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North Valley News

Volume 3, Number 25 January 23, 2026

Serving Porter Ranch, Northridge, Granada Hills & Chatsworth

News in Brief

Body Found in Abandoned, Burned Church on Parthenia

A body was found in an abandoned church days after the structure burned to the ground. The property at 15226 W. Parthenia Street caught fire on Tuesday, January 13, and over 100 firefighters responded to the scene. Nearby apartment buildings were evacuated while they fought the blaze. Human remains at the scene were detected by cadaver dogs but workers were unable to enter the building safely after it collapsed. Three days later with heavy equipment and more dogs they could investigate, and found a yet-to-be identified body in the ruins. Crews worked to remove the body in a dignified manner. The cause of the fire was undetermined.

Wildfire Resource Fair Saturday

A wildlife resource and education fair will be held this coming Saturday, January 24, from 10 am to 2 pm. Councilman John Lee, the L.A. Fire Department and MySafe:LA will host the event at Jane & Bert Boeckmann Park, 11930 Mason Avenue in Porter Ranch. It will feature LAFD, LAPD, DWP and LA CERT team members and displays. Learn about evacuation, home hardening, fire insurance, leaf filter gutter guards and more. There is free food and desserts plus tons of prizes and giveaways. For more information visit mysafela.org. or call (213) 634-0100.

Free Health & Wellness Expo

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.

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.

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

Visit woodlandhillscc.net for more information.

Court Rules in Favor of Boeing in Santa Susana Field Lab Cleanup

Residents fearing contamination and cancer risk for themselves and future generations from the Santa Susana Field Lab filed a lawsuit against Boeing and the Department of Toxic Substances.

They lost.

On January 8, the court rejected their petition challenging a prior cleanup agreement for the site.

Parents Against Santa Susana Field Lab, Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility claimed that a 2022 agreement between Boeing and The Department of Toxic Substances precluded a full environmental review from CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act).

They refer to some studies that show a greater increase in cancer among the 700,000 residents living directly below the site, though causation has not been proven. They argue that the site has never been fully cleared, and that the 2022 agreement will leave significant amounts of contamination on site.

The Santa Susana Field Lab is a highly controversial toxic site. In the 1950's and 60's it was used for rocket engine testing and nuclear research, leaving radioactive and hazardous material behind. In 1959 the sodium nuclear reactor had the first meltdown of a core reactor in history. For years the community has called for intensive cleanup.

The 2,850-acre lab is owned 80% by Boeing and the rest by NASA and the Department of Energy.

The Department of Toxic Substances and the Environmental Protection Agency are responsible for the cleanup.

The lawsuit focused on the area of the site that Boeing is responsible for, and claimed that the 2022 agreement did not require soil cleanup mandated to a residential standard and was negotiated before a full CEQA review.

They refer to some studies that show a greater increase in cancer among the 700,000 residents living directly below the site, though causation has not been proven.

It cited the 2008 Supreme Court case Save Tara, which ruled officials violated CEQA by approved elements of a West Hollywood housing project before the official review was finished. The ruling stated that agencies cannot commit to actions or alternatives before a full CEQA review is finished.

The January court ruling in the SSFL lawsuit said that the Save Tara argument was not applicable as the two cases were different.

Plaintiffs in the SSFL lawsuit allege that the 2022 agreement will allow Boeing to leave 90 to 95% of contaminants on the site.

Denise Duffield, Associate Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility, said, "The agreement was negotiated privately , without public input or representation of the community's interests. It breaks prior promises for a safe and complete cleanup." The plaintiffs have vowed to continue fighting the court ruling.

For related editorial see page 4 of this paper.

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Community Calendar

NORTHRIDGE: Residents are invited to attend a Senior Services Event hosted by Los Angeles City Attorney Hydee Feldstein Soto, focused on connecting older adults with available resources and support programs in the community. The event will be held on Friday, January 30, from 12 to 1 pm at the Wilkinson Senior Center, 8956 Vanalden. For additional information, community members may contact Matthew Frazier at (213) 978-2988.

