Granada Hills Celebrates Valentine's!

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Sounding the Alarm on Heart Disease

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Valley Home Sales and Active Listings Surge in January

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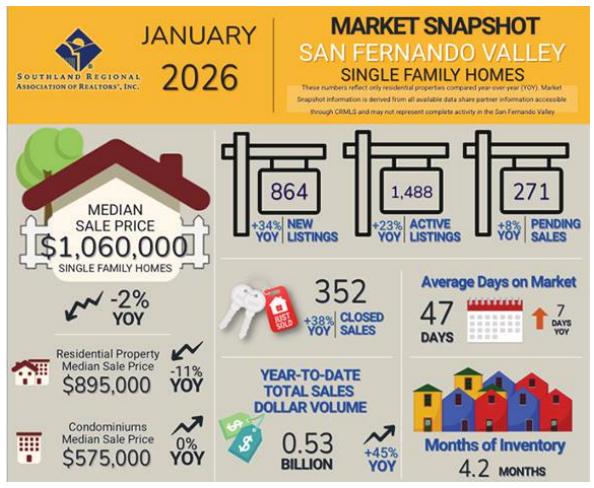

North Valley News

Serving Porter Ranch, Northridge, Granada Hills & Chatsworth

Volume 3, Number 26 February 20, 2026

News in Brief

Community Volunteer Patrols Fight Crime

We all have growing concerns about crime in our neighborhoods. We complain that the police aren't able to provide the surveillance necessary to keep our streets and homes safe. The members of the LAPD Devonshire Division Volunteer Community Patrol *are* doing something about it. Every week they drive with partners in specially-marked cars through the area to identify potential imminent crime activities and notify uniformed officers. Their efforts are working! Each week the crime statistics decline in the locales they have patrolled. When burglaries have occurred, they assist detectives in collecting information related to the crimes. In addition to patrols, they provide support at traffic collisions, which increases the safety of victims and responders, as well as releasing officers to return to their own patrol responsibilities. You may have also seen them working at special events, such as the Granada Hills and Chatsworth Christmas parades, to help ensure an enjoyable and safe experience for all. We all need to consider contributing to the quality of life in our neighborhoods. The VCP, soon celebrating its 10th anniversary, may just be the organization that's right for you. They provide all of the necessary training and uniforms. Applicants must pass an LAPD background check, be able to sit and stand for extended periods of time, and be able to work a minimum of two four-hours shifts per month. For more information, please contact Bill Cotter at VT175@lapd.online and learn more about the unit.

LAPD Plans Drone Stations at Devonshire Stations and The Vineyards

LAPD plans to purchase a fleet of drones and docking stations to help in retail theft policing. The Devonshire Station would receive two of the Skydio drone docking stations, which use video cameras and thermal imaging to send real-time information to LAPD officers on the ground. Additionally, two stations would be placed at the Vineyards shopping center in Porter Ranch. Drones launched from the rooftop docking stations could operate in a two- to three-mile radius. Since LAPD started using drones in 2024 they have conducted 1,779 flights and the drones were first on scene in 754 incidents. They were also used by officers during the 2025 World Series and parade. Critics say that drones could lead to an invasion of residents' privacy. However, LAPD officials say drones improve response time and make it safer for officers to handle calls. Funding for the drone program will come from a $2.1 million donation from the Los Angeles Police Foundation. The L.A. City Council has to approve the donation before the program is launched.

Valley Businessman Enters Mayor's Race

A prominent local west valley businessman has filed to run for Los Angeles mayor.

Robert "Goody" Goodman, a former Bell Canyon resident who lost his home in the Woolsey Fire, was the founder of Box Brothers Corporation, a successful chain of retail box, packaging and shipping centers. He opened multiple locations across Southern California and earned recognition as a finalist for "Entrepreneur of the Year" several times. After a serious health challenge where he battled liver cancer, Goodman underwent a successful liver transplant, an experience that deepened his appreciation for life and

Battling and surviving liver cancer deepened his appreciation for life and community - and strengthened his resolve to give back.

community - and strengthened his resolve to give back, especially to those navigating the challenges of starting and growing a business in the Los Angeles region.

He is an active member of the West Valley Warner Center Chamber of Commerce, where he mentors small business owners and shares practical insights from decades of experience in retail, logistics and entrepreneurship.

His platform includes eliminating the Los Angeles business tax to small businesses. He wants to eradicate the tax to empower small businesses and stimulate local economic growth.

He also is pushing to bring back Hollywood by reducing red tape, enhancing public safety and making L.A. a welcoming place for business again.

Following the Altadena and Palisades fires, Goodman believes in a hassle-free rebuilding experience. That includes cutting through city and county bureaucracy, eliminating duplicate approvals and establishing clear timelines for permits.

"Homeowners should not be penalized for rebuilding, and small businesses must be able to reopen quickly without excessive fees and delays," he told *Valley News Group*.

Goodman also believes in taking an aggressive stance against crime and restoring accountability for criminal behavior. "We need to fully staff our police departments and provide officers with the necessary resources to effectively serve the community fighting crime and street racing," he said.

Robert "Goody" Goodman has thrown his hat in the ring.

Addressing one of Los Angeles' most urgent problems, Goodman wants to help the homeless - "helping those who want help first."

His approach prioritizes assistance for individuals ready to accept help and provides immediate assistance for those who have recently lost their homes due to eviction, job loss or health issues. He believes in offering temporary housing, job placement and social services to help individuals regain stability. "We need to focus on solutions that break the cycle of homelessness," he stated.

He also believes in treating addiction, not enabling it, with those seeking help undergoing mandatory detox, followed by a minimum six-month rehab program for those committed to recovery. "We need zero tolerance. We can no longer allow open drug use to destroy our neighborhoods and the lives within them."

