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ENCINO ENTERPRISE

Volume 6, Issue 136 | A Compendious Source of Information | January 22, 2026

NEWS IN BRIEF

Encino Neighborhood Council to Hold Town Hall on Homelessness February 5

The Encino Neighborhood Council will hold an in-person town hall on Thursday, February 5, from 7 to 8:30 pm. The panel will include representatives from the departments that provide homeless services to answer your questions and provide updates for 2026. The meeting will be held at the Encino Community Center, 4935 Balboa Blvd.

ONEgeneration Book Sale at the Encino Farmer's Market Jan. 25

ONEgeneration will hold a book sale at the Encino Farmer's Market this Sunday, January 25, from 8 am to 12 pm. There will plenty of unique books for you to find your next favorite read! The cost is two books for one dollar. The sale is cash only and no change or coins will be accepted or given. The book booth will be located in the back area of the market. All proceeds support the programs and services of ONEgeneration.

LAFD Crews Battling Underground Fire at Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex in Encino

Locals in the Encino and Sherman Oaks area woke up to a strong odor this Thursday morning as a nearby fire at the Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex in Encino sparked the smell of creosote. The wooden beams supporting the parking lot are soaked in this brown oil, used as a wood preservative, and when burned, produce a heavy petroleum-like smell. However, residents might not see much smoke as the fire is burning underneath the parking lot at the intersection of Oxnard St. and Lasaine Ave. The tunnel runs from a wash underneath the lot of the baseball fields, making it difficult for firefighters to access and extinguish. Firefighters are using a remote suppression unit, called the Thermite RS3 which can navigate the small space, while spraying water and foam on the flames. While the cause of the fire remains under investigation, firefighters believe it was a warming fire from a nearby homeless encampment that got out of control.

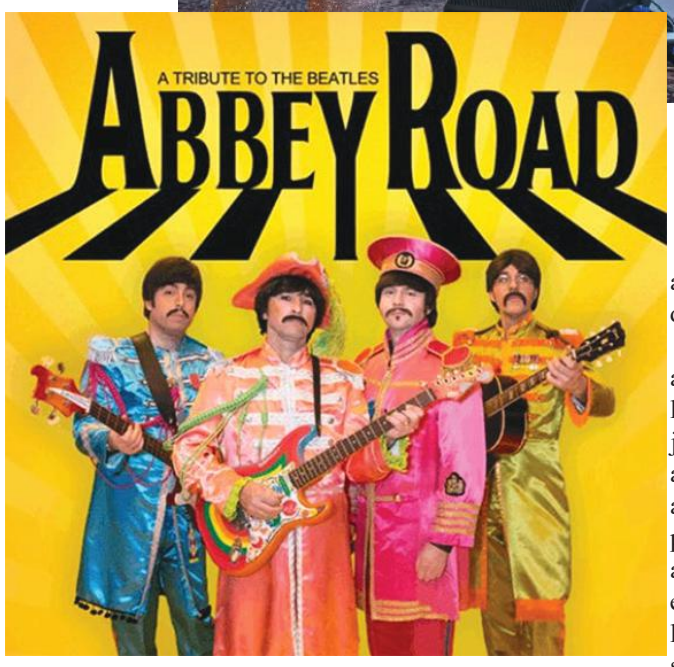
Summer Concert Season Announced

Valley Cultural Foundation (VCF) is excited to announce the return of its legendary free Summer Concert Series at Warner Park, marking an incredible 51 years of music, community, and memorable moments.

This season promises a vibrant lineup of 10 unforgettable Sunday concerts, featuring a dynamic mix of crowd-favorite tribute bands and rising stars.

Each concert starts at 5:30 pm with an Emerging Artist Showcase, spotlighting fresh, original talent before the main act takes the stage around 6:30 pm. It's the perfect blend of discovery and nostalgia—all in one summer evening!

New Romantics entertaining the crowd (photo: Jay Ross) and fan-favorite Abbey Road.



In addition to the music, concertgoers can explore local vendors, indulge in various food trucks, and enjoy the festive atmosphere that's made this series a cherished Valley tradition.

So grab your blankets, rally your friends and family, and come early to snag the best spot in the park.

The 2026 Warner Park Summer Concert schedule includes:

-June 14: Dog n Butterfly (Tribute to Heart).

-June 21: Red Corvette (Tribute to Prince).

-June 28: Cali Country All Stars (Country Tribute).

-July 12: Flashback Heart Attack 80's (80's Tribute).

-July 19: Ridin' The Storm Out (Tribute to REO Speedwagon).

-July 26: Abbey Road (Tribute to The Beatles).

-August 2: New Romantics (Tribute to Taylor Swift).

-August 9: Start Me Up (Tribute to The Rolling Stones).

-August 16: Super Soul Group (Tribute to Motown).

-August 23: Led Zepagain (Tribute to Led Zeppelin).

All opening acts will be announced at a future date.