CHATSWORTH: New and established players are invited to join the Chatsworth Library for Mahjong on most second and fourth Wednesdays of the month; please check the calendar to confirm. Experienced players will be on hand to teach new players how to play. The library is located at 21052 Devonshire Street.

WOODLAND HILLS: The next meeting of Valley Unity Republican Women will be held on February 5, at 10:30 am, at the Woodland Hills Country Club, 21150 Dumetz. The cost is $42 which includes lunch. Guest speakers are Susan Shelley, an advocate for Proposition 13 and opinion writer for *The Daily News Group*, and Evelyn Sky-Jones, a representative of "America 250." RSVP by Friday, January 30 at valleyunityrw.org or RSVP to (818)926-0228. Payments can be made using Zelle or you can bring a check or cash to the meeting.

NORTHRIDGE: Attend a Home Composting and Urban Gardening Workshop with Steve List, local teacher, landscaper, and president of the San Fernando Valley chapter of the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers. This workshop features hands-on learning focused on sustainable living and community gardening. Participants will learn practical composting techniques, including worm bins, and gain tips on caring for deciduous fruit trees, with opportunities to purchase compost bins and enter a raffle for gardening prizes. The workshop will take place on Saturday, January 31, from 9 to 11 am at the LAPD Devonshire PALS Youth Center. Free bare-root strawberry plants will be available while supplies last. The event is presented in partnership with LA Sanitation and Pacoima Beautiful.

SEPULVEDA BASIN: 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.

PORTER RANCH: Are you a teen between the ages of 13-18, love to read, and are looking to hang out and talk about your new favorite book? Join Porter Ranch Branch Library on January 30 at 4 pm for their first meeting of the year with *Never Seen the Stars* by Kate Korsh. Please email shaina.cain@lapl.org or call the Porter Ranch library to RSVP.

NORTHRIDGE: LAPD Devonshire Station will hold a Basic Car Meeting on Wednesday, January 28, at 6 pm. Join Senior Lead Officer Sandra Zamora for the in-person meeting at Northridge United Methodist Church's Kendall Building, 9650 Reseda Blvd. Special guests will be Alejandra Moscoso and Pat Hall from LAFD Cert.

STUDIO CITY: United Chambers of Commerce is hosting its annual board installation luncheon and celebrating new Los Angeles Fire Chief Jaime Moore on January 26. Meet the new fire chief and learn about his efforts to improve wildfire response across the city. The event will be held at CBS Studios' Carla's Cafe, 4024 Radford Avenue in Studio City, beginning at 11 am. Former Councilman and UCC Vice Chair Dennis Zine will be Master of Ceremonies. No walk-ins allowed. Purchase tickets at unitedchambers.org.

VALLEYWIDE: The United Chambers of Commerce announced their 12th annual Inspirational Women of the San Fernando Valley Awards will be held on May 7. The event will recognize women who have inspired, achieved, and made the Valley a better place. Honorees will be selected from a wide array of industries, including, but not limited to, business, social services, health care and medicine, education, community advocacy, arts, government and non-profit, among others. Nominations and self-nominations are welcome and must be submitted no later than March 5 at 5 pm. The nomination form is available at form.jotform.com/260010138648147.

People in the News

Porter Ranch sisters **Melody and Leila Nouri,** above, recently appeared on *Good Day L.A.* to promote their competition on the new *Baking Championship Next Gen* on the Food Network.

Melody started baking in pre-school and her passion led her to start her own business making birthday cakes for friends and neighbors. Leila started baking at 11, helping her sister fill orders.

The two work together on the television show, but host Duff Goldman says Melody "runs the team," as she says, "I'm the main baker so I'm the boss." Lelia likes to do things her own way but does most of the clean up!

Goldman says that these kids respond better to criticism on shows than most adults because they "want to learn more."

West Hills resident **Avneet Kaur**, right, has opened Fractional Family Office, which offers expertise in areas such as proactive tax planning, diversified investments including real estate, alternative assets, estate and succession planning, fractional CFO support, delivered with a focus on cost efficiency compared to traditional structures.

