How Long Are Thanksgiving Leftovers Actually Good For?

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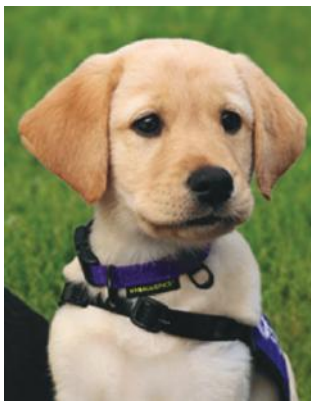
The Life-Changing Work of the Guide Dogs of America



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ENCINO ENTERPRISE

Volume 6, Issue 132 | A Compendious Source of Information | November 21, 2025

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shop Small Business Saturday on November 29

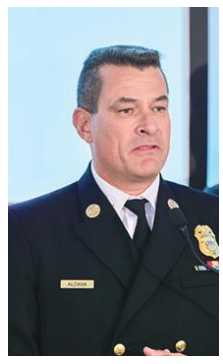
Celebrate the small businesses that make your community unique during Small Business Saturday on November 29! From entrepreneurs just starting out to established mom and pop shops, take a moment to thank the local businesses that took a risk on their ideas, invested in their local neighborhood and helped create jobs in the area. During this Saturday, and hopefully every day, shop local. Shopping small makes a big impact!

Residents Reject Motion for Turning Metro Parking into RV Impound in Lake Balboa

A proposal to turn a Metro parking lot located at the entrance to the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area into an RV impound yard has local residents speaking out in protest. District 6 Councilmember Imelda Padilla introduced the motion in an effort to clear the encampents that obstruct the roads. While no one would live in the RVs stored in the lot, residents are viewing this proposal as a "nightmare," especially for commuters who rely on the Balboa lot for the Metro's "Park and Ride" system. Mayor Bass is attempting to work to ease residents' concerns and if the proposal is to proceed forward, Metro must enter a lease agreement with the City.

Congressman Sherman Responds to Plane Photos

Congressman Brad Sherman is responding to news reports that he was looking at pornography on his iPad on a commercial flight. A fellow passenger had taken photos of Sherman looking at pictures of women clad in only their underwear. The Congressman said that his X algorithm was responsible for the pictures popping up on his device and said, "Simply put — Donald Trump Jr, the White House and MAGA are trying to divert from releasing the Epstein files. This was nothing more than scrolling through Twitter - and unfortunately Elon Musk has ruined the Twitter algorithm to give people content that they don't ask for or subscribe to. 99% of the things I see on Twitter involve absolutely no risqué content; I often see offensive antisemitic and conspiracy-theory posts. Don Jr. and the White House press office are pushing this story when there is no story. Shame on Don Jr., shame on the White House, shame on MAGA."



Impact Award winners above from left: Fred Gaines, Brandon Boeckmann, Kathleen Sterling, Waltona Manion. At left, L.A. County Sheriff Robert Luna, L.A. County Fire Captain Andres Aldana. At right, L.A. County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone, LAPD Chief Jim McDonnell.

PHOTOS: IMAGESBYNICK

Impact Award Winners Honored

The Fernando Awards bestowed their annual awards on local Valley volunteers on November 7. They honored Armida Colmenares-Stafford with the 2025 Fernando Award, and also presented eight Impact Awards. The Impact Awards were started in 2018 to recognize individuals, teams or local businesses who demonstrate outstanding achievement in community engagement, volunteerism and leadership.

This year's honorees are Kathleen Sterling, Waltona Manion, Fred Gaines, Galpin Motors, L.A. County Fire Department, L.A. County Sheriff's Department, Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles Fire Department.

Sterling is the award-winning publisher of *Valley News Group*, which includes *Valley Vantage, Calabasas Enterprise, Warner Center News, Encino Enterprise* and *North Valley News*. She has been dedicated to community journalism and focusing on the Valley's local news since 1982.

Manion has been a community activist and volunteer for over two decades, with groups such as Los Angeles Valley College's Citizens Building Oversight Committee, Valley Glen Neighborhood Association, Encino Chamber of Commerce, local schools and more.

Attorney Fred Gaines served twice as mayor for the City of Calabasas, and has been an advocate for the Mountains Restoration Trust, LA Jewish Health, VICA and Valley Economic Alliance.

Brandon Boeckmann and Galpin Motors were recognized for their history since 1946 of community service, supporting tens of thousands of educational, spiritual, cultural, charitable and civic institutions through the Valley.

The LAPD, LAFD, County Sheriffs and Fire Departments were all honored for their tireless work during this year's wildfires, protests and more.

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Community Calendar

* Due to the holiday season, the Encino Neighborhood Council will be holding their general board meeting on Wednesday, December 3, at 7 pm. It will be the last board meeting of the year. For more info, visit encinonc.org.

* The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is continuing to work with partners, the Friends of the Los Angeles River (FoLAR) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) on the ongoing habitat restoration efforts in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve (SBWR). The next community cleanup will take place on Saturday, November 22, from 8 to 11 am. For details on volunteering, visit sfvaudubon.org/event/sbwr-habitat-restoration-3/2025-11-22.