VCF offers a convenient season-long parking pass for just $125, giving you access to parking for all concerts. Individual parking donations are also available at each event. Parking is located in the adjacent structure directly behind the stage on Califa Street, between Topanga Canyon Blvd. and Owensmouth Ave.

Since 1975, Valley Cultural Foundation has been dedicated to providing live entertainment programs and cultural events that reflect the rich diversity of the Valley—uniting talent, community, and local business. For more info, contact VCF at (818) 704-1358 or visit www.valleycultural.org.

CALENDAR

Community Calendar

* The Encino Neighborhood Council will be holding their general board meeting on Wednesday, January 28, at 7 pm. For the agenda, visit encinonc.org.

* The Sherman Oaks Encino Chamber of Commerce will hold thier monthly "Mix and Mingle Live" on Tuesday, January 27, from 5:30 to 7 pm. This networking event will take place at Surly Goat Encino (17337 Ventura Blvd.) and the cost is $20 for members and $40 for guests. To RSVP, visit shermanoaksencinochamber.org.

* The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society is continuing to work with 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). If you would like to get involved and get your hands dirty, this is for you! They will be meeting on Saturday, January 24, from 8 to 11 am. For meetup info, visit sfvaudubon.org/event/sbwr-habitat-restoration-3/2026-01-24.

* Join the Encino Tarzana Library on Thursday, January 29, at 4 pm for a children's crafting program. Craft themes will change monthly; this event is for kindergarten through elementary age children.

* The Tarzana Community and Cultural Center will be hosting their first music night of 2026 on Friday, January 30, from 7 to 10 pm. This show will be indoors; seating is limited so purchase tickets in advance. Snacks and beverages available for purchase; admission is just $5. Buy tickets at mytarzana.org.

* Join the West Valley Regional Library on January 26, at 10 am for an engaging discussion on some of the world's best short stories. This year's selections are from *100 Great Short Stories* edited by James Delay and *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction*. This meeting's selection (from *The Scribner Anthology*) is *How Far She Went* by Mary Hood.

* The Tarzana Community and Cultural Center will host free meditation classes every Monday from 7 to 8 pm. Sahaja Yoga is a revolutionary method of meditation founded in 1970 by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee who is acclaimed as one of the most significant voices on spirituality and world peace today. No experience is necessary to join and individuals can join at anytime.

* Join the Sherman Oaks Encino Chamber on Wednesday, February 4, at 2 pm for the Community Disaster Preparedness Committee. Find out how to take the lead to prepare the community for the next big disaster/emergency (be it fire, flood, earthquake, windstorm, etc.). They ask that you embrace personal responsibility to be prepared; to get training in first aid and emergency skills; and to volunteer to support local emergency responders, disaster relief efforts, and increase community safety. This Zoom event is free to attend, but those interested must register at shermanoaksencinochamber.org.

* Save the date for your next life-saving appointment. The American Red Cross, in partnership wtih Westfield Fashion Square, will hold their next blood drive on Tuesday, February 10, from 10 am to 4 pm. Make your appointment at redcrossblood.org.

*Volunteers are welcomed and needed to join Volunteers Cleaning Communities to help keep Mulholland Drive, between Encino Hills Drive and the 405 freeway cleaned of litter and trash. Weather permitting, regular cleanups are scheduled from 9 to 10:30 am on the third Sunday of every month. However, Volunteers Cleaning Communities holds regular neighborhood cleanups throughout the Valley. If you are interested in joining, visit volunteerscleaningcommunities.com for a schedule of clean ups and join the mailing list to be notified on events in your neighborhood.

People in the News

Local educator **Chloe Bisland** is a public school garden teacher in the San Fernando Valley who is passionate about sharing her lessons on social media. Bisland returned back to the elementary school she attended to design her dream garden curriculum and create an outdoor classroom with gardening beds, tree-stump chairs and a shed for written lessons.

Through Bisland's curriculum, students learn about sustainability and food systems while getting hands-on experience planting, weeding, harvesting, and cooking.

On Instagram, Bisland gives a behind-the-scenes look into her life as a teacher by sharing gardening lesson vlogs, day-in-the-life videos, and nature education content.

"My class encourages kids to get their hands dirty and feel comfortable and at home with nature," Chloe said. "I'm proud to share my lessons on Instagram, and I hope it inspires others to seek out nature in their own communities."

For those looking to learn a bit more about the nature that surrounds them, visit shorturl.at/LIUrc or follow Bisland on Instagram @chloelynnbisland.

Local leaders including Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Congressman Brad Sherman and Councilmember Nithya Raman recently celebrated the grand opening of the Armenian Cultural Foundation Sarkis & Suzan Kitsinian Youth Center in Encino.

The center's goal is to create a culturally rich environment for the Armenian-American youth and to provide recreational and educational facilities in an area of the community where they are desperately needed.

To learn more, visit acfkitsinianyouthcenter.org.

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.

• Jaxon Cassidy sent in this salient thought: I finally realized it! People are prisoners of their phones. That's why they are called cell phones.