There is The Holistic Suite for wealth management, real estate, insurance and taxes; The MFO Architect: Building multi-family offices that actually function and The Industry Connector: getting the financial services world to collaborate. Kaur is a Wall Street survivor, legacy builder, and transparency crusader. After excelling at UCLA, she landed on Wall Street just in time for the 2008 global financial crisis. "While others were panicking, I was getting a master's degree in "How Not to Run a Financial System." It sparked an entrepreneurial fire in me and a lifelong obsession: transparency," she said. Her approach to wealth was influenced by her two favorite teachers: a military household in India and the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers. One taught her that discipline is non-negotiable; the other taught her that "too big

to fail" is usually a polite way of saying "too messy to manage."

"I grew up watching my own family build two family offices from the ground up. I saw the gears turning—the tax strategies, the investment pivots, the succession talks over dinner. It wasn't just about money; it was about building a legacy that didn't crumble the moment it changed hands."

Kaur holds real estate, insurance, and Series 65 licenses, but what she really does is "retail" the Family Office model. Usually, the "Family Office" is a gated community reserved for billionaires. "I decided to open the gates for entrepreneurs who have hit that $10 million+ sweet spot. If you've spent your life building a business, you shouldn't have to spend the rest of it wondering if your wealth manager is actually on your team." To reach Kaur visit franctional-familyoffice.com or call (818) 326-1042. Follow her @advisoravneetkaur.

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VIEWPOINT

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.

• Speaking of which, with everyone on a cell phone now, everyone is texting. Even seniors are learning to punch buttons and abbreviate their texts. Here are some classic senior texts:
BFF -best friend fell.
BTW - bring the wheelchair
BYOT - bring your own teeth
FWIW - forgot where I was
GHA - got heartburn again
LMDO - laughing my dentures out
OMSG - oh my! Sorry, gas
TTYL -talk to you louder

• 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.

Guest Editorial: Boeing Wins, Kids Lose

From Melissa Bumstead, Parents Against SSFL

In 2022, Parents Against Santa Susana Field Lab (PASSFL) served as the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Boeing Company, challenging the cleanup agreements for the Santa Susana Field Lab, one of California's most toxic and radioactive Superfund sites, under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

On January 8, the Ventura County Superior Court issued its final ruling, siding with DTSC and Boeing. Boeing has said they intend to begin the cleanup in Summer 2026.

The Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL) is located in the hills between Los Angeles and Simi Valley, an area home to approximately 700,000 residents. During the Cold War, the site was used for rocket engine testing and nuclear reactor experiments, activities that left extensive contamination in soil and groundwater, including long-lasting endocrine-disrupting chemicals, toxic metals, and radioactive waste. A federally funded study found that residents living within two miles of SSFL experienced a 60% higher cancer incidence rate compared to surrounding populations, demonstrating a strong correlation between cancer risks and proximity to the site.

"Boeing had a legal victory today, but at what cost? It will allow children in our community to continue to get preventable cancer," said Melissa Bumstead, PASSFL founder and mom to a two-time cancer survivor. "The DTSC and Boeing lawyers have to live with the consequences of their actions – kids will get sick because of this – and I don't envy them."

The lawsuit centered on the 2022 Settlement Agreement between DTSC and Boeing, which owns 80% of the SSFL, that superseded earlier cleanup agreements at the site that would have removed all man-made contamination, to have been completed by 2017.

According to independent analysis, the new agreement will allow Boeing to leave approximately 95% of the contaminated soil onsite after their cleanup is complete.

Boeing then plans to open the site to the public as a park. They claim this will meet their legal obligations for a "health protective" cleanup.

This ruling comes despite Boeing's 2015 risk analysis, which found that some portions of the site are so contaminated that, if left unremediated, an estimated 96 out of 100 hypothetical residents would develop cancer if they lived onsite and consumed food grown there. This level of risk stands in stark contrast to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's excess cancer risk goal for post-cleanup conditions, which seeks to limit risk to no more than one additional cancer case per 1,000,000 people.

