free, they do ask for an RSVP at members.chatsworthchamber.com/events/details/child-resource-center-2nd-annual-back-to-school-backpack-giveaway-795.

NORTHRIDGE: Want to know the buzz about the community? The North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce will meet on Friday, August 16, from 9 to 10 am for "Friday Morning Buzz" at their office (9015 Wilbur Ave). Chat with fellow members over tea or coffee and learn what's happening the community. Registration is $5 and can be done at northridgechamber.org/eventcalendar/Details/the-friday-morning-buzz-1119545?sourceTypeId=Website.

GRANADA HILLS: The Granada Hills Farmers Night Market is relocating to White Oak Ave and Chatsworth St. Visit them at their new location every Friday from 6 to 10 pm.

CHATSWORTH: Join the Chatsworth Library on Wednesday, August 7, at 1:30 pm for their book club meeting. The novel being discussed is *Lady Tan's Circle of Women*, novel by Lisa See. Sent into an arranged marriage, Tan Yunxian, forbidden to continue her work as a midwife-in-training as well as see her forever friend Meiling, is ordered to act like proper wife and seeks a way to continue treating women and girls from every level of society in fifteenth-century China.

NORTHRIDGE: CSUN will hold their last free Summer Movie Fest on Thursday, August 8, with a double feature of *Shrek* and *Shrek 2* on the Library Lawn. There will be various food trucks, photo booths, lawn games and activities themed around the movie of the week. Activities start at 6 pm and the screenings start at dusk — approximately 7:45 to 8 pm. Picnics, low lawn chairs and well-behaved dogs on leash welcome.

GRANADA HILLS: The Granada Hills Library will host "Illusions by Allen" on Saturday, August 3, from 3:30 to 4:15 pm. Join them for a thrilling magic show as Allen will bring a levitating table, a live rabbit and more.

ELECTION 2024

Guest Editorial: Larry Thompson for Congress

Hi. Larry Thompson here. I'm desperate for you to know what's in my heart. I want so badly for you to understand why I'm running to be your U.S. Congressman.

I'm not sure I totally knew myself until a would-be-assassin fired on Donald Trump and a Democrat friend of mine said "I'm sorry the shooter missed". I was stunned and saddened. No matter what your party preference there is no room for violence in our election process.

I knew when I decided to run in California, and especially in this democratic stronghold, district CA 32, my probable opponent would be Brad Sherman (D-CA) who has been in office for 14 terms (28 years). I was aware that would make me an obvious long shot to succeed, but I believed voters needed to hear both sides of the political spectrum to make the most informed decision. I didn't believe a one party state was politically healthy, so I threw my hat in the ring for my voice to be heard. And where once there were seven candidates in our primary race there are now only two in this general election. Sherman and me. Liberal versus Conservative. Democrat versus Republican.

So you now have a real choice - as it should be all over America. You can vote your tribe and party line and keep the long time incumbent Sherman or you can open your windows and mind to a fresh wind of compassion, values, and hope for our country and vote your dormant passion for a new direction and inclusive liberty for all Americans.

At this moment our United States is dangerously filled with hatred and insanity. I'm your new and improved "Sanity Man."

I am working to awaken, organize, and unite the canceled conservative voter, the dissatisfied Democrat voter, and the undecided No Party Preference voter. I want them to feel alone, defeated, and scared no longer. I call upon them to have courage, stand up, and join me and those who share their true values and vision of our country. I will always protect family values. I want everyone to simply use common sense with common civility to find common ground to solve our common Issues. We are one country and one shot should not represent how we solve our issues.

The bullet that pierced Trump's ear rang loud and clear all over the world. It offered a sudden earful of enlightened insight into our belief systems, our feelings, our hope, our values, and our collective vision for our universal humanity.

Did you hear the wake-up call? Did you listen to freedom ring? Did you overhear the truth? Did you eavesdrop on the need and sanctity of change? Did your eardrums start to the march to a new future? Did you grab your ear to stop the pain or did you simply reach for it to wipe the blood away?

I have been deafened by the silence of open dialogue between neighbors and friends, and I have been quieted by the liberal media.