• A religious man came by the office the other day to report in the beginning there was nothing. But God said, "Let there be light!" And there was light. There was still nothing, but you could see it a whole lot better.

• Ron Olsen informs us that the inventor of auto-correct has died. His funnel is tomato.

• Psychiatry is the care of the id by the odd.

• Our favorite line in the bible. "Noah, we thought the boat left at 4. Signed, the unicorns."

• Cats own the house. That's why the word homeowner has "meow" in it.

• One of the quickest ways to meet people is to pick up the wrong ball on a golf course.

• Father O'Reilly, newly ordained, was to hear his first confession. Anxious to get the ministry off on the right foot, he asked the experienced Father McMartin to sit in and critique his handling of the assignment. At the end, all McMartin could offer was that, in the future, O'Reilly should make an effort to say, "I understand," instead of, "Oh, wow!"

• Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

• Wise advice: To make sure you hit the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target!

• Is a theatrical performance on puns a play on words?

LOCAL NEWS

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Congressman Brad Sherman Secures Federal Funds for Local Nonprofits

Congressman Brad Sherman (CA-32) has announced that he secured federal funding for education, public safety, and wildfire prevention in the Valley and Westside of Los Angeles.

These projects were included in the federal funding bill (H.R. 6938) which last week passed the House and is expected to pass the Senate this week. Additional spending bills, which include several other projects Congressman Sherman is championing, are expected to pass Congress in the coming weeks. Sherman has secured funding for more than 180 earmarks in appropriations bills and transportation reauthorizations throughout his time in Congress.

"I am pleased to announce the first set of CA-32 community projects to receive funding for 2026 have passed the House today," said Congressman Sherman. "One year after the Palisades Fire struck our congressional district, funding for the Santa Monica Mountains brush clearance project is vitally important to thwart the next fire before it starts. Prevention saves lives. Additional projects for the City of Los Angeles will increase community safety in the Valley and Westside, and a grant for CSUN will grow the STEM workforce and enhance educational outcomes throughout the region."

Projects funded in the H.R. 6938 funding bill include:

-Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA Santa Monica Mountains Brush Clearance & Wildfire Mitigation

Amount Secured: $1,031,000

Lands within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) are in need of habitat restoration, in particular brush clearance and the removal of invasive plant species. This project is critical for preserving the wildlife habitat and reducing wildfire risk as the Palisades and neighboring communities recover from the 2025 LA Fires.

-California State University, Northridge High Bay Structural Test Lab

Amount Secured: $1,031,000

The technology and equipment in this 1,100-square-foot lab will expand research opportunities, through testing on structural systems using different types of loads that reflect real-world conditions. In addition, the laboratory provides workforce training to CSUN students in STEM pathways as the lab's projects have real-world applications.

-City of Los Angeles Crisis and Incident Response through Community–Led Engagement (CIRCLE) Program

Amount Secured: $2,062,000

The funding will be used to help expand the Crisis and Incident Response through Community-led Engagement (CIRCLE) program, a 24/7 unarmed response program that deploys trained teams to address non-urgent LAPD calls related to unhoused individuals.

-Los Angeles Police Department West LA Real Time Crime Center

Amount Secured: $1,031,000

The funding will be used to install a Real Time Crime Center in the West LA LAPD Division and expand the camera network around the community to reduce burglaries.

Why Brands Grow Stronger When Community Comes First

By Danrochelle D. Yumul

Community is one of the most underutilized growth levers in brand strategy and one of the easiest to misunderstand.

Brand growth is no longer defined by reach alone. It is shaped by relevance, trust, and the ability to sustain meaningful relationships over time. In an environment marked by constant change and audience fatigue, community is a strategic discipline.

When brands treat community as an afterthought or mistake visibility for connection, they risk becoming disconnected from the very people they aim to serve. Growth that ignores context, culture, or lived experience does not scale. It weakens trust and limits long-term impact.

Trust remains the foundation. Not the kind built through campaigns or slogans, but the kind earned through consistency and presence. Brands that show up reliably, listening as much as they speak and contributing more than they promote, build credibility over time. That credibility compounds, strengthening loyalty. But trust is also fragile. When brands assume rather than understand, or communicate without context, they signal tone-deafness. Awareness and credibility must work hand-in-hand.

Community also reshapes advocacy. The most powerful advocates are not incentivized; they are invested. Advocacy grows when people feel included and aligned with a brand's values. This requires brands to loosen their grip on the narrative and make room for perspectives that may challenge internal assumptions. Growth stalls when control is prioritized over connection.

Equally important is the role community plays as an intelligence source. Communities surface insight that no data set can fully capture, revealing unmet needs, shifting expectations, and early signs of misalignment. Brands that listen closely evolve with intention rather than reactively. But insight only creates value when it is received with openness. Dismissing feedback because it is uncomfortable creates distance. Sustainable growth depends on learning.