"The Settlement Agreement didn't include a required environmental review, a main component of CEQA," said Denise Duffield, Associate Director for Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles (PSR-LA), a co-plaintiff in the lawsuit. "It was negotiated in private without any representatives for the public interest and was agreed to without any public input. It breaks all their prior promises for a safe and complete cleanup. DTSC reserved $2,000,000 tax-payer dollars for this lawsuit to defeat the community — who are just trying to protect their families and environment from well documented contamination. Once again DTSC has failed to do its job."

PASSFL intends to push the cities of Simi Valley and Los Angeles, and the counties of Los Angeles and Ventura to uphold their motions to sue the DTSC if the cleanup agreements do not result in the removal of all man-made contamination to "background" in a safe and responsible manner.

"Our environment, wildlife, water systems, and our families will continue to be at risk of the Santa Susana's contamination until it's cleaned up at the source. Boeing has the capability and more than that, they have a moral obligation to protect us from their site's toxic and radioactive waste," said Bumstead. "There's too much at stake. We refuse to give up."

Further material on the issue is available online: at www.parentsagainstssfl.com/PRJan82026.

Melissa Bumstead is founder and co-director of Parents Against Santa Susana Field Lab.

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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-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.

When brands treat community as an afterthought or mistake visibility for connection, they risk becoming disconnected from the very people they aim to serve.

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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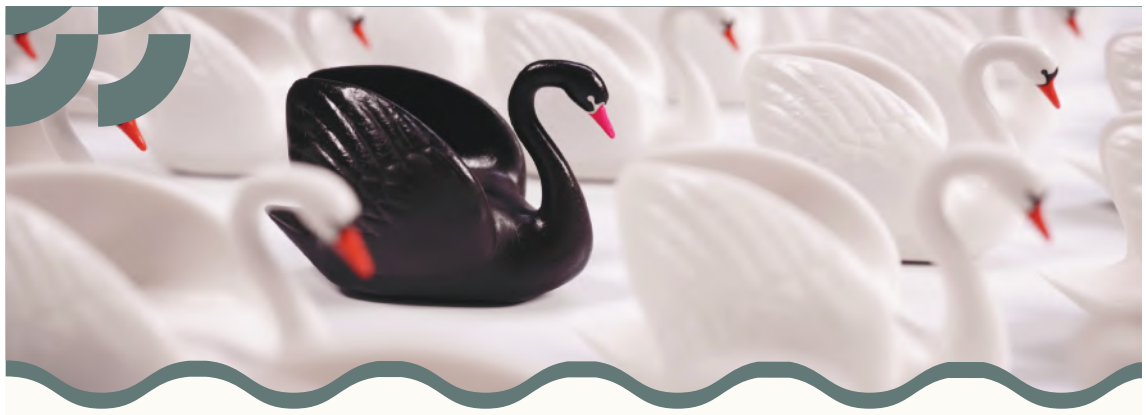
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VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Gerald Clayton plays Duke Ellington at Soraya.

Gerald Clayton Opens the Soraya's Fifth Annual Jazz at Naz Festival

The Soraya has assembled an entire company of musicians who are 2026 Grammy nominees: pianist and music director Gerald Clayton, Los Angeles-based gospel choir Tonality, and jazz vocalists Christie Dashiell, and Michael Mayo.

Opening The Soraya's fifth annual Jazz at Naz festival, Clayton brings us "Sacredness," his rendering of the work Duke Ellington considered his most important, the three Sacred Concerts that were performed between 1965 and 1973 in cathedrals and churches in San Francisco and New York City.

Ellington evoked a Cotton Club revue meets the African American Church that has endured as nondenominational and universal. Clayton brings Ellington's daring masterpiece into the present day with original arrangements, four dancers led by tapper and choreographer Josette Wiggan, an all-star jazz big band, and new spoken word creations.

Gerald Clayton suggests a new ideal and a promising way forward in modern jazz. A pianist, composer, and seven-time Grammy nominee, he stands out for his ability to balance heritage and innovation — bridging the tradition he grew up in and a fearless sense of exploration.