* The Encino Tarzana Library will host their Book Club on Monday, December 1, at 1:30 pm. Each month the library will provide limited copies of the upcoming book for discussion. Feel free to bring titles of books you'd like to share with the group, and they will compile a list for future meetings.

* ONEgeneration will be holding a Holiday Boutique at the farmer's market on Sunday, December 7, from 8 to 1 pm. There will be crafts, one-of-a-kind gifts, specialty foods and more.

* Gather 'round for a magical moment this holiday season! Join Westfield Fashion Square as Santa Claus himself takes a break from the North Pole to read some of the season's most beloved children's books—straight from the local library! This free event will take place on Saturday, November 22, from 11 to 11:30 am. Whether you stay for a story or two or just pop in to see Santa in action, it's a delightful way to celebrate the magic of the holidays together.

* The American Red Cross in Encino needs your help to install free smoke alarms and help make the community safer. Volunteers will meet at Encino Park (16953 Ventura Blvd.) on Saturday, November 22, from 9 am to 2 pm and will work alongside fire departments and other local groups, canvassing at-risk neighborhoods to install free smoke alarms, replace batteries in existing alarms, and educate families of Encino and Reseda about fire prevention and safety. Experience a rewarding day connecting with other volunteers and the families you'll help. Sign up at surl.li/ubiwgv.

* On Tuesday, December 2, from 1 to 2 pm, the West Valley Regional Library will host the Center for Health Care Rights that will discuss Medicare benefits, costs, eligibility rules for Medi-Cal and how Medi-Cal works with Medicare.

* Westfield Fashion Square, in partnership with the American Red Cross, will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, December 9, from 10 am to 4 pm. To schedule your appointment, visit redcrossblood.org.

* The Sherman Oaks Encino Chamber of Commerce will hold their monthly Health and Wellness Committee meeting on Thursday, December 4, from 12 to 1 pm at ONEgeneration (17400 Victory Blvd). Attendance is free for chamber members and a light lunch will be provided by the featured speaker, John Mason of BrightStar Care.

* The Reseda Neighborhood Council will be holding their general board meeting on Monday, December 8, from 6:30 to 8 pm. For more information, visit resedacouncil.org.

* Join musician Terrell Edwards and friends for "California Christmas," a holiday classic concert on Saturday, December 6, at 6:30 pm at the Holy Spirit Retreat Center (4316 Lanai Road in Encino). Doors will open at 5:30 pm. For every ticket purchased, $5 will be donated to painting utility boxes in Sherman Oaks and Encino. Use promo code "SOCF" when purchasing tickets at terrelledwardsmusic.com.

People in the News

Encino resident **Marty Cooper,** center, and his Cooper Literacy Program for the West Valley Boys & Girl Club, recently hosted an evening to celebrate the power of words.

Guest speaker and actor **Fred Melamed**, far right, spoke on literacy and the spoken word. *Valley News Group* publisher **Kathleen Sterling,** not pictured, also spoke on the importance of reading at all ages. Shown at far left is Boys & Girls Club immediate past board chair **Don Weissman**, who emceed the event.

The Cooper Literacy Program raises funds to support a love of reading and strengthening literacy at the club, including storybook stars, pages of purpose, book buddies, a book club, bilingual immersion, a field and buying trip to Barnes & Noble for club members and more.

To learn more about the program, and how you can donate, visit bgcwv.org/cooper-literacy-program.

English Channel

By Rodger Sterling

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

* Jokestor Jerry Humes makes a solid point when he highlights that Thanksgiving is the only holiday when you eat the mascot!

*Why did the police arrest the turkey? They suspected fowl play.

* Why don't turkeys eat on Thanksgiving? They're stuffed.

* Why did pilgrims' pants always fall down? Because they wore their belt buckle on their hat.

* After his family begged him to stop telling his "dad jokes" regarding Thanksgiving, the father replied that he couldn't just quit "cold turkey!"

* I love reading those sayings on church marquees...I think they come from a dial a prayer service. But we got a chuckle on this modern take on an old concept, seen on a Fallbrook Avenue church: "Download Jesus to your 'heart' drive."

* This morning, I accidentally switched the GPS voice to "male." Now it just says, "It's around here somewhere. Just keep driving."

The Village at Sherman Oaks, an active retirement community, proudly announced that Maintenance Director **Jorge Escobar** has been recognized by the California Assisted Living Association (CALA) with the Outstanding Department Director Award.

CALA presents its annual Excellence in Service Awards to honor individuals who, on any given day in CALA-member communities across the state, step beyond their job descriptions to uplift residents, support teammates, and lead with strength.

"This recognition speaks to the exceptional standard Jorge brings to our community. We are proud to have a maintenance director who leads with integrity, expertise and a genuine passion for service," said Executive Director Grace Hartnett. "His award is a testament to his leadership and the difference he makes at The Village at Sherman Oaks.

Escobar, who was honored during the association's Award Celebration Luncheon, has been a part of The Village at Sherman Oaks team for nearly two decades. Beginning as a houseman in 2005, he advanced to the position of maintenance assistant in 2006. He became maintenance director in 2015, where he has built a record of technical mastery and dependability.