Loyalty, in this context, is built through depth rather than frequency. Community creates emotional continuity, anchoring brands in trust instead of transaction. This becomes especially important during periods of uncertainty, when people gravitate toward brands that feel consistent and grounded. Growth that ignores external realities feels disconnected; however, growth that acknowledges them feels credible.

Community creates emotional continuity, anchoring brands in trust instead of transaction.

Community-driven growth also reframes reach. It expands through shared networks and relationships. This kind of growth requires discernment. Leveraging community stories without consent, engaging cultural moments without understanding, or aligning superficially undermines trust. Authenticity, in this case, has to be demonstrated.

At its most effective, community engagement humanizes a brand. It shifts perception from entity to participant. This requires a willingness to evolve publicly. Brands that position themselves as learners rather than authorities tend to build stronger relationships. They ask better questions, listen more closely, and adapt alongside their communities.

Community also acts as a stabilizing force during growth. As brands expand, the pressure to move quickly can dilute identity. Community provides a lens for evaluating decisions, ensuring growth remains aligned with values rather than driven solely by opportunity. When community is integrated into strategy, growth feels intentional.

Measuring community-driven growth requires a broader view. Traditional metrics capture activity, not impact. The true indicators are trust, retention, referrals, and sustained engagement over time. Just as important are the qualitative questions. Who benefits from this growth? Who is included? Who is left out? Responsible growth considers both outcomes and implications.

Community is not something to activate or scale on demand. It is a relationship to protect. Brands that approach community with accountability and consistency build relevance and resilience over time. The brands that lead are not everywhere. They are deeply embedded and trusted enough to be chosen by the communities they serve again and again.

Danrochelle D. Yumul is the Communications Manager at Cowe Communications. Follow @CoweOfficial or visit cowe.com for more.

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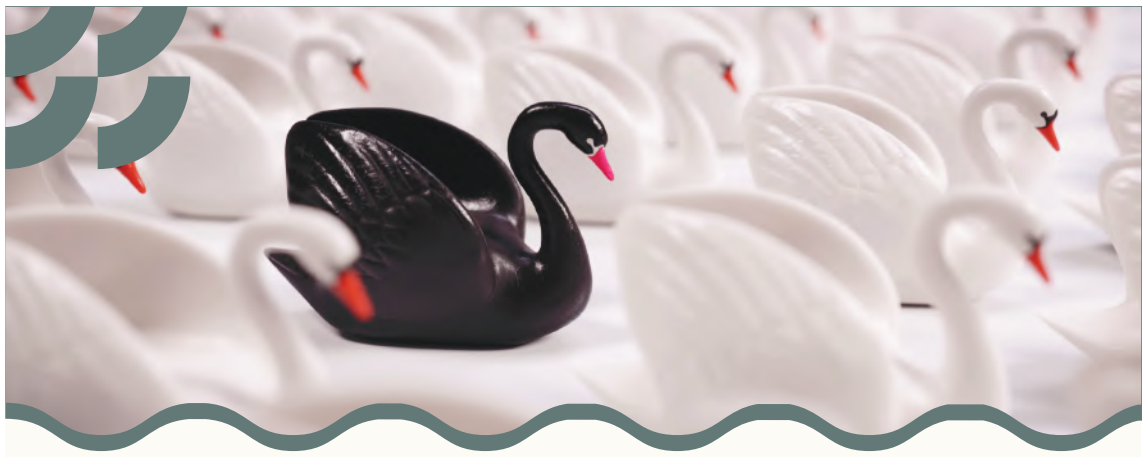

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Free Health and Wellness Expo January 24

The West Valley Warner Center Chamber of Commerce and their Community Benefit Foundation will be holding a free Wellness Expo on Saturday, January 24, from 9 am to 1 pm. The event will be held at the Westfield Community Center (21710 Vanowen St).

This public event allows attendees to meet with professionals who hold resources to help kickstart your health journey. There will be fitness, health and wellness activities for individuals of all ages.

Sponsors of the event include Westfield Topanga, UCLA Health, Senior Living and Care Resources and Councilmemember Bob Blumenfield.

Guest speakers include Matthew Mayer on carbon health, Dr. Vaziri on weight and pain management, Gwen Bernardo on performance myofascial release and various teen therapy centers.

Exhibitors include AT&T, Bearies Acai, Carbon Health, Cutting Edge Hyperbaric / Foot & Ankle Alliance, Cutting Edge Martial Arts Academy, Dr. V. Weight and Pain Management, Elevated Healing Treatment Centers, Forest Lawn, H2o Droplet, Health e-Habits, Hope Springs Wellness, Joint Matters Calibration Services, New York Life, Performance Myofascial Release, R. Susan Tenzer of J.D. Tenzer Consulting, Rhonda Krick Nutrition, Senior Living and Care Resources, Southern California Medical Center, Teen Therapy Center, UCLA Health, Unwind Chiropractic LA and Dr. Raisa Cipriano, West Valley Counseling Center, West Valley Warner Center Chamber of Commerce and Woodland Hills Warner Center Neighborhood Council.