The concert also features Michael Mayo, Christie Dashiell, Tonality, and Josette Wiggan.

The opening of Jazz at Naz kicks off on Saturday, January 31, at 2 pm, with tickets starting at $59. Tickets available at thesoraya.org.

The Younes and Soraya Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts is located at 18111 Nordhoff St., on the CSUN campus.

Say Hello! to Book of Mormon at Pantages

The Book of Mormon 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 serious and dedicated and the other socially awkward yet well meaning, 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.

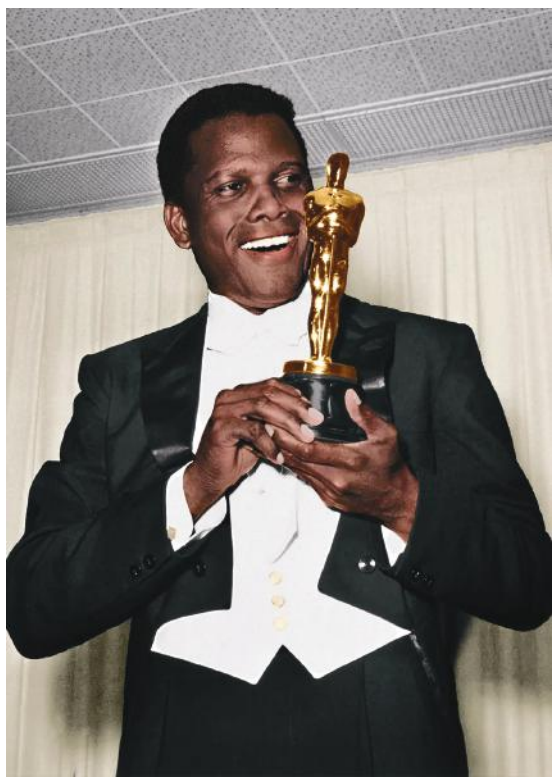
The Reel History of the Valley

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.

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!

Everything You Wanted to Know About Sinuses... But Were Afraid to Ask

By Marc Kerner, MD, FACS

Have you had a cold or allergy attack that wouldn't go away? If so, there's a good chance you had sinusitis. We estimate that 37 million people are afflicted with sinusitis each year, making it one of the most common health conditions in America.

Dr. Marc Kerner of CalWest Head & Neck Sugical Institute

When is a Cold Actually Sinusitis?

The majority of sinus infections are caused by bacteria usually preceded by a cold or allergy attack. They can be made worse by exposure to environmental pollutants.

Unlike a cold, or allergy, bacterial sinusitis requires a physician's diagnosis and treatment with an antibiotic to cure the infection and prevent future complications.

Normally, mucus collecting in the sinuses drains into the nasal passages. When people have a cold or allergy attack, sinuses become inflamed and unable to drain. This can lead to congestion and repeated episodes of infection. Diagnosis of acute sinusitis usually is based on a physical examination and a discussion of your symptoms. Your doctor also may use x-rays of your sinuses or obtain a sample of your nasal discharge to test for bacteria.