"Jorge pairs expertise with service – solving problems quickly, mentoring teammates, and creating a safe, comfortable place residents are proud to call home," said CALA President & CEO Heather Harrison.

LOCAL NEWS

Valley News Group
Warner Center News | Valley Vantage | Las Virgenes And Calabasas Enterprise | North Valley News | Encino Enterprise

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Want Your Grandkids to Grow Up in the Valley? We Need Middle Class War Bonds to Build the Future

By Bob Hertzberg

Who can come up with $160,000 for a down payment on an $800,000 three-bedroom home after paying everyday bills? Our educated kids—nurses at Kaiser, teachers at Grant High, engineers at SpaceX—earn solid wages but can't scrape together that 20% down payment.

Under my new plan, which will require voter approval on the 2026 November ballot, qualified Californians put down just 3% cash, $24,000 of that $160,000, borrow the rest at fixed low interest rates, and build equity from day one.

By committing funds exclusively to new builds, we are not just subsidizing demand; we are incentivizing supply. Buyers get brand-new homes, row houses, townhomes, condominiums, and more. Homes that have never been lived in, with new appliances, modern layouts, and energy-efficient features that save money for years.

As a lifelong Californian and former representative of the San Fernando Valley, serving as your Assembly Speaker and Senate Majority Leader over a 30 year period in and out of government, I have watched our neighborhoods transform from tight-knit communities of dreamers into battlegrounds for affordability.

We have poured billions into low-income subsidies and homelessness. But the middle class, the "missing middle," gets crumbs.

I worked for years in the legislature, and have continued to work as a private citizen, to build middle class housing at the scale and pace our kids need to stay in the Golden State. I'm fighting for what I call "Middle Class War Bonds" (officially the 2026 Middle Class Homeownership Act) on the 2026 ballot, because the middle class in this state is in danger of being wiped out.

Remember the California Dream? Work hard, play by the rules, and own a slice of paradise: a modest backyard for barbecues, a swing set for grandkids. That is the social contract we grew up on. But today, it is shattered.

We have poured billions into low-income subsidies and homelessness, vital work, no doubt. But the middle class, the "missing middle," gets crumbs. Existing programs are tangled in red tape, underfunded, and first-time or first-generation only, leaving families like yours behind.

Home is where the wealth is. Home is a dream.

Homeownership is not luxury; it is skin in the game. It roots families in neighborhoods, fostering stability and pride. Owners invest in schools, parks, and Little Leagues, turning short-term renters into long-term stakeholders. And it is the surest path to wealth for the middle class: Equity builds nest eggs, funds college, weathers recessions. Without it, downward mobility festers, and faith in the system evaporates.

That is why our Middle Class War Bonds are laser-focused on you, Valley families. It authorizes $25 billion in revenue bonds, with not one taxpayer dime at risk. No dealing with government bureaucrats, you'll work with your local lender as you would on any conventional home loan.

This will spark 100,000 to 150,000 new homes statewide, including thousands in the Valley. It will create jobs for local builders in Northridge and bring more families walking down Sherman Way.

Join us on the CA Homes Coalition website (cahomescoalition.com), where we are rallying support.

Let us reclaim the California Dream, one Valley home at a time.

Robert Hertzberg served the Valley in both chambers of the CA Legislature, in the Assembly from 1996 to 2002 and in the Senate as Majority Leader from 2014-2022. He served as the 64th Speaker of the California State Assembly, unanimously elected by both parties in 2000 and 2002. During his time in office he secured more than $1 billion in state funding to build Valley infrastructure, including school facilities, road improvements, and the creation of the G line.

The Life-Changing Work of the Guide Dogs of America

by Danrochelle D. Yumul

When someone takes their first confident step with a Guide Dogs of America dog by their side, you can almost see their whole world open up again.

For more than seventy years, Guide Dogs of America – Tender Loving Canines has been changing lives in the most heartwarming way, by pairing people with incredible service dogs who give them independence and connection. Whether it's someone who is blind or visually impaired, a veteran coping with PTSD, or a family with a child on the autism spectrum, these dogs bring comfort and security back into daily life. And the best part? Every dog is provided at absolutely no cost, along with lifelong support.

The journey to becoming a guide dog starts the moment each puppy is born. With a careful breeding program in place, the puppies begin learning from their earliest days, getting used to sounds, textures, and new experiences. At eight weeks old, they head off to live with volunteer puppy raisers who spend an entire year teaching them how to be confident, well-mannered, and ready for the world. They bring the puppies into grocery stores, malls, parks, and anywhere a future service dog might need to go. They learn how to handle loud noises and busy crowds. This year of training is the foundation for everything that comes next.

When the dogs return to campus for advanced training, they work with professional instructors who help them build the skills they need for their future partner. Guide dogs learn how to safely navigate streets, avoid obstacles, and make smart decisions that keep their handler safe. They learn tasks that support veterans and children with autism, like grounding during panic attacks, interrupting night terrors, or offering comforting pressure during overwhelming moments. Each dog is evaluated carefully so they can be matched with the right person.