Spots are still available for the following fields: optometrists and ophthalmology, audiologists and dentists. Visit woodlandhillscc.net for more info.

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HEALTH

Health Screenings You Need to Book in the New Year

While resolutions can run the gamut, oftentimes a new year inspires individuals to take charge of their health. Some eat less junk food, some cut back on alcohol or some decide to increase their level of workouts. While all are beneficial to one's health, doctors urge individuals to schedule yearly health panels to truly get a full picture of their physical well-being.

Health screenings allow for a more comprehensive look to help diagnose any potential diseases, chronic conditions or areas of concern. Sometimes the best manner of treatment is prevention, catching a potential problem early and reducing the risk of it becoming a larger problem down the road.

All adults need general health screenings that test cholesterol, blood pressure, weight, diabetes risk, etc. These are typically done during a physical exam that includes a blood draw and body scan by the physician. Depending on your health history or family history, more comprehensive scans including bone density tests, hearing and vision tests can also be done.

Additionally, cancer screenings are crucial as irregularities can be detected before the early stages of symptoms are even detected. The earlier a cancer diagnosis is found, the more successful treatment can be to prevent the disease from progressing.

Crucial preventative cancer screenings include mammograms, prostate screenings, cervical cancer screenings, colorectal cancer screenings and skin checks. While some tests can be done every few years if panels come back clean, a skin check should be done yearly and individuals should always be aware of any changing moles or areas of skin that seem to never heal.

Health screenings are generally covered by insurance, Medicare and Medicaid, but more invasive tests not included in an annual physical could incur fees. Talk with your doctor to inquire which tests are needed depending on your own health history, family history and areas of concern.

Preventative medicine is the best way to a healthy lifestyle and the more you are on top of yearly tests, the more in control of your health you will be. Make 2026 your healthiest year yet!

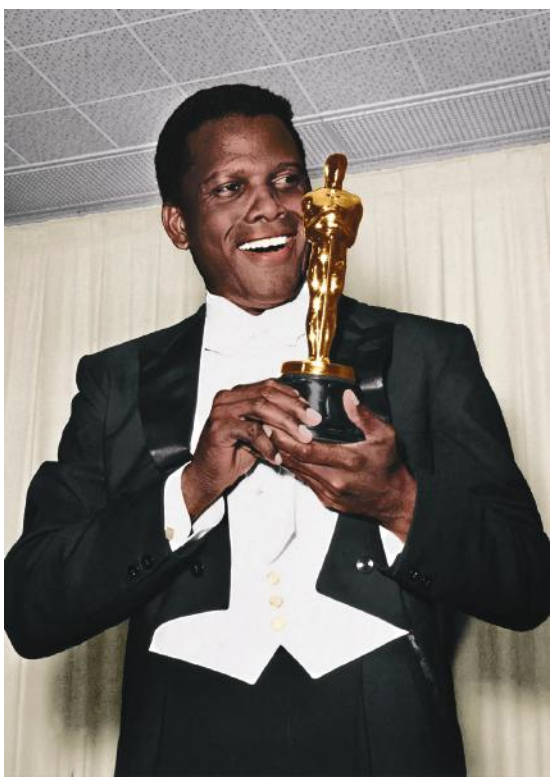
The Reel History of the Valley

By Martin M. Cooper

Black Actors and the Valley: An Improving Picture

The story of Black filmmakers in the San Fernando Valley has to begin under the unflattering light shined on the region's history of racism until well after World War Il.

Bigotry was in full flower from the 1920s through the 1950s in the Valley; the Valley-based studios largely restricted their portrayals of Black actors to musicians, athletes, maids, or comedic players. Behind the cameras, nary a Black face was to be seen.



Sidney Poitier admires his 1963 Best Actor Oscar for Lilies of the Field. The film had five Academy Award nominations.

Warner Bros. displayed greater social consciousness than others with *The Green Pastures* (1936), a story of God, heaven, and Old Testament stories. The film used the perspective of rural, Black Americans, with a predominantly Black cast. While it portrayed Black people as simplistic and naive, it was not truly racist; more of a well-intentioned but patronizing artifact of its era.

The Green Pastures starred Rex Ingram, Oscar Polk and Eddie Anderson, who played Rochester on Jack Benny's radio program from 1937 to 1955, and on Benny's TV program from 1950 to 1965. Many of the TV programs with Anderson were filmed at Revue Studios, today's Radford Studio Center.

Actors such as Herb Jeffries, who was deeply involved in independent Black filmmaking, starred in a series of all-Black cast cowboy films in the late 1930s. *Harlem on the Prairie* (1937), a pioneering all-Black Western musical, was filmed on the Iverson Movie Ranch. Late in life Jeffries lived in Woodland Hills and died in 2014 at West Hills Hospital at 100 years old.