For those on the streets facing mental health issues, he believes in increased access to hospital care, medication management and supervised facilities, providing safe options for those in crisis to protect their well-being and that of the public.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

NORTHRIDGE: Celebrate the Year of the Horse and the 2026 Lunar New Year at a celebration at Northridge Park on Saturday, February 28. From 11 am to 2 pm enjoy food, activities and giveaways. The park is located at 10058 Reseda Blvd. The event is sponsored by Councilmember John Lee, Cheer and the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

WOODLAND HILLS: Boys & Girls Club of the West Valley will hold their "Tee Off Fore Kids" golf classic tournament on Monday, March 30, at Woodland Hills Country Club. Included with tournament registration is a player prize pack, time on the range, contests, a shotgun start, continental breakfast, boxed lunch and a cocktail hour with team awards. To register email j.rondan@bgcwv.org.

RESEDA: ONEgeneration will hold a Bingo tournament on Saturday, February 28, from 10 am to 12 pm. With a $20 donation, you will receive three cards for all 10 games ($5 for an extra pack). Doors open at 9:30 am and the event is cash only. The event will be held at 18255 Victory Blvd.

CHATSWORTH: The Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains will host a hike on Sunday, February 22. The 1.5-mile hike will traverse the El Camino Nuevo/Upper Meadow Loop from 10 am to noon. Meet at the Rocky Peak parking lot on the south side of Santa Susana Pass Road. For more information and events visit fpssm.org.

NORTHRIDGE: Tickets are now on sale for United Chambers State of the County Luncheon on Wednesday, March 25, at 11:30 am. County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath will be the guest speaker. Reservations are required. The event will be held at Porter Valley Country Club, 19216 Singing Hills Drive. To register visit unitedchambers.org.

PORTER RANCH: The Vineyards at Porter Ranch hosts a weekly Farmers Market every Sunday from 9 am to 2 pm in the parking lot of Kaiser Permanente. Certified California Farmers Markets will bring together local vendors to Porter Ranch to bring fresh food and fun experiences. Please be kind to each other and the environment – don't forget to bring reusable shopping bags! Pets are not allowed at the Farmers Market because it violates county health codes. The Vineyard is located at 20065 Rinaldi Street.

Free Wealth Protection Seminar

In a time of rising inflation, market volatility, and global uncertainty, many Americans are quietly asking: Is my retirement truly protected?

On Saturday, February 28, at 10 am, Allegiance Gold will host a complimentary educational seminar in Calabasas aimed at helping investors and retirees protect, preserve, and thoughtfully grow the wealth they've worked a lifetime to build.

The Wealth Protection Summit will be led by Alex Ebkarian, co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Allegiance Gold, who brings more than 22 years of experience in the investment and financial services industry.

The event will focus on how physical gold and silver can be strategically incorporated into retirement accounts such as IRAs, 401(k)s, and TSPs — using tax-advantaged structures when done properly.

Attendees will learn:

- Paper vs. Physical Assets: What many investors overlook.
- Portfolio Risk: The danger of overexposure to U.S. dollar, stocks and ETFs.
- Why Gold and Why Now: How metals can fit into retirement plans.

Rather than sales pitches, the summit centers on education and clarity. "Most people don't realize how exposed they are until the market reminds them," said Ebkarian. "This isn't about fear — it's about awareness. If you understand how the system works, you can make smarter decisions. My goal is simple: give people clarity so they can protect what they've worked their whole lives to build."

Guests will enjoy free parking, light refreshments, and a comfortable educational environment, with a special raffle where attendees will have a chance to win a one-ounce silver coin.

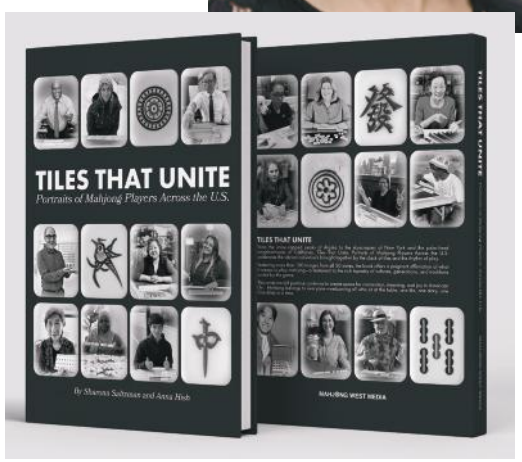
The summit is ideal for individuals with portfolios of $50,000 or more who are concerned about inflation, market instability, or the long-term outlook of the U.S. dollar.

The event will be held at 27001 Agoura Road, Suite 200. There is free parking, and light food and refreshments will be provided. To RSVP call (844) 790-9191 or use the QR code on page 16 of this paper.

People in the News

When Sharona Saltzman's (at right) only child left for college, the quiet in her home led her to American mahjong — and to a discovery that would shape her next creative project. Though she had tried the game years earlier, this time it clicked. Beyond learning strategy, she became intrigued by the people who played and the communities they formed.

Her interest soon expanded into a broader exploration of mahjong's history and cultural impact.



Antique sets sparked questions about the generations who played before, and a trip to China with her daughter offered firsthand insight into the game's origins. Back in the U.S., Saltzman curated a pop-up exhibition at New York's Museum of Chinese in America, highlighting both the game's roots and the players who sustain it today. The exhibition brought together stories, photographs, and sets, showing how mahjong connects individuals across time and place.

Those experiences led to *Tiles That Unite - Portraits of Mahjong Players Across the Country*. The book features more than 150 players from all 50 states, pairing their personal photographs with their stories. From collectors and competitors to teachers and casual enthusiasts, the book demonstrates how a shared game can foster connection, preserve tradition, and create community. It is not a manual on gameplay; it is a portrait of the people who keep mahjong alive.

Saltzman is a writer, producer, and cultural curator. She is the founder of Mahjong West Media, a platform dedicated to documenting the cultural life of mahjong and the individuals who quietly sustain its legacy.

Tiles That Unite is available on Amazon.