Once a match is made, the real magic begins. Recipients spend several weeks living on campus, learning how to communicate with their dog and build trust as a team. This is when some of the most powerful transformations happen. Many people who have lost their sight describe their world shrinking over time until they're barely leaving their home. Veterans often feel disconnected or anxious in public spaces. Parents of children with autism may struggle with everyday routines or outings. But with their dog beside them, everything starts to change. Families begin enjoying activities they once avoided. Veterans rediscover calm and safety. Children feel more secure and supported. And for those who work with facility dogs, their presence can make speaking up or calming down so much easier.

"Watching that transformation, seeing someone's world open up again, is incredible. We hear so often that when a visually impaired person begins to lose their sight, their world slowly closes in. For our veterans, the world they once knew no longer feels like theirs, and many become so closed off, they won't leave their homes. Hearing their stories and seeing them six months or a year later, discovering just how much their lives have changed, is truly inspirational," shares Tracy L. Diaz, Director of Development and Marketing at Guide Dogs of America.

One of the biggest challenges Guide Dogs of America faces is simply getting the word out. Many don't realize GDA is a fully accredited, nonprofit organization that provides dogs at no cost. Awareness has grown for autism service dogs thanks to the documentary Unleashing Hope, which featured Rosie O'Donnell and her son's journey with a GDA dog.

There are also misconceptions, like the idea that modern technology replaces guide dogs. Sure, assistive technology and devices are helpful, but they can't offer companionship, emotional support, or real-time decision-making the way a guide dog can. A dog doesn't wait for an alert before acting; they're already guiding, adjusting, and caring.

When a guide dog is ready to retire, usually after six to eight years of service, many stay with their handler as a beloved pet. Others return to their puppy raiser, and some join new loving families within the GDA community. Not one GDA dog has ever ended up in a shelter. They're cared for their entire lives by people who adore them.

Guide Dogs of America proves every single day that the bond between a person and a dog can change everything. These dogs bring independence, comfort, and joy to people who may have felt their world shrinking. These dogs don't just change lives. They give people their lives back, one step, and one wag, at a time.

For information, visit their website: www.guidedogsofamerica.org.

HEALTH

Surviving the Holidays with Exercise, Joy and Ease

By Conni Ponturo

How do you survive, and even thrive, during the holiday season?

1. Slow down! We are rushing around so much that we seem to miss what's going on around us, and during the holidays it seems even worse. Take a deep breath in and then walk and drive a little slower.

2. We complain about traffic, people, the music in the malls and on the radio, getting our shopping and cooking done, going to parties, fitting everything in and finally dealing with family. Keep yourself on the positive side. Before you know it, the New Year will be here so smile at everyone. That alone can make a big difference.

3. Focused breathing. Inhale for two counts, hold your breath for two counts, and then slowly exhale for two counts. This will slow you down and relieve stress so you can enjoy this short holiday time.

Before you know it, the New Year will be here so smile at everyone. That alone can make a big difference.

4. Start your holiday shopping early. Have fun with your shopping and park at the furthest part of the parking lot, walk to the mall and then back to your car and you will get in more steps!

5. Holiday pushups. As you get up in the morning to wash your face, place your hands on the bathroom counter just a little wider than your shoulders. Next, bring your feet together and step back from the counter. Now, slowly lower your body toward the counter, inhale as you move lower and then exhale as you push away.

If you are new to exercise, do about four repetitions and then slowly you can add on. Watch your shoulders and if there is pain on movement, stop.

6. Holiday squats. Watching TV can be time to do a squat break! Stand up from your chair with your feet hip distance apart and slowly lower back down to the chair with hips reaching back, and then slowly stand up. Your body weight is in your heels and you want to feel it in the back of your hips (gluteus maximus) and the front of your legs (quadriceps). Start with 10 reps and then add on every couple of days.

7. Present bicep curls. Your arms are full of packages filled with presents and you have just made it to your car.

Before you put them away let's do bicep curls! Stand tall in your body and engage your abdominals and then slowly bend your elbow up into a curl, and then slowly back down. Do eight curls and then if you want to do more try eight on the right side and eight on the left. Your arms will thank you.

8. Holiday marching. In the morning, as you are brushing your teeth let's march in place. Lift your knee as high as you can and slowly put your foot down, then switch to the other leg. Do this movement for as long as you brush your teeth. Don't forget to engage your abdominals.

Remember, the holidays are about family, friends, and embracing all the joy around you.

Conni Ponturo is the owner of Absolute Pilates Upstairs. She is a leading authority in the field of pain-free living, which includes the power of creating a harmonious connection of mindset, emotions, and body. She can be reached at 818-226-0695.

Her book "Falling Into Joy: Eight Simple Steps to Allow Your Body to Become Your Best Friend" is available for purchase on Amazon.com. Perfect for holiday gifting!

KEEP ON WRITING COMEBACK STORIES

We see our success in the lives we help turn around. For us, winning comes from the many futures returned and families made whole. That's why, from performing over 2,700 heart transplants to the first human bladder transplant, our story is about more than breakthroughs. It's about all those we help to write more chapters of their own.

UCLA Health

Keep on rising

HEALTH

How Long Can You Actually Keep Thanksgiving Leftovers?