Lockheed's Burbank plant employed thousands of Black workers during World War II, many of them depicted in training films, industrial shorts, and wartime documentaries produced nearby. These were among the first motion pictures to portray – in a positive light – Black labor, skill, and patriotism even while on-screen representation in mainstream features remained limited and stereotyped.

After World War II, when mass migration changed the face of the Valley, redlining – the practice of denying house sales or rentals to minority groups – began to diminish. But it wasn't until the 1968 Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, color, religion, or national origin, that significant numbers of Black people, including those in entertainment, began moving to the Valley in any numbers.

The postwar era brought a subtle but important shift. Television production exploded in the Valley and the boundary between TV and movies meant that Black performers and craftspeople increasingly worked in Valley studios and locations.

But no portrayal of a Black person before the early 1950s was as positive as that of Sam in 1942's *Casablanca*, filmed entirely in the Valley. He was not only portrayed with dignity; he was Humphrey Bogart's long-time friend in the film. It was Dooley Wilson's career highlight.

Hattie McDaniel, the first African American to win an Academy Award (*Gone With the Wind*, 1939), also appeared in a substantial supporting role in Warner's *In This Our Life* (1942), in a film dealing explicitly with racial issues, shot on the studio lot. She lived her last years at the Motion Picture Country Home in Woodland Hills, where she died in 1952.

And what about Black actors of the past 60 years, where a number of Black actors have achieved parity with white thespians in terms of roles and compensation?

The one individual who should be credited with doing the most for recognition of Black actors is Sidney Poitier, the first Black actor to win the Academy Award for Best Actor (*Lilies of the Field*, 1963). He starred in three major hits in one year, 1967, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, In the Heat of the Night,* and *To Sir, with Love*.

In 2002 he was awarded an Honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement in breaking racial barriers and a distinguished film career; the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2009); made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE, 1974); received a Cannes Film Festival Tribute for lifetime contributions to cinema and was presented with France's Order of Arts and Letters (2006); the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Film Institute in 1992; and the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award in 1999.

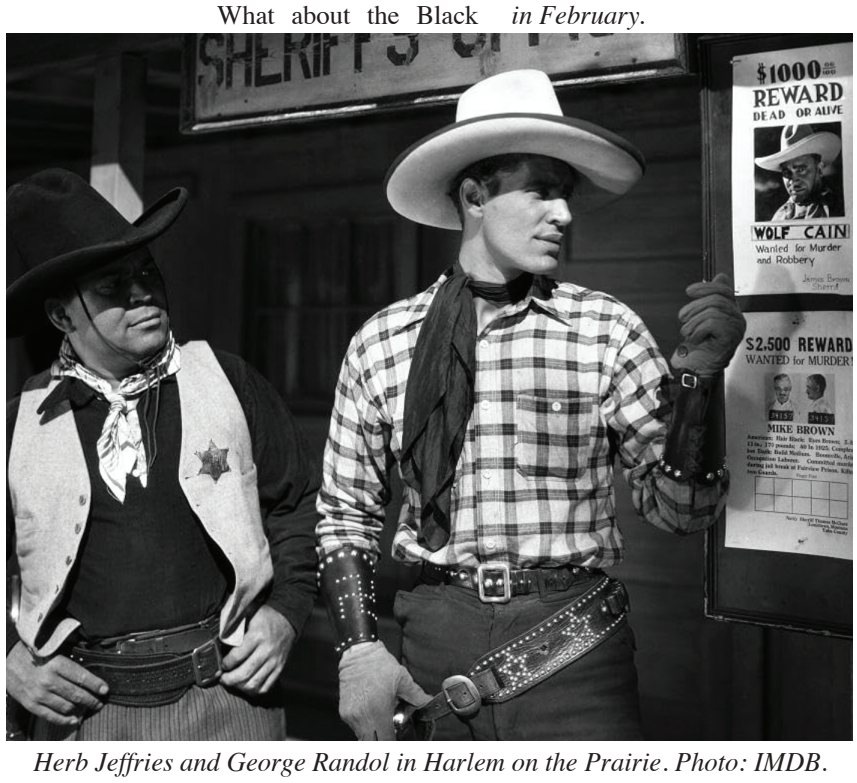
Hattie McDaniel (r.) with Vivien Leigh in 1939's Gone With the Wind.

A personal list of the top ten Black actors beyond Poitier: Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Will Smith, Morgan Freeman, Eddie Murphy, Viola Davis Jamie Foxx, Whoopi Goldberg, Idris Elba, and Cynthia Erivo.

What about the Black experience behind the cameras? Tune in next month.

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.

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 in February.



Herb Jeffries and George Randol in Harlem on the Prairie. Photo: IMDB.

ENTERTAINMENT

Jewell Noel, Sam McLellan, and Jacob Aune in the North American tour.

Say Hello! to The Book of Mormon at Pantages

The Book of Mormon cast will soon embark on their next mission at the Pantages Theater with a limited run from February 3 to 15.