When Acute Becomes Chronic Sinusitis

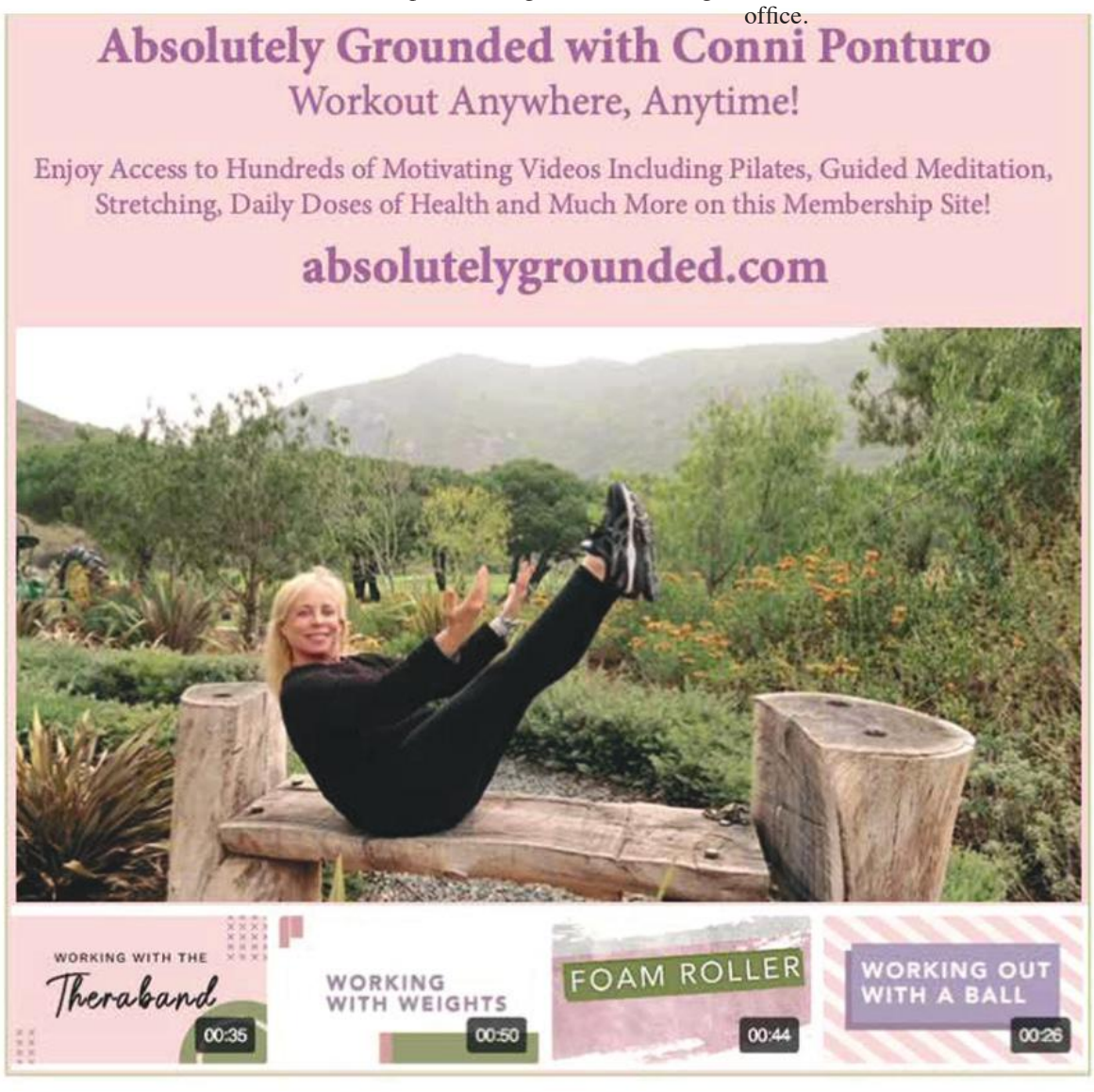
When you have frequent sinus infections, or the infection lasts three months or more, you most likely suffer from chronic sinusitis. Symptoms of chronic sinusitis may be less severe than those of acute sinusitis; however, untreated chronic sinusitis can cause damage to the sinuses and cheekbones that sometimes requires surgery to repair.

Treating Sinusitis

Bacterial sinusitis: Therapy for bacterial sinusitis should include an appropriate antibiotic. In addition to an antibiotic, an oral or nasal spray or drop decongestant may be recommended to relieve congestion, although you should avoid prolonged use of nonprescription nasal sprays or drops. Inhaling steam or using saline nasal sprays or drops can help relieve sinus discomfort. The symptoms of sinus infections that become chronic include headaches, facial pain or pressure, nasal congestion, nasal drainage, ear fullness, cough, fevers, sneezing, dental pain, itchy eyes and sometimes fatigue.