I advocate closing the borders immediately, reducing the cost of living by putting policies in place to reduce and end inflation, and lowering taxes including "no taxes on tips." I'm tough on crime, strong on parental rights, pro bitcoin and cryptocurrencies, and an enormous protector of the everyday working man and woman. It doesn't take AI to know we need a strong military headed by a powerful leader and government.

I plead for more common sense, less fear and hatred of our fellow citizens, and a renewed abundance of personal prayer. Most of all I pray for a peaceful election.

I have published everything I believe and stand for on my campaign web site: Larry Thompson for U.S. Congress - California 32nd.

I have written a political manifesto, *Voting In The Age Of Chaos*, which you can read at Age Of Chaos.

Lend me your ears. Harken to the insightful sounds of a new tomorrow.

Fernando Award Nomination Period Extended

Due to a change in board leadership, the time period to submit a nomination for the annual Fernando Award has been extended. Nominations are now due before noon on August 9, 2024. For more information on the Valley's highest award and nomination criteria visit fernandoawards.org. The winner will be announced November 8.

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VIEWPOINT

English Channel

From the late Rodger Sterling...
English Channel offers the best of editor Rodger Sterling's columns that ran continuously in the local papers since 1968.

• You have to love all the Olympic commentary coming out this past week...No one gives better feedback on an Olympic athlete' performance than someone watching from the couch!

• Funny food for thought from the Internet: To get a true representation of each country's athletic skill, the Olympics should randomly select citizens to compete like it's jury duty. Who's next on the balance beam?! Oh, its 39-year-old electrician Dale from Colorado - he does NOT look confident. Ha!

• John Christopher jokes that he likes the concept of fung shui because if he's having a bad day, he can just blame it on the dresser!

• Can anyone explain why bra is singular and panties plural?

• Thought for the week: Families are like fudge - mainly sweet but with a few nuts thrown in.

• Didja' hear about the guy who had amnesia and deja vu at the same time? He thinks he's forgotten this before.

• I remember the old days before computers...a keyboard was a piano. A web was a spider's home. A virus was the flu. A CD was a bank account. A hard drive was a long road trip. And if you had a 3.5 inch floppy, you didn't tell anyone.

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Rantz & Ravez from Dennis P. Zine

Is it safe to ride the Metro Transit System in Los Angeles County?

I have ridden Metro's Orange Line, Red Line, Blue Line, and the shuttle from Union Station to Dodger Stadium over the years. Every ride is an interesting experience with genuine concern for my safety and that of the other passengers. I have personally witnessed a lack of security and various Code of Conduct violations. Law enforcement personnel were directed in the past not to enforce Code of Conduct Violations or fare evasion. This policy, which has been cancelled, has directly contributed to the lack of safety on the Metro in the past.

The Metro Board of Directors and Metro Leadership ha not supported safety on the bus and rail systems, as evidenced by the continuing deadly and violent attacks against Metro employees and transit passengers.

The Metro Board has finally realized that enforcement of the LAW establishes orderly and safe operations for everyone. It is sad that blood was shed by innocent people before the Metro Board had the courage to enforce the Code of Conduct and related rules.

The local headlines and media reports reflect the lack of security and safety for all who use the Metro system. It is obvious that passenger and employee safety has not been maintained by the $9 BILLION transit system run by the Metro Board of Directors, executives, and staff.

The following news headlines reflects the violence and criminal activity committed in and around the METRO transit systems operating throughout Los Angeles County……

*Metro Riders Speak Out About Crime, Drug Use and Homeless on Transit System.

*Man Wounded in Shooting at Metro Green Line Station.

*Man Found Dead at Lynwood Metro Station I'd.

*Wife Speaks Out After Man Shot to Death on Metro Bus in Commerce; Suspect Charged.

*Suspect Arrested for Metro Stabbing in Lynwood.

*Recent Assaults on LA Metro Transit Prompt Safety Proposals at Thursday Board Meeting.

*L.A. Metro Plans to Address Violence.

*After Violent Attacks, Bus Drivers Stage L.A. Sick-Out.

*Editorial: Metro Riders Need Safer Trains and Buses. That Doesn't Necessarily Mean More Police.

*L.A. Metro Crime Statistics are an Absolute Horror Show.

*L.A. Metro Operators Demanding Better Protections.