This nine-time Tony Award®-winning musical follows a mismatched pair of Mormons sent on a mission to a place that's about as far from Salt Lake City as you can get. One is serious and dedicated and the other is socially awkward yet well meaning, both are sent to Uganda to convert citizens to the Mormon religion. Hilarity, and confusion, ensue much to the delight of audiences nationwide.

Entertainment Weekly calls *The Book of Mormon* "the funniest show ever" and *The New York Times* simply calls it "the best musical of this century."

Created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the award-winning creators of *South Park*, and Robert Lopez, two-time EGOT winner for Best Original Songs from the musicals *Frozen* and *Coco* and Tony Award-winning co-creator of *Avenue Q*, this smash-hit Broadway musical comedy opened in New York in the spring of 2011 and has gone on to become one of the most successful musicals of all time.

It includes gut-busting popular songs such as "Hello!," "Hasa Diga Eebowai," "Tomorrow is a Latter Day" and "Turn it Off."

The Book of Mormon runs two hours and 45 minutes (including intermission) and contains explicit language, theatrical smoke and strobe-like effects.

Tickets start at $55 and availability is limited. To purchase, visit broadwayinhollywood.com or call the box office at (323) 468-1770. The Pantages is located at 6233 Hollywood Blvd. in Los Angeles.

Hamnet is a Visceral Tale of Grief and the Importance of Art to Heal

By Katie Sterling

In a movie whose title references Shakespeare's most famous work, the narrative seemingly has very little focus on the playwright himself. Rather, it delves into the largely unknown story of his son, who died young, and a mother attempting to live after grief. *Hamnet*, based on the bestselling book by Maggie O'Farrell, is a tragic tale of loss and how a true-life tragedy served to beget the classic tragedy told on stage.

William Shakespeare (Paul Mescal) is working as a village tutor when he meets and becomes quickly beguiled by Agnes (Jessie Buckley). As the daughter of a forest witch, she is a gifted healer who prefers to spend her time in the woods. It's her connection to nature that encapsulates the largely ethereal aesthetic of the film and for almost the entire first half, audiences feel as if they are watching a sort of fable play out on screen. It's a quiet introduction into this world, with director Chloe Zhao integrating long stretches of screen time solely focusing on the whistling wind in the trees or a lone hawk soaring through an expansive sky. It's at times enchanting, but also oddly eerie as you know the narrative will soon turn dark.

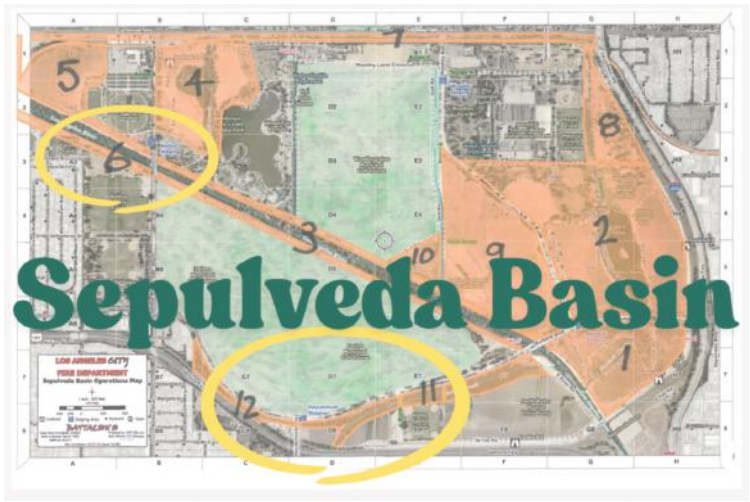
After a whirlwind romance, Agnes and Will have married and become parents to three children, a daughter named Susanna (Bodhi Rae Breathnach) and then subsequently twins, Hamnet (Jacobi Jupe) and Judith (Olivia Lynes). During this time, Will has become more focused on his playwriting, frequently spending time in London to get his plays on stage as his popularity is growing. Back home in the countryside, Agnes is installing her love of nature upon her children, her sense of mysticism seemingly rubbing off of them. After all, as twins, Hamnet and Judith have a sense of telepathy that only those who shared a womb can. They are exceptionally close and often disguising as each other in an attempt to trick those around them for a giggle that only eleven-year-olds can truly delight in. As the film climaxes to the inevitable death of Hamnet, it's apparent that the bliss this family finds comfort in will soon shatter.

The death of the young boy is perhaps the most impactful moment of the movie, both beautifully filmed and exceptionally tragic. It presents itself in an almost dreamlike state until the moment is broken as Agnes comes to the realization of what has happened and lets out an animalistic howl that only a bereft mother could. The loss is all-encompassing, made even worse by the fact that Will is away in London when it occurs. Upon his return, he is shocked to discover the loss of his child and the shadows into which Agnes has retreated into.