The Boys & Girls Club of the West Valley Honored **Lucas S.**, above, at their annual Youth of the Year Celebration February 7. Lucas is a 12th-grade student at Chatsworth Charter High School who is an active member of the robotics team and consistently demonstrates strong leadership skills. He is very polite, respectful, and sets a positive example for his peers. Through his involvement, Lucas contributes to a collaborative and supportive environment at the club. He gives back by volunteering with elementary school students interested in robotics. For the next year, he will serve as an advocate for all youth across the West San Fernando Valley. He will advance into the next round of competition aspiring to be named one of the two L.A. County finalists.

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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.

• My wife is addicted to flea markets, so I keep in mind what George Carlin said: A house is just a place to keep your stuff while you go out and get more stuff.

• Which reminds me of the joke about the couple who both talked in their sleep. The husband, a golf nut, would yell out "Fore!" His wife, who loved auctions, would reply in turn, "Four and a quarter!"

• Ralph and Bob were in the locker room of the country club lamenting the disappearance of their friend, the Professor. "I always admired him because he was such a profound thinker," said Bob. "That's true," replied Ralph. "Last time I saw him he was swimming in the lake and suddenly called out 'I'm thinking! I'm thinking!'" "You dummy," roared Bob, "Didn't you know the Professor lisped?"

• Attorney Dave Smith checks in with this yuk-yuk. What happened when Jack was jilted by a street cleaner's daughter? Why, he was going to sewer.

• Every lovely British TV show village: Population 47. Annual murders: 12.

• Thought for today: When you're in too much of a rush, you're liable to pass more than you catch up with.

• Here's one for the kids. Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7 8 9!

• Did you hear about the butcher who backed up into his meat grinder and got a little behind in his work?

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Guest Editorial:

Keeping "Micro Drama" Films in Los Angeles

By Bob Blumenfield

For well over a century, Los Angeles has been the epicenter of the entertainment industry and the San Fernando Valley has played a starring role. Since Carl Laemmle opened Universal Studios in 1915, the Valley has served as an iconic backdrop for countless films and TV shows, but over the last decade this prosperous, job creating industry has been dissipating.

Many other states and countries have offered enormous incentives to move productions around the world, and while California has boosted the original film tax credits I co-sponsored while in the State Assembly, more must be done. Aside from these foundational economic issues, the entertainment industry has vastly evolved in other critical ways. While people consume a lot of entertainment at home rather than going to theaters, a new, bustling sub-section of the industry has emerged and we have to step up before we lose even more jobs.

"Micro Ddramas" are a new type of short form content, often consumed on a phone (often vertical format), and in just the past few years have become a multi-billion dollar industry. Usually it's a "show" where each episode is just a few minutes long with anywhere from a dozen to hundreds of episodes. While many may not be aware of these shows, millions across the world are watching them and LA needs to take it seriously and encourage more production in our backyard.

Last week the LA City Council unanimously voted on my motion to create new financial incentives to help keep lower budget "Micro Drama" productions in Los Angeles. With budgets typically under $200,000, micro-drama productions often fall below the threshold to qualify for California's state tax credits and creators are relocating to other cities to benefit from tax credits offered by other jurisdictions.

A recent survey showed 78% of local independent producers now shoot these projects outside of Los Angeles, resulting in significant loss of jobs and local revenue. This financial incentive will help create opportunities to assist vertical content creators by establishing a grant program that provides upfront funding to incentivize local production and generate local jobs. The targeted support to micro-drama production will not only nurture a new generation of creative talent, but also help future-proof Los Angeles' position at the center of the global entertainment industry.

In just a few short years micro dramas have become a multi-billion dollar industry. They don't qualify for California tax credits and creators are relocating to other cities.

The motion specifically directs City departments to report to the Council with 1) a plan to review permitting structures as to lower costs and speed up turnaround; 2) how special funds can finance a targeted local incentive to complement the State credit and reward local hiring and more; 3) create rebate opportunities for property owners who offer discounted rates to qualifying productions — to increase inventory of affordable locations for vertical content creators; and 4) identify $5,000,000 in public and/or private/philanthropic funding sources to establish a "40% Launch & Rebate" grant. The grant would provide up-front funding to micro-drama productions by offering a 40% rebate on qualifying LA expenditures with an initial 20% paid upfront upon project approval (to address cash-flow for small productions) and the remaining 20% paid upon completion.

It's a reality that LA-based filmmakers have been lured to other cities around the country because of incentives for these new, specific types of productions and it's imperative that Los Angeles step up before it's too late. The Valley is home to so many 'below the line' professionals and we owe it to them, and the next generation of filmmakers, to make it easier and more affordable to keep jobs and productions in LA.

Bob Blumenfield is a Los Angeles City Councilman representing the West Valley.

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The Reel History of the Valley

By Martin M. Cooper

The Valley's Black Filmmakers: Behind the Cameras

The history of Black actors who lived or worked in the San Fernando Valley's film industry is not one of acceptance and equality, except for a few exceptions and for often-demeaning roles.

The history of those working behind the cameras is even less admirable.

For the first half of the 20th century, the studio gates were firmly shut when it came to Black executives, cinematographers, production designers, and other behind-the-scenes professionals. From the 1920s through the 1950s, the Valley's major film facilities churned out Westerns, screwball comedies, and noir thrillers — and yet few Black faces were in positions of importance behind the screen.