*L.A. Metro Board Ponders Facial Recognition, Other Security.

It is sad that blood was shed by innocent people before the Metro Board had the courage to enforce the Code of Conduct and related rules.

*Metro Board Backs Whopping $9 Billion Budget, More Safety.

*Safety is a Concern for L.A. Metro Riders and Officials.

*Dangerous Lack of Security at L.A. Metro Rail Subway.

*L.A. Metro Declares Public Safety Emergency Due to Recent Incidents.

*LA Metro Adding New Security Officers Amid Safety Concerns.

*Woman Fatally Stabbed in Neck at Studio City Metro Station.

*Rise in Mass Transit Crime Has LA Officials Searching for Solutions.

*Man, Fatally Shot on Metro Gold Line Train in Baldwin Hills.

*Metro Expediting Procurement of Glass Barriers to Protect Bus Operators.

*L.A. Metro is Doomed if it Can't Keep Bus and Train Riders Safe.

*1 dead in Stabbing, Shooting at Metro Station in Hollywood.

*Los Angeles City bus Driver Violently Attacked by Woman Over Fare Dispute.

*LA City Council Members Express Frustration Over Violent Incidents on Metro Trains and Buses.

*Rise in Mass Transit Crime has LA Officials Searching for Solutions.

*Metro Faced with 3 More Assaults.

*Metro to Introduce Motion for Increased Law Enforcement for Buses and Trains.

*String of Assaults Strokes Safety Fears on L.A. Metro.

*1 Dead, 1 Injured in Shooting at Reseda Bus Stop.

*Man Killed in Attack on Metro Train in Hawthorne.

*L.A. Metro Bus Operator Stabbed Multiple Times in Heinous Act of Violence.

*Metro Bus Driver stabbed in the Back in Venice, the Second Attack in a Month.

*Police investigating Stabbing Outside North Hollywood Metro Station.

*Body Found at Lynwood Metro Station.

*Man Killed in Gang-Related Shooting near Metro Station.

*Man Dies after Being Pepper Sprayed on Metro Bus by Assailant.

With all the evidence of continuing and escalating crime and violence on the Metro, one would think that the Metro Board of Directors and management would have a game plan to address the situation. Unfortunately, to this point, little has been effective to reduce the fear and continuing crimes against innocent riders and Metro employees.

The Metro Board of Directors recently directed that Metro re-establish an in-house law enforcement agency to reduce crime and the fear of crime on the transitlLines. It is interesting to note that 25 years ago there was a Metro Police

(Contiued to page 11)

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What Makes An Effective PR Strategy

By Miri Rossitto

As much as people want to think otherwise, image is everything. It's more so for businesses and brands who want to establish a positive public persona and manage their reputation. Here's where public relations (PR) steps in and becomes your BFF. To enhance your visibility, build trust, and foster strong relationships with various stakeholders, an effective PR strategy can make you shine. This includes:

Clear Objectives and SMART Goals

A successful PR strategy starts with well-defined objectives. Whether it's increasing brand awareness, managing a crisis, or launching a new product, clear goals provide direction and a framework for measuring success. And though you've heard this a billion times before, establishing specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals is key.

Understanding the Audience

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE. It is vital to craft messages that resonate. Conduct thorough research to identify your target demographics, their preferences, and the channels they use. This allows for creating tailored content that speaks directly to their interests and needs.

Consistent Messaging

Consistency in messaging across all platforms helps in building a recognizable and trustworthy brand. Make sure your core messages align with your brand values and are consistently communicated through press releases, social media, interviews, and other channels. This strategy helps reinforce your brand identity.

Building Relationships with Media

Strong relationships with journalists, bloggers, and influencers are crucial for effective PR. Engage with the media regularly, provide them with valuable information, and be responsive to their needs. Building trust with media professionals can result in more favorable coverage and well-positioned media exposure.

Leveraging Social Media

Social media platforms are your PR power tools. They offer direct access to your audience and provide opportunities for real-time engagement. Use social media to share news, engage followers, and manage your brand's reputation. Monitoring social media trends and conversations provides valuable insights.

Crisis Management Planning

Every business and brand faces the possibility of a PR crisis. Having a well-prepared crisis management plan to "break in case of emergency" makes a significant difference in handling such situations. Identify potential risks, prepare key messages, designate spokespeople, and establish a response protocol to address crises promptly and effectively.