As typical following the death of a child, the parents grow farther apart, each grappling with grief in their own ways. Agnes becomes angry and Will retreats into his work, a choice that infuriates Agnes since it seems to her that he is simply moving on with life. Little does she know that Will is using his playwriting as an outlet for his grief and that *Hamlet* (often interchangeable with the word Hamnet) is his way of making sense of his personal tragedy. At the film's climax, the message is clear that art can serve as a powerful tool for healing, something that Agnes begins to understand when she first witnesses his play.

Much like Shakespeare's works, *Hamnet* is not an easily digestible film on the surface, but one that is layered with meaning and interpretation. It is at times a story of love, of grief, of spirituality and of art. Jacobi Jupe as young Hamnet encompasses a sense of innocence so pure that when he selflessly tries to offer himself in replacement of his sick sister, you can't help but ache for him. Jessie Buckley transforms from a quiet wanderer of the woods to a mother so torn by grief, her performance as the narrative escalates is so impactful, audiences feel her anger and her sadness in their guts. This may be a film whose title is tied to Shakespeare, but make no mistake, this is Agnes' movie and Buckley beautifully portrays a mother crippled by loss. *Hamnet* is tragic in a myriad of ways, but it also serves as a gentle reminder that healing can be found in unexpected ways.

Hamnet is currently in theatres.



Sepulveda Basin Update from the ENC Homelessness Liaisons

As part of the Sepulveda Basin clean-up, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority Central Valley (LAHSA) Homeless Engagement Teams (HET) have been very active in the basin, focusing on Zones 6, 11, and 12, which were where large encampments were located.

Currently, Zones 11 and 12 in the basin are clear of encampments, and no person experiencing homelessness has reported returning to these areas. However, LA Park Rangers have reported periodic re-pops, which resulted in two arrests, but the continued diligence by LAHSA and Park Rangers to maintain the area is a top priority.

The clean-up of encampments and hazardous materials in Zone 6, by the LA River, is underway. All crews are doing their part to clear the area and keep the process of getting people experiencing homelessness housed as seamless as possible.

So far, LAHSA has been able to make connections with 39 persons experiencing homelessness from August to the present. These individuals have been offered housing and services.

LAHSA continues to engage with all individuals, even those who are not open to services at the moment; in most cases, they can ultimately work with the individuals to get them housed.

Each person is referred to the County's Emergency Centralized Response Center (ECRC) and connected to the LA County Department of Mental Health (DMH)/ Department of Health Services (DHS) if applicable.

The outreach won't stop once the initial basin clean-up is complete. The LAHSA team is committed to engaging with PEH in the basin and surrounding areas in Encino. Help from the Encino community by reporting people experiencing homelessness in the region is an invaluable tool. The information from residents helps LAHSA proactively engage with the individuals and prevent them from moving into the basin or relocating.

Please utilize the LAHOP website at ahsa.org/portal/apps/la-hop if you encounter someone experiencing homelessness. Working together, we can all do our part to keep the community safe and housed.

Please reach out with any questions at encinonc.org. We are here for YOU, Encino.

Encino Homelessness Liaisons Rachel Perry, Jennifer Luce and Josh Sautter.

Valley Home and Condo Annual Prices Hit Record Highes, Sales Lag

The annual prices of homes and condominiums that changed owners during 2025 in the San Fernando Valley rose to record highs while home sales fell 5%, the Southland Regional Association of Realtors® reported.

Local Realtors® assisted the close of escrow of 7,715 homes and condominiums from January to December 2025. Those transactions generated $9.79 billion for the local economy of the Valley and Greater LA. That tally does not include the added millions of dollars home sales often yield in related services, ranging from new appliances and home remodels to landscaping and new furnishings.

Of that total, 5,987 were single family homes and 1,728 were condominiums. After posting a positive annual number in 2024, Valley home sales fell 4.6% in 2025. Condominium annual closed escrows increased by eight sales to 1,728, up 0.5% from a year ago.

The association reported that the 5,987 single-family homes sold during 2025 had an annual median price of $1.1 million, up 3.5% from a year ago and setting a record. It was only the second time since SRAR started reporting statistics in 1987 that the median broke through the $1 million benchmark.

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Sacredness
Gerald Clayton Honors Duke Ellington's Concert of Sacred Music
Featuring Michael Mayo, Christie Dashiell, Tonality, and Josette Wiggan

THU FEB 5, 8PM
Arturo O'Farrill Trio
ONSTAGE JAZZ CLUB

FRI FEB 6, 8PM | **SAT FEB 7, 8PM**
Cécile McLorin Salvant
ONSTAGE JAZZ CLUB

WED FEB 11, 8PM | **THU FEB 12, 8PM**
Anat Cohen Quartetinho
Featuring Vitor Gonçalves, Tal Mashiach, and James Shipp
ONSTAGE JAZZ CLUB

SAT FEB 14, 8PM
Love Inside Out
Valentine's Day With Veronica Swift
Featuring Pacific Jazz Orchestra
Chris Walden, conductor

WED FEB 18, 8PM
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SAT FEB 21, 8PM
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