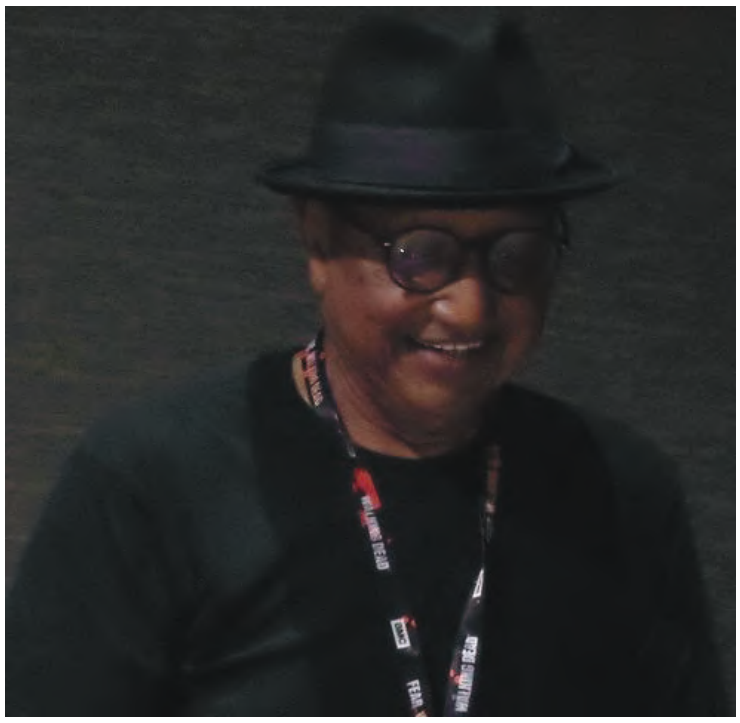
The four Valley studios – Universal, Disney, Warner Bros., and Radford – did not go out of their way to seek out technicians and other behind-the-camera filmmakers. It didn't help that Valley residential communities often had restrictive covenants that kept people of color from buying homes in the post-World-War II boom.

It wasn't just the studios that failed when it came to providing open doors to Black people. Film unions and guilds were notorious for policies inimical to inclusion of Black and brown people, while the many outside companies which provided services to studios and production houses were mostly owned and managed by white people.

But progress is being made, starting with the civil rights movement of the 1960s and continuing today. The gates guarding the film and television industries are opening up. While still few in number, studios have, since the 1970s, been placing Black executives in senior roles.

Nigerian born Pearlena Igboikwe is Chairman of Television Studios, NBC Entertainment & Peacock Scripted at NBCUniversal, where she oversees NBC Entertainment, including scripted, unscripted, late-night, and specials, as well as Peacock scripted programming and the company's major TV production studios.

Channing Dungey is Chairman and CEO at Warner Bros. Television Group & U.S. Networks, responsible for all scripted, unscripted, and animated TV production, as well as Warner Bros. Discovery's U.S. Networks portfolio.



In 2007, Floyd Norman was named a Disney Legend.

The San Fernando Valley became one of the most important gateways for Black creative authority in Hollywood. Few careers illustrate that evolution more clearly than those of Gordon Parks and Bill Duke, whose professional work spans feature films and television.

Gordon Parks entered feature filmmaking at Warner Bros. with *The Learning Tree* (1969), shot largely on location in Kansas but edited and produced within the studio in Burbank. When Parks directed *Shaft* (1971) and *Shaft's Big Score!* (1972), much of the post-production and studio oversight occurred within Valley-based infrastructure.

Parks became the first major Black director to exercise sustained control over studio features at the moment when the Valley supplanted Hollywood as the industry's nerve center. His success demonstrated that Black filmmakers could command authority within the studio system, not merely on independent margins.

Bill Duke has been an actor, director, producer, and screenwriter. Appearing as an actor in films such as *Car Wash* (1976), *American Gigolo* (1980), and *Commando* (1985), he transitioned into directing during the 1980s. Like many Black film professionals, Duke got his start in television, directing episodes of *Hill Street Blues, Miami Vice, Cagney & Lacey*, and later *The X-Files* – all series produced or post-produced at Universal Studios, Warner Bros. Television, and Radford Studio Center. He directed films such as *The Killing Floor* (1984), *A Rage in Harlem* (1991), and *Deep Cover* (1992).

Channing Dungey speaking at a press tour of the Television Critics Association.

Later Black directors followed the path Duke forged. Figures such as Ernest Dickerson, Carl Franklin, Mario Van Peebles, and Paris Barclay built résumés through Valley-based television before moving into feature films. Barclay became one of the most influential TV directors and producers, working extensively at Universal and Fox facilities in the Valley and later serving as president of the Directors Guild of America.

Film unions and guilds were notorious for policies inimical to inclusion of Black and brown people, while the many outside companies which provided services to studios and production houses were mostly owned and managed by white people.

Floyd Norman was Disney's first Black animator, beginning at the studio in the 1950s. He worked on *Mary Poppins* (1964), *The Jungle Book* (1967), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Mulan* (1998), *Dinosaur* (2000), and many more. Norman left Disney to co-found Vignette Films, Inc., producing six animated films on Black history. He rejoined Disney to work on several more films.

Frank Braxton was one of the first animators hired at both Disney and Warner Bros., starting as a Disney trainee before signing on at Warner Bros. He became the first Black president of the Screen Cartoonist's Guild…a memorable achievement in Hollywood union history.

Ron Husband was also a pioneering Black animator at Disney. He was at the studio for 38 years, starting in 1975. He eventually became a supervising animator. In a PBS documentary on him, *HUZ: Drawn to Life*, Husband said of his career that if you were Black, "You had to be twice as good as a white person just to break even."

These are just a few of the Black filmmakers who were twice as good.

Martin Cooper, President of Cooper Communications, supervised PR 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 soon.

VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Divorced, Beheaded, Live!
SIX Sing Its Way to Hollywood Pantages

Divorced, beheaded, died, divorced, beheaded, survived.

The Tony Award-winning musical *SIX* comes to the Hollywood Pantages Theatre February 18 to March 8.

From Tudor queens to pop icons, the six wives of Henry VIII take the microphone to remix five hundred years of historical heartbreak into a euphoric celebration of 21st century girl power! This new original musical is the global sensation that everyone is losing their head over!

SIX is a pop-concert musical by Toby Marlow and Lucy Moss that reimagines the six wives of Henry VIII as a modern girl group, with each queen telling her story to compete for the lead role in their band, ultimately reclaiming their narratives from their infamous husband.