It is important for patients to be evaluated by a Board Certified Specialist if you have these symptoms. Diagnosis can be made by looking into the nasal cavity with a small telescope and then with a special x-ray called a CT scan of the sinuses. Surgery should be considered only if medical treatment fails or if there is a nasal obstruction that cannot be corrected with medications.

Surgery for sinus disease has evolved over the last 30 years from highly complicated, painful surgery to minimally invasive procedures that target the diseased areas using image guidance and fine instrumentation. We also have a number of minimally invasive office procedures that are highly effective in treating sinus disease including balloon dilation, and cryoablation (freezing tissues) both of which can be performed in the office under local anesthesia. For more information visit www.calwestent.com or call (818) 349-0600 to schedule an appointment with Dr Kerner in his Northridge office.



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REAL ESTATE

Stoney Point Request for Proposals Due March 24

Stoney Point Ranch in Chatsworth was purchased by the City in 2007 with the intent of preserving equestrian-oriented use of the property. Councilmember John Lee introduced a motion in 2021 requesting that the Department of Recreation and Parks launch a transparent, competitive bidding process for the management and operation of Stoney Point Ranch. An initial Request for Proposal (RFP) was released in 2024 after years of working through challenges to ensure that existing equestrian uses would not be displaced during the process.

A secondary RFP was released on December 12, 2025, with responses due on March 24, 2026. Anyone interested in responding to the current RFP must attend a mandatory Pre-Proposal Meeting on January 29, 2026.

For more information visit https://recreation.parks.lacity.gov/concession-opportunities.

Santa Susana Hikes Scheduled

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains has scheduled two hikes for this coming weekend.

A slow and gentle mindfulness hike will take place on Sunday, January 25, at 10 am. The easy-to-moderate, three-quarter mile hike will be led by Kimberly. Meet at the Larwin Trailhead.

Also on Sunday, January 25, Sophia will lead a scenic overlook hike at 1 pm. The moderate, three-quarter-mile hike will start at the Lilac Lane Trailhead.

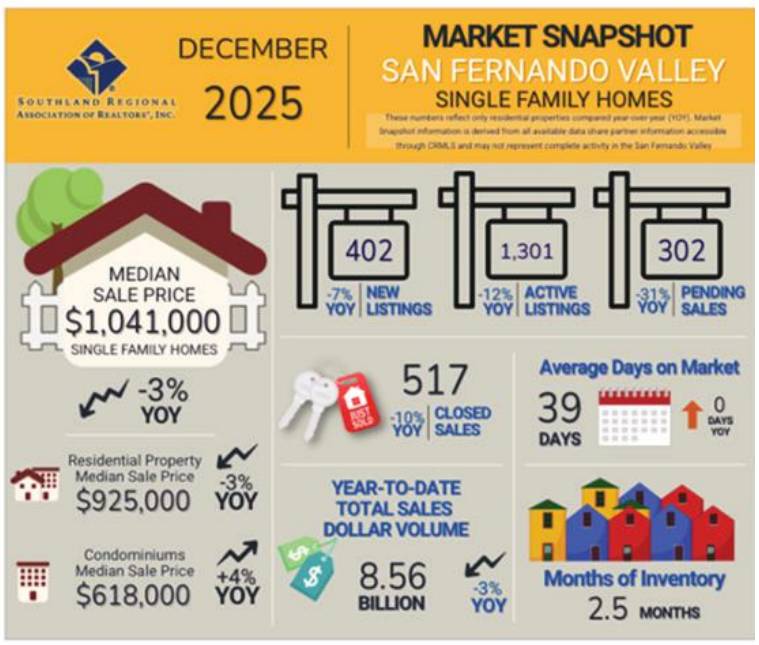
For more information and cancellations due to rain visit fpssm.org.

Audubon Society Hosts Owl Show

The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society will host a Zoom presentation entitled "What an Owl Knows" on Thursday, January 29, at 7 pm.