Measuring and Evaluating Performance

Regularly measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of your PR efforts is a must. Use key performance indicators (KPIs) such as media coverage, social media engagement, website traffic, and public sentiment to assess your strategy's impact. This data-driven approach allows for continuous improvement and adjustment of your PR tactics.

Effective PR involves telling compelling stories that captivate and engage your audience.

Storytelling

Effective PR involves telling compelling stories that captivate and engage your audience. Whether it's a human-interest story, a behind-the-scenes look at your business, or customer success stories, storytelling can make your brand more relatable and memorable.

Engaging Content

Create high-quality, engaging content that adds value to your audience. Think blog posts, press releases, videos, podcasts, and infographics. Valuable content attracts attention and positions your brand as an industry leader and a trusted source of information.

Authenticity and Transparency

In an age of information overload and skepticism, authenticity and transparency are valuable commodities. Be honest and open in your communications, acknowledge mistakes, and show genuine concern for your audience. Authenticity builds trust and fosters long-term relationships.

An effective PR strategy is multifaceted and requires careful planning, execution, and evaluation. Remember, PR is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process that evolves with your business and the ever-changing media landscape. Stay adaptable, keep learning, and continuously refine your strategy to stay ahead.

Miri Rossitto is CEO of Cowe Communications. Follow them on all social @CoweOfficial or visit their website at cowe.com.

Valley Single Family Home Median Price Reaches Record High

The median price of single-family homes that closed escrow during June in the San Fernando Valley set a record high, the Southland Regional Association of Realtors® reported.

The median price - meaning half the homes that changed owners had a higher price and half a lower price - came in at $1,105,000 in June, up 10.5% over a year ago. It beat the prior record of $1.1 million initially set in June 2022 and repeated this April and May.

The median price of condominiums sold in June was $625,000, up 4.2% from a year ago, but down from the condo record high of $650,000 set in May.

"Record prices benefit home sellers while recent market changes provide limited relief for beleaguered buyers," said Bob Khalsa, President of the nearly 11,000-member Southland Regional Association of Realtors®. "Moderation in interest rates for home loans in recent weeks combined with recent steady increases in inventory could tempt more buyers to enter a market that offers them more options."

The 1,604 single-family home active listings reported at the end of June were up 25.9% over a year ago for the largest inventory since October 2020.

There also were 401 active condominium listings reported at the end of June. That total was 56.6% ahead of June 2023 and

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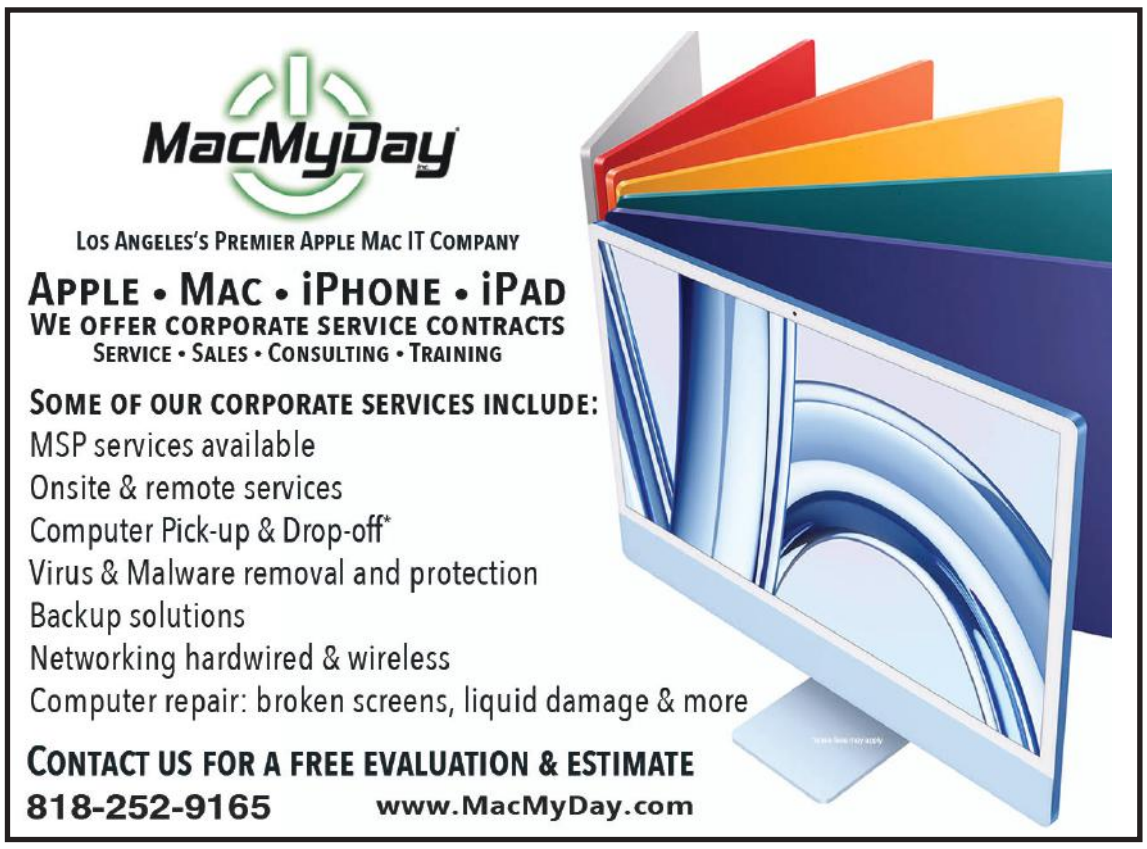

VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Frank Sinatra Tribute at Museum of the San Fernando Valley

Come on out to the Museum of the San Fernando Valley and enjoy your favorite Ole' Blue Eyes tunes performed by one of the country's leading impersonators.

Vaughn Suponatime has performed on the *Tonight Show* and *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, throughout Las Vegas, Merv Griffin's Coconut Club, and The Hollywood Palladium, Sinatra's "Twin Palms" Estate in Palm Springs and the "Compound" in Rancho Mirage.

On Thursday, August 8, from 5 pm to 8 pm, The Museum of the San Fernando Valley will stage a fundraising event to support museum programming with the Frank Sinatra tribute. The gates open at 5 pm and the show begins at 6:15 pm, with dancing and music until 8 pm. "We held this event last year and by popular demand, we are bringing it back this year. Frank Sinatra is beloved by so many and his music, as all music, returns each person to a favorite place and time. Please come on out to the beautiful Rancho and support *your* museum of history, arts and culture," said Michael Stevens, Vice President, Chair, Business Development, The Museum of the San Fernando Valley.

Vaughn Suponatime sings the songs of Sinatra August 8.

Event tickets are only $10 per person and RSVP is required. Refreshments such as beer and wine samples, water and a paid coffee bar will be available.

To order tickets, visit TheMuseumSFV.org and click on link for event. For questions about the event or museum programs call (818) 347-9665.

The museum is located on the grounds of the Rancho Cordillera del Norte at 9015 Wilbur Avenue in Northridge. There is free parking on the grounds.

Twisters is the Summer Blockbuster Worthy of Getting Swept Up In

It seems the well-known adage "everything old is new again" should be the unofficial tagline for a slew of recent blockbusters. The 80's and 90's are making a resurgence through sequels, remakes, and seemingly the studio's favorite method: a requel.

Colloquially, a requel is a reboot sequel that revives the subject matter of a franchise or specific movie, but is not a remake or a linear continuation of that original movie's plot. Cue the dinosaurs, cue the ghosts, cue the fighter pilots, cue the natural disasters!

In the latest requel making waves, or shall I say winds, you've got every component of a summer blockbuster: action-packed, good-looking leads, a mindless yet wildly-entertaining plot, a big budget and a press tour as entertaining as the movie itself. Pop a plural on the original title and *Twisters* is a modern must-see with a nostalgic nod.

The opening sequence introduces audiences to scientist Kate (Daisy Edgar-Jones) who studies tornados in the hopes of calculating a way to tame their destructive power. But given that Mother Nature is quite a powerful, and unpredictable beast, a storm chase goes awry, leaving the majority of her team dead except for herself and Javi (Anthony Ramos). Fast-forward five years and the trauma of it all sees Kate having left the world of storm chasing behind for a mundane life in New York City. It's only with a bit of coaxing from Javi, who needs her scientific expertise, that Kate realize her long-dormant twister-chasing passion is ready to resurface.