The show, which premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2017, has become a global sensation, winning a Tony Award for Best Original Score and earning critical acclaim.

The six wives (Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard, and Catherine Parr) hold a singing competition to see who had the worst time with Henry VIII, but they end up empowering each other.

The *New York Times* says SIX "TOTALLY RULES!" (Critic's Pick) and *The Washington Post* hails SIX as "Exactly the kind of energizing, inspirational illumination this town aches for!"

The "SIX: Live on Opening Night" Broadway album debuted at Number 1 on the Billboard castalbum charts and surpassed one billion streams worldwide!

Tickets are available at broadwayinhollywood.com. The Pantages Theatre is located at 6233 Hollywood Blvd. just west of Vine in Hollywood.

Get a Free Sound Bath at Native Spirit Lodge

Native Spirit Lodge in Woodland Hills is offering a free soundbath experience for up to two (normally $20 per person).

Sound baths are offered Fridays at noon, Saturdays at 4 pm and Sundays at noon.

Native Spirit Lodge also hosts free drum circles Saturdays at 11 am.

The store offers the largest selection anywhere for Native American merchandise, including dream catchers, arrows, Kachina dolls, breastplates, chokers, necklaces, drums, pottery, wedding vases, coup sticks, rattles and more.

They also carry crystals in a variety of shapes and sizes, sage and incense, bracelets, singing bowls, semi-precious stones, singing bowls, drums, tarot and oracle decks plus much more.

Native Spirit Lodge is located at 22559 Ventura Blvd. The store is open Tuesday to Sunday from 11 am to 7 pm and closed Sunday.

Call to register in advance for the sound bath at (818) 703-7046.

VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Granada Hills Centennial Celebrates Valentine's

By Jay Ross

The Granada Hills Centennial Valentine's Dance was located at the Knollwood Country Club in Granada Hills on Friday, February 13. The theme "Love thru the Decades" celebrated love across different eras.

Granada Hills Centennial Chair John Ciccarelli and Councilmember John Lee.

Speaking of love through the decades, they did this cute little roll call asking how long folks had been married. They started with 30 years, then 40, then 50... and just when you thought it couldn't get any better, Bam! A 60-year marriage champ stepped up. Now, me as a widower who always dreamed of hitting that 60-plus club like my folks did, I was feeling all the feels—cue the emotional music.

But then, plot twist: She walks up to accept her prize... all by herself. Yeah, no husband in sight! I'm thinking, maybe the secret to a long marriage isn't just love and commitment—it's letting your spouse stay home binge-watching TV while you take the spotlight. Who knew? Apparently, the key to 60 years is perfecting the art of flying solo when it counts. Husband's probably at home yelling at the game, blissfully

unaware he was not present to accept their trophy for "Longest Marriage"

This event was part of the Granada Hills Centennial celebration series. It was a sold-out dinner dance that beautifully combined Valentine's Day festivities with the centennial spirit. Guests enjoyed an Italian cuisine dinner followed by dancing, creating a formal yet festive atmosphere where nearly everyone embraced the theme by wearing pink or red.

The event was organized by Committee Chairperson John Ciccarelli, along with committee members Lori Sawa, Emilie Koster, Maria Fisk, Ivette Bertin, and Linda Jenkins. Honorary Chairperson Councilmember John Lee of District 12 also played a key role by promoting and participating in various events throughout the centennial year (April 2025 – April 2026). His involvement underscores his dedication to representing and celebrating the rich history and community spirit of Granada Hills within his council district.

"Granada Hills 100" refers to the centennial celebration marking 100 years of the Granada Hills community. This milestone is being commemorated with a series of events throughout 2025 and 2026, highlighting the history, culture, and community spirit of Granada Hills. For a calendar of events and updates visit the official event page: granadahills100.com.

PHOTOS/JayRoss/JaysFStop

Neighborhood Junior Tennis Program Celebrates 32 Years of Community Impact

For more than three decades, the Neighborhood Junior Tennis Program (NJTP) has been positively impacting youth and families throughout the Northeast San Fernando Valley — one lesson, one player, and one family at a time.

Established in 1993, NJTP is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing children with a healthy, structured, and positive alternative to gangs, drugs, and childhood obesity through the game of tennis. What began as a grassroots effort to give back has grown into a respected, year-round community tennis program serving thousands of families.

The foundation of NJTP traces back more than 50 years, when a young Philip Siordia signed up for group tennis lessons at a local neighborhood park. That simple opportunity sparked a lifelong journey in the sport. Siordia went on to compete in high school and college, earning scholarship opportunities and gaining firsthand experience of how access to sport can shape a young person's future.

Two decades later, Siordia and fellow former players reunited with a shared vision: to give back to the community that once gave them an opportunity. They began offering free tennis lessons to neighborhood children. Interest quickly grew, and what started as informal park sessions evolved into an organized, affordable tennis program focused on long-term youth development.

In 1993, the Neighborhood Junior Tennis Program was officially established. Today, NJTP operates at multiple sites across the San Fernando Valley. The program has expanded to the CSUN Tennis Complex, serving youth ages nine to 18, and maintains a longstanding presence at El Cariso Park in Sylmar, serving children ages four to 18.

NJTP offers structured sessions Monday through Friday, with classes ranging from beginner instruction to high school and high-performance training. The curriculum emphasizes stroke development, footwork, athletic movement, match strategy, and mental focus — while also teaching sportsmanship, accountability, and personal responsibility.

The organization is led by President Siordia, who recently retired as Tennis Operations Director for the University of Southern California Men's and Women's Tennis programs. USC is widely regarded as one of the premier collegiate tennis programs in the nation, capturing 21 National Championships and producing numerous professional and nationally ranked players.

Siordia's decades of experience in a championship-level collegiate environment bring structure, organization, and high standards to NJTP's community-based mission. NJTP is also a recognized Community Tennis Association partner of the United States Tennis Association (USTA), providing pathways for youth to participate in Junior Team Tennis leagues and competitive match play.