Leftovers: some say it's better than the actual meal itself. Ross from *Friends* famously turned his into the infamous "moist maker." But how long are they actually good for? According to FoodSafety.com, the answer lies in the storage of leftovers and the time left in the refrigerator.

Ideally, leftovers should be stored within two hours of cooking and divided into smaller portions to allow the food to cool quickly and avoid giving bacteria the chance to multiply. While many believe the food needs to be cooled down before storing, that is not the case.

Once the food is in the refrigerator, it can be kept for approximately three to four days – ideally, until the Monday following Thanksgiving. However, according to a survey posted by Food Safety, 31 percent of participants indicated they would eat leftovers kept longer than four days in the refrigerator. If you store leftovers in the freezer, they should keep their quality for around two to six months. Just ensure that all food is stored in air-tight containers and plastic wrap if needed.

When it comes to consuming the leftovers, experts advise individuals to reheat the turkey and stuffing to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit. If the turkey texture is slimy or the meat takes on a grayish tint, you know it has already gone bad. Stuffing that looks wet or smells "off" has gone bad. Anything that contains eggs or dairy (pie, mashed potatoes, etc.) should be refrigerated within two hours of serving or sooner. Any signs of mold or the filling separating means the pie should be thrown out.

The one item you can hold on to the longest? Cranberry sauce! Thanks to the high acidity and sugar content, the sauce will last around 10 to 14 days. If you notice a fermented smell, however, that indicates that it is no longer safe to eat.

As with all leftovers, make sure to take a good gander before you gobble!

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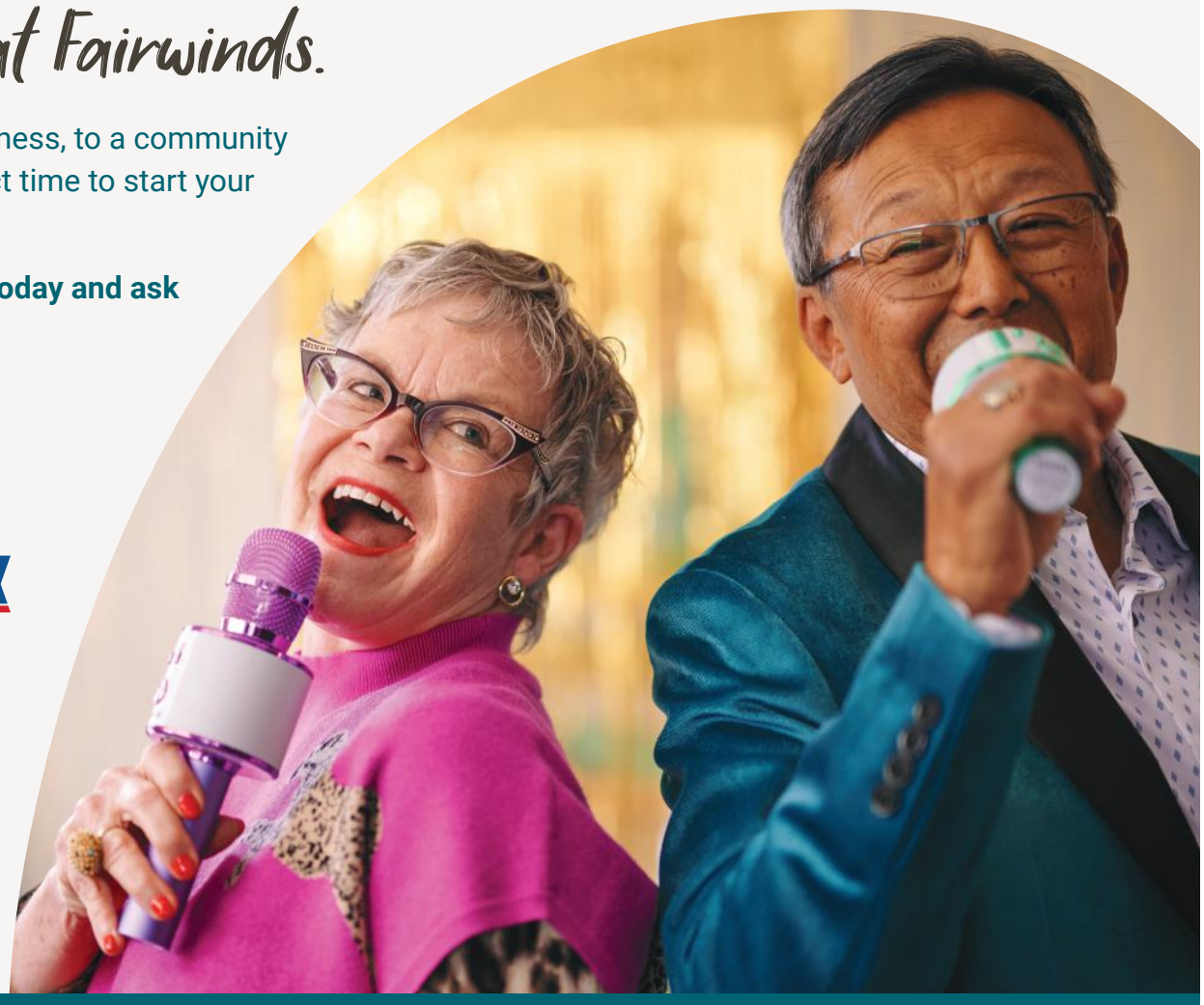


LEISURE CARE

The Reel History of the Valley

By Martin M. Cooper

Special Effects Made the Valley Special

While absolutes are often problematic when it comes to "firsts" in filmmaking, it is generally agreed that the first special effects date back to the French director Georges Méliès, the father of cinematic special effects. In his minute-long film, *The Vanishing Lady* (1896), a woman sits in a chair; Méliès covers her with a cloth; and when the cloth is lifted, she has vanished…the first stop-motion special effect.