Back in Oklahoma, thanks to social media, storm-chasing has now become quite an endeavor. While Kate and Javi are focused on studying the twisters for science, others are chasing storms solely for entertainment value. Enter cowboy tornado wrangler Tyler (Glen Powell, dare I say, Hollywood's latest Golden Boy and for good reason). Tyler and his rag-tag team seem reckless and ridiculous on the surface, but is there more there than meets the eye? Layers people! Like a building storm, these people have layers!

Naturally, it wouldn't be a summer blockbuster without a little romance, and the will-they, won't-they chemistry is as thrilling as the storm chase itself. Audiences know they will, but it's the snarky interactions and slow burn that make it all worthwhile. Like most movies he's starred in recently, Powell absolutely steals the show and his boy-next-door charm, mixed with a Hollywood heartthrob look will have him leading blockbusters for the foreseeable future.

Naturally, it wouldn't be a summer blockbuster without a little romance, and the will-they, won't-they chemistry is as thrilling as the storm chase itself.

What follows is your typical blockbuster of big-budget CGI storms, baddies getting their comeuppance and an enemies to lovers trope all set to a country playlist that succeeds in transporting you to good ole' Oklahoma. To sum it up bluntly: this movie is fun. If you fault this movie, do you just hate fun? It's a disaster movie – don't hurt your brain thinking too hard! *Twisters* is the epitome of a summer blockbuster and dare I say, one worthy of getting swept up in.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO THIS WEEKEND? VISIT OUR ADVERTISERS!

VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Sweetener Linked to Higher Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke

A recent study in the *European Heart Journal* found that consumption of xylitol, a sugar alcohol commonly added to low-calorie sweeteners, may increase one's risk of heart attack and stroke.

"The very same people most likely to be targeted for taking sugar substitutes - those with obesity, diabetes, or metabolic syndrome - are the most vulnerable, [or are] most likely to suffer an incident CVD [cardiovascular disease] event," Stanley Hazen, MD, PhD, chair of cardiovascular and metabolic sciences and co-section head of preventive cardiology at Cleveland Clinic said. "By trying to reach for something healthy, the concern is one is inadvertently adding to cardiac risks."

While xylitol is promoted as a health-conscious alternative to sugar, research has shown a strong correlation between xylitol consumption and increased blood clotting. In the three-year study of more than 3,000 people in the U.S. and Europe of participants in their early-to-mid-60s, the results showed that people with higher levels of xylitol in their blood had an increased risk of a "major adverse cardiovascular event." In studying blood samples, people who drank xylitol-sweetened beverages had a much higher clotting ability than those who drank glucose-sweetened beverages. This study also mirrors one that took place with erythritol, a similar sugar alcohol.

A working theory as to why xylitol causes blood clots is the way in which the sugar alcohol interacts with the body's chemical

receptors. Scientists believe that there is a chemical receptor on platelets that is triggered by the sweetener and leads to an unnecessary "robust response."

Though diabetics rely on xylitol because it doesn't trigger insulin release, it needs to be safely incorporated into ones diet since the clientele that typically relies on this substitute are

Diabetics relay on xylitol because it doesn't trigger insulin release.

the same individuals that may face the biggest risk using it.

"Clinical observation studies show significant [cardiovascular disease] risk associated with high xylitol levels in middle-aged and elderly subjects with significant cardiovascular disease risk," he explained. "[But] whether xylitol is associated with long-term increased risk in younger subjects, or those without significant comorbidities—obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol—is less clear."

While xylitol does not need to be eliminated completely, this study poses the question of how much can be safely incorporated into one's diet. It certainly varies per individual and is a conversation for those consuming it to have with their health care provider.

When To Worry About That Mosquito Bite

With summer comes increasing temperatures and a rise of pesky bugs that oftentimes swarm those that spend these months outdoors. While mosquitos are the most prevalent culprit of bites during the summer months, most times those bites are an irritating nuisance, rather than a major health issue. However, when are mosquito bites something you have to worry about?