Jennifer Ackerman's presentation will focus on her latest book, *What an Owl Knows: The New Science of the World's Most Enigmatic Birds*. This book was an instant *New York Times* bestseller and has been described in reviews as "eloquent and engaging," "a fascinating read," and "a masterful survey."

For more information and programs visit sfvaudubon.org.



Valley Home Prices Rise But Sales Slump in 2025

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 today.

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 San Fernando Valley and Greater Los Angeles. 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, San Fernando 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. "Real estate professionals had great expectations for the 2025 local housing market," said Nicole Stinson, the 2026 President of the 10,000 member Southland Regional Association of Realtors. "Yet it often felt like buyers and sellers were stuck, hesitant to commit given economic and job uncertainties. An expanded inventory kept the market moving forward while interest rates that were trending down made many purchases possible.

"With the hope of additional drops in interest rates," Stinson said, "perhaps this new year will see more families achieve their dream of owning a home."

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.

The condominium annual median price came in at a record $675,727, up 9.9% from 2024.

"Home and condo annual resale prices have been steadily increasing since recovery from the Great Recession began in 2012," said Valerie Biletsky, the association's Chief Executive Officer. "With only one exception –2023– prices have soared in every year as inventory tightened and competition for homes increased.

"Eliminating even a few of the many qualms about the direction of the economy will bolster the confidence of prospective homebuyers. I'm hoping we'll see sales improve in 2026 by about 3% to 6%."

Combined pending sales – a measure of future closed escrows

After posting a positive annual number in 2024, San Fernando Valley home sales fell 4.6% in 2025.

– fell 24% to 411 open escrows. Properties listed on the market spent an average of 41 days, up two days from December 2024.

SRAR's Income-to-Loan guide for December found that an income of $155,456 was needed to qualify for an 80% loan of $493,600 on a San Fernando Valley median-priced condominium of $617,000. With the national average interest rate at 6.29% during December – the lowest since December 2024's 6.31% and well below the 7.79% of October 2023 – the income needed to qualify increased 5.2% compared to a year ago. The monthly PITI — principal, interest, taxes and insurance payments — totaled $3,886.

The Southland Regional Association of Realtors is the voice for real estate in San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys.

Neighborhood Council Meetings

The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council will hold a general board and stakeholder meeting on Wednesday, February 4, from 6:30 to 9 pm.

For the Zoom link visit chatsworthcouncil.org.

Granada Hills South Neighborhood Council will hold an in-person board meeting on Thursday, February 5, at 7 pm at Granada Hills Charter High's Rawley Hall, 10535 Zelzah Ave. For agenda visit ghsnc.org.

Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council will hold an in-person board meeting on Tuesday, February 3, at 6:30 pm at St. Euphrasia auditorium, 11766 Shoshone, Granada Hills. For agenda visit ghnnc.org.

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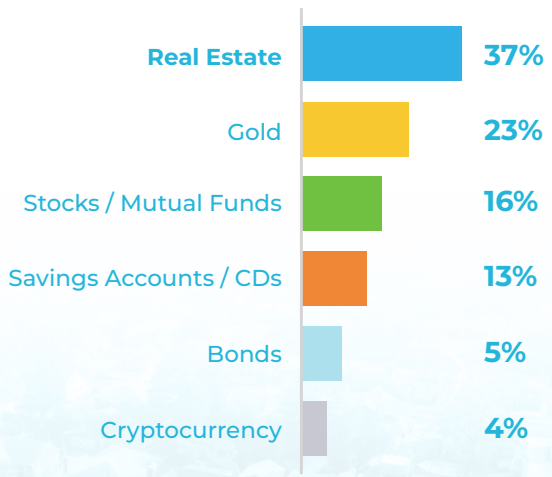
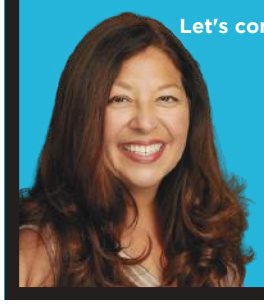


If you've been trying to decide if it makes sense to buy a home today, let this reassure you. **Homeownership wins in the long run.**



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

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