There is a direct line from Méliès through George Lucas to the preeminence of the San Fernando Valley as the special effects capital of the world for motion pictures, television, video games, and other forms of moving images.

It was exactly 50 years ago – in 1975 – that a 31-year-old Lucas established a small special-effects shop in a warehouse at 6842 Valjean Avenue in Van Nuys, near the end of one of the Van Nuys Airport's runways.

Lucas' decision to move to the San Fernando Valley was a practical one: the Valley offered inexpensive industrial space, flexible zoning regulations, skilled machinists, creative designers, access to film labs, and proximity to Hollywood without being bound by studio bureaucracy. But the results were revolutionary.

He rented the warehouse space specifically to house his new firm, Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), and to produce motion-control photography, construction of miniatures, pyrotechnics, and visual and optical effects for *Star Wars* (1977). It housed a model shop, motion-control rigs, and other special effects.

Within that near-anonymous industrial block, a group of young tinkerers, engineers, and artists—John Dykstra, Joe Johnston, Richard Edlund, Lorne Peterson, and others—developed the Dykstraflex motion-control system, modernized miniature effects, and produced every space battle, ship miniature, and laser blast for *Star Wars*. Their work in Van Nuys didn't merely enhance the film; it redefined audience expectations for cinematic spectacle and permanently changed the trajectory of effects filmmaking.

It was in this laboratory-like climate that the foundation of the late-20th-century blockbuster effects were defined.

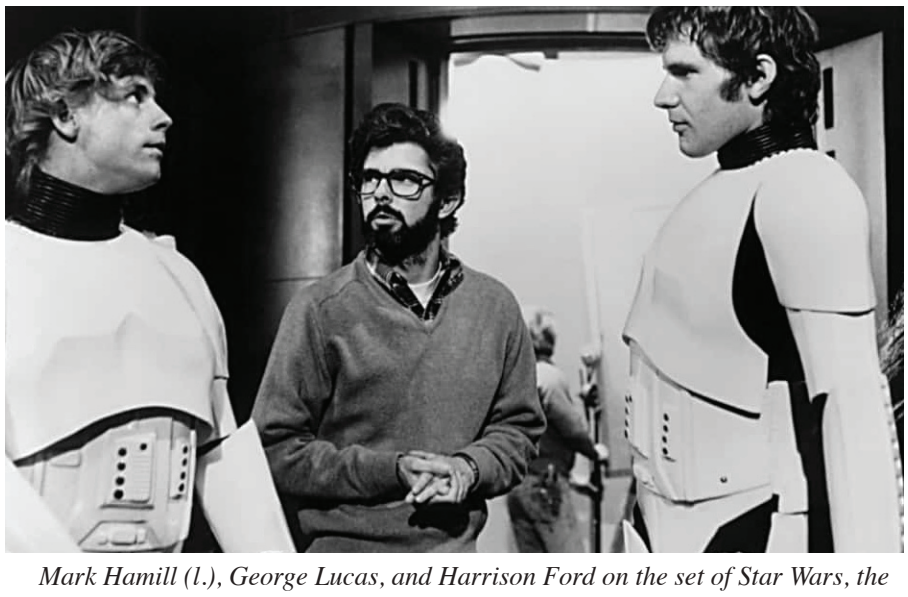
The Valley's importance extended beyond its facilities. It nurtured a collaborative culture that blended Hollywood's artistry with the practicality of aerospace engineering. Unlike traditional studio departments, Valley effects shops were garage-like environments where experimentation was encouraged and hierarchy was minimal. Many of the breakthroughs in motion-control, miniature dynamics, forced-perspective photography, and early optical compositing were not the result of formal R&D programs, but rather of crews improvising solutions with hardware-store materials and surplus aircraft parts. It was an environment that attracted a blend of artists and technical minds who thrived in such unstructured creative freedom.

In fact, it was the aviation and aerospace pioneers of the mid-twentieth century who laid the foundation for the motion picture technical achievements to come.

Georges Méliès' 1896 film, A Vanishing Lady, is considered to be the first film with special visual effects.

By mid-century, the Valley was dotted with aerospace and defense contractors—Lockheed, Hughes, and numerous subcontractors—whose machinists, optical technicians, and engineers became the future model builders, motion-control riggers, and camera technicians of modern special effects. This culture of mechanical expertise created a foundation that filmmakers would soon exploit.