Mosquito bites, when inflamed, are usually around the size of a pea. If the bite becomes closer to the size of an avocado pit (or larger), you may suffer from skeeter syndrome which is a rare allergy to the proteins in mosquito saliva. This can lead to extremely painful and hot to the touch, itchy bites.

Once bitten, reaction to the bite usually appears minutes to hours after contact and will typically fade in approximately a week. However, if your bite becomes swollen or discoloration is spreading beyond the initial bite days after contact, it's imperative to go to an urgent care. These signs, as well as pus coming out of the bite, could indicate a bacterial infection that could spread if left untreated. This is made worse, and stems from, scratching the itchy bite and transferring germs inside of the wound. A good way to track progress of any bite is to draw an initial circle around the bite with a pen and if swelling or redness extends beyond the initial circle, to see a doctor.

It is also well known that mosquitos can carry viruses such a dengue, malaria and West Nile Virus. Approximately 2,000 infections of these types of diseases are reported each year by the Department of Health and Human Services, but many don't even display symptoms if infected.

While bites from diseased mosquitos won't look any different, they can cause nausea, vomiting, chills, fever, joint and muscle pain. As with any bite, it's imperative to monitor both the external and internal symptoms experienced in the following days.

While it can be difficult to completely protect yourself from mosquitoes, smalls steps like avoiding standing water, wearing bug repellent, and covering exposed skin with loose clothing can help prevent bites in the summer months.

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REAL ESTATE

Valley Home Prices Rise

(Continued from page 5)

the highest tally since November 2022.

"Persistently inadequate supply has kept upward pressure on resale prices," said Valerie Biletsky, the Association's Chief Executive Officer. "Let's hope a rising inventory releases enough pressure to give buyers added bargaining power."

Local Realtors® helped close escrow on 530 single-family homes, down 14.8% from June 2023 and below the 573 closed escrows reported in May. Condominiums closed escrows totaled 156 transactions, down 7.7% from a year ago. Pending escrows - an indicator of future sales - were down 25% for homes and off 20% for condominiums.

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Achieving Your Homebuying Dreams in 2024

Planning to buy a home this year? Here's what to focus on:

Improve Your Credit

Your credit score impacts your mortgage rate and future home loan. Monitor your credit and work on improving it by paying off devts.

Plan for Your Down Payment

Save some money from every paycheck for your home fund and get help from a professional to explore down payment assistance options.

Get Pre-Approved

Pre-approval from a lender helps you know how much money you can borrow for your home loan. That way, you can start figuring out your budget.

Decide What's Most Important to You

Make a list of things you want in a home and decide if they're Must-Haves or just Nice-To-Haves. Then, talk to your agent about it before starting your search.

Let's connect to so you have expert advice on how to reach your homebuying goals this year.

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Nighttrek Report: What to See in the August Sky

By Neill Simmons

The highlight of August occurs on Monday the fifth. Look west 30 minutes after sunset at approximately 8:20 pm. The brightest planet, Venus, will appear low in the west. At the same time, the beautiful, thin crescent Moon will appear so close to Venus that it will look like the two heavenly bodies are touching. This phenomenon is called a "conjunction."

Many stargazers look forward to the month of August because this is when the Perseid Meteor Shower happens. The peak nights this year will be on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. A potential problem will be the brightness of the Moon until 10 pm when it will be low enough on the horizon to darken the night sky. The meteor shower will continue all night long.

Look east after 11 pm each night of August to see the ringed-planet Saturn. Notice its yellow tint due to atmospheric conditions. Saturn is very far from Earth at almost 830 million miles away. We can easily see it with the naked eye because of its massive size. After Jupiter, it is the second largest planet with a diameter of almost 75,000 miles. To give an idea of just how big Saturn is, 764 Earths can fit inside of it!

DAWN PATROL: On the early morning of August 10, set your alarm to 4 am to see the conjunction of Jupiter and Mars. They will appear to be so close to each other that astronomers call this a "Sky Kiss." At the same time and in the same area, a very bright star named Aldebaran will be visible. Aldebaran is 44 times as large as our Sun with a diameter of 38 million miles. This reddish, giant star is located in the constellation Taurus, The Bull. Look east.