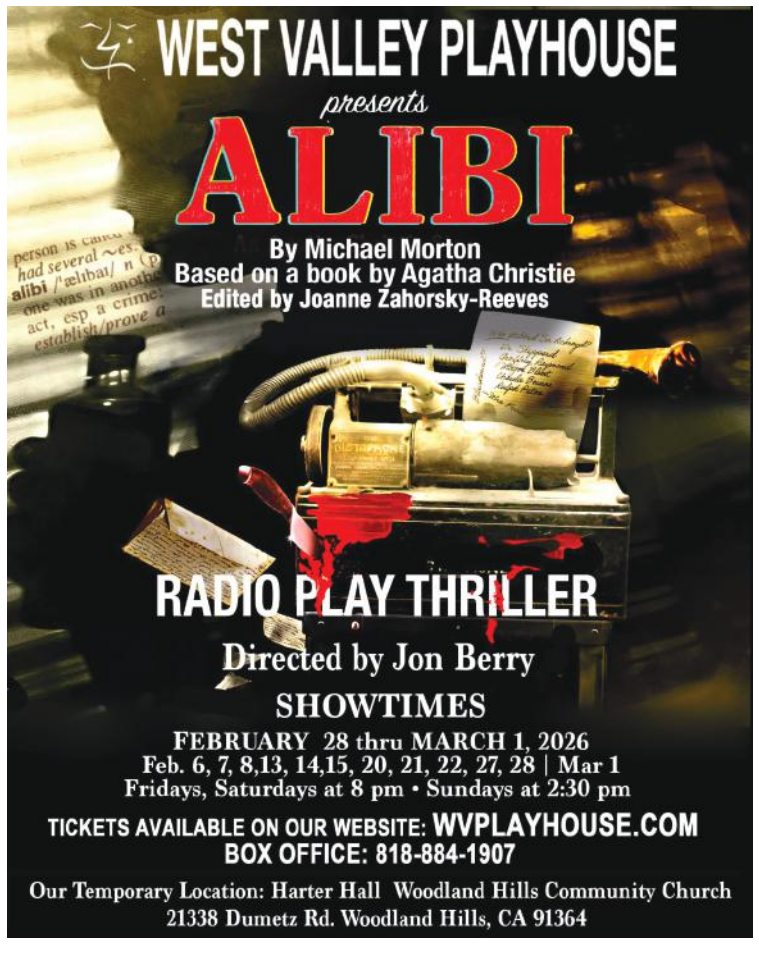
In addition, NJTP works with the United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA) and the Professional Tennis Registry (PTR) to ensure instructors maintain professional certification and continuing education standards.

Over its 32-year history, NJTP has introduced thousands of children to tennis, with many participants advancing to high school varsity teams and collegiate competition. More importantly, the program continues to provide a safe, structured environment where young people can develop confidence, resilience, and life skills.

As NJTP looks toward the future, its mission remains unchanged: to strengthen the community through accessible, affordable tennis programming that develops both athletes and responsible young leaders.

After three decades of service and continued growth, NJTP stands as a lasting example of how local investment, mentorship, and opportunity can create generational impact across the San Fernando Valley.

For more information on NJTP visit njtptennis.net.



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Sounding the Alarm on Heart Disease During American Health Month

As the nation observes American Heart Month this February, Dignity Health is spotlighting the vital importance of proactive heart health, urging individuals to prioritize understanding their cardiac risk factors through comprehensive screenings.

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States, yet many cases are preventable or manageable with early detection.

"Heart Month is more than just an awareness campaign; it's a critical call to action," shares Dr Jahandar Saleh, a leading cardiologist at Dignity Health Northridge Hospital Medical Center. "Many people don't realize they are at risk for heart disease until they experience a serious event. That's why getting screened, understanding your numbers, and having an open dialogue with your doctor are paramount. Early detection can literally be a lifesaver."

Heart disease often develops silently, with symptoms not appearing until significant damage has occurred. Screenings play a crucial role in identifying warning signs and risk factors before they escalate into more

attacks, strokes, or heart failure.

Key Heart Screenings Everyone Should Consider:

Dignity Health recommends a range of screenings, tailored to individual risk factors and age. These often include:

√ Blood Pressure Checks: High blood pressure (hypertension) is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, often without noticeable symptoms. Regular checks are essential.

√ Cholesterol Tests (Lipid Panel): Measures total cholesterol, LDL ("bad") cholesterol, HDL ("good") cholesterol, and triglycerides, which can indicate plaque buildup in arteries.

√ Blood Glucose Tests (Diabetes Screening): Untreated diabetes can severely damage blood vessels and nerves, significantly increasing heart disease risk.

√ Body Mass Index (BMI) and Waist Circumference: Indicators of obesity, a major contributor to heart conditions.

√ Electrocardiogram: A quick, painless test that records the electrical signals in your heart, detecting irregularities in heart rhythm and structure.

√ Advanced Screenings (as recommended by a physician): For those with higher risk factors, doctors may recommend calcium scoring CT scans, stress tests, or echocardiograms to provide a more detailed view of heart health.

"Knowing your numbers – your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar – is the first, most powerful step in preventing heart disease," adds Dr. Saleh. "These simple tests, often performed during a routine check-up, provide invaluable insights that empower you and your healthcare team to make informed decisions about your health."

Beyond screenings, Dignity encourages lifestyle modifications that support a healthy heart, including a balanced diet, physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, managing stress, and quitting smoking.