Star Wars' breakthrough also catalyzed an entire ecosystem within the Valley. When Lucas moved ILM to Marin County after its first film, many of the original Van Nuys artists stayed behind, choosing to remain in the neighborhoods where they lived and had built a network of machinists, prop houses, and optical labs. The result was the creation of new Valley-based effects companies that would dominate the next decade. Perhaps most important of them was Apogee, founded by John Dykstra and other ILM veterans and located just blocks from the old ILM building. From *Battlestar Galactica* (1978) to *Firefox* (1982), *Spaceballs* (1987), and *Outland* (2009), Apogee transformed Van Nuys into a center of spaceship miniatures, pyrotechnic explosions, and motion-control wizardry.



Mark Hamill (l.), George Lucas, and Harrison Ford on the set of Star Wars, the film that spawned a whole new level of special effects in filmmaking.

It was in this (Van Nuys) laboratory-like climate that the foundation of the late-20th-century blockbuster effects were defined.

Today, much of the Valley's historic effects infrastructure still exists, even if the marquee companies have changed or dispersed. The original ILM building still stands. Many veterans of Apogee and other shops descended from ILM continue to live or work in the region. Small practical-effects studios, prop shops, and commercial VFX boutiques still line the industrial corridors of Burbank, North Hollywood, and Sun Valley. The Valley remains a hub for training the next generation of effects artists, serving as an intergenerational bridge between the analog and digital eras.

Anyone looking for the roots of today's special effects wizardry in films need look no further than some of these Valley-based companies whose people, processes, and procedures led to the big-screen wizardry enjoyed throughout the world: Lockheed (Burbank), Rocketdyne (Canoga Park), Litton (Woodland Hills and Canoga Park), and Garrett (Chatsworth).

Far from the glamour of Hollywood, the San Fernando Valley stands as one of the most important—if often underappreciated—birthplaces of modern movie magic.

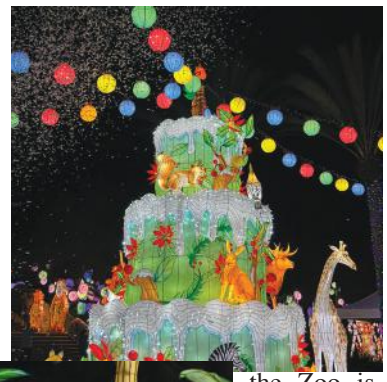
Martin Cooper, President of Cooper Communications, supervised public relations for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences for 10 years; held executive positions with Disney and Universal Studios; and was Board Chairman of the UCLA Film & Television Archive. He is a Fernando Award Honoree and Past Chairman of VICA. An award-winning author, he has written four books, two of them on the San Fernando Valley. His fifth book, The 'Reel' Hollywood: The San Fernando Valley, the history of motion pictures in the Valley, will be out later this year.

ENTERTAINMENT

LA Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow Dazzles this Holiday Season

L.A. Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow, L.A.'s wildest holiday tradition, is returning for 2025 and tickets are now on sale at lazoolights.org.

Running now through January 11, 2026, guests will immerse themselves in a dazzling world of lantern sculptures and lights, with exciting new elements that will delight the entire family.



L.A. Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow brings guests through a holiday themed wonderland; the weird and wonderful world of plants and pollinators featuring larger than life birds, butterflies, insects and flowers; glowing lanterns depicting wildlife of Southeast Asia; and an African landscape that includes representation of the continent's iconic regions and wildlife, all illuminated by spectacular sculptural lights.

In addition to the all-new lanterns and light displays, the Zoo is returning some of last year's fan favorites including interactive displays, a giant walk-in kaleidoscope, seasonal treats and cocktails, and photo-ops through the park including Santa Claus himself. Guests can ride the conservation carousel and enjoy warming treats like churros, smores, and hot cocoa. Those 21 and older can enjoy beer, wine, and spiked hot cocoa available every night.

L.A. Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow will also host two special community nights:

• Sensory-Inclusive Zoo Lights: Dec. 9, a serene evening with sensory accommodations for all guests, which includes smaller crowds, quieter music, sensory bags available on a first-come first-served basis, and reentry options.

• Pride Night: Jan. 8, celebrating the LGBTQIA+ community with added festivities, including an all-ages DJ dance party and a full cocktail bar for adults 21-and-over. For this event, guests are welcome to use their chosen restroom facilities.

L.A. Zoo Lights: Animals Aglow event is closed most Mondays and Tuesdays, plus Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. General admission tickets start at $19 for children ages 2-12 and $29 for adults ages 13+. L.A. Zoo members receive a $5 discount off ticket prices. For more information and details, visit lazoolights.org.

It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Grinchmas!

Universal Studios Hollywood is set to sparkle this holiday season, welcoming guests to a wonder-filled celebration across the theme park where beloved traditions return to create unforgettable memories!

The spirit of the holidays echoes throughout the theme park, creating uniquely festive experiences at every turn. Universal Plaza, located at the heart of Universal Studios Hollywood, transforms into a dazzling holiday spectacle with the return of the beloved "Grinchmas" Who-bilation.