August 19 brings us a "Super Full Moon." A Super Moon occurs when the Moon's elliptical orbit comes close to the Earth resulting in a larger than usual appearance. The August Full Moon is also known as "The Sturgeon Moon." This name comes from the giant freshwater fish that was an important food staple of Native Americans.

August has two of the greatest summer constellations. Look in the south after dark to see Sagittarius and Scorpius majestically positioned side by side.

The main stars in Sagittarius form a giant "teapot." With a dark sky, the Milky Way appears as steam coming from the spout. Looking at the Milky Way is looking at our galactic center. Next to Sagittarius is the constellation, Scorpius. It appears to be a giant letter "J" but if you look closely you can see the scorpion's claws reaching upwards. The giant red star, Antares, is located in the center and represents the scorpion's heart. Many star clusters are visible with binoculars in this constellation.

Many stargazers look forward to the month of August because this is when the Perseid Meteor Shower happens.

Many folks ask where is a good place near Los Angeles to see the night sky. Some of the best places are at the beaches north of Malibu or take a drive up to Mt. Pinos by Frazier Park.

Ursa Major, The Big Dipper, is hanging by its handle with the bowl close to the horizon. Right above it is Ursa Minor, The Little Dipper, which is high in the north. Polaris, The North Star, is located at the end of the handle. Polaris is not the brightest star, but it is the only star in our sky that does not rotate and is always in the north.

Once a month, the Griffith Park Observatory partners with local telescope groups to share their telescopes and knowledge with the public. With dozens of telescopes on the lawn, there's always something to see! Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 10. It begins at dusk and is totally free.

When not stargazing, Neill Simmons is a Wealth Advisor with LPL Financial in Woodland Hills. If you have any astronomy or financial questions, he may be reached at (818) 936-2626 or by email at neill.simmons@lpl.com.

REAL ESTATE

Rantz & Ravez from Dennis P. Zine

(Continued from page 4)

safety on the Metro Bus System. The agency was disbanded and contracts for patrols were established with the Los Angeles County Sheriff, LAPD and Long Beach Police Departments. The three law enforcement agencies currently provide police services to the entire Metro system.

If and when a Metro Transit Police Agency is established, they will be dedicated solely to Metro security. The only problem with the plan is that it will take between three to five years to establish. The agency will be built from the top down with an executive staff, administration and all the cost associated building a police agency. So, what happens in the meantime to the passengers who risk becoming the next crime victim on the Metro? The LA Sheriff, LAPD and Long Beach Police will continue providing safety for all associated with Metro.

When Metro wakes up and examines the lack of interest in pursuing a law enforcement career with the CHP, LA Sheriff, LAPD or any of the other police agency in the Los Angeles region desperate for candidates, they might realize that recruiting hundreds of personnel to Metro might be more challenging than they ever thought. For example, the starting salary for the CHP in training is currently $8,131 a month, in addition to many other benefits while in training. The LAPD starting salary is $88,698 and rises to $97,300 a year. The L.A. Sheriff's starting salary after academy graduation runs from $82,157 to $138,605. The Beverly Hills Police median salary is $91,000 a year. You can see that the starting salary does not include overtime pay and all the benefits for medical, vacation and a long list of other job perks. Good luck finding qualified candidates to join the Metro Police Dept with all the competition from the other established law enforcement agencies in Southern California.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn is the current Metro Board Chair. Hahn has committed to riding the Metro on a regular schedule. Will she ride alone or with a law enforcement escort? I wish my former colleague from the Los Angeles City Council safe and happy travels on the Metro.

Dennis P. Zine is the author of RantZ and RaveZ. He is retired from law enforcement and the Los Angeles City Council. Zine continues to serve the people of Los Angeles as a Reserve Police Officer. Dennis is a featured guest on KABC Radio along with Fox 11 and Spectrum News.

Neighborhood Council Meetings

Porter Ranch NC will meet Wednesday, August 14, at 6 pm at Castlebay Elementary, 19010 Castlebay Lane.

Northridge South NC will meet Monday, August 12, at 6:30 pm. For agendaand Zoom link visit northridgesouth.org.

Northridge East NC will meet on Wednesday, August 21 at 7 pm. For agenda and Zoom link visit nenc-la.org

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