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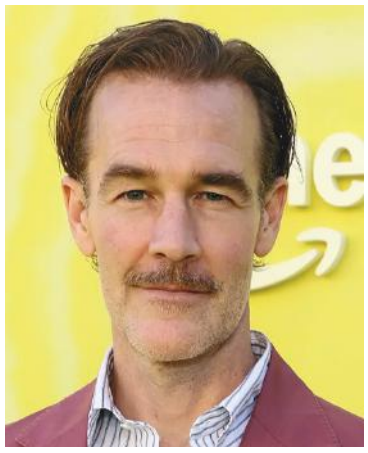
Colorectal Cancer Rising in Young Adults

With the recent deaths of Catherine O'Hara and James Van Der Beek, both suffering from colorectal cancer, health professionals are spotlighting how this disease is rising in young adults. According to a TIME report, "Today's young adults are about twice as likely to be diagnosed with colon cancer and four times as likely to be diagnosed with rectal cancer as those born around 1950." One in five individuals diagnosed are now under the age of 55.



James Van Der Beek

Often individuals present with symptoms that include abdominal pain, rapid weight loss, rectal bleeding and iron deficiency. Due to young age, these symptoms are often misattributed to other things, but when diagnosis is reached, an individual often has more advanced and aggressive tumors.

While there isn't a clear answer as to why colorectal cancer is rising in younger adults, some health professionals point to an increasing rise of processed foods and sedentary lifestyles.

March is officially Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and recent celebrity deaths are only serving to bring this issue even more front-of-mind. Health professionals urge early detection as the prominent manner to combat the potential of this cancer emerging or progressing. Guidelines generally recommend scheduling regular screenings beginning at age 45 unless you have a family history or healthcare disparities that put you at a higher risk.

Given the nature of colorectal cancer, oftentimes individuals are embarrassed to talk about the issue, but the disease is often preventable or treatable if caught early. Know your body and recognize any drastic changes in bowel movement, inflammation and bleeding. Regular colonoscopies and stool tests are standard procedures to check for colorectal cancer and are often covered by insurance.

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HOT PROPERTY NORTHRIDGE

Sometimes hot properties are beautiful and sometimes hot properties are very well priced. Rarely are they both. 20159 Londelius St. in Winnetka (lower Northridge) is both many times over.

Discover the perfect blend of comfort, convenience, and value in this beautiful four-bedroom, two-bath, 1906-square-foot home. From the moment you step inside, you'll appreciate the thoughtful design and inviting spaces that make this home ideal for both relaxation and entertaining. The spacious living area offers abundant natural light and a seamless flow into the dining and kitchen spaces—perfect for family gatherings or quiet evenings at home. The kitchen features ample cabinetry and generous counter space for effortless meal preparation. Retreat to the primary suite, complete with plenty of closet space. Three additional bedrooms provide flexibility for family, guests, or a home office.

Outside, enjoy your own private oasis with a refreshing pool—ideal for weekend relaxation or entertaining under the sun. The landscaped yard offers both beauty and privacy, creating a peaceful outdoor retreat. Located in a highly desirable neighborhood, this home combines tranquility with easy access to top-rated schools, shopping, dining, and recreational options.

With its ideal location, desirable amenities, and competitive price, this property is the perfect place to call home and should sell quickly. Listed for $879,000 by Scott Friedman, Coldwell Banker Realty (Cal RE#01744368). Call (818) 317-2011 for showings and to make offers.

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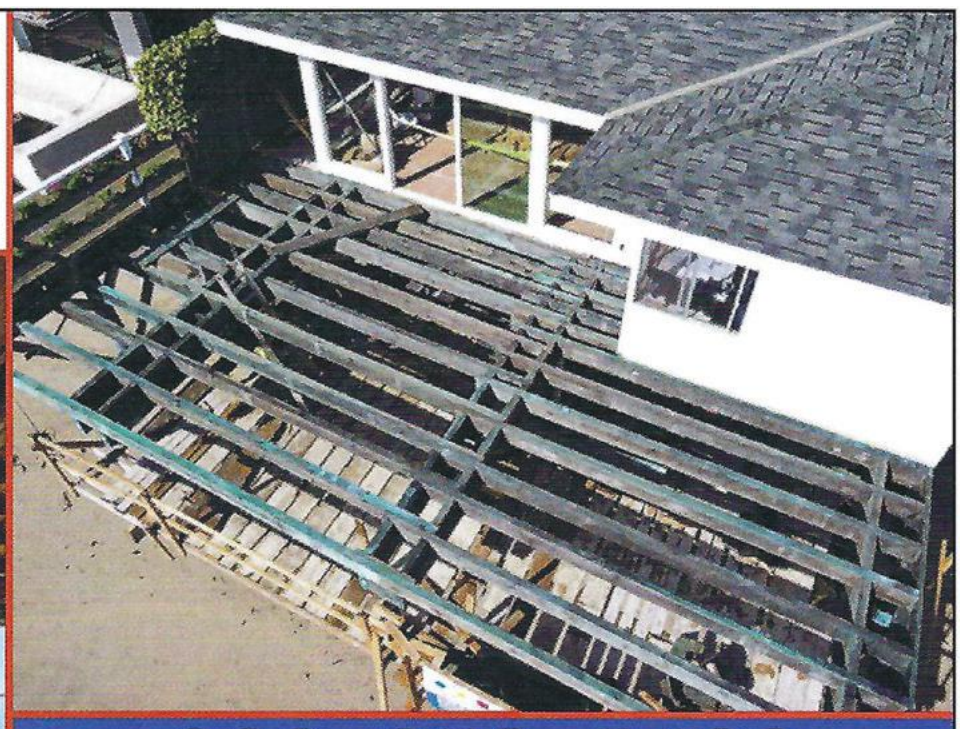