A whimsical 65-foot Grinchmas tree towers at the center of Who-ville adorned with hundreds of vibrant ornaments and thousands of shimmering LED lights. This topsy-turvy holiday icon serves as the centerpiece of the celebration, where nightly tree-lighting ceremonies, complete with a flurry of cascading snow, create a truly magical moment that captures the spirit of the season as the Who-inspired singing quartet perform legendary harmonies for an infectious Who-liday spirit.

From taking Instagramable photos with the mischievous Grinch™ and his loyal dog Max, and cozy story time with Cindy-Lou Who as she reads *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, to a cheerful visit at the Who-ville post office to send a postcard filled with three good deeds and decorating festive paper "Grinchmas" ornament, "Grinchmas" is a family tradition packed with whimsical fun.

"Christmas in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter" features a jubilant décor of twinkling lights, magical garlands and cheerful wreaths. The Frog Choir's traditional holiday a cappella performances will resonate with joy, as visiting witches, wizards and muggles wander Hogsmeade village in search of enchanting gifts and exclusive keepsakes while sipping a delicious cup of hot, cold or frozen Butterbeer™ .

Nightfall brings "The Magic of Christmas at Hogwarts™ Castle" to life with an electrifying light projection show, transforming the iconic Hogwarts™ School of Witchcraft and Wizardry into a visually dazzling display. Accompanied by a rich medley of music from the *Harry Potter* films, this immersive experience will envelop guests in a symphony of festive sights and sounds.

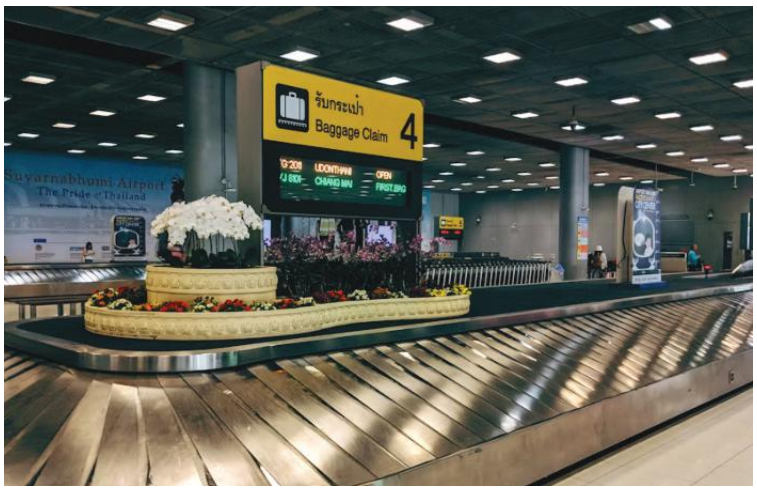
Before stepping into the Mushroom Kingdom at Super Nintendo World, guests will encounter two cheerful snowmen, one sporting Mario's signature red hat and scarf, the other donning Luigi's green cap and scarf, alongside a sparkling tree crowned with a Super Star. From December 1 through February 28, enterprising guests can unlock the exclusive "Winter Wonder" stamp, while those visiting during the month of December can earn a festive "Holiday Party" stamp.

Universal CityWalk Hollywood also ushers in the holiday season with a wonderous celebration featuring festive décor, highlighted by a majestic 40-foot Christmas tree. The seasonal festivities extend to Universal CityWalk's 5 Towers stage, where select evenings welcome curated live musical performances, dynamic DJ sets and engaging street entertainers.

Holidays at Universal Studios Hollywood is included with theme park admission and runs daily from Monday, November 24, through Sunday, January 4, 2026.

More information is available at UniversalStudiosHollywood.com.

REAL ESTATE



TSA Holiday Travel Tips

As millions travel throughout airports this holiday season, it's imperative to pack diligently to avoid being picked out of the dreaded TSA security line.

As per usual, exercise caution when packing liquids and foods for transport. Your grandma's traditional fruitcake? Safe to put in your carry on. As are stuffing, casseroles, sweets and frozen, cooked or uncooked meats. Your famous holiday cranberry sauce? Must be packed. Any liquids (such as gravy, alcohol, dips, etc.) over 3.4 oz must be put in your checked luggage). When in doubt if your food can fly as a carry-on, put it in your checked luggage to avoid possibly having to throw it away at security. The saying goes,"If you can spill it, spray it, spread it, pump it or pour it," it's not eligible for carry-on.

For those bringing presents to their intended destination, the TSA advises individuals to not wrap their gift before packing it in either their carry-on or checked luggage. If an item gets flagged by security, the TSA will have to unwrap your gift to see what lies beneath the paper. This risks you having your carefully wrapped materials no longer able to be used and even slowing you down on your way to your flight. If you must wrap a gift before traveling, the TSA advises using a gift bag for easy access if needed.

While the government shutdown has ended, the effects of it are likely to stretch into the Thanksgiving holiday.

Given the recent government shutdown, airline personnel are stressing that individuals give themselves plenty of time to arrive at the airport, go through security and find their gate. While the government shutdown has ended, the effects of it are likely to stretch into the Thanksgiving holiday. Between the limited staff and the influx of holiday travelers, the airport can get chaotic quickly.

Plan accordingly, give yourself more time than you usually would carve out for the airport and continue to check your flight status with your airline for the latest updates.

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