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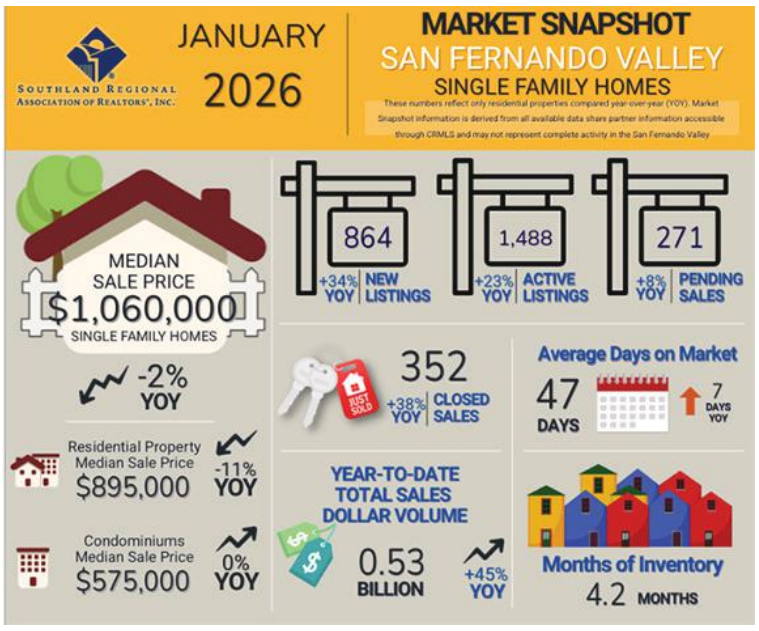

Valley Home and Condo Resale Prices and Active Listings Surge

Closed escrows and active listings of homes and condominiums in the San Fernando Valley increased sharply during January while resale prices remained flat or fell, the Southland Regional Association of Realtors reported today.

A total of 352 single-family homes and 136 condominiums changed owners last month for an increase of 37.5% and 44.7%, respectively, according to association statistics.

While well below the totals reported during the COVID pandemic in 2021 and 2022 of 697 and 618 respectively, the January home total was a giant leap from last year's 256 closed escrows. Similarly, the condominium tally was the highest for a January over the last four years, surpassed by the 196 condo transfers in January 2022 and the 2021 total of 221.

"It's a welcome robust start to the new year, especially with the increase in active listings offering prospective buyers many more options," said Nicole Stinson, the 2026 President of the 10,000-member Southland Regional Association of Realtors. "Interest rates are at their lowest levels since 2024 and expected to go lower in the coming months. It's possible people who have been sitting on the sidelines may decide to jump into the market.

"Plus, for the first time in multiple years," Stinson said, "homesellers are willing to consider concessions and growing numbers are flexible on pricing. We're inching closer to a more balanced market, where neither buyer nor seller have an advantage."

The median price of single-family homes that changed owners in January came in at $1,060,000, which was down 1.9% from a year ago and below the record high $1,150,000 set in June and again in September 2025.

The association also reported the condominium median price at $575,000, which was unchanged from a year ago and the first time in 12 months that the condo median price was below the $600,000 benchmark.

"After watching resale prices climb higher nearly every month over more than a decade it's refreshing to see even slight increases in affordability," said Valerie Biletsky, the association's Chief Executive Officer. "There are plenty of lingering questions that could impact the national and local economies, yet the new year is showing promise for the local residential real estate market."

With the national average interest rate at 6.23% during January – the income needed to qualify dropped 3.7% compared to a year ago.

Combined pending sales – a measure of future closed escrows – came in at 352, down 29% from a year ago.

The 2,270 active listings, down 3% from January 2025, represented a 4.7-month inventory at the current pace of sales. That number is inching closer to the 38-year average of a 5.3-month supply indicative of a balanced market.

SRAR's income-to-loan guide for January found that an income of $145,298 was needed to qualify for an 80% loan of $463,200 on a San Fernando Valley median-priced condominium of $579,000.

With the national average interest rate at 6.23% during January – the lowest since December 2024's 6.31% and well below the 7.79% of October 2023 – the income needed to qualify dropped 3.7% compared to a year ago. The monthly PITI — principal, interest, taxes and insurance payments — totaled $3,632.

Chartered by the National Association of Realtors in 1920, the Southland Regional Association of Realtors is the voice for real estate in San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys.

Neighborhood Council Meetings

Chatsworth Neighborhood Council will hold a board and stakeholder meeting on Wednesday, March 4, at 6:30 pm.

For agenda and Zoom link visit chatsworthcouncil.org.

Northridge South Neighborhood Council on Thursday, February 26, at 7 pm at Northridge Middle School Library, 17960 Chase Street. For agenda visit northridgesouth.org.

Granada Hills North Neighborhood Council will hold a board meeting on Tuesday, March 3, at 6:30 pm at St. Euphrasia School, 11766 Shoshone. For agenda see ghnnc.

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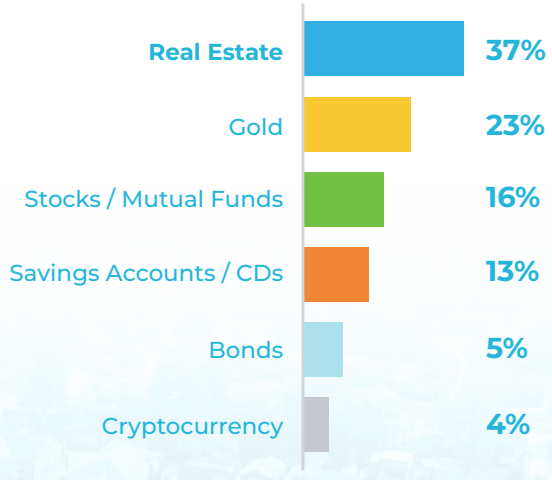

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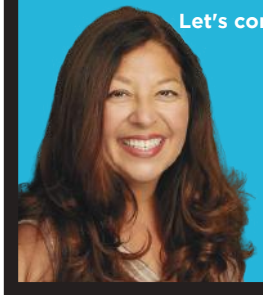

Let's connect so you have expert advice on how to reach your homebuying goals this year.

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Alex Ebkarian is the Co-Founder of Allegiance Gold, a nationally trusted precious metals firm. As a former banker, with over 25 years in finance, he helps investors protect their wealth through strategic gold ownership. A frequent financial media contributor, Alex brings insights on market risk, economic shifts, and long-term wealth protection.

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